**The complexity of sustainable tourism behaviour during recession**

During the last few decades sustainable tourism has exponentially increased its popularity, since it operates as a means for economic growth, increase of life quality, and natural and cultural heritage preservation. Nevertheless, the sustainability’s economic costs hider the potential for its wider implementation (Nickerson et al., 2016). Thus, tourists continue to select less sustainable behavioural patterns, even if they are highly environmentally committed (Barr et al., 2011). Previous studies indicate that during economic crises the environmental pressures related with sustainability are reduced because people tend to consume less (Evans, 2011). However, when we want to evaluate the sustainable tourism behaviour we have to take under consideration the complexity of the affiliated tourism systems (Franzoni, 2015). This is due to the fact that several indicators and interactions substantially influence the tourism behaviour (Agyeiwaah et al., 2017), and an asymmetric analysis of the behavioural complexity can assist us to better comprehend its formulation (Hsu et al., 2020).

This aim of this study is to examine the aspects that influence the complex decisions related with the sustainability of tourism behaviour during recession. The research was held in 2019, and the sample consists of 324 permanent adult residents of Athens (Greece) that more than a decade are batter with recession and extensive austerity measures. The study employs fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) considering the simple conditions of marketing activities, price and quality, destination image, and disposable tourism income. The findings have generated three pathways: (i) the economic impact (ii) the nexus towards price and quality, and (iii) the quality in the provided experience.

The contribution of this research lies in both, theoretical and methodological domains. Literature-wise, it contributes by examining the complexity of tourism decision-making related with sustainability during an economic crisis. Methodologically, it contributes by employing fsQCA (a relatively new method in tourism analysis), and by comparing its findings with the dominant linear analysis methods (regression; Cramer’s V).

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