



Publisher: Scientific-Professional Society for Disaster Risk Management

International Journal of Disaster Risk Management



Article

Domestic Hiking Tourism for Post-COVID Recovery and Transformation

Kebrabe Matewos^{1*}

¹ Ambo University, Woliso Campus, Oromia Region, Ethiopia; kebrabematewos@gmail.com.

* Correspondence: kebrabematewos@gmail.com; tel.: +251-961124591

Received: 20 March 2025; Revised: 5 May 2025; Accepted: 15 May 2025; Published: 30 June 2025.

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly disrupted global tourism, necessitating adaptive recovery strategies. This study explores the role of domestic hiking tourism in Ethiopia as a resilience mechanism for post-pandemic recovery and transformation. Using a qualitative case study approach, interviews were conducted with 16 hiking organisers in Addis Ababa to assess the factors contributing to the growth of hiking tourism, the challenges faced during the pandemic, and its potential as a catalyst for tourism recovery. Findings indicate that shifting travel preferences, increased health awareness, the influence of digital media, and emerging government initiatives have fueled the rise of hiking tourism. However, regulatory gaps, enforcement of health protocols, and political instability remain key challenges. Despite these obstacles, domestic hiking tourism has played a crucial role in revitalising the tourism industry, fostering community engagement, and promoting local economic development. This study highlights the importance of policy support, infrastructure investment, and regulatory frameworks in sustaining Ethiopia's growing hiking tourism sector as a long-term recovery strategy.

KEYWORDS

COVID-19; domestic hiking tourism; post-COVID recovery; tourism resilience.

1. Introduction

The outbreak of the lethal COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the global health sector, leading to widespread socio-economic crises (Arbulú, Razumova, Rey-Maquieira, & Sastre, 2021). Among the hardest-hit sectors, tourism suffered severely due to travel bans, curfews, a sharp decline in demand, and restrictions on people's movement (Sharma, Thomas, & Paul, 2021; Pasquinelli & Trunfio, 2021). Despite ongoing challenges, various measures were implemented to address the crisis and facilitate recovery. However, the pandemic significantly altered people's perceptions of lifestyles, underscoring the need for resilience and transformative efforts to ensure sustainability and operational continuity across multiple sectors, including tourism (Noorashid & Chin, 2022).

Matewos, K. (2025). Domestic Hiking Tourism for Post-COVID Recovery and Transformation. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Management*, 7(1), 283–300.



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors.

Prior research has highlighted that crises and disasters can create opportunities to reshape the tourism industry by promoting resilience and sustainable recovery strategies (Faulkner, 2001; Faulkner & Vikulov, 2001; Scott, Laws, & Prideaux, 2008; Manojlovic et al., 2025; Cvetkovic et al., 2022; Port & Jawahar, 2024; Sheikh, 2024). More recently, studies have extensively examined the effects of the pandemic and the opportunities it presents for the tourism sector. However, it is essential to note that much of this research is grounded in Western perspectives (Arbulú et al., 2021). To date, few studies have attempted to conduct research in developing countries, notably in an African context, on the pandemic's impact and implications for building a resilient tourism industry (Soliku, Kyiire, Mahama, & Kubio, 2021; Salem, Elbaz, Elkhwesky, & Ghazi, 2021). For instance, Soliku et al. (2021) analysed the pandemic's effects on resilience in Ghana's eco-tourism sector, while Salem et al. (2021) examined government initiatives to mitigate the pandemic's impact on Egypt's hotel industry.

Despite the rapid growth of hiking tourism, no research has specifically explored its role in Ethiopia's tourism recovery during and after the pandemic. Consequently, this study aims to bridge that gap by employing a case study approach that focuses on multiple travel clubs and hiking organisers in Addis Ababa. It examines how the pandemic influenced the rise and expansion of hiking tourism. Based on this understanding, the study addresses three main research questions: (1) What factors contributed to the development of hiking tourism in Ethiopia? (2) What challenges did hiking organisers face during the pandemic, and how were they overcome? (3) How can hiking tourism serve as a catalyst for tourism recovery and transformation in the post-pandemic era? The study thus develops a conceptual framework of crisis as an opportunity to rethink, reset, and redefine tourism in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. The study, therefore, adds new knowledge and insights into the use of crisis and disaster as opportunities for the recovery and transformation of the tourism industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Hiking

Hiking, recognised globally by various terms such as bushwalking, trekking, tramping, or simply walking, involves travelling on foot through natural landscapes, often with supplies and equipment and can range from a few hours to days or even weeks, on or off-trail (Buckley, 2006). Recently, hiking has gained recognition as a cost-effective travel option and a tool for enhancing both physical and mental well-being. The benefits of hiking are evident in the positive emotional responses of participants, including feelings of joy, happiness, and psychological improvement after the hike. These mental and physical enhancements align with the wellness benefits that hiking tourism provides, making it increasingly popular worldwide (Bichler & Peters, 2020).

While hiking is a popular leisure activity in many Western countries, its definition can vary according to regional and cultural perspectives. For example, in Spain, Gomez-Martin (2019) defines hiking as "an activity that involves following paths, which may or may not be signposted, on foot, for sporting and cultural purposes" (p.1). In Norway, hiking is often associated with leisurely trips on foot during the summer and cross-country skiing in winter (Svarstad, 2010). In New Zealand, it is described as a long, vigorous walk (Nordbo & Prebensen, 2015). Similarly, in Malaysia, hiking is a form of outdoor recreation that emphasises both physical and mental fitness (Nordin & Jamal, 2021).

Several studies have highlighted the various benefits of hiking, particularly its connection to wellness tourism and health improvement (Lee, Manthiou, Chiang, & Tang, 2017). For instance, Nordbo and Prebensen (2015) emphasise how hiking enhances physical and mental fitness. In Israel, hiking plays a crucial role in promoting emotional attachment to the country, as well as fostering national and political revival (Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2016).

2.2. Hiking Tourism in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the tourism industry has been severely affected by the pandemic. Main tourism entities, including tour operators, travel agents, car hire companies, accommodations, and attraction providers, were among the most impacted (UN, 2020). Following the first reported case of COVID-19 on March 13, 2020, Ethiopia enforced travel restrictions, social distancing measures, and isolation protocols (Harris et al., 2021). Although the country did not close its airports, tourist destination sites were shut down to curb the spread of the virus (Abegaz, Beyene, & Emiru, 2020). These measures resulted in a 69% decline in international tourism (MoT, 2020). However, on September 23, 2020, Ethiopia reopened its tourism industry, allowing fully vaccinated tourists to return after a six-month closure (Kucheran, 2020).

As public health concerns limited international travel, Ethiopian domestic tourism, specifically nature-based tourism such as hiking, gained renewed interest. This shift in demand and a change in tourist behaviour presents a valuable opportunity to examine how hiking tourism can contribute to post-pandemic recovery and long-term transformation in Ethiopia's tourism landscape. This aligns with Faulkner's (2001) assertion that crises and disasters can serve as catalysts for positive change, stimulating innovation, market recognition, product repositioning, and the emergence of new business opportunities.

Domestic hiking tourism in Ethiopia is a relatively new development in the country's tourism industry. In the inbound tourism market, hiking is often regarded as trekking or walking to renowned destinations such as the Simien, Bale, and Abune Yoseph mountains, typically organised as multi-day excursions by inbound tour operators. In the domestic travel market, however, hiking is primarily a recreational outdoor activity arranged by travel clubs and independent organisers, providing an escape from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Addis Hiking Group was founded by gym trainer Biniam Shirfo and his companions. They began organising hikes from Addis Ababa to the Sululta Highlands and the Gullele Botanical Garden Mountains, which surround the capital city (Tigabu, 2016). This group was likely among the first to promote hiking as a tourism-related business activity to the general public. Their trips aimed to visit the scenic landscapes surrounding Addis Ababa while encouraging connections among adventure enthusiasts.

Today, numerous hiking groups and individuals organise public hiking tours with scheduled departure dates, primarily on weekends, including Saturdays and Sundays. These tours vary from single-day hikes to short excursions. Popular domestic hiking destinations include Wonchi, Debre Libanos, Yerer Mountains, Gemesa Gedel, Menagesha Suba Forest, Ensaro, Chebera Churchura, and Bale Mountains National Park, among other natural attractions. These destinations provide diverse landscapes, rich biodiversity, and cultural heritage, making hiking a growing segment in Ethiopia's tourism sector.

2.3. Hiking Tourism amid COVID-19

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments worldwide have implemented travel bans, curfews, and movement restrictions (Ioannides & Gyimóthy, 2020). Most countries closed their borders to foreign tourists to curb the spread of the virus, resulting in significant disruptions to global travel and tourism. This, in turn, created socio-economic challenges and negatively impacted both health and mental well-being (Abbas, Mubeen, Iorember, Raza, & Mamirkulova, 2021; Ugur & Akbıyık, 2020).

Undoubtedly, the pandemic has had a significant impact on reshaping customer behaviour and travel intentions. For instance, it has altered consumer behaviours, attitudes, and decision-making processes, forcing tourism stakeholders to adapt to the new normal. As Pasquinelli and Trunfio (2021) have expressed, COVID-19 has had a profound impact on post-pandemic travel behaviour and attitudes. Similarly, Toubes, Araújo Vila, and Fraiz Brea (2021) observed shifts in tourist consumption behaviour in Spain as travellers adjusted to the new normal. In the same context, Luo and

Lam (2020) also identified changes in mobility intentions and psychological attitudes among Hong Kong travellers. Likewise, Im, Kim, and Choeh (2021) documented a swift shift in Korean behaviours, leading to increased risk aversion.

Likewise, recent studies (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021; Chan, 2021) have demonstrated that COVID-19 has significantly altered the patterns of tourism demand and supply. As a result, understanding tourist behaviour during and after crises such as COVID-19 is crucial for effective destination recovery planning (Golets, Farias, Pilati, & Costa, 2021). This necessitates research into changes in tourist behaviour and preferences to develop effective strategies for the sector's survival. Furthermore, during these crisis times, it is essential to formulate recovery and resilience strategies for post-pandemic tourism development while also strengthening socio-economic linkages with other sectors (Kampel, 2020).

Parallel to these findings, the literature suggests that considerable efforts have been made to mitigate the pandemic's impacts by fostering an adaptive and resilient tourism industry. For example, Abbas et al. (2021) highlighted the renovation of tourism infrastructure, improving staff quality, and embracing digital technology as crucial strategies for recovery. Similarly, Assaf and Scuderi (2020) emphasised several recommended actions for both the tourism industry and governments to mitigate economic losses during the pandemic. Their joint analysis suggested strategies such as market diversification, technological innovation, funding for tourism promotion, and the easing of visa regulations.

In the same vein, many scholars and organisations have highlighted domestic tourism as a potential beacon of hope and a catalyst for the recovery of the tourism sector (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021; Abbas et al., 2021; Persson-Fischer & Liu). Emerging studies also indicate that policies are increasingly focused on promoting domestic tourism, with expectations that domestic and regional tourism will recover before international tourism (WTO, 2020; Arbulú et al., 2021; Noorashid & Chin, 2022). Therefore, understanding domestic travel is crucial for the sector's recovery. In times of crisis and disaster, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic tourism plays a crucial role in the recovery of the tourism sector (World Tourism Organisation, 2020). Unlike other forms of tourism, domestic tourism contributes to regional economic development, preserves jobs, sustains livelihoods, and offsets the decline in international tourist arrivals caused by crises and disasters.

Although domestic tourism in Ethiopia has traditionally been centred around religious pilgrimages, its growth in the leisure and adventure tourism sectors has been limited. This can be attributed to a general lack of enthusiasm for travel and exploration (Bayih & Singh, 2020). The pandemic, however, has shifted people's perspectives on tourism, prompting them to reassess their attitudes towards travel. The crisis has presented an opportunity to transform travellers' behaviour and intentions towards adventure tourism. As Burnett (1998) noted, crises and disasters can lead to positive change and have a transformational effect. In this context, the rise of hiking tourism, driven by COVID-19 restrictions, is a promising example of post-pandemic tourism recovery in Ethiopia.

As suggested by Kash and Darling (1998) and Scott et al. (2008), tourism crisis recovery may require a fundamental shift in operations, the creation of new networks, adaptation to more sustainable practices, emergency preparedness, product repositioning, and the stimulation of new business opportunities. During the pandemic, tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia have faced challenges from the uncertainty associated with COVID-19. Therefore, greater resilience and transformation are necessary to revive the industry and prepare for post-pandemic development.

Consequently, this paper aims to explore how domestic hiking tourism has contributed to building resilience, transforming Ethiopia's tourism sector, and supporting recovery from the COVID-19 crisis's impacts.

2.4 Domestic Hiking Tourism for Resilience and Transformation Amid COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has shed new light on the role of tourism and its potential for redefining industry practices. This crisis presents an opportunity to adopt sustainability as a central focus

for the future of tourism development (Pasquinelli & Trunfio, 2021). In this context, tourism necessitates a resilient strategy to adapt to new global conditions, meet emerging demands, and transform the industry for sustainable growth.

Although COVID-19 has significantly impacted the tourism sector, it has also led to the promotion of outdoor activities such as hiking, trekking, and walking as a means to sustain local economies, support tourism businesses, and encourage tourism recovery (Sharm et al., 2021). The surge in outdoor leisure activities has been especially notable in developing countries, where hiking and trekking have gained popularity as safe, low-risk alternatives during the pandemic (Nordin & Jamal, 2022; Hettiarachchi & Lakmal, 2018; Narvekar & Dayanand, 2020).

In this new climate, outdoor adventure tourism has emerged as a viable option for post-pandemic recovery. It is increasingly recognised for promoting health, fitness, and well-being in natural, rural, and mountainous environments. During the pandemic, many people turned to national parks, nature reserves, and other natural destinations to escape the constraints of urban life, which further accelerated interest in nature-based tourism (CBI, 2021). Moreover, adventure tourism activities, such as hiking, are considered low-risk in terms of COVID-19 transmission and are becoming increasingly common (Wengel, 2020).

Amid these changing circumstances, domestic tourism—particularly through outdoor adventure activities—plays a significant role in addressing the decline of mass international tourism, which was heavily impacted by the pandemic. Recent research suggests that domestic and regional tourism may recover faster than international tourism (WTO, 2020; Arbulú et al., 2021). Therefore, understanding and promoting domestic hiking tourism is vital to the sector's recovery.

However, while outdoor adventure tourism has grown in popularity, challenges such as over-tourism are beginning to emerge. As restrictions ease, some hiking destinations are experiencing increased visitation, leading to overcrowding and potential environmental degradation. For instance, Mackenzie and Goodnow (2020) observed an increase in overtourism at popular hiking destinations due to pandemic-driven demand. Similarly, Nordin and Jamal (2022) identified over-tourism in Community-Based Tourism in Brunei during the pandemic. Despite these challenges, domestic hiking tourism holds strong potential to become a key driver in the recovery and transformation of the tourism industry in the post-pandemic era.

In light of these emerging trends, this paper aims to investigate how domestic hiking tourism has contributed to the recovery and transformation of Ethiopia's tourism industry, with a focus on the ways it mitigated the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.



2.5. Theoretical framework of the study

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the Resilience Theory, which offers valuable insights into crises and the responsive mechanisms necessary to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the tourism sector. Resilience Theory was first developed by Holling (1973) and has since been adapted and expanded by scholars across various disciplines, including ecology, psychology, and socio-economics. According to Pisano (2012), resilience refers to a system's capacity to absorb disturbances, adapt to change, and reorganise while maintaining its core functions. In the context of tourism, resilience involves the strategic management of crises to ensure business continuity, adaptability to diverse risks, and responsiveness to new emergencies and environmental challenges through effective mitigation strategies that engage stakeholders (Noorashid & Chin, 2021). This theoretical framework is particularly relevant to tourism, as it conceptualises recovery not merely as a return to pre-crisis conditions but as an opportunity for growth and transformation. In this study, Resilience Theory provides a foundation for analysing how Ethiopia's tourism sector has leveraged the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity for recovery and sustainable tourism development. Specifically, this study examines the promotion of domestic hiking tourism in Ethiopia through this lens, highlighting its role in fostering resilience and long-term sectoral transformation.

3. Methods

This study employed a qualitative case study approach, utilising purposive sampling to select participants. A case study is a qualitative research design that focuses on the in-depth exploration of complex phenomena within their real-life contexts. It is beneficial for understanding intricate social processes and individual experiences, allowing researchers to collect detailed data through methods such as interviews and observations (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Twenty owner-managers of hiking organisations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, were identified and interviewed due to their active roles in organising hiking tours and sustaining operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews were conducted between May and June 2022.

To gain an in-depth understanding of the factors that contributed to the rise of hiking tourism in Ethiopia during the pandemic, the study employed semi-structured interviews. These interviews focused on key themes, including the challenges faced by hiking organisers, their perceptions and experiences in mitigating the effects of COVID-19, and their strategies for adapting to the evolving tourism landscape. Given the lack of pre-existing research on hiking tourism in Ethiopia, the combination of semi-structured interviews and purposive sampling allowed for a comprehensive exploration of participants' knowledge and experiences in managing hiking tours during the crisis.

While 20 professional hiking organisers were initially recruited for the study, the final sample size was determined by the principle of data saturation—the point at which no new insights emerged (Mohajan, 2018). In this study, saturation was achieved after 16 interviews, confirming the sufficiency of the data collected. All interviews were conducted with the participants' informed consent, ensuring ethical compliance.

The transcribed interviews were analysed using inductive qualitative content analysis to identify key themes related to the role of hiking tourism in Ethiopia's post-pandemic recovery. The data were reviewed multiple times to develop initial codes, which were then organised into broader thematic categories (Mohajan, 2018). To enhance reliability, the coding framework was refined through iterative analysis and critical self-reflection. Validity was strengthened through member checking, in which selected participants were asked to confirm the accuracy of interpretations, and peer debriefing, which provided external perspectives on emerging themes. Ethical standards were rigorously upheld by assigning pseudonyms and ensuring participant confidentiality throughout the research process. Maintaining participant anonymity during data collection, analysis, and reporting is a fundamental principle in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014).

4. Results

4.1. Factors Contributing to the Growth of Hiking Tourism in Ethiopia

Hiking tourism in Ethiopia has experienced significant growth in recent years, driven by a combination of socio-economic and technological factors. Although hiking has traditionally been included in Ethiopia's adventure tourism packages for international visitors, its popularity within the domestic travel market has notably increased, especially in the post-pandemic era. This rising trend can be attributed to shifting travel preferences, growing interest in domestic tourism, heightened awareness of health and wellness, the influence of social media, and emerging government initiatives aimed at promoting tourism.

4.1.1 Changing Travel Preferences and Domestic Tourism Growth

One of the primary drivers behind the rise of hiking tourism in Ethiopia is the shift in travel preferences among both domestic and international tourists. As the global tourism industry increasingly shifts toward more sustainable and experience-based travel, activities such as hiking have gained considerable traction (CBI, 2021). Interviews with hiking organisers revealed that many travellers are now seeking nature-based experiences, adventure, and opportunities for cultural exchange, which Ethiopia's diverse tourism offerings fulfil in abundance.

The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated this shift, prompting a surge in domestic tourism. With international travel restrictions in place, many Ethiopians turned to exploring their own country, uncovering scenic trails in destinations like Wonchi-Dendi Ecotourism, Menagesha Suba Forest, and Yerer Mountain. The affordability and accessibility of hiking, compared to international travel, made it an appealing alternative. As interviewee R03 noted:

"Unlike international travel, hiking is an affordable and accessible adventure. You do not have to worry about the cost of visas, long-haul flights, or expensive hotel stays. Instead, all you need is a good pair of comfortable hiking shoes, a few essentials like water and snacks, and a sense of adventure".

4.1.2 Health and Wellness Awareness

Another significant factor contributing to the growth of hiking tourism in Ethiopia is the rising awareness of health and wellness, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis underscored the importance of physical fitness and mental well-being, prompting more individuals to seek outdoor activities as a form of recreation and self-care. As an eco-friendly and physically engaging activity, hiking gained popularity as a therapeutic way to reconnect with nature, manage stress, and maintain a healthy lifestyle. In this context, an increasing number of residents in Addis Ababa have turned to hiking as a means of escaping the city's hustle and bustle. For many, it offers a refreshing break from daily routines while contributing positively to both mental and physical well-being.

4.1.3 The Role of Social Media and Digital Platforms

Social media has significantly contributed to the rise of hiking tourism. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have emerged as powerful tools for promoting hiking activities, primarily through visually appealing content. Respondent R07 shared a compelling perspective, stating:

"We regularly share our hiking adventure experiences on Telegram, Instagram and Facebook, and the response has been impressive! The moment we post breathtaking photos of scenic trails in the Menagesha-Suba forest, the view of Wonchi Lake and mountains, and serene forests, people get inspired and immediately want to join. The stunning landscapes, combined with the joy of outdoor exploration, spark curiosity and excitement, making our hiking trips more popular than ever."

The viral nature of social media has contributed to cultivating a strong hiking culture in Ethiopia by raising awareness of the country's rich natural heritage and inspiring a broader audience to participate in outdoor excursions. This digital exposure has helped expand a growing community of hikers who value adventure, wellness, and social interaction, thereby reinforcing the role of hiking tourism in the post-pandemic recovery of the tourism sector.

4.1.4 Emerging Infrastructure Development

Despite historically limited government policies and infrastructure support, recent efforts indicate a growing recognition of tourism's importance in Ethiopia. Under the Ten-Year Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda (Planning and Development Commission, 2020), tourism has been prioritised as a key sector, prompting the launch of various destination development programs. Notably, government-led initiatives such as Dine for Sheger and Dine for Ethiopia have attracted significant investment and successfully promoted domestic travel, thereby stimulating interest in both rural and urban tourism. These shifts have contributed to the growing popularity of outdoor activities, particularly hiking, which has become a favoured weekend recreational option.

Recognising this emerging trend, the government has begun to extend more support to the tourism sector. As one interviewee (R02) remarked, the Ministry of Tourism is increasingly identifying hiking tourism as a promising niche, particularly in the context of post-pandemic recovery. This marks a notable shift in policy direction, where hiking is viewed not merely as a leisure pursuit but also as a strategic component of national tourism development and economic revitalisation.

4.2. Challenges Faced by Hiking Organizers Amid the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted the global travel and tourism industry, including Ethiopia's hiking tourism sector. Government-imposed travel restrictions halted international travel, necessitating significant adaptations within the industry (Arbulú et al., 2021; Vouloutidou et al., 2021). Even after the lifting of these restrictions at the end of September 2020, hiking organisers continued to face substantial challenges. These included enforcing health protocols, navigating an unregulated market, and dealing with the impact of political unrest, all of which hindered the sector's recovery.

4.2.1 Challenges in Enforcing Health Regulations

As domestic hiking tourism surged after pandemic-related restrictions were lifted, organisers struggled to enforce COVID-19 health and safety measures. When asked about the health regulations, the respondent indicated that ensuring compliance with mask mandates, sanitisation protocols, and social distancing proved difficult. As highlighted by Participant P09, this challenge requires immediate attention:

"We used to remind hikers to bring their face masks, carry hand sanitisers, and follow COVID-19 safety protocols. However, enforcing these measures on the trails proved to be quite challenging. With the open-air environment and the physical exertion involved, many found it difficult to keep their masks on at all times. While we did our best to promote safety and responsibility, ensuring full compliance among all participants was not always easy".

4.2.2 Unregulated Market

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tour operators and guides were required to have licenses, but hiking tourism remained an unregulated sector. The lack of proper control and oversight exacerbated the issue, as anyone could organise hikes without obtaining the necessary legal registration or licensing. This led to inconsistencies in service quality, pricing disparities, and an overall unstable market. The absence of a licensing system to uphold professionalism and service quality has allowed unqualified tourist guides and operators to enter the sector, leading to inconsistent service standards and market instability. Inadequate training among some guides led to issues related to safety, navigation, and customer service, ultimately undermining the quality of the hiking experience. Additionally, the lack of oversight made it difficult for credible operators to compete with unlicensed providers, who often offered lower-priced, subpar services. The absence of regulation thus created an uneven playing field, complicating efforts to improve the overall quality of hiking tourism

4.2.3 Impact of Political Instability

Ethiopia has experienced political instability, with the government issuing State of Emergency decrees in various parts of the country since November 2015 (Kebede, 2018). A dispute between the Federal and Tigray Regional governments escalated into a conflict on November 4, 2020. It escalated into a full-scale war, having a profound impact on the recovery of both domestic and international tourism. In response to the widespread security concerns, the government declared a six-month State of Emergency on November 2, 2021. As a result, hiking tourism was severely disrupted and brought to a halt. Although the war was primarily confined to the northern part of the country, the overall security situation discouraged travel throughout the country. As a result, some organisers postponed planned hikes to conflict-affected areas, such as Simien and Abune Yoseph Mountain, until stability was restored. Even after the state of emergency was lifted, travel demand did not immediately return to pre-war levels and took time to recover. This indicates that political crises tend to have long-lasting adverse effects, often requiring extended periods for recovery compared to other types of crises.

In response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, hiking organisers adopted various strategies to sustain their businesses. To comply with health regulations and rebuild traveller confidence, many offered smaller, private hiking tours, ensuring safer group experiences. Digital marketing

played a crucial role, with organisers leveraging social media platforms to promote hiking opportunities and reassure potential tourists about safety measures. As stated by interviewee P16, how they tackle the challenges:

"We increased our online presence by focusing on showcasing the beauty and uniqueness of local hiking spots. Through captivating photos, engaging stories, and informative posts, we showed the diverse landscapes, wildlife, and unique attractions that make these trails worth exploring. By emphasising the natural wonders right at our doorstep, we sparked curiosity and encouraged locals to explore destinations they may not have previously considered. This strategy helped us to regain the trust of local tourists gradually and encouraged more people to explore the outdoors once again."

To further adapt, many organisers diversified their services by incorporating eco-tourism and wellness-focused hikes and broadening their appeal to cater to shifting consumer preferences.

4.3. Hiking Tourism as an Opportunity for Tourism Recovery and Transformation

Crises and disasters often stimulate new demand, drive technological shifts, and challenge businesses to transform and adapt to changing conditions (Abbas et al., 2021). In this context, COVID-19 catalysed change, influencing consumer behaviour and driving up demand for outdoor adventure tourism. At the same time, it helped tourism operators recognise and respond to these evolving consumer preferences (Noorashid & Chin, 2021). In Ethiopia, this crisis has catalysed a transformation of the tourism sector, particularly by underscoring the potential of domestic hiking tourism. Based on the findings, four main recovery and transformational factors contribute to the resilience and growth of hiking tourism in Ethiopia. These factors include:

4.3.1 Hiking Tourism as a Catalyst for Recovery

Historically, crises have prompted destinations to adapt and innovate. For example, following the Asian Economic Crisis of 1997–1998, Australian tourism redirected its marketing efforts and developed new products and policies (Ritchie, 2004). Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a shift in Ethiopia from an emphasis on international tourism to a focus on domestic markets. As the pandemic restrictions eased, residents sought outdoor activities, leading to a surge in interest in local hiking opportunities. This shift is evident in the words of respondent R12, who thoughtfully reflected on this issue and explained:

"After months of isolation and partial lockdowns, locals began to take a renewed interest in hiking and other outdoor activities as a way to unwind and reconnect with nature. Many people who desired fresh air and physical activity turned to the outdoors as a safe and therapeutic escape from stress. Hiking offered them a much-needed break from the confines of home and work, allowing them to explore their surroundings, rejuvenate their mental and physical health, and rediscover the joy of nature. This shift in interest not only helped boost local tourism but also fostered a stronger sense of community, as more people embraced outdoor adventures together".

This trend aligns with findings by Haywood (2020), who noted that the pandemic significantly altered the attitudes of local populations towards domestic tourism. As international travel became more uncertain and restrictive, people shifted their focus to exploring nearby destinations, seeking the comfort and safety of familiar environments. Haywood also emphasised how the pandemic fostered a deeper connection to local landscapes and led to a surge in domestic travel as people sought relaxation and new experiences closer to home.

4.3.2 Diversifying Hiking Destination and Activities

The hiking organiser demonstrated that offering diverse destinations and incorporating cultural activities played a crucial role in sustaining hiking tourism in Ethiopia during the pandemic. A study by Sharm et al. (2021) also confirmed that diversifying tourism products and services while utilising natural environments is a crucial strategy for enhancing resilience and sustainability in

post-COVID-19 tourism. The success of this approach was evident, as hiking organisers achieved significant milestones from their strategic efforts to diversify offerings for the domestic market. This aligns with findings from other studies (Noorashid & Chin, 2021; Kristiana, Pramono, & Brian, 2021; Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2021), which emphasised that expanding niche tourism products and leveraging natural resources are effective ways to revitalise the industry.

In the case of hiking tourism in Ethiopia, trips initially focused on specific destinations such as Wenchi (Wonchi) Crater Lake, Debre Libanos Monastery, Lake Ziway (Dambal), and nearby areas. However, as hiking tourism grew, organisers began to diversify and expand their operations to new destinations, including Yerer Mountains, Ensaro, Menelik-Meskot, Ankober, and Kormasho. These destinations offer unique experiences and provide personalised services to their customers. Moreover, to make hiking tours more distinctive and engaging, various activities were incorporated, including tree planting, cultural exchange programs, local language learning, and traditional music and dance performances. Beyond adventure, hikers also participated in charity work by providing school supplies such as exercise books, pens, and pencils to students in need.

Consequently, the pandemic enhanced hiking organisers' expertise in selecting destinations, designing packages, and arranging hiking tours to meet the interests of residents. Additionally, it fuelled greater interest among residents in outdoor activities, leading to more extended stays, overnight hiking programs, and an increasing number of departures to various hiking destinations.

4.3.3 Fostering Local Engagement and Sense of Local Belongingness

The pandemic encouraged the focus on domestic tourism and strengthened Ethiopians' connection to their natural and cultural heritage. As Sharma et al. (2021) stated, travelling to nearby destinations has fostered a sense of place attachment and community pride. Similarly, the expansion and diversification of hiking activities have also contributed to building a sense of local belongingness and pride among Ethiopians. Travelling to a close-to-home destination boosts cultural exchange and community connection with local places and the natural environment. This has been validated by scholars in tourism research, both during and post-pandemic times. For instance, Mackenzie and Goodnow (2020) emphasised that post-pandemic adventure travel is confined to local and micro-adventures. Likewise, Haywood (2020) indicated that the pandemic changed tourist travel patterns to more domestic, short-day, and outdoor activities. Based on the study findings, hiking allowed most residents of Addis Ababa to develop a sense of place attachment and gain a deeper understanding of their country. This result reconfirmed the previous study by Collins-Kreiner and Kliot (2016), which found that hiking helps create a strong feeling and sense of identity among Israelis.

Furthermore, Sharma et al. (2021) stress that the feeling of belongingness motivates and drives for quick revival and recovery of the tourism industry. This context may apply to the current domestic hiking tourism in Ethiopia. As the hiking organisers claimed, the pandemic has made locals appreciate what nature has gifted to the country while also contributing to the development of domestic tourism. Boosting domestic tourism is also a national Sustainable Development Goal of the country, to be achieved by 2030 (MOCT, 2020). The pandemic has allowed us to recognise the capacity of domestic hiking tourism and served as an intervention for the sector's development. This is also evident in Community-Based Tourism (Noorashid & Chin, 2022) in Brunei and other Southeast Asian countries (Adams, Choe, Mostafanezhad, and Phi, 2021).

While the pandemic has driven the transformation of tourism from its traditional way of operating to a new, demand-oriented, outdoor adventurous model. As a result, hiking has emerged as a new concept for the domestic market amid the pandemic. Currently, domestic hiking tourism is being utilised as a resilience measure for the country's tourism industry.

4.3.4 Leveraging Crisis for Tourism Transformation

The challenges posed by COVID-19 have also presented opportunities to rethink and reshape Ethiopia's tourism sector. This transformation can be framed through three critical actions: First, rethinking tourism operations by recognising the risks of depending solely on international markets, which has led to a strategic shift toward domestic tourism. This includes creating customised

and diversified tour packages for local communities. Second, we will reset the sector with a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability and community involvement. By adopting eco-tourism principles, operators are adding value for both tourists and host communities and, third, redefining the tourism sector by focusing not just on increasing visitor numbers but on improving the quality of experiences and their positive impact on local communities. Hiking tourism now serves as a conduit for cultural exchange, community empowerment, and environmental stewardship.

This strategic realignment positions Ethiopia's tourism industry to emerge more resilient and sustainable in the post-pandemic era. While the COVID-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges to Ethiopia's tourism sector, it has also unveiled opportunities for growth and transformation. The rise in domestic hiking tourism, driven by shifts in consumer behaviour and a growing appreciation for local natural resources, has transformed the industry's landscape.

4.4 Conceptual Framework of COVID-19 Crisis, Tourism Recovery and Transformation

During the COVID-19 pandemic, various scholars proposed frameworks for post-pandemic tourism recovery. Sharma et al. (2021) emphasised resilience, while Bai and Ran (2022) focused on stakeholder collaboration in China's tourism supply chain. Tiwari and Chowdhary (2021) highlighted the role of sustainable energy in recovery. This study presents the COVID-19 crisis as a transformative opportunity, particularly for the emergence of hiking tourism in Ethiopia. The proposed conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 1, is structured into three phases: pre-pandemic, during the pandemic, and post-pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic, Ethiopia's tourism sector relied heavily on international visitors, with minimal or no domestic hiking tourism. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the international tourism industry was halted by measures taken to control the spread of the virus. During the COVID-19 crisis, people developed a behavioural shift towards outdoor relaxation, seeking health and wellness, where government support for outdoor activities was revealed. As restrictions eased, domestic hiking emerged as a popular alternative, reshaping travel preferences and giving rise to new tourism patterns. At this phase, the transformative power and positive effect of the pandemic changed customer behaviour and resulted in the origin and rise of hiking tourism in Ethiopia. Consequently, it is essential to strike a balance between the positive and negative effects of the pandemic. Thus, alongside the use of technology to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic, it is essential to accelerate tourism operations for post-pandemic development. Considering the transformative power and positive effects of the pandemic, it is crucial to ensure tourism recovery and transformation. The post-pandemic phase is characterised, first, by building resilience, including diversifying hiking destinations, offering wellness and eco-tourism activities, and promoting community involvement. Second, tourism recovery is expected to bring benefits such as increased local travel demand, job creation, and income generation. Third, tourism transformation is evident in new travel norms, a demand for soft outdoor activities, digital promotion of tourism, and a growing sense of local belonging.

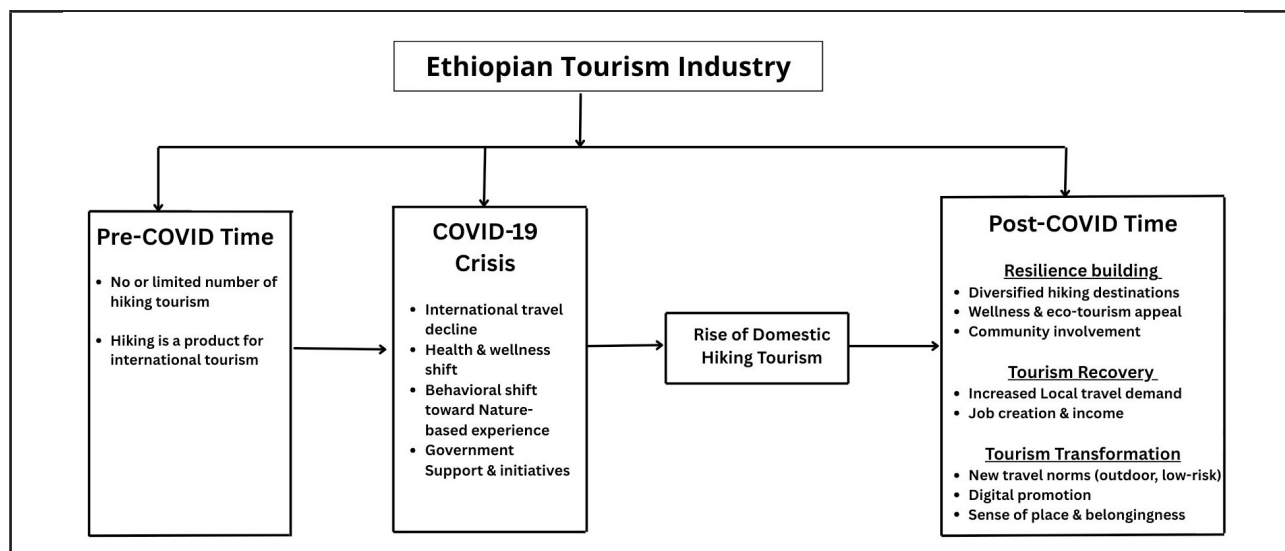


Figure 1. COVID-19 and Tourism: Recovery & Transformation Framework. Source: Author's elaboration.

5. Discussion

This study has examined the rise of domestic hiking tourism and detailed the impacts of COVID-19 on hiking tourism from the perspective of organisers during the pandemic. In this context, the study found that hiking tourism in Ethiopia has emerged as a significant segment within the domestic tourism market, driven by evolving travel preferences, increased health awareness, and the power of digital media. The growth of hiking tourism has been further reinforced by government initiatives aimed at promoting domestic travel, especially in the post-pandemic era. This is a widely recognised finding in recent research on tourism recovery from the COVID-19 crisis (Noorashid & Chin, 2021). However, challenges such as a lack of regulatory oversight, health and safety compliance issues, and political instability have hindered its full potential. Despite these obstacles, the sector has demonstrated resilience through innovative marketing strategies, flexible tour offerings, and the growing enthusiasm for outdoor recreational activities. The COVID-19 pandemic has also reshaped Ethiopia's tourism sector, accelerating the growth of domestic hiking tourism as a resilient and adaptive response to the pandemic.

Additionally, many countries have turned to domestic tourism to mitigate the losses resulting from international travel restrictions. For instance, Vietnam's domestic tourism market made a significant contribution to its recovery in 2022, highlighting the potential of local travel to revitalise the economy (Tung & Duc, 2023). Sub-Saharan Africa faces unique challenges in harnessing domestic tourism, yet it remains a critical strategy for recovery, emphasising the need for tailored approaches to overcome inherent constraints (Matiza, 2022).

In brief, the study's findings provided evidence of the potential for crises and disasters to drive positive change through product repositioning, adjustments to existing operational practices, and the recognition of new markets. Hence, it can be concluded that Ethiopia's domestic hiking tourism has emerged as a key driver for recovery and future growth. Therefore, it is highly recommended that sustainable hiking tourism development be ensured through policy support, infrastructure investment, and adherence to quality standards, as these will be crucial for the long-term success of Ethiopia's hiking tourism.

6. Conclusions

The study presents three main academic implications. First, the study reveals a shift toward nature-based and experience-driven tourism, aligning with global trends that emphasise sustainability, wellness, and cultural exchange. Hence, the study offers new insights and knowledge to

help understand post-pandemic travel behaviour, revealing an increasing preference for local and cost-effective outdoor experiences.

Second, while research on the COVID-19 crisis has increased, much of the literature has focused on its adverse impacts on health, society, and the economy. However, only a few studies have indicated the pandemic's positive, opportunistic, and transformative potential (Seabra & Bhatt, 2022; Abbas et al., 2021). The pandemic prompts a reevaluation of pre-COVID tourism operations and the development of new strategies for tourism recovery and sustainability. The adaptability of hiking tourism businesses in Ethiopia demonstrates how crisis response mechanisms, such as digital marketing and product diversification, can help mitigate external shocks. Third, it also underscores the growing role of social media. Social media is playing an increasingly vital role in shaping travel decisions and promoting niche tourism by influencing consumer behaviour, enhancing destination visibility, and fostering engagement. This study contributes to the enrichment of the literature on how social media enhances tourism recovery and transformation following crisis and disaster.

The study has several practical implications for tourism entrepreneurs and policymakers in the Ethiopian context. First, the study has practical implications for governments to develop tourism sector-wide contingency plans and risk management strategies to ensure resilience against political instability and public health crises. The study's findings indicate that the government can recognise how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed consumer behaviour, which helps in developing better tourism recovery strategies. By adapting policies and actions to fit the new normal, where travellers prefer safer outdoor and domestic experiences, authorities can create a more resilient and sustainable tourism sector. Second, the study suggests that the government should take a leading role in regulating and licensing hiking organisers to ensure consumer rights and promote recovery and crisis management. It urges the government to establish a clear regulatory framework, including licensing, safety standards, and compliance monitoring for hiking operators. Finally, this study emphasises the significance of domestic hiking tourism, which played a crucial role in revitalising the tourism industry, particularly during times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, to support domestic adventure tourism, targeted institutional support is essential. This can involve financial incentives, such as micro-grants and tax relief, for local tourism businesses. Additionally, capacity-building programs focused on marketing, environmental management, and digital promotion, as well as basic infrastructure development, including marked trails, rest areas, and sanitation facilities. Additionally, domestic tourism should be integrated into national strategies for resilience and recovery. These actions will help ensure a safer, more sustainable, and resilient tourism sector.

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations. Its focus on popular hiking destinations near Addis Ababa restricts the generalizability of findings to other regions of Ethiopia. Furthermore, the study primarily examines organised urban hiking groups, which may introduce bias by excluding informal or rural hiking practices that could present alternative perspectives. The informal nature of many hiking groups presents challenges in obtaining comprehensive data on participation rates and economic impact. Additionally, the study primarily captures insights from hiking organisers while lacking extensive government perspectives on policy and regulation. Given its short-term focus, future research should adopt a longitudinal approach to assess long-term sustainability trends in Ethiopia's hiking tourism sector. Addressing these limitations will provide a more holistic understanding of the industry and guide future policy and strategic decisions for sustainable development.

Acknowledgements: I sincerely appreciate the hiking organisers for their valuable support in data collection and providing case study insights. Your expertise and cooperation were essential to this research.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

1. Abbas, J., Mubeen, R., Iorember, P. T., Raza, S., & Mamirkulova, G. (2021). Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on tourism: transformational potential and implications for a sustainable recovery of the travel and leisure industry. *Current Research in Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 100033.
2. Abegaz, G., Beyene, S., and Emiru, T. (2020). *The impact of COVID-19 on Amhara National Regional State's economy*. International Growth Centre.
3. Adams, K. M., Choe, J., Mostafanezhad, M., & Phi, G. T. (2021). (Post-) pandemic tourism resiliency: Southeast Asian lives and livelihoods in limbo. *Tourism Geographies*, 23(4), 915-936.
4. Arbulú, I., Razumova, M., Rey-Maquieira, J., & Sastre, F. (2021). Can domestic tourism relieve the COVID-19 tourist industry crisis? In the case of Spain. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 20, 100568.
5. Assaf, A., & Scuderi, R. (2020). COVID-19 and the recovery of the tourism industry. *Tourism Economics*, 26(5), 731-733.
6. Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The qualitative report*, 13(4), 544-559.
7. Bayih, B. E., & Singh, A. (2020). Exploring domestic tourism in Ethiopia: trends, prospects, promotional marketing, and challenges. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering (IJRTE)*, 8(6), 2675-2688.
8. Bichler, B. F., & Peters, M. (2020). Soft adventure motivation: an exploratory study of hiking tourism. *Tourism Review*.
9. Buckley, R. (2006). *Adventure tourism*. Oxfordshire, UK: CAB International.
10. Burnett, J. J. (1998). A strategic approach to managing crises. *Public relations review*, 24(4), 475-488.
11. CBI. (2021, January 21). *The European market potential for adventure tourism*. Retrieved April 05, 2021, from CBI: <https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/adventure-tourism/adventure-tourism/market-potential>
12. Chan, C. S. (2021). Developing a conceptual model for the post-COVID-19 pandemic changing tourism risk perception. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(18), 9824.
13. Collins-Kreiner, N., & Klot, N. (2016). Particularism vs. universalism in hiking tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 56(3), 132-137.
14. Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
15. Cvetković, V. M. (2023). A Predictive Model of Community Disaster Resilience based on Social Identity Influences (MODERSI). *International Journal of Disaster Risk Management*, 5(2), 57-80. <https://doi.org/10.18485/ijdrm.2023.5.2.5>.
16. Cvetković, V., Nikolić, N., Ocal, A., Martinović, J., & Dragašević, A. (2022). A Predictive Model of Pandemic Disaster Fear Caused by Coronavirus (COVID-19): Implications for Decision-Makers. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19, 652.
17. Faulkner, B. (2001). Towards a framework for tourism disaster management. *Tourism management*, 22(2), 135-147.
18. Faulkner, B., & Vikulov, S. (2001). Katherine, washed out one day, back on track the next: A post-mortem of a tourism disaster. *Tourism management*, 22(4), 331-344.
19. Giampiccoli, A., & Mtapuri, O. (2021). From conventional to alternative tourism: Rebalancing tourism towards a community-based tourism approach in Hanoi, Vietnam. *Social Sciences*, 10(5), 176.
20. Golets, A., Farias, J., Pilati, R., & Costa, H. (2021). COVID-19 pandemic and tourism: The impact of health risk perception and intolerance of uncertainty on travel intentions. *Current Psychology*, 1-14.

21. Gomez-Martin, M. B. (2019). Hiking tourism in Spain: Origins, issues and transformations. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 11(13).
22. Harris, D., Baird, S., Ford, K., Hirvonen, K., Jones, N., Kassa, M., ... & Woldehanna, T. (2021). The Impact of COVID-19 in Ethiopia: Policy Brief.
23. Haywood, K. M. (2020). A post-COVID future: Tourism community re-imagined and enabled. *Tourism Geographies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1762120>.
24. Hettiarachchi, W.N., & Lakmal, H.M.A. (2018). The impact of perceived value on satisfaction of adventure tourists: With special reference to Sri Lankan domestic tourists. *Colombo Business Journal*. (9)1, 80-107.
25. Holling, C. S. (1973, November). *Resilience and stability of ecological systems*.
26. Im, J., Kim, J., & Choeh, J. Y. (2021). COVID-19, social distancing, and risk-averse actions of hospitality and tourism consumers: A case of South Korea. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 20, 100566.
27. Ioannides, D., & Gyimóthy, S. (2020). The COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity for escaping the unsustainable global tourism path. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 624-632.
28. Ioannides, D., & Gyimóthy, S. (2020). The COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity for escaping the unsustainable global tourism path. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 624-632.
29. Kampel, K. (2020). COVID-19 and tourism: Charting a sustainable, resilient recovery for small states.
30. Kash, T. J., & Darling, J. R. (1998). Crisis Management: Prevention, Diagnosis and Intervention. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 19(4), 179-186.
31. Kebede NS. (2018). The Fate of Tourism during and in the Aftermath of Political Instability: Ethiopia Tourism in Focus. *J Tourism Hospit* 7: 337. doi:10.4172/2167-0269.1000337
32. Kristiana, Y., Pramono, R., & Brian, R. (2021). Adaptation strategy of tourism industry stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic: A case study in Indonesia. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8(4), 213-223.
33. Kucheran, K. (2020, October 7). *Ethiopia Has Reopened For Tourism: Covid-19 Entry Requirements*. Retrieved May 2, 2022, from Travel Off Path: <https://www.traveloffpath.com/ethiopia-has-reopened-for-tourism-covid-19-entry-requirements/>
34. Lee, S. A., Manthiou, A., Chiang, L., & Tang, L. R. (2017). An assessment of value dimensions in hiking tourism: Pathways toward quality of life. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(2), 236– 246.
35. Luo, J. M., & Lam, C. F. (2020). Travel anxiety, risk attitude and travel intentions towards “travel bubble” destinations in Hong Kong: Effect of the fear of COVID-19. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(21), 7859.
36. Mackenzie, S. H., & Goodnow, J. (2020). Adventure in the age of COVID-19: Embracing microadventures and locavism in a post-pandemic world. *Leisure Sciences*, 43(1-2), 62-69
37. Manojlović, B., Cvetković, V. M., Renner, R., Grozdanić, G., & Perošević, N. (2025). The Influence of Socio-Demographic Factors on Local Attitudes Towards Sustainable Tourism Development in Skadar Lake and Durmitor National Parks, Montenegro. *Sustainability*, 17(7), 3200.
38. Matiza, T. (2023). Post-COVID-19 domestic tourism-led recovery: The paradox of Sub-Saharan African tourism. In *Towards sustainable and resilient tourism futures* (pp. 225-245). Erich Schmidt Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin.
39. Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MOCT). (2020). *Culture, Tourism and Sport Sector 10 Years Sustainable Tourism Plan (2020-2030)*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
40. Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 7(1), 23-48.
41. Narvekar, R. H. and Dayanand, M.S. (2020). Perceived value in adventure tourism – a study of trekkers in Himachal Pradesh with respect to satisfaction and future intentions!. *Journal of Tourism & Development*, 34, 21-38.

42. Noorashid, N., and Chin, W. L. (2021). Coping with Covid-19: The resilience and transformation of community-based tourism in Brunei Darussalam. *Sustainability*, 13(15), 8618.
43. Nordbo, I., & Prebensen, N. K. (2015). Hiking as Mental and Physical Experience. *Advances in Hospitality and Leisure*, 11, 169–186.
44. Nordin, M. R., & Jamal, S. A. (2021). Hiking Tourism in Malaysia: Origins, Benefits and Post Covid-19 Transformations. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(13), 88–100.
45. Ocal, A., Cvetković, V. M., Baytiyeh, H., Tedim, F., & Zečević, M. Public reactions to the disaster COVID-19: A comparative study in Italy, Lebanon, Portugal, and Serbia. *Geomatics, Natural Hazards and Risk*. doi:10.1080/19475705.2020.1811405
46. Pasquinelli, C., & Trunfio, M. (2021). The missing link between overtourism and post-pandemic tourism. Framing Twitter debate on the Italian tourism crisis. *Journal of Place Management and Development*.
47. Persson-Fischer, U., & Liu, S. (2021). The impact of a global crisis on areas and topics of tourism research. *Sustainability*, 13(2), 906.
48. Pisano, U. (2012). Resilience and Sustainable Development: Theory of resilience, systems thinking. *European sustainable development network (ESDN)*, 26, 50.
49. Planning and Development Commission. (2020). Ten Years Development Plan: A Pathway to Prosperity 2021-2030. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: FDRE Planning and Development Commission.
50. Port, K. J. N., & Jawahar, G. (2024). Management of COVID: The Creeping Disaster in the Indian Scenario. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Management*, 6(1), 103–110.
51. Ritchie, B. W. (2004). Chaos, crises and disasters: a strategic approach to crisis management in the tourism industry. *Tourism management*, 25(6), 669–683.
52. Rogerson, C. M., & Rogerson, J. M. (2021). COVID-19 and changing tourism demand: Research review and policy implications for South Africa. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 10(1), 1–21.
53. Salem, I. E., Elbaz, A. M., Elkhwesky, Z., & Ghazi, K. M. (2021). The COVID-19 pandemic: The mitigating role of government and hotel support of hotel employees in Egypt. *Tourism Management*, 85, 104305.
54. Scott, N., Laws, E., & Prideaux, B. (2008). Tourism crises and marketing recovery strategies. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 23(2–4), 1–13.
55. Seabra, C., and Bhatt, K. (2022). Tourism Sustainability and COVID-19 Pandemic: Is There a Positive Side?. *Sustainability*, 14(14), 8723.
56. Sharma, G. D., Thomas, A., and Paul, J. (2021). Reviving tourism industry post-COVID-19: A resilience-based framework. *Tourism management perspectives*, 37, 100786.
57. Sheikh, U. S. (2024). Analysing in Post COVID-19 era: The Effect of Occupational Stress and Work-Life Balance on Employees Performance. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Management*, 6(1), 75–90.
58. Soliku, O., Kyiire, B., Mahama, A., and Kubio, C. 2021. Tourism amid COVID-19 pandemic: impacts and implications for building resilience in the eco-tourism sector in Ghana's Savannah region. *Heliyon*, Vol. 7, No. 9. doi:10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07892.
59. Svarstad, H. (2010). Why hiking? Rationality and reflexivity within three categories of meaning construction. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 42(1), 91–110.
60. Tigabu, T. (2016, July 23). *The Reporter*. Retrieved May 11, 2022, from the hikers of Addis: <https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/3924/>
61. Toubes, D. R., Araújo Vila, N., & Fraiz Brea, J. A. (2021). Changes in consumption patterns and tourist promotion after the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, 16(5), 1332–1352.

62. Tung, L. T., & Duc, L. A. (2023). Can Domestic Tourism Demand Play a Main Driver For The Post-pandemic Recovery Strategy? Evidence From Vietnam. *In Proceedings of the International Conference on Business Excellence* (Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 660-669). Sciendo.
63. Ugur, N. G., & Akbiyik, A. (2020). Impacts of COVID-19 on global tourism industry: A cross-regional comparison. *Tourism management perspectives*, 36, 100744.
64. United Nation Ethiopia. (May, 2020). *Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa. Ethiopia.
65. Vouloutidou, G., Nikas, D., Kostas, A., Tsoukalidis, I., & Karasavvoglou, A. G. (2021). The COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Effects on the Greek Tourism Sector: A Case Study of the Region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace. *KnE Social Sciences*, 256-274
66. Wengel, Y. (2020). The micro-trends of emerging adventure tourism activities in Nepal. *Journal of Tourism Futures*.
67. World Tourism Organization (2020), *UNWTO Briefing Note – Tourism and COVID-19, Issue 3. Understanding Domestic Tourism and Seizing its Opportunities*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422111>.



