

## Abstract

### **Tourist behaviour and sustainable travel modes in coastal regions: Tackling overtourism challenges**

The rapid growth of tourism has brought significant economic benefits to many regions. However, it has also led to substantial environmental and social challenges, particularly in coastal regions with limited access and infrastructure. Overtourism is a growing concern worldwide, especially in regions with delicate ecosystems. Coastal areas experience significant tourist influxes during peak seasons, leading to congestion, pollution, and strain on local resources.

The **primary goal** of this research is to investigate the determinants behind tourists' choice of sustainable and unsustainable travel modes in coastal regions with limited infrastructure. By examining these factors, the project seeks to contribute to the theoretical framework of sustainable tourism and provide practical solutions to mitigate the negative impacts of overtourism.

The study will focus on the following key areas:

- **Identifying Tourists' Behaviour:** Analyzing patterns and trends in tourists' transport choices in coastal regions.
- **Personal and Collective Influences:** Exploring how personal norms, self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and moral decoupling affect tourists' travel behaviour.
- **Collective Action Problems:** Assessing how individual and group dynamics influence the adoption of sustainable travel modes.
- **Regulatory Measures:** Evaluating existing and potential regulations to promote sustainable travel practices.
- **Travel Mode Attributes:** Investigating how different attributes of travel modes influence tourists' preferences.

By promoting sustainable travel modes, this research aims to significantly **reduce the environmental footprint** of tourism in coastal regions. Coastal areas often host fragile ecosystems that can be severely damaged by overuse and pollution. Encouraging tourists to adopt eco-friendly travel options can help preserve these natural environments for future generations. Additionally, sustainable tourism can lead to **long-term economic benefits for local communities**. By avoiding the degradation of natural resources, regions can maintain their attractiveness as tourist destinations, ensuring continuous economic support.

Overtourism often leads to overcrowding, which can diminish the quality of life for local residents and the tourist experience. By managing tourist flows more effectively and promoting sustainable travel modes, this research aims to alleviate congestion and improve the overall **well-being of both residents and visitors**. Enhanced tourist experiences can lead to higher satisfaction and repeat visits, fostering a positive relationship between tourists and local communities. The insights gained from this project will provide evidence-based **recommendations for policymakers**. Effective regulations and initiatives can be implemented to promote sustainable travel practices, such as incentives for using public transport, development of infrastructure for non-motorized travel, and education campaigns about the environmental impacts of different travel modes. These policies can serve as models for other regions facing similar challenges.

This research will also contribute to the **theoretical framework of sustainable tourism and mobility** studies by integrating personal, social, and regulatory factors. The comprehensive analysis of travel behaviour in diverse coastal regions will enhance the understanding of the complexities of overtourism and provide a robust foundation for future studies.

The project involves conducting research in four coastal areas characterised by limited infrastructure capacity: **Amalfi Coast and Cinque Terre in Italy, and Hel Peninsula and Vistula Spit in Poland**. The projects involve netnographic analysis, a survey among 2400 respondents across all regions, 40 individual in-depth interviews with local stakeholders, and 20 service safari observations. The data will be analysed with quantitative and qualitative methods that allow for a comprehensive understanding of tourists' behaviour and impact on environment and local communities.

While the focus is on specific coastal regions in Poland and Italy, the findings of this research will have **broader implications for other destinations** facing similar challenges. The strategies and recommendations developed can be adapted and applied in various contexts worldwide, contributing to the global effort to promote sustainable tourism. In summary, this project seeks to bridge the gap between tourism demand and sustainable practices, offering a comprehensive understanding of tourist behaviour and mobility patterns in coastal regions with limited infrastructure. The insights gained will contribute to the broader goal of achieving sustainable tourism, protecting fragile coastal ecosystems, and ensuring the long-term well-being of local communities and visitors alike.