

# A Systematic Literature Review on Marine Tourism in Business Management: State of the Art and Future Research Agenda

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## Abstract

This systematic literature review investigates marine tourism within the scope of business management areas, shedding light on diverse industry dimensions, from environmental impacts to economic valuations. Utilizing the Scopus database and spanning a decade (2012-2022), this research meticulously sifts through an initial bulk of identified articles, ultimately honing in on 37 pertinent papers through a criterion that ensured relevance via aspects like authorship, title, publication year, journal, and citation count. With a structured mapping approach, the research categorizes marine tourism in business management into basic, emerging, motor, and niche themes, revealing critical insights and articulating states of the art in several key facets of marine tourism. Among these are Limited Focus on Sustainable Practices, Under-Explored Technology Utilization, Insufficient Market Segmentation Studies, and Minimal Research on Crisis Management. The study further crafts a future research agenda, considering pivotal domains such as sustainability, technology, market dynamics, crisis management, and community engagement. Serving as a potential cornerstone for forthcoming studies, this research not only maps out future investigations in marine tourism within business management but also highlights themes ripe for deeper, more detailed exploration, thereby enriching the academic vista in marine tourism within the realm of business management.

**Key Words:** Marine Tourism, Business Management, Systematic Literature Review, Sustainability.

**JEL Classification:** Z30, Z31, Z32

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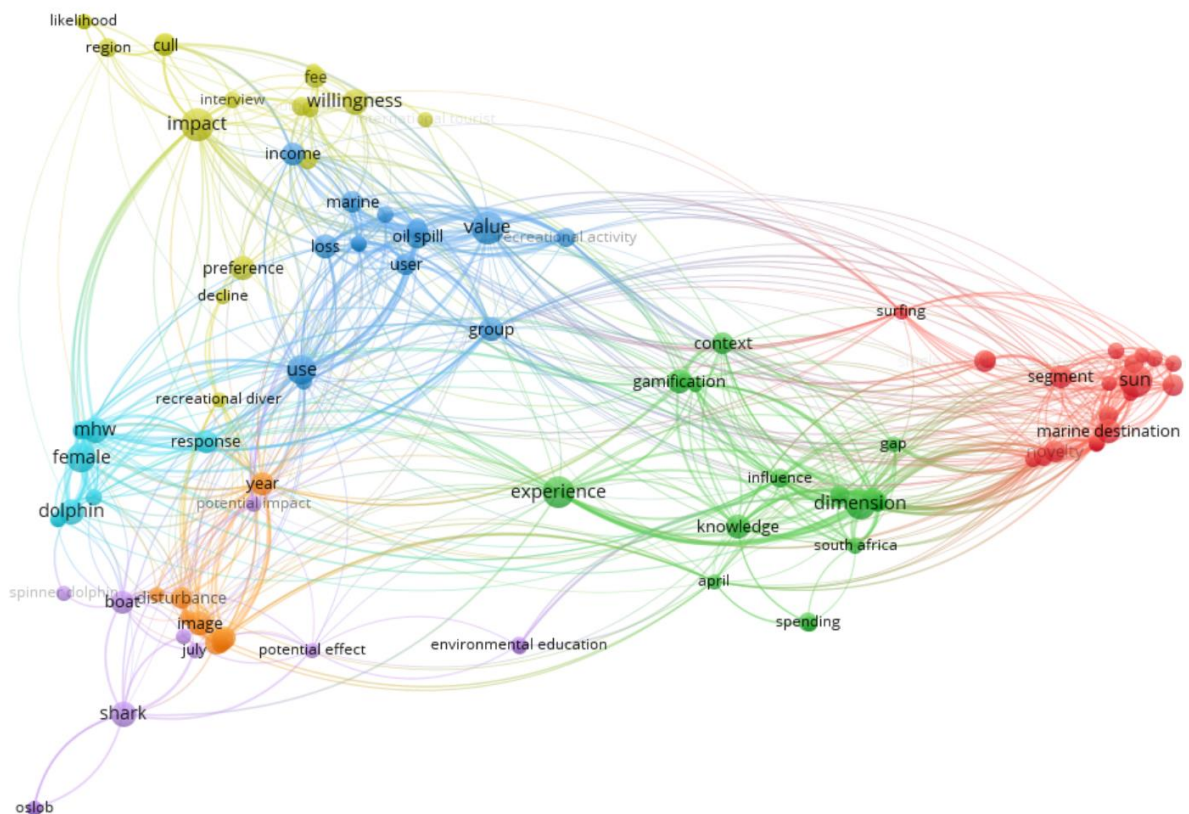
## 1. Introduction

Marine tourism has been gaining increasing attention in recent years due to its significant contribution to the global tourism industry and the growing demand for unique, nature-based experiences (Adam, 2022; Agam et al., 2021; Jupowicz-Ginalska & Pataák, 2018). However, the rapid expansion of this sector also brings numerous challenges, including environmental degradation (Coghlan et al., 2011), climate change impacts (Karani & Failler, 2020), and the need for sustainable management practices (Burgin & Hardiman, 2015). To better understand the complexities of marine tourism and foster its sustainable development, it is essential to delve into the literature and identify the key areas of research that have shaped the field (Spinelli & Benevolo, 2022). The previous research underscores the multifaceted nature of marine tourism, Krelling et al. (2017) demonstrated the economic implications of marine debris on tourism revenue. However, the exploration of effective waste management and conservation strategies to mitigate this impact requires further attention. This study demonstrates that tourists' perceptions and reactions to marine pollution can impact their satisfaction and willingness to return, ultimately affecting tourism revenues. As such, implementing effective waste management

strategies and marine conservation measures is crucial for preserving both the environmental quality and economic viability of coastal regions.

While the studies referenced above have provided valuable insights into various aspects of marine tourism, a comprehensive understanding of how these dimensions interact and influence the overall marine tourism experience still largely remains unexplored. Mathieu et al. (2003) focused on the valuation of marine parks in developing countries but did not delve into the broader context of economic, social, and environmental dynamics that shape these values. Similarly, the study by Jarvis et al. (2016) pinpointed determinants of tourist satisfaction but did not explore the role of visitor memories and their influence on experience perception and satisfaction in depth. Furthermore, while Ballantyne et al. (2011) briefly touched upon the role of visitor memories in creating compelling interpretive experiences, there has been little exploration of how these memory-driven experiences could be better leveraged to deepen tourists' bonds with the marine environment and inspire responsible behaviors.

Figure 1. Results of Topic Exploration Based on Network Visualization



Source: own results

A focused study of the literature from 2012 to 2022 is crucial for understanding marine tourism through the lens of business economics for several compelling reasons. First, the marine tourism industry has witnessed considerable transformations over the past decade (M. Orams, 2002; Paker & Vural, 2016; Porter et al., 2018). There have been significant advancements in technology (Tan, 2018), changes in consumer preferences (Burgin & Hardiman, 2015; Saayman & Saayman, 2017), and shifts in market dynamics (Groeneveld et al., 2018; Jonas et al., 2020; Karani & Failler, 2020), all of which have directly impacted the way the industry operates. These transformations necessitate a review of the most recent literature to grasp the current state and challenges of the industry accurately. Furthermore, in light of the growing global emphasis on sustainability and environmental conservation, there's been a notable shift

towards sustainable practices within the marine tourism sector (Carvache-Franco et al., 2021; Cong & Chi, 2021; Dimitrovski et al., 2021). Recent literature is more likely to incorporate discussions and findings related to sustainability (Leposa, 2020; Marlina et al., 2020), providing valuable insights into how the industry is balancing its economic goals with the imperative to preserve and protect marine environments (Groeneveld et al., 2018; Mann-Lang et al., 2021). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for scholars and practitioners aiming to promote responsible and sustainable marine tourism. Moreover, the economic impact of global events, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic, cannot be understated (Alharbi, Alsubki, et al., 2022; Marhaeni et al., 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2022). The pandemic has drastically affected the tourism sector (Finlay et al., 2022; King et al., 2021), leading to unprecedented challenges and necessitating novel approaches to business and economic planning within the industry (Gaffar et al., 2022). Literature from the 2012-2022 period will offer invaluable insights into how marine tourism entities are navigating these challenges, providing a reference point for strategies that are relevant in the face of global economic disruptions.

In Figure 1, it is evident that the topic of marine tourism consists of several crucial axes that are still separated from each other, especially the research topic of experience, which is still far from the main topic axis. Consequently, there is a research gap (Van Eck & Waltman, 2011), which is the lack of connection between experience and tourism research, particularly in marine tourism. The analysis depicted in Figure 1 suggests that within the realm of marine tourism, various research themes are not well-connected, and the research on experience is quite distant from the central themes. This separation indicates that there is a research gap in marine tourism studies, where the role of experience is not sufficiently explored or integrated into the broader context of tourism research. As a result, future research in marine tourism could focus on bridging this gap by emphasizing the relationship between tourists' experiences and other key aspects of marine tourism.

Despite the substantial volume of existing literature on marine tourism, there remains a significant research gap in understanding the intricate interplay among business management strategies within the marine tourism sector. While several studies have explored these elements individually, there is a scarcity of empirical research that integrates these components, which is necessary to provide a comprehensive understanding of effective business management in marine tourism settings. Addressing this gap is pivotal for developing management strategies that ensure sustainability, responsible conduct, and profitable growth within the marine tourism industry. Given this context, our systematic literature review seeks to bridge this gap with a concentrated focus on business management within the marine tourism sector. The review will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the identified gaps and limitations in the current body of knowledge regarding the synergy within business management strategies in the context of marine tourism?
2. Based on the review findings, what future research directions are crucial for enhancing understanding and improving business management practices for the sustainable and responsible growth of marine tourism?

To answer these research questions, the review will diligently analyze and synthesize existing studies published between 2012-2022. This process will involve a comprehensive search of academic databases, with Scopus serving as the primary source, utilizing specific keywords and criteria to identify articles pertinent to business management in marine tourism. Each chosen article will undergo a critical review and analysis to extract key findings, methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and highlight identified research gaps. This methodical and structured approach aims to offer valuable insights and directions for future research and practice in the field of marine tourism, with a special focus on business management strategies.

This research is organized into eight chapters. Chapter 1: Introduction presents the topic, its relevance, a literature overview, research gaps, questions, and objectives. Chapter 2: Theoretical Background reviews the main concepts and theories regarding marine tourism, sustainability, and the economic, social, and environmental interplay, providing a study foundation. Chapter 3: Methodology details the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures, promoting systematic and replicable

research. Chapter 4 focuses on thematic classification of marine tourism in business management. Chapter 5 delves into highly cited works in marine tourism business management. Chapter 6 proposes a state of the art. Chapter 7 proposes a future research agenda in marine tourism. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes the research, summarizing findings, discussing implications, and reflecting on the research process.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Marine tourism, broadly construed, encompasses a range of activities wherein travel occurs beyond one's usual residence, prompting visitors to interact with the marine and coastal environments for leisure or recreational purposes (Orams, 2002). This wide-ranging domain comprises various sub-sectors including beach tourism, yachting and cruising, marine wildlife tourism, and sea angling, among others (Carvache-Franco et al., 2020; Orams & Lück, 2014). As an industry, marine tourism has burgeoned into a global powerhouse, representing a substantial proportion of the global tourism market. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), an estimated 80% of all tourism occurs in coastal areas. This data underscores the weighty contribution of marine tourism to worldwide tourism revenues (UNWTO, 2023). While marine tourism offers noteworthy economic benefits, it also presents a multitude of environmental challenges. Increased tourist footfall can precipitate the degradation of marine ecosystems, biodiversity loss, and disturbances to marine wildlife (Buckley, 2021). This situation underscores the industry's urgent necessity to shift towards more sustainable practices.

In the context of marine tourism, sustainability refers to the mindful management and use of resources. This approach respects the integrity of the marine ecosystem, caters to human economic, social, and aesthetic needs, and considers the well-being of both present and future generations. This understanding of sustainability includes the reduction of negative environmental impacts, the advancement of conservation efforts, and the protection of local communities' welfare. Serving as the theoretical backbone of the sector, the interplay of economic, social, and environmental elements forms the cornerstone of the marine tourism experience. A profound understanding of these dynamics is crucial for fostering sustainable behaviors among tourists, promoting conservation, and enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of marine destinations. Therefore, this theoretical framework provides a conceptual foundation and guides the focus of the literature review on marine tourism. This approach aims to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of marine tourism and its connections to sustainability, thereby providing essential context for the ongoing dialogue on sustainable marine tourism.

## 3. Methodology

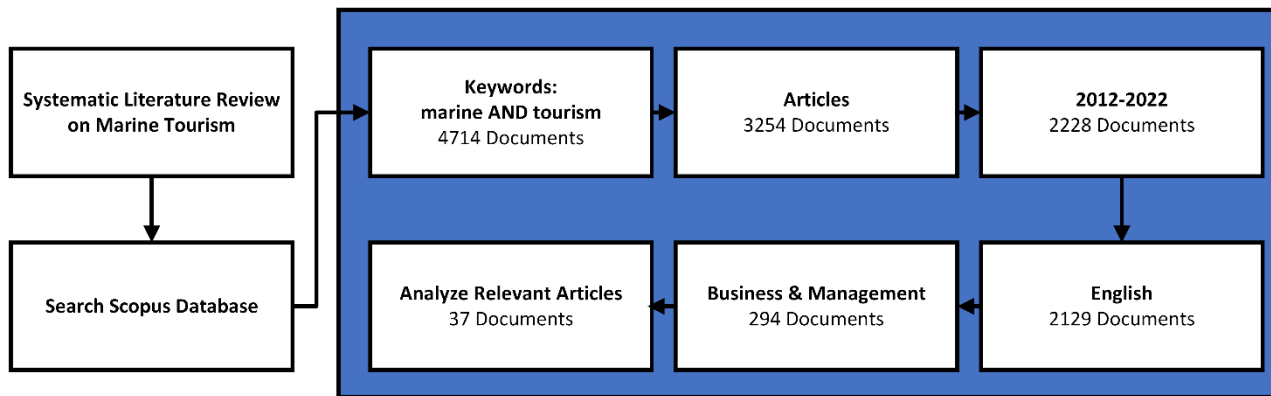
This research adopts a systematic literature review approach to explore various facets of the marine tourism industry (Prabakusuma et al., 2023; Sahabuddin et al., 2023), including its environmental impacts, economic valuation, and visitor behavior. Through this approach, the study systematically searches, selects, and evaluates existing literature on marine tourism to garner insights and understand the breadth and depth of the current body of knowledge on the topic. The systematic review method enables the identification and synthesis of key findings and themes in the literature, providing a comprehensive understanding of the industry's characteristics and trends (Meiryani et al., 2023). This structured method of reviewing literature ensures that the research is replicable and the findings are reliable, offering a solid foundation for future research in marine tourism.

The review encompasses literature from 2012 to 2022, a timeframe selected to encapsulate the notable growth and transformation witnessed in the marine tourism industry. The methodology adopted

for this review involves searching the Scopus database to identify articles relevant to the study. The search criteria involve two sets of keywords. The first set, comprising "marine" and "tourism," is incorporated into the search through the title, abstract, and keywords, yielding 4,714 documents. Subsequently, this research narrows its focus to documents of the article type only, resulting in 3,254 documents. Limiting the research to the years 2012-2022 yields 2,228 documents. Restricting the scope to English-language documents produces 2,129 documents, and filtering within the business & management area reduces the count to 294 documents. Following this, we conducted a manual analysis of the documents relevant to the discussion of marine tourism in the context of business management, ultimately identifying 37 documents.

Following the search process, the articles are screened for relevance, focusing on those that provide substantial insights into the marine tourism industry in business management. The screening process involves assessing the articles' authors, titles, year, journals, and cited to ensure their relevance to the research topic (Alotaibi & Al Anizi, 2019). Once the relevant articles are identified, a thorough analysis is conducted to extract pertinent information, findings, and trends.

Figure 2. The Procedure for Choosing the Ultimate Research Articles for Analysis



Source: own results

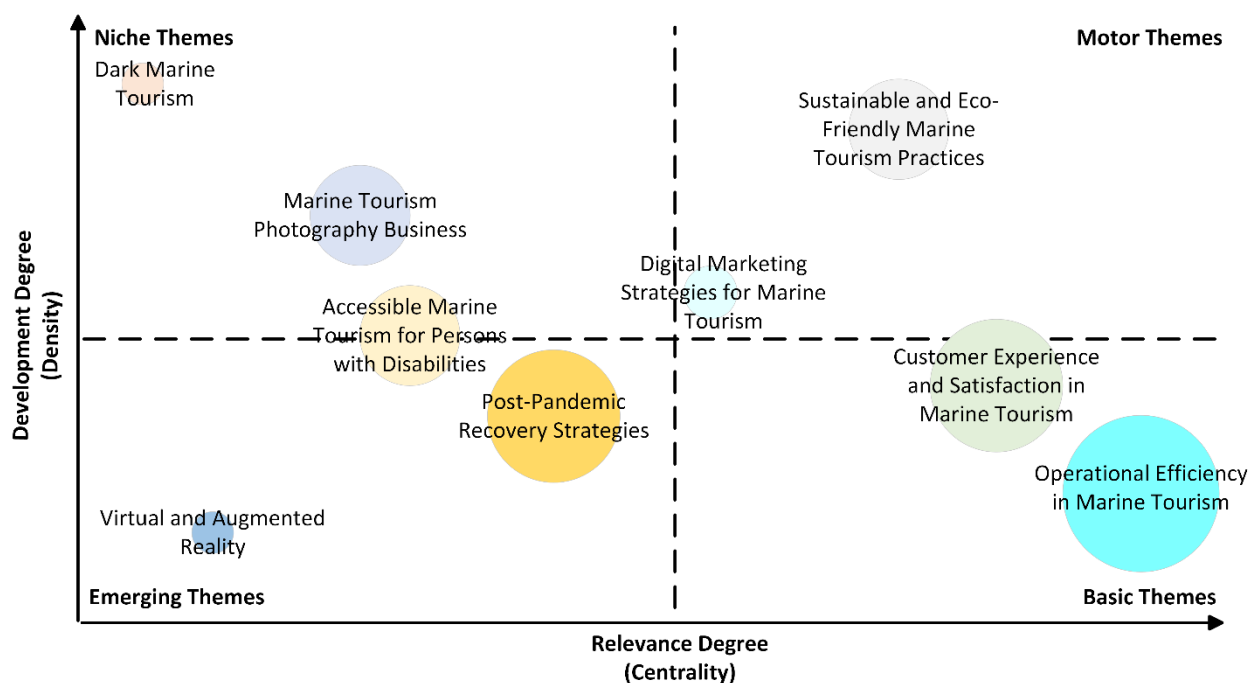
In the methodology section of this systematic literature review on marine tourism (see Figure 2), the methodology enables researchers to identify and analyze a substantial body of literature on marine tourism and visitor behavior (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2015). This approach provides valuable insights into the diverse aspects of the industry (Jensen et al., 2023), which can contribute to the development of sustainable management strategies and informed decision-making for marine tourism destinations and stakeholders (Khizar et al., 2023). The analysis to determine the state of the art and future research agenda, based on the identification of the most cited articles, involved several steps (Loureiro et al., 2021). Firstly, highly cited articles were identified through a comprehensive literature search and sorted based on citation counts (Kim & So, 2023). Secondly, a content analysis was conducted to extract key information and insights from the selected articles, focusing on themes, theories, methodologies, and findings. Thirdly, common themes and emerging trends in marine tourism research were identified, considering recurring topics, theoretical frameworks, and research methodologies. A gap analysis was then performed to identify areas where further research is needed, such as underexplored topics or methodological limitations (Agrawal et al., 2022; Page & Duignan, 2023). Based on the identified themes, trends, and gaps, a future research agenda for marine tourism was developed, proposing potential research directions and priorities (Norton et al., 2015; Tasnia et al., 2021). This analysis has provided valuable insights for advancing the field and guiding future research efforts (Suárez-Rojas et al., 2023).

#### 4. Thematic Classification of Marine Tourism in Business Management

Marine tourism with its multifaceted and dynamic nature has garnered extensive attention within the realm of business management research (Carvache-Franco et al., 2021; Jang & Cho, 2018). In an attempt to streamline the vast array of knowledge, we embark on a systematic thematic classification that elucidates the foundational, burgeoning, driving, and specialized themes currently permeating the field. These classifications enable scholars and practitioners to grasp the nuanced dimensions of marine tourism while identifying gaps, opportunities, and future directions in both research and practice. In the subsequent section, Figure 3 is presented to visually illustrate and categorize the pivotal themes within the context of marine tourism studied under the lens of business management. The figure serves as a conceptual map that delineates the scope and focus of each identified theme, offering readers an at-a-glance understanding of the field's thematic landscape. This visual representation simplifies the complex tapestry of marine tourism research, facilitating an intuitive comprehension of the breadth and depth of existing literature (Spinelli & Benevolo, 2022). By articulating the basic, emerging, motor, and niche themes (Bamel et al., 2022; Mühl & Oliveira, 2022), the figure accentuates the multi-dimensional character of marine tourism research, providing a structured framework for further exploration and analysis.

This visual elucidation is crucial for academics, researchers, and industry practitioners aiming to navigate the intricate field of marine tourism with a business management perspective (Khare & Jain, 2022). By identifying and explicating these themes, the figure fosters a deeper appreciation of the prevailing academic discourse, thereby guiding future research endeavors and practical initiatives in marine tourism management. The ensuing discussion will delve into each thematic classification, explicating their significance, contributions, and implications for the advancement of knowledge and practice in marine tourism.

Figure 3. Thematic Classification



Source: own results

In the academic landscape of marine tourism literature, Figure 3 presents a systematic categorization of themes, distinguishing between basic, emerging, motor, and niche themes, each providing unique insights and avenues for research and practice within the field. Starting with the basic

themes, the figure highlights 'operational efficiency in marine tourism' and 'customer experience and satisfaction in marine tourism' as the core areas. Operational efficiency is imperative for marine tourism operations to ensure they are economically viable, sustainable, and capable of meeting stakeholders' expectations. This encompasses various management practices aiming at resource optimization, waste minimization, improved service delivery, and overall effective functionality of marine tourism enterprises (Wenhai et al., 2019). On the other hand, the customer experience and satisfaction theme mirror the industry's focus on the tourists, aiming to understand and exceed their expectations to build loyalty and promote positive referrals (Chen & Chen, 2021). This area scrutinizes the totality of tourists' interactions and perceptions throughout their marine tourism journey, providing invaluable insights for improving service and value propositions of marine tourism offerings.

The emerging themes depicted in the figure include 'Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR & AR)' and 'Post-Pandemic Recovery Strategy.' VR & AR in marine tourism are in their infancy but are poised to redefine the tourist experience by offering immersive engagements with the marine environment (Aguayo & Eames, 2023; Mofokeng & Matima, 2018). These technologies, while creating novel tourism products, also promise enhanced accessibility for those unable to participate physically. There is a need for more scholarly work to understand their practical applications, challenges, and long-term implications for the industry. 'Post-Pandemic Recovery Strategy' is a substantial emerging theme due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Alharbi, AlGhanmi, et al., 2022). It calls for the development of robust strategies and practices focusing on health protocols, business continuity, financial resilience, and sustainable practices reshaped by the pandemic's realities.

Motor themes in the figure are 'sustainable and eco-friendly marine tourism practices' and 'digital marketing strategies for marine tourism.' Sustainability in marine tourism is a moderate theme, crucial for developing practices that are economically, environmentally, and socially responsible, acting as a guide for future research and industry applications (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Marlina et al., 2020). 'Digital marketing strategies for marine tourism' is a smaller but essential theme, focusing on leveraging digital channels to market marine tourism effectively, signifying its transition into a basic theme due to the digitization trend in the industry (Jang & Cho, 2018; Pranita, 2018). Niche themes like 'dark marine tourism,' 'marine tourism photography business,' and 'accessible marine tourism for persons with disabilities' represent specialized areas in the literature. 'Dark marine tourism' is a small but significant theme focusing on visits to maritime sites associated with death and suffering, offering unique ethical and managerial challenges (Hooper & Lennon, 2016; Kennell & Powell, 2021). 'Marine tourism photography business' is a moderate theme reflecting the entrepreneurial opportunities in photography within the marine tourism sector, with potential for further study on business strategies and sustainable practices (De Brauwert et al., 2017; Fahlevi et al., 2020). 'Accessible marine tourism for persons with disabilities' is another moderate theme emphasizing inclusivity and accessibility in marine tourism, underscoring the industry's commitment to catering to all individuals, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities (Samsudin et al., 2023).

These themes offer a structured overview of the marine tourism literature landscape, providing scholars and practitioners with a roadmap for understanding the current state of knowledge, identifying gaps, and suggesting directions for future research and practice. Each theme plays a vital role in the broader tapestry of marine tourism research and practice, contributing to the field's ongoing evolution and response to the dynamic global tourism environment.

## 5. Analyzing Key Contributions: Highly Cited Works in Marine Tourism Business Management

Attention is devoted to key contributions within the realm of marine tourism research, with a distinctive emphasis placed on aspects of business management. The documents selected for review have been acknowledged for their significant scholarly impact, as evidenced by the notable number of citations

each has garnered within the academic community (Prabakusuma et al., 2023; Sahabuddin et al., 2023). These foundational texts shed light on various facets of marine tourism, offering valuable insights and deepening our understanding of the essential business management strategies for conducting efficient and sustainable operations in the sector. Through a careful examination of these crucial works, readers can gain comprehensive insight into the established concepts, methodologies, and empirical findings that have profoundly influenced and shaped both scholarly discourse and practical applications in marine tourism business management.

Table 1. Highly Cited Works

| Document Title   | Authors  | Source   | Year | Citations |
|--|--|--|------|-----------|
| Facilitating reef tourism management through an innovative importance-performance analysis method  | Coghlan, A.  | Tourism Management, 33(4), pp. 767–775   | 2012 | 92        |
| Managing whale-watching as a non-lethal consumptive activity   | Higham, J.E.S., Bejder, L., Allen, S.J., Corkeron, P.J., Lusseau, D. | Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 24(1), pp. 73–90                                       | 2016 | 72        |
| Customer segmentation for marinas: Evaluating marinas as destinations  | Paker, N., Vural, C.A.   | Tourism Management, 56, pp. 156–171  | 2016 | 71        |
| The Causal Relationships among Recreational Involvement, Flow Experience, and Well-being for Surfing Activities                            | Cheng, T.-M., Lu, C.-C.  | Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 20, pp. 1486–1504                            | 2015 | 38        |
| Determinants of visitor length of stay at three coastal national parks in South Africa   | Scholtz, M., Kruger, M., Saayman, M.                                 | Journal of Ecotourism, 14(1), pp. 21–47  | 2015 | 36        |
| Sustainable Entrepreneurship Tourism: An Alternative Development Approach for Remote Coastal Communities Where Awareness of Tourism is Low | Porter, B.A., Orams, M.B., Lück, M.                                  | Tourism Planning and Development, 15(2), pp. 149–165                                   | 2018 | 23        |
| SCUBA diving and marine conservation: Collaboration at two Australian subtropical destinations   | Hammerton, Z., Dimmock, K., Hahn, C., Dalton, S.J., Smith, S.D.A.    | Tourism in Marine Environments, 8(1-2), pp. 77–90                                      | 2012 | 23        |
| Friendly or dangerous waters? Understanding dolphin swim tourism encounters  | Wiener, C.   | Annals of Leisure Research, 16(1), pp. 55–71   | 2013 | 20        |
| Factors influencing tourist visitation in marine tourism: Lessons learned from FRI Aquarium Penang, Malaysia                               | Isa, S.M., Ramli, L.   | International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research, 8(1), pp. 103–117 | 2014 | 18        |
| Promotion analysis of marine tourism in Indonesia: A case study  | Briandana, R., Doktoralina, C.M., Sukmajati, D.                      | European Research Studies Journal, 21(1), pp. 602–613                                  | 2018 | 16        |

Source: own results

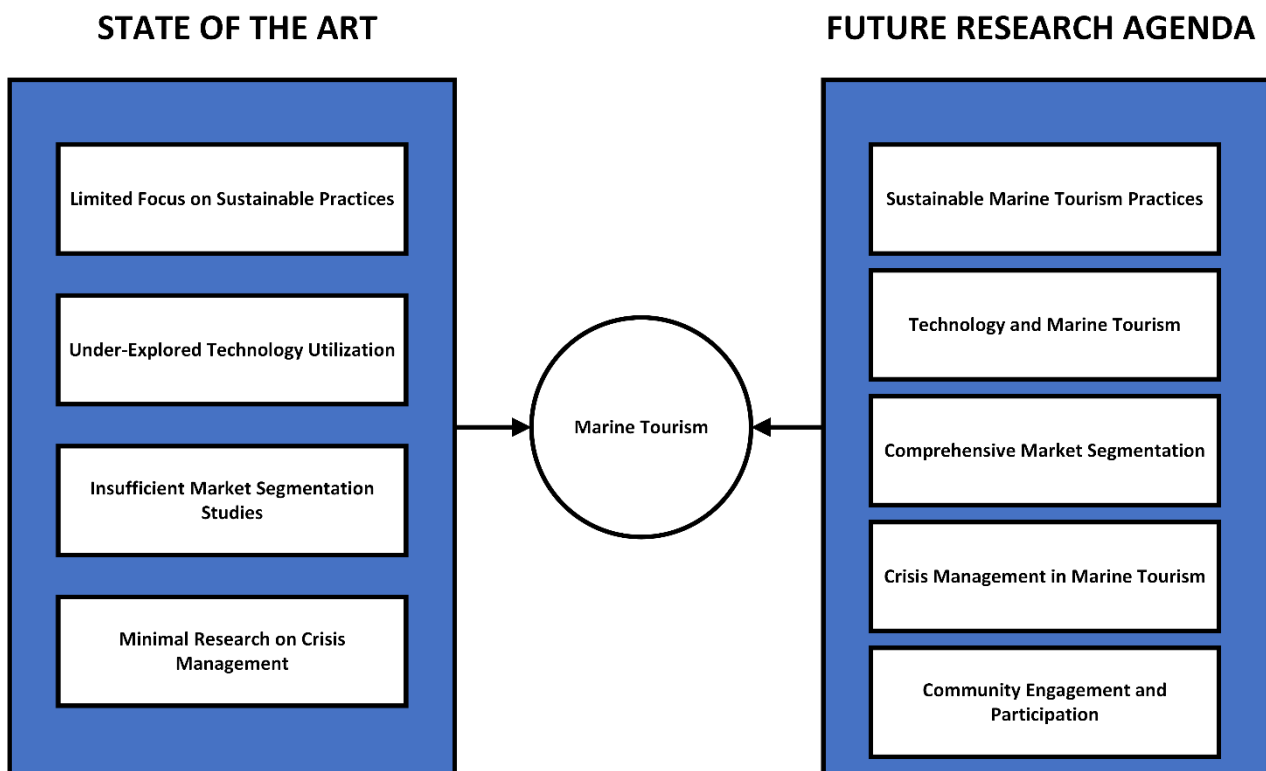
Presented in Table 1 are summaries of these essential texts, with details including document title, authorship, source of publication, year of issuance, and the respective citation counts. This tabular



arrangement facilitates easy comparison and provides a clear understanding of the relative importance and impact of each work within the broader field. Following Table 1, we engage in a detailed discussion highlighting the specific contributions and implications each article presents for research and practice in the dynamic field of marine tourism business management.

The work of Coghlan (2012) serves as a substantial contribution to the literature on marine tourism management, introducing a nuanced importance-performance analysis method. This method is utilized for the quantitative assessment of visitor satisfaction in reef tourism contexts. The study illuminates the asymmetric impacts of various operational, environmental, and service attributes on visitor satisfaction, revealing a complex relationship among these factors, Higham et al. (2016) provides a critical exploration of whale-watching as an activity deeply embedded within the global capitalist framework. Higham et al. (2016) provide a crucial examination of whale-watching, framing it as an activity intricately woven into the global capitalist structure. The authors advocate for a necessary shift toward sustainability in whale-watching practices and call for the establishment of international regulatory frameworks and management strategies to address the negative externalities linked with this tourism type. Paker and Vural (2016) study from 2016 is also noteworthy in the literature, adopting a benefit segmentation approach to comprehend marinas as tourist destinations. Their analysis identifies five distinct market segments based on yachters' expectations, offering valuable implications for both practitioners and scholars in the field of marina services and marine tourism marketing.

Figure 4. State of the Art and Future Research Agenda



Source: own results

In the realm of water-based recreational activities, the study by Cheng and Lu (2015) is significant for examining participant well-being. The authors found a direct relationship between recreational

involvement, flow experience, and well-being among surfers, with flow experience serving as a mediator between recreational involvement and well-being. Scholtz et al. (2015) concentrate on identifying factors influencing visitor length of stay at coastal national parks, which is vital for grasping the economic and environmental implications of tourism at these locations. Their work lays the groundwork for the development of strategies encouraging longer visitor stays. Porter et al. (2018) address the demand for alternative development approaches in remote coastal communities by presenting the Social Entrepreneurship Tourism Model as a feasible alternative. For individuals interested in diving and conservation, the work of Hammerton et al. (2012) is essential as it investigates the motivations of divers participating in conservation activities and explores the potential benefits derived from collaborations between private and governmental organizations in marine conservation initiatives. Wiener (2013) study makes a valuable contribution by shedding light on the social implications of human-dolphin interactions in tourism, offering an updated review of tourist perceptions and experiences in dolphin swim activities. The studies by Isa and Ramli (2014) and Briandana et al. (2018) provide insights into the factors influencing tourist visitation and the promotional strategies of marine tourism destinations. Both contribute significantly to the understanding of marketing and management in marine tourism destinations, proving valuable for academics and industry practitioners alike.

The explanations provided above allow us to delineate both the state of the art and the future research agenda for marine tourism, as outlined in Figure 4 below:

Examining the state of the art and pinpointing a forthcoming research agenda in marine tourism is crucial for deepening comprehension of the sector, guiding management approaches, tackling environmental hurdles, and fostering interdisciplinary study. Such endeavors will play an important role in securing the enduring sustainability and triumph of marine tourism.

## 6. State of the Art in Research on Marine Tourism Business Management

This section delineates and discusses four identified State of the Art themes in marine tourism within the sphere of business management. These themes have been discerned through a meticulous analysis of existing literature and have been flagged due to their importance and the apparent lack of sufficient attention they have received in current research. Consequently, addressing these themes is crucial as they present both challenges and opportunities that are central to the present and future of marine tourism management. Each theme has specific implications for the industry and represents an area where further scholarly engagement and practical application are needed. The subsequent discussion provides an in-depth analysis of each identified theme, elucidating the reasons why each constitutes a State of the Art in marine tourism in business management and pointing toward future avenues of research and practice in each area.

### *Limited Focus on Sustainable Practices*

Sustainability is not just a periphery element, it has positioned itself at the forefront of business management, considering the rising awareness and concern regarding environmental conservation and social responsibility among stakeholders, including tourists, operators, and regulatory bodies (Adam, 2022; Burgin & Hardiman, 2015). Marine tourism being an industry heavily reliant on the natural environment, faces heightened scrutiny and expectation to adopt sustainable practices (Dimitrovski et al., 2021). The term “limited focus” suggests that while there is an acknowledgment of the necessity for sustainable practices within the sector, the depth and breadth of engagement with sustainability in existing literature and practical applications within the field might still be inadequate or narrow in focus. Such a

limited focus impedes the industry's ability to effectively respond to the environmental challenges posed by tourism activities, while also falling short of meeting the evolving expectations of tourists who are increasingly valuing sustainability as a crucial factor in their consumption choices (Tsai et al., 2021).

This state-of-the-art topic highlights an imperative for deeper, more comprehensive research and practices committed to understanding and implementing sustainability in marine tourism. The literature within this domain must aim to bridge the existing gaps, providing robust theoretical frameworks, empirical insights, and practical tools to facilitate the adoption and integration of sustainability at the core of business management in marine tourism. By doing so, would contribute significantly to not only the academic advancement of the field but also the operational excellence and long-term viability of marine tourism enterprises (Jang & Cho, 2018; Sala et al., 2013). Furthermore, acknowledging and addressing this area as a state-of-the-art theme catalyzes future research endeavors, encouraging scholars and practitioners alike to delve into uncharted territories of sustainability within marine tourism business management. This exploration is essential for crafting innovative, effective strategies that harmoniously align economic objectives with environmental stewardship and social equity, fostering a more sustainable and responsible marine tourism industry.

### ***Under-Explored Technology Utilization***

Technology utilization has become important in various industries, profoundly shaping how businesses operate, market, and engage with their consumers (Ahmad et al., 2023; Fahlevi et al., 2022; Husainah et al., 2023). In the context of marine tourism, the infusion of technology can redefine operational efficiencies, customer experiences, and marketing strategies, thereby creating a more responsive and innovative business environment (Jang & Cho, 2018; Tan, 2018). However, despite the undeniable impact and potential of technology, its incorporation within marine tourism remains under-explored, suggesting that there is limited literature and practical understanding of how technology can be leveraged effectively within this specific sector. The "under-explored" descriptor indicates that while there might be some engagement with technology at a superficial or functional level, there is a dearth of in-depth analysis, discussion, and application of technology as a strategic tool for enhancing business processes, value propositions, and customer engagements in marine tourism (Hu & Olivieri, 2020; Li et al., 2020).

The current landscape of marine tourism exhibits a gap where the nuances, challenges, opportunities, and implications of technology utilization are not fully comprehended or addressed. This knowledge and practice void highlights an urgent need for robust scholarly investigation and industry application in the realm of technology within marine tourism (King et al., 2021). Addressing the under-explored state of technology utilization in this sector necessitates a systematic inquiry into various technological tools, platforms, and innovations that can be applied in marine tourism settings, ranging from operational management, customer service, marketing, to sustainability initiatives.

By acknowledging "Under-Explored Technology Utilization" as a state-of-the-art theme, there is an explicit call for researchers and practitioners to delve deeper into this domain, exploring the myriad ways technology can be harnessed to drive efficiency, enhance customer satisfaction, improve accessibility, and promote sustainability within marine tourism. Fostering a more comprehensive understanding of technology utilization will not only contribute to academic discourse but will also offer practical insights and guidelines for marine tourism businesses, helping them to navigate and thrive in the increasingly digital and technologically driven global marketplace. This exploration of technology in marine tourism, therefore, stands as a significant and timely research agenda that promises to yield valuable contributions to both theory and practice in marine tourism business management.

### ***Insufficient Market Segmentation Studies***

Market segmentation is an indispensable strategy in business management, serving as a framework for companies to identify, target, and effectively serve different consumer groups. It allows for the customization of marketing strategies and service delivery to meet the specific needs and preferences of diverse customer segments, thereby enhancing the overall customer experience and satisfaction (Jang & Cho, 2018). In the context of marine tourism, the industry is marked by a wide array of tourist profiles, each with unique motivations, expectations, and behaviors. Understanding these nuances is vital for marine tourism operators to craft offerings and services that resonate with their target audience, thus fostering customer loyalty and driving business success (Adam, 2022). However, the designation of “Insufficient Market Segmentation Studies” underscores that the marine tourism literature has not adequately engaged with or dissected the complexities of its consumer base (Kurniawan et al., 2016).

Despite the multifaceted nature of marine tourism, there is a conspicuous lack of scholarly work that meticulously segments and analyzes the market (Isa & Ramli, 2014). The studies conducted to date may either be too general, failing to capture the intricate characteristics of different tourist groups, or too narrow, focusing on specific segments without considering the broader market landscape. This insufficiency hinders the development of informed and effective business strategies, as the industry might not have a clear and comprehensive understanding of who their customers are and what they seek from their marine tourism experiences. The acknowledgment of this state-of-the-art points towards a crucial need for more rigorous and nuanced market segmentation studies in marine tourism. Such research endeavors should aim to delineate and understand various tourist segments in marine tourism, delving into their motivations, preferences, expectations, and consumption behaviors. Enhanced market segmentation insights will empower marine tourism operators to devise and implement tailored marketing campaigns, product and service development, and customer relationship management strategies that align with the specific demands and expectations of different tourist segments (Wu & Li, 2017).

This area, therefore, represents a significant research opportunity and necessity. By addressing the insufficient market segmentation studies, scholars and practitioners can contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the marine tourism market. This would not only facilitate the refinement of existing business management practices but also spur innovation and creativity in developing offerings that appeal to and satisfy the diverse needs of tourists engaging with marine environments, thereby promoting the sustained growth and competitiveness of marine tourism enterprises in the global market.

### ***Minimal Research on Crisis Management***

Crisis management is a crucial component of business strategy, particularly essential for industries like tourism that are inherently vulnerable to various unforeseen events and crises, including natural disasters, economic downturns, health pandemics, and political instabilities (Gaffar et al., 2022). These events can significantly disrupt operations, tarnish reputations, and incur substantial financial losses, making it imperative for businesses in the tourism industry to develop and implement robust crisis management plans. In the realm of marine tourism, the industry is uniquely exposed to specific sets of risks and challenges, such as extreme weather conditions, maritime accidents, and environmental conservation concerns. However, despite the evident need for effective crisis management, there is a noticeable paucity of research dedicated to understanding, preparing for, and mitigating crises within marine tourism operations from a business management perspective (King et al., 2022).

This scarcity of scholarly attention to crisis management in marine tourism restricts the industry's preparedness and resilience in facing unexpected adversities (Brown et al., 2017; Senbeto, 2022). The lack of in-depth research contributes to a void in academic and practical knowledge, leaving marine tourism businesses without a theoretical foundation or empirical guidelines to navigate through crises effectively and sustainably. The dearth of research also implies that the industry may be reliant on generic crisis management frameworks, which may not fully account for the unique and complex characteristics of marine tourism, thereby limiting their applicability and efficacy (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012).

Highlighting “Minimal Research on Crisis Management” as a state of the art in the field signals an urgent call for scholarly inquiry and investigation into this underexplored area. There is a pressing need for empirical studies and theoretical developments that are intricately aligned with the dynamics and particularities of the marine tourism sector. The future research agenda should encompass the development of marine tourism-specific crisis management models, assessment of crisis communication strategies, evaluation of stakeholder coordination during crises, and exploration of recovery and rebuilding processes post-crisis. Engaging with and addressing this identified gap in the literature will not only enhance the academic understanding of crisis management in marine tourism but will also significantly benefit industry practitioners. Providing theoretical insights and practical recommendations will equip marine tourism operators with the knowledge and tools to preemptively plan for crises, efficiently manage adverse situations when they occur, safeguard the interests of all stakeholders involved, and ultimately ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of their enterprises amidst an uncertain and turbulent environment (Coghlan et al., 2011).

## 7. Future Research Agenda in Research on Marine Tourism Business Management

Marine tourism seamlessly intertwines the dynamic integration of captivating natural environments and substantial economic opportunities, standing on the brink of a broad, transformative evolution influenced by factors such as sustainability, technology, market dynamics, crisis management, and community engagement. Navigating through the intricate aspects of both operational and strategic management, the sector is steering toward a future that firmly anchors a balanced harmony between industry expansion and ecosystem preservation. Bridging the existing knowledge gap and enlightening future practices with solid, data-driven insights necessitate the formulation of a meticulously focused future research agenda.

### *Sustainable Marine Tourism Practices*

Marine tourism inherently depends on the health and vitality of marine ecosystems, making the adoption of sustainable practices not just ethically imperative but also crucial for the sector’s long-term success and resilience (Marlina et al., 2020; Tsai et al., 2021). Sustainability in marine tourism encompasses a broad range of practices and strategies aimed at minimizing the negative environmental impact of tourism activities while maximizing benefits for local communities and ensuring economic profitability for industry stakeholders. However, there is a recognized need for more comprehensive, empirical research that explores, analyzes, and evaluates sustainable practices in various marine tourism contexts, from coastal destinations to deep-sea adventures. The future research agenda should focus on developing theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and indicators that effectively measure and promote sustainability in marine tourism operations (Burgin & Hardiman, 2015; Cong & Chi, 2021). As global awareness and concern regarding climate change and environmental degradation grow, tourists are increasingly seeking destinations and experiences that align with their values related to sustainability. This shifting consumer mindset necessitates a deeper understanding of how sustainable practices influence tourist behavior, satisfaction, and loyalty, providing another rich area for future research. Scholarly inquiry in this domain should also examine the challenges and barriers to implementing sustainable practices in marine tourism, offering solutions and recommendations for overcoming these obstacles.

Furthermore, with the rapid technological advancements and the emergence of innovative tools and platforms, future research should investigate how technology can be leveraged to facilitate and enhance sustainable practices in marine tourism (Pranita, 2018). This could include studies on the use of renewable energy sources, waste management systems, eco-friendly infrastructure, and digital platforms that promote responsible tourism. Focusing on sustainable marine tourism practices in future research agendas is vital to crafting and implementing strategies that protect marine biodiversity, foster community

engagement and development, and ensure that the marine tourism sector remains economically vibrant and competitive. This holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to sustainability in marine tourism is fundamental to navigating the complex challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the industry, making it a crucial area for future academic and practical exploration and innovation.

### ***Technology and Marine Tourism***

The area of 'Technology and Marine Tourism' is ripe for in-depth exploration, providing a fertile ground for scholarly inquiry into the adoption, integration, and optimization of various technological tools and platforms in marine tourism operations (Aguayo & Eames, 2023; Kaźmierczak et al., 2021). Future research should aim at illuminating how technologies, such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality, blockchain, and other emerging digital solutions, can be strategically harnessed to enhance operational efficiency, improve customer experiences, facilitate marketing efforts, and contribute to sustainability initiatives within the sector. For instance, investigating the role of technology in crafting immersive and interactive customer experiences can offer valuable insights into developing innovative tourism products and services that not only meet but also exceed tourist expectations. Furthermore, there is a need to examine how technology can aid in promoting sustainable practices within marine tourism, such as through the use of data analytics to monitor and manage environmental impacts or by employing digital platforms for raising awareness and fostering responsible tourist behavior.

The technological landscape is ever-evolving, and the marine tourism industry must navigate through the dynamic interplay of various technologies to stay competitive and relevant in the modern market (Zheng & Wu, 2023). Future research agenda focusing on 'Technology and Marine Tourism' would play a pivotal role in bridging the existing knowledge gaps, providing a clearer roadmap for the effective utilization of technology in marine tourism business management. Academic scholars and industry practitioners alike would benefit from this enriched understanding, gaining the capacity to innovate and implement technology-driven solutions that propel the industry forward while addressing the unique challenges and opportunities presented in the realm of marine tourism.

### ***Comprehensive Market Segmentation***

As the marine tourism industry continues to expand and diversify, a one-size-fits-all approach to marketing and service provision proves increasingly insufficient (Jang & Cho, 2018; Pranita, 2018). Therefore, the sector requires robust, multifaceted market segmentation strategies that adeptly cater to the varied preferences, motivations, and expectations of different tourist demographics. Fostering a more thorough comprehension of market segmentation within the marine tourism sector is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it provides insights into the behavior and needs of distinct tourist groups, allowing businesses to tailor their offerings more effectively, enhance customer satisfaction, and foster loyalty (Cossío-Silva et al., 2019). More nuanced segmentation can reveal opportunities for innovation and differentiation in a crowded market, aiding businesses in developing unique value propositions that resonate with specific customer segments (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020).

Furthermore, with the advent of big data and advanced analytics, there is an opportunity for marine tourism researchers and practitioners to leverage these technologies to conduct more sophisticated market segmentation (Agrawal et al., 2022). Future research in this area might explore the use of data-driven approaches to gain deeper insights into customer behavior and preferences, potentially unveiling previously unidentified market segments. This enhanced understanding, in turn, supports the development of more targeted and effective marketing strategies and product development initiatives. Additionally, comprehensive market segmentation studies in marine tourism would facilitate a more inclusive approach to service provision. By recognizing and understanding the needs of diverse groups, including those with specific accessibility requirements or cultural expectations, marine tourism operators can develop services and experiences that are truly inclusive and accessible to all (Marques et al., 2021).

Given the dynamic and competitive nature of the marine tourism industry, investing in research that contributes to a more sophisticated understanding of market segmentation is not merely beneficial but essential. Such endeavors will ultimately support the creation of more customer-centric business strategies, driving both the immediate success and long-term sustainability of marine tourism enterprises. This research agenda, focusing on comprehensive market segmentation, is poised to offer invaluable contributions to both the theoretical and practical realms of marine tourism business management.

### ***Crisis Management in Marine Tourism***

Given the inherently volatile nature of the tourism sector, coupled with the specific sensitivities related to marine environments, marine tourism entities face a myriad of potential crises ranging from natural disasters and environmental degradation to health pandemics, economic downturns, and reputational damages (Adam, 2022; King et al., 2021, 2022). Crisis management is quintessential for preserving the integrity, viability, and sustainability of marine tourism businesses in the face of such unpredicted adversities. Despite its critical importance, there is a conspicuous gap in the extant literature regarding crisis management tailored specifically to the nuances and peculiarities of the marine tourism sector. The industry necessitates specialized crisis management frameworks and strategies that are intricately designed to align with its unique operational, environmental, and stakeholder considerations (Dimitrovski et al., 2021).

Future research agenda in this domain should be committed to developing and validating comprehensive crisis management models and frameworks that are specifically contextualized for marine tourism. Such research endeavors should delve into preemptive crisis identification and preparedness, effective crisis response and mitigation strategies, communication during crises, and post-crisis recovery and learning mechanisms. The role of various stakeholders, including government agencies, tourism operators, local communities, and tourists, in crisis management should also be a significant focus, understanding their responsibilities, contributions, and collaborations in times of crisis.

Moreover, considering the rapid advancements in technology, future research should also explore the integration and utilization of technology in crisis management within marine tourism. This may encompass the use of social media for crisis communication, data analytics for crisis prediction and response, and virtual reality for crisis simulation and training, among others. Undertaking research in crisis management within marine tourism is not only timely but imperative for enhancing the industry's resilience and sustainability (Tsai et al., 2021). This research focus is poised to yield pivotal theoretical insights and practical guidelines that can significantly contribute to safeguarding marine tourism businesses and destinations from the detrimental impacts of crises, ultimately fostering a more resilient, responsive, and sustainable marine tourism industry.

### ***Community Engagement and Participation***

The growing recognition of the importance of fostering symbiotic relationships between the marine tourism industry and local communities (Dimmock, 2012; Marlina et al., 2020). While the marine tourism sector brings about economic opportunities, it also has a profound impact on the social, cultural, and environmental fabric of local areas where it operates. Acknowledging this interconnected dynamic, there is a compelling need for scholarly exploration into how community engagement and participation can be enhanced to ensure that marine tourism development is inclusive, equitable, and reflective of the needs and aspirations of local communities. The essence of this research agenda lies in the understanding that community engagement is pivotal for the sustainable development of marine tourism. It aims to ensure that the benefits derived from tourism activities are equitably distributed, contributing positively to the social and economic well-being of the community while minimizing potential negative impacts. However, existing literature may not sufficiently address how to effectively involve communities in decision-making processes related to marine tourism, how to balance their needs with business objectives,

or how to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among local residents for sustainable tourism practices (Jang & Cho, 2018; Sala et al., 2013).

Future research should delve into strategies for fostering genuine dialogue and collaboration between tourism operators and communities, understanding the dynamics of power, trust, and communication that underpin these relationships. It should explore the mechanisms through which communities can actively participate in tourism planning, development, and management, thereby having a say in how tourism is shaped and conducted in their locales (King & Iba, 2021). Moreover, the research should also examine the skills, knowledge, and capacities that communities need to participate effectively in marine tourism, identifying the gaps and devising strategies for capacity-building. Another important aspect to explore is the assessment of community perceptions and attitudes towards marine tourism and how these influence their willingness and manner of participation.

The aim is to contribute to the development of models and frameworks for community engagement and participation that are grounded in principles of social justice, respect, and mutual benefit. This line of inquiry is fundamental for the creation of a marine tourism sector that not only is economically viable but also socially responsible and committed to the holistic development of the destinations it touches. This research direction promises to provide invaluable insights for academics, policymakers, and practitioners dedicated to advancing a more inclusive and sustainable paradigm of marine tourism.

## 8. Concluding Remarks

A systematic literature review concerning marine tourism and business management is crucial for an in-depth understanding of the subject and for pinpointing research gaps within the current knowledge base about the synergy among business management strategies in the marine tourism context. The review underscores several pivotal research areas in marine tourism, derived from an exploration of documents in the Scopus database and highly cited documents. To safeguard the long-term sustainability of the marine tourism industry, future research must delve into a myriad of topics, such as sustainability, technology, market dynamics, crisis management, and community engagement. Research findings on these subjects can provide invaluable insights for tourism management and policymakers, enabling them to enhance tourism practices in marine destinations, promote responsible behavior among tourists, and alleviate the negative impacts of tourism on marine ecosystems, ultimately contributing to the marine tourism industry's long-lasting sustainability. This research can serve as a foundational reference in mapping out future research concerning marine tourism within the business management area and elucidates opportunities for themes with potential for deeper discussion. The study enhances knowledge and can lay the groundwork for future research findings in marine tourism within the context of business management. This research does have limitations due to the utilization of only one database, limited document selection, and a focus solely on the business management area.

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