

Review

Progress in Sustainable Tourism Research: An Analysis of the Comprehensive Literature and Future Research Directions

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Abstract: Sustainable tourism must maintain a high level of customer satisfaction, raise awareness of sustainability concerns, and spread sustainable tourism practices among them. Several earlier studies have measured sustainable tourism in various regions of the world, but a thorough review of it is rare. Thus, the study is founded on a comprehensive literature review to evaluate the current research level and to provide guidelines for future research on sustainable tourism. The paper's first section clarifies and analyzes a broad overview of existing studies. While a tabulated presentation of studies, which consists of the author, significant objectives, methods, and critical results, is broadly given in the second part. The third part of the study highlights the critical analysis of the existing literature on sustainable tourism and research gaps. This study makes a significant positive contribution to sustainable tourism research. It is beneficial for aspiring researchers conducting subsequent research studies since it offers a research pathway to advance the field's literature. The broad domains of sustainability, issues related to sustainable infrastructure and services, livelihood, and management of tourism destinations are the critical areas that scientific research studies could further explore. The results of this study show that most studies lack depth in proper analysis, methodology, geographical variances, empirical analysis, and real-world application.

Keywords: sustainable tourism; literature review; critical analysis and gaps; tourism research; tourism management



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1. Introduction

One of the most innovative and dynamic industries in the world is tourism. Planning and developing tourism responsibly requires balancing the needs of society's environmental, economic, and social sectors [1]. In this context, sustainable tourism comes into mind, uplifting consumer satisfaction and environmental and social benefits. Environmental concerns at popular tourist destinations have brought sustainable tourism to light, which is an outgrowth of sustainable development. The main goals of sustainable development were to safeguard the environment from harmful externalities of development and to ensure environmental preservation, community involvement, and other advantages. The idea of sustainable tourism did not emerge until the 1990s, emphasizing the growth of tourism sustainably rather than mass tourism [2,3]. Consequently, sustainable tourism is a part of sustainable development in the context of the tourism sector. Its core agenda is preserving the environment, economic benefits, and sociocultural protection.

Sustainable tourism is defined as “meeting the needs of present tourists and the host community while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It ensures that resources are managed to satisfy economic, social, and aesthetic requirements while preserving cultural integrity, crucial ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems [4]. Hunter and Green [5] defined it as “tourism development that seeks to safeguard and improve the quality of the tourist experience at destinations through the environmental quality and tourism activity.” Middleton and Hawkins [6] focus on balancing environmental quality and tourism activity. As per UNWTO [7], “sustainability principles refer to “environmental, economic, and sociocultural aspects of tourism development and a suitable balance must be established among these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability”.

Worldwide tourist attractions are presently coping with several environmental concerns [8]. Poor road and transportation systems, public utilities, solid waste management, sewage treatment, security, and governance are significant causes of sustainability issues. The fundamental components and caliber of service the tourism industry offers are closely related to sustainability issues. Useless waste and sewage treatment result from subpar performance and inadequate facilities, compromising the destination’s sustainability [9].

Adequate management of tourism potential and protection of the pristine environment is indispensable. Tourism resources can debase destinations’ image and threaten long-term sustenance if not appropriately administered. The features facing a threat from tourism growth primarily are landscape, water bodies, and aquatic life [10,11]. Consequently, appropriate management and the correct agenda for tourism development are obligatory. Otherwise, negative externalities may distract balance and trim down the flow of tourists in the future. “Mismanagement of Himalayan tourism has created massive confront related to solid waste, water, traffic, loss of biodiversity, etc. Binding actions will be necessary to deal with serious waste management concerns, water crises, and other environmental and social issues” [12].

The advantages of tourism ought to come from a sustainable paradigm, and expansion ought to be consistent and uninterrupted. Low cost can be an excellent chance for service providers; however, inattention to the environment and tourism resources does not guarantee the future performance of destinations [13]. Therefore, decision-making should focus on preserving the environment and culture and ensuring long-term economic benefits. The effective use of a sustainable tourism plan maintains the harmony of the dimensions, fosters brand loyalty, and encourages return trips to tourist destinations. There is a positive and significant effect of sustainable tourism’s environmental, economic, sociocultural, and institutional dimensions on tourists’ satisfaction [14]. As a result, dimensions of sustainable tourism must be considered as part of a holistic approach to planning and monitoring tourism development.

Around the globe, mass tourism has brought negative externalities and continues to produce sustainability issues. Examples are biodiversity loss, pollution, resource overuse, and excess carrying capacity. It degrades pure environments and puts strain on resources’ ability to perform. Unrestrained mass tourist activities would probably ruin the appeal of goods and constitute a danger to tourism in the future. Promoting sustainable tourism in this setting is a significant task for the global community, especially for nations with abundant natural resources.

Nevertheless, if stakeholders embrace sustainable practices and pursue sustainable tourism techniques, economic development and conservation tourism destinations may coexist harmoniously. Adopting sustainable tourism is undoubtedly difficult and expensive for countries, and its promotion is beneficial to safeguard the uniqueness and quality of products. Therefore, it is important to carefully assess tourism-related goods and locations to determine their sustainability level.

Despite extensive study in this field, sustainable tourism development is a dynamic process that continuously faces new difficulties as applicable technology and tourist-related consumption patterns evolve. As a result, research has been carried out on various aspects

of sustainable tourism and this is continuous. Studies focused on the origination of sustainable tourism, theoretical underpinnings, issues and challenges, initiatives, and strategies. In the second phase, researchers tried to develop a suitable methodology for dimensions and indicators applicable at the national and regional levels. Sustainability indicators are intended to provide reliable data on the indicators and dimensions of sustainable tourism. However, studies related to sustainable tourism reveal numerous limitations and need further exploration and scientific analysis [15]. Moreover, what are the contemporary potentialities for sustainable tourism in conjunction with the competitiveness of a tourist industry that are constantly of interest to scientific researchers? To examine regions covered by researchers and areas that have not yet been studied, the present study reviewed and analyzed the body of literature already in existence on sustainable tourism. The primary goal is to investigate gaps in the reviewed research and potential areas for further study. The research is timely because it addresses the significant progress of sustainable tourism that has emerged due to the tourism industry's rapid growth. There is currently a dearth of sustainability because this fast expansion has led to unsustainable tourism activities, and this paper explores those issues. The study's contribution is anticipated to be helpful and serve as a foundation for more research.

2. Methodology

The key objective of this paper is to study uncovered areas in interdisciplinary sustainable tourism research and lay a strong foundation for future inquiries. A systematic review method has been taken into consideration to classify the subject matter of sustainable tourism research into three major categories, including (a) development and dimensions of sustainable tourism, (b) issues, challenges, and needs of sustainable tourism, (c) sustainable tourism practices and measurement. For this rationale, many databases were investigated to gain a clear idea of the research gaps, consistency, and representativeness of the domino effect. Standard databases, terminology, and popularity of articles via citations are utilized to select articles for review purposes. Articles were taken from journals from well-recognized publishers, Elsevier, Routledge, Emerald, Springer, MDPI, Wiley, and SAGE, as well as journals indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and ABDC, which are well-recognized journal indexing sites. We searched through Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus, and Science Direct databases while looking for online sources. However, it should be kept in mind that no database, not even Scopus and Web of Science, is exhaustive or error-free [16]. To locate publications connected to sustainable tourism, this study also conducted a manual search of several well-known sources, including Science Direct, PubMed, and Springer-Link as electronic databases, as well as the advanced search feature of Google Scholar. When searching and choosing the articles, only English was offered. To generate results based on specific characteristics and content of sustainable tourism, highly pertinent papers published between 1990 and 2021 have been chosen. Relevant studies are sorted out by date, journal, subject matter, highness of contents, focus, and conclusions. Nevertheless, this study excludes papers directly or indirectly unrelated to sustainable tourism's main contents, features, and dimensions. The articles in Beall's listed predatory publishers and journals were avoided.

Table 1 lists the terms employed in this study's literature search. The following factors were taken into consideration when searching the literature:

- a. Is the article's language English? Since English is the most accepted language for academic writing worldwide, we have chosen it;
- b. Are the articles prepared from the standpoint of sustainable tourism?;
- c. Is the paper published in Beall's predatory journals? Since it contains a vast dataset regarding the protentional predatory journals and publishers, we have solely depended on excluding articles from predatory journals;
- d. Is the article published between 1990 and 2021? This period contains the largest amount of publications on sustainable tourism arguments;

- e. Are the articles focused on the development, dimensions of tourism, issues, challenges, need, practices, and measurement of sustainable tourism?;
- f. What are the concluding statements of the paper? The concluding remarks of the paper highlight the key messages of the research.

Table 1. Database search string.

Database	Search String
Google Scholar	("tourism development" OR "development in tourism" OR "sustainable tourism" OR "sustainability in tourism" OR "tourism management" OR "sustainable tourism dimension" OR "sustainable tourism measures" OR ("Issues" OR "Challenges" OR "Need" OR "Practices") AND ("Sustainable tourism"))
Scopus	("tourism development" OR "development in tourism" OR "sustainable tourism" OR "sustainability in tourism" OR "tourism management" OR "sustainable tourism dimension" OR "sustainable tourism measures" OR ("Issues" OR "Challenges" OR "Need" OR "Practices") AND ("Sustainable tourism"))
Web of Science	("tourism development" OR "development in tourism" OR "sustainable tourism" OR "sustainability in tourism" OR "tourism management" OR "sustainable tourism dimension" OR "sustainable tourism measures" OR ("Issues" OR "Challenges" OR "Need" OR "Practices") AND ("Sustainable tourism"))
Science Direct	("tourism development" OR "development in tourism" OR "sustainable tourism" OR "sustainability in tourism" OR "tourism management" OR "sustainable tourism dimension" OR "sustainable tourism measures" OR ("Issues" OR "Challenges" OR "Need" OR "Practices") AND ("Sustainable tourism"))

The systematic literature review procedure's initial phase involved selecting relevant publications through database searches. The duplicate articles were later deleted. The screening procedure's main goal was to eliminate duplicate articles and studies that did not meet the criteria for inclusion. To achieve the study's goals, the abstracts and text of each manuscript were carefully examined at this point. Once the abstracts and contents were reviewed, 53 publications were ultimately selected for this study.

3. A Comprehensive Review of the Relevant Studies

3.1. Development and Dimensions of Sustainable Tourism

Due to the negative consequences of growth on the environment, sustainable development gradually gained momentum starting in the 1960s, and its actual necessity and relevance became apparent in the 1970s. In 1980, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources published the 'World Conservation Strategy'. Based on this, the Brundtland Commission established the full-fledged version of sustainable development in 1987. During the 1990s, the concept of sustainable tourism emerged among the international tourism community focusing on the sustainable development of tourism instead of mass tourism, and obtained the concept of sustainable tourism by establishing a sustainable development framework [2,17,18]. Consequently, sustainable tourism is deeply rooted and originated from the idea of sustainable development and prevailed before its formal origination in terms of conservation, community involvement, and economic benefits [3].

Sustainable tourism was developed with the primary goals of involving the stakeholders in environmental protection, local cultural preservation, and benefiting the host

community. As a result, it became the central theme of international conferences, workshops, and meetings, and the experts elaborated on its importance and caught the world's attention. It has been revealed that it can be utilized as a strategy for community development and eliminating poverty in developing countries [19–22]. A primary focus of sustainable tourism was to tackle challenges, such as carrying capacity, environmental insurgencies, and other problems [17]. However, the area of sustainable tourism was extended and incorporated multidisciplinary research analyses, such as the impact of sustainable tourism on quality of life, rural tourism, satisfaction, the role of local entrepreneurship, sustainable practices and initiatives, and geographical perspectives [11,23–27].

3.2. *Issues, Challenges, and Needs of Sustainable Tourism*

The environment works with lodging, transportation, cuisine, and other services to operate as the primary source for the tourism business. The growth of mass tourism fuels destructive environmental uprisings and opens the door to disastrous outcomes. Unquestionably, it provided exports, jobs, and wealth to underdeveloped nations. However, rapid expansion hurts the environment and the resources available for tourism in certain places [10,28,29]. Adverse environmental effects, such as emissions, overpopulation, excessive use of natural resources, and high trash output, severely harm the ecosystem and biodiversity in prospective tourism-producing countries [30–34].

It is extensively recognized that at the beginning of the tourism progression, nations tried to sustain tourism in terms of tourist influx and economic benefits rather than promoting sustainable tourism at destinations [35,36]. For instance, the government of India focused on sustainable tourism initiatives belatedly and framed criteria solely fit for hoteliers, tour operators, and tourism organizations. Consequently, tourism ranking continuously improved, and environmental sustainability implied a downward trend over the years [37]. Inadequate infrastructure, poor service quality, unhygienic conditions, and insufficiently skilled workforce are unsustainability causes. As a result, the intensification of tourism infrastructure, scientific encroachment, and skilled labor force availability are treated as indispensable. In addition, “effective strategies must be developed and implemented in cooperation with all stakeholders to achieve sustainable tourism goals [9]”.

The same has been endorsed by studies conducted by researchers in other nations. According to a model of 4Es (economic, efficiency, effectiveness, and environment), the primary reasons for the low performance of sustainable tourism includes deficient green logistics, public utilities, insufficient road infrastructure, increasing air pollution, inadequate sewage treatment plants, and others [38,39]. Adequate infrastructure and better service quality helped Malaysia to downsize its sustainability issues. However, Indonesia faced sustainability issues due to infrastructure deficiency and lack of services, thereby creating sustainability issues in Thailand [40].

3.3. *Sustainable Tourism Practices and Measurement*

The current situation sees nations worldwide focusing on sustainable tourism projects and practices. However, the main hurdle in implementing sustainable tourism is that the connotation is not clearly understood, and the same has been reflected in substandard tourism practices. To guarantee that the evaluation of sustainable tourism is based on valid criteria, conceptual and practical clarity is required [41–43]. The lack of reality, measurement, and advanced methods has created hurdles to measuring sustainable tourism at destinations and therefore requires advanced benchmarking tools [44,45]. At the local level, indicators of sustainable tourism can assess the performance of sustainability dynamics, tourism management, and planning but have been hampered by technical difficulties and planning instruments [46–48].

The origin of sustainable tourism asserts that it came into being due to the environmental issues at tourist destinations. However, the concept of sustainable tourism also incorporated other dimensions over time. Furthermore, researchers have found that the other dimensions significantly affect the functioning and execution of sustainable tourism.

It is propounded that the influence of the dimensions of sustainable tourism to understand tourists' satisfaction varies according to context and situations [49]. All four dimensions of the PRISM of sustainability (environmental, economic, sociocultural, and institutional) explained a 45 percent variance in predicting residents' satisfaction. However, in terms of relative significance, the institutional dimension is the most vital, followed by environmental, economic, and sociocultural dimensions [50–52]. So, strengthening the role of institutions is significant for adopting sustainable tourism at destinations [53,54].

Sustainable tourism issues differ among the regions and require region-specific dimensions and indicators. In addition, models and frameworks inferred that the indicators must be relevant to sustainable tourism and have a logical and scientific foundation [55–60]. Prior to implementing sustainable tourism policies and programs, area-specific indicators need to be identified and analyzed systematically. Applying selected indicators according to the issues and challenges in a particular region could help indoctrinate sustainable tourism with a standard monitoring system. Table 2 presents the reviewed papers in terms of sustainable tourism.

Table 2. Presentation of papers in terms of authors, objectives, materials, methods, analysis, and discussions/conclusions. Source: compiled and designed by the authors.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Materials and Methods	Results/Conclusions
Swarbrooke [2]	Discuss the historical perspectives of sustainable tourism and analyze its association with sustainable development.	Review of historical studies, conceptual and theoretical discussions.	Sustainable tourism emerged during the 1990s, and sustainable tourism development is the critical goal.
Butler [16]	To discuss the term sustainable development and its application in the tourism industry.	A critical review of existing historical, theoretical, and empirical studies.	The prime focus of sustainable development was environmental sustainability, and the same link had been extended to tourism.
Bahaire and White [45]	To study the use of geographical information systems (GIS) and its integration with the principles of sustainable development.	Review of studies and use of GIS datasets, such as spatial and attribute data.	When it comes to providing information to help decision-making during the development and administration of sustainable tourism, GIS and GPS are strong tools.
Mcadam [46]	To discuss the functionality and application of GIS in tourism-related projects.	Primary data and simple percentage analysis.	Results confirm that 90% did not use GIS to construct tourism projects. Furthermore, 85% did not have the skills to develop GIS applications.
Kokkranikal and Morrison [11]	To study the role of local entrepreneurship in the sustainable tourism of Kerala.	A comprehensive review of the literature, use of secondary information, and interviews of houseboat owners and officials.	Local entrepreneurship could promote sustainability through the use of local resources.
Hardy et al. [3]	Historical background of sustainable tourism.	A critical review of the existing historical, theoretical, and empirical studies.	Sustainable tourism originated from sustainable development and focused more on the environment than other fields.
Richards and Hall [18]	To examine the relationship between community development and sustainable tourism.	Audit of the policy documents and exploration of policy issues and conceptual discussions.	Community involvement is crucial to the success of sustainable tourism initiatives.
Neto [10]	To study the environmental impact of tourism in developing countries.	Secondary data sources were gathered from reports, journals, and other materials.	Tourism development in developing countries offers income, employment, and many infrastructure facilities. However, rapid growth negatively affected the environment and tourism resources.

Table 2. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Materials and Methods	Results/Conclusions
World Bank [29]	To study tourism's environmental and social implications on the North Coast, Bay Islands, and Copan Valley.	Planning model developed using soft systems, mapping techniques, impacts, synergies, scenario model techniques, Dalal–Dayton and Sadler method.	Environmental impact is positive on the Bay Islands, deteriorating on the North Coast and less significant in the Copan Valley.
Choi and Sirakaya [54]	To identify variables and develop a scale for measuring residents' attitudes towards sustainable tourism.	In a critical review of past studies, three hundred students and eight hundred households were surveyed by questionnaire.	Identified 159 variables to measure residents' attitudes toward sustainable tourism; finally, 44 variables with seven sub-scales were retained.
Lansing and Devries [40]	To study the concept of sustainable tourism in the context of reality or merely a dream.	Critical evaluation of existing studies and conceptual model building via theoretical deliberations.	Misuse of the term sustainable tourism was reflected in the application and adoption of sustainable tourism practices.
United Nations [39]	To develop a sustainable tourism benchmarking tool to detect sustainability issues and problems in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.	Review of past studies, conceptual model building, and development of sustainable tourism benchmarking tool.	Developed a methodology to measure tourism sustainability based on quantitative indicators and found that infrastructure establishments and service quality helped Malaysia to downsize sustainability issues and its deficiency creating sustainability issues in Indonesia and Thailand.
Amuquandoh and Dei [33]	To study the viewpoint of residents about sustainability impacts at Lake Bosomtwe, Ghana, South Africa.	Respondents were surveyed and applied the Chi-square test to analyze results.	Respondents supporting large-scale establishments considered sustainable tourism relevant to gain economic benefits.
Johansen et al. [55]	To develop indicator-based strategies for sustainable tourism development in the Alpine regions.	Strategies and indicators were developed through desk research, stakeholder discussions, case studies, and data collection analysis.	Sustainable tourism issues significantly vary among regions and require region-specific indicators.
Choudhary, Renu [61]	To study the issues and challenges in sustainable tourism growth in India.	Review of the policy reports of the Govt of India and telephone interviews conducted with hoteliers and experts of tourism.	Inadequate infrastructure and services, poor quality, unhygienic conditions, and lack of skilled workforce badly affect sustainable tourism in India.
Sims [62]	To study sustainable tourism in terms of local area development through the role of local foods at destinations in the U.K.	Primary data were collected from 78 tourists, 24 hoteliers, and 17 local food producers.	It is suggested that local food consumption is the best way to protect the local environment and adopt sustainable tourism practices.
Grundey [19]	Theoretical aspects of sustainable development and its influence on sustainable tourism.	Systematic literature review and logical analysis, methods of comparison, and generalization.	Sustainable development should ensure the participation of all stakeholders to maintain tourism destinations and products. Further, sustainable tourism should focus on the vital needs, possibilities, and restrictions at the spots.
UNESCO [24]	Discussion of the sustainable tourism development, approaches, and practices in South-Eastern Europe.	Descriptive analysis and use of theoretical models and explorations.	There is a need for sustainable tourism planning and its strong execution.
Mahony and Ferreira [56]	To prepare a framework via a 'quality coast program' to instill sustainable tourism in Europe.	Based on primary data.	Common standards to monitor the performance of sustainable tourism in the coastal areas of Europe are lacking.

Table 2. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Materials and Methods	Results/Conclusions
Khalid and Stephanie [34]	To discuss the challenges and initiatives taken by tourism stakeholders to ensure sustainable tourism in Thailand.	Secondary sources of information are utilized to explore the sustainable tourism initiatives taken by the local govt community, NGOs, and others.	Sustainable tourism faces challenges in Thailand, including environmental issues, over-carrying capacity, and inadequate management.
Liu [43]	To critically examine the weaknesses in the literature on sustainable tourism.	Descriptive discussions and explanations and critical review of existing historical, theoretical, and empirical studies on sustainable tourism.	An interdisciplinary approach is viewed as a prime challenge waiting for future research.
Kruja and Hasaj [63]	Perceptions of tourism stakeholders towards sustainable tourism in Albania.	One hundred fifty respondents are surveyed by questionnaire	Local government officials and tourists recorded a higher level of satisfaction, and residents and business units were not satisfied with the government's sustainable tourism initiatives.
Huayhuaca et al. [49]	Impact of sustainable tourism on development via residents' perception in and around the Franken Wald National Park, Germany.	A primary survey was conducted on 306 residents, and an application of regression analysis.	Sustainable tourism had a positive impact on tourism development.
Cotrell et al. [48]	Residents' satisfaction with sustainable tourism in Hogue Veluwe National Park in Netherlands and Chongdugou, China.	Primary data collected via questionnaire and regression analysis was applied to study the influence.	Each dimension of sustainable tourism contributes positively to residents' satisfaction.
Bac [17]	To explain the history and development of the concept of sustainable tourism.	A critical review of historical, theoretical, and empirical studies.	Sustainable tourism's core agenda involves the stakeholders in preserving the environment and local culture and generating benefits for the host community.
Gourdon [44]	To develop a sustainable tourism benchmarking tool to assess tourism's sustainability among countries.	The scaling chart presentation and evaluation method followed to identify and explore the dimensions and indicators.	It is revealed that the sustainable tourism benchmarking tool is an advanced technology to combat sustainability issues at destinations.
Buckley [41]	To discuss sustainable tourism in the context of research and reality.	Review conceptual, theoretical, and empirical literature on sustainable tourism.	A critical review deliberates that the links between sustainable tourism and population are less studied.
Delgado and Saarinen [47]	To analyze local, sustainable tourism practices by listing indicators offered by researchers.	The literature was reviewed to develop a theoretical and phenomenological framework for sustainable tourism indicators.	Measurement of sustainable tourism hampered by technical and conceptual difficulties.
Ahmad, P.A. [50]	To study the armed conflict's impact on tourism sustainability in Jammu and Kashmir.	Secondary data was collected from various reports from the Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India, journals, newspapers, and websites.	Dependents of the tourism industry, such as small vendors, laborers, and handicraft workers, are badly affected and shift their establishments and houses from their inheritance. Therefore, irreparable damage to tourism and the economy of the state.
Eusbio et al. [22]	Implications of rural tourism on sustainable development in Portuguese Schist, Portugal.	Case study method and Interviews conducted with stakeholders of rural tourism.	Positive corollary between implications of rural tourism and sustainable development.
Aall [35]	To audit the policies and practices of sustainable tourism in Norway.	Reviewed literature and reports from the Ministry of Tourism Norway, United Nations Organization, WTO, WTTC, etc.	The government of Norway tried to sustain tourism in terms of tourist influx and economic benefits rather than implementing sustainable tourism.

Table 2. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Materials and Methods	Results/Conclusions
Hussain and Ali [14]	Influence of sustainable tourism dimensions in predicting the satisfaction of residents.	Primary survey and application of the partial least square analysis.	The positive impact of dimensions of sustainable tourism on residents' satisfaction.
Carneiro and Eusebio [26]	To study the host and tourist interactions and their impact on the quality of life of residents at two beaches in Portugal.	Use of primary and secondary data. For analysis, correlation and principle component analyses were used.	Positive correlation between host and tourist interactions and its impact on the quality of life.
Ackerman [23]	To study how consumers view sustainability in the cruise industry.	Primary information was collected, and ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc criterion were used to verify results.	Sustainable practices are more important to younger cruisers than the older ones.
Zolfani et al. [64]	To study the key disciplines, journals, articles, and authors contributing to sustainable tourism.	Categorization and interpretation of research carried out in sustainable tourism via the classification and critical review of the literature.	From 47 journals, a total of 132 papers are related to sustainable tourism from 1993–2013. Among the journals, the <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i> is the most famous as it contains 28 papers on sustainable tourism among the 47 journals.
European Parliament [31]	To build a framework to make the European Union competitive in sustainable tourism.	Developed a framework to make European tourism sustainable and competitive.	Results found a lack of up-to-date data and a lack of concrete and comprehensive framework for tourism's environmental and social effects.
Mathur and Khanna [27]	To study the adoption of sustainability practices and customer satisfaction in five-star hotels in Delhi.	In Delhi, 372 guests were surveyed from fifteen five-star hotels through a questionnaire. The analysis was carried out through the application of statistical correlation.	Fifty percent of the respondents registered dissatisfaction over the sustainability practices experience in their respective hotels. It was found that sustainable practices and the level of satisfaction of tourists are strongly correlated.
Dahiya [36]	Sustainable tourism practices of the Govt of India through policies adopted during the planning period.	Audit of the global travel and tourism competitiveness index and utilized reports and statistics from the Ministry of Tourism and Planning Commission.	Sustainable tourism initiatives of the Govt of India mainly focussed on the environment and framed criteria solely fit for hoteliers, tour operators, and tourism organizations.
Luo [9]	To measure the performance of sustainable tourism in Zhangjiajie, China.	Used secondary evaluation index data for Zhangjiajie during 2005-09, data from 'China City Yearbook 2006-10', and the 'China Urban Construction Statistical Yearbook 2006-10'.	Primary reasons for the low performance of sustainable tourism include public utilities, insufficient road infrastructure, increasing air pollution, inadequate sewage treatment plants, and vice versa.
Genc [28]	To study the threats of cruise tourism on the environment.	Conceptual and empirical model building and application of the regression analysis.	The functioning of cruise tourism and environmental damage are deeply rooted. Therefore, sustainable cruise tourism based on collective management is vital.
Guo et al. [65]	To study the development of sustainable tourism and policies adopted by nations.	Use of the systematic review method and literature co-citation network analysis.	The primary focus is the sustainable development of tourism, and the research lacks depth on the influence of policies and governance patterns of a country on sustainable tourism.
Nepal et al. [32]	To study the relationships between tourist arrivals, energy consumption, pollutant emissions, and their implications for sustainable tourism.	Auto-regressive distributed lag model and Granger causality test.	Integrating national tourism policies with environmental and energy policies is highly needed to promote sustainable tourism in nations.

Table 2. Cont.

Author(s)	Objective(s)	Materials and Methods	Results/Conclusions
Huang et al. [25]	Major researchers of sustainable tourism research via countries.	A critical review of the existing studies of sustainable tourism from 1900 to 2016 from five online databases.	Over the years, publications in sustainable tourism have potentially increased, particularly from 2006 onwards, and the areas mainly targeted via research are Asia, Europe, and America.
Font et al. [57]	The positive contribution of the <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i> towards sustainable tourism development.	Descriptive analysis and conceptual deliberations are highlighted and presented lucidly.	Impactful research topics, methodologies, and multidisciplinary research with impactful partnerships and communications are critical in promoting the culture of advanced and scientific sustainable tourism research.
Gkoumas [42]	Study the causes of the Mediterranean standard for sustainable tourism (MESST) failure in Southeast Europe.	Ex-post factor analysis based on local tourism professionals' opinions in creating the MESST in 2007.	Imperfect endorsement, derisory supremacy, and a feeling of distrust had damaged the efficacy and espousal of the standard.
Eckert & Hartman [58]	A systematic review of tourism sustainability indicators and their applications.	Case study method and formal discussions.	The application of universal methodology and indicators to measure the sustainability of tourism at numerous destinations predictably will give wrong results.
Hsu et al. [59]	To validate the sustainable tourism attitude scale.	Cross-cultural validity examination and multigroup confirmatory factor analyses.	A sustainable tourism attitude scale can evaluate resident attitudes toward sustainable tourism in an Eastern Island context.
Streimikiene et al. [66]	To identify the fundamental mechanisms and elements for enhancing tourist competitiveness for sustainable tourism.	Scientific literature analysis.	Tourism-related services positively influence the environment and local people, but the COVID-19 pandemic has created additional difficulties for sustainable tourism growth.
Obradović et al. [67]	To examine the locals' attitude towards the growth of sustainable tourism.	Sustainable tourism attitude scale.	The study demonstrates that residents have a positive attitude toward sustainable tourism growth, and seven characteristics have been extracted to define sustainable tourism.
Trišić et al. [68]	To point out the significance of eco-friendly business and the development of sustainable tourism.	Likert scale analysis and ANOVA.	The hotel industry is influenced by the green economy and eco-certificates, which work to improve the sustainability of the tourist sector and safeguard the environment.
Miličević et al. [69]	To examine the long-term viability and sustainability of tourism development in the mountain areas of Serbia.	We are utilizing five categories of comparison indicators developed by the EU—economic, social, cultural, environmental, and visitor satisfaction.	Tourism growth is not entirely consistent with sustainable development in the mountains under investigation.
Grilli et al. [70]	To look at the sustainable management practices of coastal ecosystem services and tourism.	Choice experiment and latent factors.	Tourists compromise on sustainability's social, economic, and environmental components.
Marinello et al. [71]	To examine the growth and structure of sustainable tourism evaluation and monitoring.	Review of 104 scientific papers.	This study advances the knowledge of the critical elements of sustainable tourism.

4. Discussion and Future Research Directions

According to research carried out at the national and international levels, sustainable development is where sustainable tourism first emerged [17,19,28]. The research on sustainable tourism that followed attempted to highlight the practical applications and concluded that the notion lacked a conceptual definition [40,43]. Later, scholars in the respective areas tried to rectify the issues and laid a base of four dimensions: economic, environmental, sociocultural, and institutional [37,39]. However, studies have been conducted to conceptualize sustainable tourism as a reality or a dream still uncharted. As a result, proper operationalization and practicality of sustainable tourism required further exploration and deliberations in future research.

A well-known trade-off exists between economic growth and sustainable tourism. Stakeholders mainly focus on economic benefits at destinations, and insufficient attention is given to preserving critical environmental assets. Overcarrying capacity and poor supervision are apparent issues. Consequently, the degradation of the environment is happening in numerous developing countries and therefore calls for the initiation of sustainable tourism strategies and facilities, which in turn are highly helpful in promoting tourist loyalty [32,60]. However, sustainability issues confirmed variation by dimensions and need a suitable framework. Each dimension impacts according to the role and influence of the particular community and varies among destinations. So, scientific analysis via participatory research is vital to identify sustainable tourism development conditions at destinations [61,62]. Here, it is endorsed that the studies conducted did not mention the role of infrastructure in safeguarding the environment and its influence on dimensions of sustainable tourism.

Adopting sustainable tourism requires strategies, indicators, methods, and models. Accordingly, researchers tried to develop area-specific indicators and applied them in different regions. Regional characteristics vary and need the identification of indicators specific and relevant to the particular area [47,55,58,63]. The performance of sustainable tourism has been taken into account and examined. Nevertheless, measuring sustainable tourism is hindered by technical know-how and a dearth of inclusive methods [45,57,64]. Therefore, constructing a comprehensive methodology and viable techniques to quantify sustainable tourism is indispensable.

Available indicators and dimensions are utilized to measure the performance of sustainable tourism through the insights of the host community, and the implications of each element vary between the respondents and regions [13]. Improved methodology and scaling measures are focused upon and validated for better results [54]. Enhanced techniques helped researchers examine the relationship between dimensions of sustainable tourism and their role in the satisfaction of tourists. Then, research on sustainable tourism is diversified and applied in numerous fields, such as quality of life, image of destinations, and sustainability practices [26]. However, studies are still insufficient to present a methodology to be applied to give an aggregate quantitative value of sustainable tourism at destinations.

Extension in research conducted by worldwide agencies and others diversified the notion of sustainable tourism. Accordingly, studies are conducted in an interdisciplinary manner and diversified fields [27,65]. One example is the role of local resources and entrepreneurship in sustainable tourism. Subsequently, the impact and implications of rural tourism on sustainable tourism initiatives and practices also come under the ambit of broad research in the respective areas [24]. In addition, the relationship between local products, host community involvement, and sustainable tourism initiatives are also part and parcel of the diversified version [11,25,67]. Doubtless, many areas have been covered and studied associated with sustainable tourism and its dimensions [14]. However, the influence of service quality on dimensions of sustainable tourism is yet unfamiliar and requires further scientific analysis.

Infrastructure and services are compulsory for the enlargement of each nation, and maintenance of quantity and quality is required and strongly influences the image of tourism spots. Dearth in any of the elements gives birth to sustainability issues and degrades the long-

term sustenance of products. Around the globe, nations with good infrastructure and high tourism services can attract tourists from various parts and helps them to curb the negatives of high tourist influx. Otherwise, the long-term sustenance of destinations and the dream of sustainable tourism remains incomplete. Subsequently, it asserts the significance of scientific research and should incorporate the elements of infrastructure and services. The existing literature partially incorporated infrastructure and services in the research analysis of sustainable tourism and did not evaluate any observed association.

Infrastructure, services, and sustainable tourism are, therefore, strongly ingrained. The provision of services is a crucial infrastructure function, and both significantly impact local initiatives and sustainable tourism practices. It endorses the lack of empirical analysis linking the three categories indicated above and urges that future research be performed with a strong emphasis on it. However, it should be highlighted that study in this area requires a solid methodology and a scientific approach. As a result, it offers a chance for high-quality research and encourages the exploration of new, cutting-edge approaches and procedures.

Policy framework and its appropriate execution are indispensable in every sector. In the case of sustainable tourism, the role of government initiatives, rules and regulations, training and skills, and investment in sustainable practices are crucial. So, researchers should focus on better research and sound policy outcomes [35,36]. Successful strategies and execution are regarded as a base and help widely to achieve better results. In this context, no doubt studies have been conducted but are partial and inadequate. Exploration of the comprehensive policies and suitable strategies to engage stakeholders for sustainable tourism practices.

In brief, the arguments above and deliberations show that the studies on sustainable tourism covered various areas, such as origination, strategies, indicators, dimensions, and measurement. However, the attempt made by researchers is partial and therefore calls for further advancement. A lack of appropriate conceptualization, reliable methodology, geographical specification, empirical analysis, real-world applications, and practices is apparent.

5. Conclusions

National and international organizations started developing sustainable tourism in the 1990s to continue the industry's sustainable expansion. It was regarded as a crucial instrument for addressing the negative aspects of mass tourism. The fundamental objectives of sustainable tourism are to protect the environment, provide social and economic benefits for people who depend on tourism, and ensure visitor satisfaction. In conclusion, it can be said that while sustainable development and sustainable tourism are receiving more and more attention, the following are not fully adopted either by the tourism sector or by the visitors themselves. Systematic education of businesses, consumers, and other interested parties is required if sustainable tourism is to become the norm. The foundation of sustainable tourism is preserving the vital environment and maintaining the harmony of all factors. Sensitive tourist destinations require sufficient supervision for long-term survival and protection from an excessive load. Service providers may be able to make money and cut expenses by taking advantage of mass tourism. However, it was impossible to ensure that extended destinations would continue to operate and provide income for their inhabitants. Adverse effects of abandonment increase sustainability problems, including pollution, misuse, degraded goods, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct adequate management, protection, and sustainable practices.

Exploring the relevance of sustainable tourism and examining destination research and development performance is a powerful instrument. It assists in substantiating the theoretical and practical application of sustainable tourism in nations. Consequently, studies have been conducted on numerous areas of sustainable tourism, inferences are made, and the process is still continuous. Existing literature broadly focuses on the history, theoretical ideas, issues and concerns, strategies, dimensions, and indicators. It is endorsed that the

research contains limitations and does not incorporate certain crucial areas. These include sustainability, sustainable infrastructure and services, sustainable livelihood, and management of tourism destinations. Further, a critical review of accessible studies confirmed a dearth of proper conceptualization, methods, region-specific indicators, a relevant quantity of dimensions, scientific approaches, and practices. So, future research is broadly expected in the mentioned areas; hence, better possible outcomes are projected.

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