

Youth Entrepreneurship in Sustainable Tourism: A Catalyst for Achieving SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism is a key driver of equitable economic development, job creation and environmental protection. The entrepreneurship of the youth has a great role to play in the development of sustainable tourism thru innovation, digital evolution and ethical business practices. Theoretical Model This study proposes a theoretical model based on entrepreneurial orientation, digital skills, sustainability awareness, government support, and tourism innovation to explore their impact on sustainable tourism entrepreneurship among young people. The proposed framework further investigates the role of sustainable tourism entrepreneurship in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8), which emphasizes the importance of decent work and economic growth. It offers a theoretical framework, formulates research questions, hypotheses and describes the methodology of future empirical research.

Key words: Sustainable Development Goal 8, Green Travel, Tourism Development, Digital Revolution, Business Innovation, Young Entrepreneurship

1 Introduction

Tourism is an important global economic sector and essential for job creation, GDP growth, foreign exchange earnings and regional development [3]. The United Nations has recognized tourism as a key contributor to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8, which calls for sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work [1]. Technology-Driven Tourism Entrepreneurship The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital marketing, smart tourist technology, cloud computing and social media has transformed tourism entrepreneurship [4].

Technological advances offer opportunities to young entrepreneurs to develop innovative tourism products with higher consumer satisfaction, operational efficiency and ecological sustainability. Youth entrepreneurship has emerged as a powerful strategy to reduce unemployment and promote inclusive economic growth [5]. [6] Young entrepreneurs in sustainable tourism undertakings tend to focus on eco-tourism, rural tourism, historical tourism, and community-centered tourism that generates employment and protects natural and cultural resources. Despite the growing academic interest in sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship, existing studies tend to investigate entrepreneurial orientation, digital skills, sustainability awareness or government support in an ad hoc way. There are few studies that integrate these variables into a unified framework that explains their cumulative effects on SDG 8 achievement [4]. This theoretical study tries to fill this research gap.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Eco-Friendly Tourism Objectives and Sustainable Development

Sustainable tourism seeks to balance economic development, environmental protection and social equity as well as the long-term competitiveness of destinations [6]. The United Nations recognizes tourism as an important industry that can create jobs, support local communities, reduce poverty and

promote sustainable economic growth [1]. Sustainable tourism can contribute directly to a number of Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 8, SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13 and SDG 17 [2].

2.2 Adolescent Entrepreneurship in Sustainable Tourism

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a driver of innovation, job creation and economic competitiveness [5]. The budding entrepreneurs demonstrate innovation, technological skills and flexibility and are well placed to develop sustainable tourist businesses. Bandura [7] Social Cognitive Theory posits that self-efficacy and experiential learning are significant drivers of entrepreneurial behavior. Likewise, Ajzen [8] Theory of Planned Behavior asserts that entrepreneurial intention depends on attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. These ideas provide the behavioral foundations for understanding young tourist entrepreneurship.

2.3 Smart Tourism and Technological Development

Digital transformation thru artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), mobile apps, digital payment systems, social media, online reservation platforms and big data analysis is Changing the tourism sector [4].

Digital skills allow entrepreneurs to

- increase operational efficiency,
- personalize travel experience
- expand market penetration,
- reduce operational expenditures, and
- improve competitiveness.

Hence, intelligent tourist ecosystems improve the commercial effectiveness and sustainability of destinations.

2.4 Green Tourism Business Model

- Sustainable tourism Frameworks for sustainable tourist enterprises are made up of
- Agriturismo
- Community-led Tourism of cultural heritage
- Farm tourism

These approaches can generate jobs, while conserving natural assets and cultural heritage [6].

2.5 Elements of Youth Tourism Entrepreneurships

The proposed framework consists of five major factors. Business Orientation Entrepreneurial orientation is the propensity to be innovative, proactive, and risk taking that enables entrepreneurs to detect opportunities and create competitive advantages [4].

Technical Capabilities Digital proficiency is the ability to use technology, digital marketing, AI-based decision-making, and virtual consumer interaction to improve organizational performance (George et al., 2021).

Environmental Awareness

Entrepreneurs with higher sustainability awareness implement environmentally sustainable procedures that increase destination resilience and build consumer confidence [6]. State Aid Young entrepreneurship is promoted thru government programs, entrepreneurial incentives, incubation schemes, tourism facilities and monetary support [5].

Tourism Innovations

Innovation enables entrepreneurs to provide new tourist products, digital solutions and sustainable business frameworks that increase visitor satisfaction and increase destination competitiveness (WTTC, 2024).

3. Research Gap

Previous studies have separately studied entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable tourism. However, research has not been conducted on the integration of entrepreneurial orientation, digital competence, sustainability awareness, government support, and tourism innovation in a single conceptual model that explains youth entrepreneurship to achieve SDG 8 [4].

4. Objectives of the research

RO1. Examine the influence of entrepreneurial orientation, digital capability, sustainability awareness, government support, and tourism innovation on sustainable tourism entrepreneurship.

RO2. Investigate the role of sustainable tourism entrepreneurship in promoting decent work among youth.

RO3. Evaluate the contribution of youth entrepreneurship toward achieving SDG 8.

RO4. Develop a conceptual framework linking entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

5. Testing hypotheses

H1: Entrepreneurial orientation positively influences sustainable tourism entrepreneurship [8].

H2: Digital capability positively influences sustainable tourism entrepreneurship [4].

H3: Sustainability awareness positively influences sustainable tourism entrepreneurship [6].

H4: Government support positively influences sustainable tourism entrepreneurship [5].

H5: Tourism innovation positively influences sustainable tourism entrepreneurship (WTTC, 2024).

H6: Sustainable tourism entrepreneurship positively contributes to achieving SDG 8 through employment generation and inclusive economic growth [1].

6. Our Proposed Approach

This research uses a quantitative method thru a standardized questionnaire. It targets young entrepreneurs aged 18-35 years old who are running sustainable tourism enterprises. The data will be analyzed by using SPSS and SmartPLS 4.

Methods of statistics are

- Statistics at a glance
- Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)
 - General reliability
 - Mean Variance Extracted (MVE).
- HTMT Metric
- Correlation analysis
- Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)
- Pathway Analysis [9], [10].

The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS 29 and SmartPLS 4 to evaluate the proposed conceptual framework and test the study hypotheses. At first, descriptive statistics will be utilized to characterize the demographic features of the participants and to assess the data distribution (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, skewness and kurtosis). The reliability of the measuring scales will be evaluated by using Cronbach's Alpha, and values above 0.70 are considered to show satisfactory internal consistency [11]. Moreover, Composite Reliability (CR) will be used to assess the reliability of the constructs, and values greater than 0.70 are considered acceptable [12]. The validity of the measurement model will be checked with the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). AVE score of 0.50 or above will validate convergent validity which means each concept explains more than fifty percent of its indicator variation. Values of HTMT less than 0.85 (or 0.90) will indicate sufficient discriminant validity between the constructs [13]. Pearson's correlation analysis will be used to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the research variables.

The proposed hypotheses will be tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) thru SmartPLS 4. The structural model will estimate route coefficients (β), coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and fit of the model indices including SRMR [12]. The statistical significance of the predicted associations will be tested using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples, which will provide t-values, p-values, and confidence intervals for hypothesis testing [10]. Finally, path analysis will be applied to examine the direct and indirect effects among entrepreneurial orientation, digital capability, sustainability awareness, governmental assistance, tourism innovation, sustainable tourism entrepreneurship, and achievement of SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

7. Expected contributions

The proposed framework contributes to the entrepreneurial literature by integrating sustainability, innovation, digital transformation and tourist management in a single theoretical framework.

Practically, the study provides guidance for

- policymakers,
- tourism departments,
- startup incubators,
- educational institutions,
- tourism entrepreneurs.

The framework also supports India's Digital India, Startup India, and Sustainable Development Agenda.

8. Conclusion

Youth entrepreneurship is a strong engine for sustainable tourism and the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 8. Entrepreneurial orientation, digital competence, environmental awareness, government assistance, and tourist innovation enhance sustainable tourism enterprise. The proposed conceptual framework provides a strong theoretical basis for future empirical studies and practical guidance for policymakers, tourism practitioners and researchers [1], [2].

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