

TRANSFORMATIVE TOURISM: CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION POST-COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented global economic shock, causing a recession, increasing unemployment, and worsening poverty. In this context, tourism is emerging as a critical sector with the potential to overcome these challenges and drive economic recovery. This research explores the concept of Transformative Tourism as an innovative approach to overcoming the negative impacts of the recession, creating jobs, and alleviating poverty in the post-pandemic era. Through a comprehensive analysis of global case studies, this research reveals critical strategies for revitalizing the tourism sector sustainably and inclusively. Key findings highlight the importance of tourism product diversification, workforce skills development, use of digital technology, and collaboration between stakeholders. This research also emphasizes the central role of tourism in empowering local communities, especially vulnerable groups, through employment opportunities and small business development. By adopting a transformative approach, the tourism sector can catalyze equitable economic growth, poverty reduction, and social resilience in the face of post-COVID uncertainty. Policy implications of this research include the need for coordinated government support, investment in tourism infrastructure, and promotion of responsible tourism. This research provides valuable insights for policymakers, industry players, and academics seeking to harness the transformative potential of tourism to address pressing economic and social challenges in the post-pandemic era.

KEYWORDS Transformative Tourism, Economic Recovery, Poverty Alleviation, COVID-19 Pandemic.



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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented global economic crisis, with widespread and sustained impacts. Travel restrictions, lockdowns, and supply chain disruptions have crippled many sectors of the economy, leading to business closures, job losses, and significant declines in income. Consequently, the

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world is facing a deep economic recession, with a dramatic increase in unemployment and poverty rates in various countries (World Bank, 2021).

The tourism sector, which is one of the largest contributors to the global economy and employment, has been hit the hardest by the pandemic. This crisis has devastated the livelihoods of millions of people who depend on tourism, especially in developing countries, where this sector is often the backbone of the economy (Sigala, 2020). According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals fell by nearly 74% in 2020, causing a loss of about \$1.3 trillion in global tourism export revenues (UNWTO, 2021). To Indonesia, the arrival of foreign tourists also dropped drastically during the pandemic. The number of foreign tourists visiting Indonesia in 2020 only reached 4.02 million visits, a decrease of 75.03% compared to 2019 (BPS, 2021). This decline was largely due to travel restrictions, border closures, and health concerns. This decline in tourism also resulted in significant economic losses for Indonesia, which was around Rp 100 trillion (US\$7 billion) in 2020 due to the pandemic (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2021).

However, in the midst of these unprecedented challenges, tourism also has the unique potential to be a driving force in the post-pandemic economic recovery. History has shown the remarkable resilience of the tourism sector in the face of external shocks, with the capacity to recover faster and stronger than other sectors (Sharma, et al., 2021). In addition, tourism has a significant dual effect, where every dollar spent on tourism generates greater economic benefits through complex value chains (WTTC, 2021).

Given the great transformative potential of tourism, it is necessary to take steps to explore innovative strategies, so that they can provide benefits to overcome the negative impact of the recession, create jobs, and alleviate poverty. The concept of transformative tourism has emerged as a promising approach, aiming to reshape the tourism sector in a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient way (Ateljevic, 2020). This approach emphasizes the need for a paradigm shift away from mass tourism focused on short-term growth, towards a more responsible and community-oriented tourism model, which provides long-term benefits for all stakeholders (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

The research aims to contribute to the growing discussion about the role of tourism in post-pandemic economic recovery, focusing on its transformative potential in overcoming recessions, creating jobs, and alleviating poverty. Through a comprehensive analysis of global case studies, this study seeks to identify key strategies and best practices that can help revitalize the tourism sector in innovative and impactful ways. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a guideline for policymaking and provide practical guidance for industry players in navigating the changing tourism landscape in the post-COVID-19 era.

Literature Review

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global tourism sector has been a major focus in the current literature. Existing research reveals the scale and magnitude of disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, where there has been a drastic decline in international tourist arrivals, causing widespread economic

losses, and the loss of millions of jobs (UNWTO, 2021; Gössling, et al., 2020). The tourism industry, which is dominated by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and employs mostly informal workers, has been one of the most affected sectors (ILO, 2020). Around 1.7 million workers in the tourism industry in Indonesia are directly affected by this crisis (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has become a concern for the world, including Indonesia, because it has an extraordinary impact on the economy and tourism, so a more resilient and sustainable tourism model is needed.

In this context, the concept of transformative tourism emerged as a promising approach to rebuilding the tourism sector in a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient way. Transformative tourism is rooted in the principles of sustainable tourism (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005) and seeks to create positive change at the individual, community, and systems levels (Sheldon, 2020). The literature shows that transformative tourism focuses on creating meaningful experiences, empowering local communities, conserving natural and cultural resources, and promoting equitable economic growth (Ateljevic, 2020; Pollock, 2019). This approach emphasizes the importance of collaboration between stakeholders, innovation, and the use of technology to change the way the tourism sector operates (Sigala, 2020).

The role of tourism in job creation and poverty alleviation has been widely recognized in the literature. Before the pandemic, the tourism sector accounted for about 10% of global GDP and provided one in ten jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2019). Research shows that tourism has a strong supporting effect on job creation, where every direct job in the tourism sector generates some indirect jobs in related industries (Richter, 2019). In addition, tourism also acts as a catalyst for infrastructure development, small business growth, and empowerment of marginalized groups, as well as contributing to poverty reduction (UNWTO, 2018; World Bank, 2017). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has threatened the progress made through tourism in job creation and poverty alleviation. Therefore, a recovery strategy focused on resilience and inclusion is needed.

Global case studies on transformative tourism provide valuable insights. For example, community-based ecotourism initiatives in Costa Rica have been successful in empowering local communities, preserving biodiversity, and creating sustainable employment opportunities (Hunt et al., 2015). Similarly, heritage tourism projects in Cambodia have shown potential to revitalize the local economy, preserve cultural heritage, and improve people's livelihoods (Pawson et al., 2017). A case study from New Zealand underscores the importance of stakeholder engagement, participatory governance, and innovative marketing strategies in developing resilient and sustainable tourism destinations (Amore et al., 2020).

This literature review uncovers some of the key principles and strategies for developing transformative tourism post-pandemic. One of the key principles is to adopt a human-centered approach, which prioritizes the well-being and resilience of local communities (Cheer, 2020). This approach involves the community actively in planning, developing, and managing tourism initiatives, as well as ensuring that the economic and social benefits of tourism are distributed fairly. By putting the needs and aspirations of local communities at the forefront,

transformative tourism can contribute to improving livelihoods, cultural preservation, and inclusive recovery.

In addition, investing in skills development and capacity building for the tourism workforce has also been identified as a key strategy for transformative tourism (Baum & Nguyen, 2019). This involves providing training, education, and professional development to equip workers with the necessary skills and competencies to adapt to post-pandemic realities. By increasing the capacity of the workforce, it is hoped that the tourism sector can become more resilient, innovative, and responsive to changing needs and expectations of tourists.

The use of digital technology has also emerged as an important strategy for post-pandemic transformative tourism (Gretzel et al., 2020). Digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and big data analytics, can also be used to improve connectivity, accessibility, and traveler experience. For example, digital platforms to facilitate better interaction between tourists and local service providers, or the use of virtual reality (VR) for remote exploration of destinations. By embracing digital technology, the tourism sector can become more innovative, efficient, and sustainable.

The literature also emphasizes the importance of promoting regenerative tourism models that contribute to the restoration and protection of natural ecosystems (Cave & Dredge, 2020). Regenerative tourism seeks to go beyond sustainability by actively improving the health and well-being of destinations and their people. It involves practices such as biodiversity conservation, habitat restoration, and community-based resource management. By adopting a regenerative approach, the tourism sector can play a proactive role in addressing environmental challenges and driving a positive recovery.

The literature review also highlights the importance of fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaborations to address systemic challenges and generate greater impact (Bianchi, 2020). It involves a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, industry, civil society, academic institutions, and local communities, in the planning and implementation of transformative tourism initiatives. Through collaboration and knowledge sharing, stakeholders can develop innovative solutions, mobilize resources, and create synergies to address the complex and interconnected challenges facing the tourism sector.

Despite its transformative potential, the literature also highlights some of the limitations and challenges in implementing transformative tourism. These include a lack of supportive policy frameworks, limited institutional capacity, inadequate access to financing, and skills gaps among the tourism workforce (Ateljevic, 2020). In addition, measuring and evaluating the impact of initiatives from transformative tourism is difficult, requiring the development of appropriate indicators and methodologies (Pollock, 2019). To overcome these obstacles, coordinated efforts and long-term commitments from various stakeholders are needed.

By adopting a human-centered approach, leveraging digital technologies, promoting regenerative models, and fostering collaboration, the tourism sector can contribute to more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development. However, realizing this potential will require a paradigm shift in the way the sector operates, as well as adequate policy and investment support. Further research is needed to

develop and test specific frameworks, tools, and interventions for transformative tourism, as well as to understand supporting conditions and contextual barriers in various settings. By contributing to an ever-growing knowledge base, the research community can play a critical role in shaping a brighter and fairer future for tourism for all.

RESEARCH METHOD

To investigate the transformative potential of the tourism sector in overcoming recessions, creating jobs, and alleviating post-pandemic poverty, this study adopts a comprehensive qualitative research approach. The main objective of this study is to explore the transformative potential of the tourism sector in overcoming recessions, creating jobs, and alleviating poverty after the COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology of this research consists of several key components.

The first step involves an in-depth literature review of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector, the concept of transformative tourism, and the role of tourism in job creation and poverty alleviation. Key sources include peer-reviewed academic journals, industry reports, publications from international organizations such as the UNWTO and the World Bank, and relevant sources. This review aims to build a strong theoretical foundation, identify existing research gaps, and provide a comprehensive overview of up-to-date knowledge in the field of tourism.

To gain practical insights into strategies and best practices in transformative tourism, this study analyzes a series of global case studies. Cases were selected purposively based on criteria such as success in implementing transformative tourism strategies, significant impact on job creation and poverty alleviation, and innovation in facing post-pandemic challenges. Case studies represent various geographical contexts, stages of economic development, and tourism market segments. Data for case studies are collected through a combination of document research. Cross-case analysis is carried out using a thematic analysis approach to identify emerging themes, patterns, and lessons.

To support qualitative findings, this study also utilizes various secondary data sources. These include tourism statistics from national authorities and international organizations, economic data on the impact of COVID-19, and socio-economic indicators related to employment and poverty. Secondary data analysis involves descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, to present and interpret findings.

The final stage of the research methodology involves synthesizing findings from various components to develop a comprehensive framework for post-pandemic transformative tourism. The framework identifies key principles, strategies, and practical actions that tourism stakeholders can adopt to address recessions, create jobs, and alleviate poverty.

It needs to be acknowledged that there are limitations in the methodology of this research, such as the limited number of case studies, the lack of interviews with stakeholders, and the constraints of time and resources. However, by combining in-depth conceptual analysis and empirical evidence from various sources, this research is well positioned to make a valuable contribution to knowledge and

practice in the field of transformative tourism as a catalyst for economic recovery and poverty alleviation post-COVID-19 pandemic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study investigates the transformative potential of the tourism sector in overcoming recessions, creating jobs, and alleviating poverty post-COVID-19 pandemic. Based on an in-depth literature review, global case studies, and secondary data analysis, the main findings of this study are as follows:

1. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Tourism Sector

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges to the economies, livelihoods, and communities that depend on the industry. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an extraordinary, and unprecedented impact on the global tourism sector. A literature review reveals some of the main impacts of this crisis on tourism.

First, the occurrence of travel restrictions, border closures, and quarantine measures imposed to control the spread of the virus. This action led to a drastic decline in international tourist arrivals. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals fell by almost 74% in 2020, with an estimated loss of about 1.3 trillion US dollars to global tourism export revenues (UNWTO, 2021). This sharp decline in international travel has severe economic consequences for countries and regions that rely heavily on tourism. Indonesia also suffered heavy losses. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy estimates that Indonesia's tourism sector suffered losses of around Rp 100 trillion (around \$7 billion US dollars) in 2020 due to the pandemic (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2021). The number of foreign tourists visiting Indonesia in 2020 dropped drastically by 75.03% compared to 2019, which only reached 4.02 million visits (BPS, 2021).

Second, the pandemic has resulted in significant economic losses and the loss of millions of jobs across the tourism value chain. Hotels, restaurants, airlines, tour operators, and other tourism-related businesses, have also experienced an unprecedented decline in revenue. This has led to business closures, labor reductions, and even widespread layoffs. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that more than 100 million tourism jobs have been affected by the pandemic, where women, young people, and informal workers are directly affected (ILO, 2020). Around 1.7 million workers in Indonesia's tourism industry are also directly affected by this crisis, and many have lost their jobs or experienced salary cuts (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2021).

Third, this crisis has greatly affected small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and vulnerable groups involved in the tourism sector. SMEs, which are the backbone of the tourism industry in many countries, have limited resources and capacity to cope with prolonged economic shocks. Many of these businesses are struggling to survive amid declining demand, cash flow disruptions, and ongoing uncertainty. In addition, vulnerable groups such as women, informal workers, and indigenous peoples, who rely heavily on tourism for their livelihoods, are severely hit by the loss of income and on the other hand, they also do not have a social safety net. Foreign exchange earnings from Indonesia's tourism sector are estimated to

decline by around 80% in 2020 compared to the previous year (Bank Indonesia, 2021).

Apart from these negative impacts, the Covid-19 Pandemic crisis has also caused vulnerabilities to traditional tourism models that rely on mass, long-distance, and seasonal tourism. This has triggered calls to rethink and transform the tourism sector towards a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive model (Ateljevic, 2020; Gössling et al., 2020). The concept of transformative tourism emerges as a potential approach to rebuild the tourism sector in a better way, focusing on the well-being of local communities, environmental preservation, and equitable economic growth.

2. Potential for Transformative Tourism

A literature review reveals some of the key characteristics and transformative tourism potential in driving the recovery and redevelopment of the post-pandemic tourism sector.

First, transformative tourism focuses on creating meaningful experiences that not only entertain but also educate, inspire, and transform travelers. It involves developing tourism products and services that drive growth, intercultural learning, and deeper connections with nature and local communities (Sheldon, 2020). By offering transformative experiences, the tourism sector can attract travelers seeking more authentic and meaningful travel, thereby creating value and market differentiation in a competitive post-pandemic landscape.

Second, transformative tourism seeks to empower local communities and ensure a fair distribution of economic benefits. It involves communities in the planning, development, and management of tourism initiatives, as well as promoting local ownership and entrepreneurship (Giampiccoli et al., 2020). By putting local communities at the forefront, transformative tourism can contribute to poverty alleviation, job creation, and livelihood improvement, while preserving local culture and heritage.

Third, transformative tourism prioritizes the preservation and sustainable management of natural and cultural resources. Transformative tourism adopts environmentally friendly practices, such as biodiversity conservation, energy efficiency, and waste management, as well as educating tourists about the importance of sustainability (Ateljevic, 2020). By minimizing environmental impacts and contributing to ecosystem restoration, transformative tourism can play a crucial role in combating climate change and preserving nature for future generations.

Fourth, transformative tourism seeks to encourage equitable and inclusive economic growth. This involves developing local tourism value chains, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and promoting cross-sectoral (Scheyvens & Hughes, 2019). By spreading economic benefits more broadly across communities, transformative tourism can contribute to reducing inequality, increasing resilience, and more balanced and sustainable development.

In addition, transformative tourism emphasizes the importance of collaboration, innovation, and the use of technology to revolutionize the way the tourism sector operates. It fosters multi-stakeholder partnerships, leverages digital

technologies as solutions, and encourages experimentation and adaptive learning (Sigala, 2020). By adopting innovative and collaborative approaches, the tourism sector becomes more agile, efficient, and responsive to changing market dynamics and people's expectations.

3. Best Practices from Global Case Studies

The global case study on the application of transformative tourism for economic recovery and post-pandemic poverty alleviation, presents valuable insights into strategies and best practices. The cross-case analysis reveals several key examples that illustrate the potential for transformative approaches in shaping a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable tourism sector.

One of the best practices in the development of community-based tourism products that engage and empower local communities, is the ecotourism project in Costa Rica. This project successfully involved indigenous peoples in the management and operation of nature-based lodging, created job opportunities, and generated income for biodiversity conservation (Gabriel-Campos, et al., 2021). Similarly, a community-based tourism initiative in Tanzania that empowers rural women through the development of crafts, accommodation services, and tour guides. The initiative resulted in an increase in household income and social status of the local community (Mkini Lugalla, et al., 2024). By putting local communities at the forefront, a community-based approach can ensure a more equitable distribution of economic benefits and create more sustainable livelihoods. Cultural Heritage Tourism in Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, China, has also successfully implemented transformative tourism for the Hani ethnic community. The initiatives include community-based tour guide training, the development of traditional crafts, and the promotion of sustainable agriculture. As a result, there has been an increase in community income, a resurgence of Hani culture, and a stronger commitment of local stakeholders to the preservation of local cultural heritage (Zhang, et al., 2019).

Another example of best practice is the application of a regenerative tourism model that focuses on the restoration and protection of the natural environment. It adopts practices that not only minimize the negative impacts of tourism, but also actively contribute to the recovery and resilience of ecosystems. For example, resort management on Tetiaroa Island in Polynesia, France which implements various regenerative measures, such as zero waste-based waste management, water recycling, and coral reef restoration programs aimed at restoring the island's fragile environment (Sheldon, 2020). By prioritizing regenerative principles, the tourism sector can be a force to address sustainability challenges globally.

The use of digital technology has also emerged as a key driver of innovation in transformative tourism. Case studies illustrate how digital platforms, such as mobile apps and online booking websites, can improve accessibility, convenience, and personalize the traveler experience. For example, the Smart Tourism initiative in Seoul, South Korea, which uses artificial intelligence and big data analytics for personalized travel recommendations, time information, and navigation services to travelers. This initiative has been proven to improve tourist satisfaction and destination management efficiency (Kim, et al., 2021). In addition, Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies are increasingly in demand to

create immersive experiences and indirectly connect tourists with cultural heritage and the real world (Fan, et al., 2022). By adopting digital solutions, the tourism sector can revolutionize the way it attracts, serves, and interacts with tourists in the post-pandemic landscape through digital technology.

The case study also highlights the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration in advancing the transformative tourism agenda. Partnerships between government, industry, civil society, and educational institutions are proving critical in developing policies, building capacity, and driving innovation. For example, the government-led Grow Eco-tourism initiative in the Philippines has brought together various stakeholders to promote sustainable tourism development, increased investment, upskilling, and job growth in the sector (Ocampo, et al., 2019). In Iceland, partnerships between tourism authorities, industry, and universities have successfully fostered the development of innovative products, such as Glaciers conservation tourism, that contribute to the conservation of natural heritage while creating new economic opportunities (Weber & Saarinen, 2019). Glaciers are land ice masses that are formed from years of snow accumulation and move slowly under the influence of gravity. Glaciers play an important role in the earth's water cycle, providing fresh water to downstream communities, and serving as indicators of climate change (Gobbi, et al., 2021). These examples highlight how multi-stakeholder collaboration can bring together diverse expertise, resources, and perspectives to address complex challenges and generate transformative change.

4. Job Creation and Poverty Alleviation

Secondary data analysis reveals the important role of the tourism sector in job creation and poverty alleviation globally. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism was a significant contributor to the world economy, accounting for about 10% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and providing employment for more than 300 million people worldwide (WTTC, 2020; UNWTO, 2020; ILO, 2020). These figures highlight the scale and scope of the tourism industry and its far-reaching impact on socio-economic development.

Empirical evidence shows that the tourism sector has a strong dual effect in job creation. Any direct jobs created by the tourism industry, such as in hotels, restaurants, or tour operators, are proven to generate some indirect jobs in related sectors, such as agriculture, construction, or transportation services (Khan, et al., 2020). This dual effect amplifies the overall impact of tourism on the opening of more jobs. For example, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) proved that in 2019, for every direct job in tourism, nearly 1.5 additional jobs were created in the broader economic sector (WTTC, 2020).

In addition to creating jobs, tourism also acts as a catalyst for infrastructure development and small business growth. Investments in tourism projects, such as resort construction, transportation improvements, or attraction development, often result in infrastructure improvements that benefit local communities. Enhanced infrastructure, including highways, airports, and sanitation facilities, can improve connectivity, access to better services, and overall quality of life. In addition, tourism creates opportunities for the growth and development of small businesses, such as souvenir shops, tour guide service providers, or ecotourism start-ups. These

efforts not only generate income and employment, but also encourage innovation and entrepreneurship at the community level.

Tourism also serves as a tool for the empowerment of marginalized groups, such as women, young people, and rural communities. The tourism industry provides entry-level jobs and training, allowing individuals with limited skills or education to enter the workforce. For example, the hospitality sector has long been known as an important source of employment for entry-level women in many developing countries (UNWTO, 2019). By increasing the participation of marginalized groups in the formal economy, tourism can contribute to poverty reduction, increased gender equality, and greater social inclusion.

While tourism has a positive impact, it is important to recognize that the relationship between tourism, job creation, and poverty alleviation is complex and varies according to the context. Factors such as ownership patterns, economic leakages, and uneven distribution of benefits can reduce the positive impact of tourism on the livelihoods of local communities. To maximize the potential of tourism in reducing poverty, careful policies and interventions are needed that prioritize local community participation, local value chain development, and equitable distribution of benefits (Truong et al., 2022).

5. Framework for Post-Pandemic Transformative Tourism

Based on a synthesis of findings from literature reviews, global case studies, and secondary data analysis, this study proposes a comprehensive framework for post-pandemic transformative tourism. The framework is designed to guide the development and implementation of tourism strategies that drive a sustainable and inclusive economic recovery, while addressing systemic challenges facing the tourism sector. The framework consists of four main pillars, namely; sustainability, inclusivity, resilience, and innovation.

The first pillar is sustainability; emphasizing the importance of integrating sustainability principles into all aspects of tourism development and operations. This involves environmental protection priorities such as biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, and efficient resource management. In addition, sustainability also includes the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, as well as ensuring that tourism growth contributes to the well-being and quality of life of local communities. By adopting a holistic approach to sustainability, the tourism sector can minimize its negative impact while maximizing its positive benefits to the environment and society.

The second pillar is inclusivity; focusing on ensuring that tourism benefits are distributed fairly and equitably to all stakeholders, especially local communities. It is also related to decision-making processes, respect for their rights and knowledge, and the promotion of local ownership and control over tourism initiatives. In addition, inclusivity also means promoting equal access to tourism resources, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. By embracing inclusivity, the tourism sector can be a stronger driver for poverty reduction, empowerment, and social justice.

The third pillar is resilience; focuses on building the capacity of the tourism sector to anticipate, adapt, and recover from external shocks and pressures, such as

pandemics, natural disasters, or economic turmoil. This involves diversifying tourism products and markets to reduce reliance on specific segments, as well as developing crisis planning and preparation mechanisms. In addition, improving the skills and capacity of the tourism workforce is very important so that their adaptability and agility in facing changing circumstances are stronger. By fostering resilience, the tourism sector can be better prepared to face future challenges and ensure its long-term sustainability.

The fourth pillar is innovation; encourage the development and implementation of innovative solutions and new approaches to address the challenges facing the tourism sector. This involves how to leverage digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, the use of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), to improve the tourist experience, operational efficiency, and market connectivity. In addition, innovation also includes the development of new business models, such as regenerative tourism or the sharing economy, that create shared business value for society, and the environment. By embracing innovation, the tourism sector remains competitive, adaptive, and responsive to changing consumer preferences and expectations.

This framework provides a robust and holistic roadmap for the development and implementation of transformative tourism strategies post-pandemic. By integrating sustainability, inclusivity, resilience, and innovation into tourism planning and operations, policymakers, industry, and stakeholders can rebuild the tourism sector better, greener, and more equitable. This approach will not only drive economic recovery and job creation, but also contribute to the achievement of the broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and build a more resilient and sustainable future for all.

However, it is important to note that the implementation of this framework requires collaboration, coordination, and commitment, from various stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, and academic institutions. Effective partnerships, knowledge exchange, and political will are essential to translate these principles into concrete actions and transformative changes in tourism practices. In addition, careful monitoring and evaluation of policy interventions and their impacts will be required to ensure accountability, adaptive learning, and refinement of the framework over time.

6. Implications and Recommendations

This research underscores the transformative potential of the tourism sector in overcoming the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, creating jobs, and alleviating poverty. However, to realize this potential, coordinated action and commitment from all stakeholders are needed. The findings and frameworks presented in this study have important implications for policymakers, the tourism industry, civil society, and the academic community.

One of the main recommendations is to develop policies and incentives that support the development of transformative tourism. This includes creating a conducive environment, prioritizing sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation in the tourism sector. Policymakers should integrate these principles into national and regional tourism development plans, and provide financial and regulatory

incentives for businesses and initiatives aligned with transformative goals. For example, tax deductions for ecotourism, grants for community-based tourism projects, or awards for sustainability innovation.

Investment in capacity building and skills training of the tourism workforce is also crucial to prepare the industry for the post-pandemic reality. As travelers' preferences and expectations change, tourism employees will need new skills and competencies, such as safety protocols, digital competencies, or knowledge of sustainable practices. Governments, educational institutions, and industry associations should collaborate to design and deliver training programs that are relevant, available, and affordable for the tourism workforce, particularly on underserved groups such as women, youth, and rural communities.

Strengthening partnerships and collaborations between the public, private and civil society sectors is also critical to addressing systemic challenges and generating greater impact. The complexity of the challenges facing the tourism sector, such as climate change, social inequality, or technological disruption, requires an integrated and multidisciplinary response. Fostering dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaborative efforts among various stakeholders, also helps to overcome institutional barriers, mobilize resources, and create innovative solutions. For example, public-private partnerships can be established to jointly develop sustainable tourism infrastructure, or multi-stakeholder platforms can be established to advance responsible tourism.

Prioritizing investments in infrastructure and technology that support transformative tourism is also an important recommendation. This includes the development of digital connectivity such as high-speed broadband networks and mobile networks, to facilitate technology-based innovation and digital inclusion in the tourism sector. In addition, investments in sustainable infrastructure, such as renewable energy, water management, and sanitation facilities, are also critical to reducing the environmental footprint of industries and improving destination resilience. International policymakers and financial institutions should prioritize funding and technical support for infrastructure projects that align with transformative tourism goals.

Finally, institutionalizing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be critical to driving progress, measuring impact, and informing continuous policy and practice improvements. Developing appropriate indicators and benchmarks to assess transformative tourism performance, such as sustainability metrics, inclusivity indexes, or resilience measures, can aid decision-making and ensure accountability. Findings from monitoring and evaluation activities should be transparently communicated and adapted to policies and practices from time to time.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this research provides valuable insights into the potential of transformative tourism, there are some limitations that need to be acknowledged. The limited number of case studies and the absence of primary data from interviews with stakeholders can limit the generalization of findings. Future research could take advantage of a more robust mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative

and quantitative data from a variety of sources. Additionally, longitudinal studies can help understand the long-term impacts of transformative tourism interventions and the dynamics of post-pandemic recovery.

Identity and Possibilities

Transformative tourism is a promising approach in developing the post-pandemic tourism sector, with significant potential to strengthen local cultural identities and open up new possibilities. In terms of identity, this approach can help preserve and promote cultural heritage, traditions, and local values by actively involving local communities in the development and management of tourism. This not only creates a more authentic and meaningful experience for tourists, but also fosters a sense of pride and belonging among the local community.

However, it is important to maintain a balance between maintaining a local identity and meeting the expectations of global travelers. These challenges include how to present local culture authentically without commodifying it. Furthermore, transformative tourism has the opportunity to contribute to the formation of a new post-pandemic identity for tourist destinations, by prioritizing the values of sustainability, resilience, and social responsibility.

From the perspective of possibility, transformative tourism opens up opportunities to create new business models that are more sustainable and have a positive impact. This includes the development of community-based ecotourism or regenerative tourism. The adoption of digital technologies in this approach also allows for the development of innovative travel experiences, such as virtual tours or augmented reality, which can expand access and increase traveler engagement.

In addition, a transformative approach opens up opportunities to diversify tourism products, reduce reliance on mass tourism, and create more personalized and meaningful experiences. Cross-sectoral collaboration in this context can result in innovative solutions to complex challenges such as climate change or poverty alleviation. Last but not least, transformative tourism allows for the redefinition of the relationship between tourists, local communities, and the natural environment, towards a more balanced and mutually beneficial model.

Taking into account these aspects of identity and possibility, transformative tourism not only offers a path to economic recovery, but also opens up opportunities to shape a more sustainable, meaningful, and positively impactful future of tourism for all parties involved.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the development of knowledge, particularly in transformative tourism and its role in post-pandemic economic recovery and poverty alleviation. The findings highlight the need for a paradigm shift in the tourism sector towards a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient model. By adopting a transformative framework and implementing the presented recommendations, tourism can become a catalyst for greener and fairer economic growth, creating decent jobs, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development goals. As the world works to rebuild the economy after the pandemic,

embracing the transformative potential of tourism will be crucial in shaping a brighter and more resilient future for all.

This research offers significant contributions to tourism and economic development knowledge and practice, including: advancing the concept of transformative tourism, providing empirical evidence on its effectiveness, offering practical insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders, developing a comprehensive framework for post-pandemic transformative tourism, promoting multi-stakeholder dialogue and collaboration, and aligning the concept with sustainable development goals (SDGs). The study emphasizes the importance of participatory and inclusive approaches in tourism development and management, highlighting the potential of tourism to contribute to decent work, economic growth, poverty reduction, and responsible consumption and production.

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