



# 20th HSSS National & International Conference Systems Approach for Innovative Entrepreneurship

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# Resilience in Tourism and Destination Branding. Case study: The city of Kalamata.

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- **Research Objectives**

- In what grade was the resilience of these stakeholders impacted during the crisis?
- To reflect on resilience of tourism stakeholders from various levels of the tourism sector, during / and after a global crisis.
- To spot past experiences that empowered the resilience of tourism stakeholders in the mentioned destination,

- To point out strategies from gained insights during / and after the crisis, that could reinforce the resilience of stakeholders in the industry.
- To identify the destination's resilience as a competitive advantage on destination branding
- How could gained insight from current crises be used to strengthen future resilience in an era
  - of uncertainty ?

## Research Questions

- To understand how the pandemic (Covid – 19) affected stakeholders in Kalamata, Messinia.
- How were tourism stakeholders in Kalamata, Messinia affected by the recent crisis (COVID -19) ?
- How did experiences from past crises prepare the envolved stakeholders of the survrey for current / upcoming crisis?
- In what grade did digital transformation contribute to handling the health crisis of 2020 ?
- In what grade does a PR & communication plan contribute to the enhancing the grade of Resilience in the mentioned destination ?

*It's not the strongest of the species that survive nor the most intelligent, but those who are more responsive to change." ~ Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882)*

## Theoretical approach of the term Resilience

- «Resilience is a multidimensional concept used to explain how systems and people manage uncertainty and stress factors»

Lee, A. V., Vargo, J., & Seville, E. (2013). Developing a Tool to Measure and Compare Organizations' Resilience. *Natural Hazards Review*, 14(1), 29-41. doi:10.1061/(asce)nh.1527-6996.0000075

- The term dates back to the late 16th and early 17th centuries, and derives from the Latin word *resilio*, meaning “bounce back”

Klein, R. J., Nicholls, R. J., & Thomalla, F. (2003). Resilience to natural hazards: How useful is this concept?

“Resilience Theory has been developed in a wide dynamic and exciting field of study, addressing individuals, families, communities, workplaces and policies, since there are not many areas of life that Resistance Theory has not embraced in any way.”

Van Breda, A. D. (2001). Resilience Theory: A literature review. Pretoria, South Africa: South African Military, in Academia, Report No: MPI/R/104/12/1/4, dd October 2001

## «Resilience»:

«Regardless of differences in definition, the term is still widely used by many researchers and has been highlighted as an essential tool for capturing how systems and people cope with anticipated and unexpected change»

Amore, A., Prayag, G., & Hall, C. M. (2018). Conceptualizing Destination Resilience From a Multilevel Perspective. *Tourism Review International*, 22(3), 235-250. doi:10.3727/154427218x15369305779010

- «In ecology, resilience is used to describe the degree to which a system can absorb a shock or disorder and regain stability»

Holling, C. S. (1973). Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 4(1), 1-23. doi:10.1146/annurev.es.04.110173.000245

- «It is widely used by many researchers and has been highlighted as an essential tool for capturing how systems and people cope with anticipated and unexpected change».

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- «It was first used before the 1960s in engineering and materials sciences. The concept was then adapted and used in ecological and environmental science in the 1980s and appeared in social sciences in the early 2000s».

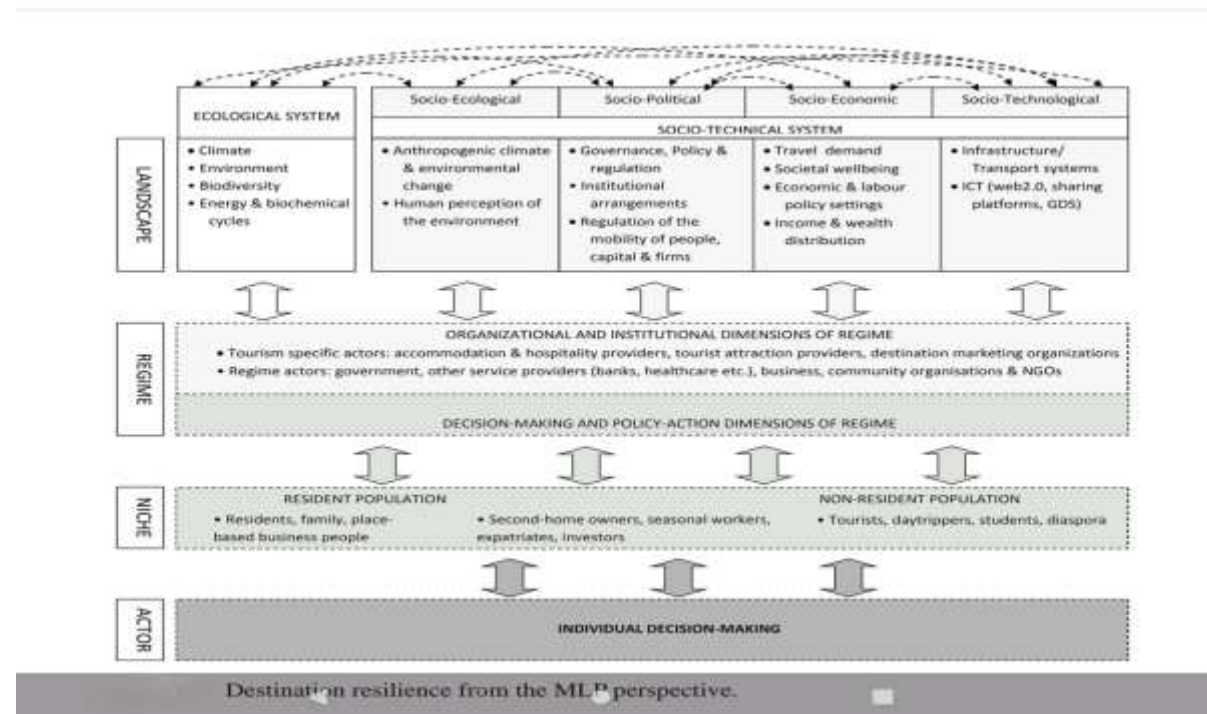
Hall, C. M. (2018). Resilience theory and tourism. *Resilient Destinations and Tourism*, 34-47. doi:10.4324/9781315162157-3

*Destination Resilience from*

*MLP perspective.*

*Adapted from*

*Hall et al. 2018*





ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ  
ΑΝΟΙΚΤΟ  
ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ

*«Resilience (Resilience) in the tourism sector has encouraged the formulation and implementation of strategies to create new attitudes in times of crisis, as crises and disasters, as well as disaster response, could be considered key issues because of the frequency and scale of these events over the past two years.»*

Della Corte V. ; Del Gaudio G. ; Sepe F. ; Luongo S. in Destination Resilience and Innovation for Advanced Sustainable Tourism Management: A Bibliometric Analysis, Department of Economics, Management, Institution, University of Naples Federico II, Sustainability 2021, 13(22), 12632;  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su132212632>

- Having clarified the conceptual framework of the term of Resilience, based on the research of the Della Corte et al. (2021), two more relevant researches, concerning the concept of Resilience, as well as the further implementation of Resilience Theory and contributed as a guideline to the present MSc Thesis, are the ones of:
  1. The research of **Fie Broker-Bulling (2020)** by the University of Upsala, Sweden, entitled **“Analyzing the Resilience of tourism stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic: A case study of Bend, Oregon”**
    - Broker - Bulling (2020) explores the extent to which the different stakeholders (Stakeholders) of the local tourism industry were affected, as well as their levels of Resilience during the Covid-19 pandemic, concluding in a more general view that the COVID-19 pandemic in its assessment provided the wider scientific and academic community with a wide range of knowledge and topics to explore (Broker - Bulling, 2020).

2. The Research Paper of **Gerolemos Demokritos**, from the Department of Spatial Planning and Development Engineering, of the Polytechnic School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, entitled: "Spatial Resilience". Elaborated in September 2018, it explores various historical and theoretical approaches to the term "Resilience", focusing mainly on its spatial dimension (Gerolemu, 2018).
- **Gerolemou (2018)** explores further the assessment of the site's durability made after a disturbance has ended, relating to the way the area-specific resistance was managed, how well-prepared the site was, and how quickly it managed to recover after the disorder ended. The research question of Gerolemos D. (2018) is whether a place / system can be aware in advance - that is before the "invasion" of a disorder-, its degree of Resilience (Gerolemos 2018).

- In general terms, the tourism literature related to destination resilience emphasizes a destination's ability to
  - ❑ adapt,
  - ❑ Learn
  - ❑ self-organize after disasters.
- Specifically, the thorough research on destination resilience has demonstrated that, as destinations are varied in structure and resources as well as in the extent of disastrous events, **the speed at which destinations recover depends on their capacity to adapt to the external turbulence**

*(Filimonau, V. De Coteau, D. 2020, as cited in Della Corte et al. 2021).*

## Case study:

### *The city of Kalamata, Messinia, Greece*

- Primary data collected through semi-structured interviews with tourism managers, entrepreneurs, stakeholders and visitors,
- secondary data was sourced from international bibliography and academic journals related to tourism recovery efforts.
- interviews, except from 2 were conducted via email, due to lack of time from the interviewees side, which did not give further the possibility of interpreting the body language of the participants

## Methodology

- Primary & Secondary Research
- Qualitative research in the form of
  - personal interviews
  - Interviews in semi - structured interviews format with questions
- Drawing on personal experience of the stakeholders, businesses and interested parties (stakeholders) interviewed in the tourism sector (belief survey).

## Sample

- Total interviewees sample: 9 people (The questionnaire was sent to businesses, organizations, tourism professionals and visitors to the city of Kalamata and was answered by 9 out of 13 respondents, which gives 70 % of the interviewees.)
- Feasibility sampling (the selection of the sample of certain groups of population, in order to explore perceptions)

“Opportunities multiply as they are seized.” ~ Sun Tzu (544 BC – 496 BC)

Issues related to Resilience Theory and indicated in the presented research :

- **«uncertainty»**
- **«adaptability»**
- **«preparation and planing»**
- **«Communication and Collaborationασία»**
- **«Synergies»**
- **«Roles and Responsibilities»**
- **«Previous and current knowledge»**

- None of the interested parties could anticipate a threat of magnitude of the 2020 pandemic, or a crisis of a similar scale.
- In times of uncertainty, the concept of innovation is considered to be an additional indicator of Resilience.
- Highlighting the importance & contribution of digital transformation in times of crisis.

- Partnerships and synergies will benefit stakeholders in the process of recovering from a crisis or disaster. Some of the interested parties tried to survive during the crisis
- while others began to thrive in the midst of crisis conditions.
- Acquired knowledge to address future crises and further improve various structures to enhance the stakeholder Resilience profile.

### Resilience Theory when determining the ability of systems to deal with large-scale long-term crises:

- Some of the participants in the survey were strongly affected and had to step up their efforts and actions, while others were able to perform swift actions, which allowed them to absorb the shocks of the 2020 health crisis.
- Organizations and businesses, respectively, were able to continue their operations, but most of them continued their activity in the context of an adverse and often suffocating external environment.
- The concept of uncertainty, a common variable in the conducted survey
- In this context the above survey could be used as a tool to help stakeholders critically reflect and identify their own resilience , but not as total representation of how COVID-19 and other crises of our era have impacted all stakeholders in the tourism industry.

### **From the survey could be concluded following:**

- Destinations are now called upon to safeguard the concept of sustainability as they recover from the past health crisis of 2020, while preserving sustainability in a destination, enhances its resilience (Hall et al., 2018). As the future is nowadays is foreshadowed by more and more crises and disasters, operators and stakeholders in Tourism have to take these crises into account, as the effects of these changes will still be evident, while COVID-19 2020 is only one of them.
- The tourism industry is going to continue to be severely impacted by these crises, and tourism researchers could use these situations as an opportunity to gain insight, into how the industry could strengthen their resilience to crises and disasters of this scale, developing further resilient tourist products based on local resources and competences (Traskevich A., Fontanari M. 2021).
- Resilience of a destination can make a significant contribution to its distinction and differentiation from others (Competitive advantage), developing furthermore resilient tourism products based on local resources and the dynamics of a tourist destination (Traskevich A., Fontanari M. 2021).

## Conclusions

*“ We must be willing to let go of the life we planned,  
so as to have the life that is waiting for us.”*

*~ Joseph Campbell (1904 – 1987)*

- The recent crisis of COVID-19 has impacted every tourism stakeholder that has been interviewed in this research. The impacts and consequences vary by participant, as do their coping mechanisms.
- The Theory of Resilience enabled the presented research to observe how stakeholders coped, and how come, some stakeholders managed better than others.
- Considering the transferability of resilience theory to social sciences, the theory was able to provide this research with useful insight, into how tourism stakeholders cope with a crisis of this scale.
- It could be concluded, that, in order to develop sustainable and functional tourism, there should be a plan in principle, which is long-term and not only aims at the numerical increase of tourists and the possible ephemeral increase in profitability.
- Future research, therefore, could highlight - among others - the influence of the factor of uncertainty on operators and interested parties of tourism, taking into account the concept of Resilience at the level of communities and societies.

- Contributing to the growing field of tourism resilience, future research could also relate to presenting practical toolkits that align with the dynamic nature of the industry, such as further research related to how Design Thinking tools – a human-centered, problem-solving approach – can enhance resilience in the tourism sector.
- By leveraging Design Thinking tools, such as empathy mapping, ideation, and prototyping (Liedtka et al. 2014), tourism stakeholders could probably better adapt to evolving circumstances and rebuild more sustainably, contributing to tourism planning and management, so that they can further develop adaptive strategies that foster innovation and sustainability.



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