



Sustainable Business Development in Sarawak Tourism Sector and Assessing the Impact of Contributing Factors Mediated by Tourism Practices and Initiatives on Business Survival



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ABSTRACT: In a highly competitive business scenario, it is crucial for any industry to ensure its significance in terms of its business sustainability to gain a considerable competitive advantage. While the business sustainability of other industries has been extensively explored, there is a significant gap in determining the sustainability of the tourism industry. The importance of ensuring the sustainability of the tourism industry is observed in a healthy balance between the ecological, cultural, infrastructural, and other human factors of tourism. This paper presents an extensive review of the previous studies exploring the different dimensions of sustainability of the tourism industry. This paper also reviews the various initiatives undertaken by the Sarawak tourism board in establishing the sustainability of the tourism industry. Further, this paper presents the research gap persisting in this domain and highlights the need for a deeper exploration of tourism sustainability in Sarawak. Finally, it presents a comprehensive conclusion of the observations derived from the previous studies and highlights the significance of sustainability of the tourism industry and the role of tourism boards in ensuring the same. The researcher has conducted secondary research on various databases, including Emerald Insight, and Google Scholar. The findings of the study revealed that the tourism board's involvement in creating a favorable destination image for travelers by emphasizing specific tourism attributes like the natural environment, the friendliness of the local communities, safety, hygiene, and etc. as part of their sustainable tourism policy has also positively impacted the sustainability of the tourism industry in Sarawak. In order to encourage sustainable tourism practices and responsible tourist conduct, the tourism board's involvement in ensuring the conservation of these protected regions is vital.

KEYWORDS: sustainability; tourism sector; Sarawak tourism board; business survival; tourism sector sustainability

Introduction

In recent times, the concept of sustainability has been taking over as the primary prerequisite for the success of any organization across industries (Amjad et al., 2021). With the evolution of the needs and expectations of the customers, organizations have also increasingly focused on developing suitable strategies to gain strategic advantages in terms of establishing their

long-term sustainability (Font & Lynes, 2018). While most industries have adopted strategies for sustainable management practices where they have prioritized the social and environmental aspects along with the financial aspects, the tourism industry is certainly not an exception (Haleem et al., 2022). In certain countries, such as Portugal, and Sri Lanka, the tourism industry is the most important economic contributor in terms of GDP. In the hospitality sector, sustainability—the careful utilization of a resource to prevent depletion or damage—is crucial. The preservation of the cultural and natural resources that draw visitors to a location is essential to the success of hospitality organizations. In case the market players are not careful regarding sustainability, there would be repercussions. A rise in tourism activity can help the travel location in many ways, including by generating thousands of employments, improving the infrastructure of the nation, and fostering a feeling of cultural interaction between the locals and visitors. Consequently, as tourism grows without adopting a sustainable tourism idea, detrimental effects grow as well, for instance increased pollution, adverse impact on the wildlife, as some of the commonly observed adverse impacts. One of Thailand's most popular beaches, Maya Bay, was shut down by the Thai government in 2018 for 3 years after daily visits from 5,000 visitors resulted in the destruction of the majority of the coral and jeopardized the area's original allure (Hess, 2019).

All forms of tourism are reliant on the environmental and cultural resources that draw visitors and serve as the primary engine of expansion and development for the tourism industry. Some places, such as the Caribbean, depend on their clean shores and glistening seas to draw visitors. Others, like Paris, depend on their cultural legacy—their buildings, their institutions, and their cuisine—to draw tourists. The attractions that constitute these places world-class destinations are at risk from human activity, and in many instances, tourism itself is the primary threat to these attractions, despite how different these places may appear to be. Sustainable business methods set apart the hotel industry. It is only with the help of adopting and emphasizing on sustainable tourism, the organizations operating in this industry can ascertain that these tourist locations are not damaged, along with its wild habitats because of developing new infrastructures, deforestation, overusing water resources due to higher influx of tourists, plastic pollution negatively impacting sea life, and noise levels. Travelers, diners, hotel guests, and consumers today give environment a lot of thought (Awan et al., 2021). They want to be sure that the businesses they support adopt ethical business practices in terms of the climate, society, and culture. Thus, emphasizing on sustainability in tourism also positively impacts the profitability of the market players in this sector. The unprecedented emergence of the covid-19 pandemic had a severe impact on the operability of the entire tourism industry further emphasizing on the need to highlight on sustainable tourism (Almeida & Silva, 2020). The impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry was also observed in the form of disruption in the balance of trade, hindering the introduction of new infrastructures, and a significantly low level of employment creation, especially in countries solely based on tourism. For these countries, regaining sustainability is the key to ensuring the strategic development of the entire territory (Tourism, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled the tourist industry to reorient its attention to sustainability, robustness, and interconnectedness among various sector partners. The sustainability of the tourism industry is dependent on the performance of a number of constituent activities and is responsible for employment generation. These are pictographically represented as follows.

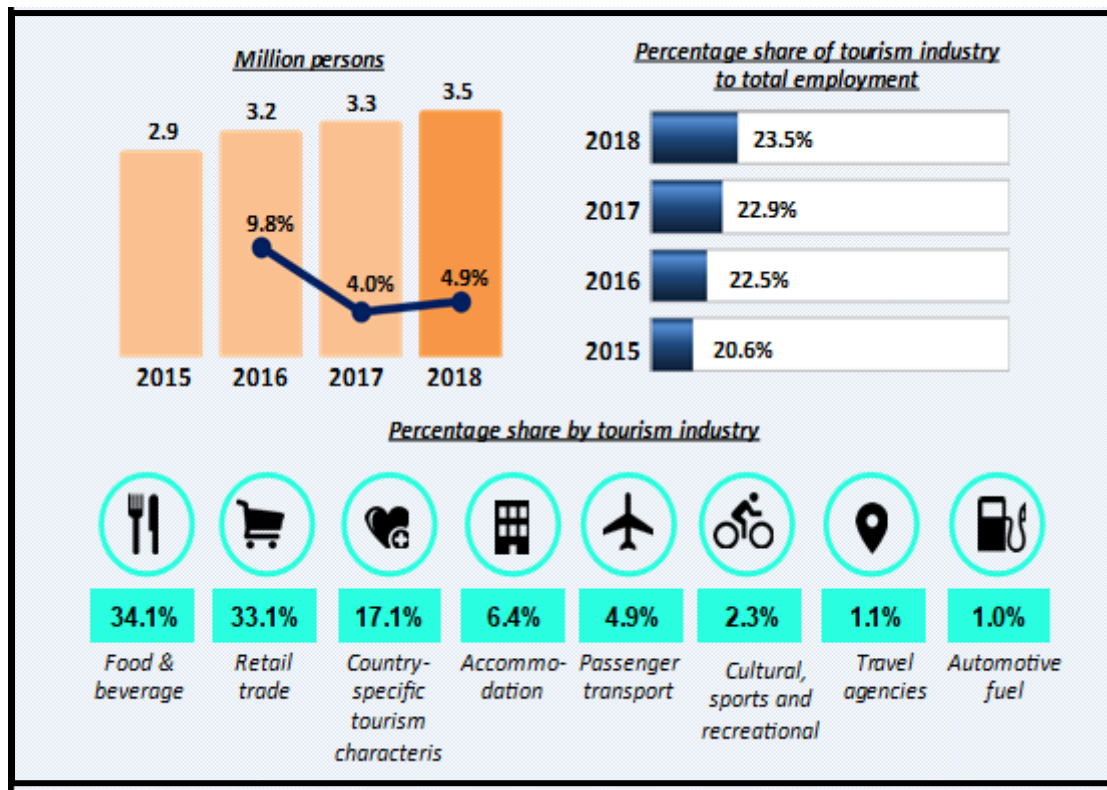


Figure 1: Employment in the tourism industry, Tourism Satellite Account

Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia (2019)

However, the efficiency of these initiatives was further shadowed by the uncertainties of the pandemic. With the increased imposition of lockdowns, the tourism industry experienced a massive dip in the demand for tourism. The lowering of tourism demand was even more significant at the international scale which is attributed to flight cancellations and varying covid protocols in each country for tourists to abide by (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019). The economic and social impact of the pandemic that was observed on the tourism industry persists even today to some extent, demanding quicker reestablishment of the sustainability of the tourism companies. It is important to note here that the impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry transcended beyond the tourism company and the tourists to other industries, namely the aviation industry, hospitality industry, and even the local small businesses that thrived on tourism activities (Almeida et al., 2019). It is evident that despite other impediments and challenges, the emergence of the pandemic has most significantly highlighted the need to achieve sustainability in the tourism industry to avoid any such instances of extreme vulnerabilities in case of any future adversities.

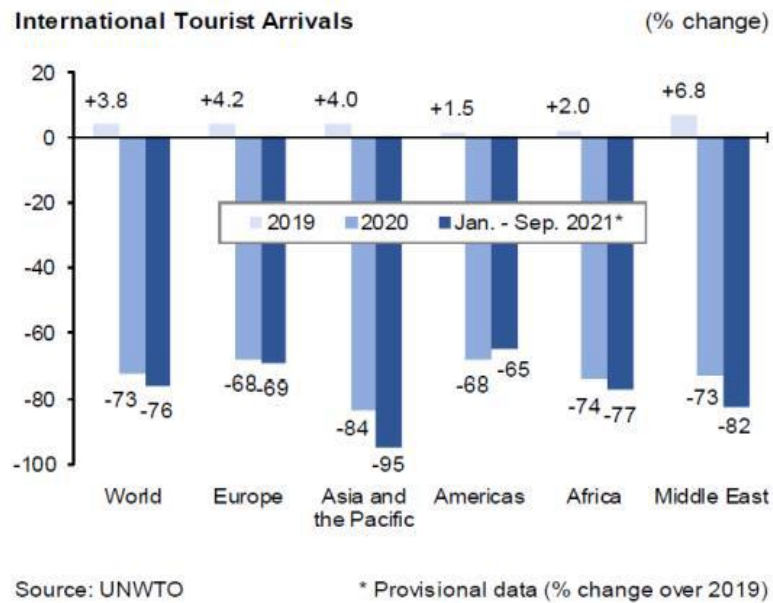


Figure 2: International tourist flows between 2019-2021

Source: Sivadasan & Salleh (2022)

There are a number of factors that determine the sustainability of the tourism industry at the global level. It has been observed that while the environmental and ecological conditions played the most important role in determining the frequency and volume of tourism activity at any said location, entrepreneurial initiatives were another major factor that facilitated tourism activities by enhancing accessibility for the tourism companies and the tourists (Moreira, 2018). There are, however, several other factors, especially natural factors such as the climatic conditions of the destination, the availability of sunlight, proximity to the sea, etc., that help in determining the desirability of the destinations and the predict the success of tourism activities. The most important factor in this respect, however, is the hospitality of the local residents, along with their local entrepreneurial capacities. This helps in enhancing the tourism experience of the tourists in terms of their accommodation and entertainment, thus highlighting the need for the tourism companies to maintain an amicable relationship with them (Gössling et al., 2020). For most economies, tourism is an important sector, even though it is equally capable of serving as the engine for driving the economic growth of the country forward, as well as an environmental and societal threat. For tourism to flourish there is a need to avert its negative impact, which has been successfully achieved by the increased adoption of different Corporate social responsibility initiatives by the tourism industry (Han et al., 2020). The generalized expectation from the tourism industry usually revolves around its ability to showcase suitable practices in terms of its business behavior. These practices primarily improve the living standards of their employees, making significant contributions to the regional communities, and the most important among these is the industry's endeavor to protect the environment (Mihalic, 2016). With an increase in the expectations towards the protection of the environment by society at large, the tourism industry has also modified in operational and functional aspects to match customer needs (Camilleri, 2020). The major responsibilities of maintaining the sustainability of the tourism sector primarily lie with the tourism boards in respective countries, which are entrusted with the development of marketing strategies to positively contribute to the development of tourism prospects and sustainability of the existing tourism practices (Costa et al., 2021). The relevance of tourism sustainability and the role of different stakeholders have thus been presented in the following sub-sections.

Sustainability as a Concept in Tourism

The term "sustainable development" first emerged in 1969 when developing nations were gathered by the "International Union for Conservation of Nature" to debate the ways in which growth could be more environmentally friendly. Sustainable growth is the idea that all stages of the decision-making process should take the ecosystem, society, and economy into consideration (Emas, 2021). This idea integrates three aspects, namely the economic, social, and environmental factors, as stated by Johnson et al. (2017). With a business perspective, the triple bottom line can be used as a success indicator for sustainable growth (Johnson et al., 2017). By taking into account the reality that a company does not just depend on economic factors but strikes an equilibrium among all three dimensions, it provides a summary of its efficacy and enables the company to expand sustainably over the long term. Additionally, Joyce & Paquin (2016) stressed the idea of a positive equilibrium between these three variables in their Triple Layered Business Canvas model. They created a tool to investigate business strategy from a sustainable viewpoint in order to boost company value while having a favorable effect on society and the environment. In this context, the concept of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) is worth mentioning. Investors who are concerned about the environment, society, and governance (ESG) use a collection of criteria to evaluate prospective investments. Environmental considerations include a company's business climate change plans as well as other environmental protection measures. ESG problems were first addressed in the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment report from 2006, which included the Freshfield Report and the article "Who Cares Wins" written by the "UN Secretary-General and UN Global Compact" (Perez Baez, & Remond, 2022). In context to tourism sector, travelers who may be unsure which company to use for a particular element of their trip will be more devoted to businesses with open ESG strategies that can promote significant work to address social and environmental issues. Transparency on ESG issues will not only please customers; many current and prospective future partners also demand it. Investors frequently evaluate a company's sustainability success as part of their due research process. In order to boost attractiveness, many business leaders are investing more money and resources in tackling ESG issues.

Business Sustainability and Tourism Sector

Most companies in the recent global systemic scenario are essentially organizations that are interdependent and find themselves obligated to follow sustainable practices for the management of social, financial, and natural resources. In this context, ensuring long-term business sustainability is extremely important for organizations to establish their relevance in the way business is carried out (Adams et al., 2016). A major challenge underlying the sustainability of the organizations is often attributed to the extraction, use as well as disposal of natural resources by the companies for their respective production processes, which not only impacts nature but also society at large. These aspects of organizations impact their business sustainability which is attributed as a negative consequence of economic development and growth (Joyce & Paquin, 2016). In this regard, if the concept of ESG in context to tourism is further analyzed, it can be noted that in terms of the environmental trends, when it comes to evaluating the environmental effects of tourism, consumers are becoming more conscious. As a consequence, businesses in the tourist sector are adapting to this change. In order to lower their carbon impact, transportation businesses like planes and cruise lines must meet rising demand for sustainable and alternative fuels. Many have already made commitments to lessen it. Large number of players in the sector and hotels have also

integrated recycling and energy saving initiatives into their daily operations. In regard to social trends, new tourism locations are putting an emphasis on supply-chain localization investments in local communities, such as the development of regional F&B production and educational initiatives that support the success of particular areas.

In addition, there has been a clear shift in emphasis towards society and societal duty in regard to the gender, workforce, diversity, community, human rights, equitable compensation, and global issues. This can be seen in the financial commitments made by businesses, which, among other things, fund assistance for young people living in areas affected by natural catastrophes. Advances in environmental reporting and openness are being seen across the board in the sector, particularly for important tourist enablers like airlines and hotel companies. These participants are utilizing global standards, licenses, and recommendations for sustainable travel (e.g., UNGA sustainable tourism resolutions) to strengthen their administration in regard to the governance trends. It is critical to acknowledge that ESG is a permanent fixture (Stolz, 2022). Major players in the worldwide tourism industry have already started the process of adjusting their strategies, businesses, and working methods.

Additionally, as consumers' understanding of how travel affects communities and the environment grows, it will have a greater effect on how, where, and when people travel. The significance of sustainable management gained prominence, particularly with the advent of the industrial revolution. Since then, the dominance of unbridled consumerism in the global scenario has continuously highlighted the importance of sustainable management to address the challenges existing in the economic progress of society. In several instances, the implementation of sustainable management practices has proven to be beneficial for organizations across industries (Mura et al., 2018). Initially, corporate sustainability was majorly focused on figuring out the essence of sustainability to develop a more comprehensive conceptualization of the subject. With the evolution of the need of the market, the organizations started exploring the implications of corporate sustainability, and eventually, they took to raising awareness about the significance of sustainable development and highlighted its implementational effectivity (Singh et al., 2021). The need for sustainable development and corporate sustainability has further been enunciated in several laws at local, domestic, and international levels.

In addition to this, there has been significant pressure on the companies from the relevant stakeholders, especially the customers. As a result, in recent times more and more companies across various industries have been looking for alternate practices to establish their operational sustainability (Savino & Mazza, 2013). The realization of the significance of corporate sustainability can be observed in the coming forward and the participation of more than 9500 companies from over 160 countries for the implementation of sustainable practices as an integral component of their respective practices. In this regard, corporate sustainability, also known as business sustainability, can be explained as the effective application of the concept of sustainable development to the reality of the concerned companies (Moldavska & Welo, 2017). It has been observed that the perspective of sustainability put forward by sustainable development is significantly generalized. This insufficiency in the domain of business, operations, and management has been compensated by the suitability and applicability of corporate sustainability which equally prioritizes the social, economic, and environmental performance of the organizations. This is further operationalized through the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of the Triple Bottom Line which is at the core of the mainstream perception of sustainability (Feil et al., 2017). From the business point

of view, the adoption and implementation of sustainable strategies in an organization have several beneficial impacts. These advantages can be observed in the contributions made by the organizations in preventing pollution, and reduction of harmful emissions, along with ensuring a reduction in the levels of waste production. It also involves the reduction of costs that result from the innovation of products and progress on issues pertaining to ecoefficiency (Nawaz & Koç, 2019). Other advantages of the implementation of sustainable strategies in organizations involve improvement in relationships between the regulators and other concerned stakeholders by ensuring optimum legal compliance along with the effective retention of the customers by respecting their values pertaining to the environment and further contributing positively towards fulfilling the social needs. Deriving benefits from the sustainable performance of the organization further involves efficient planning and risk management from a long-term perspective (Hammer & Pivo, 2017).

However, it has been observed that most of the challenges pertaining to the sustainable performance of organizations arise from their inability of formulating a plan for short-term horizons, which in turn, impedes the perspective that could potentially bring long-term changes. Implementation of sustainable strategies also involves the overall transformation of organizational strategies along with the modifications of vision and objectives which is often hindered by financial constraints (Baumgartner & Rauter, 2017). Along with a sustainable strategy, a sustainable structure for corporate governance also plays an important role in establishing the corporate sustainability of organizations across various industries. Sustainable governance efficiently furthers the objectives of business sustainability by ensuring a harmonious relationship among the concerned stakeholders and by establishing transparency, accountability, and responsibility in the operational aspects of the organization (Nunhes et al., 2020).

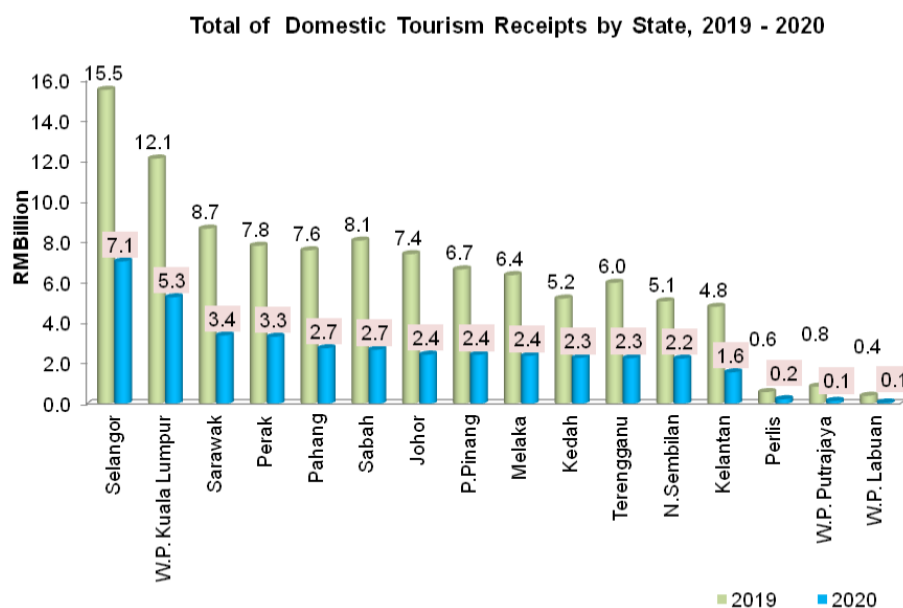


Figure 3: Department of Statistics Malaysia (2020). Performance of Domestic Tourism by State

It is important to note here that there is, however, a significant difference in terms of the organizational sustainability of the tourism industry. This can be attributed to the ability of the sector to commit to selectively sustaining those resources that are most important for attracting and retaining tourists. It has been observed that it is the only way for the tourism industry to prosper in the long term (Arbolino et al., 2021). With time the constituent firms in the tourism industry have been actively developing and implementing different forms of tourism practices that are essentially sustainable. These included practices such as eco-tourism, traveling practices that are environment-friendly, green tourism, and even alternate tourism. With the increasing demand for tourism among customers, these practices have been positively perceived by them (Chilufya et al., 2019). The tourism industry often encounters a number of challenges in the form of human resource development and human resource management. These challenges involve a lower constitution of skilled employees, employees with minimum or no experience, lack of availability of seasonal workforce, absence of motivation for the employees, and their frequent rotation to various locations. It has been observed that most of these challenges can be significantly mitigated by implementing sustainable strategies for human resource management in tourism firms (Katunian, 2019). The relevance of this can be attributed to the fact that the tourism industry is essentially an integral component of the service sector. In the service sector, it is the human resources of organizations that play the most significant role in creating value. Hence, it is essential for the tourism sector to efficiently manage its human resources to achieve significant levels of business sustainability, in the long run (Broman & Robèrt, 2017).

An important aspect to consider here is that the tourism industry is highly dynamic in nature. Prioritizing the management of human resources in tourism firms can induce significant levels of professionalism, and job satisfaction in their employees which, in turn, positively impacts their customer service, thus helping in the establishment of a certain degree of organizational sustainability. Generally, the sustainability of the tourism industry is explored with a primary focus on the environmental aspects. The dynamic nature of the industry thus calls for similar attention to the human resource aspects in tourism firms (Saratun, 2016). The efficiency of implementation of strategies for sustainable development of human resources in the tourism industry is further determined by the harmonious functioning of a number of stakeholders, namely, the tourism companies, respective governments of the states, educational institutions, public organizations, and different international institutions. Hence, effective planning is required to maintain a healthy relationship between these stakeholders to ensure the optimum economic, social, and environmental performance of tourism companies (Baum, 2018). It has been observed that historically, the tourism industry across the world has been majorly driven by economic aspects. However, with time and increased societal demand, tourism companies have taken into account the sustainability of the social, cultural, and even ecological aspects to ensure qualitative growth of the industry. This consideration has been beneficial, especially in terms of controlling the challenge of over-tourism, and facilitating a more qualitative re-orientation of the objectives of the tourism industry (Benner, 2019). The challenge of 'over-tourism' is a consequence of the economic development aspirations of the tourism industry which involved increasing the number of tourists. It had posed significant cultural disturbances, especially in popular tourist destinations, namely, Barcelona, Venice, Dubrovnik, etc., which witnessed an increasing number of public protests.

The debate grew much more intense in the case of smaller tourist destinations like Salzburg in Austria, which further challenged the sustainability of the industry (Koens et al., 2018). This signifies a remarkable qualitative shift in the perception of the population with respect to the dominant rationale and the desired goal of the tourism industry. It also establishes that the

quantitative objection of the tourism industry significantly lacked the consideration for ecological, social, or cultural sustainability of the tourist destinations (Seraphin et al., 2018). As a result, the tourism companies resorted to a number of alternate measures like the popularization of those destinations that have limited tourist capacities, along with encouraging the growth of global tourism from a secular perspective, a massive increase in cruise tourism, and the emergence of carriers that were low cost. Not only did these alternate practices break the pre-existing perception of the goals of the tourism industry, but also promoted the sustainability of the companies through their reputation (Benner, 2018). Implementing alternate practices in the tourism industry is significantly complex, especially because of the predominance of political bottlenecks. With the increased presence of entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, there is predominant demand for qualitative growth of the companies. Building a new consensus pertaining to the sustainability of the tourism sector is further challenged by the difference of interests of various stakeholders, such as the tourism entrepreneurs, the advocates of sustainability, and most importantly the population of the destination, especially those suffering from over-tourism (Glückler & Lenz, 2016).

Adding to this is the challenge pertaining to the public skepticism pertaining to mass tourism that compromises the ecological, social, and cultural integrity of tourist destinations. Additionally, while over-tourism benefits the tourist companies economically, it negatively affects the localized economic benefits of the local ecosystem and population of the respective destinations. This has been observed significantly in tourist destinations, like, Venice or Dubrovnik (Gonzalez et al., 2018). Another threat to the sustainability of the tourism industry is observed in tourist behavior which is increasingly shaped by technological developments. It has been observed that social media has a significant influence in directing the flow of tourists to destinations that lack the required infrastructure to support them. In such cases, not only the cultural aspects of the destination are compromised but there is also a considerable violation of the environmental integrity of the place along with intrusions into the private lives of the inhabitants by the tourists in search of an 'authentic experience' (Panayiotopoulos, A., & Pisano, 2019). These challenges highlight the need for restructuring the tourism industry to establish its long-term sustainability.

Enabling Factors for Business Sustainability In The Tourism Sector

The recent society majorly focuses on ensuring environmental sustainability while simultaneously fostering the business sustainability of different industries. It has been observed that there are two categories of factors that determine the business sustainability of organizations. The first category primarily consists of social, economic, and entrepreneurial factors while the second category includes cognitive factors such as motivation, values, and attitudes. Since the tourism industry is essentially service-oriented, it is crucial for them to prioritize both categories to attain organizational sustainability for the tourism companies (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018). Previously, several studies have extensively explored the various environmental and business factors that seemingly have an impact on the business sustainability of various organizations. It has been established that for any industry, organizational sustainability stands on three basic pillars, namely, (i) environmental integrity, which involved consideration of protection and safeguarding the environment for the future generation (ii) economic prosperity, which includes the financial strength of the organizations, and (iii) social sustainability, which involves ensuring the social well-being of the individual involved in the organization (Soto-Acosta et al., 2016). The most important factors for the tourism industry, however, are the behavioral and human relations factors.

These factors are further categorized in three ways, namely, (i) the emotional factors which contribute to the emotional intelligence of the individuals in the organization to improve their interpersonal communication and crisis-handling ability, (ii) the value and ethical factors, which are proactively linked to the fostering of organizational sustainability, and (iii) the motivational and cognitive factors, which are indispensable in transforming the business intentions into business actions through innovation and channeling the human capital to efficiently acquire and transform information (Yitshaki & Kropp, 2016).

However, it has been observed that in the case of service sectors, which include the tourism industry, the prominence of the behavioral factors is much higher than the business factors to support organizational sustainability. The most prominent behavioral factors in this context include the self-efficacy of the involved individuals, their ethical constitution, intrinsic motivation, and their competitive intelligence. The ethical constitution of the individuals in the industry while in combination with their competitive intelligence, is particularly, crucial for undertaking actions that generate long-term sustainability for the organizations (Tur-Porcar et al., 2018). It is also important to note here that for the tourism industry to maintain its long-term sustainability there is a significant need to keep a track of the competitiveness in terms of destinations. Subsequently, the tourism industry needs to invest and capitalize on the scenic beauty of the destinations, along with natural hydrological structure, the availability of clean, potable water, and fresh air, and simultaneously ensure efficient preservation of the species diversity in the area (Alseiri et al., 2019). In this context, the sustainability of the tourism industry is further determined by certain factors, namely, destination competitiveness, strategic leadership, effectiveness of strategic planning, and tourism sustainability practices. These factors highlight the importance of the formation of tourism plans and policies in accordance with the tourist demands to achieve tourism sustainability. In recent times tourism sustainability in being practiced extensively along with the profitability objectives of the industry. This is further determined by another set of factors constituting the core resources and attractors of the destination, resources, and support factors, the quality determinants, and destination management (Gharama et al., 2020). The efficiency of destination management is further determined by the competence of management leadership in terms of the competitive status of the destination. This will help in enhancing the performance of the destination at large thus, push forward the sustainability objectives of the tourism industry. With the negative consequences of the pandemic fading away, destination management through the implementation of different tourism sustainability practices can be considered of prime importance to increase tourist mobility and establishing longevity and sustainability of the various stakeholders of the tourism industry (Khalifa, 2020).

It is evident that the sustainability of the tourism industry has been significant influences by individual factors like culture, background, education, etc., along with organizational competency and political affiliation. However, in this regard, environmental factors also play a significant role in determining the sustainability of the tourism industry by influencing the competitiveness of tourism destinations (Dos Santos et al., 2017). Environmental factors also play an important role in improving the quality of life of the local population, which, in turn, establishes the relevance of sustainability variables in determining higher levels of competitiveness in the tourism industry. The impact of environmental factors has been prominently visible in the shift of the industry towards green tourism. The positive economic outcomes associated with green tourism or green consumers have been widely accepted by the hospitality industry as an important factor to maintain sustainability (Cucculelli & Goffi, 2016). The environmental factors not only assist in establishing the sustainability of the tourism industry but also help in developing sustainability for allied industries, such as the

hospitality industry. Further, it also contributed significantly to the improvement of tourism competitiveness which serves as a positive facilitator for the growth of tourist destinations. An interesting factor here is sustainable consumption, which is well-perceived by pro-sustainability tourists and is often perceived to be an important business opportunity by tourism companies (Pulido-Fernández et al., 2019). It has also been observed that the sustainability of the tourism industry at the global level is significantly dictated by institutional factors.

The impact of the institutional factors is further expressed by specific indicators, namely, social outcomes, ecological outcomes, and governance outcomes. However, among these indicators, the ecological and governance outcomes play the most significant role in enunciating the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry (Uyar et al., 2021). In recent times, there has been an increased awareness pertaining to the implementation of responsible business practices to avert any incidences of negative impact on social, economic, or even environmental components, which is usually observed in the form of depletion of the natural resources, climate change, social inequality, etc. The tourism industry, although not a traditional high-polluting industry like mining, manufacturing, or the chemical industry, has also incorporated sustainability initiatives to establish an amicable relationship with the concerned stakeholders (Azam et al., 2018). In this context, it has been observed that the long-term sustainability of tourism companies is primarily determined by certain factors, such as the reputation of the company, the company's image, the ability of the company to maintain public trust, and the increased implementation of sustainable operational practices in the organizations along with the institutional environment at the political, legal, financial, economic, and cultural levels (Blancas et al., 2018). It has been observed that a strong regulatory environment in tourism companies assists in the effective promotion and enforcement of responsible business practices in their respective organizations. It also serves as a significant motivator and positively shapes corporate behavior and provides a comprehensive insight into the relationship between institutional factors at the country level and the sustainability practices in the tourism industry, especially for small-scale tourism enterprises in protected areas (Font et al., 2016). The quality of governance in the country is yet another significant factor that influences the sustainability of the tourism industry, and the prominence of this influence is attributed to the uniqueness of the industry in terms of its services and products. The regulatory and enforcement mechanisms for the reporting and regular audit of the sustainability practices that result from effective governance help in encouraging socially responsible behavior from tourists, and other tourism operators (Kim et al., 2018). When it comes to any industry its sustainability is significantly determined by the levels of customer satisfaction which is a reflection of their organizational capabilities. Similarly, in the tourism industry, the sustainability of the organizations is significantly impacted by tourist satisfaction. In this regard, certain environmental factors, such as the perceived environmental values, along with some non-environmental factors, namely, the performance of the destination, development of sustainable tourism, and destination image have a prominent impact in determining the levels of tourist satisfaction (Zulvianti et al., 2022).

It has also been observed that the effective development of sustainability of tourism has a mediating influence on the relationship between perceived environmental values and the satisfaction of the tourists. Further, the satisfaction of tourists that comes from the enriched experiences in presence of environmentally responsible behavior is an important criterion that determines the success of the tourism industry. Understanding the needs, interests, and demands of tourists thus provides tourism companies with a significant competitive

advantage for long-term sustainability (Akinici et al., 2018). While there are a number of factors determining and influencing the levels of sustainability of the tourism industry across the globe, it has been observed that the sustainability of the tourism industry itself is a determining factor for social development. It has been established that the development of sustainable tourism practices, contributes positively towards the effective conservation as well as promotion of the cultural heritage of the destination. Different forms of tourism, namely, ecotourism and cultural tourism play an important role in the promotion of cultural and natural aspects of a destination while maintaining sustainability and responsible behaviors of the concerned stakeholders (Tien et al., 2021). Interestingly, it has also been observed that the sustainability of the tourism industry is also dictated by competitiveness, innovation, and the level of territorial development, along with awareness and recognition. Prioritization of these factors in the sustainability strategies of tourism companies not only provides them with a significant competitive advantage but also assists in the reduction of the ecological footprint of the organizations (Nave et al., 2021). Another important determining factor for determining the sustainability of the tourism sector is the efficiency of the relevant policies and guidelines put forward by the respective governments of the states. Maximum efficiency of policies is observed when they are integrated to cover the allied sectors along with the tourism sector to promote collective development. These policies are also crucial in bringing uniformity in the practices of the operators of business tourism (Mutana & Mukwada, 2020).

Role of the Tourism Board and its Practices with Initiatives

The success of the tourism industry, as seen in previous studies, is significantly dependent on the management ability of the concerned stakeholders, with respect to different aspects, such as tourism infrastructure, recreational facilities, tourist satisfaction, and tourism development. To integrate the management process for the different facts of tourism, there is usually a tourism board that regulates the management process. Tourism boards are essentially public sector institutions that manage the different aspects and forms of tourism in a country while fostering significant levels of sustainable development of tourism (Albalate et al., 2017). The tourism boards are responsible for the development of marketing strategies to attract more tourists to the target destinations while ensuring their optimum recreation and hospitality through authentic experiences. This the emergence of digital marketing practices the managers in the tourism boards have majorly focused on developing and implementing inbound digital marketing strategies based on the evolution of market-driven factors to reshape the tourism experience (Heikinheimo et al, 2017). The promotion of locations and coordination of the efforts of private sector tourism companies, such as hotels and tourist spots, are essential tasks for tourist boards. Since tourist boards receive public funding, they are considered to be part of the public sector, which includes all government agencies, organizations, and municipal governments that offer services to the general public. There are primarily three types of tourist boards, which includes local, national, and regional tourist boards. The best contacts one can establish, as opposed to national or regional boards, are with local tourist boards. This is due to the fact that a local council associated with the county or city is made up of other locals who are knowledgeable about the ins and outs of the local tourism business. They'll have a stronger bond with the establishments they refer to visitors, like "your holiday home". The national and local tourism boards are two additional major categories of tourist boards. They essentially have the same meanings. The national council is responsible for all national tourism information, as suggested by their names. The area tourism bureau, on the other hand, disseminates information about particular nations, states,

or regions. It might include aspects like common customs, local attractions, and climate. National tourism organizations work to advertise and develop a region's character on a national scale (Pattinson, 2021). They improve the image of tourism and elevate the standard of travel experiences across the nation. Incredible India, Amazing Thailand and Visit Britain are some of mentionable examples of national tourist boards. Regional tourist boards are groups that keep an eye on the country's tourism industry in a particular location or province. They are more qualified to offer advice and keep an eye on the region's tourism-related activities because they are familiar with its unique characteristics. In this alignment, in the current study, particular emphasis has been given on Malaysia, due to the fact that the national apart from being a country which is highly dependent on tourism, have an active tourism board that has been taking major decisions. For instance, during May 2022, in order to encourage tourism and increase traffic to Malaysia from important markets throughout the airline's network, Emirates and the Malaysia Tourism Board have executed a Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC). "The MoC was signed by Dato' Haji Zainuddin Abdul Wahab, Director General of Tourism Malaysia, and Orhan Abbas, Senior Vice President Commercial Operations (Far East), in the presence of His Highness Prince Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairperson and Chief Executive, Emirates Airline & Group". In accordance with the agreement, Emirates will create projects to promote Malaysian travel throughout its extensive worldwide network of over 130 locations (Mariano, 2022). The airline will also look into possibilities for partnerships by planning familiarization tours with important media and tourist figures, helping to revive the travel and tourism industry. Considering such proactive initiatives of the tourism board of Malaysia, emphasis has been given on this nation.

With the emergence of the covid-19 which severely impacted the functional and operational aspects of the tourism industry, the significance of tourism boards became more prominent and crucial. There has been a significant transformation in tourism policy, where the tourism boards have focused primarily on the development of strategies for the recovery of different tourism practices. These policies focus on the revival of the functioning of various stakeholders such as tourism companies, interest groups, intermediary organizations, employees in the tourism sector, tourism entrepreneurs, local communities, and tourists (Sánchez-Teba et al., 2020). Since the emergence of the pandemic more and more tourism boards across various countries have resorted to the development of sustainable inbound marketing strategies, to ensure the generation of traffic and contact to the pre-pandemic levels. In addition, they have also focused increasingly on the expansion of their contacts and databases as opposed to the generation of leads which are often observed to lose credibility (Kwok & Koh, 2021). It is evident that the pandemic has significantly transformed the roles and responsibilities of tourism boards across the globe and this impact is visible in form of increasing implementation of sustainable tourism policies in the tourism industry. However, it is interesting to note that sustainable tourism policies awaited their implementation for almost three decades. Over time, the tourism boards have been prioritizing the effective unification of the living environment and the tourism resources, while simultaneously ensuring significant coordination between the social, economic, and environmental resources (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

In many countries, there has been a significant shift in the practices of the tourism industry towards a more qualitative and sustainable developmental side. Previously it was observed that, when it came to understanding the concept of tourism sustainability, tourism boards across many countries faced a significant challenge pertaining to the lack of clarity. In absence of this understanding, most tourism boards retained the policies that revolved around economic growth. However, with an increase in awareness about sustainability and

environmental impact, sustainable tourism policies gained prominence (Xu & Sofield, 2016). The popularity of sustainable tourism practices can be attributed to its alignment with the commitments of the local communities towards environmental protection while generating environmental awareness among the various stakeholders. However, balancing the demands of tourism and the environmental consequences made the implementational process significantly complex for these sustainable tourism policies. This complexity was further added to by the absence of any considerable amount of shared responsibility (Mai, T., & Smith, 2015). Another significant challenge encountered by the tourism boards of the respective countries pertaining to the implementation of sustainable tourism policies is in terms of the simultaneous transformation of the perception of people. Additionally, there are a number of other challenges encountered in the political, social, economic, cultural, and psychological domains (Andersen et al., 2018). It is interesting to note here that the complexity in the implementation of sustainable tourism policies usually generates from its inextricable impact on other policies. Hence it is important for tourism boards to consider that tourism policies have a significant impact on transforming the values and power arrangements in the destination area. It has been observed that in presence of competent national governance, the efficiency of sustainable tourism policies can be further optimized through a holistic perception of sustainable development of tourism instead of focusing only on the long-term plans and the economic benefits (Guo et al., 2019).

While formulating sustainable tourism policies it is also crucial for the tourism boards to consider the major public concerns, such as the degradation of the environment, the economic gap associated with tourism, the potential human rights issues along with the link between the elites of the economic and political spheres. The tourism boards also need to focus on multiple stakeholders in tourism management and balance their conflicts of interest (Santos-Lacueva, et al., 2017). Most of the tourism policies at the national level are based on the factors such as the generation of higher tourism revenue, investment in infrastructures, promotion, and marketing of tourism, diversification, and development of tourism, tax laws, and regulations, etc. However, there is a significant need for the tourism boards to consider the geographical differences in terms of economic development at regional levels along with the institutional environments, ideological value systems, and power relationships to improve the implementational efficiency of the sustainable tourism policies (Santos-Lacueva & Velasco Gonzalez, 2018).

The management of tourism by the tourism boards involves direct interactions with the human as well as natural resources of the designated territory along with exposure of the stakeholders including the tourists to the local communities, and the local environment in general. This exposure inevitably brings in specific concerns about protecting the environment, which might lose its sanctity on being over-exposed along with issues pertaining to fair trade and human rights (Hadj, 2020). In this context, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices have been found to be increasingly effective in the accomplishment of the sustainability objectives of the tourism industry as it promotes the sustainable usage of natural resources whose availability is extremely limited along with the reduction in the production of waste materials. It has significantly helped in mitigating the sustainability concerns of the tourism industry in terms of destination resources (Luo, 2020). The sustainability of the tourism industry in recent times is further determined by its ability to acknowledge its accountability for the impacts that are produced by the actions of the different stakeholders in the industry in terms of the increased levels of environmental consciousness at the global level. It also involves the industry's ability to make significant contributions toward sustainable development (Fatma et al., 2016). It has been observed that

the sustainability of the tourism industry significantly depends on the sustainable practices undertaken by it at different levels. This involves the incorporation of sustainable practices in their economic expansions while ensuring that the tourism organizations contribute positively toward improving the quality of life of their employees and their families along with that of the local society at large (Horng et al., 2018). With the emergence of the covid-19 pandemic, the sustainability of the tourism industry, just like any other industry was put under question. However, the blow of the pandemic was much harder on the tourism industry with the implementation of prolonged travel restrictions across the globe. In this period of crisis, it has been observed that CSR initiatives helped significantly in restoring the sustainability of the industry by having a positive impact on the psychological capital of the employees and building trust and loyalty among the customers (Mao et al., 2021). It has been established that CSR initiatives are an important determinant of building the reputation of firms, especially in the tourism industry. Not only does it assist in highlighting the commitment of the tourism firms toward the individual well-being of their employees, but also enunciates its commitment to the overall organizational and social well-being. It also helps the tourism industry to align the profitability of its performance with the expectations and demands of the concerned stakeholders, especially with respect to the reduction in the production of waste (Madanaguli et al., 2022).

Implications of the Sustainable Tourism Sector in Sarawak

It has been evident that sustainable tourism policies have gained significant prominence in recent times, especially after the unprecedented emergence of the pandemic to ensure the sustainability of the tourism industry at a global level. The success of sustainable tourism policies is often attributed to their ability to bring economic benefits alongside the management and minimization of adverse environmental impacts of tourism (Chen et al., 2018). There have been several noticeable implications of the adoption of sustainable tourism policies around the world. The most prominent implication can be observed in the harmonious alignment of tourism policies, national energy policies, and environmental policies. In countries where the national economy is majorly dependent on tourism, the adoption of sustainable policies positively influences climate sensitivity by managing the excess energy consumption and CO₂ emission as a consequence of the arrival of tourists in the destinations (Nepal et al., 2019). These sustainable tourism policies have not only assisted in the rejuvenation of the tourism industry which was severely impacted by the pandemic through the promotion of environmental and behavioral awareness but also helped in maintaining the organizational sustainability of the tourism companies to recover steadily to the pre-pandemic levels. Moreover, sustainable tourism policies have transformed the functional and operational aspects of the entire industry towards a more qualitative, and sensitized dimension (Li et al., 2021).

In southeast Asia, one of the most preferred tourist destinations is the country of Malaysia, which welcomes a huge number of tourists every year from around the world. Even in the case of Malaysia, the pandemic had a severe impact on its tourism industry, hindering the operability of several allied industries such as the aviation industry, and the hospitality industry. This led to increased cancellation of bookings and the travel restrictions further served as an impediment to the flow of tourists in the country (Foo et al., 2021). Being one of the largest industries in Malaysia, the tourist industry is a major contributor to the economic development of the country. With the pandemic around the Government of Malaysia imposed a movement control order which severely impacted the tourism industry, especially the

tourism operators, hotels, and airlines, a majority of which struggled to maintain their sustainability (Khan & Hashim, 2020).

A prominent tourist destination in Malaysian Borneo is Sarawak. Sarawak is well known for the organizations of homestays that are culturally themed, and the cohabitation of the tourism prospects with the local communities. The local communities of Sarawak are a major determinant of the relevance as well as the implications of the adoption of sustainable tourism and its development in the region. Especially when it comes to rural tourism, the self-efficacy of the local communities of Sarawak has been significantly effective in promoting tourism sustainability in the social, economic, cultural, and environmental aspects (Fong et al., 2017). The need for sustainability of tourism in Sarawak is often attributed to the negative impacts of tourism practices, especially in rural areas. These negative impacts are most prominent in the sociocultural, environmental, and legal aspects of Sarawak. In this context, the local communities of Sarawak play a crucial role in terms of their involvement and the quality of the relationship in the tourism industry to determine the favorable and unfavorable practices and performance of the industry and help establish its sustainability (Fun et al., 2014). To increase the sustainability of tourism in Sarawak, a number of measures have been implemented. One such example that promotes the prospects of tourism in Sarawak is the Semenggoh Wildlife Centre which provides provisions for direct human-animal interaction. It is thus evident that even though certain tourism practices are perceived to be negative on the natural resources and cultural heritage of Sarawak, capitalizing on these by involving the local communities and preserving the natural heritage is the most effective way to boost the sustainability of tourism industry (Chong et al., 2018). The sustainability of tourism, in turn, helps in boosting the destination competitiveness of the various locations in Sarawak.

Further, the economic contribution from the tourism industry significantly assists Sarawak to boost its income and the sustainability of the industry further ensures the shift of Sarawak from a resource-based economy to a service-based economy. Consequently, the economic upliftment of Sarawak boosts the tourism demand in the region (Puah et al., 2019). Ensuring the sustainability of the tourism industry in Sarawak has been proven to be significantly beneficial for the region and Malaysia at large, with its economic contributions surpassing the manufacturing and agricultural sector. Its natural resources, namely, the equatorial climate, tropical rainforests, exquisite flora and fauna, and adventure activities highlight the scope for tourism to be the prime factor in economically uplifting Malaysia (Chin et al., 2022). Sustainable tourism in Sarawak is crucial to provide tourists with relaxing experiences in natural settings, to ensure that they come back again and again. This is a convenient alternative for Sarawak to boost tourism sustainability, especially with an abundance of natural resources ranging from having the largest dam in southeast Asia (Bakun Dam), to one of the earliest human settlements (Niah cave), and a rich collection of flora and fauna such as the great collection of hornbills on the island of Borneo (Thong et al., 2022). It is thus evident that the tourism industry is highly dependent on sustainable tourism practices to establish its socio-economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability in the long run. Hence, this serves as the basis for ensuring the sustainability of the tourism industry in Sarawak (Haigh, 2020).

The tourism culture of Sarawak is reflective of the harmonious co-existence of culture, tourism, and development is the core concept of sustainable tourism. The success of a sustainable tourism policy is thus determined by the alignment of cultural activities in the destination, the tourism policies, and most importantly, an organized generation of wider economic activity in the region (Ngu, 2017). Hence, to forward the sustainable objectives of the tourism industry, cultural policies were had been developed to promote cultural tourism in

the region to establish the sustainability of the industry in the long run. However, it was observed that these cultural policies were perceived to be creating an unnecessary ethnic split in an otherwise nascent cultural sector, which impeded the coordination among the concerned stakeholders. It was also observed that the policy only served the political will while creating significant isolation, resentment, and exasperation behind the facade of cultural tourism (Haigh, 2020).

Another important tourism policy in Sarawak is the pro-poor tourism policy, which is a form of sustainable tourism that essentially includes other common forms of tourism such as ecotourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism, etc. It has been observed that a pro-poor tourism policy positively impacts the local communities in Sarawak by significantly contributing to capacity building, infrastructural development, and building stakeholder support in the region for poverty alleviation. However, it was also observed that the success of the pro-tourism policy was dependent on financial assistance from the local government, along with private tourism, and semi-government tourism channels (Wasudawan & Ab-Rahim, 2018). Another implication of sustainability of the tourism sector can be observed in the initiatives undertaken by the Sarawak Tourism Board in combating the impact of covid 19 on the business sustainability of the region. The Sarawak Tourism Board developed the 3R strategy which was implemented in three phases with an aim to simultaneously empower the tourism businesses and the local communities to effectively boost Sarawak's tourism businesses ecosystem (Bakar and Rosbi, 2020). The 3R strategy involved the concepts of rebuilding and relief, recovery collaboration, and redialing, which was meant to comprehensively cover the detrimental impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry. This strategy was well-received by the various stakeholders of the tourism industry for the rebuilding of the tourism services in the region to make it more aggressive, vibrant, and active to recover from the blow of the pandemic (Sivadasan & Salleh, 2022). It was previously pointed out by UNWTO that with regard to different tourism practices, a number of tourism boards have successfully developed and implemented shopping tourism as part of their marketing plan. This is an important component of a successful tourism strategy as it exclusively deals with the interest, needs, and desires of the tourists and caters to them accordingly to facilitate the flow of tourists to the destinations. Tourism shopping has thus been recognized as a prime contributor to tourism expenditure as well as revenue generation for the concerned economies (Jin et al., 2017).

In recent years, tourism in Malaysia has also witnessed a significant propensity of tourists toward shopping tourism. Accordingly, the tourism boards have prioritized the development of major shopping projects as part of their tourism policies to promote sustainability. This has led to the present position of Malaysia as one of the most preferred shopping destinations for tourists in Asia (Tourism Malaysia, 2016). As a result, the tourism board promoted a diverse ethical culture of the Kuching region of Sarawak that witnessed an increasing inflow of matured domestic and international tourists with varying shopping interests. In this regard, the mature shopping behavior of tourists has contributed to the sustainability of the tourism industry (Azmi et al., 2020). The sustainability of the tourism industry in Sarawak has also been positively impacted by the intervention of the tourism board in developing a positive destination image for the tourists by highlighting certain tourism attributes like the natural environment, the hospitality of the local communities, safety, hygiene, etc., as part of their sustainable tourism policy (Alam, 2016). The natural environment of Sarawak, with around 14 protected areas, and hot springs, has been a great source of attraction for local and international tourists as well as for revenue generation for the economic advancement of the country. The role of the tourism board is crucial here to ensure the conservation of these

protected areas to promote sustainable tourism practices and responsible tourist behavior (Darma et al., 2020). For the effective conservation of protected areas in Sarawak, like the hot springs, the Sarawak tourism board had introduced an appropriate entree fee for local and international tourists. Interestingly it was observed that the tourists were willing to contribute more towards the conservation of these protected sites and their participation in the process reflected the sustainability of the tourism policy curated by the board (Kamri et al., 2020). The Malaysian government has repeatedly enunciated the significance of the tourism industry in terms of its contribution to the national economy. Simultaneously it has also highlighted the importance of Sarawak in terms of its culture, heritage, and ecology as an important tourism destination. In this regard, the collaborative actions of the tourism board with other organizations as a part of their Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), have withstood the test of time in establishing the sustainability of the tourism industry (Wijesinghe, 2022). It has contributed positively to investments for the sustainable development of the tourism industry as well as assisted in ensuring its long-term sustainability by capitalizing on the cultural tourism prospects of Sarawak. Thus, the strategic PPP alliance between the Sarawak tourism board, the Ministry of Tourism of Sarawak the Sarawak convention bureau, and the Sarawak Economic development cooperation has ensured the relevance of the conservation of the ecological culture and heritage of Sarawak, as a crucial point of attraction for higher and responsible tourist inflow (Abdullah & Abdul Hamid, 2018).

The sustainability of the tourism sector in Sarawak has helped in ensuring a certain continuity in tourist flow in the region by optimizing the environmental stimulus along with the hospitality by the local communities to ensure high levels of tourist satisfaction. When combined with sustainable tourism strategies, high levels of tourist satisfaction further facilitate the revisit intentions of tourists (Chin et al., 2022). It has also been established that sustainable tourism strategies have positively contributed to poverty alleviation in the region while simultaneously maintaining the integrity of the ecological, and cultural heritage of Sarawak. It has also facilitated sustainable tourism behavior to promote the desirability of Sarawak as a prominent tourist destination in Asia. Simultaneously by ensuring re-visitations by tourists through high levels of tourist satisfaction, the sustainability of the tourism sector has been established as a prominent and crucial contributor to the economic development of the nation (Rogos et al., 2021). It is thus, evident that the sustainability of the tourism sector, especially in those countries that are economically dependent on tourism, is essential not only for their economic stability but also for the conservation of heritage (Li et al., 2022). Moreover, the most prominent implication of a sustainable tourism sector can be observed in terms of the ability of the sector to evolve according to the tourist's needs and which in the long run ensures the ability of the industry to cushion any unprecedented crisis and consequent blow to the operational and functional aspects of the society.

Research Gap

For the present paper, a number of previously conducted studies were reviewed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the various aspects of the tourism industry, with particular emphasis on the sustainability of the industry. Further, the sustainability of the tourism industry was reviewed in the context of the Sarawak region in Malaysia. It has been observed that the sustainability of the tourism sector, in general, has been comparatively less explored in contrast to other industries, such as the manufacturing industry or the chemical industry. Thus, there is a significant gap pertaining to a comprehensive exploration of the sustainability of the individual components of the tourism sector of Sarawak, and Malaysia at large (Alam,

2016). There is also a significant gap in the understanding of the transformation of the operational and functional aspects of the Sarawak tourism industry, especially in the pre-covid and post-covid times (Ibrahim et al., 2021). This is important because Malaysia is majorly dependent on its tourism industry for revenue generation to move forward with its objective of economic development. The Sarawak tourism industry involves different types of tourism like eco-tourism, cultural tourism, edu-tourism, etc. In this context there is also a significant gap in the sustainability of individual types of tourism as the sustainability factors for each type may vary considerably (Lee et al., 2022; Maying et al., 2021). Further, there is a dearth of studies exploring the different success factors for the sustainability of the different types of tourism practices in Sarawak. It has been observed that the Ministry of Tourism in Malaysia along with the various tourism board, namely, the Sarawak Tourism Board, play an important role in the development and implementation of tourism policies and practices. In this context, it is also important to explore the role and contribution of the respective tourism boards in the development of tourism strategies for the sustainability of the organizations (Chin et al., 2022; Haigh, 2020). There is also a significant gap in the analysis of the implementational success of sustainable tourism policies in Sarawak, which is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Southeast Asia (Goi, 2022). Further, there is also a major gap in terms of the development of a sustainable tourism policy in Sarawak and Malaysia at large, to cushion the detrimental impact of any unprecedented incidents such as the pandemic (Wasudawan & Ab-Rahim, 2018; Haigh, 2020). Since the emergence of the pandemic, there was a major decline in the arrival of tourists in Sarawak, which went from 9,393,000 in 2020 to 6,510,900 in 2021 (Sarawak Tourism Board, 2022). This created a substantial economic crisis in Sarawak which highlighted the need for an immediate revival of the tourism industry. This signifies that there is a significant gap in the assessment of the implication of sustainable tourism in Sarawak, especially in crisis conditions like the pandemic (Tingi & Tugang, 2021; Wijesinghe, 2022). Addressing this gap will help establish a healthy balance between the environmental, cultural, and human factors related to the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry in Malaysia.

Methods

Emerald Insight, and Google Scholar are the databases that have been searched for collecting the literatures that have been reviewed in this study. The keywords “sustainability, tourism sector, Sarawak, tourism board, business survival, and tourism sector sustainability” are some of the mentionable keywords considered for conducting the search in these databases. The various databases employed search strings that were formulated using Boolean operators. Articles collected from Google Scholar ranged from 989, 255 in Emerald Insight. A total of 1244 articles were considered for reviewing. A total of 210 articles were found to be relevant among these articles which accurately aligned with the research topic. Among these 210 articles a total of 106 articles were found to be quality literatures that were finally used for reviewing in this paper. The inclusion criteria that were maintained for selecting quality literatures were studies that were published between 2016 and 2023, and the studies that were published only in English language.

Conclusion

With respect to business sustainability, it has been observed following a thorough review of the previous studies that it is highly significant across industries in terms of maintaining high

organizational performance while retaining a considerable degree of competitive advantage in the current market scenario. Even for the tourism industry, business sustainability is of prime importance that had led to a significant transformation of its tourism policies across the globe, toward the qualitative aspects.

When it comes to the business sustainability of the tourism industry a number of previous studies had identified different enabling factors. These factors have been primarily categorized as social, economic, and entrepreneurial factors, and cognitive factors such as motivation, values, and attitudes. Further, the sustainability of the tourism industry is also determined by environmental integrity, economic prosperity, social sustainability, value and ethical factors, competitive intelligence of the tourism stakeholders, destination competitiveness, strategic leadership, effectiveness of strategic planning, and tourism sustainability practices. However, the most important factor that dictates the sustainability of the tourism industry is the behavioral factors of the relevant stakeholders especially the tourists and the local communities. Hence, by prioritizing the promotion of sustainable behavioral practices as part of tourism policies organizations can achieve long-term business sustainability. Some of the mentionable actions that can be taken in this regard are managing the effects of human activity on the environment, which is largely dependent on reducing our dependence on fossil fuels, saving energy, and increasing energy efficiency. Any ecological plan must start with efficient garbage management. Tourist businesses that practice responsible trash management show a strong dedication to environmental protection. Consumers in Europe are well aware of the widespread issue of plastic pollution and are accustomed to seeing pictures of beaches and oceans covered in copious quantities of plastic trash. The three R's—reduce, reuse, and recycle—are the cornerstones of trash management, and customers today are very familiar with this mantra. Single-use plastic, which is frequently found in plastic bags, water and drink bottles, straws, and plates and flatware, is generally regarded as a significant offender. Some single-use plastics are prohibited in many nations, including Tanzania. In many nations that receive little rain or are prone to drought, water is a scarce resource that must be carefully controlled. One should encourage clients to use reusable water jugs and supply filtered water in addition to urging them to use water wisely for cleaning and other purposes. The most crucial step in combating climate change is reducing carbon pollution. Tourism cannot be sustained unless locals are employed by businesses. Local people gain from a personal growth standpoint as well as economically. Additionally, it can benefit the whole family and promote a feeling of civic and national pride.

In countries like Malaysia, where tourism is a major contributor to the country's economy, the development of sustainable tourism policies and practices have been observed to make several beneficial implications. In the context of Sarawak, a prominent tourist destination in Malaysia, which is well known for its cultural and ecological heritage, the implementation of sustainable tourism practices has contributed significantly to poverty alleviation. Further, the promotion of responsible tourist behavior has facilitated the conservation of the ecological integrity of the region, which has, in turn, popularized the competitiveness of the destination, making it one of the most popular tourist destinations in Asia.

In recent times, the contribution of the tourism board of Sarawak has been observed prominently in its 3R strategy which involved the concepts of rebuilding and relief, recovery collaboration, and redialing. This strategy was successful in comprehensively covering the detrimental impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry and reviving it to function in full throttle. Thus, it can be concluded that the sustainability of the tourism sector, is essentially a

collaborative functioning of its various stakeholders in coherence with sustainable environmental and cultural practices which is facilitated by the effective implementation of sustainable tourism policies.

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