UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI "FEDERICO II"

DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN MANAGEMENT

(XXXVI CICLO)

RESILIENCE, LOYALTY, AND INNOVATION IN TOURIST DESTINATIONS: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY.

TESI DI DOTTORATO

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OTTOBRE 2023

Resilience, Loyalty, and Innovation in Tourist Destinations: A Comprehensive Study.

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List of abbreviations
ATT: Attitude

AVE: Average variance extracted

DL: Destination loyalty

DM: Destination Management

MCE: Memorability of culinary experience

PEI: Perceived experiential innovativeness

PLS-SEM: Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling

RIS: Regional innovation system

SME: Small and medium-sized enterprises

SN: Subjective norms

TRA: Theory of Reasoned Action

WoS: Web of science

ZWH: Zero waste hotel

CHAPTER I
Introduction

1.1 Background to the study
1.1.1 The resilience of tourist destinations

In recent years, the interest of the scientific community within the tourism domain in the topic of destination resilience has been growing (Pyke et al., 2021). This increased attention can be attributed to the recognition that tourist destinations face significant disruptions and challenges (Bui et al., 2021), which include natural disasters (Zhang et al., 2023), economic fluctuations (Bhuiyan et al., 2021), political instability (Rittichainuwat et al., 2020), and outbreaks (Rathjens et al., 2023). Despite this, international tourism flows have continued to grow amid increasing uncertainty and in the face of new emerging crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict between Ukraine and Russia (Pappas et al., 2023). The term resilience was originally introduced by Holling (1973) to refer to the ability of a system to absorb disturbances and recover from them. Despite numerous relevant scientific contributions in this research domain, a consensus on the meaning of resilience is still lacking (Filimonau and De Coteau, 2020). Additionally, the connection between resilience and related concepts, such as vulnerability and adaptability, along with reliability of its measurement, remain contentious areas (Barbhuiya and Chatterjee, 2020; Prayag and Dassanayake, 2023). Moreover, in the current stage of scientific research, a universally accepted definition of resilience remains elusive (Hall et al., 2017). As claimed by Fromhold-Eisebith (2015), this issue can be attributed to the dynamic nature of resilience, which varies according to the specific characteristics of different industrial sectors. To delve deeper, existing research exposes two contrasting perspectives (see table 1.1). On one hand, there are scholars that portray resilience in a static manner, viewing it as the capacity of a system to revert to a normal state or adapt to disturbances while minimizing risks (e.g., Holling, 1973; Gallopin, 1991; Berkes and Folke, 1994; Walker, 2004). In contrast, as illustrated in the figure 1.1, other authors contribute to the development of a dynamic view of resilience, where the primary aim is not risk mitigation and a return to the pre-crisis condition, but rather the ability to navigate change by emphasizing innovation, learning, growth, and capitalizing on emerging perspectives (e.g., Tyrrell and Johnston, 2008; Hudson, 2010; Richards, 2020; Ketter, 2022). In this view, resilience encompasses the ability to withstand and recover from unexpected events and the capability to foresee and prepare for such situations, learn lessons from past setbacks, and promote innovation and diversification to create new opportunities and value for all stakeholders involved (Mazzucato, 2018).

Table 1.1 – The definitions of resilience.

Authors	Definitions of resilience
Holling, 1973	… a measure of the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationship between population or state variables.
Gallopin, 1991	… the capacity of a system to withstand external environmental disturbances and to maintain its own functions.
Berkes and Folke, 1994	… a system's ability to tolerate emerging concerns.
Walker, 2004	… the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedback.
Folke, 2006	… is about persistence, adaptation, structures and processes recombination, system renewal and emergence of new trajectories.
Tyrrell and Johnston, 2008	… the ability of social, economic, or ecological systems to recover from tourism induced stress.
Hudson, 2010	… refers to the ability of a socio-economic system to cope with disturbances, to absorb exogenous and endogenous shocks, to adapt its organization, to shape change via constant innovation and learning.
Cellini and Cuccia, 2015	… is the ability of providers to change their orientation and specialization in front of negative shocks.
Bec et al., 2016	… a system's ability to withstand and respond to change.
Orchiston et al., 2016	… refers to the ability of a system to maintain its identity and adapt its essential structure and function in the face of disturbance.
Serfilippi and Ramnath, 2018	… is the capacity of people, communities, or systems to prepare for and to react to stressors and shocks in ways that limit vulnerability and promote sustainability.
Holladay, 2018	… the capacity of a system to absorb change and continue to persist.
Fabry and Zeghni, 2019	… the ability of the stakeholders to accept shocks, which rely on planning and anticipation and responsiveness.
Richards, 2020	… consists in implementing creative strategies able to offer new avenues for future development beyond the new normal.
Pilquimán-Vera et al., 2020	… the inherent abilities of the community to resist, adapt, and overcome the consequences of adversity using only available resources.
Ketter, 2022	… re-orienting the tourism system and regenerating tourism growth following a crisis.
Zhang et al., 2022	… is the ability of a system to maintain its stability and recovery after disturbance.

Source: own elaboration

The role of innovation as essential driver of destination resilience becomes evident (Gretzel and Scarpino-Johns, 2018), as it helps to adapt to challenges and to identify and seize new perspectives in a changing environment. This dynamic perspective on resilience encourages destinations to harness innovation, ultimately making them more robust (Lebel et al., 2006; Moore et al., 2018). Furthermore, extant literature emphasizes that a significant number of studies concentrate on adaptation and reaction to negative events, financial recession, and disease outbreaks, while relatively few contributions aim at developing theoretical framework to support and manage the destination in a resilient perspective by leveraging a value-based approach (Filimonau and De Coteau, 2020).

Figure 1.1 – The dynamics of tourism destination resilience.
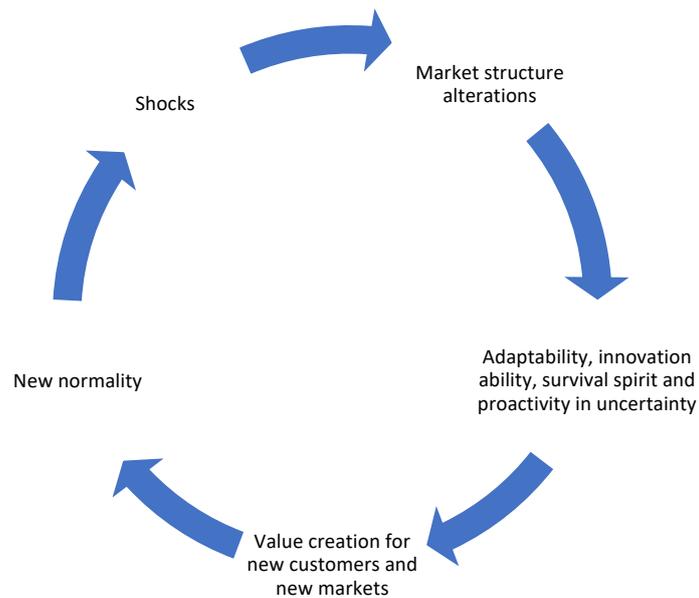
Source: own elaboration.

This is based on the premise that each activity brings value to the overall disaster management process (Krishnan et al., 2022). However, it is worth noting that disaster management and value creation are often studied as distinct areas (Raikkonen et al., 2017). In particular, the concept of resilience has been predominantly confined to the field of disaster management research, with a primary focus on facing significant disasters and crises (Martinelli et al., 2018). Nonetheless, integrating innovation into destination resilience strategies has the potential to reshape the tourism sector, enabling destinations to survive, thriving in the face of adversity, creating a more sustainable and resilient industry (Innerhofer et al., 2018). Accordingly, this consideration underscores the need for new investigations that specifically examine the impact of innovation on the development of resilient tourist destinations.

1.1.2 Innovation as a driver of tourism destination resilience
The tourism industry is well known for its responsiveness to external influences, which have the potential to greatly reshape its structure (Gursoy et al., 2022). These externalities can be both sources of threat and opportunity (Rianty et al., 2022). In the context of dynamic external environment, service businesses are compelled to make innovation a cornerstone of their competitive strategy (Baradarani and Kilic, 2018). In line with Schumpeter's (1934) entrepreneurial theory, innovation is defined as the generation of new knowledge or the reconfiguration of existing knowledge, leading to innovative advancements within the business domain. Concerning the various forms of innovations, as suggested by Hjalager

(2010), product/service, process, managerial, management and institutional innovations constitute the primary categories:

- Product/service innovation refers to changes that customers directly perceive as novel, whether they are entirely unprecedented or recently introduced to a specific business or destination. Innovations in products or services are easily noticeable to tourists, and their impact on purchase decisions should not be underestimated.

- Process innovation is related to backstage efforts that aim to increase operational efficiency, productivity, and the fluidity of processes. Technology investments are the bedrock of mainstream process innovation, sometimes in combination with the reorganization of manual work operation layouts.

- Managerial innovation pertains to the adoption of new approaches for internal collaboration, the effective leadership and empowerment of employees, the establishment of career pathways, and the structuring of compensation including pay and benefits. Retaining staff, preserving operational flexibility, and cost control present significant challenges for numerous tourism firms. Additionally, managerial innovations aim to enhance workplace satisfaction and promote the development of internal knowledge and competence resources.

- Management innovation involves the adoption of new strategies by organizations, including tourist boards, destination management entities, and individual firms aimed at optimizing the planning, coordination, and implementation of their management procedures. Such innovations are frequently used to establish connections with emerging customer segments or redefine existing messaging to strengthen brand identity within the tourism sector.

- Institutional innovation involves new collaborative structures or legal frameworks that reshape or enhance industry operations. These innovations range from specific networks and alliances, beneficial especially for smaller enterprises, to more far-reaching changes impacting many businesses and customers.

As a result, innovation can be conceived as a proactive approach to address the challenges and uncertainties that the tourism industry faces (Hjalager and Madsen, 2018). Extant literature underscores the critical role played by innovation in promoting destination resilience through various avenues (Bangwayo-Skeete and Skeete, 2022). It enables stakeholders involved at destination level to be better prepared for crises, as well as to create new opportunities in the wake of disruptions (Leta and Chan, 2021; Pappas et al., 2023). With reference to the tourism industry, innovation can assume different forms (Elkhwesky

et al., 2022). It might involve the development of new attractions, experiences, or technologies that enhance the visitor's satisfaction (e.g., Nunkoo and Seetanah, 2018; Sustacha et al., 2023). It can also encompass improvements in marketing strategies, sustainability practices, and customer service (e.g., Satta et al., 2019; Seshadri et al., 2023). In essence, innovation in tourism is about meeting the evolving needs and desires of travelers while remaining environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. Destinations reliant on a single market or a particular target of tourists are extremely vulnerable to external shocks. Therefore, innovative thinking can lead to the development of unique tourism products and experiences that set a destination apart from its competitors (Della Corte et al., 2015). Indeed, the introduction of novel and innovative offerings enables destinations to captivate new segments of tourists and reduce their reliance on traditional products, consequently bolstering their resilience against economic fluctuations and shifts in consumer preferences (Streimikiene et al., 2021; Kuščer et al., 2022). For example, economic expansion in emerging markets can introduce new source markets for tourism, whereas shifting consumer preferences can generate demand for innovative experiences (Kim and So, 2022). These changing market dynamics further underscore the significance of innovation as a fundamental driver of resilience, as demonstrated by lessons learned from previous crises. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses quickly adopted contactless services, such as digital payment solutions, to minimize physical contact and enhance safety (Rathjens et al., 2023). This swift adoption of innovative technologies allowed them to continue operating during challenging times and differentiate their offerings (Yang et al., 2021). These also include the adoption of renewable energy sources, the implementation of intelligent transportation systems, and the implementation of sustainable waste management practices. As a result, the incorporation of innovative and sustainable practices and technologies can contribute to reducing the environmental footprint of tourism activities (Walker et al., 2021). Consequently, innovation can also foster sustainability, which is increasingly relevant since travelers are more aware of the environmental and social impacts of their travels (Gössling and Dolnicar, 2023). By offering innovative sustainable experiences, using storytelling and creating interactive exhibits, destinations can spread a genuine appreciation for their identity and heritage (Zins and Abbas Adamu, 2023). In the continuing evolution of the tourism industry, the concepts of experiential tourism and authenticity are emerging as powerful drivers of resilience and destination loyalty (Ivanka et al., 2023). Experiential tourism focuses on creating meaningful, immersive experiences for travelers, going beyond the conventional conception of tourism, wherein visitors passively observe and document their surroundings. Instead, it encourages active

participation, personal connection, and a deep sense of engagement with a destination (Câmara et al., 2023). To foster experiential tourism, destinations and businesses should create memorable experiences that reflect the real essence of the place. These offerings can include a wide range of activities, from culinary tours that delve into the region's gastronomic heritage to cultural experiences that allow travelers to connect with local community and traditions (Gálvez et al., 2017). The aim is to empower tourists to go further than simply visiting a new destination but to feel, taste, and embody it. In this way, they become emotionally attached to the place (Dwyer et al., 2019), developing a loyalty that extends beyond crossing a place off the wish list. Travelers experiencing truly restorative experiences are more likely to return to the same destination (Dwyer et al., 2019). When a negative event occurs, such as a natural disaster or global pandemic, destinations with a loyal following have a more reliable visitor base to rely on when the recovery begins (Walters and Mair, 2012). These loyal tourists can provide essential support and help boost the local economy during the restart phase (Mair et al., 2016). However, this process of developing an emotional connection with a place is closely linked to the concept of authenticity in destinations and tourist experiences (Richards, 2021). Authenticity is about preserving the unique identity, culture and heritage of a place (Zhou et al., 2023). It means showcasing the true essence of a destination, including its history, traditions and the everyday lives of its inhabitants. In a time when travelers are increasingly seeking meaningful experiences, authenticity has become a driving force behind their choices (Richards, 2021). This is because authentic experiences provide travelers with a sense of connection and understanding, increasing their intention to return in the future (Li et al., 2020). Nevertheless, achieving authenticity is difficult, as the allure of commercializing and catering to mass tourism can compromise a destination's original character, resulting in an overflow of tourists that undermines its sustainability (Butler, 2017). It is important to highlight that balancing destination resilience, visitor attractiveness, and maintaining authenticity, including using innovation, is a delicate challenge that requires careful planning and collaboration among local communities, businesses, and policymakers, often exploiting open innovation logics.

1.1.3 The relationship between resilience and innovation: a focus on the open innovation
Open innovation is characterized by the active involvement of a diverse set of players in the process of generating and implementing innovative solutions (Chesbrough, 2003; Chiaroni et al. 2011). Despite this transformative approach is spreading across several industries, its application within the tourism industry remains relatively underexplored (Novelli, 2023). In a context in which destinations constantly strive to survive, attracting and satisfying a variety

of travelers, open innovation offers a versatile and inclusive approach (Annamalah et al., 2023). It encourages all local actors to leverage their internal resources and collaborate with a wide range of external partners, such as tourists, local communities, businesses and government organizations (Roxas et al., 2020). This collaborative model breaks down traditional boundaries and stimulates the exchange of ideas and expertise across different fields, which ultimately enriches innovation processes (Del Vecchio et al., 2018). Therefore, the primary benefit of this practice is the ability to incorporate diverse perspectives into collaborative dynamics (Chesbrough, 2003). These creative interactions allow tourism destinations to differentiate their offerings and gain a competitive advantage (Della Corte et al., 2015). Beyond stimulating creative thinking and knowledge sharing, open innovation also promotes the establishment of networks and partnerships within the tourism ecosystem (Annamalah et al., 2023). Such connections serve as the key factors influencing the capacity of a destination to respond effectively to crises or adapt to changing market conditions. These relationships assume a pivotal role in crisis management and fortifying destination resilience (Filimonau and De Coteau, 2020). Destinations with established networks are better equipped to collaborate and coordinate resources and actions in response to unexpected events (Casal-Ribeiro et al., 2023). In this regard, relevant literature suggests that success in tourism lies in the innovative stance employed by stakeholders as well as the resilience shown by destinations and companies in times of uncertainty (Pappas et al., 2023). Consequently, by following open innovation logics, players from various backgrounds and expertise come together, ensuring that destinations remain adaptive and responsive to internal and external pressures (Fyall et al., 2012). Therefore, crisis preparedness is notable advantage of open innovation within the tourism industry (Mair et al., 2016). Destinations engaged in open innovation initiatives dispose of a more comprehensive set of tools and resources to draw upon when crises occur. The diverse expertise, resources and competences combined through open innovation mechanisms can support destinations to respond swiftly and creatively to unforeseen challenges (Annamalah et al., 2023). Moreover, through the collaboration among different actors, sustainable innovation and practices can be implemented within the destination. Since sustainable tourism is an increasingly important consideration for travelers, destinations that engage in green solutions and embrace eco-friendly practices are able to attract a growing segment of environmentally conscious tourists (Han et al., 2021). Open innovation also encourages destinations to learn from one another. Different tourism destinations within a region can exchange ideas and best practices, enhancing the overall competitiveness of the whole area. This collective learning and

knowledge sharing can result in the development of innovative offerings that elevate the entire region's tourism opportunities.

1.2 Research problem

The relevance of studying resilience in tourism becomes particularly important, especially given the wide range of challenges and shocks that tourism destinations constantly experience. While scholars have shown a growing interest in this important topic, the existing literature is lacking in providing comprehensive solutions and practical strategies that destinations can implement to effectively improve their resilience (Sharifi and Yamagata, 2014; Mair et al., 2016; Cai et al., 2018; Serfilippi and Ramnath, 2018). Tourism destinations are generally focused on specific issues, such as infrastructure development, marketing, and ensuring visitor satisfaction. However, the contemporary environment is characterized by a series of interconnected issues that profoundly affect the sustainability and prosperity of tourism destinations (Filimonau and De Coteau, 2020; Han, 2021). Therefore, the research problem holds significance for three main reasons.

Firstly, extant literature focuses on the reactive aspects of resilience, such as adapting to crises and managing adverse events. While these are essential components of resilience, less attention has been given to the proactive elements that should lead towards a theoretical framework development, in order to support and manage destination resilience (Casal-Ribeiro et al., 2023). Proactive resilience, in the context of tourist destinations, involves a forward-looking approach that goes beyond simply reacting to crises. It centers on the development of a comprehensive theoretical framework and strategic planning that allows destinations to not only withstand shocks but also actively work towards building long-term sustainability, competitiveness, and robustness (Pennington-Gray, 2014). In essence, while it is undeniably crucial to be able to adapt to unexpected challenges and recover from adverse events, it is equally imperative to proactively build a solid foundation for destination resilience (Yang et al., 2021). This approach regards a multifaceted process that integrates policy formulation, infrastructure development, community engagement, and stakeholder collaboration. Thus, one central aspect of proactive destination resilience is the establishment of a theoretical framework that can serve as a guiding structure that provides a clear roadmap for assessing, developing, and improving the resilience capability of a destination. It is a proactive strategy that lays the groundwork for identifying vulnerabilities, planning for potential risks, and continuously improving the resilience of the destination (Dwyer et al., 2019; Câmara et al., 2023).

Accordingly, the following research question is proposed:

RQ1: What factors contribute to the development of destination resilience in face of various disruptions and challenges?

The second limitation of the extant literature concerns the role of innovation in the context of destination resilience, which remains ambiguous and fragmented (Hjalager and Madsen, 2018). While some researchers acknowledge the role of innovation (Leta and Chan, 2021; Gursoy et al., 2022; Pappas et al., 2023), there is a lack of in-depth studies addressed to investigate on how innovation can be exploited to promote and sustain destination resilience. Additionally, the relationship between innovation and other aspects of tourism, such as experiential travel and authenticity, is not fully elucidated (Ivanka et al., 2023; Zins and Abbas Adamu, 2023). Consequently, there is an evident gap in the literature regarding the experiential aspects of tourism and how innovation-driven experiences contribute to destination resilience (Kim and So, 2022). As destinations strive to retain tourists and maintain their loyalty, understanding how innovation-driven experiences can fulfill these objectives becomes essential. However, the intricate interplay between destination loyalty and destination resilience remains a relatively unexplored theme (Dwyer et al., 2019). Moreover, the connection between destination loyalty and resilience is not unidirectional. While loyalty can strengthen resilience, resilience itself can be a source of increased loyalty. Indeed, a destination's ability to effectively manage crises and recover promptly can instill a lasting positive impression on visitors, strengthening their loyalty.

Therefore, the following research question is proposed:

RQ2: What role do innovation-driven tourism experiences in enhancing destination loyalty, and how can it be maintained?

The third research gap concerns collaboration and cooperation, another key facet of destination resilience. Engaging with various stakeholders (e.g., local institutions, companies, enterprise systems, residents) is fundamental in creating a collective commitment to resilience (Roxas et al., 2020). Open innovation encourages these stakeholders to share insights and jointly work towards the common goal of making a destination more resilient (Fyall et al., 2012). Through open innovation dynamics, destinations can leverage the collective knowledge of these stakeholders to address a wide range of challenges, from sustainability and technological development to visitor experience and crisis management. One of the remarkable aspects of open innovation in tourism is the ability to exploit the creativity and expertise of various players. For instance, local communities might offer unique insights into preserving cultural heritage, while technology companies can provide cutting-edge solutions for enhancing the digital experience for travelers. By opening the door to external contributions, destinations can access a broader

spectrum of skills and perspectives, leading to more comprehensive and effective solutions. Moreover, open innovation involves engaging with the global community and tapping into international expertise and best practices.

Consequently, the following research question is proposed:

RQ3: How does open innovation serve as a catalyst for the development of innovative and sustainable tourism systems, and what are the key factors driving this process within the tourism sector?

After defining the research gaps, related research questions are answered through three scientific contributions analyzed in the following chapters. Accordingly, this work aims to investigate which are the factors influencing the development of destination resilience in face of exogenous conditions. Specifically, the study both considers innovation-driven tourism experiences in enhancing destination loyalty and the open innovation approach as a catalyst for innovative and sustainable tourism systems.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This section presents the general structure of the thesis. The study is organized into five chapters and the contents of each chapter are summarized in the following subsections.

1.3.1 Chapter 1 – Introduction

The thesis is presented in this chapter. It introduces the concept of destination resilience in tourism, driven by the increasing disruptions that tourism destinations face. Different definitions of resilience are discussed, ranging from static risk mitigation to dynamic innovation and adaptability. Therefore, innovation is the central element of the discussion. It fosters the resilience of destinations, enabling them to overcome crises, create new opportunities and reduce dependence on conventional tourism offerings. Additionally, innovation can lead to the creation of novel and interactive experiences that allow tourists to connect with local culture, heritage, and communities. Experiential tourism encourages participation, connection, interaction and a deep sense of engagement with a destination. To achieve this, destinations need to collaborate with various stakeholders, pursuing open innovation dynamics, to develop and deliver enhanced tourism experiences.

1.3.2 Chapter 2 - Destination resilience and innovation for advanced sustainable tourism management: A bibliometric analysis

This chapter delves into the compelling topic of destination resilience and its growing relevance in various fields, including tourism and strategic management. It explores the potential for resilience within the tourism sector and the importance of strategies and open

innovation approaches in responding to crises. The chapter introduces a conceptual framework that intertwines destination resilience and open innovation, with supporting evidence from bibliometric analysis. Furthermore, it serves as a foundation for a broader discussion on the factors contributing to destination resilience and lays the groundwork for a toolkit of matrices and strategies. In conclusion, it raises questions about resilience assessment and performance, paving the way for future research into intriguing avenues.

1.3.3 Chapter 3 - Gastronomic experience as a driver of destination loyalty: Evidence from the Mediterranean area

The primary aim of this chapter is to uncover the drivers of destination loyalty, with a focus on the Mediterranean region. The chapter introduces the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and extends it to propose an innovative theoretical model. Italian tourists' intentions to revisit Mediterranean destinations are investigated through a questionnaire, and the data analysis has been performed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Models (PLS-SEM). The findings emphasize the significance of innovativeness and memorable culinary experiences in fostering destination loyalty. This chapter contributes to both theory and practice, providing insights into stimulating tourists' re-visit intention to Mediterranean destinations.

1.3.4 Chapter 4 - Regional innovation systems in tourism: The role of collaboration and competition

This chapter explores the concept of Regional Innovation Systems (RIS) within the context of the tourism industry. It underscores the importance of collaboration and competition among companies to drive innovation. Additionally, it examines the role of social capital, relational assets, and social relationships in promoting innovation. Focusing on the Campania Region, the chapter outlines a theoretical framework that integrates dynamic capabilities, the relational view, and resource-based theory to elucidate the mechanisms and dynamics of RIS. It highlights the co-creation of innovation and strategic plans as a key component of RIS. The research concludes by emphasizing the need for collaboration, innovation, and the alignment of various stakeholders' interests to foster sustainable and innovative regional systems.

1.3.5 Chapter 5 - Conclusion

This section summarizes the main points and final remarks of the thesis. The research focus is reintroduced, while the contents of the previous chapters are synthesized to highlight the relevance of this study to both theory and managerial practice. Suggestions for future research on the topics addressed in this work are also provided.

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CHAPTER II
Destination Resilience and Innovation for Advanced Sustainable Tourism Management: A Bibliometric Analysis. [1]

2.1 Abstract

Over the years, the concept of destination resilience has garnered increasing attention across various disciplines, including strategic management and sociology. Consequently, the potential for resilience within the tourism sector has stimulated the development of strategies, policies, and initiatives aimed at mitigating risks and capitalizing on opportunities through open innovation attitudes during times of crisis. This study aims to contribute to the debate on tourist destination resilience by presenting a conceptual framework that combines destination resilience and open innovation, supported by a bibliometric analysis. Furthermore, this work serves as a foundation for a wider discussion of factors that contribute to destination resilience and therefore provides the basis to develop a toolkit of matrixes and approaches. The results reveal that resilience assessment, as well as in terms of performance, remain undiscovered. Additionally, this research raises unresolved questions, paving the way for intriguing avenues of future research.

Keywords: tourism; destination; resilience; innovation; sustainability; open innovation

2.2 Introduction

The post COVID-19 future will be characterized by companies that will maintain their business model and rely on an economic upswing, but also, by numerous companies that will not survive. Innovation is an imperative for organizational survival and success in the turbulent market environment of the tourism industry, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis (Goessling et al., 2020; Hall et al., 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Lapointe, 2020; Nepal, 2020; Niewiadomski, 2020; Sigala, 2020; Wen et al., 2020). Due to its complexity, the tourism industry is vulnerable to the impacts of major crises (Ritchie et al., 2014). In this light, to face the increasingly devastating impacts of disasters, the use of the resilience approach is frequently suggested by multiple scholars as the best approach to respond to disasters (Aldunce et al., 2014). More specifically, resilience is a concept with many different shades of meaning and with several disciplines employing their own definition and matrixes (Folke, 2006). Generally, the term resilience refers to the intrinsic ability of objects, places, and people to absorb and recover from external stressors (Amore

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et al., 2018). The concept was for the first time applied in the engineering research area and emphasized the ability of objects to resist to disturbance and quickly return to a given equilibrium state (Holling and Gunderson, 2002). While there are multiple definitions of resilience, major variants of its concept include different perspectives and fields of application, such as ecological research, political sciences, organizational studies, etc. More specifically, the use of the concept in ecological research was introduced in the 1970s, with Holling (1973, p. 14) defining ecological resilience as "the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance, and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables", providing further momentum to its adoption as an analytical construct. Over the past few years, the resilience concept has been adopted in other research domains, including planning (Davoudi et al., 2014), psychology (Norris et al., 2008), organizational studies (Stephenson et al., 2020), political sciences (Wildavsky, 1991), and urban studies (Pelling, 2003; Gotham and Greenberg, 2014; Amore et al., 2017;). Although there are several notions of resilience available in the literature, it is possible to identify two main approaches (Pelling, 2003; Norris et al., 2008). The first one considers resilience as a polysemic concept or a metaphor (Sharifi and Yamagata, 2016) and is defined as either an outcome or a process resulting from a triggering event whereby the affected entity returns to its original state. This approach is often viewed as an "engineering" approach to resilience. The second perspective regards the "ecological" or "socio-ecological" issues (Holling and Gunderson, 2002). This approach focuses on all the aspects of resilience and their intrinsic abilities to maintain or adaptively change in the face of external factors. Starting from this, our attention shifts to the destination resilience concept, considering that, over the past few years, this issue has gained much interest and growing appeal in current tourism research, but there are still some discrepancies between the different contributions developed in the field (Traskevich and Fontanari, 2021). Tourist destinations are difficult to define, but "they lie at the heart of much thinking about tourism and resilience". In this light, tourist destinations represent fertile soil to study the different notions of resilience. Based on the literature on the theme under investigation, there is no one-size-fits-all definition of resilience that can be indiscriminately applied. In fact, "the resilience of tourist destinations emerges from the many features of the tourist supply as well as from its demand. Therefore, a sound assessment of destination resilience requires comprehensive frameworks of analysis" (Hall et al., 2018, p. 107). In this direction, the research aim is to contribute to the debate on tourist destination resilience by proposing a conceptual framework of destination resilience and innovation based on a bibliometric analysis. The growth of tourism research has been accompanied by the publication of several

bibliometric studies of the literature (Barrios et al., 2008; Hall, 2005; 2011). In contrast to narrative and systematic review, bibliometric analysis focuses on evaluating the research performance and contribution of individuals, publishing outlets, and institutions (Hall, 2011). This study is intended as a starting point for a wider discussion of factors that contribute to destination resilience, providing the basis to develop a toolkit of matrices and approaches. Accordingly, the following research question is proposed:

RQ1: What are the drivers that allow the development of a destination resilience framework based on innovation practices?

The study is organized as follows: first, the literature review on destination resilience and its interconnections with the innovation approach is examined. Subsequently, the methodology is presented, consisting of a sequence of methodological stages and a figure summarizing the entire process. The explanation of the results is then provided, leading to the main findings. The research concludes with discussions on its limitations and suggestions for further research. More in detail, it develops useful insights that destinations stakeholders can use to measure their resilience in the optic of innovation for their tourism industry, for which very little empirical research exists. To the best of the authors' knowledge, the sample of this study synthesizes the largest selection of destination resilience articles in different journals as the methodology explains.

2.3 Literature review

Research on crises and disasters, as well as post-disaster responses, are central issues due to the frequency and scale of these events occurring over the most recent years. The rise of the resilience concept is emphasized by the most recent contributions showing that it is a hot topic above all in the tourism academic literature (Prayag et al., 2018; Cochrane, 2010; Luthe and Wyss, 2014, Filimonau and De Coteau, 2020; Lew and Cheer, 2017). The resilience matter has been explored in a range of anthropogenic contexts, including recent applications in tourism (Cochrane, 2010), capturing increasing attention of academics and decision makers from various disciplines and sectors (Jones and Comfort, 2020; Cai et al., 2018). Analyzing the potential development of the tourism industry, it is necessary to consider the emergence of negative events and situations associated with climate change, crisis, political, social, and legal changes, and cultural circumstances (Niezgoda and Awedyk, 2018; Bangwayo-Skeete and Skeete, 2021; Liu and Pratt, 2018). The disruptive nature of disasters determines different implications for the tourism industry, for example, they impact transit routes and sources markets, by changing consumer perception of destinations as being safe (Liu and Pratt, 2018). The media amplifies this impact, creating the so-called "ripple effect",

which spreads the impact of disasters across different geographical areas and economic sectors, as well (Filimonau and De Coteau, 2020). This effect hinders destinations' recoveries as negative consumer perception of a disaster-affected destination hampers injection of foreign exchange, thus increasing the amount of time needed for the destination to recover (Ritchie et al., 2014). Thus, managing disasters becomes of paramount importance in the optic of sustainable tourism. In such a context, resilience requires reversal in posture from minimizing losses to creating value in the face of change orientation, toward constant learning and adaptation (Roege, 2016). Each activity conducted in times of crisis imposes an open-minded attitude towards innovation, which improves the resilience capacity of an entity (organization, destination, the whole local tourism industry). Different studies highlight that the tourism industry is more resilient than other sectors. Accordingly, some papers focus on a tourism-specific resilience indicator to measure the ability of tourism markets to replace domestic tourism flows with international ones (Cellini and Cuccia, 2015; Dai et at., 2019; Lew et al., 2016). In this direction, many papers focus on both adaptation and reaction to natural disasters, economic crises, pandemic events, and climate change, while few contributions aim at creating a rigorous and holistic measurement framework in order to manage and develop the destination in a resilient perspective by leveraging an open innovation approach. Specifically, this work is related to innovation, conceived in the optic of "open innovation" because it concerns the ability of a destination to create and integrate value added products that help to maintain the position and market share and/or improve it in the long run (D'Hauteserre, 2000). Since tourism products are the result of a co-creation approach, the adoption of open innovation can offer added value for tourists and a collaborative basis among the actors of the tourism industry and other stakeholders involved (Schnitzer et al., 2018). In general terms, the tourism literature related to destination resilience emphasizes a destination's ability to adapt, learn, and self-organize after disasters. Specifically, the extant research on destination resilience has demonstrated that, as destinations are varied in structure and resources as well as in the extent of disastrous events, the speed at which destinations recover depends on their capacity to adapt to the external turbulence (Filimonau and De Coteau, 2020). Moreover, as underlined by Hall et al. (2018), it is possible to distinguish two different dimensions of destination resilience: macro-dimension and micro-dimension. The first one relates to the social–ecological aspects of destination resilience, giving a destination-wide view of the tourism systems and how they adapt to disasters (Orchiston and Prayag, 2016) while the micro-dimension concerns the individual networks within the larger system, covering areas such as business-specific resilience (Paraskevas et al., 2013). In line with these assumptions, extant research reveals

that destination resilience depends on the resilience of all subsystems within the destination (Hall et al., 2018) and should regard planning and sharing of resources via stakeholder collaboration. Properly, tourism stakeholders should collaborate with the goal of building disaster resilience at a destination level, building their own, internal resilience. This is known as organizational resilience (Prayag et al., 2020). Therefore, building overall resilience at a destination level relies on collaborative actions the destination managers/policymakers are able to develop. Consistent with the open innovation paradigm, conceived as "the use of purposive inflows and outflows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation, and expand the markets for external use of innovation, respectively" (Chesbrough, 2006 p. 2), destinations are open and flexible in terms of the actors and the resources they involve, have flexible notions of what constitutes tourism, and also actively promote the sharing of data and other resources (Della Corte et al., 2017; Gretzel and Scarpino-Johns, 2018). They practice openness and sharing through open data and open innovation initiatives. The opening of data banks, and of infrastructure together with the notion of sharing and co-creation facilitate new levels and types of connectivity, which Hartman (2018) described as an important condition to achieve destination resilience. An important resilience issue is the ability to communicate with tourists and other stakeholders immediately before, during, and in the aftermath of a crisis (Schroeder et al., 2013). In this view, open innovation and creativity are fundamental elements of the tourism ecosystem at destinations and are actively supported by the technological and governance layers. Being able to develop as well as implement innovative solutions to address long-term problems, like overtourism, creating pathways to innovation, in terms of established partnerships, available data and technological infrastructure are aspects of destinations that clearly support the resilience issue. Hence, like resilience requires the incorporation of "thinking in adaptive systems" (Hartman, 2018), destination management requires a smart tourism mindset embracing technological connectivity, flexibility, creativity, and openness that needs to permeate all development strategies.

2.4 Methodology

The study performs a bibliometric analysis which is a robust methodology, due to its degree of objectivity, used in many disciplines, that allows systematization of scientific production on a theme, by making sense of large volumes of unstructured data in rigorous ways (Donthu et al., 2021; Aznar-Sánchez et al., 2019; Carrión-Mero et al., 2021; Hallinger and Kovačević, 2021). As regards the use of bibliometric analysis for the topic of destination resilience, there already exist academic contributions (Jiang et al., 2019; Hall, 2017); nonetheless, the attention and novelty of this research lies in the precise topic of destination resilience with

specific reference to the open innovation paradigm, considering that the destination resilience literature could greatly benefit from adopting a more open-innovative viewpoint, also integrating smart tourism principles into its frameworks. This study has been conducted through Bibliometrix, an R-package software (Massimo Aria, Department of Economics and Statistics, University of Naples Federico II, Naples, Italy) which allows bibliometric analysis using the R language (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017; Warin, 2020). This is an open-access software which provides many functions to perform quantitative analysis both in bibliometrics and scientometrics research (Donthu et al., 2021). Other advantages include avoiding the use of additional software, since it also provides a set of tools for data visualization and ensures statistical correctness and completeness of results (Derviş, 2019; Jasmin et al., 2020). Bibliometrix is spreading in many domains of academic research such as economics (Almeida and De Paula, 2019), business and management (Jasmin et al., 2020; Campra et al., 2020; Bretas and Alon, 2021), tourism and hospitality (Palacios et al., 2021; Kırtıl and Aşkun, 2021; Kim et al., 2021), open innovation (Quesado and Silva et al., 2021), politics (Demiroz and Haase, 2019; Medie and Kang, 2018), and psychiatry (Akintunde et al., 2021). The work is conducted following a precise bibliometric workflow (reported in Figure 2.1): data collection, data analysis, and data visualization (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017).

Figure 2.1 – The bibliometric workflow.
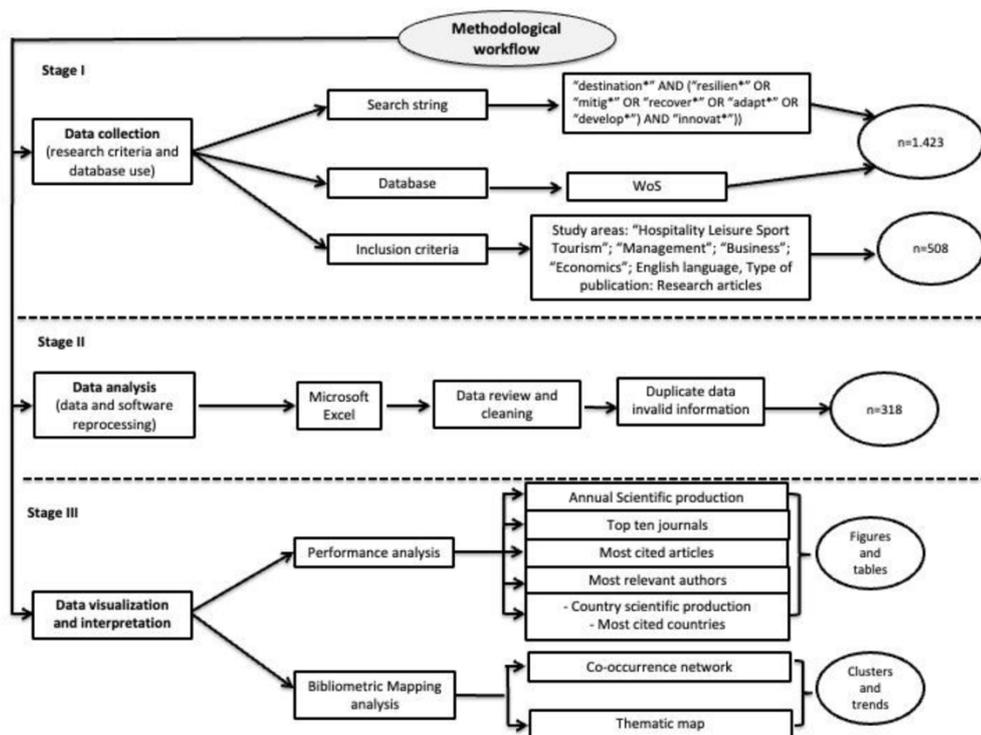
Source: own elaboration.

2.4.1 Data collection

Web of Science Core Collection database has been used to collect the articles on which our research is based with the following keywords, considered as the most pertinent:

"TS= (("destination *" AND ("resilien *" OR "mitig *" OR "recover *" OR "adapt *" OR "develop *") AND "innovat *"))".

These precise keywords have been chosen for delimiting our research field. Indeed, the word "destination" has been selected to define our research stream while the words "resilien *", "mitig *", "recover *", "adapt *", "develop *" to better discover the behavioral attitudes of destination in time of crises, using different synonyms suggested by the referring literature (Cai et al., 2018; Cellini and Cuccia, 2015; Orchiston et al., 2016; Demiroz and Haase, 2019; Hudson, 2010; Fabry and Zeghni, 2019; Morrish and Jones, 2020). Furthermore, the word "innovate *" has been added to verify whether and to what extent firms have adopted innovative solutions and behaviors. We used the word "innovat *" rather than "open innovat *", because we considered different pathways to innovation, in terms of partnerships (systemic innovation), data sharing, digital solutions, and experiential innovation, as fundamental conditions, strictly linked to the open innovation paradigm. Clarivate Analytics' Web of Science is the worldwide leading database for academic purposes (Gong et al., 2019; Zhu and Liu, 2020). This platform covers a broad range of scientific tasks across several knowledge domains (Li et al., 2018; Archambault et al., 2006) and it is traditionally accepted as the exclusive and largest accessible database for bibliometric analysis (Chavarro et al., 2018; Echchakoui, 2020; Pranckutė, 2021). It is used both as a research tool as well as a dataset for large-scale data intensive studies (Li et al., 2018). The present study has been carried out using documents released in May 2021. The asterisk was used to retrieve alternative forms of a term according to its root, for example its singular/plural form (i.e., destination or destinations; innovation or innovative). Keyword research was conducted in the Web of Science (WoS) "topic" section, which involves title, abstract, author keywords, and Keyword Plus. Initially, the search generated about 1.423 documents. WoS filters were used to narrow the search field. The first one was applied for categories, selecting: "Hospitality Leisure Sport Tourism'', "Management", "Business", and "Economics". These subjects are in line with our research purposes. Other filters concerned the type of document and the language, searching for only research papers and in English language. The decision was based on the assumption that English is the common language of science or the most used language of scientific publication (Stockemer and Wigginton, 2019) and it is widely considered as the "lingua franca'' for academic purposes also among non-Anglophone

researchers (López-Navarro et al., 2015; Majerova and Abdrazakova, 2021). After the gathering process, the total number of papers decreased to 508.

2.4.2 Data analysis
Thereafter, the abstract of each publication was carefully analyzed, excluding 190 records; specifically, in the excluded works, in addition to duplicates (2) and those not study-related (113), the concept of destination diverged from the tourist perspective. In these works, the destination was conceived as the location of exports (25) as well as foreign investments (32) or discussed in the migration context (18). The final database consists of 318 articles. This work uses some inference methods to investigate into dataset, sources, documents, and literature conceptual structure.

2.4.3 Data visualization
Visualization techniques are used to represent a science map and the outcomes of different analysis (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017). As Jiang et al. (2019) state, bibliometric visualization tools provide additional insights within a literature area by improving communication of results, supporting data analysis, and offering meaningful information to readers. In this study, data are examined using performance analysis and science mapping (Carrión-Mero et al., 2021). Performance analysis is considered a standard practice in reviews (Donthu et al., 2021). While this bibliometric approach allows to present and assess the activity of research constituents (e.g., countries, journals, authors) and their impact (Noyons et al., 1999), science mapping pertains to both intellectual and structural relationships among scientific actors (Donthu et al., 2021), by determining the cognitive structure of the research domain (Carrión-Mero et al., 2021; Noyons et al., 1999). The analysis considers the annual scientific production, top ten journals by number of publications, most cited articles, most relevant author, scientific production by countries, and most cited countries as measures for performance analysis. Science mapping analysis concerns the co-occurrence network and thematic map.

2.5 Results
Firstly, to have a more comprehensive outline of the destination resilience linked to the open innovation paradigm, a systematic literature review has been conducted searching for the most relevant and more influencing papers in the current academic debate. Accordingly, the literature review reveals that 65% out of 318 papers are conceptual, while 35% are empirically based (Figure 2.2). In the case of empirical papers, most of them concentrate on qualitative research, emphasizing the multi-case study approach. In detail, most of the contributions are based on the study of specific crisis events taken individually, pursuing a

governance-based approach. Economic crises and natural disasters are the main phenomena investigated while the units of analysis are principally macro-aggregates, such as a country, a specific destination, or the whole tourism industry. Some publications aim to contribute to the resilience topic by advancing measurement models and offering disparate indicators (Hu et al., 2021), but only few of them conduct empirical validation of the proposed resilience indexes (Cai et al., 2018) providing quantitative insights. The most suggested and adopted ones include economic indicators, social indicators, institutional indicators, infrastructure indicators, and community indicators (Cai et al., 2018; Pranckutė, 2021; Barbhuiya and Chatterjee, 2020).

Figure 2.2 – Conceptual vs empirical papers.
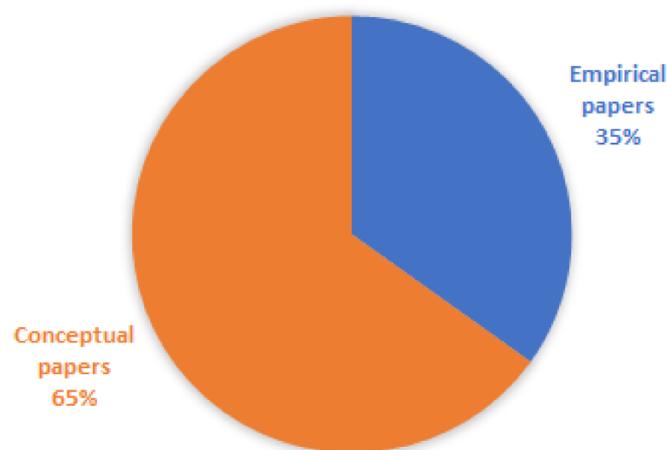
Source: own elaboration.

To strengthen the interconnection between the destination resilience and the open innovation approach, this work uses a bibliometric analysis. It seems to be very interesting to investigate the parallels between the concept of destination resilience and open innovation principles and therefore to suggest that further conceptualizations and empirical research at the intersection of the two topics could greatly inform theory and practice in both areas. For instance, while there is great research on open innovation in tourism (Egger et al., 2016), the main drivers and outcomes of open innovation have not been examined yet, above all not at the destination level and not with respect to the notion of destination resilience. The next section discusses the literature trend from 1998 to 2021.

2.5.1 The evolution of scientific production

With reference to the following graph (Figure 2.3), in relation to the topics addressed in this study, there is a growing research trend. We divided the timeframe in three time flows according to turning points identified in the literature evolution over the years. These turning points concern the contraction or increase in scientific production as well as shifts in the

topics addressed. After the first period (1998–2004), characterized by only five contributions, scholarly attention has increased since 2005, reaching a peak in 2020. The only years in which there was a slight contraction were 2015 and 2016. During the second period (2005–2014) 100 articles have been published. The themes of destination management, innovation and sustainability begin to assume a central role in the literature. With reference to destination management and governance research, i.e., (Nordin, S.; Svensson, 2007; Zach, 2012; Ali and Frew, 2014; Paulino et al., 2021), the fourth most cited article (Dredge, 2006) explores the role of networks between local government and industry in creating public-private partnerships, identifying managerial implications in tourist destinations through a case study. Several studies are addressed to the innovation (i.e., Hjalager, 2002; Borseková et al., 2017) and sustainable development (i.e., Krozer and Christensen-Redzepovic, 2006; Triantafillidou and Tsiaras, 2018; Seraphin and Gowreesunkar, 2021) topics. Within the context of cultural tourist destinations and based on the results of the ISAAC European project, a study covers both subjects (Paskaleva et al., 2011). Authors deal with technical and organizational innovations in the implementation of integrated e-services, which allow to improve access and fruition of local and cultural heritage, promoting sustainable development that benefits the whole community. Other studies deal with topics related to the issue of sustainability. Among these, a contribution discusses the centrality of mobility in sustainable destination planning (Scuttari et al., 2013). Findings reveal that innovations oriented to sustainable forms of transport are justified because of social, environmental, and economic impacts of tourist traffic.

Figure 2.3 – The annual scientific production from 1998 to 2021.
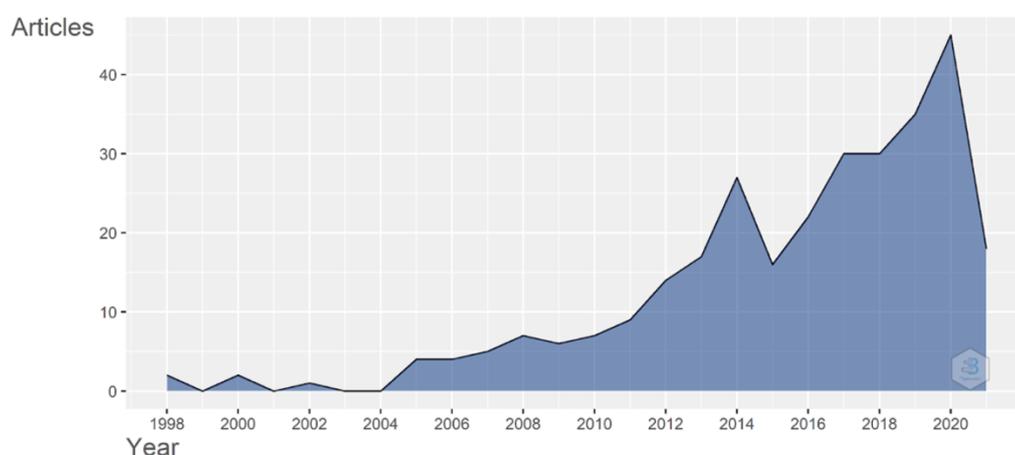
Source: own elaboration.

The third scientific production period (2015–2021) counts 213 contributions. The themes of innovation and sustainability, resilience (e.g., Gretzel and Scarpino-Johns, 2018; Calgaro et

al., 2014; De Uña-Álvarez and Villarino-Pérez, 2017; Beirman et al., 2018) and its related topics, such as disaster and crisis recovery, (e.g., Cave and Dredge, 2020; Türkcan and Erkuş-Öztürk, 2020; Student et al., 2020; Choi et al., 2021; Dias et al., 2021) climate change, (i.e., Demiroglu et al., 2015; Coles et al., 2015; Scott et al., 2016; Veiga et al., 2018) and overtourism (e.g., Nillson, 2020; Ganzaroli et al., 2021), start to emerge. Other papers stress the attention on smart destinations. Among these, the most cited article (Gretzel et al., 2015) defines the fundamentals of the smart tourism concept and discusses its potential and disadvantages.

2.5.2 Distribution of scientific production in journals, most cited articles, and main authors

The academic production of the papers included in our database appears fragmented. The total number of sources is 103 and the top ten journals have published 127 articles, representing 40% of the entire sample (Table 2.1). In our opinion, this is probably due to the general interest of tourism scholars in the topics under investigation, emphasizing their pivotal role in the field-specific literature.

Table 2.1 – Top ten journals.

Sources	N. of Articles	Impact Factor	H-Index
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	21	7.96	103
Tourism Management	17	10.96	199
Tourism Review	17	4.45	32
Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	15	6.95	39
Current Issues in Tourism	14	6.89	74
International Journal of Tourism Research	10	3.79	58
International Journal of Tourism Cities	9	2.60	12
Journal of Travel Research	8	10.98	132
Tourism Analysis	8	1.47	36
Tourism Geographies	8	6.64	61

Source: own elaboration

This is also evident from the aim and scope of the principal sources, which cover different subjects. The Journal of Sustainable Tourism (H-index: 103) promotes the understanding of sustainability and its relationship with the tourism industry by stimulating the scientific

debate and pursuing a multidisciplinary approach. Tourism Management, the journal with the highest H-index (199) in the Tourism, Leisure, and Hospitality Management subject category on Scimago and Journal of Destination Marketing and Management (H-index: 39) deal with management, planning, and marketing of travel and tourism. Tourism Review (H-index: 32) and Current Issues in Tourism (H-index: 74) are generalist journals, which cover a wide range of themes within the tourism field. The last five positions are occupied by International Journal of Tourism Research with ten articles, followed by International Journal of Tourism Cities with nine articles and, at last, Journal of Travel Research, Tourism Analysis and Tourism Geographies with eight published articles. In general, all these journals encourage multi and interdisciplinary debates disseminating novel and creative approaches and methods to foster research. The first eight journals are the core sources as they published about a third of the papers included in the database. Furthermore, bibliometric tools allow for a list of the most cited articles (Table 2.2); in this research, these represent leading tourism-specific contributions.

Table 2.2 – Most cited articles.

Articles	Total Citations
Gretzel U, 2015, Electron Mark	392
Buhalis D, 1998, Tourism Manage	384
Hjalager Am, 2002, Tourism Manage	352
Dredge D, 2006, Tourism Manage	320
Vogt Ca, 1998, Ann Tourism Res	273
Dwyer L, 2009, Tourism Manage	229
Lamming R, 2000, Int J Oper Prod Man	208
Neuhofer B, 2012, J Destin Mark Manage	199
Oskam J, 2016, J Tour Futures	194
Buhalis D, 2005, Tour Recreat Res	163

Source: own elaboration

The research domain of destination resilience and open innovation is addressed by a large number of authors. In fact, 694 scholars have contributed to the 318 articles, of which only 58 contributions can be considered as single-authored documents. Specifically, only 8 authors published at least 4 publications (1.2% of total authors), followed by 8 authors which

contributed with 3 papers (1.2% of total authors), 60 authors of 2 publications (8.7% of total authors), and lastly 618 authors with just one work (89% of total authors). These ratios indicate a low concentration in this field of study. The authors per document index is 2.18, the co-authors per document index 2.52, while the collaboration index is 2.47. The top contributors, according to the number of published papers, are presented in detail in Figure 2.4. The most prolific authors are D. Buhalis, A.M. Hjalager, and H. Pechlaner. By the use of WoS citation report function, we collected information about the number of published works over the years, the citation average per item and the H-index. This is a measure of the productivity and citation impact of the publications of a scholar (Hirsch, 2005). Buhalis D. is the author who contributed to the academic research with 140 publications from 1993 to date. This author, affiliated with Bournemouth University, is an expert in the subject of strategic management and marketing with a particular interest in the application of ICT in the tourism and hospitality industry. His citation average per item is about 70 and the H-index is 45. He is followed by Hjalager A.M. from the University of Southern Denmark. Her main research priorities concern tourism and rural development. Since 1996, she has published 57 contributions. This scholar has an average citation per article of 34 and the H-index is 16. The last of the top three contributors is H. Pechlaner from the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. His research interests are related to entrepreneurship and destination management and governance. This author contributes to scientific debate with 106 publications and the H-index is 22.

Figure 2.4 – Most relevant authors.
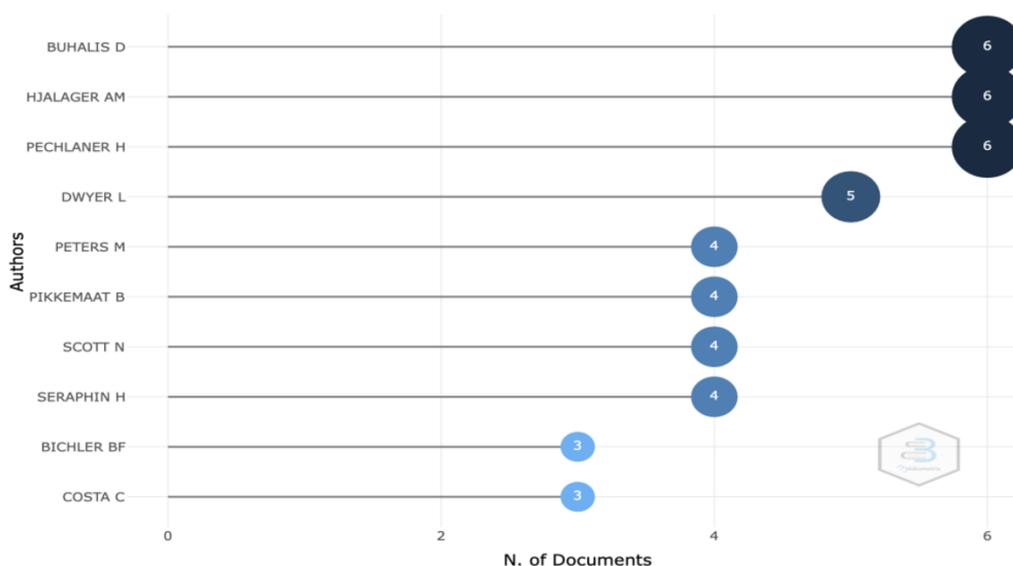
Source: own elaboration.

2.5.3 Contributions and citations by country

Figure 2.5 reports the global scientific production by country, in which the color tends to change according to the number of published works. The extant literature is provided by 62 contributing countries, for a total of 664 frequencies. The most productive country is the United Kingdom that covers 68 documents, representing 10.2% of the whole sample. It is followed by Spain and Australia with respectively 65 (9.8%) and 62 (9.3%) articles. Italy is the fourth country in the list, with 51 contributions (7.7%). Next in the ranking are the United States (47; 7.1%), China (44; 6.6%), Portugal (39; 5.9%), and The Netherlands (24; 3.6%). In addition, there are 54 countries which contribute to this field of study with less than 24 documents, representing 40% of total frequencies.

Figure 2.5 – Scientific production by country.
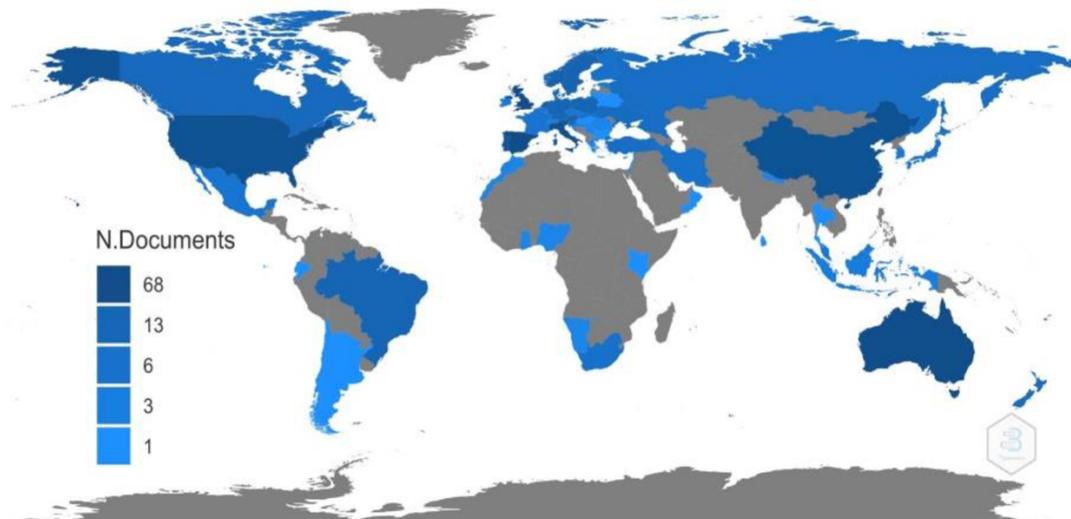
Source: own elaboration.

Comparing these data with the number of citations per country (see Figure 2.6), the top 5 contributors are also the most mentioned. The United Kingdom is the country with the largest number of citations (1550), 688 more than Australia (862) and nearly triple the citations of the USA (569), Spain (533), and Italy (468). Although Denmark (435), Korea (403), Canada (246), and Slovenia (204) do not appear among the main contributors, these are some of the ten most frequently cited countries. The Netherlands is placed ninth with 241 mentions.

Figure 2.6 – Most cited countries.
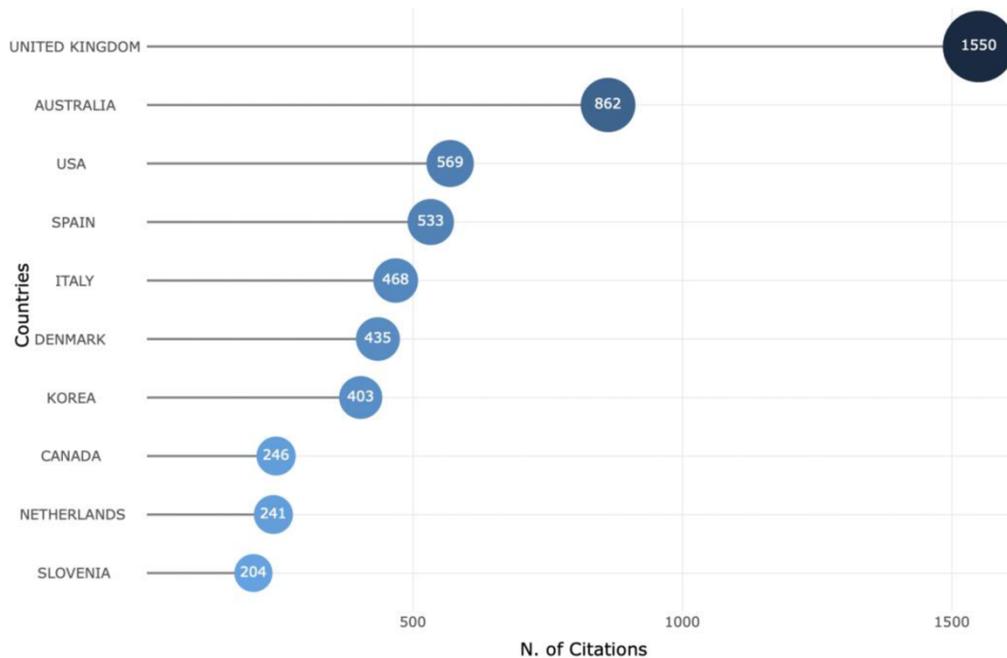
Source: own elaboration.

2.5.4 Conceptual structure: co-occurrence network and thematic map

The keywords used to conduct our analysis are suitable for the study purposes, since these allow us to answer the research questions. The co-occurrence network allows to evidence the conceptual structure and the most recurrent issues in the examined themes. Specifically, co-occurrence analysis was used to detect the most frequently occurring keywords and to identify trends and emerging research topics. Figure 2.7 shows the keyword co-occurrence and clusterizes the main concepts coming from the papers. This constitutes the conceptual structure of our research field. The results indicate that research on destination resilience and open innovation regards topics: innovation, management, performance, destination, tourism, and networks. This finding, given the generic nature of these words, reveals that tourism-related literature is still in an embryonic state in the fields of resilience and innovation. These concepts have not been thoroughly investigated yet and appear to be linked by traditional management keywords that are associated with: competitiveness, strategy, model, experience. Some words seem too broad, such as management and performance; this is explained by the selection criteria used to retrieve contributions in management, business, and administration subjects, which are associated with business performance. Other interesting words, such as collaboration and networks, are related to resilience, as the ability to cope with crises, and connected to coopetition strategies. This result paves the way for future compelling research opportunities. Other significant themes emerge from our work,

namely, technology, sustainable tourism, absorptive capacity, dynamic capabilities, and knowledge concerning firms or destination resilience capacity.

Figure 2.7 – The co-occurrence network.
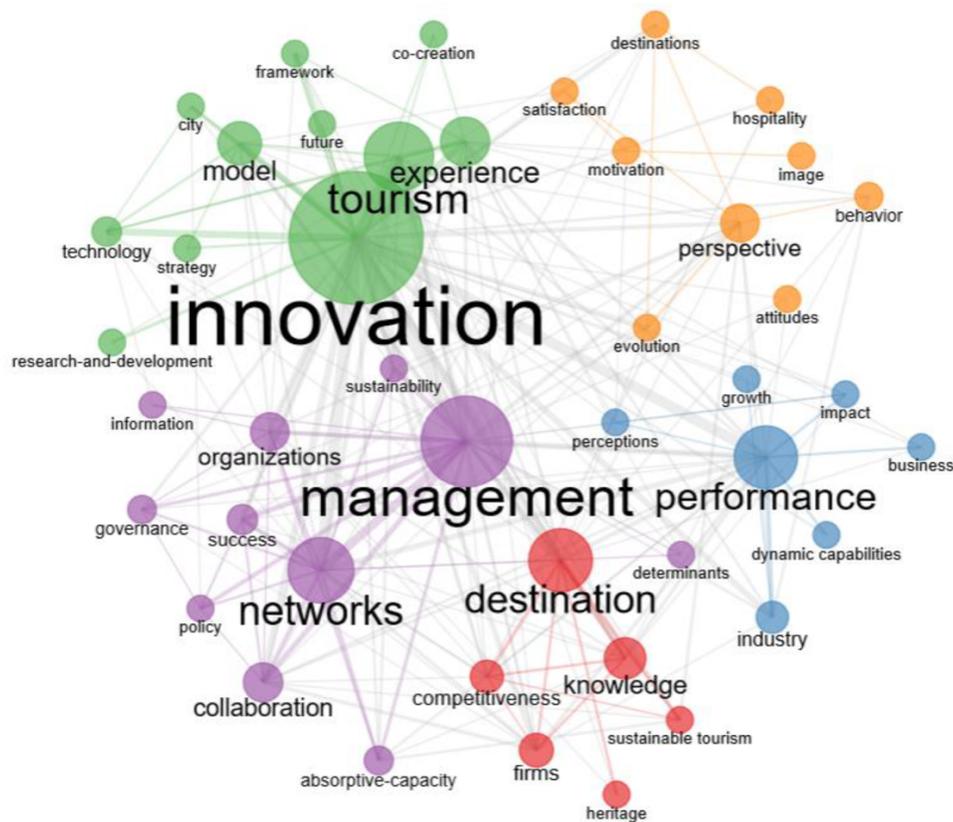
Source: own elaboration.

Figure 2.8 illustrates the thematic map, which exploits the Keywords Plus field. Those keywords are associated by Thomson Reuters editorial experts supported by a semi-automated algorithm. They review the titles of all references and highlight additional relevant but overlooked keywords that were not listed by the authors. Differently from the authors' keywords, the Keywords Plus field is normalized. Keywords Plus terms are able to capture an article's content with greater depth and variety (Della Corte et al., 2019). The thematic map, also known as strategic diagram, shows the main detected themes, categorizing them in four classes according to their Callon's density and Callon's centrality measures (Cobo et al., 2011). The centrality represents the importance of the topic and the density indicates how the topic is developed according to quantitative terms (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017). As Cahlik (2000, p. 375) describes:

- Motor themes (upper-right quadrant): Hospitality, antecedents, and perspective even if they are developed and relevant themes, they are almost general. For their high

centrality and density, these are the main matters for the structuring of a research field.

- Niche themes (upper-left quadrant): Product innovation and destination development/management are only of a marginal importance for the field of study because these have well developed internal ties but unimportant external ties. So, these themes have a high centrality but a low density.

- Emerging or declining themes (lower-left quadrant): Sustainable tourism is slightly developed and marginal. This topic is still in an embryonic state of study with the topic of destination resilience and innovation.

- Basic themes (lower-right quadrant): Model, technology, city/innovation, tourism, networks/knowledge, industry, impact are themes with low density and high centrality that are transversal in the research area.

Figure 2.8 – Thematic map.
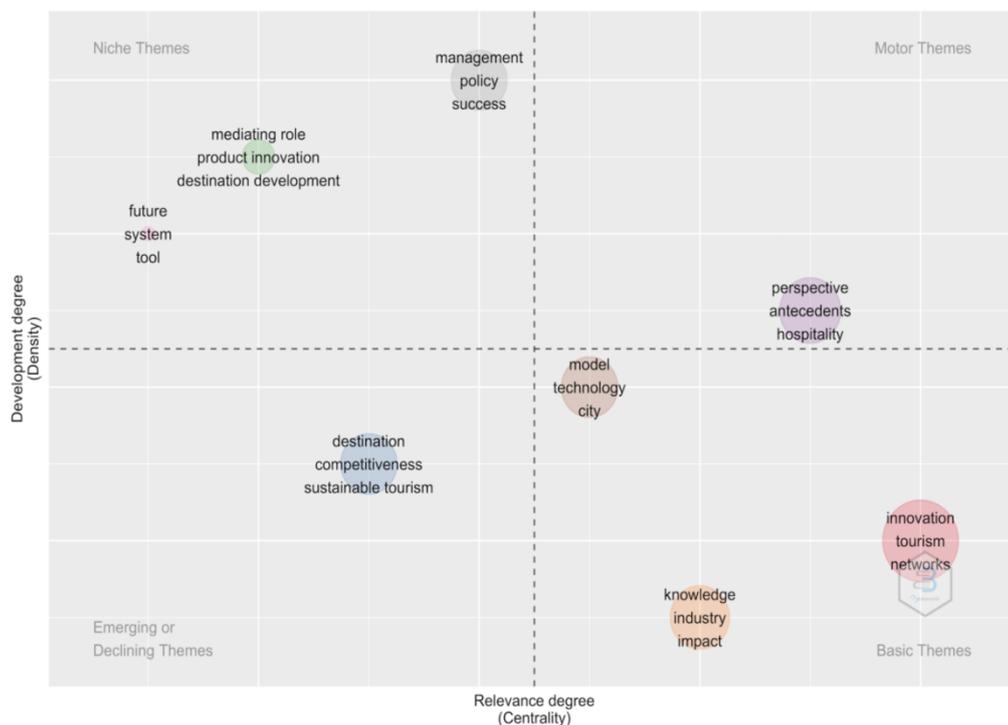
Source: own elaboration.

2.6 Discussion

Based on literature review and bibliometric analysis and in order to answer the research question aimed at understanding what are the drivers that allow the development of a destination resilience framework in an open innovation realm, a resilience-based conceptual framework is proposed, by providing a set of drivers of destination resilience that can lead

to the adoption of useful post-crisis recovery strategies in the optic of sustainable tourism development. As emerges from Figure 2.9, technology (as also emerges from the thematic map) represents a major force in creating flexibility in the tourism industry (Hall et al., 2020). Crises and disasters help in speeding up changes in technology. Robots replacing people, applications on mobiles being employed to track people's contacts, artificial intelligence devices or Big Data analytics forecasting are only few examples of technologies spread among the masses. In particular, during COVID-19, people have taken massive aid from technology experts. Thus, technology can handle pandemic-specific issues such as screening travelers, ensuring online education for students, etc. (Hall et al., 2020). Some contributions show people willingness to change their attitudes toward technology (Gursoy et al., 2019; 2020; Lin et al., 2020). In this direction, Gretzel et al. (2020) propose the "six transformative e-tourism research pillars" for bringing in changes in e-tourism by proactively using IT resources for short-term and long-term purposes. Mukherji and Silberman (2013) argue that high growth and progressive regions differ in their culture that promotes innovation. This attitude is due to their absorptive capacity, which they define as the combined ability of firms and individuals within the region to recognize, assimilate, and commercialize external knowledge or knowledge generated elsewhere. The factors and organizational capabilities which influence and foster absorptive capacity within tourism businesses are deeply investigated (Ponce-Espinosa et al., 2020). According to the authors, absorptive capacity enables the achievement of a competitive advantage, leading to a firm superior performance. This stream of research supports the existence of a positive relationship between inter-firm cooperation, dynamic capabilities, competitive advantage, and company performance (Wilke et al., 2019). Therefore, absorptive, innovative, and adaptive capabilities are the outcomes of inter-organizational cooperation. The importance of innovation tourism networks (as resulted from the thematic map) in the tourism field has been widely highlighted in the literature. In the context of coastal tourist destinations, a contribution points out the international dynamics that seaside territories should implement within innovation networks (Brandão et al., 2019). Specifically, authors argue that to improve territorial attractiveness and competitiveness, markets and products innovation and diversification play a central role. At least, expert knowledge and experience, in terms of knowledge industry impact (Chang et al., 2020; Prideaux et al., 2020) need to be put into practice for shifting toward destination resilience. As for the post-crisis responses, it is evident that the recent times are the most suitable for promoting a sustainable tourism industry (Benjamin et al., 2020). This one needs to be oriented toward education, environmental and social justice, and racial healing. The tourism industry's players need to

be encouraged to push a new demand by changing their unsustainable product offers. Such measures can connect, support, and take care of the whole tourism industry to everyone's advantage (Stankov et al., 2020, Sharma et al., 2021). Sustainability represents an on-going procedure to attain positive outcomes and is defined by changing beliefs, wishes, information, skills, and public awareness (Galvani et al., 2020). While the variety of models in the extant literature highlights a particularly interesting area of research, the absence of universally recognized models raises some questions that can be addressed in the future research. Since the disaster triggers depend on a wide range of causes and the response can require a different mix of competences and supplies (Whybark, 2015), the primary challenge in developing a robust and integrated model is the complexity associated with synthesizing the multitude and heterogeneity of variables (Whybark, 2015).

Figure 2.9 – Destination resilience-based framework.
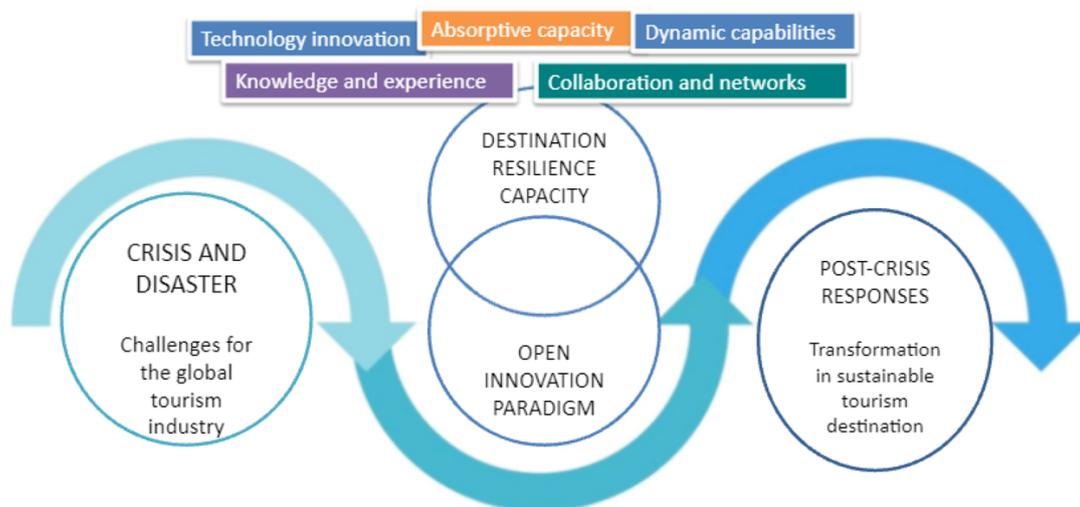
Source: own elaboration.

Furthermore, the identification of appropriate parameters is complex and their monitoring costs are daunting (De Sausmarez, 2007). While tourism development for local communities is expected to contribute to the economy, improving social welfare and preserving local culture (Poor and Smith, 2004), tourism destinations are significantly vulnerable to shocks (Calgaro et al., 2008). Resilience to disaster events is mainly associated with risk mitigation, cost minimization and impact reduction rather than with the ability to cope with change by seizing opportunities. This is particularly relevant if we consider that the tourism industry is a good example of a complex adaptive system (Farrell and Twining-Ward, 2004). In a transitional phase, entrepreneurs need to create new value for customers and new markets (Lam et al., 2021). Considering an organization as a value creation source, both innovation and knowledge creation assume relevance (Gretzel et al., 2015; Yun et al., 2016). Making a

destination more dependent on innovation seems at first sight counterproductive to achieving greater resilience as innovation adoption can add different kinds of vulnerabilities (Yun et al., 2016). As Hartman specifies in his work (2018), it is desirable to develop, as well as efficiently implement, innovative solutions to address long-term issues like overtourism. For instance, pathways to innovation, partnerships as systemic collaborations, data sharing, and pervasive technological infrastructure are fundamental conditions, strictly linked to the open innovation paradigm (Lindroth et al., 2007) that clearly support destination resilience. Creativity and innovation are seen as key components in company and destination management strategies (Sharpley, 2005). To date, surprisingly little is known about the complex drivers of destination resilience, leading to the creation and application of ineffective resilience-building solutions. Of course, the vulnerability of tourism destinations to socio-economic and environmental shocks (rapid-onset events) and stressors (slow-onset events) is widely recognized (Carlsen and Liburd, 2008). Long-term resilience-building activities aimed at securing future sustainable tourism cannot be operationalized successfully without understanding and addressing the underlying drivers that form the foundations of destination resilience in the optic of open innovation.

2.7 Conclusions, limits, and hints for further research

This study contributes, according to both a theoretical and practical point of view, to the scientific production on the theme under investigation by suggesting a coping-up mechanism, which revolves around resilience. However, considering the extant literature, the assessment of this attitude, as well as in terms of performance, remain unclear. Specifically, there are some unresolved questions that can represent the starting point for further research. Firstly, it would be interesting to understand how destination resilience should be analyzed and evaluated. In this direction, it could be useful to study if economic indicators, such as balance sheet ratios, could be used to measure resilience capacity. Nonetheless, apart from economic indicators there is a need to develop indicators aimed at measuring soft capabilities, which currently cannot be identified. Another important issue to be addressed regards the period in which the resilience capacity should be measured (e.g., one year after the crisis?). An extensive part of the research carried out so far is devoted to prevention, scenario creation, and preparation of contingency plans. In this direction, the approach to post-crisis recovery strategies has been dispersed and unstructured. Hence, most studies on the issue under investigation fail to adopt a more holistic perspective. In addition, practitioners within the tourism destination have yet to realize the importance of risk and crisis management planning due to the lack of theoretical and conceptual frameworks addressing this issue. To close significant research gaps in the tourism management field,

we consider both necessary and interesting for future research to investigate firms' post-crisis recovery even to define measures (variables, indicators) in order to include a corporate dimension in resilience assessment models and to clarify how value creating business conducts contribute to system-wide resilience improvement. The present study highlights a growing need for new resilience approaches considering the location-specific characteristics of the tourism industry, its relevance to the local economy, and the hospitality supply chain strategies. This is very important in the optic of the actual situation because it is clear that during the pandemic all destinations were going through a difficult period, but it is also true that as a post-COVID 19 response, destination managers are focusing attention on tourism as a source of development (as highlighted also by the budget allocation for sustainable and social tourism). Hence, according to this view and in the wake of the pandemic, this research proposes a destination resilience-based framework for reviving the global tourism industry post-COVID 2019. However, this work presents some limitations. First of all, this study certain tools of bibliometric analysis were adopted, so it is suggested for future research to deeply investigate the social and intellectual structure, through other bibliometric instruments. The second limitation concerns the type of documents included in this work. Only topic-related papers written in English were collected from the WoS database, excluding conference proceedings, book chapters and doctoral theses. Furthermore, future studies should select additional keywords properly connected to resilience and open innovation in management and hospitality subjects. Finally, it is advisable the complementary use of other research techniques (i.e., content analysis) for a better understanding of examined issues and to improve the quality and relevance of the bibliometric outcomes. In order to make them generalizable and to test the validity of the proposed destination resilience framework, a cross-country empirical study could be helpful. However, this article reveals that, at the conceptual level, there are many parallels between the notion of destination resilience and open innovation principles and therefore suggests that further conceptualizations and empirical research at the intersection of the two topics could greatly inform theory and practice in both areas. The aspiration is that this research will serve as a steppingstone towards such greater integration of destination resilience concepts and open innovation practices, encouraging research that bridges the two subjects.

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CHAPTER III
Gastronomic Experience as a Driver of Destination Loyalty: Evidence from the Mediterranean Area [2]

3.1 Abstract

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the drivers of destination loyalty in the Mediterranean area. The proposed model starts from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and proposes an innovative version of the same through the extension of the model. The research was conducted through a questionnaire submitted to Italian tourists concerning their intention to revisit tourist destinations in the Mediterranean area. The data collected have been studied adopting the Partial Least Squares approach to Structural Equation Models (PLS-SEM). The results highlight that innovativeness and memorability of the culinary experiences play a key role. The chapter brings interesting theoretical and managerial implications. Under the first profile, it offers an innovative and extended version of the model, deepening the role that gastronomic experiences have on destination loyalty. From a managerial point of view, it provides a clear key to understanding which levers are to be used to stimulate tourists to return to tourist destinations.

Keywords: Destination, loyalty, Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), PLS-SEM, Mediterranean area.

3.2 Introduction

The concept of Destination Loyalty (DL) has become increasingly important in recent years, because of companies' realization that acquiring a new consumer is far more expensive than relying on tourists to re-entrust their resorts (Um et al., 2006). According to several authors, loyalty towards a destination plays a central role in supporting the tourist resort and the tourism industry (Rohman, 2020). The biggest challenge for destination managers is to be able to develop strategies to make the destinations attractive and highly recognizable for tourists (Gursoy et al., 2014). In this regard, DL plays a central role in the development of local tourist attractions (Lemy et al., 2020). According to extant literature, one of the drivers of tourist destinations is linked to food-related experiences (Björk and Kauppinen Räisänen, 2016). As such, the study of culinary experiences within the tourism and hospitality field

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[2] Please be informed that a similar version of this chapter has been published with the same title in "Evolving the perspectives on the value of gastronomy for Mediterranean destination development", 3rd Edition, McGraw Hill (2023). I would like to express my gratitude to my co-authors, Dr. Valerio Muto, Dr. Fabiana Sepe and Dr. Anna Prisco for their valuable contribution. I assume full responsibility for any inaccuracies or mistakes that may be identified in this chapter.

reflected the development in management and marketing theory. This transition entails shifting from a focus on rational decision-making to a greater emphasis on the emotional aspects of experiences (Richards, 2021). Within the field of Destination Management (DM), gastronomy, local culture and traditions are intended to influence the destination value, strengthening tourists' overall image and perception of the destination (Du Rand et al., 2003; Choe and Kim, 2018). Nowadays, more and more destinations and companies are realizing the importance of gastronomic experiences as drivers for the most important and modern tourist flows. Mediterranean countries have been long associated with gastronomy, which has always been a lever for the development of tourist destinations (Nistor and Dezsi, 2022). From the perspective of Mediterranean cuisine, "food quality" and "traditional gastronomy" are a key role for the tourists' food consumption satisfaction (Akdag et al., 2018). At the same time, Mediterranean countries have witnessed an increasing correlation between wine tasting, food experiences and tourism, which has been influenced by efforts in regional development and reimagining approaches amid the larger context of global rural restructuring (Hall and Mitchell, 2000). The research gap in the existing literature lies in the lack of comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing tourists' satisfaction and loyalty in the context of food-related activities as drivers for the development of tourist destinations. While there is a growing body of research on the impacts of food tourism, particularly on destination development (Di Clemente et al., 2020; Park and Widyanta, 2022), the specific role of local food consumption value on shaping tourist behavior remains relatively underexplored. Specifically, as also stressed by Rousta and Jamshidi (2019) existing studies have not fully elucidated the extent to which the value attributed to consuming local food influences tourists' overall satisfaction with their experiences and their subsequent loyalty to the destination. Furthermore, the existing body of literature concerning memorable food experiences shows a notable gap in the incorporation of sensory impressions as a fundamental element of food tourism investigation. Over the past ten years, only a limited number of studies have highlighted the significance of memory and its connection to food experiences (Afaq et al., 2022). By delving into this underdeveloped theme, this study sheds light on the significant role that local culinary experiences play in shaping tourists' perceptions, emotions, and overall satisfaction during their visits to a destination. Understanding the impact of local food consumption value on tourist behavior can offer valuable insights for destination managers, hospitality businesses, and policymakers in designing effective strategies to enhance tourist satisfaction and foster long-term loyalty to the destination (Choe and Kim, 2018). Consistent with the above considerations, the purpose of this chapter is to investigate the role of food experiences on

tourist DL. It is essential to examine the drivers of DL to provide managers with a tool to understand which levers to use to strengthen loyalty towards a tourist destination. To investigate drivers of DL, the study uses the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) and extends it with two external constructs: "Perceived experiential innovativeness" (PEI) and "Memorability of culinary experiences" (MCE). The chapter is structured as follows: in section 3.3, a brief literature review is presented. In Section 3.4, the research framework and the hypotheses development are explained, while in section 3.5 the methodology, data analysis and results are described. Section 3.6 reports the main findings, while section 3.7 and 3.8 describe the theoretical and practical implications, and conclusions, respectively.

3.3 Literature review

3.3.1 The evolving role of gastronomy in tourist experiences

Gastronomy is a broad concept, encompassing the relationship between culture and food (Kivela and Crotts, 2006). The culture of a society is expressed in various ways (e.g., in art, literature, music) and can be considered as a set of activities usually defined as the "art of living", which provides meanings and values to life in a particular community (Hegarty and O'Mahony, 2001). These include food, art, habits, and behaviors of people who experience them and feed the tradition of a territory (Hernández-Rojas and Huete Alcocer, 2021). Accordingly, gastronomy can also be defined as part of regional culture that consists in the possession of expertise and competencies related to food and drink, which improves the enjoyment and delight of eating and drinking (Santich, 2004). Sensory experiences related to culinary activities and stimulated through the tasting of typical drinks and foods are increasingly used in tourism in order to enhance the relation between people and territories (Di Clemente et al., 2019). Traditional gastronomy affects both the destination economy and the conservation of regional culture (Hernández-Rojas and Huete Alcocer, 2021). From the economic perspective, the benefits triggered by food-related tourism consumption can significantly contribute to the economic development and sustainable competitiveness of destinations and tourism firms involved (Mak et al., 2012). Moreover, the interconnection of gastronomy tourism's economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and technological aspects offers unique opportunities to both tourists and destinations (Yong et al., 2022). On the other side, gastronomic tourism promotes food and culinary heritages, by co-creating with local producers and host communities the sociability, enjoyment and sharing of regional foods in various ethno-cultural spaces, fostering social sustainability and wellbeing (Fusté-Forné and Jamal, 2020). With the evolution of gastronomic experiences beyond their fundamental purpose of merely providing food to travelers, there has been a greater focus on

understanding the essence and arrangement of these experiences, their impact on customer behavior, and their significance in the realm of tourism marketing and branding (Richards, 2021). Consequently, tourist destinations are revitalizing and promoting local food for cultural awareness and market exploration (Di Clemente et al., 2019; Hernández-Rojas and Huete Alcocer, 2021). In considering the evolving role of gastronomy in tourist experiences, it is interesting to examine it through the lens of the "The Four Realms of an Experience" model proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1998). This framework delineates four distinct levels of economic value and consumer engagement in experiences, namely entertainment, education, esthetic and escapism, that manifest across two dimensions: customer participation (passive-active) and connection (absorption-immersion) (Chirakranont and Sakdiyakorn, 2022). First, within the realm of entertainment, culinary tourism offers an engaging and enjoyable escape from routine life as travelers engage in gastronomic adventures to taste new flavors and culinary creations. This entertainment aspect not only satisfies the palate, but also ignites curiosity and excitement, making gastronomy a central component of leisure travel experiences (Park and Widyanta, 2022). Second, culinary tourism contributes to educational experiences by offering insights into the cultural significance and historical roots of local cuisines. Through culinary tours, cooking classes, and interactive workshops, tourists gain a deeper understanding of traditional food practices, ingredients, and culinary techniques, enriching their cultural knowledge and appreciation (Kokkranikal and Carabelli, 2024). In addition, in gastronomic tourism, emphasis is placed on the sensory pleasures and visual appeal that surround culinary experiences (Lee et al., 2023). Gastronomic activities are meticulously designed to capture the senses and evoke aesthetic satisfaction. Perfect vineyards set in rolling hills, picturesque farm-to-table restaurants that exude rustic charm and cutting-edge restaurants that feature innovative dining presentations contribute to the immersive aesthetic experience of gastronomic tourism (Thanh and Kirova, 2018). The interplay of colors, textures, aromas and flavors not only tantalizes the taste buds, but also stimulates the visual and smell senses, creating a multi-sensory journey for tourists (Di Clemente et al., 2019; Haller et al., 2021). Furthermore, culinary tourism offers travelers a special opportunity to escape the confines of the daily routine and immerse themselves in new culinary adventures (Walter, 2017). It offers a respite from the monotony of daily life, allowing individuals to disconnect from their busy schedules and engage in the exploration of different culinary landscapes (Thanh and Kirova, 2018). The act of savoring unfamiliar flavors, engaging in culinary rituals and immersing oneself in the cultural tapestry of a destination fosters a sense of renewal. Through culinary tourism, travelers have the opportunity to venture beyond their comfort

zone, creating new connections and lasting memories amid global culinary diversity. These insights point to a new scenario for the tourism industry, in which tourists perceive feelings, memories and personal engagement as the added value of tourism products (Tsai, 2016; Di Clemente et al., 2019). However, this development does not affect all countries equally. In relation to these emerging trends, Pavlidis and Markantonatou (2020) argue that Greece seems to lag behind somewhat, as its tourism interactions are still primarily influenced by the anthropocentric culture of the Greeks. Nevertheless, they argue that with the general increase in tourism services, it is expected that local gastronomic offerings will also experience an overall growth. Moreover, food has different impacts in each stage of the journey. In this regard, Chen and Huang (2016) analyzed the relevance of food experiences for domestic tourists visiting Chongqing (China). Their findings demonstrated that while in the pre-trip stage food was not a relevant motivator in visiting the city, during and at the end of the trip food-related activities have been perceived to be among the most important ones. Similarly, Rousta and Jamshidi's study (2020) highlighted that the image of Shiraz (Iran) as a food destination failed in the pre-travel phase, because it did not affect the intention to visit, but positively influenced post-travel tourists' behavior in recommending destination local food and revisiting the city. Such evidence is in line with Quan and Wang's (2004) assertion that food tourism and its activities serve as a peak experience that motivates tourists to travel and visit a destination.

3.3.2 Destination loyalty in the field of gastronomy tourism

Because of the robust connection between gastronomy tourism and the driving force behind visiting a place (Wondirad et al., 2021), a research focus has emerged in the academic literature aimed at investigating DL within the context of gastronomy tourism (Ullah et al., 2022). DL is characterized by the behavior of returning to a specific tourist destination, motivated by a psychological inclination to visit that particular place (Halkiopoulos et al., 2022). This topic holds great relevance for tourism marketers and destination managers, as it is regarded as the most reliable predictor of future post-visit behavior and serves as a catalyst for gaining a competitive edge and achieving success in the market (Cossío-Silva et al., 2022). The perception of a tourist destination, comprising its reputation, brand identity, and perceived attractiveness, exerts a substantial impact on DL. In this regard, according to Singh et al. (2022), a positive and appealing destination image can create a strong emotional connection with tourists and increase their likelihood to return. Other scholars suggest that both the quality of services provided by the destination and its attractions, such as natural landscapes, cultural heritage, and gastronomy lead to increased loyalty (Wang and Li, 2023). Consistent with prior research, Lacap (2019) examined the relationship between DL and

gastronomy tourism with reference to the food tourist satisfaction. The results of the study reveal that when visitors are inspired by local culinary offerings and participate in food-related experiences in a destination, they cultivate a favorable perception of the destination, fostering deeper engagement and a greater likelihood of revisiting it. Accordingly, extant literature highlights that food tourist satisfaction and loyalty are influenced by several factors. San Martin et al. (2013), conceiving DL either as the intention to revisit a destination or the intention to recommend it, revealed that tourist satisfaction and experience are the main determinants of DL. The relevance of satisfaction is also confirmed by the study of Nilplub et al. (2016), which pointed out that tourist satisfaction strongly moderates the effects of personal motivations and perceived value for money on DL. In another study, Ali et al. (2020) identified food quality, perceived environmental quality, perceived value and service quality as the main attributes affecting tourist satisfaction, which in turn significantly impacts on the DL.

3.4 Research framework and hypotheses development

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model was developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) to explain individuals' specific behaviors. According to the authors, the theory assumes that intention is the main predictor of personal behavior. Some scholars suggest that TRA incorporates cognitive, affective and conative components (Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960). According to this theory, individuals are rational and motivation-based in their decision-making processes and make a reasoned choice among various alternatives (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). The intention to behave in a certain way is influenced by cognitive assessments of behavior (Attitude) and social pressure (Subjective Norms). Specifically, this study considers the Behavioral Intentions as the intention of tourists to revisit a certain destination i.e. "Destination loyalty" (DL) (Neuts et al., 2013). In this sense, DL is a real behavioral intention when tourists are planning to visit a place again (Lemy et al., 2020); in fact, tourists who are really satisfied with a destination they have visited, will be much more motivated to make positive word of mouth and to stay and spend more than expected in that particular destination (Neuts et al., 2013; Lemy et al., 2020). Attitude toward behavior is the result of the degree to which a certain behavior is perceived and, therefore, evaluated as favorable or unfavorable (Ajzen, 1991). The attitude is based on the combination of the perception relative to the results that will come from the behavior and the subjective value of the expected results (Manosuthi et al., 2020). In the field of travel and tourism, several studies (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2017; Hasan et al., 2017; 2019) found that despite tourists' beliefs about the consequences of visiting a destination or the intentions of visiting a destination are variable, their attitudes based on such beliefs will affect differently and subjectively the

intentions to revisit the destination and, therefore, the DL (Han and Kim, 2010). Hence, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H1: Attitude positively influences Destination Loyalty

Subjective Norms (SN) refer to the social pressure perceived by an individual to practice a certain behavior or not (Ajzen, 1991) or as the degree of one's perception of social approval for the accomplishment of a certain behavior (Bianchi et al., 2017). SN has a crucial role and a fundamental function regarding the normative beliefs of important referents and the motivation to conform to them (Meng et al., 2020). Normative beliefs refer to the behavioral expectations of the referents of a certain level, while the motivation to conform refers to the weight that the expectations of the referents can have towards the subjects at the base of the study. This means that individuals will be strongly influenced by the social pressure of the community and the so-called "main referents" to evaluate and implement behavior (Han and Kim, 2010). The importance of subjective norms as a driver of behavioral intentions is also recognized in the field of marketing and tourism studies (Hasan et al., 2020). The choice of a given tourist destination is strongly influenced by opinions about those who are considered "important referents" (family, friends, colleagues) (Han and Kim, 2010; Meng et al., 2020).

Hence, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H2: Subjective Norms positively influence Destination Loyalty

The study proposes an extension of the TRA model with two external constructs: DL and MCE. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) suggested extending the TRA model to improve the predictive power and to better adapt the model to the specific context of analyses. In this regard, several studies have extended the TRA basic model. Previous studies (e.g., Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2003; Berry et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2018) demonstrated how DL is strongly influenced by customer-perceived experiential innovativeness. In particular, Kim et al. (2018) defined "experiential innovativeness", the ability of the company to create a personalized and unique experience, based on the lifestyle and values of the customer. To really have the effect, experiential innovation, unlike that of technology-based services, focuses on the commitment to develop the reference environment and the circumstances related to it, according to customer needs (Kim et al., 2020). Gastronomic tourists are those who travel in search of unique flavors and gastronomic experiences; the objective of food service providers is to surprise customers and stimulate their interest through innovative offers of products and services in order to enhance perceived experiential innovativeness by customers (Haberland and Dacin, 1992; Kunz et al., 2011). Perceived restaurant experiential

innovativeness can create excitement and hedonic value towards food tasting experiences in a destination that increase the customer's propensity to revisit a certain place and hence its DL (Kunz et al., 2011).

Hence, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H3: Perceived Experiential Innovativeness positively influence Attitude

H4: Perceived Experiential Innovativeness positively influence Destination Loyalty

In line with previous studies (e.g., Hoch and Deighton, 1989; Ali et al., 2014, 2016; Kim et al., 2012; Kim, 2014, 2018; Afaq et al., 2023), extant literature points out that DL is strongly influenced by the providing memorable experience by the tourist destination. According to Kim (2010), to have a strong impact, companies should implement marketing strategies to ensure that these experiences can be permanently stored in the memory of tourists. Several scholars explored the relationship between memory and gastronomic tourism (e.g., Kauppinen-Räisänen et al., 2013; Lin and Mao, 2015; Mathis et al., 2016; Quan and Wang, 2004; Tsai, 2016). In particular, Kauppinen-Räisänen et al. (2013) argue that memory and memories are able to influence customer attitudes and food acceptance and, consequently, the willingness to repeat the experience in the future. In the wake, Afaq et al. (2023) explore the relationship between food experiences and memory, with a particular focus on the impact of sensory stimuli in shaping positive food-related memories. They propose a framework that highlights the significance of sensory cues in creating lasting and enjoyable recollections associated with food. Other academics note the positive impact that tourist experiences considered by tourists as memorable, have on faithful behavior and, therefore, the propensity to revisit a certain destination (Deighton, 1988; Kim et al., 2012; Ali et al., 2014, 2016; Kim, 2014).

Thus, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H5: Memorability of Culinary Experiences positively influence Attitude

H6: Memorability of Culinary Experiences positively influence Destination Loyalty

3.5 Methodology
To collect data, an online questionnaire has been submitted (see Appendix) through Qualtrics software, to tourists visiting the city of Naples in the time span ranging from November 2022 to January 2023. Qualtrics allows researchers to create customized web-based questionnaires, providing a range of features to align with the specific goals and criteria of their research efforts (Touni et al., 2022). Previous studies have emphasized the reliability

of data acquired through Qualtrics' online panel, pointing out the absence of response bias (So et al., 2018; Nimri et al., 2020).

Figure 3.1 – The proposed model.
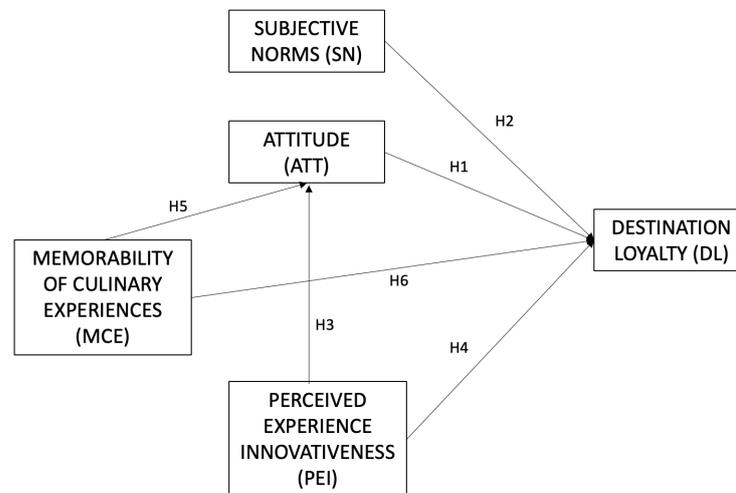
Source: own elaboration.

Moreover, the Qualtrics panel encompasses a diverse range of respondents spanning various demographics (Nimri et al., 2020). In this study, Qualtrics ensured that all participants met the necessary requirements to be included (Touni et al., 2022). The questionnaire has been developed using scales derived from other studies (see Table 3.1). In particular, "Attitude" (ATT) and "Subjective norms" (SN) have been measured by two items adapted by Hansen et al. (2004), "Destination Loyalty" has been measured by five items adapted by Rahman (2014), "Memorability of culinary experiences" has been measured by three items adapted by Di Clemente et al. (2019) and "Perceived experiential innovativeness" has been measured by three items adapted by Ding et al. (2022). To produce the Italian version, the translation and back-translations procedures have been carried out (Saunders et al., 2009). All items have been measured using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree"). To reduce retrieval bias (Kline et al., 2000; Podsakoff, 2003), the items have been intermixed from different constructs, while to reduce social desirability bias and common method bias, some guidelines to the survey aimed at explaining the scope of the survey, and at providing contacts for further information (Saunders et al., 2009) have been added. Moreover, to select the respondents, a screening question has been included in the questionnaire to interview only those who had previously visited tourist destinations in the Mediterranean area. To assess the face validity and reliability of the questionnaire a pilot study has been conducted on 50 respondents. The final sample consists of 300 valid responses. The characteristics of the sample are shown in table 3.2.

Table 3.1 – Measurement items.

Items	
ATT1	Spending holidays in tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area is attractive to me in my daily life.
ATT2	Tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area are well suited to the way in which I spend my holidays.
SN1	Members of my family think that it is a good idea to spend holidays in tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area.
SN2	Most of my friends and acquaintances think that spending holidays in tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area is a good idea.
DL1	I am willing to return to tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area in the future.
DL2	I am willing to recommend tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area to family and friends as a holiday location.
DL3	I have a wonderful image of tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area as a holiday location.
DL4	I feel I am very loyal to tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area as a travel choice.
DL5	I tend to revisit Mediterranean tourist destinations.
MCE1	I have wonderful memories of the culinary experiences I lived in the Mediterranean area.
MCE2	I will not forget the culinary experiences I lived in the Mediterranean area.
MCE3	I will remember many positive feelings about the culinary experiences I lived in the Mediterranean area.
PEI1	Restaurants interact with customers in innovative ways to enhance their culinary experiences.
PEI2	Restaurants are well-known for their innovative events in delivering culinary experiences.
PEI3	Restaurants deliver cutting-edge experiential services.

Source: own elaboration.

3.5.1 Data analysis and results

The data collected have been studied adopting the Partial Least Squares approach to Structural Equation Models (PLS-SEM) (Hair et al., 2011), using SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2015) for model evaluation. PLS-SEM is appropriate for small samples and for non-normal data (Hair et al., 2016). It consists of a two-step approach. The first is the assessment of the measurement model and the second is the assessment of the structural model.

Table 3.2 – Characteristics of the sample.

Characteristics	Type	%
Gender	Male	43%
	Female	57%
Age	<20	5%
	20-30	30%
	31-40	43%
	41-50	13%
	>50	9%
Income	< 50.000 EUR	45%
	50.001-100.000 EUR	33%
	100.001-150.000 EUR	17%
	150.001 – 200.000 EUR	3%
Education	Secondary education	1%
	Higher education	5%
	Bachelor's degree	75%
	Post-graduation	19%

Source: own elaboration.

3.5.2 Measurement model

For the quality of the measurement model, it was studied the reliability assessment, the convergent validity assessment and discriminant validity. To assess the reliability, it was checked that the items' loadings on their latent is higher than 0.6 (Chin, 1998, Henseler et al., 2009), that each construct's Cronbach's alpha is higher than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2011) and that each construct's composite reliability (CR) index is higher than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2011). Regarding the convergent validity assessment, it was verified that the average variance extracted (AVE) of each block is higher than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2016). As presented in Table 3.3, reliability and convergent validity have been verified. Discriminant validity was assessed applying the Fornell-Larcker criterion, "i.e., the square root of AVE for each construct should be higher than its highest correlation with the other constructs". As presented in Table 3.4, the square root of AVE for each construct was higher than its highest correlation with the other constructs.

Table 3.3 – Reliability and convergent validity.

	Outer loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
ATT1	0,847	0,735	0,792	0,787
ATT2	0,925			
SN1	0,978	0,944	0,971	0,946
SN2	0,967			
PEI1	0,906	0,856	0,874	0,777
PEI2	0,916			
PEI3	0,819			
DL1	0,882	0,943	0,945	0,816
DL2	0,929			
DL3	0,887			
DL4	0,924			
DL5	0,893			
MCE1	0,864	0,942	0,943	0,813
MCE2	0,885			
MCE3	0,871			
MCE4	0,946			
MCE5	0,938			

Source: own elaboration.

3.5.3 Structural model

Regarding the structural model, we looked at the quality of the structural model, evaluating the R2 for the model's ability to predict the constructs. Then we use a bootstrap procedure with 5,000 resamples (Hair et al., 2016) for the hypothesis testing. As presented in Table 3.5, all the hypotheses have been verified, except H3. The R2 result has shown that on ATT is 0.130, while on DL is 0.630, this means that the model has a very high explicative capacity.

Table 3.4 – Discriminant validity.

	ATT	DL	MCE	PEI	SN
ATT	0,887				
DL	0,442	0,903			
MCE	0,357	0,490	0,902		
PEI	0,189	0,591	0,414	0,881	
SN	0,391	0,595	0,151	0,266	0,973

Source: own elaboration.

Table 3.5 – Hypotheses testing.

Hp	Relations	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values	Support
H1	ATT -> DL	0,129	0,128	0,039	3,290	0,001	**Yes**
H2	SN -> DL	0,414	0,413	0,035	11,701	0,000	**Yes**
H3	PEI -> ATT	0,049	0,051	0,058	0,840	0,401	**No**
H4	PEI -> DL	0,360	0,360	0,041	8,776	0,000	**Yes**
H5	MCE-> ATT	0,337	0,339	0,050	6,719	0,000	**Yes**
H4	MCE -> DL	0,232	0,233	0,047	4,982	0,000	**Yes**

Source: own elaboration

3.6 Discussion

The results confirm that both H1 and H2 are supported, hence both the attitude and the subjective norms positively influence the intention to return to a tourist destination. These results confirm the validity of the TRA model as shown by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). Moreover, results support previous studies in the field of travel and tourism that found that attitude positively influences DL (Han and Kim, 2010; Bianchi et al., 2017; Hasan et al., 2017; Hasan et al., 2019) and subjective norms positively influence DL. Regarding the extension of the model, all the hypotheses have been accepted except for H3. The results confirm previous studies. In line with some authors the propensity to revisit a certain tourist location is influenced by the innovativeness of food experience (Haberland and Dacin, 1992; Kunz et al., 2011). At the same time, the results show the positive influence of MCE, confirming previous studies that showed the key role of the memorability of food experience

and tourism destination (Kauppinen-Räisänen et al., 2013; Ali et al., 2014, 2016; Kim, 2014).

3.7 Theoretical and practical implications

This chapter provides both theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical point of view, consistent with previous studies, this work confirms the relationships between the variables related to the TRA model. However, to date, there are no studies that have adapted the TRA model to understand the factors that influence tourists to return to a tourist destination. Furthermore, there are no studies that have extended the TRA framework with the constructs of "Perceived experiential innovativeness" (PEI) and "Memorability of culinary experiences" (MCE). As emerges from our findings, within the culinary tourism field, experientiality may lead to new positive results for tourist destinations. These considerations lead to a new scenario for the tourism industry where memories and personal emotions, such as perceived innovativeness, represent the added value that consumers seek in tourism destinations. These results are in line with Richards's (2021) consideration that there is now a heightened recognition of the hedonistic elements of consumption, increased consumer engagement in experiences, and a deeper consideration of the relational dimension of these encounters. The culinary sector and, particularly, food tourism, is a particularly suitable field for the enhancement of experientiality. The emphasis on experientiality in the food and wine sector aligns with the principles of the experience economy, where experiences become a critical driver of value for consumers (Forlani et al., 2022). This finding can advance the understanding of how the experience economy operates in this specific domain, shedding light on its impact on consumer behavior and preferences. Tourism and gastronomy businesses working within the Mediterranean countries should develop plans to capitalize on their rich Mediterranean cuisine and diet as valuable resources for future strategic plans (Pavlidis and Markantonatou (2020). Theoretical implications may involve delving into the emotional and sensory dimensions of experientiality within the food and wine sector. Understanding how these elements influence consumers' perceptions and evaluations can contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms driving experiential consumption behavior. Tourism managers should take into consideration the role of typical food and food-based activities as MCE and PEI have a great impact on DL. Thus, practitioners should take advantage of it by building and offering new products/services capable of impacting tourists' memory over the long-term. In such a context, future research can identify specific experiential elements that are most relevant and effective in the food and wine sector. Understanding these elements can inform businesses in this industry about the aspects they should emphasize to create meaningful and enjoyable experiences for their

customers. Moreover, further research could also explore how technology, such as virtual reality or augmented reality, can be integrated into food tourism experiences to enhance experientiality further. Research in this area may offer insights into the role of technology in creating immersive and interactive culinary journeys.

3.8 Conclusion

This work represents the first attempts to measure the experiential value of culinary experiences lived in tourist destinations and its effect on marketing results, in terms of future loyal intentions towards a tourist destination. Specifically, this research provides useful strategies for increasing the competitiveness of tourist destinations in the new experiential scenario. Accordingly, tourism practitioners are constantly in search of turning their tourist services into experiential offerings to be competitive in the international arena. This chapter provides an empirical analysis on how both PEI and MCE affect both attitudes to visit a destination and the DL. This work has some limitations that offer hints for future research. First, the application of a convenience sample does not allow to generalize the results. These ones should be understood within the context of this chapter, and future research lines should be regarded to different tourism practices and tourist destinations, as this work mainly concentrates on Mediterranean destinations, in order to check how experiential variables work in other contexts. The survey's respondents have been intercepted at different moments after their visit to the destination, thus, the vivacity of their memories and the consequent judgements about the experience they were asked, could be different due to the time passed since the visit occurred. Accordingly, future studies could consider the standardization of the moments in which data are collected and the repetition of the survey over time.

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CHAPTER IV
Regional Innovation Systems in Tourism: The Role of Collaboration and Competition [3]

4.1 Abstract

The study explores the concept of Regional Innovation Systems (RIS) in the context of the tourism industry. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration and competition among companies within regional systems to foster innovation. It also discusses the role of social capital, relational assets, and social relationships in driving innovation within RIS. The Campania Region recognizes the importance of tourism for its development and supports the digital transition, modernization of public administration, communication infrastructure, and production system. In this vein, the work proposes a theoretical framework that combines dynamic capabilities, relational view, and resource-based theory to explain the mechanisms and dynamics of RIS. The co-creation of innovation and strategic plans within a system of regional assets is highlighted as a key aspect of RIS. The research concludes by emphasizing the need for collaboration, innovation, and the integration of various stakeholders' interests in the development of sustainable and innovative regional systems.

Keywords: open innovation, collaboration, tourism, regional innovation systems, RIS.

4.2 Introduction

The expression "Regional Innovation" encloses two terms. Starting from the adjective "regional", it is important to point out that according to Cambridge dictionary (2022) a Region is "a particular area or part of the world, or any of the large official areas into which a country is divided". Although this definition can be sharable, it is useful to translate it into a specific geographic context. For example, considering Italy, that is the Nation where this analysis takes inspiration, the Region is the most important sub-state territorial body provided for in the Italian Constitution. Its introduction in the constitutional text, in 1947, marks one of the most important innovations with respect to the Albertine Statute (1848-1947), which did not provide for them. Currently the region tends to be considered as an open industry system, a space where all the elements, physical and human, are interdependent and driven by the same processes: that is, it is determined by the links between the components of the territory (geology, morphology, hydrography, climate, etc.) and the components of its organisation (population, land use methods, manufacturing

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activities, communication routes, etc.). These features have influenced both political strategic decisions and academic literature development (Sydow et al., 2011; Porter, 1990). Indeed, this geographic focus has led scholars to first focus the attention on the concept of clusters and districts that have lent to the regional systems literature some of their characteristics. Indeed, the regional systems can be defined as geographic concentration where there are business communities and other actors that jointly perform activities, share resources, knowledge, tangible and intangible assets in order to increase both performance and productivity. The regional systems, of course, enclose mechanisms of collaboration and competition among companies (Annamalah, 2023). While it is true that regional systems play a vital role in fostering innovation as a strategic asset for both regional development and individual firms, it is important to recognize that their primary purpose extends beyond innovation generation. Indeed, regional systems serve as complex ecosystems that encompass various functions, such as knowledge exchange, talent development, infrastructure support, and economic diversification. In this optic, a Regional Innovation Systems (RIS) is defined as "a subsystem of knowledge generation and diffusion (knowledge infrastructure dimension), which includes research and development institutes, educational bodies and technology transfer organisations, and a subsystem of knowledge application and exploitation (business dimension), which is made up of the companies located in the region" (Trippl, 2010, p. 151). The focus on innovation within the RIS, has been examined according to an open innovation lens where the actors of the referring regional ecosystem are co-creators of innovation (Grèzes et al, 2016; Theeranattapong et al, 2021). The interrelationship between open innovation and regional culture has been explored by studies on regional advantage emphasizing socio-cultural aspects of opening innovation, the literature on regional clusters, emphasizing knowledge sharing in networks, and the contributions to regional innovation systems, emphasizing the role of the institutional environment (Grèzes et al, 2016; Pyka et al., 2018). Hence, through a case study, this work examines how the hospitality sector potentially enhances integration levels, facilitates knowledge transfer, and fosters innovation within Regional Innovation Systems. The study is structured into three parts. The first part carries out a literature review on regional innovation systems and on digital transformation in the tourism sector. In the second part, the work analyses a case study and, finally, conclusions and managerial implications are presented.

4.3 Literature review

4.3.1 Open innovation and systemic collaboration

The process of fostering innovation is closely linked to the generation of novel knowledge, as emphasized by Du Plessis (2007). Moreover, it is essential to recognize that knowledge serves as the common thread connecting all forms of innovation, a notion well-established in the existing literature (Mytelka and Smith, 2002). In recent years, studies on innovation and knowledge transmission have increasingly highlighted the importance of dynamic collaborations occurring both within and across various industries. This emphasis has led to the emergence of open innovation, a paradigm that departs from the traditional 'closed' or 'linear' models (Ngo, 2023). Open innovation, as suggested by Chesbrough (2003), posits that firms can significantly enhance their innovation performance by actively engaging with external sources of knowledge and expertise. This concept is gaining momentum across various industries, facilitating enterprise-level technological advancements, bolstering market growth, increasing sales revenue, and catalyzing research and development efforts for innovative products (Qiu et al., 2021). Furthermore, it underscores the critical role of inter-firm cooperation, as recognized in academic research (Belussi et al., 2010). Effective collaboration is widely acknowledged as a vital ingredient for fostering innovation (Varadarajan and Cunningham, 1995). This study specifically examines the tourism and hospitality sector, where transformative changes have been initiated but require further implementation. The open innovation approach holds particular relevance for the above-mentioned sector due to several reasons (Dias et al., 2022): 1) tourism and hospitality firms experience benefits rather than costs when engaging with external stakeholders compared to other sectors; 2) distinctive innovation patterns within these firms make it essential to consider external innovation processes as a more accurate indicator of their innovative capacity (López-Fernández et al., 2011); 3) the tourism and hospitality sector is characterized by actors deeply rooted in local communities, enabling the formation of social capital networks. Firms can leverage such networks by adopting open innovation practices to cultivate and advance innovative approaches (Kim et al., 2013). These considerations introduce the concept of systemic innovation and the importance of relational and dynamic capabilities. Systemic innovation refers to the ability of interdependent and self-organizing actors to continually identify and prioritize constraints and opportunities. In response, they coordinate and collaborate with others to mobilize new and existing knowledge, resources, and capabilities. This includes experimenting with social, technical, and institutional options (Schut et al., 2014). Firms can activate mechanisms of inter-firm cooperation with various external entities, such as customers (a valuable source of knowledge), competitors (sharing

know-how across sectors promotes innovation), and public or private research centres and universities (recognized as significant sources of specialist knowledge and technology transfer). Consequently, we align with Marasco et al. (2018) assertion that collaborative and systemic approaches to innovation have become increasingly central. This increased interest is a direct response to the cutthroat competition prevalent in the industry, where collaboration and innovation have evolved from optional strategies to indispensable tools for improving the competitiveness of companies and destinations. A key observation relies on the recognition of tourism and hospitality enterprises operate in a delicate equilibrium between competition and cooperation. This balance is emphasized by Hall and Williams (2008), who note that the production and consumption of tourism experiences are inherently intertwined with the formal and informal connections that bind various providers and organizations together. Similarly, Den Hertog et al. (2011) further elaborate on this perspective, pointing out that a hospitality experience typically comprises different elements of service. Accordingly, this complexity profoundly influences the concept of innovation within this sector. In this intricate network of collaboration and innovation, inter-organizational structures are the facilitators of knowledge and information exchange (Hjalager, 2010; Shaw and Williams, 2009). This highlights the significance of creating and nurturing structures that enable the seamless flow of ideas and insights. At the same time, customer relationships emerge as a dynamic force (Hjalager and Nordin, 2011). These relationships play a central role in the development of novel products and services, emphasizing the need for customer-centric innovation strategies. In this regard, Campos et al. (2018) underscore the significance of collaborative design in shaping unique and compelling tourism experiences. The phenomenon of collaborative networks, framed within the context of systemic innovation, has garnered considerable attention in the examination of destination competitiveness (Baggio and Cooper, 2010). Nevertheless, it is only in recent years that researchers have started to explore the collaborative dynamics of innovation. These networks of collaboration bring advantages not only to individual organizations but also to the destination. By accessing external resources and knowledge, these networks enable the creation of value-added relationships, expansion of offerings through new or enhanced services, cost reduction, and fulfilment of the needs of various stakeholders in the tourism industry (Novelli et al., 2006; Denicolai et al., 2010). A wide range of scientific articles consider collaborative networks at systems level, and specifically at regional level (Booyens and Rogerson, 2016; 2017; Brouder, 2012; Novelli et al., 2006; Prats et al., 2008; Tolstad, 2014). These studies, drawing mostly on innovation system theories, has the common aim to identify factors influencing innovation processes, such as the regional

business economic structure, the institutional environment, the proximity of universities, research institutes and financial institutions, as well as socio and cultural elements of local society (Lundvall, 2010).

4.3.2 Regional innovation systems

The concept of Regional Innovation Systems (RIS) draws upon the territorial approach, as discussed by Asheim and Coenen (2005). In this context, interfirm learning processes and relational proximity are central factors contributing to the generation of innovation flows. In addition to emphasizing inter-firm collaboration, RIS also underscores the significance of the institutional ecosystem. Within this context, it is crucial to recognize that public–private collaboration is an integral component of the RIS framework (Asheim and Coenen, 2005). Although the border would appear regional, the interregional dimension should not be neglected. What is important to emphasize is the dynamicity of the context in which RIS is inserted. From a strategic perspective, it is worth noting that RIS highlights the critical role of dynamic capabilities at the network level. These capabilities are defined as 'the capacity of the firm to develop a purposeful set of routines within its networks, resulting in the generation of new resource configurations and the firm's capacity to integrate, reconfigure, gain, and release resource combinations' (Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009, p.32). This definition encompasses the concepts of exploitation capability (leveraging) and of exploration (creation of new resources) through the regional network. This concept is strictly linked to the level of innovation a firm can potentially achieve through external relationships and the related knowledge and competences it generates for both the single firm and the regional system in which it is involved. In this direction, the process of knowledge transfer and resource sharing are useful for the generation of innovation (Mitton et al., 2007). The concept of RIS presents a geographic perspective on innovation. It posits that innovation creation and enhancement occur as localized processes wherein regional communities, shared knowledge, and a sense of identity act as vital interplaying factors. This approach underscores that the resulting innovations are inherently tied to their geographical context (Doloreux and Parto, 2005). The continuity between regional system and firm is proved by the embeddedness approach (Cooke et al, 1998) since the Region is the milieu of social relationships. In line with these assumptions, the RIS framework highlights the significance of building robust social relationships with various actors, even competitors, to succeed (Cooke, 2016). This view is linked to the concept of social capital, defined as (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998) "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit. Social capital thus comprises both the network and the assets that may be mobilized

through that network". Based on this definition, it becomes evident that relational assets (Dyer and Hatch, 2006; Dyer and Singh, 1998; Chou and Chow, 2009) hold a central role within the context of RIS. The relational dimension of the social capital which explains how interpersonal relationships can lead to the creation of social capital through the sharing of goals and norms, the diffusion of trust and the determination of common expectations. Several studies have underlined that social capital allows the access for the creation of new opportunities (Batjargal, 2003), the improvement of innovation (Ahuja, 2000; Goktan and Miles, 2011) and-or of the company identity (Leana and Van Buren, 1999). Innovation process consists of a mix between current (recalling the definition of social capital these are resources embedded within and available through) and new knowledge (derived from looking at social capital definition) implemented for commercial objectives. Trust, shared values and mutuality become evident only when collaboration is effectively spread among the RIS. This process appears to foster a coopetition context, which can prove highly profitable (Nalebuff et al., 1996). Competition often stimulates innovation, and through collaboration, strategic initiatives can be initiated, enhancing the overall market power of the entire RIS. The RIS configuration assumes the existence of relationships among competitors, leading to the development of both competitive and cooperative attitudes. Indeed, what happens inside the RIS is a paradoxical view since the exchange of resources and competences as well as knowledge sharing are the basic logics between the members while they are competitors in the market for the commercialization of their own products or services. The new dynamics of the current scenario dictate the necessity to exploit strategies of coopetition (competition + cooperation) (Nalebuff et al., 1996, Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 2011; Tsai, 2002; Bengtsson and Kock, 2000) that consider the cooperation with other players even if competitors in order to favor processes of enlargement and strengthening of their bundle of resources. If this coopetition dynamic is correctly implemented, the region creates a tourism offer that is difficult to imitate for competitors. The importance of collaboration in the tourism sector and in its related industries resides in the fact that it supports the firm's process of creating, building and maintaining competitive advantage, since it is possible to participate in the process of knowledge sharing with the benefit of the overall involved parties (Du Plessis, 2007; Della Corte et al., 2021). Moreover, the collaboration initiatives allow the firms to codify tourists' needs, suggestions and complaints (Della Corte and Aria, 2016; Della Corte, 2013) and to after address organizations efforts in the light of new issues and perspectives expressed by the customers as well as by other actors with which the firms interact. Consistent with the literature review on RIS, figure 4.1 proposes the conceptual model related to the relationships, key

components, mechanisms and outcomes of RIS. These aspects are connected with both closed and open innovation approach, reflecting the evolving nature of how relationships are generated and developed over time.

Figure 4.1 – Conceptual model.

	RELATIONSHIPS	KEY COMPONENTS	MECHANISMS	OUTCOMES
	Innovative regional system	Regional institutions Tourism firms External partners Local community	Incubators and accelerators Regulation and policy Education and training Hospitality-specific research centers Funding competitions	Improved regional public image Community empowerment Regional connectivity
	Innovative actions	Tourism firms External partners Local community	Innovation mentoring Cross-sector partnership Innovation consortia Innovative projects showcases Local schools' involvement	Community engagement Community wellbeing Cultural exchange Economic diversification Innovation spillovers
	Knowledge transfer	Tourism firms External partners	Collaborative research initiatives Market access support HR training programs	Long-term partnerships Market expansion Enhanced R&D activities
	Collaboration	Tourism firms	Networking Risk sharing Resource sharing	Increased competitiveness Diversification of tourism offerings Competitive advantage
	Competition	Single tourism firm	R&D activities	Better performance

OPEN INNOVATION / CLOSED INNOVATION (vertical axis: Coopetition)

Source: own elaboration.

With specific reference to the relationships that can be established among the different stakeholders involved in the RIS, the "Matrix of Regional Innovation System" has been depicted (see Figure 4.2). By representing innovation capacity of the stakeholders involved and the Region's resource endowment, it simplifies the study of regional dynamics, highlighting patterns, trends, and areas for intervention. This approach enhances the understanding of innovation systems, aids policymakers in targeting resources more effectively, and facilitates the communication of research findings. Accordingly, the matrix contextualizes innovation based on resource availability, providing a clear and informative perspective on RIS. In detail, "dual dilemma" regions are characterized by low innovation capacity and low resource endowment. These regions are in a disadvantaged situation and may require targeted interventions to improve their position, such as access to funds for innovation, fostering collaboration and attract foreign investment. The upper right quadrant includes "innovation lag" regions, which have significant resource endowments but relatively low innovation capacity. Hence, these can heavily invest in research and development, but may not be able to effectively transform these resources into innovative outcomes. This situation requires more attention to building local innovation capacity, supporting the creation of knowledge networks, the implementation of exchange and knowledge transfer programs, and develop sector-specific HR training programs. "Creative" regions demonstrate significant innovation capacity but have limited resources.

Figure 4.2 – Matrix of Regional Innovation Systems.
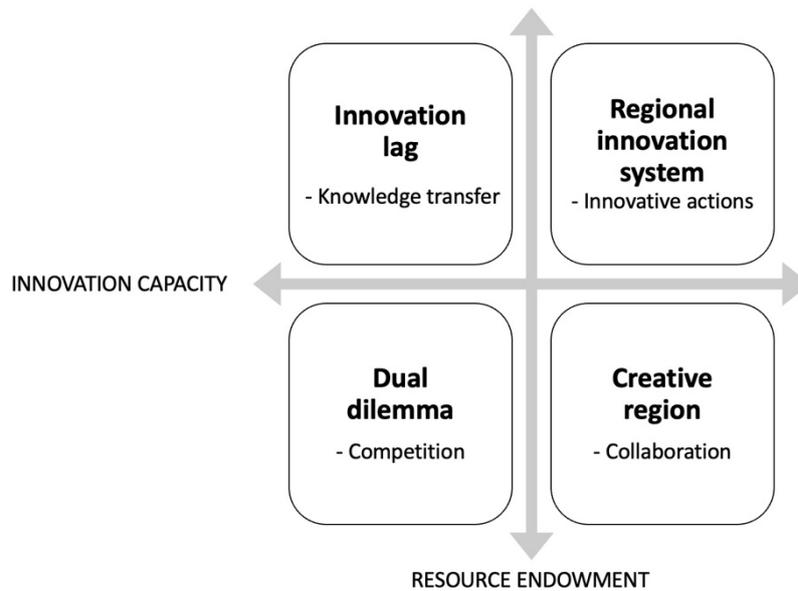
Source: own elaboration.

These regions can be regarded as challengers in innovation because these operate to achieve high levels of innovation despite resource constraints. These could rely on collaborative strategies to minimize risks and exploit common resources, innovation networks, and support open-source research initiatives that enable free access and knowledge sharing. Finally, "regional innovation systems", located in the upper right quadrant are generally leaders in innovation and have significant resources available to support their innovative efforts. These are characterized by positive public image, a diversified economy, significant investment in research and development, and good collaboration among companies, local institutions, and government. At the same time, these regions can guarantee multilevel outcomes following both top-down or bottom-up approaches and reaching out to the local community.

4.4 Research design and context

4.4.1 Methodology

The research focuses on the Campania region to examine and discuss the RIS and the relational dynamics within the tourism sector. To this purpose, the study performs an exploratory qualitative investigation employing a single case study approach, following the methodology proposed by Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (1994). Data collection has been conducted through various means, including the examination of documentary evidence, conducting semi-structured interviews, and engaging in participant observations. These multiple data sources facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the organization in its

specific operational context, allowing for an exploration of both processes and the perspectives of key stakeholders (Yin, 2009). This approach is particularly useful when the study requires a detailed understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Darke et al., 1998). Data have been collected between December 2022 and April 2023. The risk of interpretation bias of data from multiple sources has been mitigated by triangulation process (Jentoft and Olsen, 2019). The quantity of semi-structured interviews conducted (as presented in Table 4.1) was guided by the principle of theoretical saturation, as proposed by Tucker (2021). In determining the appropriate number of interviewees, the familiarity with the research context has been considered, drawing insights from Morse's (2020) recommendations. Various factors have been considered, including the quality of the information sources involved, the study's scope, the complexity of the subject matter, the richness of insights obtained from participants, and the significance of any emerging auxiliary data. The interviews have been structured around specific topics, with the objective of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the main opportunities and challenges within the context of the Campania RIS. The discussions focused particularly on capturing interviewees' perceptions of how they navigated the complex interplay of different logics in this context. This included their perspectives on the relationships between the RIS, the tourism sector, and the local community.

Table 4.1 – The interviews.

Interviewees	Sector	Label	Total time
CEO	Entrepreneurial world	E1	1 hour
CEO	Entrepreneurial world	E2	2 hours
General Manager	Entrepreneurial world	E3	2 hours
Managing Director	Entrepreneurial world	E4	1 hour
Local resident	Local community	C1	1 hour
Neighbourhood association member	Local community	C2	2 hours
Local reporter	Local community	C3	2 hours
Spokesman on regional tourism	Regional institution	R1	1 hour
Regional and regulatory expert	Regional institution	R2	1 hour
Tourism industry association member	Regional institution	R3	1 hour

Source: own elaboration.

Throughout the interviews, a significant emphasis has been placed on uncovering insights into the internal dynamics of the regional innovation system. The primary aim was to understand how various logics were reconciled at regional level, also to explore the evolving practices and management tools employed by various stakeholders over time. The process of data interpretation involved a multi-step approach, which included the thorough review of interview recordings and interview/observation notes, all while taking into account the suggested theoretical framework. Emerging issues were systematically categorized to establish conceptual boundaries that aligned with the chosen theoretical framework. Multiple iterations of material examination were undertaken, which aided in the detailed portrayal of the phenomena under investigation, complete with illustrative quotes and concrete examples.

4.4.2 Research context: the case of Campania Region

The Campania region, located in southern Italy, boasts a rich cultural heritage, amazing landscapes and historical treasures that have attracted travelers from all over the world for centuries (Pinto et al., 2020; Sisto et al., 2022). Nevertheless, in the face of a rapidly changing world in which travelers seek unique experiences, sustainable practices, and seamless interactions, the need for innovation in the regional tourism sector is a priority. Furthermore, with ESG considerations at its core, ensuring that economic, social, and environmental dimensions are harmoniously integrated into every aspect of the tourism experience is crucial. Systemic challenges often impede the continuous exchange of knowledge and technical innovations between companies, academic and industrial research spheres (Zollo et al., 2011). This observation strongly resonates with the current situation in the Campania Region, which is experiencing an urgent need for innovation. In pursuit of innovation, the Campania Region has implemented a multifaceted approach aimed at enhancing its economic and technological landscape. Recently, the Region embraced open innovation principles aimed at unlocking the innovation potential of start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to drive development and enhance competitiveness (Open Innovation Campania, 2022). This initiative represents a paradigm shift, enabling companies to bolster their competitive positioning by not only relying on internal resources but also exploiting tools, competences and expertise generated by external partners such as universities, research centers, start-ups, SMEs, incubators, and innovators. It underscores the significance of leveraging the collective wisdom and resources of multiple stakeholders to create a thriving innovation ecosystem that benefits all. Moreover, the Campania Region (see Figure 4.3) considers the promotion and development of tourism as a priority objective

for the development of the territory and recognizes the contribution of tourism for the civil, cultural, social and moral growth of local community, visitors and tourists. Firms operating in the tourism sectors as well as policymakers, at both regional and city level, support the digital transition of Campania, in the modernization of the public administration, in the communication infrastructures and in the efficiency of production system. The regional institutions are working to ensure the coverage of the whole territory with ultra-broadband networks, improve the competitiveness of industrial chains and facilitate the internationalization of businesses. In accordance with Ponsiglione et al. (2017), the actors of Campania Regional Innovation System can be classified in different categories: explorers, exploiters, governor, and catalyst. The exploiters are SMEs or big companies operating in tourism industry that need stimula from the external environment for the generation of innovation. Hence, these are those who exploit resources, knowledge, competencies, and the values of the partners of the regional system. Explorers are Universities and other research bodies that bring specific knowledge to the referring system. Catalysts are Chambers of Commerce, scientific and technological parks, and incubators. Finally, contributors are the local community, visitors, tourists and other actors that, according to an open innovation logic, can create value in terms of innovation. This classification provides insight into the intricate dynamics of Campania's innovation ecosystem. The roles of various actors, from resource-exploiting companies to research institutions and facilitating catalysts, shape the innovation environment. The success of any innovative ideas lies in the collaboration between stakeholders, from government bodies and educational institutions to local businesses and entrepreneurs. Campania's innovation ecosystem offers a unique opportunity for these players to come together and harness the region's potential for growth. By addressing government gaps and fostering a conducive environment for research, development, and implementation of cutting-edge ideas, the region can position itself as a frontrunner in shaping the future of tourism. Inspired by the international Zero Waste movements (Zaman, 2015) and born from the vision of Antonino Esposito (Project Manager), the "Hotel Rifiuti Zero" (Zero Waste Hotel - ZWH) project aims to catalyse innovation within hospitality industry (www.hotelrifiutizero.it). The idea of zero waste can be understood as a deliberate attempt to create a system for resources that involves methods to optimize recycling, decrease waste generation, and simplify consumption (Connett, 2013). This involves transforming consumption patterns to ensure that resources can either be recycled or repurposed, thereby minimizing the environmental repercussions of disposal (Lehmann and Zaman, 2013).

Figure 4.3 – Campania Region

The ZWH initiative goes beyond hotels and restaurants, encompassing a wide array of accommodation facilities, commercial enterprises, beach resorts, and more. Fundamentally, the initiative aims to advance both education and ecological responsibility in the context of tourism, converting the concept of sustainable development from an abstract objective into a practical and achievable reality. In Campania, more specifically in the Amalfi Coast, ZWH strategy is implemented through "Zero Waste Amalfi Coast" project, promoted in collaboration with the Amalfi Coast Tourism District. This organization, officially recognized in 2014 by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities for Tourism (MiBACT), operates in collaboration with public and private players. Its mission is to foster a sustainable and well-organized development of the tourist destination, encompassing not only the local tourism economy, but also seeking to improve the local inhabitants' quality of life. It achieves these goals by promoting sustainable and innovative practices and initiatives, such as ZWH, and introducing novel services tailored to their needs, with a particular focus on residents in inland regions, frequently marginalized in sustainable development strategies. It is worth noting that this project extends its influence on the Campania region, with particular emphasis on the Amalfi Coast, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1997 (Festa et al., 2020). It is one of Italy's most enchanting locations which extends between the Gulf of Naples and the Gulf of Salerno, and it is renowned for the captivating combination of breath-taking scenery and coastal views. The towns along the Coast exhibit a diverse tapestry; each possesses its own distinct traditions and attributes that render it exceptional. All of them share a common thread of architectural treasures steeped in historical and cultural significance (Casillo et al., 2021). The captivating mountainous topography is a highlight, characterized by terraced levels typically utilized for cultivation on the elevated

landscape. Nevertheless, this configuration presents challenges in terms of accessibility across the region, given that a solitary winding road serves as the sole route to access the coastline enveloped by these terraced formations (Palazzo et al., 2021). Regarding the image associated with the destination, the Amalfi Coast holds a distinguished position and a well-known tourist brand that is gradually progressing towards a mature stage, by a consistent and steady rise in the number of visitors (Metallo et al., 2012). However, this evolution is characterized by an overflow of tourists during peak seasons, leading to instances where the harmonious balance between environmental sustainability and meeting the preferences of host community and tourists seeking an experience rooted in quality, tradition and heritage is repeatedly compromised (Palazzo et al., 2021). This matter stands as a primary source of disruption and discomfort, thereby generating an unsustainable level of tourism pressure that exerts adverse impacts on the environment (Pinto et al., 2020). In response to these challenges, the project primarily aims at cultivating ecologically virtuous behaviours while simultaneously making tangible strides in reducing the environmental impact associated with tourism resource consumption. The central objective is to deeply transform the hospitality sector, which inherently thrives on the beauty and unique attributes of its surroundings, into a symbol of sustainability, respect, and preservation (Ivona et al., 2021; Srisathan et al., 2023). This innovative form of tourism embraces sustainability as a core value, diverging from the homogenizing trends of globalization and the often-sterile standards of an overemphasized service quality. Indeed, it rekindles the authentic spirit of hospitality, embracing human connection and addressing fundamental needs. Previous studies examined the relationship between hospitality firms' strategies for implementing environmental processes and the management of service quality practices. In this regard, the literature points out that environmental practices have a positive influence on several development factors, such as purchase decision making, customer loyalty and satisfaction, willingness to pay a higher price and occupation (Oliveras-Villanueva et al., 2020). The ZWH project's scope extends to economic considerations as well. The underlying concept involves collaborating with local administrations to revise waste management fees based on the volume of waste generated and the quality of recycling efforts. For businesses involved in the network, the strategy encompasses a series of steps, outlined through operational guidelines, aimed at implementing concrete waste reduction and elimination policies. The strategy to shift the hotel's linear operational model to a circular economy (Vargas-Sánchez, 2018) is focused on prolonging the usefulness of discarded materials by repurposing them into valuable resources, either as substitute raw materials or through recycling, for the creation of new products (Dileep, 2007). Along with the policy reforms addressed to reduce

the negative impacts on the environment (Tanova and Bayighomog, 2022), the role of employees in facilitating a successful shift towards sustainability cannot be understated (Siyambalapitiya et al., 2018). Indeed, human resource management (HRM) is recognized as the means by which employees, whether individually or collectively, cultivate mindsets and exhibit actions that harmonize with organizational objectives. As environmental concerns have been integrated with these strategies, green HRM has emerged as both a practical instrument for professionals and a subject of scholarly inquiry (Tanova and Bayighomog, 2022). In line with this perspective, the ZWH project adopts a training paradigm that takes into account the evolving perspectives of tourists and entrepreneurs. Strengthened by in-depth initiative monitoring, this approach can initiate a transformation in values and priorities. This, in turn, is accompanied by measurable resource consumption reduction, serving as a significant incentive that complements the broader environmental goals. The expected objectives from the proper implementation of the ZWH project's guidelines are reduction of waste production, increase in waste sorting rates, enhancement of the green reputation, decrease in water and energy consumption, and improvement in air quality.

4.5 Discussion

In line with the conceptual model, the case of Campania Region and, particularly, the inclusion of the ZWH project within the theoretical approach of "Open Innovation" sheds light on a dynamic and interconnected perspective that accentuates its significance. From an entrepreneurial standpoint, the integration of the ZWH project has been a facilitator for collaboration, shifting the focus from a mere competition to collaboration among firms. According to E2, entrepreneurs within the tourism sector have found new avenues for growth and innovation:

"The integration of the shared initiatives in our business policy, such as the ZWH project, are a catalyst for collaboration. These allow to work closely with other businesses, not only within the tourism sector but also with local suppliers and start-ups. For example, we have partnership with local food producers to source fresh, sustainable ingredients, enhancing our offerings and supporting local businesses simultaneously".

Therefore, initiatives that involve several and diverse stakeholders, serve as a compelling force of a transformative shift from a traditional model of closed innovation to a dynamic realm of open innovation on a regional scale. The matter clearly emerges in the words of E4:

"Historically, organizations have often adhered to a closed innovation model, where the primary emphasis is on internal research and development activities to generate innovative

solutions within the confines of the firm. However, the limitations of closed innovation became increasingly evident in the last years".

Indeed, the open innovation model assumes that firms should use external ideas and internal pathways to the market while seeking to implement their innovations (Grèzes et al, 2016). As industries increasingly emphasize agility, flexibility and concentration of core competencies, the incorporation of external sources of knowledge and innovation becomes crucial (Szromek et al., 2022). The interviewees R2 and E3 hold the same view on these considerations:

"The regional economy is witnessing a notable transformation. For firms operating in the Region, the integration of external knowledge flow is becoming essential. With stronger global competition, companies are now more inclined to engage in knowledge sharing and cooperation. This new strategic approach is accelerating regional innovation cycles and creating new opportunities, allowing companies to access specialized expertise that might not exist internally".

"Today companies recognize that they can't operate in isolation. They are forming partnerships, collaborating with external players, and engaging in open innovation initiatives. This approach not only fosters creativity but also accelerates the development of new products and services. It is a response to the challenges posed by a rapidly evolving market in which staying ahead requires a collective effort".

By embracing open innovation principles, boundaries of individual organizations collapse, unleashing a collaboration spirit that reaches upwards to a regional scale. This shift towards open innovation recognizes that valuable insights, competencies, and innovations are not confined within the walls of any single company but exist as a collective wealth distributed among diverse stakeholders within the Region. In this regard, R1 highlights the potential of Campania region:

"Closed innovation, while valuable in its time, no longer suffices in a rapidly evolving world. This is particularly true especially in regions like Campania, where untapped potential exists in the form of external knowledge, skills, and resources which enrich our regional innovation ecosystem".

In this vein, open innovation is considered as the new imperative to create and profit from an effective involvement and participation of different actors (Chesbrough, 2003; Qiu et al., 2021). Therefore, the collaboration with external ecosystem requires a dynamic behavior represented by the degree of openness which instead consists of an attribute of the system.

From here the importance of governance mechanisms comes out since in a system network the coordination of the entities is fundamental to guarantee the right interaction, agreement, communication take place to realize a value co-creation outcome. R3 clarifies these issues:

"Governance mechanisms are the backbone of collaborative efforts. They ensure that all entities within the ecosystem coordinate effectively. As local institutions, we work in aligning efforts toward shared goals. As a result, we see improved community engagement, economic diversification, and innovation spillovers, which collectively drive our community's prosperity, growth and wellbeing".

Innovative actions, realized within collaborative network, such as consortia or other forms of trade associations where diverse stakeholders converge, facilitate the exchange of ideas and resources resulting in collective problem-solving and innovation aimed to cutting-edge solutions and sustainable practices. According to E1, C2 and C1 the outcomes of this kind of network result in a positive impact also on the local community:

"The ZWH project encouraged local businesses to adopt eco-friendly practices, reducing our environmental footprint. Thus, by embracing open innovation logics, we are not only fostering economic growth through collaboration but also ensuring that our local community benefits from green solutions and sustainable practices; the ZWH project is a tangible reality".

"Residents feel increased opportunities to actively participate in sustainability initiative, creating a stronger sense of community empowerment. This is not just about environmentalism; it's about nurturing a sense of togetherness and shared purpose".

"I believe that drive for a regional innovation has the potential to generate job opportunities by fueling business growth, which, in turn, improves our overall economic situation. Moreover, open innovation encourages the development of sustainable practices, which is critical for preserving our environment and ensuring a high quality of life. It's exciting to see Campania evolve into a hub of innovation that will positively impact our community's future!".

In conclusion, the fusion of the ZWH project in the broader context of RIS reveals a synergistic multilevel relationship between collaboration, innovation and sustainability. This alignment underscores the project's potential to be both a beacon of ecological transformation within the tourism industry and a pioneering example of how regional open innovation principles can be operationalized in the RIS setting. In this regard, the opinion of C3 is highlighted:

"The shift towards collaboration and innovative actions has been nothing short of inspiring. It's not just about businesses or schools; it's about our entire community working together to create something greater than the sum of its parts".

In Campania, the journey towards open innovation is not just a strategy; it's a vision for a brighter and more innovative future. It is a process in which entrepreneurs, regional institutions and citizens are collectively pioneering a transformation that promises economic growth, sustainability and community well-being. Moreover, the region benefits from substantial resource endowment, including public funding and access to funds, which contribute to supporting innovative initiatives and the development of new ventures. Therefore, the study reveals that the Campania region can be considered an innovative regional system (upper-right quadrant). This privileged position in the graph (see figure 4.4) indicates an extraordinary potential for Campania to lead innovation, stimulate economic growth, and establish itself as a successful model within the regional ecosystem. As Campania continues to embrace the principles of open innovation, it positions itself as a dynamic hub of innovation and a model for regions aspiring to foster collaboration and drive progress. Beyond the findings related to the open innovation approach, the results of the study also emphasize companies' commitment to environmental sustainability and resource efficiency, both at firm and regional level. Indeed, this innovative approach overcomes the firm level, resulting in the rise of pioneering, sustainable offerings within the tourism industry and other related sectors. These innovations bolster the competitiveness of the whole region and enhance its attractiveness to customers and investors as well. The region's ability to attract investors and partners from around the world benefits local businesses and promotes international collaboration, leading to the exchange of knowledge and expertise on a global scale. However, this transition requires strong collaboration and synergistic relationships across the entire supply chain. Nevertheless, the success of the RIS also depends on policymaking. Regional authorities and local institutions can draw valuable insights from this transformation to formulate policies that support innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration. Public-private partnerships and incentives for innovative initiatives can further accelerate the region's progress. To exploit the full potential of innovative activities, research and practice must deepen the complexities of supply chain integration, examine logistics, and examine the roles played by various stakeholders in the effective implementation of new strategies. This holistic approach is crucial for advancing regional sustainability, fostering innovation, and amplifying the positive impacts of collaboration within the region.

Figure 4.4 – The position of Campania Region in the matrix of RIS.
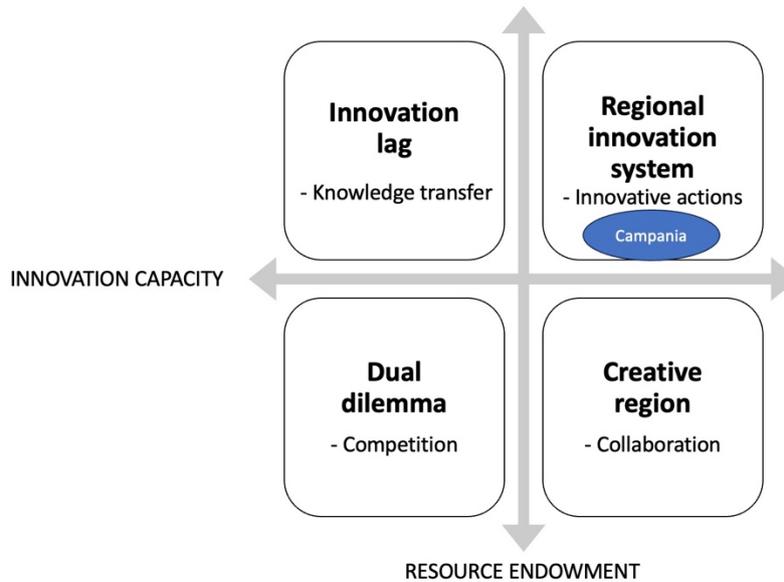
Source: own elaboration.

4.6 Conclusion

4.6.1 Theoretical implications

The study primarily serves as a valuable exploration and analysis of RIS, offering insights and methodologies that can be adapted and applied to other regions. While the findings may not be directly transferable due to the adoption of a single case study, the frameworks and analytical methods can provide valuable guidance for studying and addressing the unique innovation dynamics of various regions. From a theoretical point of view, the cooperative-competitive dynamic related to the RIS not only fosters a more robust innovation ecosystem, but also encourages knowledge and resource sharing. In this environment, companies can leverage the strengths of their regional peers while harnessing the power of open innovation to drive collective progress, ultimately fueling regional competitiveness and sustainable growth. This vision requires the adoption of open innovation in the tourism industry, that explains the transition from closed systems to open systems and that has changed firms' strategic paths, more and more based on relationships with other companies in the context of creative management, through the development of common ideas, strategies and policies in processes and services implementation, such as ZWH project. Through active engagement in initiatives promoting waste reduction, recycling, and sustainability, firms can mitigate their environmental footprint and cultivate the region's reputation as a sustainable tourist destination. The merge of collaboration, innovation, and sustainability has several implications for regions facing similar challenges and opportunities, offering them a roadmap to build resilient innovation ecosystems that drive economic prosperity,

environmental responsibility, and community welfare. Theoretical implications extend to the development of innovation policies at regional levels. By analyzing the cooperative nature of innovation within RIS, scholars and policymakers can refine and design policies that promote inter-firm cooperation, knowledge sharing, and resource utilization as key drivers of innovation and economic growth.

4.6.2 Practical implications

The present study allows to verify the existence of a possible interaction between resources and competences both at single firm level and regional level through the lens of RIS. Furthermore, the concomitant use of the relational view and stakeholder management theory, allow to verify the different perspectives and the results deriving from them. From a managerial point of view, globalization has brought to the necessity of the philosophy "think globally and act locally". This has led policies makers, firms, local community and other actors to redesign the geographic boundaries and to find a strategic concept, such as the one of RIS, that encloses the typicity of regional identity and the resources, including competence, able to stimulate the generation of innovation in terms of experiential innovation, regional innovation and sustainable innovation. While this study underscores the transformative potential of open innovation within regional systems, it also offers actionable insights for businesses and regional authorities. For businesses in the tourism sector, adopting open innovation principles can be operationalized through strategic partnerships and collaboration. They should actively seek out opportunities for collaboration, whether it's with other tourism businesses, local suppliers, or start-ups, as demonstrated in the ZWH project. This collaborative approach can not only drive innovation but also enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of their offerings. Regional authorities and policymakers should consider the importance of governance mechanisms that facilitate effective coordination among diverse stakeholders within the ecosystem. These mechanisms can range from regulatory frameworks to incentives for collaborative initiatives. For the local community, the adoption of open innovation logics by businesses can have positive implications, not just environmentally but also in terms of community empowerment and job opportunities. Residents should be encouraged to actively participate in sustainability initiatives, nurturing a sense of togetherness and shared purpose. Therefore, the research goes further the specific case study to offer theoretical insights that advance the understanding of RIS. These insights encompass the dynamics of collaboration, the reshaping of strategic pathways, the resilience of innovation ecosystems, cross-industry knowledge exchange, and policy development. Researchers and policymakers can draw

upon these theoretical foundations to enrich their studies and promote the growth and adaptability of regional innovation systems.

4.6.3 Limitations and future research directions

Notwithstanding the theoretical and practical implications touched upon above, a caveat on limitations and future research hints is of fundamental importance. Indeed, it is important to consider that the insights derived from the case study are not replicable in any kind of setting, as they are not dependent on any regional policies, but involve entrepreneurs' personal traits. Consequently, regarding the applicability of the findings to regions with differing characteristics, it is important to consider that there are inherent limitations to generalizing our results universally. Moreover, each region has its own distinct ecosystem and challenges, which may not perfectly align with Campania. Further research should be addressed to the examination of consumer behavior and perception. Some opened questions remain unsolved, thus, paving the way to future research avenues: How do guests respond to hotels' circular initiatives? Do they value products created from repurposed materials, and how does this affect their choice of accommodation? Investigating consumer attitudes and preferences in the optic of RIS, can provide valuable insights for all firms involved in the ecosystem.

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Open innovation Campania – accessed 22nd September 2023

Zero Waste Amalfi Coast – accessed 15th January 2023

CHAPTER V
Conclusion

5.1 Final remarks

The contribution of this thesis highlights the interconnected relationship between innovation and collaboration in improving the resilience of destinations in the transforming landscape of the tourism industry. By embracing the principles of open innovation and recognizing the cultural and regional dimensions of tourism, destinations must respond effectively to the challenges they inevitably face, thereby ensuring their long-term sustainability and success. At the heart of this thesis is a fundamental assumption: destination resilience is not a one-dimensional concept, but a multifaceted construct involving a multitude of variables and actors. Through the lens of dynamic resilience, the thesis emphasizes the importance of the ability to adapt, transform and ultimately prosper in the face of adversity. Among recent events, the COVID-19 pandemic was a powerful reminder of the tourism sector's vulnerability to external shocks. It underscored the undeniable need for innovative approaches to cope with these disruptions and to emerge stronger and more resilient than before. The insights from this thesis emphasize that, within the tourism ecosystem, destination resilience is a collective endeavor, requiring the interaction of various stakeholders. The dynamics of open innovation support the idea that the best solutions often emerge from a collaborative approach. At the same time, this thesis outlines the central role of culture in shaping the character and attractiveness of tourism destinations. It highlights the importance of preserving, promoting and fostering local cultural heritage as an essential component of a destination's identity. Cultural experiences, including culinary traditions, play a key role in creating authentic and memorable experiences for tourists. The regional focus on collaboration, exemplified by Regional Innovation Systems (RIS), underscores that a destination's strength lies in its ability to work as a cohesive unit. Based on the above considerations, adopting a thesis by publication approach, this work contains three distinct scientific contributions to propose a novel conceptualizations of tourism destination resilience.

The primary objective of the first paper, which is the second chapter of this thesis, is to contribute to the debate on tourism destination resilience by introducing a conceptual framework that combines destination resilience with open innovation, supported by a comprehensive bibliometric analysis. The study outlines the growing attention that destination resilience has received across various academic disciplines. This heightened interest has emerged due to the tourism industry's recognition of the need to develop strategies, policies, and initiatives that can effectively mitigate risks and capitalize on

opportunities, especially during times of crisis. The critical premise behind this research is the pressing need for innovation in the tourism industry, particularly in light of negative events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, the chapter emphasizes that innovation is vital to the survival and success of tourism organizations in a changing market environment. The originality of this study lies in the exploration of destination resilience, focusing on discrepancies in the existing literature. Tourism destinations, characterized by multifaceted supply and demand, are recognized as complex systems. Consequently, it is argued that there is no universally applicable definition of resilience within the tourism industry. To address this challenge, a conceptual framework incorporating the principles of open innovation is proposed. Moreover, it addresses the RQ1, by identifying and discussing the drivers that contribute to the development of destination resilience in face of various disruptions and challenges. These include technology, inter-organizational cooperation, absorptive capacity, innovation networks, sustainable practices, and the central role of innovation in enhancing resilience.

The second contribution forms the third chapter of the thesis. It delves into the factors that drive Destination Loyalty (DL) in the Mediterranean area, focusing on the influence of culinary experiences on tourists' intentions to revisit these destinations. The study proposes an extended version of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to create a new model and explore the impact of perceived experiential innovativeness (PEI) and memorability of culinary experiences (MCE) on destination loyalty. Therefore, this chapter addresses the RQ2, by analyzing and discussing the drivers of DL, with a focus on the role of gastronomic experiences in shaping tourist loyalty. It points out that in the context of destination management, local culture and traditions can significantly influence the value of destinations, affecting the overall perception of tourists, and strengthening their resilience. In this context, food quality and traditional gastronomy contribute to tourists' satisfaction with food consumption, making it a significant factor in the tourist experience. The research attempts to bridge the gap in the existing literature, which has not thoroughly examined the influence of local food consumption on tourists' overall satisfaction and destination loyalty.

The third contribution, which constitutes the fourth chapter of the thesis, examines the Regional Innovation Systems (RIS) within the tourism industry, with a particular focus on the Campania Region (Italy). It underscores the pivotal role of collaboration and competition among different stakeholders within regional systems in promoting innovation. Additionally, it highlights the significance of social capital, relational assets, and social relationships in driving innovation within RIS. The study combines dynamic capabilities,

the relational view, and resource-based theory to construct a theoretical framework that clarify the mechanisms and dynamics of RIS. The co-creation of innovation and strategic plans within a regional assets system emerges as a crucial aspect of RIS. However, RIS extends beyond innovation generation. These are complex ecosystems encompassing functions such as knowledge exchange, talent development, infrastructure support, and economic diversification. Therefore, RIS is defined as a subsystem of knowledge generation and diffusion, including research and development institutes, educational bodies, and technology transfer organizations, and a subsystem of knowledge application and exploitation made up of the companies in the region. Specifically, the study examines how the tourism industry enhances integration levels, facilitates knowledge transfer, and fosters innovation within RIS, using the Campania Region as a case study. The research employs a qualitative investigation approach, collecting data through documentary evidence and interviews. This chapter addresses RQ3, highlighting that open innovation principles are key to fostering collaboration and innovation. The integration of cross-sectoral stakeholders in initiatives and projects acts as a transformative force, shifting the focus from competition to collaboration among firms. Open innovation emphasizes that valuable insights, competencies, and innovations are not confined within individual companies (closed innovation) but are distributed among stakeholders within the region. Collaboration is a central theme within RIS, as various regional stakeholders, including businesses, institutions, and communities, work together to foster innovation. This collaboration serves as a key driver for building resilience in tourism destinations. When different actors in a destination come together to address common challenges, they are better equipped to respond to and recover from negative events. This can range from economic crises to natural disasters or even shifts in traveler preferences. The principles of open innovation align with the idea that open systems are more adaptable and, therefore, more resilient. By adopting open innovation practices, tourism destinations can benefit from a broader range of ideas and resources, both internally and externally, which can be pivotal in developing innovative solutions to challenges and changes.

5.2 Theoretical contribution

The studies presented in this thesis have significant theoretical implications that extend beyond the specific topic of destination resilience. This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of how tourism destinations can prepare for and recover from crises. It proposes a conceptual framework for assessing and enhancing destination resilience, which can serve as a foundation for further theoretical development in this area. The study suggests the need for a more holistic perspective on destination resilience, which can lead to the

evolution of theoretical models in this field. The consideration of soft indicators in assessing destination resilience is a novel concept, and it has theoretical implications for resilience measurement. This opens new avenues for theoretical development in terms of how to incorporate intangible aspects, such as social and cultural capital, into resilience assessment models. In addition, the study offers insights into the dynamics of collaboration, innovation, and sustainability within regional innovation systems. The study of regional innovation systems (RIS) and the cooperative-competitive dynamic within these systems contributes to the theoretical understanding of how knowledge sharing and resource exchange can foster innovation. It proposes the conceptual parallels between destination resilience and open innovation principles, suggesting that further theoretical development related to the intersection of these two areas is required. In conclusion, these implications not only contribute to the theoretical foundations of these areas but also provide a solid basis for further theoretical development, ultimately enriching the knowledge base of the broader scientific community.

5.3 Practical implications

This thesis has several practical implications. First, it highlights how for businesses, particularly those in the tourism sector, the adoption of open innovation principles emerges as a beacon of opportunity. By embracing this approach, businesses can foster innovation processes and strengthen their sustainability efforts. This takes on added significance in the tourism sector, where the unexpected can disrupt the industry. Collaboration and partnerships, whether with nearby tourism destinations, local suppliers, or innovative startups, become key drivers of progress. For example, partnering with local artisans or food producers can enrich the authenticity of tourism experiences, thereby enhancing destination appeal and competitiveness. Furthermore, these partnerships can play a fundamental role in helping destinations build their resilience against shocks or crises. Indeed, this spirit of cooperation fosters an environment where new ideas can flourish and where sustainability practices can be amplified, making tourism destinations more resilient in the face of uncertainty. By diversifying their network of partners and suppliers, tourism entrepreneurs can create redundant solutions in their operations, mitigating the impact of supply chain disruptions or economic downturns. This proactive approach to risk management strengthens the overall resilience of tourism destinations, enabling them to deal with crises more effectively. Regional and local authorities, and policymakers are at a crucial crossroads, and research urges them to act. The implementation of governance mechanisms designed to simplify coordination among different stakeholders within regional ecosystems is critical. This is particularly crucial in the context of tourism destination resilience, where

effective coordination is imperative to prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises. In this context, public policies play a leading role in shaping the innovation climate in tourism-oriented territories, exerting influence at the European, national and regional levels. These policies are instrumental in creating an environment that promotes collaboration, fosters sustainable practices and drives innovation throughout the tourism value chain. At the European level, policymakers are responsible for creating general frameworks and initiatives that promote innovation and sustainability in the tourism sector. By coordinating efforts and sharing best practices among member states, European policies can facilitate knowledge exchange and skill development, advancing innovation on a continental scale. European initiatives (e.g., Horizon Europe, European Tourism Strategy) provide funding and support for research, development and innovation projects that aim to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of European destinations. Similarly, national governments are expected to implement policies and programs that support innovation within respective tourism industries. This can involve investments in infrastructure development, financial incentives for innovation, or the creation of regulatory frameworks that encourage collaboration and entrepreneurship. For example, tax incentives for research and development expenditures, innovation loans and grants for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) could stimulate and facilitate the renewal of the tourism supply chain. At the regional level, policymakers have the opportunity to tailor strategies and actions to the specific needs and characteristics of local tourism ecosystems. Regional innovation strategies can promote collaboration among stakeholders, facilitate knowledge and technology transfer, and stimulate entrepreneurship in tourism-driven regions. By investing in initiatives that leverage regional strengths and resources, policymakers can promote innovation-driven growth and increase the resilience of tourism destinations. By promoting these efforts, authorities can catalyze positive change that benefits not only businesses but also the communities they serve. In the tourism industry, a resilient destination benefits the whole community by ensuring continued employment and economic stability. Encouraging active community participation in sustainability initiatives becomes a focal point, nurturing a sense of sharing and togetherness. In the context of tourism, this means that local communities actively engage in efforts to make their destination more resilient, which can lead to more inclusive and sustainable tourism practices.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

Although the studies presented in this thesis have made significant advancements in their respective fields, several avenues remain for future research that can build on and expand these findings. Future research should focus on developing and validating frameworks for

destination resilience. This includes a more comprehensive analysis of economic and soft indicators that can be used to assess the resilience of tourism destinations. Exploring the ideal timeframe for measuring resilience after a crisis is essential, as is a focus on post-crisis recovery strategies. In addition, a more holistic perspective on destination resilience that considers both preventive measures and post-crisis responses is needed. Moreover, an intersection between the notion of destination resilience and the principle of open innovation is emerging. Future research can explore the conceptual and empirical bridges between these two research areas, offering insights that inform theory and practice in both fields. This integration could lead to the development of innovative strategies that improve destination resilience through collaborative practices and open innovation. Finally, with reference to tourist behavior, future research can further extend the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by incorporating new constructs such as "Perceived Experiential Innovativeness" and "Memorability of Culinary Experiences". Understanding how these elements influence tourists' perceptions and evaluations, particularly in area of food tourism, can shed light on the intricate mechanisms that drive experiential consumption behaviors. In conclusion, these future research directions could contribute to the understanding of the areas explored in this thesis, paving the way for innovative and practical approaches that can improve destination resilience, enrich tourism experiences, and shape the future of regional innovation systems. By addressing these research avenues, scholars and practitioners can continue to contribute to the advancement of these fields, promoting sustainability, resilience, and innovation in the tourism industry.

Appendix – Questionnaire

N.	Questions	Response options
Q1	*Have you ever visited tourist destinations in the Mediterranean area?*	- Yes - No
Q2	*Have you ever visited the city of Naples (Italy) for tourism purposes?*	- Yes - No
Q2.1	*If you answered YES to the previous question, did your visit take place between November 2022 and January 2023?*	- Yes - No
Q3	*Based on your experiences at tourist destinations in the Mediterranean area, how much do you agree with the following statements?* 1. I have a wonderful image of tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area as a holiday location. 2. Spending holidays in tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area is attractive to me in my daily life. 3. I feel I am very loyal to tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area as a travel choice. 4. Tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area are well suited to the way in which I spend my holidays. 5. I am willing to return to tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area in the future. 6. I have wonderful memories of the culinary experiences I lived in the Mediterranean area.	Seven-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree")
Q4	*Have you participated in culinary experiences while traveling to destinations in the Mediterranean area?*	- Yes - No
Q4.1	*If you answered YES to the previous question, how much do you agree with the following considerations regarding the innovation of culinary offerings of tourist destinations in the Mediterranean area?* 1. Restaurants interact with customers in innovative ways to enhance their culinary experiences. 2. I will not forget the culinary experiences I lived in the Mediterranean area. 3. Restaurants deliver cutting-edge experiential services. 4. I will remember many positive feelings about the culinary experiences I lived in the Mediterranean area. 5. Restaurants are well-known for their innovative events in delivering culinary experiences.	Seven-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree")
Q5	*In general, how much do you agree with the following statements?* 1. I am willing to recommend tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area to family and friends as a holiday location.	Seven-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree")

	2. Members of my family think that it is a good idea to spend holidays in tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area. 3. I tend to revisit Mediterranean tourist destinations. 4. Most of my friends and acquaintances think that spending holidays in tourist destinations within the Mediterranean area is a good idea.	
Q6	*What gender do you identify as?*	- Male - Female - Prefer not to say
Q7	*What is your age?*	- <20 - 20-30 - 31-40 - 41-50 - >50
Q8	*What is your annual income?*	- < 50.000 EUR - 50.001-100.000 EUR - 100.001-150.000 EUR - 150.001 – 200.000 EUR - >200.001 EUR - Prefer not to say
Q9	*What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?*	- Secondary education - Higher education - Bachelor's degree - Post-graduation