



EXAMINING THE POST-COVID-19 TOURISM RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AFRICAN TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply disrupted the global tourism and hospitality sectors, with African nations particularly affected due to their dependency on tourism as a critical economic driver. Despite the sector's importance, limited research exists on the recovery and resilience of African tourism during the pandemic. Understanding these dynamics is vital to addressing the challenges and capitalising on opportunities this crisis presents. This study critically examines the recovery and resilience strategies in the post-pandemic context of the African tourism industry. By integrating insights from literature and case studies, it identifies sectoral challenges, including economic vulnerabilities, policy gaps, and structural inefficiencies. It also explores adaptive, innovative, and sustainable approaches to recovery, underscoring the need for inclusive growth and resilience-focused planning. The findings offer actionable recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders, advocating multi-level strategies that prioritise sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation to guide Africa's tourism sector toward a robust recovery.

Keywords: recovery; resilience; African tourism industry, sustainable practices; COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the deadly disease coronavirus has caused significant economic losses and generated global health and financial catastrophes (Anderson et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has radically transformed the global economic landscape, with substantial implications for developing and developed nations (Dube & Nhamo, 2024). Travel restrictions and social distancing caused unprecedented failures in some industries, while others adapted to digital platforms to survive (Mehroli et al., 2020). Tourism is an industry that relies heavily on tourist mobility to remain viable. Therefore, this industry is ranked as one of the most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (Fotiadis et al., 2021; Xiong et al., 2020). The pandemic caused disruptions in tourism businesses, leading to increased health concerns among potential travellers (Rahman et al., 2021), particularly those with pre-existing health disorders (Gansevoort & Hilbrands, 2020).

As a result of the pandemic, the world has witnessed a reduction of 2.7 billion international tourist arrivals from 2020 to 2022 (UNWTO, 2024). The governments of numerous nations diligently created and executed a variety of recovery plans and initiatives to revitalise the tourism sector and assist in its recovery process, in addition to removing travel restrictions, relaxing lockdowns, and reopening businesses (Jones, 2022; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020). Many African countries rely heavily on tourism to support their economies (Bama & Nyikana, 2021). The economic contributions of tourism to African nations like South Africa, Mauritius, and Seychelles were substantial before the COVID-19 pandemic (Muzekenyi et al., 2018; Sarpong et al., 2020). In 2022, Africa witnessed a 49.9% decline in international tourist arrivals compared to the same period in 2019. The decline was approximately 48% in the North African region, whilst sub-Saharan Africa experienced a reduction of 50.7% (UNWTO, 2022).

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Doi:10.47963/ajhtm.v5i1.1797

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South Africa's tourist arrivals dropped 77.9% from 2019 to 2021, with a partial recovery in 2022, but that was still 44.3% below pre-pandemic levels. In contrast, other African nations saw an 11.9% rise in Q4 2023 compared to Q4 2019 (Statistics South Africa, 2024). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, most African countries depended on international tourism, which was seen to be more profitable than domestic tourism (Emmy et al., 2023). South Africa's national parks have a significant economic impact because they rely on international visitors (Souza et al., 2021). However, this scenario changed after the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to put the tourism industry on a path to recovery and, more importantly, to increase its resilience to future disturbances, a shift was made to domestic tourism (Yeh, 2021; Nyikana & Bama, 2023). The African tourism industry has faced severe difficulties because of its heavy reliance on international tourists and tourism-related revenue (Rogerson & Baum, 2021).

Despite tourism's vital role in African economies, limited research exists on recovery and resilience strategies by tourism businesses in Africa after the COVID-19 pandemic. This study focuses on how tourism businesses sustain in this tough time and what strategies they implemented to recover from this pandemic. This study seeks to answer the following research question: What resilience and recovery strategies have the African tourism industry adopted post COVID-19 pandemic? This study addresses this gap by examining the recovery journey of African tourism in the post-pandemic era, highlighting localised challenges and successful strategies. It emphasises the need for sustainable, inclusive, and innovative approaches, offering insights for policymakers and stakeholders. A review of existing literature using the Scopus database provides a

foundation for developing a robust framework to guide future research. The above discussion highlights the need to examine the post-COVID-19 tourism recovery and resilience in the context of the African Tourism Industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A systematic literature review (SLR) is a reliable, systematic, and repeatable method for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data from previous studies related to a specific research question (Santos et al., 2022). This study adopts a systematic and meticulous strategy to explain the resilience strategies adopted by the African tourism industry. The SLR followed established guidelines and protocols to ensure methodological diligence, transparency, and consistency throughout the research process (Waqar et al., 2024). SLRs help identify recurring themes for a subject by systematically analysing the literature. The key objective of this study is to identify themes of resilience in the post-pandemic era within the African tourism industry.

This SLR adopts the PRISMA approach (Figure 1) to ensure a transparent and rigorous research process. Systematic literature reviews widely utilise the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology, which provides an orderly and organised framework for documenting the review process (Salim et al., 2024). PRISMA minimises bias and enhances assessment process transparency, strengthening the credibility and relevance of the review's findings (Moher et al., 2009). This systematic methodology strengthens the accuracy and reliability of the evaluation, enhancing its academic value accordingly (Moher et al., 2009; Sujood et al., 2023). The Scopus database is the key source for discovering



relevant articles due to its comprehensive coverage of scholarly literature (Mishra et al., 2024). The title, abstract, and keywords were utilised in the article search, combined with the Boolean operators "OR" and "AND" to ensure comprehensive inclusion of all relevant records.

The search was performed using the keywords "COVID-19" OR "pandemic" OR

"coronavirus" OR "SARS-CoV-2" AND "tourism" OR "travel" OR "hospitality industry" AND "recovery" OR "revival" OR "resilience" OR "sustainability" AND "Africa" OR "African continent" OR "Sub-Saharan Africa"

According to Santos et al. (2022) and Mishra et al. (2024), inclusion and exclusion criteria are critical in systematic reviews. Table 1 outlines these criteria.

Table 1: Screening Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Justification
Article focusing on tourism resilience strategies post-pandemic in the African continent	Article not focusing on tourism resilience strategies post-pandemic and not relating to the African continent.	Beyond the study's scope
Scopus indexed	Other databases like Web of Science, JSTOR and PubMed	Scopus is known for its comprehensive collection of high-quality scientific publications acknowledged by scholars and its wide-ranging subject coverage
Peer-reviewed, publicly available full-text articles	Opinion articles, book chapters, editorials, and books are not subject to peer review. The exclusion criteria further include conference proceedings and research notes.	Peer review is a process that ensures the accuracy and trustworthiness of research findings.
English language	Other language	English has become the dominant language for sharing scientific research.
Article mainly discussing resilience strategies of tourism industries	Article not discussing resilience strategies by tourism industries	Narrowing down the focus

Source: (Based on Mishra et al., 2024; Santos et al., 2022)

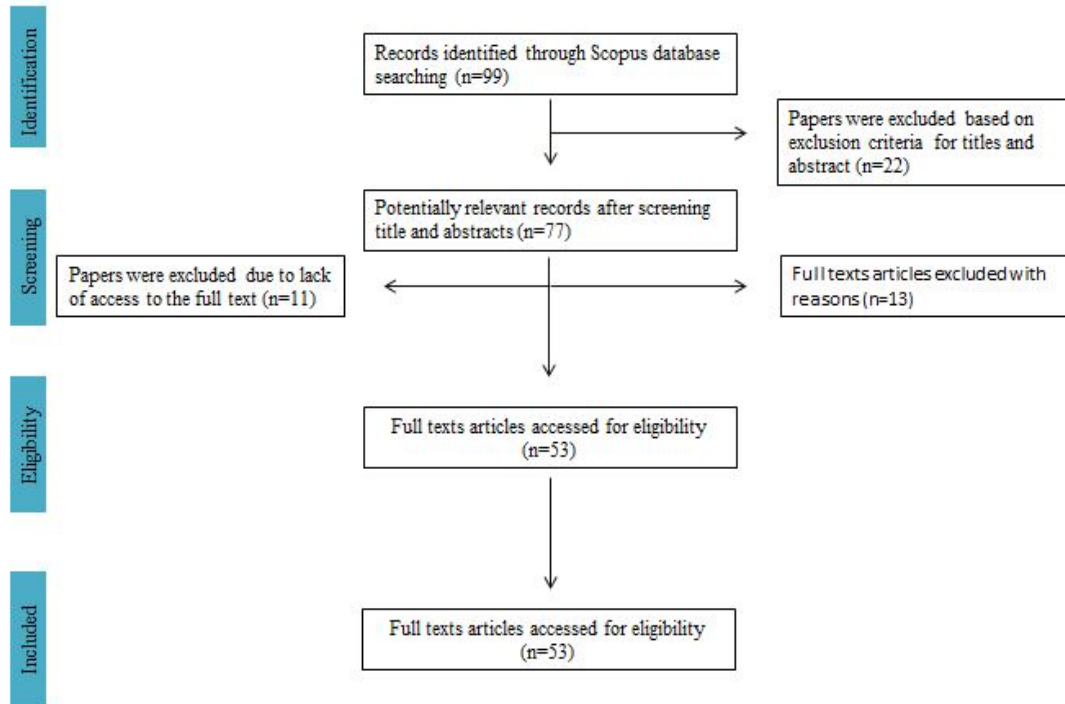


Figure 1:PRISMA Approach

FINDINGS

Recovery and Resilience Strategies for the African Tourism Industry

Domestic tourism is one of the significant themes emerging in the literature as a resilience strategy in the African tourism industry. African tourism also depends on nature-based tourism (NBT), so the resilience strategies of NBT destinations were also studied, and MICE, another critical sector, was evaluated. Lastly, the study sheds light on stakeholder resilience strategies.

Domestic tourism

Recent research systematically indicates a clear trend of growing interest and support for domestic tourism post-pandemic. Domestic tourism significantly contributes to the economic impact of the

tourism sector. Many studies indicated that before COVID-19, African tourism mainly depended on international tourism; there was a lack of support for domestic tourism (Chakrabarti & Ekblom, 2024; Mandina & Preez, 2022). Most industries heavily depend on international tourism; however, domestic tourism has gained equal importance after the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, domestic tourism is anticipated to be a source of optimism for the tourism industry (Mandina & Preez, 2022).

As a brand, Africa has always been linked to poverty, underdevelopment, jeopardy, and disease, among other miseries. Although many South Africans have limited disposable income, the study by Gounden et al. (2024) shows that people are still willing to spend on travel and participate in tourism activities. According to Adinolfi and Skotoyi (2023), national



and local governments must prioritise domestic tourism by implementing tax holidays, discounted tariffs, reduced value-added tax, and sales promotions like discounted travel and accommodation packages designed to increase demand among domestic tourists. Understanding domestic travellers' evolving preferences and requirements is crucial for stakeholders in the tourism sector to address emerging and continually shifting trends and opportunities effectively (Mandina & Preez, 2022).

Many destinations implemented domestic tourism as a recovery strategy (Chakrabarti & Ekblom, 2024; Nyikana & Bama, 2023; Shereni, 2023). In view of this, Adinolfi and Skotoyi (2023) suggest that the South African government and the private sector must prioritise this growing industry by implementing policies and strategies that enhance and promote access to domestic tourism. Strategic marketing efforts, coupled with tailored incentives and packages, will be vital in harnessing the potential for domestic travel and addressing the latent demand within the sector (Bob & Gounden, 2024). A focused marketing mix must be implemented to cater to domestic, regional, and international tourism markets (Dube, 2021).

Guesthouses must improve cash flow, optimise expenses, swiftly adjust to pandemic-related changes, and strengthen their reputations through creative marketing that aligns with the "new normal" (Sucheran, 2021). Seyitoğlu and Ivanov (2020) suggest using robots in service delivery within hospitality environments to maintain physical separation and improve tourist and hospitality employees' safety perceptions. All hospitality stakeholders must cooperate to alleviate the pandemic's effects and formulate short-, medium-, and long-term recovery strategies (Sucheran, 2021).

Murima and Shereni (2023) examine Namibian stakeholders' views on domestic tourism resurgence during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study found that Namibia, like many others in the developing world, suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted international tourism. A survey by Chakrabarti & Ekblom (2024) on the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association in Kenya revealed that although domestic tourism provided crucial funding to conservancies, most stakeholders thought it could be more financially viable for the long term. A study on Limpopo by Dube and Nhamo (2024) highlights the industry's need to financially plan for calamities like COVID-19. Despite limited governmental support and considerable obstacles, such as inconsistent utility services, high inflation, and a global economic recession, the sector demonstrated resilience, experiencing relatively few business closures (Dube & Nhamo, 2024).

Following COVID-19, the African tourism sector is experiencing the rise of new tourism ideas that are constantly attracting tourists. Drive tourism has emerged as a crucial strategy for revitalising global tourism, especially in South Africa, where the COVID-19 lockdown has made it an acceptable and attractive choice for tourists (Hattingh, 2022). Most road trip tourists in post-COVID-19 South Africa are young, consistent with the country's predominantly black population and the target markets specified in the National Tourism Sector Strategy and Domestic Tourism Growth Strategy (Adinolfi & Skotoyi, 2023). The significance of local innovation and effective governance is seen in the critical role of place-based responses for the resilience and recovery of small-town tourism destinations, especially in coastal regions (Rogerson, 2023).



Numerous challenges arise when prioritising domestic tourism over international tourism, including limited local awareness of tourism initiatives, an unfavourable pricing structure, barriers rooted in colonial history, and structural weaknesses in stakeholder collaboration (Murima & Shereni, 2023). Implementing the COVID-19 assistance fund was

often chaotic and marked by vague policies. Racial-based aid distribution proved insensitive, underscoring the need for the government to promote social cohesion and belonging more efficiently (Dube & Nhamo, 2024). Table 2 outlines major studies discussing domestic tourism resilience strategies.

Table 2: Domestic Tourism

Author	Objective	Methodology	Sample Size	Findings
Lekgau et al. (2021)	To examine the potential of virtual tourism in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic	Quantitative	110	Virtual tourism can improve the tourist experience at a destination, but it cannot replace traditional tourism. This study advocates for integrating virtual tourism elements as supplementary features to tourism attractions.
Adinolfi & Skotoyi, (2023)	To explore the demographic characteristics of domestic road trip tourists and their travel behaviour	Quantitative	297 Tourists	The respondents, particularly the young, reflect the majority Black population of South Africa, a significant target market mentioned in the National Tourism Sector Strategy and Domestic Tourism Growth Strategy.
Hattingh (2022)	To examine the importance of Drive tourism post-pandemic in SA	Qualitative	SLR	Drive tourism is expected to be the most effective means of reviving tourism businesses worldwide, including South Africa's struggling industry.
Booyens et al., (2022)	To investigate the business management responses of small tourism firms to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and restrictions in South Africa.	Qualitative	75 Interviews	Government support to facilitate recovery has been inadequate, and small and microenterprises have few viable mechanisms to mitigate the crisis's effects.

Source: Authors



Nature-based tourism

Nature-based tourism boosts many countries' GDPs, including South Africa's, and supports local livelihoods (Gounden et al., 2024). Africa's natural reserves and conservation areas are globally recognised, with several designated as World Heritage Sites. South Africa's nature-based tourism was projected to be the driver of the sector during the

COVID-19 pandemic due to its safety and cleanliness features (Mandina & Preez, 2022). Nature-based tourism and outdoor activities have experienced substantial growth in prominence, with South Africa providing well-established nature-based tourism products, such as Coastal and Marine Tourism (CMT) destinations (Bob & Gounden, 2024). Table 3 outlines major resilience strategies in NBT.

Table 3: Nature-Based Tourism

Author	Objective	Methodology	Sample Size	Findings
Ranke et al. (2023)	To study the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Tanzanian national park.	Qualitative	-	The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the need to rapidly diversify income portfolios to finance national park management in Africa, especially in Tanzania, and critically reduce future reliance on tourism money to conserve national parks.
Vermeulen-Miltz et al. (2023)	To examine the impacts of COVID-19 on coastal tourism in Nelson Mandela Bay (NMB), South Africa	Quantitative	System Dynamic Modelling (SDM)	The findings highlight the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration in facilitating informed decision-making for sustainable tourism recovery.
Mabibibi et al. (2021)	To examine how Kruger National Park (KNP) assists the host communities in meeting the SDG goals and targets.	Qualitative	30 Interviews	Findings reveal that Kruger National Park has assisted communities in meeting at least 15 out of the 17 SDGs
Gounden et al. (2024)	To study the impacts that COVID-19 has on businesses and livelihoods in smaller towns.	Quantitative	140 Sample	The DSPIR (drivers, pressure, state, impacts, and responses) framework, in particular, demonstrates how a structured approach can be used to assess the complex and multidimensional relationships between nature-based tourism (and businesses in particular) and changing socio-economic conditions.
Barker & Rodway-Dyer (2023)	To explore the role of virtual wildlife safaris in conservation during the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential long-term benefits of virtual nature-based tourism (VNBT) for conservation.	Qualitative	10 In-depth Interviews	Virtual safaris and virtual conservation experiences (VCEs) can provide a viable and potentially valuable alternative to in-person safaris. They have the potential to support conservation goals by increasing engagement with wildlife, building awareness about conservation issues, and supporting local economies with reduced environmental impact.

Source: Authors



Ranke et al. (2023) suggested that local governments, national park administrations, and the global community should seek external financing to reduce dependence on international nature-based tourism to conserve national parks and biodiversity. The tourism industry is acknowledged for tackling socio-economic development issues such as unemployment, education, and poverty (Mabibibi et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of seeking additional revenue sources for the Kenya Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (Chakrabarti & Ekblom, 2024). The MMWCA is not the only organisation that may benefit from these lessons; other African conservancies can also benefit from them.

According to Ranke et al. (2023), "Several non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF), as well as international organisations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), have directly supported protected areas. Also, private funds such as the Grumeti and Friedkin Conservation Fund have invested in local development and supported local development in communities surrounding protected areas." A positive outcome of the pandemic was the influx of donations from unexpected sources (Chakrabarti & Ekblom, 2024). Nature-based tourism (NBT) in Africa has the potential to improve its sustainability and resilience by incorporating virtual tourism into its strategies (Barker & Rodway-Dyer, 2022).

MICE

In the post-COVID-19 period, the MICE industry is considered a significant driver for

rebuilding the global economy (Lekgau & Tichaawa, 2022). South Africa, a prominent MICE destination in Sub-Saharan Africa, enjoys widespread recognition as a viable worldwide destination (Weru & Njoroge, 2021). Many stakeholders in sports event tourism have begun to provide virtual or hybrid events, which may significantly enhance traditional events in the future (Daniels & Tichaawa, 2021). The African MICE industry experiences challenges as the media frequently highlights concerns such as stringent visa regulations, political volatility, and criminality; yet, events like South Africa's World Cup highlight the region's capacity for enhancing its image and hosting global events (Mandina & Preez, 2022).

In South Africa, sports event tourism has benefited the economy, environment, society, politics, infrastructure, urban development, and sports, all of which have helped achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (Daniels & Tichaawa, 2024). Virtual and hybrid MICE events aided the continued survival of the MICE sector during COVID-19, generating substantial revenue opportunities for stakeholders (Lekgau & Tichaawa, 2022). The study also highlights a need to improve engagement and interaction among virtual attendees to ensure these events fully achieve their intended goals. Another research by Lekgau & Tichaawa (2021a) examined the strategies used by South Africa's MICE sector in response to COVID-19, revealing adaptive approaches such as reducing operational costs and postponing rather than cancelling events. Evolving tourism policies and strategies focus on crisis management, improved technological integration, and capacity assistance as critical components for fostering resilience in MICE tourism recovery from present and future pandemics (Lekgau & Tichaawa, 2021b).



Sport tourists' behaviour has shifted, with a growing demand for engaging, high-quality experiences throughout each event stage (Daniels & Tichaawa, 2023). In reaction to the pandemic, stakeholders created a sophisticated interaction mechanism to safeguard communication and develop sustainable support frameworks (Daniels & Tichaawa, 2024). They also examined contracts that safeguard against unwanted financial losses. Despite increased stakeholder engagement, cooperation between the public and private sectors remained restricted, highlighting the need for government support to

improve the resilience of sport event tourism in South Africa for future recovery (Daniels & Tichaawa, 2024). A study by Verkerk (2022) found that, despite virtual reality (VR) offering many advantages for tourism, it also brings considerable challenges. Currently, the tourism industry in South Africa cannot be successfully recovered by VR due to critical barriers, including the digital divide, insufficient digital infrastructure, and limited accessibility (Verkerk, 2022). Table 4 outlines major resilience strategies by MICE

Table 4: MICE Themes

Author	Objective	Methodology	Sample Size	Findings
Du Preez & Kruger (2022)	To examine music event tourism as a potential motivator for domestic tourism post-pandemic	Quantitative	350 Sample	The study identifies two distinct tourist segments: avid explorers and experienced tourists in specific areas. These groups differ in their goals and experiences, but both contribute to the sustainability of this niche.
Lekgau & Tichaawa (2021a)	To examine the adaptive responses employed by the MICE sector of South Africa	Qualitative	19 Interviews	The MICE sector has previously implemented operational techniques such as postponements instead of cancellations, alterations in business strategy, and venue-specific reactions.
Verkerk (2022)	To examine whether virtual reality might revitalise tourism in South Africa following the COVID-19 pandemic.	Mixed-Methods		The study's findings indicated that virtual reality provides many benefits to tourism but simultaneously presents a risk to the sector. However, the study concludes that VR is currently unable to revive the tourism industry in South Africa due to several significant challenges.



Table 4 continued

Lekgau & Tichaawa (2022)	The research explores the use of virtual and hybrid events in enhancing the resilience of MICE Events in SA.	Mixed-methods		The findings indicate that virtual events have become an essential instrument for boosting the resilience of MICE events during crises, and hybrid events are anticipated to become a significant component of MICE offers in the future.
Daniels & Tichaawa (2024)	To determine how South African sport tourism stakeholders responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, look at sustainable pathways to building a resilient sport event tourism sector.	Qualitative	28 Interviews	The study recommends stakeholder participation and the formulation of policies to promote sustainable practices and management. Additionally, it highlights the necessity of appropriate policies to guide stakeholders through the recovery process and mitigate long-term negative consequences.

Source: Authors

Stakeholders' Strategies

The economic repercussions of the COVID-19 epidemic have rendered many individuals financially restricted and afraid to take risks (Bob & Gounden, 2024). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) recognised South Africa as one of the 15 nations most negatively impacted by the near-complete shutdown of the international travel sector during the pandemic (Moodley & Naidoo, 2022). Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), which represent approximately 80% of licensed tourism-related businesses worldwide, experienced significant adverse effects due to the crises (Ramukumba, 2023). The failure of these SMMEs caused substantial difficulties for individuals in vulnerable areas

dependent on tourism for their livelihoods (Ramukumba, 2023). The pandemic has severely impacted small tourism-related businesses, particularly microenterprises. Low-skilled women from low-income, primarily black African populations are facing the most significant difficulties due to inadequate government assistance and declining businesses (Booyens et al., 2022).

After the COVID-19 pandemic, travel agencies implemented several recovery strategies, including price reductions, acquiring funds via loans, improving employee multitasking skills, and imposing temporary firm closures (Mbuyane et al., 2024). While government support was extended to many tourism businesses across Africa, the distribution and uptake of these funds fell short of expectations, leaving many



tourist guides vulnerable (Mbatha et al., 2021). Consequently, numerous guides turned to personal survival strategies, such as liquidating assets, securing or refinancing loans, cutting back on individual expenses, and seeking additional employment to supplement their income (Mbatha et al., 2021). People's concerns were about the pandemic, and government reports' delusions, inconsistencies, and trustworthiness (Bama & Nyikana, 2021). Many travel and tourism enterprises got governmental aid, allowing them to reduce their operational costs.

In South Africa, mountain guides employed reskilling and upskilling tactics, and improved promotion and marketing proved beneficial in their recovery; however, government assistance for these guides could have been minimal or nonexistent (Heath, 2023). A proactive risk management plan should be implemented at the organisational level (e.g., for tourist guides) and across the broader industry to increase resilience and reduce the impact of future tourism crises (Mbatha et al., 2021). Fourie et al. (2024) found that in Cape Town, South Africa, informal traders prioritised survival during an epidemic by selling personal assets and using savings; nevertheless, many also aimed to expand their enterprises and train others, indicating a growth-oriented and sustainable mindset.

Tourism's significance in the South African economy and potential contribution to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals allow the sector to influence policies that facilitate SMME development, encourage pro-poor tourism in rural regions, and advance ecological restoration (Lewis et al., 2021). Small tourism agencies must reassess their situation and adopt synergies and collaborations with larger companies offering economies of scale (Moodley & Naidoo, 2022).

Encouraging stakeholder participation and integrated planning is crucial for developing a sustainable domestic tourist offering (Murima & Shereni, 2023). Bama & Abrahams (2023) found that, while COVID-19-related restrictions significantly impacted all edu-tourism businesses, social media, virtual tours, phone apps, computer-based technology, and VR/AR could help the industry recover. A study by Mandina and Preez (2022) examined travellers' perceived risk for visiting Africa and Zimbabwe and found that travel risk perceptions are country-specific. The AU High-Level Task Force (AU-HLTF) acts as the new governing mechanism and a crucial strategic stakeholder group (Ayiine-Etigo & Amankwah-Amoah, 2021). A close look at tourism governance within the main frameworks of the AU-HLTF, the Yamoussoukro Decision, and the African single air transport market, along with their connections to regional aviation and tourism development, shows that governance is constantly changing (Ayiine-Etigo & Amankwah-Amoah, 2021). COVID-19 gives us a chance to think deeply about this change.

Government Initiatives

The South African government has enacted several programs to aid the tourism sector, encompassing financial assistance, regulatory relief, and promotional support (Viljoen & Maphosho, 2023). The government significantly contributed to the survival of stakeholders in the travel and tourism industry by deferring tax payments and implementing stimulus packages (Mbatha et al., 2021). The South African government launched programs such as the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and Pay As You Earn (PAYE). However, several small enterprises still need more awareness and resources to implement these programs. SA Tourism implemented the



Tourism Relief Fund (TRF), the Tourist Guides Fund, and the Tourism Recovery Plan to provide relief for tourism and hospitality businesses (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021). The Tourism Sector Recovery Plan (TSRP) encouraged collaboration between the government and the private sector to facilitate the long-term recovery of the tourism sector (Viljoen & Maphosho, 2023).

Domestic leisure travel in South Africa faces two significant obstacles: an imbalance between travel services and the leisure culture of the majority (Black) population, and the financial effects of COVID-19, which lowered incomes for many (Adinolfi et al., 2021). The introduction of travel stokvels and related savings and payment methods could have a crucial role in sustaining the South African tourism economy (Adinolfi et al., 2021). The government must implement measures like flexible payment methods, economic encouragement, targeted funding, sustainable investments, assistance for the most affected sectors, and reskilling initiatives to preserve the African tourism sector (Krüger & Meyer, 2021). The SARIMA model (Chipumuro & Chikobvu, 2022) and the ARIMA model (Chipumuro et al., 2024) were used to forecast future tourist arrivals for SA.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study was conducted based on the SLR on post-COVID-19 tourism recoveries and resilience in the context of the African Tourism Industry. It investigates recovery and resilience strategies in the COVID-19 pandemic. The research reveals that the African tourism industry has encountered numerous obstacles as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but there are prospects for resilience and recovery. The findings shed light on key themes central to the sector's revival: domestic tourism, nature-based

tourism (NBT), the MICE sector, and stakeholder strategies. A key theme is the shift towards domestic tourism, which governments and stakeholders emphasise as necessary to compensate for the decline in international tourist arrivals. Countries such as South Africa, for example, have policies in place to develop and market domestic tourism, recognising the potential within local populations. This shift is consistent with global trends emphasising the importance of domestic tourism as a foundation for post-pandemic recovery. There were different policies and strategies adopted by the South African government in order to promote domestic tourism (Adinolfi & Skotoyi, 2023) to fix the impacts caused by the shutdown of the tourism industry during the pandemic.

Another identified key theme was NBT. The pandemic has resulted in people understanding the need for sustainable tourist practices that prioritise environmental conservation while meeting the economic demands of people relying on these sectors. It was suggested that Africa's nature-based tourism (NBT) has the potential to increase its sustainability and resilience by incorporating virtual tourism into its strategy (Barker & Rodway-Dyer, 2022). Virtual platforms have arisen as methods for conservation and audience engagement while minimising the environmental impact of traditional tourism.

Following the pandemic, the function of MICE tourism has been redefined. It plays a vital role in global economic recovery following COVID-19 (Lekgau & Tichaawa, 2022), with South Africa developing as a key MICE destination in Sub-Saharan Africa (Weru & Njoroge, 2021). Hybrid and virtual events have proven effective in ensuring business



continuity while also presenting opportunities for innovation. However, the MICE industry continues to face fundamental issues, including infrastructure constraints and inconsistent stakeholder participation. Addressing these shortcomings could help the sector grow and contribute significantly to regional economies. The COVID-19 response strategies in South Africa's MICE sector included cost reductions and event postponements, and post-pandemic resilience calls for policies focusing on crisis management, technology, and capacity building (Lekgau & Tichaawa, 2021b). Sport tourists now expect high-quality, engaging experiences (Daniels & Tichaawa, 2023), and stakeholders have developed frameworks to maintain communication and support during crises (Daniels & Tichaawa, 2024). Despite increasing participation, public-private collaboration remains limited, indicating the need for greater government support to drive the recovery of sport event tourism in South Africa (Daniels & Tichaawa, 2024). However, the potential of virtual reality (VR) in tourism is constrained by the digital divide, poor infrastructure, and limited accessibility, which pose challenges for revitalising South Africa's tourism industry (Verkerk, 2022).

Finally, the pandemic has prompted stakeholder responses, such as reskilling and upskilling workers and implementing tailored recovery programs. However, variations in government assistance underscore the importance of inclusive policies that enable equitable resource distribution across tourism firms of various sizes. Collaborative frameworks that include public and private sector activities are critical for long-term resilience.

Limitations and Future Research Agenda

Every study meets certain limitations that establish the foundation for future investigation initiatives, and this study is no exception. This SLR was mainly conducted to evaluate resilience strategies in the African tourism industry post-pandemic and based on only the Scopus database, as it provides access to a large database of high-quality journals. In this study, the researcher included only articles, excluding conference papers and book chapters to ensure the robustness of the review. This study reviewed only English-language papers. Additionally, this study exclusively examined full-text papers that were publicly accessible.

Finally, this study undertook a comprehensive review of the existing literature and found that major industries implemented different resilience strategies based on their capability. While the majority of the research on resilience strategies has concentrated on South Africa, there is a necessity to investigate resilience practices in other parts of the African continent to develop more comprehensive, region-specific approaches to crisis management in tourism. A mixed-methods study is recommended to understand resilience by tourism stakeholders. Stakeholder theory can be used in future research to analyse how partnerships between governments, private sectors, and communities influence long-term tourism recovery. Also, the studies can be done on what collaborative models are most effective for fostering resilience among African tourism stakeholders after a pandemic.



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