Business Research Proceedings

ISSN: 2993-0049 | Open Access
Vol. 0, No. 0 | 10.51300/BRP-2026-5

LUMINOUS INSIGHTS

Extended Abstract |The 2nd Research Innovations in Sustainable Marketing: A Global Symposium

From Sustainable Tourism to Regenerative Tourism: A Conceptual Reflection

Otto Regalado-Pezúa [1] **and Sylvie Christofle** [2]

[1]ESAN Graduate School of Business, Universidad ESAN, Lima, Peru
[2]IAE Nice-ESPACE, Université Côte d'Azur, Nice, France

KEYWORDS

Sustainable Tourism, Regenerative Tourism, Environmental Protection

ARTICLE HISTORY
Published: 24 January 2026

The transition from sustainable tourism to regenerative tourism represents the next step in environmental protection. Although the focus of sustainable tourism is to "reduce the negative impact of tourism on society, the environment, and the economy" (Zaman, 2024b), in these times of crisis, it is urgent that tourism contributes more actively to the well-being of the planet (Yeoman and Sheldon, 2024). Regenerative tourism, in this context, is proposed as an alternative that minimizes the negative impact and seeks to regenerate ecosystems and communities affected by tourism activity. Its fundamental objective is to co-create and ensure that travel and tourism initiatives are reinvested in local communities, natural environments, and ecological systems, thus fostering our socioecological structures' sustained revitalization and flourishing (Dredge, 2022). To leap into a regenerative mindset in tourism, one must "recognize that we need systems change, a change in mindset and change the way we work tourism" (Dredge, 2022). In this sense, it is essential to understand both concepts, their differences, limitations, and approaches in real scenarios.

Sustainable tourism is a model that seeks to balance economic, ecological, and social benefits in tourism destinations, minimizing negative impacts on the environment and local communities (Hui et al., 2023). It operates within a framework of reducing negative impacts and maintaining balance, focusing on mitigating the ecological footprint of tourism while supporting local economies and cultural heritage (Hui et al., 2023). However, this approach has been criticized for its limited and mechanistic vision, influenced by neoliberal paradigms promoting the separation between humans and nature, making it difficult to adapt to living systems' complexities and environmental justice demands (Bellato et al., 2023). Although it encourages responsible practices and climate protection policies, its capacity to address contemporary socioecological challenges must be improved, requiring a shift towards more competitive and regenerative models (Zaman, 2024a).

On the other hand, regenerative tourism is presented as an emerging paradigm that goes beyond the traditional approach to sustainability. According to Bellato et al. (2023), this concept redefines tourism as

Corresponding author:
Otto Regalado-Pezúa | oregalado@esan.edu.pe | ESAN Graduate School of Business, Universidad ESAN, Lima, Peru

Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. | **Licensee:** Luminous Insights, Wyoming, USA.
This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

an intervention mechanism that develops the capacity of social and ecological systems to operate in harmony, promoting positive effects on tourism destinations. Yeoman and Sheldon (2024) emphasize that regenerative tourism has systemic perspectives and values, recognizing that tourism systems are inseparable from nature. This approach proposes a paradigm shift, both in tourists' mindsets and values and practices.

Regenerative tourism integrates indigenous and Western ecological paradigms, promoting holistic development that restores ecosystems, strengthens community resilience, and prioritizes the interdependence between humans and nature (Bellato et al., 2023). Furthermore, it conceptualizes tourism as a process of co-evolution, challenging reductionist approaches and demanding systemic changes in mindsets and practices. This involves collaborative leadership, ecological literacy, and technologies such as immersive journalism to foster environmental awareness and pro-environmental behavior in tourists (Dredge, 2022; Hui et al., 2023). These elements redefine tourism as an economic activity and a transformative tool for ecological and social regeneration.

The correlation between the two paradigms lies in their shared goal of fostering environmental responsibility, although their methodologies and outcomes diverge significantly. While sustainable tourism establishes a foundation of environmental responsibility, regenerative tourism raises this standard by promoting ecological renewal and social well-being (Bellato et al., 2023; Dredge, 2022). Thus, regenerative tourism is positioned as a critical paradigm for addressing the dynamic challenges of global tourism, integrating solutions that transcend mere mitigation to actively revitalize the ecosystems and communities in which it operates.

Funding Statement

No funding was received for this work.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Cite as

Regalado-Pezúa, O. & Christofle, S. (2026). From Sustainable Tourism to Regenerative Tourism: A Conceptual Reflection. In *Proceedings of the 2nd Research Innovations in Sustainable Marketing: A Global Symposium* (pp. 1-2). Business Research Proceedings. 10.51300/BRP-2026-5

References

Bellato, L., Frantzeskaki, N., Lee, E., Cheer, J. M., & Peters, A. (2023). Transformative epistemologies for regenerative tourism: Towards a decolonial paradigm in science and practice? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *32*(6), 298–311. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2023.2208310

Dredge, D. (2022). Regenerative tourism: Transforming mindsets, systems and practices. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, *8*(3), 269–281. https://doi.org/10.1108/jtf-01-2022-0015

Hui, X., Raza, S. H., Khan, S. W., Zaman, U., & Ogadimma, E. C. (2023). Exploring regenerative tourism using media richness theory: Emerging role of immersive journalism, metaverse-based promotion, eco-literacy, and pro-environmental behavior. *Sustainability*, *15*(6), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15065046

Yeoman, I. S., & Sheldon, P. J. (2024). The future of tourism: Interview with emeritus professor pauline sheldon on regenerative tourism. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, *10*(3). https://doi.org/10.1108/jtf-06-2024-0120

Zaman, U. (2024a). Missing the forest for the trees: Scientometric analysis of sustainable versus regenerative tourism (1966-2023). *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences*, *18*(2), 468–502. https://doi.org/10.64534/commer.2024.048

Zaman, U. (2024b). Nexus of regenerative tourism destination competitiveness, climate advocacy and visit intention: Mediating role of travel fomo and destination loyalty. *Sustainability*, *16*(17), 7827–7827. https://doi.org/10.3390/su16177827