

Article

Designing the Tourist Journey for the Advancement of Sustainable Tourist Practices

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Abstract: Sustainable tourism has become a key priority in the strategic plans for tourism development in order to attain sociocultural development and environmental preservation. This paper examines opportunities for the advancement of sustainable tourism by encouraging tourists to consider sustainability and to include sustainable options in their tourist practices. The paper adopts a practice-based approach for the understanding of tourist behavior as a series of practices tourists perform for the development of valuable experiences, usually with the support of services offered by tourist organizations and service providers. Sustainability is an option for tourists that needs to be offered, promoted, and supported when they decide on their practices and the way they will perform them. Hence, sustainability is an option that needs to be designed so that tourists are enabled and motivated to adopt sustainable tourist practices. The paper proposes the sustainable tourist journey as an approach for the analysis and design of sustainable tourist practices that is based on the holistic scope of the consumer journey. The paper contributes to the advancement of sustainable tourism by introducing and improving the understanding of sustainability concerns in tourist practices. The paper discusses also how digital technologies can support the design of sustainable tourist practices.

Keywords: sustainability in tourism; sustainable practice; tourist practice; service design; consumer journey; tourist journey; lifelogging; service integration



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1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest sectors in modern economies and is worth over USD 1.4 trillion and accounts for 10.4% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) [1]. In addition, it is a beloved human activity, with 1.4 billion international arrivals in 2018 [2], that is estimated to grow to 1.8 billion international arrivals by 2030 [1]. Despite the positive impact on economic development, the increase in tourism consumption has led to the depletion of natural resources and harm to the environment. Today, many destinations cope with great demand that causes side-effects on various environmental and social issues. This situation certainly has roots in mismanagement [3]. However, the growing demand in tourist services is not inevitably an unsolved problem; on the contrary, it can be seen as a great opportunity to improve the way of life of local communities and implement successful sustainable tourism strategies.

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the prevailing tourism strategies for the future address two main issues: the digital transformation and the sustainable development of tourism destinations [1]. Sustainable tourism provides opportunities for the development of the local communities, the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDG), and the alleviation of the impact of climate change. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) announced 2017 as the “year of sustainable tourism” [4]. The development of sustainable tourism can be a strong answer to the new global challenges that humankind faces in our days, such as the climate crisis, energy cost, and COVID-19, that greatly affect tourist activities as well. For instance, the climate crisis demands the development of more environmentally friendly consumption patterns that can

be addressed by eco-tourism and the development of sustainable policies by tourist service providers [4,5]. The rising energy cost may encourage tourists to choose closer destinations or less-energy consuming means of transportation. The pandemic of COVID-19 deterred mass tourism and stimulated demand for tourism that follows sustainable practices [6], for local regions and remote or even unpopular destinations [7].

The development of sustainable tourism poses great challenges for national and local tourism organizations. However, it is not only a matter of policies and measures, but requires the development of awareness, the acceptance of the principles and goals of sustainable tourism, and, most of all, the adoption of sustainable tourism practices by tourists [8]. This paper focuses on this last issue and adopts a practice-based approach for understanding and describing tourist behavior as a set of practices tourists perform in order to create tourist experiences. Practices include behaviors and attitudes, actions, and the way of thinking about actions, and they form the basis for the way people live their lives [9]. We consider tourism to be an important kind of human practice that refers to what tourists are thinking and doing when they experience tourism. Sustainable tourism practices, in like manner, are the decisions and the behavior of tourists that are compatible with the concept of sustainability.

This paper suggests the sustainable tourist journey as a design method for the description of sustainable tourist practices. The method builds on the concept of the consumer journey as a holistic approach that expands the scope of consumer experiences in the lifeworld of the consumer [10,11], and the customer logic for the understanding of the value created in the customer's lifeworld [12,13]. The sustainable tourist journey can be implemented retrospectively, in order to analyze past tourist practices, or prospectively, for the design of tourist practices and experiences. The paper illustrates the use of the sustainable tourist journey for the description and design of tourist practices and discusses the application of digital technologies for the support of several critical aspects of tourist practice design.

This paper provides several practical and theoretical contributions for research in sustainable tourism. From a practical point of view, the paper contributes to the better understanding of sustainable tourist practices as attitudes and behaviors that are guided by the principles of sustainability. Sustainable tourism practices, therefore, can be inspired, learned, and developed by tourists as options that tourists choose when they decide and perform their practices. The sustainable tourism practices are implemented both at the microlevel of the relationship between the service provider and the tourist and at the macrolevel of the total tourist experience. The paper emphasizes on the macrolevel and provides a design method for sustainable tourist practices. From a theoretical point of view, the paper proposes a practice-based view for the description and design of sustainable tourism behavior that is novel in the literature, recognizes services and community input as integral elements of practices, and promotes the research in customer-centric approaches in service design. Sustainability is recognized as a horizontal quality of all tourist practices, meaning that all practices are sustainable to different degrees. The sustainable tourist journey advances the research about the new concept of the consumer journey as a holistic approach on experience design.

2. Concepts and Requirements of Sustainable Tourism

Tourism impacts the society at large, both in a positive and a negative way. Tourism destinations may suffer from various environmental, political, social, cultural, and economic problems that arise due to tourism activities [14]. Hence, the principles of sustainability can provide an alternative and novel way of development and strategy that can provide certain solutions to the aforementioned problems [15].

Sustainability is based on three basic pillars: the environmental, the sociocultural, and the economic, and sustainable development refers to an alternative economic model that aims to preserve the well-being of present and future generations [16]. The environmental pillar aims to protect the environmental resources and biodiversity of the region, as well as

to engage tourists to engage with choices, activities, and practices that serve the protection of the environment [17]. The sociocultural pillar deals with the protection of local regions, the advancement of local communities, the preservation of local traditions, and other cultural resources, and, in general, the viable and mutually beneficial interaction between tourists and local communities [18]. In particular, interactions between travel agencies, residents, suppliers, and, of course, tourists, are of utmost importance [19]. The economic pillar deals with the economic needs of destinations, such as increased revenues, increased employment, creation of job opportunities, better quality of life, improved infrastructure for the residents, etc. [20]. Roberts, Reynolds, and Dolasinski [21] provide a review of the various patterns and trends that are in progress in sustainable tourism today. In sum, sustainable tourism can be regarded as the strategy that can be followed to meet the various economic, sociocultural, and environmental needs with respect to environmental protection, biological and cultural preservation, and economic efficiency [4].

Sustainability is a vital tool for the differentiation of destinations, the development of strong destination brands, and the development of destination positioning strategies [22]. The nature and the physical environment have a major impact on the attractiveness of a destination, and sustainability can positively impact consumer experiences and value creation, destination image, destination performance, customer satisfaction, customer revisit intention, and customer word of mouth [17,18]. These results are compatible with new evidence supporting that consumers are becoming more and more concerned today about the impact of their own actions and personal activities on the environment [15] and they are interested in knowing the direct effect of their own behaviors on various significant societal or environmental issues and taking actions to offset the negative effects [23].

Tourists have looked for new types of experiences in recent years, and sustainable tourism has a role to play in this field, as an emerging issue in tourism literature [24]. For instance, tourists interested in protecting the environment have various options available, ranging from traveling to unpopular places, adopting options for alternative tourism, or deciding to visit and holistically experience the nature and the locality of the destination. Sustainable tourists seem to appreciate the fact that they visit a place where someone else's culture, environment, economy, and society is in action, and for this reason, they respect all these unique elements of the destination [25]. Fermani et al. [7] suggest that sustainable and green values can predict tourists' behavior with regard to sustainable options.

Considering the activities and the practices of sustainable tourists, sustainable consumer behavior can be regarded as an umbrella term that contains a consumer's various activities for reducing negative environmental impact, saving natural resources, covering society's environmental needs, and improving well-being and life quality [26,27].

Environmentally sustainable consumer behavior has been studied based on specific behavioral variables, such as consumption of eco-products, postpurchase/prepurchase behavior of eco-products, energy-efficient actions, saving of natural resources, behavior toward garbage sorting, solid waste minimization, food waste reduction, and use of public transportation (e.g., [28]). In tourism, the most frequent environmentally sustainable consumer behaviors are related to towel/plastic/bottles/bag reuse, water saving, food waste reduction, purchase of eco products, energy saving, and consumption of local products [29]. Furthermore, sustainable tourists are increasingly interested in consuming green tourism products, such as environmentally friendly hotels, cruises, restaurants, airlines, destinations, and resorts, and often express a great willingness for sustainable consumption [30,31]. Multimodal transport systems can also support sustainable transportation solutions in destinations [32].

Previous studies have investigated the major factors that influence consumers to adopt sustainable products or services. The major sustainability factors that influence the tourist experience are the interaction with locals and enjoyment of nature and environment [33]. However, it is worth mentioning that the distance tourists have to travel in order to arrive in a foreign country or tourist destination negatively impacts the visits of foreign tourists [34,35]. Tourists visiting a foreign country are also interested in environmental and

human rights issues such as employment and working conditions. Millar and Baloglu [36] found that tourists visiting eco-friendly hotels use the words ‘recycling’, ‘environmental-friendly’ and ‘environmental efficiency’ most frequently in order to describe them.

The increased awareness of sustainability issues and the interest in sustainable tourist practices leads to the new trends for proenvironmental and prosocial actions that seek the protection of the natural, cultural, and social environment [15,37]. The concept of proenvironmental purchase refers to the tourists’ eco-friendly selection and action toward green products/services [38] that not only avoid causing a negative impact on the environment, but in some cases succeed in bringing some positive impact on nature [26,28]. Proenvironmental behavior in tourism has, as a prerequisite, the development of proenvironmental behavior in everyday life practices [39], so that sustainable activities become habitual in the life of the person and are exercised in all the life practices, including tourist practices [40]. In addition, proenvironmental behaviors enhance sustainable experiences and contribute to the development of sustainable tourism [41].

Sustainable tourism behavior is also the outcome of cognitive procedures. Tourists perceive the concept of ‘green image’ [31,39,42] as the overall image about an environmental-friendly product or service [40]. The main driver for the development of a green image is the knowledge about the tourism offering and its attributes [42]. The concept of environmental knowledge reflects a consumer’s ability to recognize and understand the various environmental terms, concepts, problems, and activities, and constitutes a major cognitive construct that explains sustainable tourism behavior [38,43].

Today, digital technologies have become pervasive in human life, and they have become a critical part in the tourism industry. They also play an important role in the advancement of sustainable tourism and the adoption of sustainable practices by tourists. The social and mobile technologies in particular, such as smartphones and wearables, have dramatically changed the way tourists consume tourism products and services [44]. Tourists have integrated them in their practices and use them to perform their actions [45], such as finding information about sustainable tourist options and developing a sustainable tourism experience. For instance, tourists are interested in applications that can provide information about carbon content measurement, energy consumption, waste, and sustainable and smart transportation systems [46].

3. Customer Experience Design

Customer experience has emerged in the recent years as a top priority research issue in marketing, under the premise that creating positive experiences will result in increased customer loyalty [47]. Customer experience can be simply defined as the internal and subjective response of customers to any direct or indirect contact with a company [48]. It is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that includes cognitive, affective, emotional, social, and physical experiences [49,50], covers all the phases of the buying behavior, including search, purchase, consumption, and after-sale phases of the experience, involves multiple channels and touchpoints, and extends to the social interactions of the customers in the physical world and on social media [47,50].

The emergence of customer experience indicates a gradual shift from the consumption of goods to the consumption of services and, finally, the consumption of experiences [51]. The new mindset for the creation and the assessment of customer value was based on the assumption that consumers value experiences more than goods and services. In the same vein, service-dominant logic underscores the experiential character of service value, suggesting service value is determined phenomenologically by the customer, when service is used in the customer context [52].

Customer experience design can be approached from different points of view [47]. From the organizational point of view, the firm takes the leading role [53], running the risk, however, that customer experience may not be perceived by consumers as intended by the firm [54]. From the customer point of view, the focus is on the customer and his functions, and what the customer is doing with products and services in order to meet

needs and accomplish goals [10,12]. From a cocreational point of view, the customer acts as resource integrator and interacts with the firm and potentially other firms and other customers [55,56] for the collaborative design of experiences and the creation of value [57].

A pre-eminent concept in the study of customer experience is the customer journey [54], which serves as a basic conceptualization of the customer experience, per se, and as a metaphor for the description of the different stages the customer passes through, during the interaction with the provider [47]. In a customer journey analysis, emphasis is put on the description of the interaction of the customer with the multiple touch points along the various purchasing stages and the understanding of the customer decisions and behaviors [50]. Hence, the customer journey focuses on the dual relationship between the customer and the provider and considers customer experience with respect to the provider. The service journey emphasizes customer interactions and experiences in service-intensive environments [58].

From the customer point of view, however, customer experiences extend beyond the interaction with the provider, are developed as a part of the social life of customers, and are influenced by contextual and social factors [54]. Customer-dominant logic [12,13], which focuses on customers and what they are doing with services in their life practices, rather than on the provider, the service system, or the service itself, has inspired the development of customer-centric approaches in service-experience design. According to these approaches, the study of customer experiences must go beyond the immediate service delivery system and consider how customers cocreate value in their own context or customer ecosystem [59,60].

In this realm, the concept of the consumer journey has been introduced recently to suggest a shift toward more customer-centric approaches in experience design that expand beyond the customer–provider interaction and the purchasing experience. The consumer journey involves multiple activities and multiple service providers and relates the consumer experience to the life practices and the goals of the individual [10,11,61]. The consumer journey may include multiple interactions with business, organizational, and social actors and therefore may include multiple customer journeys. This way, customer-experiences design is becoming increasingly complex and multidimensional because it can include other actors beyond the boundaries of the service provider [59].

The service design literature offers additional approaches for the holistic analysis of the customer experience [60]. Becker and Jaakkola [11] suggest service design amalgamates both firm-oriented and customer-oriented approaches. On the one hand, it regards the entire consumption process and considers customer experience as embedded in a customer's lifeworld and interpreted by the customer, while on the other hand, it examines how firms can affect customer experience by managing different touchpoints and stimuli. The complexity of service systems prompted the development of multilevel design approaches that integrate the analysis and design of customer experiences at different levels of interest. For example, Multilevel Service Design (MSD) [62] consists of the levels of the service concept, the service system, and the service encounter. Hence, next to the service encounter for the design of the interaction with the customer and the service system for the design of the service operations, designing at the service-concept level requires positioning the service in the customer's 'value constellation experience' and relating it to relevant services that proceed or follow the use of the core service offering. Other service-design approaches, inspired by service-dominant logic [56], promote the ecosystemic understanding of service design. The Service Ecosystem Design is such an approach [63]; service design at the micro-, meso-, and macrolevels refer, respectively, to the design of a focal instance of value cocreation, the dynamic interplay between the focal design process and other design and nondesign processes, and the dynamic interplay between the design process and the institutional arrangements that govern service ecosystems.

In sum, customer experience is intertwined with the notions of service design and value creation [64]. The early approaches of service design adopted the organizational/firm-centric approach to customer experience, examined the dyadic relationship and interaction

between the customer and the service provider, and aimed at the design of the customer experience at the service encounter (e.g., the service blueprint) or the multiple touchpoints of the service system (e.g., the customer journey). More recently, some research approaches have shifted the interest toward customer-centric approaches in experience design that relate the development of experiences to the life practices of the customers (e.g., the consumer journey).

4. Tourist Practices and Sustainability

4.1. Background Concepts

This paper adopts a practice-based approach for understanding tourist behavior as a set of activities that tourists perform when they create tourist experiences. According to practice theory [9,65], practices are organized, open-ended configurations of activities and material entities for which people share a common understanding. Practices are bodily expressions that include both social variables, as they are embedded in the people's social life and embrace the participation of other people, and psychological variables, as they echo what people think and say [9]. Hence, practices include both what people think, feel, and decide about a situation and the activities they perform in order to achieve their goals [65]. Practices take place in a particular context and under particular circumstances and conditions [65] that are defined by physical, temporal, social, and other dimensions. In sum, practices form the basis for the way that people live their lives [9].

Following Korkman [66], who studied the practices of cruise passengers, we consider tourism as an increasingly important human practice in the social life of people today. We suggest that tourist practices refer to what tourists are thinking and doing in some particular context and situation that is relevant to their travel and vacations. Therefore, tourist practices form the basis of the development of tourist perceptions, behaviors, and experiences. For instance, transportation is a practice that tourists exercise when they want to move to a destination; the specific transportation methods that are available in particular situations, such as by car, by train or on foot, are the particular ways that people can use to exercise their practice. Additionally, sightseeing (as a solo traveler, as a couple, as a family, or in a tourist group) and tasting local food (in street eateries, in food festivals, or in fine-dining restaurants) are common tourist practices that take place in particular ways by tourists and in contexts for the development of tourist experiences.

Sustainability can be seen a quality of tourist practices, as they can be implemented in more or less sustainable ways. For example, there are more or less sustainable transportation practices (e.g., going on foot or by bicycle, as opposed to going by motor vehicles), as well as more or less sustainable practices for tasting local food (e.g., together with locals in festivals, as opposed to dining in fine restaurants that serve local specialties). The development of sustainability in tourism is the result of the adoption of sustainable tourist practices. Following Schatzki [65], who discussed vegetarianism as a practice, regarding socially recognized forms of activities organized around a shared understanding about eating ethics and habits, we suggest sustainability in tourism prescribes particular choices and actions of tourists that are compatible with the norm of sustainability. Sustainability can be considered as a quality of tourist practices that refers to the shared understanding of what constitutes sustainable tourist behavior, followed by the adoption of sustainable decisions and activities during traveling and vacations. Sustainable tourist behavior can be inspired, learned, and developed as a routine or a habit that tourists choose when they perform tourist practices.

As they incorporate material entities [9], tourist practices include both activities performed by tourists and activities performed by third parties for the support of tourists. Services are embedded in customer practices [66] as activities performed by others in order to support the customers in the creation of value [67]. The customers act as resource integrators of self-resources and services and they cocreate value by providing resources, integrating resources, or simply providing the context for the creation of value [52]. In order to understand the way that customers use services and create value, it is important to

develop a holistic understanding of the customer's life, context, practices, and experiences, and focus on the structural fit between the customer's life practices and services [12,13].

4.2. The Anatomy of Sustainable Tourist Practices

Tourist practices refer to the mindset, the attitudes, and the behavior of tourists; it is what tourists are thinking and doing, routinely or after consideration, in some particular situation and context. Some common categories of tourist practices include traveling/transportation, visiting attractions, sightseeing, performing tourism-relating activities (sports, pilgrimage, etc.), tasting food/eating, resting/relaxing, shopping, interacting with people (locals or other tourists), etc. Practices can be performed in different ways and in different combinations by tourists, according to their idiosyncrasies and preferences, in a particular situation and under certain prevailing contextual variables.

Taking into account the practice theory, we suggest an abstraction of tourist practices that consists of three components: customer/tourist activities, tourist services, and community input.

- *Customer activities* are bodily expressions of the actions tourists think, decide, and implement when they perform a practice. According to Schatzki [9], the term 'activity' is used to mean both doings and sayings. Hence, activities refer to behaviors and behavioral patterns and the knowledge and skills that are required by tourists for the implementation of their practices, as well as their preferences, dispositions, attitudes, and habits that are related to their practices (for instance, changing towels/bedsheets every two days, or turning off lights and air conditioners when leaving the room). With this broad meaning that covers both 'doings and sayings', customer activity is an intrinsic element of all tourist practices.
- *Services* are activities and material elements offered by service providers for the support of tourists in the implementation of their practices, such as accommodation, transportation, tourist guidance, tourist attractions, tourist events, etc. Services refer also to the decisions, strategies, policies, systems, and facilities that service providers offer to tourists to enable and support the implementation of their practices (for instance, a sustainable development strategy, a 'green policy', and recycling procedures that enable tourists to exercise recycling practices).
- *Community input* refers to 'sayings and doings', activities, and material offerings that friends, family members, colleagues, and other community members perform or provide in order to support tourists in the implementation of their practices. Interactions on social media are extremely important in tourism today and greatly influence tourist practices, advancing also the adoption of sustainable tourist practices. In addition, opinions and recommendations by locals or other tourists, in digital or in physical contexts, are important in shaping tourist experiences, as well as activities and material offerings that bring direct benefit to tourists [68].

Figure 1 depicts the abstraction of tourist practice as a composition of tourist activities, services, and community input. As open-ended configurations [9], practices can be formed by any kind of combination of these three elements, in any quantity, with tourist activity being always present as an intrinsic element of all tourist practices. In Figure 1, we also depict some basic types of configurations of tourist practices: (a) a single-customer activity (going on foot), (b) customer activity and service (going by taxi), (c) customer activity and social contribution (pickup by a friend), (d) customer activity, service, and social contribution (receiving advice by peers/locals for the most convenient way to move to a destination with public transport). In addition, we may have multiple customer activities and multiple services (participation in a local festival, dancing and listening to folk music as tourist activities, eating local food, and shopping from kiosks as activities enabled by service providers), multiple customer activities and community inputs (participation in a local festival, interacting with and learning from locals), and multiple customer activities, services, and community input (participation in a local festival that includes all the previously mentioned activities, services, and community inputs).

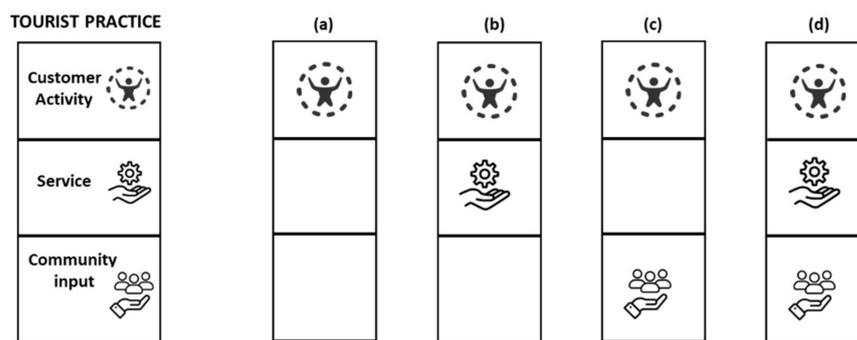


Figure 1. The anatomy of tourist practice and major types of tourist practices.

The description of tourist practices provides answers to the basic questions of what is happening, how, why, by whom or with whom, where, and when. For example, transportation from the airport to the hotel, by shuttle bus service, for a family with two kids, in order to reach their destination comfortably and at a low cost. Accordingly, we suggest the description of tourist practices can be determined by six basic variables: utility (what), procedure (how), intention (why), social context (with whom/by what), physical context (where), and temporal context (when). The utility refers to the functionality of the practice, e.g., transportation for sightseeing, for going to the hotel/airport, for getting to a point of interest, for visiting friends, for participating in an event. The procedure refers to the process or the method for the implementation of the practice, e.g., on foot, by bicycle, scooter, bus, tram, boat, car, carpooling, taxi. The intention refers to the goal that the practice aims to achieve, e.g., transportation can aim to be quick, on time, comfortable, luxurious, low-cost, and eco-friendly. The social context refers to the participation of other human entities in the practice, e.g., transportation for solo travelers, for families with youngsters or teenagers, for couples, and for tourist groups of young or elderly tourists. The physical context refers to the location that the practice takes place, as well as other prevailing physical conditions, e.g., transportation from/to the airport, the hotel, or the city center, on a hot, cold, or rainy day. The temporal context refers to the time frame of the practice, e.g., transportation early in the morning, in the night, or after midnight.

Tourists perform the same or similar practices, but in different ways, according to their preferences, objectives, and other contextual parameters. Tourist practices are characterized by the choices of tourists with regard to these variables. Sustainability can be an option in all these variables, as there are sustainable and unsustainable ways of implementing practices. In general, sustainability can be seen as a general quality in the implementation of practices that can exist to a greater or lesser extent. In addition, sustainability can be seen as a particular goal (e.g., eco-friendly behavior) and therefore as a general pattern and as a restriction for the available options in the configuration of practices. Table 1 presents some examples of sustainable and unsustainable options in the implementation of tourist practices (we should notice that mass tourism is not unsustainable by definition, but several practices in mass tourism tend to be (or can be) unsustainable [69]).

Table 1. Sustainability options in the implementation of tourist practices.

Variable	Sustainable Options	Less Sustainable Options
Utility	Preferring short-distance travels, staying with local families in local communities	Preferring long-distance travels, or all-inclusive holidays in grand resorts
Procedure	Going on foot, by bicycle, by scooter, using public transport, renting an e-car	Moving in a metropolitan area by taxi or car

Table 1. Cont.

Variable	Sustainable Options	Less Sustainable Options
<i>Intention</i>	Pursuing eco-friendly experiences, adopting sustainable options when they are available	Developing mass-tourism experiences, neglecting sustainable options
<i>Social context</i>	Traveling in groups, meeting locals	Traveling solo, avoiding proximity with locals
<i>Physical context</i>	Visiting local communities, local events, and attractions that promote local traditions	Visiting mass-tourism destinations, attractions, and events
<i>Temporal context</i>	Traveling in low-tourism seasons or low-traffic times	Traveling in high-tourism seasons or when local traffic is high

5. Designing the Sustainable Tourist Journey

The ‘journey’ is one of the primary metaphors used to describe the way that people engage in activities, develop experiences, and understand their lives [10]. In this paper, we use this metaphor for the description of sustainable tourist practices that shape the tourists’ experiences and determine the value they experience. The approach builds on the concepts of the consumer journey as a holistic approach that expands the scope of consumer experiences in the lifeworld of the consumer [10,11] and illuminates their decision-making procedures [70] and the customer logic for the understanding of the value created in the customer lifeworld from the customer’s point of view [12,13].

The extant literature provides approaches and tools for the design of services and experiences from the provider’s point of view (e.g., service blueprint, customer journey), as well as frameworks for the conceptualization of the customer point of view in the analysis and design of customer experiences (e.g., consumer journey). However, design from the provider’s point of view narrows the scope on a particular service encounter and addresses the related customer experience only. For instance, designing eco-friendly services in a hotel environment, such as eco-friendly cleaning and room-making procedures, organic meals, and carbon-neutral air heating/cooling systems, is restricted to the practices and the experiences of tourists when they are in a hotel. However, what about the rest of the practices and the total tourist experience?

The development of sustainable tourism requires tourists to develop a sustainable way of thinking and a sustainable attitude in all, or at least in a wide range, of the tourist practices. In addition, it requires expanding the scope to cover the total tourist experience and adopting the customer point of view in the analysis and design. The concept of the consumer journey can be useful here, as sustainability can be seen as a ‘high-order goal’ [10], or a point of life for (certain) tourists that drives their life practices and governs their experiences. Hence, we suggest that the tourist journey is a particular case of the consumer journey that draws attention to a series of tourist practices, such as individual activities, services, and community input, and describes ‘the passage’ from one practice to another as the development of the expected experiences, the creation of value, and the achievement of particular goals. The sustainable tourist journey, likewise, adopts sustainability as the guiding principle in the way tourists decide on, arrange, and implement their practices. The sustainable tourist journey refers to the arrangement and implementation of tourist practices that are chosen because they are sustainable and implemented in a sustainable way.

The key element in the tourist journey is the tourist practices and the way they are joined together and integrated for the formation of tourist experiences. The tourist journey is related to the design of experiences, because tourist practices are loaded with experiences and become the vehicle for the development of experiences, and the design of services, because services are embedded in practices and shape the resulting value and experiences. However, it is different from them and the approaches that have been developed for the

design of services and customer experiences. The tourist journey emphasizes the ‘design of tourist practices’ and draws attention to the way tourists conceive, decide on, arrange, and implement their practices. This is compatible with the meaning of the word ‘design’ (e.g., in Merriam-Webster, it is defined as: to conceive or execute a plan; to create, fashion, execute, or construct according to plan; to have as a purpose).

The sustainable tourist journey can be developed retrospectively, in order to describe past tourist practices, analyze tourist behavior, and evaluate tourist experiences, or prospectively, for the design of tourist practices and experiences. The analysis of past tourist practices can reveal attitudes and behavioral patterns, such as what other practices can be effectuated in order to shape tourist experiences and what else tourists can do, as well as opportunities for the integration of services and community input in the implementation of tourist practices. All these are extremely relevant and important for the development of sustainable tourism. The analysis of past tourist practices can reveal what tourists consider sustainable, what their motivation and preferences are, and what they are willing to do in order to include sustainability in their practices, which are all important research issues, as discussed in Section 2 of this paper. In addition, as a way to advance sustainable tourism, it can provide insights for the promotion of additional sustainable practices that tourists can include in their journeys.

When the tourist journey is used for the design of tourist practices, it has even more significant implications for the development of sustainable tourism. In this case, the interest is not on the understanding of what tourists have already done in their practices, but on what they can do in order to include sustainable practices in their current and future tourist plans. The emphasis is put on how they can be facilitated and supported in the adoption of sustainable practices, for instance, by promoting sustainable tourism options, motivating tourists to adopt them, and facilitating the integration of sustainable options in tourist practices.

The design of sustainable tourist practices includes three phases: (a) the decision for the adoption of sustainable tourist practices, (b) the planning and arrangement of tourist practices in the lifeworld of tourists, and (c) the integration of services and community input in the implementation of tourist practices. The decision of the adoption of sustainable tourist practices requires that tourists become aware of the existence of sustainable options in their practices and motivated for their selection and adoption. For these tourists that are not self-motivated, tourist organizations and service providers can develop several initiatives in order to increase their awareness and motivation (e.g., development and promotion of ethical programs for customer participation, reward systems, and games). The planning and arrangement of tourist practices requires that tourists are facilitated in the organization of their practices and in building their expected experiences. The development of sustainable tourism requires the promotion of the available sustainable tourist options, as well as sustainable substitutes/alternatives, when tourists make unsustainable options, and complementary sustainable practices, in order to expand the sustainable behavior. The integration of services and community input augments tourist practices and supports their implementation. The development of sustainable tourism requires the promotion of sustainable services that can easily be embedded in tourist practices.

The sustainable tourist journey expands to the total tourist experience and transcends the boundaries of single organizations. How can tourist organizations and other service providers support the development of sustainable tourism experiences in their boundaries? Such as with the concept of the consumer journey that provides a holistic view on consumer experience and can include several particular customer journeys [10], the sustainable tourist journey can include the particular customer journeys for the design of sustainable services and experiences with particular tourist organizations and other service providers. For example, a hotel can employ a customer journey for the design of sustainable services and experiences for its customers (for instance, eating at the organic food/vegan restaurant, participation in the program for saving energy, etc.), while the sustainable tourist journey provides a holistic approach on the tourist experience.

The structure of the sustainable tourist journey is developed in two dimensions. The horizontal dimension outlines the timeline of tourist practices, as they occur in the tourists’ lifeworld. The vertical dimension refers to the structure of tourist practices (if they are composed of tourist activities, services, and/or community input), their sustainability index (high, medium, or low) and the description of the variables of tourist practices. Next, we provide an example for the design of the sustainable tourist journey. It refers to the tourist practices of a family with two children visiting the town center of their vacation’s destination. Let us assume their practices include transportation to the town center, sightseeing in the town center, shopping, relaxing, eating, and meeting other people. As discussed in the previous section, there are several different ways to implement these practices, according to the requirements of tourists and the prevailing contextual conditions, that are characterized by different degrees of sustainability.

In this scenario, the family learns on social media that there is a scooter service in the town and decides to use it for moving to the town center. Their decision is based on variables such as their willingness to use eco-friendly means of transport, the fun they can have as all the family moves by scooters, the availability of the service in their area, and the availability of bicycle/scooter lanes in their route, so that they can move safely. After their arrival to the town center, they start mixing up practices of sightseeing and shopping. They visit some monuments of the town (the old town square, the cathedral, etc.) and along their walk, they stop for shopping in the local stores (memorabilia, gifts, local food, etc.). They interrupt their sightseeing to enjoy a coffee in the town square. Searching for additional sightseeing options, they receive recommendations for visiting the folk museum, the botanical garden, and an old brewery that operates as a museum. The botanical garden provides a first-order opportunity for resting and enjoying a light meal. Later, they visit the new commercial mall to buy warm clothes, because the weather was colder than they expected, as well as a flea market that operates nearby to search for antiques and the spirit of the old stores of the town. Lunch approaches and the family chooses a traditional, local restaurant in the old town to taste some local specialties. Full of experiences, they hire a taxi to return to the hotel conveniently, as public transport alternatives are not convenient enough, the temperature has risen to heat levels, there is traffic jam in the narrow streets of the old town center, and the air quality is poor. The sustainable tourist journey for this scenario is depicted in Figure 2, with a more-detailed and text-based version that includes the variables of tourist practices, and in Figure 3, with a more-concise and visual version that emphasizes the sustainability capacity of the tourist practices. The colored dots are used to indicate the sustainability level of the tourist practices (green for highly sustainable practices, yellow for fairly sustainable practices and red for slightly sustainable practices).

Customer Activity 	Move to town centre	Visit old town square	Shopping in local stores	Taking a coffee	Visit botanical garden	Shopping in local mall	Visit flea market	Taste local food	Return to hotel
Service 	Scooter		Local stores	Coffee shop	Botanical garden	Commercial stores		Traditional restaurant	Taxi
Community input 	Information from travel sites/ blogs				Information from travel sites/ blogs		Information from travel sites/ blogs		
Sustainability index 	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low
Utility 	Altern. urban transportation	Visit landmarks	Shopping gifts	Enjoy coffee	Recreation, enjoy light meal	Shopping clothes	See antiques & old items	Taste food	Urban transportation
Procedure 	Hiring & using scooter								Hiring taxi
Intention 	Fun, fast, eco-friendly	Sightseeing, learning	Shopping	Resting/Relaxing	Come close to the nature	Buy warm clothes	Sightseeing, learning	Learn local cuisine	Fast, convenient
Social context 	Family	Family, other visitors	Family	Family	Family, other visitors	Family	Family	Family, other visitors	Family
Physical context 	Good weather	Town square – open space	Local market	Town square – open space	Botanical garden	Mall	Flea market	Traditional restaurant	Traffic jam, High Co2
Temporal context 	Morning	Morning	Morning	Noon	Noon	Afternoon	Afternoon	Late afternoon	Late afternoon

Figure 2. The sustainable tourist journey—detailed and textual version.

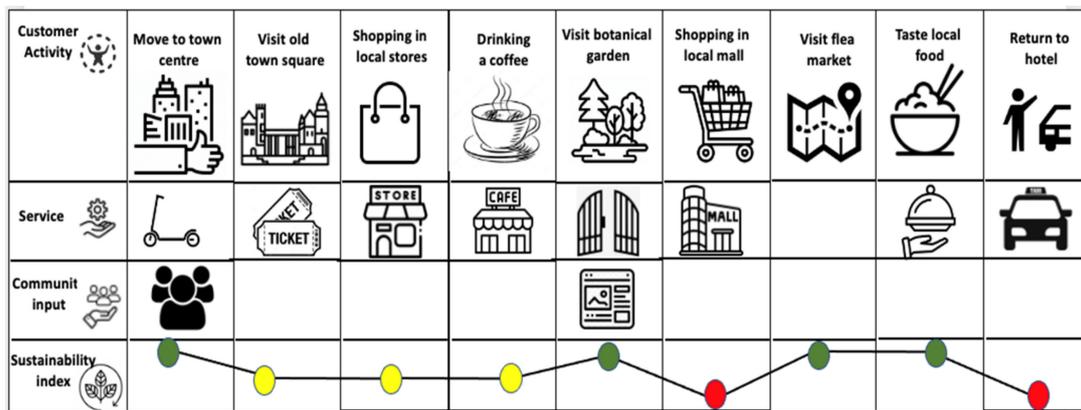


Figure 3. The sustainable tourist journey—concise and visual version.

6. Technologies for The Design of Sustainable Tourist Practices

The decision for sustainable tourist practices requires, most of all, providing information for the available options for sustainable practices. The management of information is the key function of information systems, and most types of tourist information systems (for instance, destination management systems, travel planning systems, recommendation systems, and social media applications that promote special interests related to sustainable tourism) aim to provide information in order to support tourists in their decision making. There is also a variety of web and mobile applications that provide information and recommendations for sustainable tourism practices, such as services that support the sharing economy with locals with regard to various aspects of the daily practices (accommodation, transportation, food, social interaction, etc.), or translation services that help tourists visit local foreign communities, etc. Decisions for sustainable tourism at the firm level require that accommodation providers communicate their initiatives, such as their green policy, the measures for saving energy and water resources, the local food, and the local events they organize. In general, sustainable practices should be indicated and promoted in order to be noticed and adopted by tourists. Beyond providing information and recommendations, the development of sustainable tourism could be favored also by persuasive technologies [71] and behavior change support systems [72] that aim to change the attitudes and behavior of users through persuasion. Such approaches have been applied to tourism [73]. Such systems provide information in a structured way to persuade tourists to accept and adopt sustainability in their practices and provide feedback for the reinforcement of the emerging sustainable attitudes.

As regards the planning and arrangement of tourist practices, travel planning applications are quite popular, and their functionality is quite mature today. Some applications provide comprehensive solutions for travel planning and arrangements, while others focus on certain aspects, such as making and organizing reservations, making itineraries by organizing and scheduling the daily activities, keeping notes and content for the experiences gained, collaborating and sharing itineraries and experiences with friends, writing diaries and travel guides, and budgeting and tracking travel expenses. The development of sustainable tourism requires recommendations for sustainable alternative options and complementary sustainable practices and services (e.g., the participation in a local food event can be supplemented by the provision of local food cooking classes, a visit to a village that is known for local food specialties, or a visit to a local food producer). It is important to visualize the practices of tourists, not only in order to make them more appealing, but basically to support their management, review, and evaluation.

Travel planning applications suffer from a serious shortcoming, as they fail to recognize and include practices that are unplanned, unbooked, and introduced spontaneously in the lifeworld of tourists. The improvement of lifelogging technologies today, with the significant advances in wearable sensors, networking capabilities, and storage capacity, can provide insights for the development of information systems that capture tourist practices

as they happen in their lifeworld. Lifelogging technologies enable recording content (video, images, and sound) and contextual information (locations, physical conditions, and social information, such as who else participated) for every activity and every event tourists experience [74,75]. In the most typical case, users wear a camera or another similar device (for instance, devices such as Google Glasses) that captures all their life activities. Lifelogging can have a great impact on tourism, as it can be used for recollecting, reviewing, and reflecting on tourist experiences. Especially for sustainable tourism, lifelogging can support the reviewing of past behaviors and the evacuation of alternative, sustainable options. In general, lifelogging can provide several insights for the development of future systems that capture the practices and the experiences of the users as they happen in the lifeworld of the people.

Tourist practices are widely embedded with services and/or community input. The integration of services and community input in tourist practices needs to be facilitated by technologies, not only for the sake and the convenience of tourists, but also for understanding the role of services and community input in human practices and for the design of improved services. Today, several digital mega-platforms, such as Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook, accommodate services from various tourism providers and, more importantly, provide opportunities for single sign-on methods to the services provided by different providers. At the moment, user facilitation remains at the access of different services, while the true integration of services is minimal. Future development would require drawing attention to the integration of a variety of services from different providers, seamlessly, and the examination of how they are embedded in the life practices.

With regard to the evaluation of tourist-experience design, service-design research employs a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods (interviews, case studies, ethnographic research, etc.). Even though some of them require arduous efforts to be implemented, they are extremely useful in order to gain a better understanding of the tourist point of view in service use. Digital technologies can provide additional and more effective methods for the identification of service-use patterns at individual and collective levels. For instance, tracking technologies can capture user behavior in digital environments, as well as a variety of data about the user, the contextual parameters, and the timeline of service use. Data analytics technologies enable the observation and measurement of human behavior, which can allow the analysis, modeling, and experimentation with human behaviors, reveal behavioral patterns, and support a dynamic adaptation of service provision. User-profiling tools automatically capture the interest, contextual parameters, and past behavior of the user or similar users in order to personalize service experience. All these technologies can provide a basis for the development of tools that support the understanding of the way that people use services and create value in their life practices.

7. Discussion

The paper proposes a practice-based approach for the description of sustainable tourism behavior as a set of practices that tourists perform when they travel and enjoy vacations. The concept of practice, which includes both what people think, feel, and decide about a situation and the activities they perform in order to achieve their goals, has exercised important impact and inspired the development of customer-centric approaches in service research [12,13,65]. Practices form the basis for the way that people live their lives [9]; therefore, we suggest that tourist practices form the basis for the development of tourist perceptions, behaviors, and experiences. The paper defines the concept of tourist practice, delineates its structure, and provides a framework for the description of tourist practices. The proposed approach is quite novel in the literature and the paper provides several research implications, as well as practical and policy implications, that are discussed next.

The proposed practice-based view is particularly relevant for the understanding and development of sustainable tourism. As practices are socially recognized forms of activities organized around a shared understanding of an issue [65], we suggest that sustainable tourism refers to tourist practices that are compatible with the concept and the norms of

sustainability. Sustainability, thus, is a way of thinking, deciding, and performing tourist behaviors. In addition, sustainability is an option for tourists, as there are sustainable and unsustainable ways of implementing practices, and it can be seen as a quality of tourist practices that characterizes them to different extents (i.e., there are more- or less-sustainable tourist practices). Hence, sustainability can be inspired, learned, and developed as a behavior that tourists choose when they perform their practices.

This paper proposes the sustainable tourist journey as a method for the analysis and the design of sustainable tourist practices. The sustainable tourist journey employs the form and the general designing approach of the customer journey but builds on the new concept of the consumer journey [10] as a holistic approach that transcends the boundaries of the particular organizations that interact with and support tourists in their practices and describes the way that people/tourists pursue the achievement of their life/travel goals. The sustainable tourist journey depicts the series of tourist practices that take place as tourists shape their travel experiences and describes their sustainability capacity, as well as other characteristics.

7.1. Research Implications

This paper supports the understanding of tourism and sustainable tourism as human practices and promotes the development of practice-based research in the field. The tourist practice is a comprehensive concept that can provide several insights for research. It expands beyond action, what is seen in tourists' behavior, to also include what tourists are thinking and planning in some particular context and situation that is relevant to their travel experiences. Hence, research in tourism, and especially in sustainable tourism, should not stay at the surface of tourist behavior, but dig into the underlying motivation, beliefs, and attitudes of tourists. In addition, research should pay attention to the context of tourist practices, including the physical and the social context. Importantly, the tourist practice is inherently tourist-oriented and supports the development of customer-centric approaches in tourism research that emphasize the activities and the goals of tourists, rather than of tourist service providers.

Sustainability in tourist practices is defined as a behavior and a state of mind, with tourists accepting the general principles of sustainability and deciding to act accordingly. In addition, sustainability is recognized as a horizontal quality of all tourist practices, in the sense that all practices are or can be sustainable to a greater or lesser extent. Therefore, sustainability of tourist practices needs to be determined and measured (i.e., what constitutes sustainable tourism practice, what is a more- or less-sustainable tourism practice, etc.).

The proposed conceptualization of the structure of tourist practices as consisting of tourist's activities, services, and community input has several research implications. With regard to service research, it can support the better understanding of the role of services in tourist practices and the creation of service value, as well as the development of practice-based and customer-centric approaches in the study of tourism. Services are seen as an integral element of tourist practices that are always related to the activities of the tourist. In the imaginary scenario we used for the demonstration of the sustainable tourist journey, almost all the tourist practices included the service element. Hence, services can be better understood when they are studied in the frame of tourist practices and in relationship to them. The development of practice-based approaches for service research places the research interest on the practice itself, the way it is implemented, and the outcomes it brings. In addition, the approaches support the analysis of the relationship between the practices, particularly the worldviews, the intentions, the actions of the customer, and services, and requires the development of a holistic understanding of the customer's life, idiosyncrasy, context, and experiences. Regarding the creation of value, the embeddedness services in tourist practices can explain the concept of value cocreation, which is a core concept in the service literature, as well as several concepts of SD logic [52], such as that service value is always cocreated with the customer and is determined phenomenologically by the customer.

The proposed conceptualization of tourist practices also highlights the important role of the communities, as local communities or communities of tourists and peers that operate on the physical world or in online social networks, in tourist practices. Communities provide valuable input in tourist practices that support decision making and the implementation of tourist activities. Especially for sustainable tourism, research can investigate the role of communities in the adoption of sustainable tourism practices and the interconnection between services and the support of tourists' sustainable plans.

The sustainable tourist journey is an approach for the analysis and design of tourist practices. It draws attention to the way tourists conceive, decide on, arrange, and implement their practices and suggests that the design of tourist practices is a planning procedure for future sustainable travel plans. It adopts the design approach of the customer journey; however, it refers to the practices that are performed in the lifeworld of tourists, rather than to the services or the experiences that are created in the interaction with service providers, as happens in the customer journey. Thus, the sustainable tourist journey provides an expanded view on tourist-experience design that goes beyond the interaction with particular service providers and depicts the total tourist experience as it is created through all the choices, activities, and interactions of the tourist. At this point, the sustainable tourist journey adopts the principles of the new concept of the consumer journey [10] as a holistic approach on customer-experience design and advances the research in this emerging topic with the provision of a particular method for the analysis and design of tourist practices.

7.2. Practical Implications

This paper contributes to the better understanding of tourist practices as attitudes and behaviors that include tourist activities, external services, and community input. It defines the concept of tourist practice, delineates its structure, and provides a framework for the description of tourist practices. In addition, the paper contributes to the better understanding of sustainable tourism and the characteristics of sustainable tourism practices. It describes sustainable tourism practices as the shared understanding of what constitutes sustainable tourist behavior, followed by the adoption of sustainable decisions and activities during traveling and vacations, and suggests that the development of sustainability in tourism is the result of the adoption of sustainable tourist practices. It recognizes sustainability as a quality of tourist practices, meaning that all the practices can be sustainable to some extent. In sum, the paper provides a comprehensive conceptual framework for the analysis of tourist practices and the understanding of the requirements of the development of sustainable tourism.

The sustainable tourist journey is a method for the analysis and design of tourist practices that provides practical implications. It can be used for the analysis of past practices and the interpretation of sustainable tourist behavior, as well as for the design of future tourist practices, that can support the development of sustainable tourism behavior by tourists. When it is used as a design tool, it highlights how tourists can be facilitated and supported in the adoption of sustainable practices, for instance, by promoting sustainable tourism options, motivating tourists to adopt them, and facilitating the integration of sustainable service alternatives in tourist practices. The use of the sustainable tourist journey as a design tool can support the development of sustainable tourism behavior because it portrays the plan for tourist practices, exposes the needs and the goals of tourists, and provides opportunities for motivation, promotion of sustainable practices, and integration of sustainable services. The sustainable tourist journey can bridge, thus, the gap between what tourists plan and how they implement their plans.

The sustainable tourist journey provides the tourist's perspective and the "big picture" on the series of tourist practices that are implemented during a travel or vacation. It zooms out to the total experiences of tourists that are developed during travel or vacation and it can provide valuable information for the worldview, preferences, and objectives of tourists. The customer journey can be used supplementarily to the sustainable tourist journey, when it is necessary, in order to zoom in on the particular interaction between tourists and service

providers and support the analysis and design of the experiences that derive from particular service offerings.

This paper suggests the design of sustainable tourist practices and includes three phases: (a) the decision for the adoption of sustainable tourist practices, (b) the planning and arrangement of tourist practices in the lifeworld of tourists, and (c) the integration of services and community input in the implementation of tourist practices. Tourism management should support all the three phases with different instruments, such as the development of awareness and motivation for the decision of sustainable tourism practices, the support of the configuration of practices and the integration of services and community input in the planning phase, and the support of tourists in the implementation and the monitoring of their tourist plan.

This paper discusses the role of digital technologies in the adoption of sustainable practices and highlights the importance of technologies in the three phases of the design of sustainable tourist practices. Persuasion technologies can support the decision phase for sustainable tourist practices. Online tracking technologies and lifelogging technologies that capture people's life practices as they happen can be very useful for the analysis and the understanding of tourist practices and they can provide rich data for the analysis of behaviors and the recognition of behavioral patterns. Federated platforms of services and single sign-on methods can support the configuration of practices and the integration of services and community input in tourist practices. Notice that the application of these and similar technologies can cause issues related to the management of personal data and requires cautious administration.

7.3. Policy Implications

The development of sustainable tourism is manifested in tourist practices, but it is rooted in tourists' minds and needs to be cultivated with the appropriate information, feedback, and incentives. Hence, sustainable tourism should be developed firstly as an attitude in the mind of tourists in order to be manifested later in their choices and behavior. It is important to communicate and promote sustainable tourist practices in order to make tourists aware and educate them, as well as facilitate their adoption of these practices. Additionally, it is helpful to determine the "sustainability level" of the various tourist practices in order to motivate tourists to adopt the more-sustainable ones.

The conceptualization of tourist practices suggests that sustainable tourism needs to be supported by sustainable policies and services provided by tourist organizations and firms, as well as by the positive contribution from communities. This paper highlights the importance of the integration of services and community input in tourist practices. Tourism management should pay attention to all three elements of the tourist practice; it should support tourists in planning and performing their activities, as well as integrate services and community input in their practices. The integration of services in human practices reveals how people are using services in their lifeworld and what they are doing with services, as well as what is the benefit they receive from services and the value they create. This is critical information for the design and development of improved services that better address the needs and requirements of the users.

The paper advocates the development of a holistic approach that regards sustainable tourist behavior on the totality of tourist practices. Such an approach can help tourist organizations and service providers see beyond their direct relationship and interaction with tourists. Widening the scope of tourist behavior, as well as adopting the customer point of view on sustainable tourism, can provide several new insights and approaches for the development of sustainable tourism.

7.4. Research Limitations and Future Research Plans

This paper provides a novel conceptual framework for the development of sustainable tourism and the design of sustainable tourism practices. The major limitation of this work is related to its conceptual nature. The paper provides several examples that clarify the

concepts, as well as a comprehensive scenario that demonstrates the sustainable tourist journey. However, the paper provides limited empirical evidence, and the research needs to be further validated in practice.

Future research priorities should exploit the research contributions and lessen the limitations of current research. The proposed approach on the design of sustainable tourist practices needs to be further elaborated theoretically and evaluated empirically. Future research should improve and further evolve the major concepts, such as the concept of sustainable tourist practice and the structure of the sustainable customer journey. Related to this is the continuous cross-fertilization of the research with the latest input from the three theoretical pillars for this research, the practice theory and its applications in services, the service design and especially the consumer journey, and the customer logic as the conceptual background for customer-centric approaches in service design. Primary importance has the formulation of the sustainable tourist journey as a design method and a tool that can be disseminated and implemented in different projects for the analysis and design of sustainable tourist behavior, with input from the implementation of the customer journey, the consumer journey, and other service-design methods. Future research should also pay attention to the practical examination of the sustainable tourist journey in particular case studies and in research projects that aim at the development of sustainable tourism behavior.

8. Conclusions

The paper proposes a practice-based view for the description of sustainable tourism behavior that highlights what tourists are thinking and doing in their daily activities. Tourist practices form the basis for the development of tourist perceptions, behaviors, and experiences. The adoption of a practice-based view is important for the development of sustainable tourism and supports the inspiration of sustainable attitudes and the adoption of sustainable behaviors by tourists. The paper delineates the concept of tourist practice, describes its structure, and provides a framework for the analysis of tourist practices. It also develops the meaning of sustainability in tourist practices, recognizes sustainability as a quality of tourist practices, and proposes the sustainable customer journey as a method for the description and design of tourist practices. The paper supports the better understanding of tourist practices and the requirements for the development of sustainable tourist practices.

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