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Sustainable Cruise Tourism: Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Areas

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Abstract: The cruise shipping industry has existed for centuries. However, sustainability is a relatively new trend that could make a big difference and someday impact the industry. A growing body of research on sustainable cruise tourism includes studying changes among industry stakeholders, internal and external processes, and more. However, until now, there have been no comprehensive and systematic reviews of the academic literature on this topic and proposals for future research areas. The sample for our research consists of 56 articles structured into the following themes and subthemes: (1) corporate social responsibility (public interaction and emissions management); (2) territory management (collaboration with stakeholders and infrastructure development); (3) training in sustainable behavior (passengers, ship personnel, and other stakeholders). These themes fully explore the various use cases for sustainable cruises, forming a conceptual framework for understanding trends for the industry's sustainable development. We direct the attention of other researchers to the following areas for further research: GHG emissions of cruising; biodiversity impacts; quantitative understanding of the target audience and their participation in sustainability financing; in-depth understanding of the reasons for cooperation between stakeholders; identifying the true motivation for participation in sustainable development; the long-term trends; and how the shipping industry is adapting to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: literature review; sustainability; cruise tourism; corporate social responsibility; territory management; training

1. Introduction

The continued demand for sustainability is changing the structural approach to doing business. Changes are subject to internal business processes, e.g., developing employer–employee relationships, reducing office waste, eliminating discrimination, etc. [1,2]. Sustainability presents versatile opportunities for improvements and adaptations, cruise tourism. Moreover, the demand for sustainable change comes from passengers, local communities, employees, transport companies, policymakers, and other industry stakeholders. Meeting these requirements and demands constitutes a major managerial challenge for passenger ship owners and operators.

However, the cruise industry stands before a major paradox of adapting to climate change (and climate change's plentitude of consequences) and reducing emissions [3], locally and globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has been seen as a catalyst for change. Although progress has been made, global events and travel disruptions have hampered the post-pandemic recovery. Therefore, how and when a return to so-called normality will occur is very uncertain. The recovery's speed and sustainability depend on how the market

assesses future travel risk [4]. A sustainable and equitable blue recovery should allow the increasing world population to continue benefiting from the services the ocean provides. Sustainable and smarter practices promote humanity's well-being and conserve marine ecosystems [5]. The blue recovery constitutes a major opportunity to drive the industry in a more sustainable direction with pressing global demands, especially in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, air quality, and acting on biodiversity loss [6] (p. 37) and [7,8].

Cruises have, throughout the years, drawn attention regarding their unsustainable practices, whether due to adverse environmental impacts, questionable labor conditions, or the lack of a positive effect on the destinations' economies. Although attempts have been made to adopt sustainable practices into their management policies and operations, the measurement and evaluation methods have been found lacking. The Ocean Panel, a policy body of serving world leaders supported by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, has a goal that by 2030, "coastal and ocean-based tourism is sustainable, resilient, addresses climate change, reduces pollution, supports ecosystem regeneration and biodiversity conservation and invests in local jobs and communities" [9] (p. 8).

Passenger shipping is typically considered a specific segment of shipping. However, the part of ships carrying passengers constitutes a fraction of the industry, the biggest segments being container and bulk (tankers) shipping. For example, concerning global GHG emissions, the shipping industry's share is 2–3%; vessels carrying passengers stand for some 7% (excluding so-called roll-on/roll-off vessels). However, passenger shipping is also measured by the typical metrics (transport tonne km) rather than considered part of the travel or tourism industry. Measurement covers cruise ships and ferries, which we will refer to as water-borne passenger travel.

Four different ship types facilitate waterborne passenger travel: passengers-only ferries, RoPax ferries (roll-on/roll-off passenger vessels), cruise ferries, and cruise vessels. We focus mainly on travel based on the latter two. RoPax ferries provide limited services to passengers, such as cabins for overnight stays. Conversely, cruise ferries can entertain passengers with venues, such as restaurants, spas, shops, etc. Passengers on these vessels can be travelers who use the ferry for transportation, but a fair share uses it as a destination, i.e., take short cruises. Cruise shipping, in turn, is characterized by vessels devoted purely to cruise tourism, categorized by the EU as under the blue economy sector of Coastal and Maritime Tourism. Unlike other shipping segments, cruise ferries and ships are considered ship types that operate on consumer markets [10]. However, managing the vessels and their technical operations clearly bear more resemblance to the shipping industry in general.

We pose the following research question for our study: "What are the key themes, trends, and gaps in the existing body of research on sustainable cruise tourism from a business and management perspective, and what potential directions for future research can be identified?" Our motivation to conduct this study stems from the understanding that cruise tourism, while a significant contributor to global tourism, is at a crucial juncture. The industry is grappling with the paradox of maintaining growth and satisfying stakeholder demands while navigating the pressing need for sustainable practices. This balance becomes even more delicate due to unpredictable global events, such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Despite a growing body of research on sustainable cruise tourism, there remains a discernible gap in comprehensive, systematic literature reviews, particularly from a business and management perspective. Furthermore, there is a need for clear directions for future research, considering the dynamic and complex nature of the industry. Our study aims to fill this gap and, in doing so, contribute meaningfully to the discourse on sustainable cruise tourism. We hope that our work will guide future research efforts and inform industry practices toward greater sustainability.

The relevance of this article lies in its examination of a rapidly growing yet traditionally unsustainable sector—the cruise tourism industry. As societal demand for sustainability intensifies, the cruise industry faces a significant challenge in reconciling its operations with environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

This article serves several key purposes:

- Systematic Literature Review: The paper provides a comprehensive and systematic review of academic literature on sustainable cruise tourism. This allows for a thorough understanding of what has been studied and what findings have emerged in this domain so far.
- Conceptual Framework: By organizing the research into three main themes—corporate social responsibility, territory management, and training in sustainable behavior—the article presents a conceptual framework for understanding the diverse applications of sustainability in the cruise industry.
- Identifying Future Research Areas: The article identifies several areas that require further research. These include the greenhouse gas emissions from cruising, impacts on biodiversity, stakeholder cooperation, sustainable development motivations, and the industry's adaptations to the COVID-19 pandemic. By identifying these areas, the article sets the agenda for future research in sustainable cruise tourism.

As business actors act, an increasing body of literature on the topic accumulates. However, a systematic literature review regarding sustainable cruises from a management and business perspective has not been conducted; it is time to take stock of the developments over the past few years. There is a huge amount of research that is relevant to the sustainable cruise industry but is related to environmental sciences, engineering, chemistry, and other areas. The purpose of our literature review is on sustainable cruise studies from the management and business perspective. Our work aims to structure and analyze the work of researchers in the areas of management and business, identify the main trends and areas of application of research, and suggest directions for future work. We start with a brief description of the current state of sustainability and cruise transportation, followed by a description of the methodology, including selecting and analyzing the sample for our study. After that, we proceed to our findings: corporate social responsibility, territory management, and training in sustainable behavior. We conclude by suggesting several main directions for developing the area under consideration.

2. Method

This study aims to analyze the existing literature and identify a further research agenda regarding sustainable cruises from a management and business perspective. We used a systematic approach in collecting and analyzing data concerning this topic [11].

2.1. Article Selection

The initial sample was taken in May 2022 using the Web of Science database. The initial search string was <'sustainab*' AND 'cruis*' OR 'ferr*' OR 'voyage'> in the title, abstract, and keywords sections. This choice was made to form a wide enough sample while dealing with cruise tourism's sustainability as a central thing and to get an overview of the field's existing publications. Thus, the initial sample comprised 1864 publications. Another filter applied was "only articles" and "publications in English." However, the resulting sample was mostly technical articles related to engineering, materials, chemistry, and other sections. We selected a subcategory related to "Business" and "Management" to overcome this limitation.

The next stage of work with the sample occurred by reviewing the abstract to confirm the article's relevance to our study. Two researchers in parallel conducted this process. In most cases, opinions on including an article in the study coincided, and disagreements were dissolved after a joint discussion. The inclusion criteria were general relevance to the chosen topic, matching at least one keyword, and an abstract matching the study's purpose. In the case of compliance, the results and discussion sections were viewed. Another step in the analysis was to review the literature list of publications to identify eligible studies that might not have been included in our sample by chance. We excluded several articles in Spanish and one industrial report from the final sample. The final sample was 56 articles. Figure 1 presents our study's sampling process.
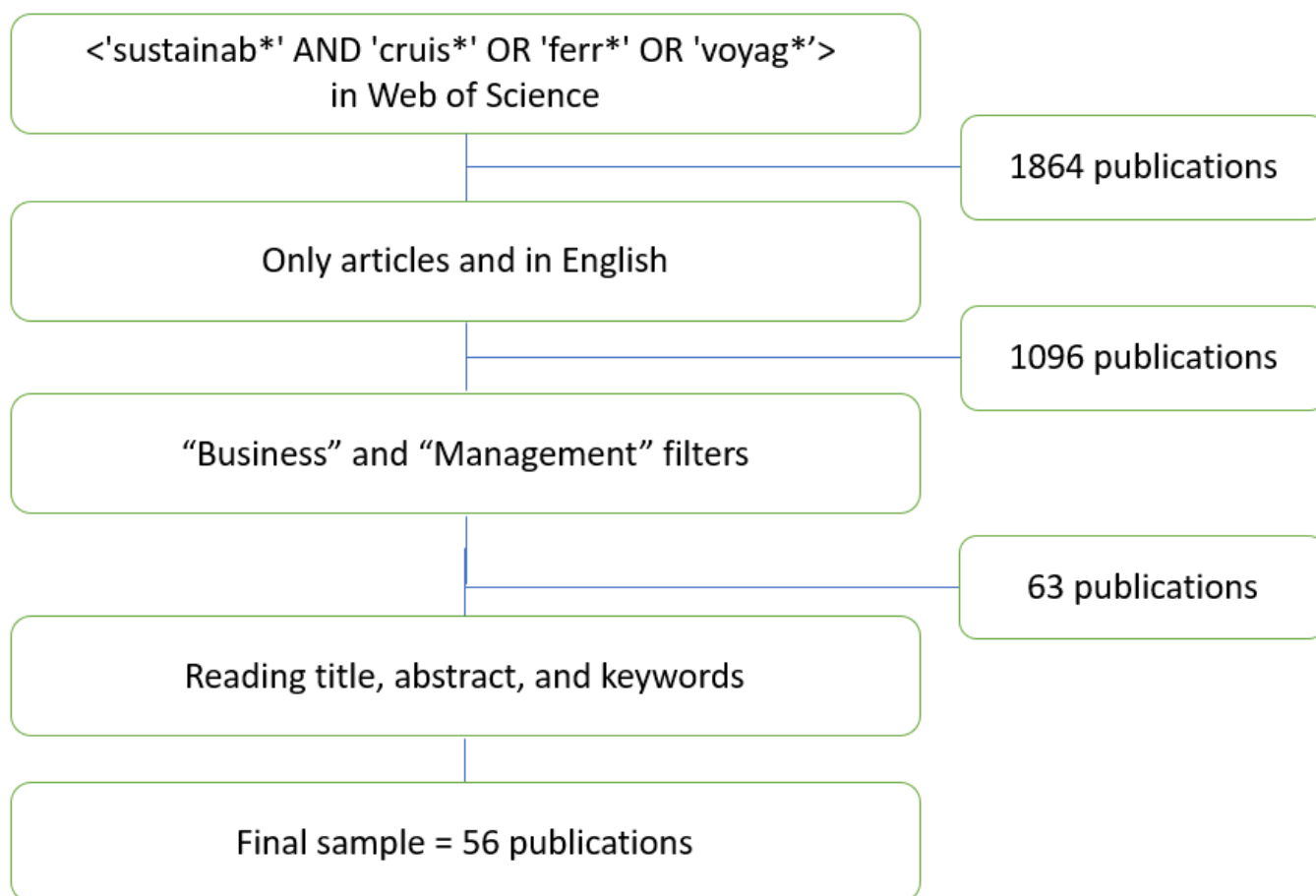
Figure 1. Sampling scheme.

Several researchers analyzed the articles in parallel by carefully reading them and entering key citations into an Excel spreadsheet hosted in the cloud. This helped reduce duplicating findings and set the stage for the descriptive analysis of selected articles. Table 1 presents the journals by the number of articles in our study. Figure 2 shows the number of publications in our study by year. We have seen little progress in the number of publications; however, we expect further growth going forward.

Table 1. Number of publications per journal.

Number of Publications per Journal	
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	13
Tourism Management	7
Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes	5
International Journal of Tourism Research	3
Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	3
Current Issues in Tourism	2
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2
International Journal of Tourism Cities	2
Journal of Park and Recreation Administration	2
Tourism Geographies	2
Acta Turistica	1

Table 1. *Cont.*

Number of Publications per Journal	
Almatourism-Journal of Tourism Culture and Territorial Development	1
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	1
European Journal of Tourism Research	1
Hospitality & Society	1
International Journal of Hospitality Management	1
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights	1
Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism-Research Planning and Management	1
Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism	1
Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	1
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	1
Tourism	1
Tourism and Hospitality Research	1
Tourism Economics	1
Tourism Management Perspectives	1
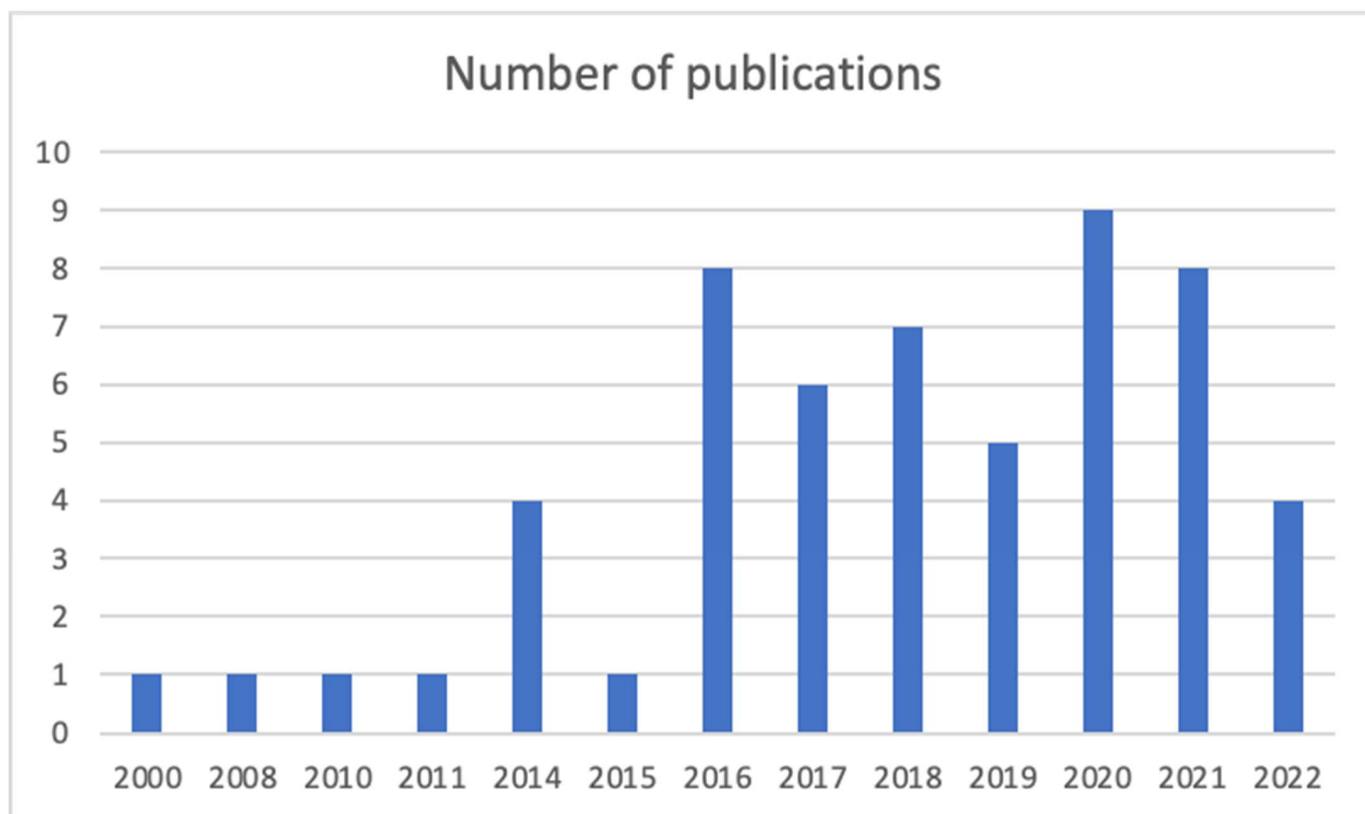
Figure 2. The number of publications for our study by year.

2.2. Key Characteristics of Selected Articles

The most common method of collecting information was the interview method, conducted as a mixture of online and offline approaches before March 2020, and online only after the pandemic's onset. Most articles were qualitative, with only four quantitative and a few conceptual. Case studies are a common research method, allowing for a deeper understanding of the nature of the phenomenon under investigation [12]. Most of our sample's

studies are single case studies describing a sustainable experience in the cruise industry, e.g., [13,14]. Multiple case studies were in the sample, typically presenting 2–3 cases from the same region. Predictably, most of the articles featured popular cruise regions, such as the Caribbean, Mediterranean, Australia, some of Africa, Asia, and the Arctic; other articles dealt with cruise tourism more generally, unspecific to a certain destination. Five articles used cruise operators' sustainability reports as a data source and/or study object. Overall, we see an increase in interest in the study area. This study area was reduced in 2021, which we attribute to the pandemic. By the time the study began, only four articles had been published in 2022. Our sample only included three articles about the COVID-19 pandemic. We admit there may be more. However, at the time of the study, a sufficient number for the study may not have been published yet, or researchers did not concentrate on our research topic. Most of the papers dealt exclusively with cruise tourism, but some considered cruise as a case among other forms of tourism, e.g., passenger traffic, passenger behavior, and so forth.

2.3. Analysis

The thematic analysis method was applied to the selected articles for our study. This analysis proposes grouping studies based on categories depending on the research topic [15]. This approach in our study aimed to inductively identify sustainability's role in the cruise industry and position the available research in an industrial context. This approach allowed our group to parallelize the analysis of articles, consult on findings, and compare findings to reduce bias [16]. The researchers who conducted the analysis met regularly with the group to present the results, coordinate actions, and develop a strategy.

3. Findings

Altogether, three major themes and eight subthemes were identified during the sample's analysis. The themes include corporate social responsibility (CSR), territory management, and training in sustainable behavior. The subthemes include public interaction and emissions management (CSR), collaboration with stakeholders, infrastructure development, community development (territory management), cruise ship personnel, industrial training for development, and young generation (training of sustainable behavior). Some studies lie at the intersection of the above themes.

3.1. Theme 1: Corporate Social Responsibility

The first theme uses the CSR perspective to respond to the cruise industry's industrial sustainability challenges. Some researchers use the term corporate social–environmental relationship (CSER), which differs only slightly from CSR and has an ecological component. We distinguish two CSR-related subcategories: public interaction and emissions management. Table 2 overviews 14 articles on this theme: public interaction (9) and emissions management (5).

Table 2. Theme 1: Corporate Social Responsibility.

Authors	Research Area	Sub-Category	Category
Adams et al., 2017 [17]	Brand commitment		
Ahn et al., 2021 [18]	Brand trust		
Ahn, 2019 [19]	Brand evaluation		
Aureli et al., 2017 [20]	Strategy development		
Bonilla-Priego et al., 2014 [21]	Publicity	Public interaction	CSR
de Grosbois, 2016 [22]	Publicity		
Jones et al., 2017 [23]	Reports		
Ramoa et al., 2020 [24]	Reports		
Medrado and Jackson, 2016 [25]	Social performance, reports		

Table 2. *Cont.*

Authors	Research Area	Sub-Category	Category
Dawson et al., 2016 [26]	Climate change		
Eijgelaar et al., 2010 [3]	Green gas emission		
Li and Wang, 2020 [27]	Food waste	Emissions management	
Lin et al., 2018 [28]	Green gas emission		
Paiano et al., 2020 [29]	Carboon footprint		

3.1.1. Public Interaction

Companies consider sustainability factors as an added value and competitive advantage in business. Although researchers find quantifying which and how much customers support these values difficult, companies are confident that sustainability increases brand loyalty to a cruise company [18,19]. CSR reputation affects customer loyalty regarding the choice of the first and subsequent cruises, as well as their switching to another brand, although no clear trend exists. [30] also support the importance of sustainability on the business side and are skeptical about the importance on the consumer side. It may be important for customers to support companies' environmental efforts if this has an insignificant effect on the cost of cruises. In turn, companies understand market trends but are not ready to invest in sustainable development and thereby increase prices, for cruises can limit this information in their public reports [20,25]. Companies are ready to disclose information associated with waste generation, water usage, and energy conservation. However, most companies in the industry prefer to hide data on compensation and work–life balance efforts due to the lack of clear standards for providing information by public and non-public companies [21]. Most companies provide general information about the importance of sustainable development steps; however, they pay much less attention to communicating specific actions and the results of applying successful or unsuccessful practices. Moreover, researchers' ongoing attempts to shape a culture and unify industry reports in the sustainability section also target SDG 14 (life below water). Suggested targets are set out in the sections on waste, emissions, and energy management [24]. This approach is common in emerging industries and often starts with large companies whose experience is picked up by smaller businesses [23].

3.1.2. Emissions Management

At the beginning of our research, we expected that most of the existing articles would be devoted to emissions management issues. However, we could only include six articles in this section. Of course, this issue is raised in other studies in our sample but is given secondary importance. For example, ref. [26] adapt the strategies of cruise companies regarding climate change and reduce emissions from companies and passengers. Reducing the importance of polluting factors is done through managing emergencies, developing optimal routes from the sustainability perspective, and creating a clearer presentation of the offer to passengers. Communicating the importance of climate change more clearly to passengers could reduce the resulting operational constraints, as [3] point out that passengers do not understand their contribution to climate change. Lack of awareness has been cited as a key factor for why cruise passengers believe their journey is not contributing to climate change, and few are willing to offset their carbon footprint.

Refs. [27,29] explore food waste, echoing the study [31] from the Training of Sustainable Behavior section. These studies also state that the age and consumption culture of passengers impact their consumption habits and, thus, the amount of food waste generated. Business is responding to such challenges by focusing on a new generation that values sustainable values more. The management of cruise companies should develop concrete steps towards forming sustainable onshore and offshore consumer behavior and convey it to their passengers. Such sustainable behavior must be shaped first among the company's staff, who will become conduits for customers [27].

3.1.3. Linking Public Interaction and Emissions Management

Emissions management is the most obvious area for cruise lines related to sustainability. Companies start their public policy by stating in industry reports that reducing their carbon footprint [29] or greenhouse gas emissions [3,28] is a priority in their business. The market considers companies' commitment in this direction; some consumers tend to consider this trend when choosing a service provider. Conversely, company sustainability reports offer fragmented data and show little progress in this area. A cruise company can choose one of its priorities for sustainability [26], but the lack of industry standards for sustainability reporting makes comparing success between companies impossible. The declaration of movement toward sustainability and success is not yet widespread.

3.2. Theme 2: Territory Management

The largest number of studies relating to the theme of territory management consists of 35 articles, see Table 3. Many of these articles echo the fundamental contradiction that local communities have with cruise tourism, i.e., balancing the harm brought by cruise ships and their passengers with the economic wealth and activity they give rise to. We conditionally divided this theme into three parts: (1) interaction between stakeholders to achieve sustainable development of the industry (15 articles); (2) development of cruise infrastructure and attractiveness for passengers (5 articles); and development of local communities and overcoming the main local restrictions (16 articles).

Table 3. Theme 2: Territory management.

Authors	Research Area	Sub-Category	Category
Chen and Chen, 2016 [32]	Collaborative mechanism		
Chen et al., 2021 [33]	Stakeholders' impacts		
Dimitrovski et al., 2021 [34]	Pro-environmental behavior		
Han et al., 2019 [35]	Passenger values		
Hillmer-Pegram, 2016 [36]	Tourism expansion		
James et al., 2020 [37]	Stakeholders' perception		
Kim et al., 2021 [38]	Conflicts examination	Collaboration with stakeholders	
Knight et al., 2020 [39]	Adaptability of stakeholders		
Losada and Mota, 2019 [40]	Influencers' impact		
Orams, 2000 [41]	Atypical stakeholders		
Scherrer and Doohan, 2014 [14]	Traditional owner permissions		
Scherrer et al., 2011 [42]	Operational standards		
Spencer and Spencer, 2022 [43]	Partnership of equals		
Thurau et al., 2015 [44]	Market segmentation		Territory management
Van Bets et al., 2017 [45]	Collective self-governance		
Alberini, 2021 [46]	Green ports		
Andrade, 2018 [47]	Park management		
Hritz and Cecil, 2008 [13]	Destination planning	Infrastructure development	
Perea-Medina et al., 2019 [48]	Public transport		
Wall-Reinius et al., 2019 [49]	Enclave tourism		
Adams, 2017 [30]	Local nationals		
Apostolou, 2018 [50]	Local communities		
Brida et al., 2014 [51]	Residents' attitude		
Coccossis and Koutsopoulou, 2020 [52]	Coastal destinations		
Del Chiappa and Abbate, 2016 [53]	Community-based tourism		
Del Chiappa et al., 2018 [54]	Clusters of residents	Community development	
Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020 [55]	Community-centred tourism		
Lasso and Dahles, 2018 [56]	Poverty reduction		
Lee and Leung, 2022 [57]	Local tourism		
Leon et al., 2021 [58]	Destination competitivenes		

Table 3. *Cont.*

Authors	Research Area	Sub-Category	Category
MacNeill and Wozniak, 2018 [59]	Community impact		
Martin et al., 2020 [60]	Local profiles		
Navarro-Ruiz et al., 2020 [61]	Flow management		
Tham et al., 2021 [62]	Local development		
Walker and Moscardo, 2016 [63]	Indigenous interpretation		
Weaver and Lawton, 2017 [64]	Community responsiveness		

3.2.1. Collaboration with Stakeholders

Refs. [32,45] discuss stakeholder management. Ref. [32] generated a demand for new methods of managing the industry's sustainable development from the governments of interested regions, and [45] propose a solution with the help of industry self-government, namely through sharing the experience of applying sustainable practices and self-regulation with stakeholders' involvement. Self-regulation does not replace industry standards and classic management practices but complements governmental regulation through access to knowledge, conflict resolution, and rule compliance based on disclosure, traceability, and trust. The industry urgently needs this approach, as sustainable development is seen more as the future than the present.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the industry and increased demand for sustainable business practices. Research in this area is focused on developing recommendations for interaction in diversifying ports, cruise lines, passengers, and the local population [38,39,43,44,65]. Shifting from a purely profit-driven business towards shared sustainable development with all partners can positively impact local community development in regions heavily dependent on cruise tourism [43] or those particularly affected by the pandemic [39]. The lack of a holistic perspective for developing the industry and the desire to secure one's profit, including by reducing the income of other participants, affects the industry's attractiveness and increases stakeholder conflicts. The imbalance between the incomes of cruise companies and local communities leaves doubts about sustainable cruise tourism development [36,37]. Developing sustainable corridors for the industry's development will affect the positive perception of passengers by local communities, increase the income of more stakeholders and reduce conflicts, which are mainly associated with negative environmental and social impacts [38,42,44]. Sustainable corridors form the foundation for decision-making for local policymakers [14].

Understanding the principles of passenger engagement in sustainable cruising is a critical issue for the industry. How passengers choose sustainable cruise tourism [35], what factors other than finances influence the choice of the trip [33,41], and who influences the choice [40] are valuable questions of the focal industry. Cruise lines must understand the demand for sustainable cruises and identify specific groups of passengers willing to participate in this business. Ref. [34] offers a holistic view of solving such problems. A multi-stakeholder view of the industry and sustainable decision-making from an individual and organizational perspective puts intersectoral dialogue as the basis for decision-making in the example of the Nordic coastal area. The prepared forecast offers an option for developing sustainability in the industry for the next decade and proposes concrete actions for its implementation.

3.2.2. Infrastructure Development

Sustainability implies an appropriately integrated approach to the industry's development, which can include developing cruise infrastructure: ports, parks, public transport, and others. Few publications were included in this subchapter since most of the studies from our sample consider developing infrastructure as part of the development of local communities and do not single out this direction.

Protected and remote areas may attract certain passenger segments [47,49]. The capacity of such places is their natural advantage and disadvantage. Limited and seasonal travel and transportation and accommodation costs are new factors for industry sustainability. However, traditional factors influencing cruise choices, such as comfort and entertainment, are valued higher by passengers when traveling. The relevance of sustainable values in such directions remains in question. Refs. [13,48] pay attention to the issues of urban planning and developing transport accessibility in places of excursions. Sustainable port infrastructure and destination cities are continuously linked to the industry's sustainable development strategy. Cruise companies, in their strategy, must interact with destinations to develop common standards and an integrated approach between stakeholders. Public and shared transport at destinations and tours increases the length of tours and offers new routes to inland regions [48].

3.2.3. Community Development

The sustainable development of local communities is an essential parameter for the cruise industry from the perspective of many researchers. Compliance with the interests of cruise companies, passengers, and local communities is prioritized regarding the economy, society, and environmental development of territories and destinations. Refs. [52,56] note that a sustainably developing industry reduces poverty and increases the local population's livelihoods. However, the authors note the importance of balancing cruise tourism income (e.g., selling souvenirs) and traditional employment (e.g., fishing). Skewed revenues towards cruise tourism, which is seasonal, could negatively affect the local population's perception of the industry. Ref. [30] continues this theme and suggests employing local representatives in the cruise industry. This approach allows for maintaining ethnic balance, training locals, and conveying the values of sustainability promoted by companies. In turn, ref. [59] in their study, target policymakers and demonstrate that the industry's sustainable development and the integration of local communities lead to a decrease in crime and an increase in the likelihood of cruise tourism projects succeeding. Additionally, it is worth noting that two studies focus on the COVID-19 pandemic's role in the sustainable interaction of the cruise industry and local communities. Ref. [55] notes that the pandemic and suspending cruises have negatively affected industry and local communities. However, sustainability is not a panacea for industry. Deeper integration of local communities into the industry will give a greater impetus to sustainable development. Ref. [57] confirm these findings and say that developing sustainable local tourism reduces the industry's sensitivity to external challenges, making it more sustainable.

Understanding the desires of local communities is the impetus for developing sustainable relationships. Researchers discuss the benefits of sustainably integrating local communities into the cruise industry [50,51,53,58,63]. Residents generally have a positive attitude toward cruise tourism's development, subject to respecting social, cultural, and economic local regulations. Concerns exist about the negative environmental impact on the part of cruise companies for local territories, which is proposed to be overcome through joint sustainable programs. In their next study, refs. [54,60] research positive and negative expectations from the local population regarding cruise tourism. Pessimistic locals suffer from a lack of knowledge about the industry and the values it promotes. Greater promotion of CSR programs will reduce negativity and create a trusting atmosphere, see the section on the CSR theme.

In addition to fears for environmental safety, most of the concerns of local communities relate to the increase in passenger flows and excursions to areas without sufficient capacity [64]. Ref. [61] propose integrating local operators. Tourist flows can be directed to regions further from the coast, reducing the pressure on the territory close to the ports and allowing more local communities to be better integrated. Ref. [62] continue this direction and reveal that redistributing tourist flows forms the prerequisite for preserving and developing parks and recreational areas.

3.2.4. Linking Collaboration with Stakeholders, Infrastructure, and Community Development

Generally, the proposed research in this part combines identifying principles and factors influencing the sustainable development of stakeholders to develop the industry. The researchers insist that sustainable development is a balanced development of the industry, an imbalance in the priority of interests favoring one stakeholder makes developing the industry and cruise destinations difficult. In addition to cruise lines, passengers, and local communities, researchers note the role of policymakers [32,45], transport infrastructure [39,44], and others [40]. Researchers see the formation and development of sustainable corridors for the industry's development as the key actions to achieve the sustainability of individual stakeholders [38,44] and the entire industry [14,45]. An important factor in the success of industry development is the ability of cruise lines to formulate a sustainable development program considering the interests of other stakeholders and communicate benefits and benefits to representatives of local communities [30,52].

3.3. Theme 3: Training in Sustainable Behavior

The Training of Sustainable Behavior section consists of six publications and focuses on the experience of training industry participants regarding more sustainable interaction. In general, we can distinguish the following subcategories in this section: (1) passenger education with a focus on the younger generation [31]; (2) cruise ship personnel training [66–68]; (3) training for the industry's development without referencing individual stakeholders [69,70]. Table 4 presents papers included in the training for sustainable behavior theme.

Table 4. Theme 3: Training in sustainable behavior.

Authors	Research Area	Category
Cecchi and Nwosu, 2016 [66]	Cruise ship personnel	
Walker and Moscardo, 2020 [63]	Cruise ship personnel	
Faremi et al., 2022 [25]	Cruise ship personnel	Training in sustainable behavior
Romhild-Raviart et al., 2019 [69]	Industrial training for development	
Blanchard et al., 2022 [70]	Industrial training for development	
Kattsir, 2021 [31]	Young generation	

The focal industry targets the younger generation as the most promising direction for sustainable values [31]. Companies form development strategies and bet on young people's involvement as future customers of sustainable transportation. In turn, cruise ship personnel actively promote sustainability ideas in the industry. However, these values must be conveyed first to the employees, who then convey the importance of sustainable development of passenger transport as the industry's future [68]. Personal interaction between employees and passengers and security on board are essential steps towards building trust [63], with their own cultural characteristics depending on the geography of the cruises [66]. However, conveying the value of sustainability is important to the industry. Individual participants make many statements; nevertheless, stakeholders may not fully understand the meaning and proposed actions. Researchers note the importance of comparing the positive and negative factors of applying sustainability, ways to reduce the inconvenience of transitioning to a new state, and the importance of understanding in-depth the benefits of a new form of interaction [69]. Ref. [70] goes further and insists on the role of sustainable transport as a step towards peace and prosperity.

Linking Passengers and Personnel Training

It is worth noting that sustainable behavior training in the industry is new for most stakeholders. Creating the value of sustainability and offering it to the market and consumers will be based on the desire of companies to participate in this trend. Now passengers

are unwilling to sacrifice their comfort or pay more for obscure values. Educating consumers, especially the younger generation, can facilitate the industry's development and attract new customers for cruise companies [31]. Understanding sustainability values and being willing to participate in financing will form brand trust.

4. Future of Sustainable Cruises and Research Agenda

The increase in publications on sustainable cruises from management and business perspective, especially over the past six years, demonstrates the promise of this direction for theory and practice. Our analysis and discussion of industry trends have formed the basis for suggesting new directions for research. Sustainability is at an early stage of research and application in practice and is a complex and multifaceted issue requiring further elaboration. Therefore, we propose the following directions to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and form an appropriate theoretical framework.

We expected to find studies identifying the ability of certain groups of passengers to pay for their sustainable efforts, especially as the current decarbonization trend of maritime traffic will be costly for ship owners and operators. However, in our review, we could not quantify which groups of cruise passengers could participate and offset these costs. We found that (1) the younger generation is more inclined to support companies and participate in sustainable development [31]—consistent with the results of studies in other industries [71–73]; (2) cultural and national characteristics affect consumption and waste [26,27]; (3) passengers would like to participate in more sustainable cruises, provided this does not lead to increased cost and decreased comfort [35,61]. Thus, passengers shift the responsibility for the industry's sustainable development to the companies [17,22,24]. Overall, our findings suggest that further research is needed to determine the willingness to pay, and which passenger segments can contribute to the cost of sustainable development by participating in sustainable cruises. Understanding how cruise companies can incentivize and motivate passengers to participate in sustainable cruises without compromising their comfort level is also essential. We assume this is because passengers understand little about their role in sustainable development; intensive practical actions are needed for their business. In turn, the industry has few uniform standards for developing and implementing sustainable practices. Regarding sustainability, the industry is at the initial development stage. Large companies form trends that will be the standard of behavior, which small players will join. Therefore, without the efforts of major players and specialized associations, we find discussing passenger segmentation and determining the willingness to pay for sustainable cruises difficult. The joint efforts of researchers and practitioners will contribute to developing an integrated industrial approach to the industry's sustainable development issues.

The next direction for research may concern increasing cooperation between stakeholders and integrating the industry's processes to achieve sustainable cooperation. In addition to the described experience of cooperation between customers and service providers, successful projects where competitors, such as cruise companies, work together to achieve common sustainable goals are of interest. How will reducing conscious consumption and emissions affect cruise satisfaction; what amenities can passengers neglect to make their journey more sustainable? We consider exploring this area to define and implement a collaborative approach to a sustainable application experience necessary. Thus, the cruise industry should define a long-term management framework where visitor benefits are maximized within sustainable resource conditions. Passenger fees should correspond with the impact on local infrastructure and resources. Pollution monitoring should be done carefully through environmental assessments, and carbon emissions standards and accounting requirements should be established. Additionally, zero-emissions technologies and their incentives should be advanced [74–76]. Finally, cruise tourists should consume responsibly, demand that the industry be more socially responsible, and choose operators who perform ethical, trustworthy, and transparent practices [4,5]. Collaboration across the cruise tourism ecosystem and among competitors also concerns the energy transition

ahead. For example, investing in local alternative fuel production [77] and bunkering or charging infrastructure at ports will be needed [78]. The collaboration will also be required concerning climate change adaptation measures [26], which, according to our study, seems to be an understudied area within cruise tourism. The risks of climate change, which cruise companies have inadequately reported, can affect sustainable development (particularly in achieving other SDGs) [79] and a company's value. The impacts of these risks, which can be defined as physical (acute and chronic) or transition (policy, legal, technology, market, and reputational), might be exacerbated if the companies' natural-, social- and human capital dependencies are threatened. Companies can convert these risks into opportunities by offering services and products that adapt to or mitigate climate change [80]. Thus, more research is needed regarding climate change risks and opportunities within the cruise industry, so that sustainable development is not compromised.

Evaluating sustainability's impact on the customer experience in the cruise industry is another research direction. Sustainable practices are often seen as sacrificing customer comfort, even if they can lead to better environmental outcomes. Studying consumer behavior and attitudes towards sustainable practices can help identify areas where the customer experience is not negatively impacted and where sustainable practices can be implemented. Finally, research into integrating sustainable practices into current and future cruise offerings should be conducted, which would involve analyzing the current industry context, identifying areas where further sustainable practices could be introduced, and assessing the costs and benefits associated with such changes. More research is needed to delve into the social sustainability aspects of cruise tourism, including the wellbeing of cruise crews, their working conditions, and strategies to improve these aspects. Notably, the next generation of cruise passengers, including those from emerging geographical regions, may have new demands and approaches to sustainability, enabling cruise companies to make informed decisions when introducing sustainable practices and ensuring they are implemented in a way that maximizes the customer experience.

Finally, there is a clear focus on social and environmental sustainability regarding the studies on sustainable travel. While the research in social sustainability deals with the potentially adverse impact of the cruise industry on local communities, environmental sustainability is focused on less. Further, only a few articles in our sample deal with emissions from cruise shipping [3,28], while cruise vessels are large energy consumers, which is striking, given the attention devoted to reducing GHG emissions and elsewhere in the shipping industry. See, e.g., [81]. These issues are debated in more technically oriented journals or journals dedicated to shipping or transportation. Yet, as indicated above, topics like passenger perception of measures to reduce emissions from cruise shipping and the corresponding willingness to pay for them are of direct interest in cruise tourism management. Sustainability reporting practices have received much critique among researchers [22] as in the general press [82]. Increased work in the industry maintains its reputation in the eyes of its customers. Next comes the threat of biodiversity loss and biodiversity accounting [83].

Biodiversity is vital for a healthy planet, essential for human well-being and economic prosperity, and central to the sustainable development agenda. The Kunming–Montreal Global biodiversity framework was developed to accelerate, enable, and awaken transformative and urgent actions to halt and reverse biodiversity loss to answer the current higher-than-average species extinction rate. Of the 23 action-oriented global targets until 2030 that the framework has developed, two targets specifically mention the private sector. Following Target 14, biodiversity and its values should be fully integrated into, e.g., regulations, planning and development processes, policies, strategic environmental assessments, and environmental impact assessments so that especially private activities significantly impacting biodiversity progressively align with the framework's targets and goals. Target 19 emphasizes the role of private resources in promoting biodiversity by leveraging private finance to add to the $200 billion per year needed to implement strategies and action plans. The private sector is also encouraged to invest in biodiversity through

instruments such as impact funds [84]. Although many cruise destinations claim to be in biodiversity hotspots [85], how the cruise industry has reported on biodiversity is severely understudied; more insight into their practices is needed. The cruise industry has devoted numerous resources to funds to seem ecologically responsible [86]. Whether these investments benefit biodiversity is questionable. Therefore, the instruments the cruise industry uses that positively (or negatively) impact biodiversity should be analyzed more closely.

Most articles included in our study are qualitative papers. However, a better understanding of what is happening and identifying development trends using quantitative research methods are required. One sub-direction could be a quantitative study of passengers and residents in the community, their needs, and priorities for sustainable cruise tourism. Research methods can include field surveys and interviews, generating the necessary data from a large sample. However, researchers should be careful when comparing the results obtained in different regions of the cruise industry. Furthermore, quantitative methods can provide more reliable and valid results than qualitative methods. Moreover, to accomplish a sustainability transition, more actionable knowledge and theoretically oriented studies are needed. Hence, the area of sustainable cruise tourism could benefit from action or design science research (or the like), which has received more attention in operations management during the past decade or so [87,88]. The complete lack of such studies characterizes sustainable cruise tourism (for an exception, see [21]).

The pandemic has certainly impacted sustainable practices in the cruise industry, and the ideas of a blue recovery have traction. Cruise lines have been forced to review and change their operational methods to comply with the increased safety measures and regulations to reduce the spread of the virus. However, we can only begin to assess the pandemic's impact on the sustainable practices that have emerged in the cruise industry during this period. Will sustainability be a change in thinking in the focal industry? What habitual practices that were typical before will change under new procedures and circumstances? Will interaction between industry stakeholders, for example, cruise companies and local communities, change? Cruises will continue prioritizing the safety of passengers and crew, and cruise lines will continue reviewing their sustainable practices to ensure they can reduce their environmental impact. Cruise lines will also continue prioritizing their relationships with local communities and ensure they can positively contribute to the local economy.

5. Policy Implications

The findings of this study carry significant implications for policymakers and business entities involved in cruise tourism. Our work underscores the urgent need for sustainable practices and offers a comprehensive roadmap for stakeholders.

Firstly, policymakers should mandate stricter regulations for sustainable practices in cruise tourism. This could involve setting limits on emissions, regulating waste management, and encouraging the use of renewable energy sources. Adopting clean technologies, such as advanced wastewater treatment systems and shore power, should be incentivized. Secondly, our findings highlight the necessity of collaboration among various stakeholders, including cruise companies, local communities, and passengers. Policies should foster a cooperative approach to achieving sustainable goals. This could include establishing platforms for dialogue and cooperation or introducing regulations that require cruise companies to work closely with local communities to minimize the environmental impact and maximize the economic benefits of tourism. Thirdly, cruise passengers play a crucial role in sustainable tourism. Policies should aim to promote responsible tourist behavior. This could involve educational initiatives to raise awareness about sustainability issues, or financial incentives for passengers who engage in sustainable practices. Moreover, our research also points to the importance of supporting local communities in cruise destinations. Policies should be implemented that ensure a fair distribution of tourism revenues to these communities and mitigate the potential adverse impacts of tourism. This could involve, for

example, regulations that require cruise companies to source a certain percentage of their goods and services from local businesses.

These policy recommendations aim to promote a more sustainable cruise tourism industry. Implementing these strategies will require a concerted effort from all stakeholders, but the potential benefits—for the environment, local communities, and the cruise tourism industry itself—are substantial.

6. Differences with Previous Studies

Our study extends the existing body of knowledge in sustainable cruise tourism by offering a more comprehensive perspective. Here, we outline the key differences between our findings and those of previous studies:

Firstly, while previous research often focused on isolated aspects of sustainability in cruise tourism (e.g., environmental impact and social implications), our study adopts a holistic approach by examining sustainability from multiple dimensions. This includes corporate social responsibility, territory management, and training in sustainable behavior, providing a more complete understanding of the issue. Secondly, our work delves deeper into the role of passengers in sustainable development, a topic that previous studies have not thoroughly explored. We identify an urgent need for further research to determine passenger segments willing to contribute to the cost of sustainable development by participating in sustainable cruises. Thirdly, our findings emphasize the importance of stakeholder collaboration for sustainable cruise tourism. This is a relatively underexplored area in existing literature, and our study highlights the potential of collaborative projects where cruise companies, passengers, and local communities work together to achieve common sustainable goals.

These differences underscore the unique contribution of our study to the literature on sustainable cruise tourism. By offering a more comprehensive and forward-looking perspective, our work provides valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, this systematic literature review has unveiled the current state of research on sustainable cruise tourism from a business and management perspective. The study has highlighted the main themes that dominate the discourse: corporate social responsibility, territory management, and training in sustainable behavior. These themes offer a comprehensive understanding of the intricate connections between sustainability and cruise tourism.

Our study has revealed that while sustainability in cruise tourism is gaining momentum, there are still considerable gaps and opportunities for further research. Key areas for future exploration include the impact of greenhouse gas emissions from cruising, the biodiversity impacts of cruise tourism, a more quantitative understanding of the target audience and their willingness to finance sustainability initiatives, and a deeper understanding of the reasons behind stakeholder cooperation. Moreover, research into the genuine motivations behind participation in sustainable development and the long-term trends in the cruise industry's adaptation to global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic presents fertile ground for future studies.

This review underscores the fact that sustainability is not a static goal but a dynamic process. As the cruise tourism industry evolves, so too should its approach to sustainability. Businesses, policymakers, and other stakeholders in cruise tourism must be willing to continually reassess and adapt their practices to meet the changing sustainability demands.

The cruise industry, like many others, is at a crossroads where it must balance economic growth with the urgent need for sustainable practices. While the path to sustainability is filled with challenges, it also offers exciting opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and growth. This study hopes to inform these efforts and inspire further research into the sustainable development of cruise tourism.

Lastly, it is worth noting that the findings and insights generated in this study are based on the available literature as of our last update. Given the rapidly evolving nature of both the cruise industry and sustainability research, we encourage continued exploration and dialogue in this important field.

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