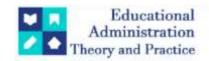
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A Qualitative Assessment Of Tourism Research Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic In Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a substantial threat to Pakistan's tourism industry, precipitated by diverse factors. Scholars have shown considerable interest in researching the developments within this industry. This study presents the findings of a qualitative thematic analysis conducted on the literature pertaining to the impact of COVID-19 on Pakistan's tourism industry. Employing ATLAS.ti 9 software, a comprehensive analysis was undertaken on 22 research publications spanning the years 2020 to 2023. The results of the study reveal the emergence of six recurring themes across the literature during this period, including the need for the development of a policy framework, provision of a favorable tourism environment considering the pandemic, building consumer and employee confidence, technological innovation, stakeholder cohesion, and domestic tourism and community belongingness. Additionally, the research offers recommendations for future investigations in this domain, shedding light on the limited scholarly efforts focused on conceptualizing the growth of the tourism industry in Pakistan amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The study also elucidates the key themes that surfaced during the analytical process.

Keywords: Crises Management, COVID-19 Pandemic, Pakistan's Tourism, Thematic Analysis, Policy Framework

1 Introduction

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has induced unprecedented disruptions across various economic sectors, notably impacting the global tourism industry (Hall et al., 2020). While the ongoing health crisis continues to evolve with uncertainties, noticeable shifts in organizational practices and travel habits have already transpired (Wang et al., 2022). Considering this, a substantial body of research has been conducted to understand the potential effects on tourism and hospitality. Despite these efforts, there exists a critical need to pinpoint specific gaps and challenges within the current knowledge landscape.

Scholars in the field of tourism and hospitality have historically delved into crises (Berbekova et al., 2021). However, in the context of the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19, there is a dearth of research, especially concerning crisis management models, particularly in regions like Pakistan. The scholars in the field advocate for a more nuanced exploration of the effects of COVID-19, emphasizing the importance of scrutinizing existing crisis management models to inform future research (Abbas et al., 2021). Furthermore,

they underscore the necessity for the development of theoretical frameworks and innovative managerial approaches tailored to the unique dynamics of the tourism industry.

Aligned with the recommendations of these authors, this study embarks on a comprehensive and meticulous examination of the existing literature on crisis management in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, specifically focusing on the tourism sector of Pakistan. By identifying and addressing gaps in the current understanding, this research aims to contribute meaningfully to both academic knowledge and practical insights for industry professionals.

While numerous studies have surfaced in the context of Pakistan, aiming to synthesize existing knowledge on the recovery of the tourism industry from the shock of COVID-19, a systematic and data-driven thematic analysis is essential (Khawaja et al., 2022; Rehman et al., 2022; Sadiq, 2021; Salman et al., 2020). This study endeavours to fill this gap by critically examining eligible articles and associating identified themes with potential avenues for research within the crisis management domain of Pakistan's tourism sector.

This study is framed by two primary objectives: firstly, to conduct an exhaustive analysis of the current research within the Pakistani tourism sector, with a specific emphasis on the contextual nuances introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, it aims to propose recommendations for future research endeavours by synthesizing identified thematic elements. This dual-pronged approach aspires to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the impact of COVID-19 within the unique landscape of Pakistani tourism and to guide the trajectory of future scholarly investigations in this domain, particularly for policy and framework development.

To achieve this, the paper employs a qualitative research approach and justifies the utilization of thematic analysis as the primary investigative method. The ensuing sections present the results of the thematic analysis, offering a detailed examination of key themes and discussing potential avenues for future research. Additionally, the significance of this study lies in its provision of a brief exploration of sensemaking perspectives and their relevance to Pakistan's tourism industry in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is intended to deepen our understanding and contribute to the evolving discourse in crisis management within the unique dynamics of Pakistan's tourism landscape. The study aims to provide guidance and a roadmap for future research endeavors, offering nuanced perspectives for policymakers and other stakeholders in the tourism industry for effective implementation. Through these contributions, the study seeks to mitigate future crises and ensure sustainable tourism development in Pakistan.

Furthermore, developing countries beyond Pakistan can derive substantial benefits from the insights offered in this study, given the shared similarities in socio-economic and environmental systems among these nations. Additionally, the global research effort dedicated to crisis management with global implications can integrate the perspectives presented in this study, shaping a universally accepted framework for future sustainable tourism. Through the incorporation of tailored perspectives from developing countries like Pakistan, this framework would attain enhanced validation and acceptance. Such an approach holds promise for the revitalization and resilience of global tourism in the face of pandemics like COVID-19, contributing to sustainable tourism practices both within Pakistan and on a global scale.

2. Literature Review

2.1 COVID-19 Pandemic and Global Tourism

The decrease in tourism activity during 2020 can be attributed to various factors, including the implementation of lockdowns, travel restrictions, and a notable reduction in air and sea travel (Hall et al., 2020). Data from the World Tourism Organization (WTO) reveals a substantial 70% decrease in international travel in 2020 (Azam et al., 2020). Moreover, a majority of tourist destinations worldwide suspended all foreign tourism operations (Shari et al., 2020).

It is essential to note that the pandemic significantly impacted nearly all sectors associated with the tourism industry (Hall et al., 2020). The International Air Transport Association (IATA) estimated an approximate \$314 billion revenue decline for the airline industry in 2020 due to a reduction in passenger numbers (Foo et al., 2020). Consequently, global airlines experienced substantial revenue losses, accompanied by an 80% decrease in the number of flights compared to 2019 (Mostafanezhad, 2020). The closure of numerous restaurants within the food industry had significant repercussions for interconnected sectors, including food production, farming, and shipping (Fizza Zubair & Mohd Farid Shamsudin, 2021). Regarding the hotel industry, a considerable proportion of accommodations worldwide remained unoccupied throughout 2020 (Shari et al., 2020).

2.2 Pakistan Tourism Industry

Pakistan is internationally renowned for its spectacular mountainous regions located in the northern part of the country (Arshad et al., 2017). This geographical area encompasses the Hindukush, Pamir, Karakoram, and Great Himalaya Mountain ranges, collectively forming the highest concentration of elevated peaks worldwide (Alam, 2020). The topography of Pakistan is celebrated for its diverse landscapes, spanning from the southern coastal regions and deserts to the fertile plains along the 2500 km long Indus River. Originating in Tibet and terminating at the Arabian Sea, the Indus River contributes to the country's picturesque and diverse scenery (Israr et al., 2009).

Contrary to common perception, Pakistan offers a significantly greater extent of historical and cultural diversity to tourists (Arshad, 2015). The local culture is enriched by diverse influences and abundant resources from nearly five ancient civilizations that have thrived in this region since the 4th millennium BC (Ali et al., 2017). The historical and archaeological sites associated with the Gandhara and Indus Valley civilizations, including Mohenjo-Daro and remnants from the Mughal Empire, possess profound cultural and historical value (Abdullah et al., 2021). Despite their significance, these sites remain relatively obscure beyond the borders of Pakistan, presenting untapped potential for the development of tourism within the country (M. W. Abbas, 2019).

Pakistan's northern region boasts eight out of the world's ten highest peaks (Rahman et al., 2011). The Karakoram Highway, often dubbed the "Eighth Wonder of the World," traverses this region, ascending to an altitude of 16,000 feet above sea level before proceeding towards the People's Republic of China (Baloch, 2007). The coastal areas along the Arabian Sea are globally renowned for their exceptional natural beauty and pristine beaches. In the contemporary context, Pakistan has become a highly sought-after tourism destination (Rehman et al., 2022). Its strategic geographical positioning makes it a crucial gateway to Central Asian states and China through road networks (Salman et al., 2020).

In summary, Pakistan offers a diverse array of popular tourist destinations (Baloch et al., 2022). Adventure tourism in the Northern Areas and Chitral, cultural and archaeological tourism in Taxila, Mohenjo-Daro, and Harrappa, and exploration of early Muslim and Mughal history in Multan, Lahore, Peshawar, Swat, and Chitral are among the prominent attractions (Arshad et al., 2017). Additionally, a variety of tourism activities with specific focuses, such as bird watching, Jeep safaris, desert safaris, trekking, and mountaineering, are readily accessible (Arif, 2019).

2.3 The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Pakistan tourism

The advent of COVID-19, identified as a newly global pandemic, led to the cessation of all economic activities in Pakistan, including the tourism sector (Rukh et al., 2020). To mitigate the prolonged state of panic, the government implemented a stringent lockdown from March 16, 2020, which involved the suspension of most economic activities. This measure had profound consequences on both the economy and the hospitality sector. The investments made in the tourism industry during the period from 2011 to 2019 seem to have yielded no positive returns. The financial loss amounts to \$20.18 billion in United States currency (RUKH et al., 2020).

In 2019, the travel and tourism sector in Pakistan made a notable contribution of 5.7 percent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The total contribution in Pakistan experienced a decline of 4.4 percent in 2020 as a result of the pandemic (Rehman et al., 2022). The termination of all tour packages for the year 2020 by the government had a significant impact on hotels, tourism, and airlines (Burhan et al., 2021).

2.3.1 COVID-19 pandemic and Pakistan tourism research

The revival of Pakistan's tourism industry necessitates the provision of adequate research support (Makalesi et al., 2020). The neglect of a comprehensive policy framework to address threats such as the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan's tourism sector has been highlighted in recent studies (Abbass et al., 2022). A study was conducted investigated the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Pakistan's tourism industry (Makalesi et al., 2020). The research examined the allocation of government funds towards the tourism sector and the subsequent economic setbacks caused by the pandemic. However, it is important to note that this study lacks empirical evidence due to its conceptual nature, primarily based on literature review and literature evaluation.

In addition, the study was conducted by Kazmi et al. (2020), to investigated the impact of COVID-19 transmission on the tourism industry in Pakistan. The study has limitations in terms of data collection and the development of a pandemic policy framework. Subsequently, another study was conducted by Rasheed et al. (2021) analysis the economic and environmental consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan. This study also lacks a policy framework for implementation in the tourism sector to cope with the pandemic. Similarly, a study aimed to assess the crisis management strategies implemented by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the hospitality sector in Pakistan amidst the COVID-19 pandemic (Burhan et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the study employed a quantitative data analysis technique, exhibiting limitations in comprehensively understanding the intricacies of the issue due to the absence of expert opinions regarding the novel nature of the pandemic. Furthermore, the study's scope is confined to SMEs, neglecting a holistic examination of the entire tourism industry.

The potential of Pakistan's tourist sector was examined in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Sadiq, 2021). Although the study presented a policy framework focusing on tourism resilience factors, it employed a quantitative approach rather than conducting qualitative interviews and primary data collection. This reliance on quantitative data may not sufficiently capture the distinct dynamics of Pakistan's tourism system.

Furthermore, the study conducted to investigate the economic ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan through the lens of the Keynesian economic framework (Abbass et al., 2022). Nevertheless, its scope is limited by the lack of a comprehensive strategy for the revitalization of tourism during and after the pandemic. The study predominantly concentrates on the economic impact of COVID-19 on Pakistan's tourism, omitting a framework for revival or offering future policy recommendations for the industry's upliftment.

The commendable study conducted (Baloch et al., 2022) has proposed a policy framework for the revitalization of Pakistan's tourism in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing inspiration from the model established in the previous work (Sharma et al., 2021) with a global perspective. Nevertheless, it is imperative to highlight the absence of both quantitative and qualitative evidence tailored to the intricacies of Pakistani tourism within this study. The framework, while rooted in established models, may lack suitability for the distinct context of Pakistan. Thus, there is a pressing need for empirical investigation through a dedicated study to authenticate the findings in concordance with the unique system of Pakistan's tourism.

Subsequent post-pandemic studies in Pakistan have focused on specific destinations, yet they lack a comprehensive consideration of the COVID-19 context (Ali, 2023; Feng et al., 2023). For instance, the study Ali (2023) highlights the growth and sustainability challenges of mountain tourism, particularly in the Hunza Valley. While providing valuable insights for policymakers, the study does not address the broader tourism sector in Pakistan and the specific impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similarly, a study conducted by Feng et al. (2023) explores the relationship between road and transport infrastructure development and the overall attitude of local communities in Gilgit-Baltistan and northern areas of Pakistan toward tourism. However, this study also lacks consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on sustainability and does not provide policy guidelines that specifically address the challenges posed by the pandemic.

In the realm of scholarly tourism research, scant empirical support exists for models and policy frameworks aimed at fortifying Pakistan's tourism economy in the context of a pandemic. Most studies, predating COVID-19, have centered on developments within the tourism industry. However, the post-pandemic landscape in Pakistan's tourism sector has been marked by a dearth of a policy framework for future sustainable development.

Consequently, there is an imperative need for post-pandemic research to comprehensively address the impact of the pandemic on Pakistan's tourism industry and formulate a robust framework conducive to its enduring survival. This framework should draw insights from the lessons learned during the previous COVID-19 pandemic, contributing to the future sustainable development of tourism in the region.

2. Methodology

To examine the evolution of scholarly research within the tourism industry, we utilized thematic analysis (TA) methodology to systematically scrutinize the available literature. Thematic analysis is a qualitative approach that involves the identification of underlying themes in order to organize and describe available data (Rahman et al., 2021). The utilization of TA was selected as the principal mode of investigation since qualitative research outcomes provide an extensive and comprehensive portrayal of the examined phenomenon. The inductive approach inherent in qualitative thematic analysis facilitates the emergence of novel theoretical perspectives and enables fresh insights into the empirical realm (Berbekova et al., 2021). Various types of data sources, such as academic literature, interviews, focus groups, and social media sources, can be utilized for conducting TA (Berbekova et al., 2021). The utilization of this form of analysis is particularly advised for addressing complex and intricate constructs (Headley & Plano Clark, 2020). It is recommended to perform a Thematic Analysis (TA) through a six-step process (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Figure 1 depicts the stages. It is important to acknowledge that, akin to numerous qualitative research methodologies, Thematic Analysis (TA) is characterized by its recursive nature, which confers flexibility and adaptability to the analytical process. This feature enables the possibility of modifications in codes and themes throughout the course of the analysis (Greene et al., 2008).

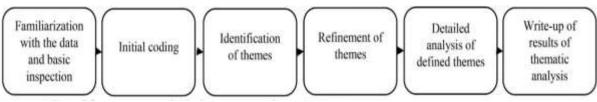


Figure 1. Phases of thematic analysis (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

2.1 Data collection

The inclusion criteria for papers in this study were based on their relevance to the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry of Pakistan. These studies were systematically selected from credible journals, with papers from non-credible journals being excluded. Additionally, papers that did not specifically address the tourism

sector of Pakistan were excluded from consideration. Studies that focused on the tourism sector of Pakistan but did not explicitly target the impact of COVID-19 were also excluded. Furthermore, studies addressing the impact of COVID-19 on the overall Pakistan economy but lacking a specific focus on the tourism sector were excluded.

The included research papers encompassed both empirical and non-empirical studies. All relevant papers, regardless of the methodology employed, were considered for inclusion in the study. The selected timeframe for these studies spans from 2020 to 2023. This timeframe aligns with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that the studies included are pertinent to the unique challenges posed by the pandemic on Pakistan's tourism industry.

In the process of establishing a thorough database for this analysis, pertinent journals from designated databases were meticulously chosen. The databases employed for retrieving research articles encompassed Emerald, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. The rationale behind the selection of these databases lies in their expansive scope and accessibility. Significantly, both Emerald and ScienceDirect are renowned for consistently publishing credible papers related to Pakistan's tourism context.

Furthermore, the identification of pertinent articles involved the utilization of specific key terms, including "crisis," "disaster," "pandemic," "COVID-19," "Pakistan," with a deliberate focus on the field of research, i.e., "tourism." The search strategy employed diverse combinations of keywords, such as "COVID-19 pandemic" and "Pakistan tourism," ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the literature. It is noteworthy that the inquiry's scope extended beyond publications within the hospitality and tourism field to encompass various perspectives on the subject matter.

The articles acquired from the chosen databases underwent a rigorous screening process to identify and remove any duplicate entries. Afterwards, the researchers performed an eligibility screening to ensure that only papers related to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan's tourism sector were included, which were discovered using thematic analysis. The compiled scholarly articles comprise a total of 22 publications, all written in English language.

The selection of these 22 publications is based on the aim to provide a complete view that includes both theoretical and practical aspects of crisis management in the context of Pakistan's tourism during the pandemic. To ensure precision and applicability, the analysis deliberately omitted reports from the tourism sector, book chapters, dissertations, and conference papers. The careful and thorough approach guarantees the scientific and academic value of the chosen papers, enhancing the reliability of the literature evaluation in this study.

The selected publications were analysed using ATLAS.ti software, known for its effectiveness in conducting qualitative thematic analysis, particularly in literature reviews (Choe et al., 2022). The software facilitates efficient data storage, code generation, and network analysis, thereby aiding in subsequent interpretation (Smit, 2021). The decision to prioritise ATLAS.ti over other options, such as Nvivo and manual Excel coding, is justified by its modern and specialised tools tailored for conducting theme analysis in literature-based research. ATLAS.ti ensures data integrity, reduces time consumption, and facilitates a straightforward analysis of interrelated themes without complexities. This tool efficiently analyses and identifies themes within words and paragraphs (Choe et al., 2022).

3. Findings

In this section, a thorough examination of the publication profile is presented, offering a detailed overview of its relevance to emerging themes. The study systematically elucidates six primary themes identified through rigorous analysis. Furthermore, it sheds light on potential avenues for future research within each of these thematic areas, thereby contributing to a nuanced understanding of the subject matter.

3.1 Profile of publications and analysis

The investigation incorporated a corpus of 22 individual papers sourced from a variety of scholarly journals. These journals span a wide range of disciplines, encompassing hospitality and tourism, organizational studies, and economics. Notably, publications within the domain of tourism and hospitality exhibited a pronounced emphasis. Table 1 succinctly presents an assemblage of articles specifically addressing Pakistan's tourism industry, with a particular focus on the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1 Reviewed papers.

Title	Supporting Themes
Fresh Insight through a Keynesian Theory Approach to Investigate the	The need for the development of a policy
Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Pakistan (Abbass et	framework.
al., 2022).	
Image branding factors & facilitating model of tourism destinations	The need for the development of a policy
management during COVID-19 in Pakistan (Alam, 2021).	framework.
	Favourable tourism environment considering
	pandemic.
Revitalization of tourism and hospitality sector: preempting	The need for the development of a policy

pandemics through lessons learned (Adams et al., 2021).	framework.
	Technological innovation.
	Building consumer and employee confdence.
	Domestic tourism and community
	belongingness.
Socio-economic and environmental impacts of COVID-19 pandemic in	The need for the development of policy
Pakistan—an integrated analysis (Rasheed et al., 2021).	framework.
Tourist's satisfaction with local food effect behavioral intention in	Building consumer and employee confdence.
COVID-19 pandemic: a moderated mediated perspective (Rehman et	
al., 2022).	
Addressing the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic outbreak: Pakistan's	The need for the development of policy
preparations and response (Meo et al., 2021).	framework.
Socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from rural	The need for the development of policy
mountain community in Pakistan (Ali et al., 2021).	framework.
After Corona (Covid-19) Impacts On Global Poverty and Recovery of	The need for the development of policy
Tourism Based Service Economies: An Appraisal (Ranasinghe et al.,	framework.
2021).	Stakeholder cohesion.
Impact Of Covid-19 on GDP: A Serial Mediation Effect on	The need for the development of policy
International Tourism and Hospitality Industry (Mushtaque, 2021).	framework.
Impact Of Covid-19 On Economy Of Pakistan (Salik, 2020)	The need for the development of policy
	framework.
Economic Impact of Coronavirus and Revival Measures Way Forward	The need for the development of policy
for Pakistan (Javed, 2020).	framework.
How Prepared Was Pakistan for the COVID-19 Outbreak? (Salman et	The need for the development of policy
al., 2020).	framework.
	Technological innovation.
Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on tourism: transformational	The need for the development of policy
potential and implications for a sustainable recovery of the travel and	framework.
leisure industry (Abbas et al., 2021).	Favourable tourism environment considering
	pandemic.
Economic Growth Vulnerability Amid the COVID-19 Epidemic: A	The need for the development of policy
Systematic Review of Different Sectors of Pakistan (Azam et al., 2020).	framework.
Historical Aspect of Inflation in Pre and Post Covid-19 Pandemic in	The need for the development of policy
Pakistan (Amjad et al., 2021).	framework.
A Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Tourism during Pandemic	The need for the development of policy
COVID-19 (Ullah et al., 2021).	framework.
How is COVID-19 pandemic causing employee withdrawal behavior in	Building consumer and employee confdence.
the hospitality industry? An empirical investigation (Khawaja et al.,	The need for the development of policy
2022).	framework.
Potential Economic Impacts of COVID-19 on Tourism Industry of	Favourable tourism environment considering
Pakistan: A Review (Rukh et al., 2020).	pandemic.
COVID-19 Outbreak And Role Of Tourism Development on Economic	The need for the development of policy
Growth in Pakistan (Latip et al., 2021).	framework.
Crisis management in the hospitality sector SMEs in Pakistan during COVID-19 (Burhan et al., 2021).	Stakeholder cohesion.
COVID-19 (Burnan et al., 2021).	The need for the development of policy framework.
	Technological innovation.
	Favourable tourism environment considering
	pandemic.
Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on micro, small, and medium-sized	The need for the development of policy
Enterprises operating in Pakistan (Shafi et al., 2020).	framework.
	Building consumer and employee confdence.

The examination of the articles demonstrates that the quantity of papers pertaining to tourism in Pakistan remains comparatively limited. Conceptual papers are primarily responsible for generating novel insights and enhancing theoretical frameworks within a particular area of study. As a result, they serve as a basis for subsequent empirical research. It is noteworthy that most of the studies (18) exhibit a dearth of theoretical foundations. The rationale behind this phenomenon is attributed to the unpredictable and uncertain nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has engendered a heightened degree of indeterminacy. Hence, novel, and imaginative strategies for mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are imperative in the realm of tourism disaster management.

4. Themes emerged

The validity of thematic data analysis was ensured through recommended techniques by researchers (Guetterman et al., 2019; Mikalef et al., 2019). For instance, it was ensured that the coding process is consistent and systematic. Additionally, engagement in discussions with peers familiar with qualitative

research was undertaken to obtain different perspectives and seek assistance in identifying potential biases or oversights. Furthermore, clear documentation of the coding process, decisions, and any changes made during the analysis was meticulously performed to ensure transparency.

Moreover, a thorough and exhaustive analysis of the literature was conducted to ensure that all relevant themes were identified and appropriately documented. Thoroughness was maintained to capture the full spectrum of available information. Additionally, measures were taken to ensure reflexivity and avoid biases and preconceptions. The alignment between the topic, background, and experiences of researchers was carefully ensured to properly interpret the themes from the literature. A comparison with existing models was undertaken to cross-reference identified themes with established theoretical models or frameworks. This comparison can help validate findings and demonstrate their alignment with established knowledge.

After an initial examination and familiarization with the data, the coding and identification of themes were carried out using ATLAS.ti 9 software. The selection of ATLAS.ti was based on its functionality and appropriateness for this study. Since the focus of this study is solely on text data from research articles, it necessitates proper documentation and transparency in code generation to prevent common errors (Smit, 2021). Other software options like Nvivo and manual coding through Excel were not chosen due to their complex and diverse functions, which are more suited for handling varied data types such as audio, videos, and images (Choe et al., 2022). This complexity was deemed unnecessary for this study, which exclusively deals with text data. Similarly, Excel sheet manual coding was avoided to prevent time wastage, as manual coding through Excel is known to consume a significant amount of time (Ames et al., 2019). Thematic analysis through ATLAS.ti was deemed more effective, saving time, and providing results without unnecessary complexity (Smit, 2021).

The researcher conducted manual coding and theme identification by engaging in repeated and active reading of each paper. The software program ATLAS.ti was employed solely as a means of organizing the dataset. This involved utilizing features such as highlighting and tagging text extracts within the reviewed paper as references, gathering these references into codes, and subsequently collating these codes under overarching themes as shown in figure 2.

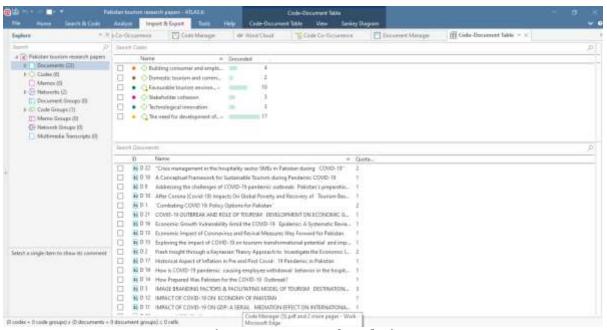


Figure 2. Process of Analysis

The utilization of the inductive approach is subsequently implemented to ascertain fundamental themes throughout the scrutinized studies. The utilization of the inductive approach denotes that the procedures for the initial coding, identification, and enhancement of themes were not motivated by any theoretical perspective or pre-established coding framework (Guetterman et al., 2019). The present study employed a data-driven approach for conducting thematic analysis. Consequently, six distinct themes emerged, comprising a total of 39 references, as illustrated in Figure 3.

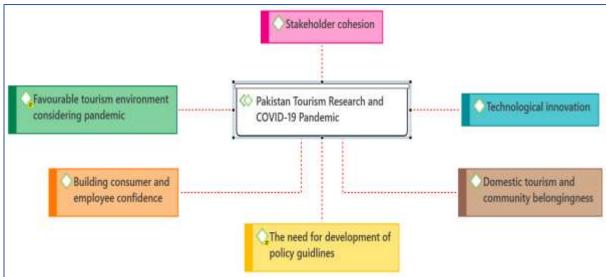


Figure 3: The emerged themes in ATLAS.ti

Moreover, the research provides a comprehensive examination of these topics in the subsequent segments. The themes presented in the study also highlight research gaps and suggest potential directions for future research, as appropriate. Six themes have emerged as follows:

- i. The need for the development of a policy framework
- ii. Provision of favorable tourism environment considering the pandemic.
- iii. Building consumer and employee confidence
- iv. Technological innovation
- v. Stakeholder cohesion
- vi. Domestic tourism and community belongingness

These themes that emerged are grounded by selected articles in the literature as shown in table 2.

Table 2 Grounded Themes		
Themes	Grounded	
The need for development of policy guidelines	17	
Favorable tourism environment considering pandemic	10	
Building consumer and employee confidence	4	
Technological innovation	3	
Stakeholder cohesion	3	
Domestic tourism and community belongingness	2	

Table 2 Grounded Themes

4.1 The need for development of policy framework

Several researchers addressed the tourism industry of Pakistan during COVID-19 to make research contribution (Salik, 2020; Rasheed et al., 2021; Salman et al., 2020). Although, to revive tourism industry few studies come up with conceptual model of policy framework (Baloch et al., 2022; Sadiq, 2021). Still, these studies also have limitations. For instance, a study suggest a theoretical prospect that national tourism strategy should incorporate a mechanism of community resilience, and social resilience to address tourism in crises and rebuild the tourism industry of Pakistan (Sadiq, 2021). Notwithstanding, it was a conceptual study with limitations in empirical evidence and a lack of appropriate policy framework. Similarly, an empirical study was conducted to present a policy framework for Pakistan tourism industry (Baloch et al., 2022). However, the study is based on quantitative data analysis following the variables and models from literature.

A study articulated that Pakistani government has tried to protect the economy from negative effects by giving citizens more purchasing power through cash transfer payments (Meo et al., 2021). The government has been educating the public on standard operating procedures (SOPs), which include hand sanitization, wearing a face mask, and keeping a safe distance of two meters. All the policy guidelines i.e., COVID-19 social media awareness campaign, participating in a smart lockdown, ensuring access to food and medical facilities, and so forth made a significant contribution controlling the spread of COVID-19 (Meo et al., 2021).

A study propose that the implementation of policies spanning short, medium, and long-term timeframes is imperative in mitigating the impact of the pandemic and revitalizing the mountain economy of Gilgit-Baltistan (Ali et al., 2021). This study offers fundamental data for policymakers and practitioners to formulate

rigorous policies in this regard. Nonetheless, the research is constrained to the advancement of tourism in Gilgit Baltistan.

To develop a policy framework, in-depth research i.e., exploratory mixed-method research needs to be conducted. The reason is that considering both quantitative and qualitative research is inevitable for in-depth understanding in social science research. to analyze complex social problems holistically through advanced knowledge for a richer understanding of the serving populations.

4.2 Provision of a favorable tourism environment considering the pandemic

Particularly during emergencies like pandemics, a tourist site with poor health outcomes and satisfaction qualities is inappropriate for entertaining leisure travelers (Mehtab Alam, 2021). In-depth emphasis was placed on health and safety precautions in the study publications that addressed destination-related health considerations (Abdullah et al., 2021; Khawaja et al., 2022; Rehman et al., 2022). In the same vein, a study provides valuable insights on how to revive the operational activities of the tourism industry (J. Abbas et al., 2021). The study offers recommendations to policymakers, academics, and tourism businesses on reinvesting in the tourism sector to restore it to its pre-pandemic state. This highlights the necessity for the establishment of pandemic-friendly tourism destinations in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic for Pakistan's tourism.

Additionally, a study emphasized the availability of a favorable business environment for the tourism industry during pandemic times (Burhan et al., 2021). This environment encompasses various factors such as hygiene standards, amplified social media promotion, innovative marketing techniques (such as modified offerings), reduction of operational costs, and employee training to adhere to the constantly evolving standard operating procedures set by the government and industry. Hence, it is imperative for the government and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the creation of a favorable tourism environment, as emphasized by the research conducted in Pakistan on tourism amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further research may concentrate on the variables that impact the perception of image and safety in tourist destinations (Sheereen Fauzel, 2021). Destination management encompasses the provision of destination products, traveler-centered decisions, and the dissemination of top-notch services to guarantee optimal infrastructure, perception, health outcomes, and unique tools for tourism management (Mehtab Alam, 2021).

4.3 Building consumer and employee confidence

The revival of the tourism industry is contingent upon the attainment of consumer confidence (Sharma et al., 2021). It is imperative to prioritize the acquisition of knowledge from disaster planning and to avoid the temptation of disregarding future failures that may arise (Noorashid & Chin, 2021). Increasing traveler confidence and lowering the perceived risk will be essential for the tourism sector to recover (Sharma et al., 2021). Since, Consumers' perceptions of tourism-related goods and services are impacted by COVID-19 (Ahmad et al., 2021; Mehtab Alam, 2021). The revitalization of tourism during the pandemic is contingent upon human capital and employee confidence (Sharma et al., 2021).

A study conducted (He et al., 2021) highlighted the importance of investing in people and fostering employee confidence. They also emphasized the importance of worker and consumer confidence in the government's and employers' support, both of which can be crucial for the survival of small, medium, and large businesses that are involved in tourism as well as the development of the sector. Little is known about employee and customer confidence during the pandemic in terms of Pakistan's tourism industry (Baloch et al., 2022). Therefore, to comprehend the significance of consumer and employee confidence in Pakistan's context during the COVID-19 pandemic, a thorough research investigation is required.

4.4 Technological Innovation

As a result of the latest and innovative technology, the tourism industry is becoming more adaptable (Berbekova et al., 2021; Hall et al., 2020; Noorashid & Chin, 2021; Sharma et al., 2021). Disasters speed up technological development, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, people benefited greatly from the expertise of technological experts (Van et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2021). The utilization of big data analytics for forecasting the transmission of the COVID-19 virus within the population, the substitution of humans with robots, and the availability of contact tracing applications for mobile devices have been reported in the literature (Lu et al., 2022). The implementation of automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence technologies holds promise for enhancing flexibility, enhancing liquidity, and reducing costs (Van et al., 2020). The advent of technology has enabled individuals to establish virtual connections without necessitating physical encounters, thereby facilitating the maintenance of minimal social distance (Assaf & Scuderi, 2020). Because of this, technology can address issues that are specific to pandemics, like screening travelers, identifying COVID-19 cases and tracing contacts, and ensuring that students have access to online education (Hall et al., 2020).

Technology is essential for preventing the spread of global pandemics and maintaining barrier-free tourism operations (Berbekova et al., 2021). To handle the pandemic outbreak and maintain the smooth operation of

the tourism activities, Pakistan is lacking enough familiarity with using and upgrading to the most recent technology (Sadiq, 2021). Pakistan still needs to make significant efforts to raise awareness of technology and its use to implement the necessary technology while battling the pandemic. To help Pakistan combat the pandemic on a national level, tourism education about the COVID-19 is necessary (Baloch et al., 2022).

4.5 Stakeholder Cohesion

Prior to the emergence of COVID-19 on a global scale in 2019, the tourism sector was insufficiently prepared to handle a pandemic (Filimonau & Coteau, 2020). The pandemic's unforeseeable nature resulted in substantial disruption and loss (Huang et al., 2021). However, the absence of proactive planning from tourism stakeholders exacerbated the situation (Bhaskara & Filimonau, 2021). Prior literature has underscored the importance and relevance of proactive planning in the tourism industry prior to a crisis (Salman et al., 2020). The topic of stakeholder cohesion and its relevance to disaster management in the tourism sector has been extensively discussed in various articles (Filimonau & Coteau, 2020).

The lessons learned from the previous pandemic can be utilized by all stakeholders in the tourism industry for effective disaster management in the future (Bhaskara & Filimonau, 2021; Khan & Hashim, 2020). The nature of COVID-19 is very new and different from prior crises; therefore, the tourism industry should adopt the new normal strategy in tourism education and awareness programs (Boguszewicz-Kreft et al., 2022). Therefore, we should adapt our tourism education so that we can include things like eating in cars, ordering takeaway, and watching films in cars (Awan et al., 2020).

The research indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic can serve as a valuable source of insight for informing future advancements in the tourism industry through the implementation of stakeholder collaboration (Abbas et al., 2021). Also, all the vulnerabilities of tourism in the previous pandemic can be transformed into resilience by all the tourism stakeholders (Baloch et al., 2022). By doing so, the policy framework for planning can be developed and utilized in upcoming crises of the same nature.

4.6 Domestic Tourism and Community Belongingness

Domestic tourism is poised to play a pivotal role in revitalizing the global tourism industry, which has been significantly impacted and is in need of reconstruction (Brouder et al., 2020; Chang et al., 2020). The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the anticipated dominance of domestic travel, with a notable shift towards travelers exploring destinations in proximity (Haywood, 2020).

During the pandemic, domestic travel initially faced restrictions, primarily limited to essential family visits. However, as of 2021, the narrative shifted, with the relaxation of regulations enabling leisure travel (Noriah Ramli & Majdah Zawawi, 2021). The concept of "tourism bubbles" emerged as a flexible strategy during this period, emphasizing local connections forged amid the pandemic. Consequently, the resurgence of the tourism sector hinges on the residents' sense of belonging to their local environment (Fusté-Forné & Michael, 2021).

The sense of local belongingness may be crucial to the tourism industry's recovery during a pandemic. This dimension appears more realistic in the context of Pakistan because of the demand for domestic travel caused by geographic dispersion and cultural diversity. Pakistan is a multicultural and geographically dispersed nation that requires a unique strategy to promote local tourism and foster a sense of community (Arif, 2019).

Therefore, the multifaceted nature of local belongingness becomes a linchpin for the tourism industry's recovery during unprecedented challenges (Noorashid & Chin, 2021). As travelers seek familiarity and connection in the aftermath of global disruptions, a nuanced approach to understanding and promoting the cultural and geographical richness of Pakistan becomes imperative (Baloch et al., 2022). This tailored strategy not only aligns with the diverse landscape of the nation but also taps into the inherent appeal of domestic travel as a means of rediscovering and celebrating local identity and community spirit.

5. Implications

Theoretical implications: The study's theoretical implications are multifaceted and span across the identified themes. In the realm of policy framework development, there is a need to delve into theoretical foundations that underpin comprehensive crisis management strategies (Cochrane, 2010; Corte et al., 2021; Holladay, 2018). This involves exploring empirical evidence to refine theoretical models and addressing the limitations in existing policy frameworks, especially those stemming from conceptual studies lacking empirical evidence (Berbekova et al., 2021; Hidayat et al., 2021).

In addition, the provision of a favorable tourism environment, particularly during pandemics, requires a deeper exploration of variables impacting the perception and image of tourist destinations (He et al., 2021). Therefore, theoretical frameworks should be developed to guide destination management, focusing on optimal infrastructure, health outcomes, and effective tourism management strategies. Moreover, consumer and employee confidence emerge as critical factors for the revival of the tourism industry (Sharma et al.,

2021). Theoretical investigations should prioritize disaster planning knowledge acquisition to enhance traveler confidence and lower perceived risks. Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of human capital and employee confidence is crucial for the sector's recovery (Noorashid & Chin, 2021).

Similarly, technological innovation in crisis management necessitates theoretical exploration of the role of technology in enhancing flexibility, liquidity, and reducing costs (Sharma et al., 2021). Thus, theoretical frameworks should address the adoption and awareness of technology in the tourism sector, considering the specific challenges posed by pandemics. Furthermore, stakeholder cohesion, a vital aspect in effective disaster management, requires theoretical perspectives emphasizing proactive planning within the tourism industry (Cochrane, 2010). Collaborative efforts should be informed by theories supporting stakeholder collaboration for enhanced disaster resilience (Corte et al., 2021).

In the context of domestic tourism and community belongingness, theoretical frameworks should delve into the dimensions of local belongingness crucial for tourism industry recovery (Baloch et al., 2022). This is especially pertinent in Pakistan, given its multicultural and geographically dispersed nature, demanding a unique theoretical approach to promote local tourism and community engagement.

Practical implications: On a practical level, the implications are equally significant. The development of policy frameworks should not only rely on theoretical insights but also undergo empirical validation through in-depth mixed-method research. A holistic approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research, becomes imperative for a comprehensive understanding of social issues in crisis management. For the provision of a favorable tourism environment, practical steps involve stringent implementation of health and safety measures and collaborative efforts between the government and stakeholders to create a conducive tourism environment.

Building consumer and employee confidence demands practical initiatives such as public awareness campaigns to increase confidence and competence-building programs for employees. These steps translate theoretical insights into actionable strategies. In the realm of technological innovation, practical measures should focus on promoting the adoption of technology in tourism operations and crisis management. Education programs can play a pivotal role in enhancing technological awareness within the tourism sector. Stakeholder cohesion requires practical initiatives that encourage proactive planning among tourism stakeholders. Leveraging lessons from previous pandemics, practical collaborative efforts can be informed by theoretical insights, transforming vulnerabilities into resilience. Finally, supporting domestic tourism and fostering community belongingness necessitate practical strategies that foster local engagement, enhance the sense of belongingness, and actively support and promote domestic tourism during and after pandemics. These theoretical and practical implications provide a comprehensive roadmap for future research and actionable interventions in the dynamic landscape of Pakistan's tourism industry amidst the COVID-19

6. Discussion and Future Research

pandemic.

The two objectives of this study are, firstly, to conduct an exhaustive analysis of the current research within the Pakistani tourism sector, with a specific emphasis on the contextual nuances introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, to propose recommendations for future research endeavors by synthesizing identified thematic elements. These objectives are fulfilled and discussed in this section.

The thematic analysis of literature on the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan's tourism industry has identified six distinct themes in this study. While previous research focused on tourism resilience in general, this study reveals a shift towards crisis management, suggesting a more proactive approach is crucial in the post-pandemic era. The TA's findings show that the response and recovery phases place more emphasis on crisis management components. This approach has the potential to enhance the readiness of the tourism sector by mitigating the degree of unpredictability in future pandemics (Roxas et al., 2022). Within each of the identified themes, potential avenues for future research have been proposed.

The thematic analysis findings recommended the development of a crisis management framework that is tailored to Pakistan's unique system and other developing countries like Pakistan for adoption, with the aim of fostering further resilient tourism. Since the first theme delineates that future research may concentrate on the development of a policy framework according to the global pandemic and Pakistan's tourism industry, this point has been raised by previous researchers in Pakistani tourism (Azam et al., 2020; Shafi et al., 2020). This finding underscores the imperative for future research to formulate a policy framework explicitly tailored for the Pakistan tourism industry, grounded in empirical evidence and comprehensive analyses of industry resilience, and contributing factors.

To cope with the pandemic, providing a favorable and health-relatedly safe environment for tourists can play an important role in keeping tourist activities ongoing (Baloch et al., 2022). The limited attention to this theme underscores a critical gap that future studies should address. For this purpose, future research can provide aspects of and attributes of safe tourist destinations suitable for tourism during a pandemic.

Furthermore, the establishment of consumer and employee confidence emerges as a crucial theme for the survival of the tourism sector during a pandemic, as highlighted by researchers (Baloch et al., 2022;

Noorashid & Chin, 2021; Sharma et al., 2021). This identified theme, serving as a significant finding, underscores the necessity for future research to develop policies and guidelines facilitating the enhancement of confidence, both within the context of Pakistani tourism and on a global scale.

Moreover, the exploration of cutting-edge technology emerges as a significant theme, indicating the substantial impact of innovative technological advancements in supporting the tourism industry during the pandemic (Sharma et al., 2021). The limited focus on this theme highlights a noticeable gap, emphasizing the need for future studies to conduct more in-depth investigations, providing nuanced insights derived from globally adopted technological models in the field of the tourism industry.

Future research should comprehensively elucidate the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the tourism industry during crises, such as the global pandemic. The significance of stakeholders' cohesion has emerged as a prominent theme in the findings, underscored by researchers (Baloch et al., 2022; Cochrane, 2010; Sadiq, 2021). This discovery emphasizes the necessity for future studies to encompass all tourism stakeholders and their collaborative efforts, which are vital for the development of policy frameworks aimed at mitigating future crises.

Additionally, the theme of domestic tourism has emerged as a prominent and significant aspect. This underscores the necessity of incorporating domestic tourism and community belongingness into crisis management models and frameworks as essential coping mechanisms (Abbass et al., 2022). The scarcity of attention given to this theme highlights a critical gap that future research should address by empirically evaluating the domestic tourism of a country, particularly in the context of Pakistani tourism. This is crucial as community support and response play a pivotal role in the effective implementation of a crisis management plan and its associated activities (Noorashid & Chin, 2021).

The results of this research showed that positivist philosophy is used to conceptualize crisis management frameworks in most current crisis management models used in the tourism industry. These approaches emphasize the need for pre-emptive crisis management planning to attract tourists back and return to regular tourism operations (Assaf & Scuderi, 2020). The present crisis management methodologies exhibit a deficiency in comprehending the response of pandemic-affected nations' unique systems towards the pandemic (Pham et al., 2021). Given the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible to adopt an alternative ontological and epistemological framework for crisis research in the tourism industry (Philosophy & 2020, 2020; Yoon et al., 2021).

The pragmatic research philosophy has exerted a noteworthy influence on the field of management studies (Shan, 2022). However, it appears that a limited number of investigations have utilized this approach to examine crisis management within the context of Pakistan's tourism industry, based on our current understanding. Subsequent research endeavors could adopt the presented philosophical and methodological approach to foster a more profound and comprehensive understanding. The pragmatic approach, which emphasizes the idea of figuring out what functions best within a particular system and context (Shan, 2022) offers a useful framework for future investigations.

7. Conclusion

This study, employing a qualitative thematic analysis approach, has undertaken a comprehensive examination of crisis management research within Pakistan's tourism industry. Serving as a crucial addition to the latest research, this study scrutinises the progression of crisis management within the tourism sector and illuminates prospective pathways for future advancement. The existing state of the literature is not just fragmented; it presents a pressing challenge in identifying potential gaps that demand urgent attention.

Through our inductive methodology, an analysis of 22 publications spanning from 2019 to 2023 has unearthed six prominent themes within the literature. These themes—the need for developing policy frameworks, creating a favourable tourism environment, building consumers and employees confidence, technological innovation, stakeholder cohesion, and domestic tourism and community belongingness—show why focused research is so important in these key areas.

As we delve into these prevailing themes, it becomes abundantly clear that future scholars are not just encouraged but urgently needed to further explore and contribute to these identified gaps. The imperative for developing a resilience model for Pakistan's tourism industry, an area conspicuously overlooked in the scholarly literature, stands out as a clarion call for immediate academic investigation.

This study highlights a notable absence of academic endeavours aimed at conceptualising crisis management within Pakistan's tourism sector, particularly in the context of a pandemic. We assertively posit that the strategies identified here are not mere suggestions; they are indispensable tools for stakeholders in the tourism industry to employ in facilitating a successful recovery of tourism operations post-pandemic.

The call to action for future scholars is unequivocal. Their contributions are not just valuable; they are the driving force behind filling the existing gaps and shaping the future trajectory of crisis management research in Pakistan's tourism industry. We express confidence that these endeavours will yield not only novel but practical implications for destinations, communities, and tourists, enabling them to cope with future crises more effectively.

Furthermore, the insights gleaned from Pakistan's experience extend beyond its borders, offering developing countries a blueprint for sustainable tourism. The proposed framework, integrating perspectives from diverse

nations, including Pakistan, gains enhanced validation, promising the revitalization and resilience of global tourism while promoting sustainability on both local and global levels.

8. Limitations

The present study is constrained by certain limitations. Primarily, this work represents only a modest fraction of the broader body of literature. Subsequent research endeavours may undertake a comprehensive examination of the existing literature, elucidating various themes investigated within the purview of this manuscript.

The proposed initiative holds the potential to enhance our understanding of the fundamental elements of crisis management and their practical implications for the tourism industry in Pakistan. Nevertheless, the tourism sector is a multifaceted industry encompassing various sub-sectors integral to its seamless operation. Future inquiries may concentrate on specific industry sectors such as leisure, tourism and travel, and airlines. Furthermore, the current study employed thematic analysis of existing literature. However, future research endeavors could potentially derive advantages from conducting empirical investigations within the industry. It is recommended to acquire a more extensive comprehension of the tourism sector in the aftermath of the pandemic.

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Data availability:

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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