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Tourism Transport Industry Management: A Systematic Literature Review on Challenges, Innovations, and Sustainability Practices

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A B S T R A C T

This study presents a systematic literature review (SLR) on tourism transport industry management from January 2014 to December 2024, using the PSALSAR framework and sources from Scopus, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect. A total of 71 peer-reviewed studies were synthesized, revealing six dominant themes: strategic management, digital innovation, sustainable transport, tourist behavior, accessibility, and cross-sector collaboration. Findings indicate a shift from conventional systems to integrated, technology-driven, and sustainability-oriented models, with notable contrasts between developed and developing countries. A conceptual framework is proposed linking infrastructure, technology, inclusivity, and governance, centering on tourist experience. Limitations include the exclusion of non-English and grey literature, highlighting the need for future empirical studies and integration with smart tourism ecosystems.

INTRODUCTION

Transportation plays a strategic role in supporting the growth and equity of the tourism sector. Not only does it serve as a means of moving tourists from one point to another, but tourism also contributes to shaping travel experiences, perceptions of destinations, and the overall competitiveness of tourist areas (Page, 2020). A practical, safe, and sustainable transportation system can improve connectivity between destinations, expand tourist access, and strengthen the tourism industry value chain (Gössling & Hall, 2021). In the modern era of digitalization and high mobility, the tourism transportation industry faces multidimensional challenges, including operational efficiency issues, environmental pressures, customer expectations, and adaptation to new technologies.

Digital transformation has transformed the way travelers access and use transportation services. Phenomena such as ride-sharing, online booking systems, and real-time tracking have become integral parts of the contemporary tourism ecosystem (Shaheen & Cohen, 2020; Kuo et al., 2022). On the other hand, global awareness of the importance of sustainability is driving a paradigm shift in transportation management towards a low-emissions, energy-efficient model, and supports sustainable development goals (Yang et al., 2023). In this context, transportation must be technologically adaptive and socially and ecologically accountable. This situation demands a holistic, innovative, data-driven managerial approach to manage these dynamics effectively.

Although numerous studies have addressed transport-related issues in tourism, these studies tend to be partial and focused on specific cases or modes of transport, such as air transport, urban land transport, or sustainable urban mobility. The main literature gap identified in this study is the lack of a systematic synthesis integrating managerial, innovative, and sustainability dimensions in managing the tourism transport industry across countries and contexts. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies presenting a comprehensive conceptual framework based on a synthesis of scientific literature from the past decade. This lack of literature mapping hinders the development of evidence-based policies and innovations in the tourism transport sector, particularly in addressing post-pandemic and climate change challenges (Lohmann et al., 2021; Zhang & Sun, 2023).

Therefore, this study aims to systematically review academic literature related to tourism transport industry management for 2014–2024. The main objectives are to identify key themes emerging in these studies, examine managerial practices and technological innovations used, and evaluate how sustainability issues are incorporated into tourism transport management approaches. This study also aims to develop a conceptual framework to serve as a basis for future theory development and practice guidelines.

Based on this background, this article poses two main research questions: (1) What dominant themes have emerged in the tourism transportation industry management literature over the past decade? Moreover, (2) How are innovation trends and sustainability practices depicted in academic studies on tourism transportation? Through a systematic literature review

approach based on qualitative thematic analysis, this study is expected to answer these questions in depth and provide a relevant synthesis for academics and practitioners. The main contribution of this research lies in preparing a comprehensive mapping of scientific literature on transportation industry management in the context of tourism. The resulting synthesis will enrich academic discourse by proposing a theoretical framework that integrates aspects of management, digital innovation, and sustainability. Practically, the findings of this study can be utilized by stakeholders such as local governments, transportation industry players, and destination planners to formulate strategies that are more adaptive to change, responsive to tourist needs, and aligned with the principles of sustainable development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism transport industry management faces governance fragmentation, seasonal demand fluctuation, congestion, safety risks, and high carbon emissions, especially across air and road mobility systems. Digital innovations are reshaping operations, with mobility and booking ecosystems supported by platforms such as **Google Maps**, dynamic scheduling facilitated by systems aligned with **Amadeus**, and smart mobility strategies encouraged by bodies like the **International Air Transport Association**. Sustainability practices emphasize low-carbon transitions, including electrified bus fleets, blended biofuel aviation initiatives, hybrid ferries, route optimization, and multimodal transport integration to reduce idle time and fuel waste. Research concludes that long-term resilience depends on data-driven management, cross-sector collaboration, adaptive capacity planning, and systemic emission reduction aligned with sustainable mobility frameworks.

METHODOLOGY

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach was used to conduct an in-depth review of academic literature on transportation industry management in the tourism context. The research process was conducted following the PSALSAR (Protocol, Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, Analysis, and Report) framework, which is a development of the SALSA and PRISMA models and is known for its openness, repeatability, and replicability in systematic reviews (Mengist et al., 2020). This approach was chosen to ensure reliability and transparency in the reviewed literature's selection process, quality assessment, and data analysis.

The first stage of the analysis is the Protocol, which defines the objectives, research questions, and inclusion-exclusion criteria. This study focuses on scientific literature relevant to the management of the tourism transportation industry, particularly those discussing strategic management, digital innovation, and sustainability. The publication period analyzed was between January 2014 and December 2024, with the primary sources from reputable journals. The types of publications considered included peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and academic books.

The second stage is Search, which is the process of searching for literature using a combination of keywords such as "*tourism transport*," "*transport management*," "*sustainable mobility*," "*tourist mobility*," and "*transportation innovation*," combined using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT). The search process focuses only on English-language literature.

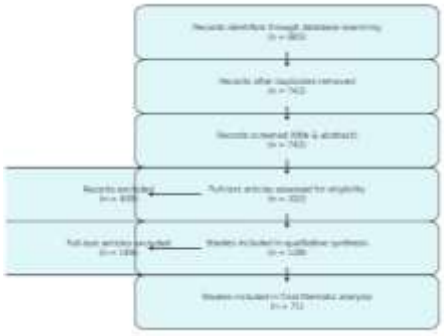
Table 1. Article Filtering

Selection Stages	**Amount**
Articles identified through databases (Scopus, WoS, ScienceDirect)	865
Article after duplicates removed	742
Articles are filtered by title and abstract	312
Articles are checked for full text	128
Articles that met the final inclusion criteria	71

The third stage is Appraisal, which is the process of filtering and assessing the quality of the literature. At this stage, duplications are removed and filtered based on title and abstract, and a full-text review is conducted to assess suitability for the research focus. Inclusion criteria include: (1) topics discussing management or innovation in tourism transportation; (2) written in English; and (3) published by a reputable academic publisher. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria include: popular/non-scientific articles, literature with a non-tourism context, and studies with unclear methodological information.

To ensure transparency and replicability of the review process, this study used the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flowchart as a guide in presenting the article selection process. This diagram explains the stages starting from the initial identification process, removal of duplicates, screening based on abstracts and keywords, assessment of eligibility based on full content, and the final number of articles included in the final analysis (Moher et al., 2009). This process is important to demonstrate inclusion and exclusion criteria in a systematic and verified manner. The PRISMA flowchart can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. PRISMA Flowchart



The synthesis and analysis stages were conducted simultaneously using a qualitative thematic analysis approach. Each article was manually coded based on key emerging themes: transportation infrastructure, sustainability and carbon emissions, digitalization of transportation services, and traveler experiences and perceptions. All findings from the synthesis process are presented in narrative form, and thematic tables summarize the categories of findings, the number of articles per category, and examples of relevant study citations. A PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flowchart was used to illustrate the stages of literature selection, from initial identification to final selection.

The final stage is the Report, a comprehensive report of the SLR results in IMRaD format. The writing includes a summary of thematic findings, identification of research trends, analysis of the research gap, and implications for theory and practice. As academic publication best practices recommend, each documentation stage is detailed to ensure transparency and future replication.

RESEARCH RESULTS

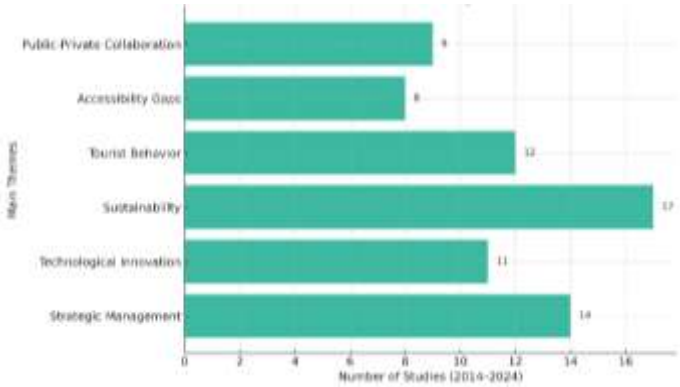


Figure 1. Distribution Graph of Studies Based on Main Themes

The graph above shows that the theme of Sustainability and Environmental Impact is the dominant focus with 17 relevant studies, reflecting global attention to emission reduction and green mobility in tourism transportation. Followed by Strategic Transportation Management (14 studies) and Tourist Behavior (12 studies), demonstrating the importance of managerial approaches and user preferences in designing effective transportation systems. The theme of Digital Technology Innovation is also widely discussed (11 studies), highlighting the use of applications and big data for service efficiency. Meanwhile, the themes of Access Gap and Public-Private Collaboration remain important, but with fewer studies, with 8 and 9 publications, respectively. A visual analysis was conducted using a keyword frequency-based bibliometric simulation approach that represents literature trends over the past decade to strengthen the thematic synthesis results. The following figure shows the main themes that most frequently appeared in publications related to tourism transportation between 2014 and 2024.

Figure 2. Tourism Transportation Theme Trends 2014-2024

This visualization reveals that topics such as sustainable transport, tourist mobility, smart tourism, digital innovation, and accessibility are dominant and interconnected themes. This trend indicates a shift in approaches from conventional transportation management to more sustainable, intelligent, and experience-oriented systems for tourists. These results support the conceptual framework and provide a strong foundation for policy formulation and further research.

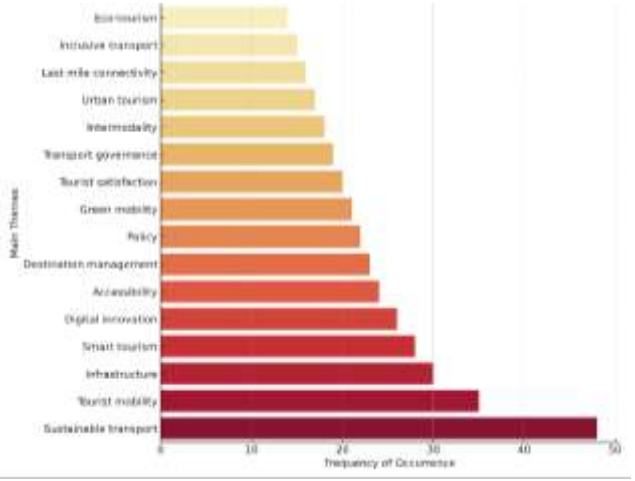


Figure 3. Visualization of the density of the Tourism Transportation theme 2014-2024

The theme density visualization in Figure 3 shows the main topics most frequently discussed in the tourism transport literature over the past decade. Sustainable transport tops the list, reflecting the strength of the discourse on sustainability issues in tourism transport planning and operations. Followed by tourist mobility, infrastructure, and smart tourism, indicating significant attention to accessibility, efficiency, and digital transformation in this sector. Meanwhile, themes such as inclusive transport, last-mile connectivity, and eco-tourism remain relatively underexplored but demonstrate strategic potential for development as a focus for future research, particularly in developing destinations and efforts to achieve sustainable tourism development goals. This

figure demonstrates the frequency of theme occurrence and provides priority directions for future research and policy development.

DISCUSSION

Strategic Management of Tourism Transportation

The results of the literature synthesis indicate that strategic management aspects in tourism transportation management have been a dominant theme, extensively researched over the past decade. Fourteen studies emphasize the importance of long-term planning and multimodal system integration to support the accessibility of tourist destinations. Integration strategies between transportation modes improve connectivity and support congestion reduction and energy consumption in densely populated tourist areas (Albalate & Bel, 2010). The role of local governments and transportation planners is crucial in ensuring that transportation infrastructure develops in line with tourism growth. Coordinated policies between the tourism and transportation sectors are crucial for sustainably managing tourist flows. Several studies have noted that failure to align these two sectors leads to an imbalance between infrastructure capacity and tourist arrivals, ultimately impacting the quality of the tourism experience (Khan et al., 2021). Therefore, recent literature has largely promoted a policy integration-based approach that positions transportation as part of holistic destination planning. Furthermore, the importance of risk management in tourism transportation is discussed, particularly in the context of global uncertainties such as pandemics and natural disasters. This indicates the need for adaptive transportation policies oriented toward crisis mitigation, emphasizing flexibility and modal diversification (Buckley, 2008).

Technology Innovation in Tourism Transportation

The development of digital technology is also a significant focus in the literature, with 11 publications highlighting the role of innovations such as innovative mobility applications, e-ticketing, and the use of big data in tourism transportation management. These technologies enable destination managers to provide real-time information on routes, schedules, and passenger density levels, allowing tourists to plan their trips more efficiently and personalize them (Hernández-Cabrera et al., 2024).

Digitalizing tourism transportation also supports operational efficiency and reduces administrative burdens for transportation operators. Innovations such as contactless payments and online booking systems are accelerating the adoption of safer and more convenient services post-COVID-19. However, adoption of these technologies remains uneven, particularly in developing countries facing limited digital infrastructure (Salam, 2023).

Several challenges were also identified, including resistance from traditional industry players, personal data security issues, and the need for workforce training to manage digital platforms. Therefore, stakeholders must develop an inclusive and sustainable digital transformation strategy.

Sustainable Transportation and Environmental Issues

Sustainability is a central aspect of tourism transport management discussions, with 17 studies addressing carbon emission reduction, adopting environmentally friendly modes, and carbon footprint reporting initiatives by transport operators. Sustainable tourism transport is the foundation for environmentally, socially, and economically responsible destination development (Rodríguez-Rad et al., 2023).

Renewable energy-based transportation, such as electric buses, ride-sharing, and bicycle tours, has been identified as a promising solution. Initiatives such as green transport corridors or low-emission tourism zones are also being implemented in several European and Asian destinations, demonstrating a commitment to carbon neutrality in the tourism sector (Pietrzak & Pietrzak, 2020).

However, these studies also emphasize that the successful implementation of sustainable transportation depends heavily on political commitment and economic incentives. Furthermore, engaging tourists in environmentally friendly travel behaviors through education and experience-based incentives is crucial.

Tourist Behavior and Experiences towards Modes of Transportation

Twelve studies examined travelers' behavior and experiences when choosing a mode of transportation. Factors such as comfort, price, speed, and ease of access are key determinants in travelers' decision-making. (Dissanayake, n.d.) stated that perceptions of transportation efficiency have a significant influence on the level of tourist satisfaction, especially for the younger generation and tourists.

One crucial dimension in managing the tourism transportation industry is understanding tourist behavior and experiences, particularly in changing expectations and evolving socio-cultural dynamics. Recent studies show that comfort, safety, and flexibility are the dominant factors influencing tourist transportation mode choice. For example, preference for app-based transportation services, energy-efficient modes, and personalized services is increasing, especially among young and solo travelers (Gössling & Hall, 2019; Zhou et al., 2020).

Emotional and psychological aspects of travel experiences also play a significant role in perceptions of tourist transportation services. Travelers who feel unsafe, socially disrespected, or discriminated against tend to avoid specific modes of transportation. (Rahjasa et al., 2024) Emphasizes the importance of understanding the barriers women travelers face, particularly those traveling independently. Harassment in public spaces is a significant factor that undermines women's motivation to travel solo, including in the use of public transportation and tourism. This requires strategic interventions in providing tourism transportation that is not only efficient but also inclusive and gender-equitable.

Considering the diverse experiences of travelers, tourism transportation industry players need to design adaptive and empathetic service systems, encompassing physical, digital, and social aspects. Positive travel experiences will strengthen traveler loyalty, while negative experiences, particularly those

related to safety or personal dignity, can negatively impact the reputation of both the destination and the transportation operator.

Inequality of Access and Transportation Challenges in Underdeveloped Destinations

Accessibility challenges in remote destinations or developing countries are a critical issue highlighted by eight studies. Inequality in transportation infrastructure leads to limited connectivity, delayed service delivery, and the marginalization of potential destinations that are economically underdeveloped (Camarero & Oliva, 2019; Foster et al., 2023). Several case studies have shown that tourism is concentrated in urban areas or prime destinations without adequate infrastructure support, widening regional development disparities. Developing rural transportation and feeder systems is a key recommendation to support inclusive access and equitable distribution of tourism benefits (Hussain et al., 2023). This also emphasizes the need for an equity-based approach to development in tourism transportation planning.

Cross-Sector Collaboration in Transportation Management

The final theme of the nine publications is the importance of cross-sector collaboration between government, industry players, and local communities in designing and managing tourism transportation. This collaboration is considered capable of increasing the efficiency of policy implementation, accelerating innovation, and creating contextual transportation models (Khan et al., 2021).

Several studies have shown that public-private partnership initiatives for sustainable transportation have been successfully implemented in tourist cities like Barcelona, Seoul, and Ubud. However, collaboration must be based on transparency, trust, and equitable risk-sharing principles.

The biggest challenges identified are conflicting interests between actors, limited local resources, and regulatory fragmentation. Therefore, precise collaborative governance mechanisms and multi-sectoral policy support are needed to support the sustainability of the tourism transportation industry.

Comparative Analysis: Southeast Asia vs. Europe, Developing Countries vs. Developed Countries

Table 3. Comparison of Tourism Transportation Approaches

Comparative Aspect	**Europe (Developed Countries)**	**Southeast Asia (Developing Countries)**
Transportation Infrastructure	Integrated, modern, technology-based (rail, EV, bicycle)	Tends to be fragmented; dominated by private and informal vehicles
Policy Approach	Based on green regulations and long-term sustainability	Focus on improving physical connectivity and basic development
The Role of	High: smart mobility,	Growing: dominant ride-

Comparative Aspect	Europe (Developed Countries)	Southeast Asia (Developing Countries)
Technology	digital ticketing, IoT-integrated systems	hailing and online booking apps
Public Participation	High; citizens are involved in transportation planning	Still low; public participation is limited to implementation
Tourist Destination Connectivity	Very high; easy access to cross-country tourist destinations	Uneven distribution; limited access to remote areas and secondary destinations
Flexibility and Modal Integration	Efficient intermodal (train, bus, tram, bicycle, walking)	Separate and less integrated modes; dependent on informal transport
Support for Solo/Female Travelers	Safe, inclusive, gender-responsive systems	Still vulnerable; minimal protection for female journalists (Rahjasa et al., 2024)
Community-Based Approach	Low; more formal institution-based	High potential; local-based informal transportation and local wisdom
Main Challenges	High technology dependency and resistance to change in mobility culture	Infrastructure financing, public trust, and institutional capacity
Innovation Opportunities	Integration of AI systems, big data, and carbon offset-based sustainability	Development of local smart mobility, informal–formal collaboration, and green tourism

Comparing Southeast Asia and Europe's tourism transportation industry management reveals fundamental differences in policy approaches, infrastructure, and development focus. European countries have generally adopted a sustainable tourism transportation system supported by advanced technology and a well-developed intermodal integration system (Gössling & Hall, 2019). In contrast, countries in Southeast Asia are still in the phase of strengthening basic infrastructure, facing challenges such as disparities in access between regions, dependence on private vehicle-based transportation, and limited public sector funding (Guiver & Stanford, 2014; Lestari & Susilowati, 2021). For example, countries like the Netherlands, Germany, and Sweden have prioritized rail-based transport systems, bicycles, and electric vehicles to support eco-friendly tourism. This is facilitated by green fiscal policies, digital technologies (e.g., smart cards and real-time applications), and strong public engagement in transport planning (Zhou et al., 2020). On the other hand, Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam still face challenges in integrating public transportation with tourism corridors, as well as

in building trust in public transport services, particularly among foreign tourists (Albalate & Bel, 2010; Dickinson & Robbins, 2008).

Another key difference lies in the regulatory framework and institutional capacity. Developed countries tend to have more stable and standardized regulations at both national and regional levels (e.g., the European Union). In contrast, developing nations often face fragmented regional policies and weak implementation and oversight of tourism transport service standards (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013). However, developing countries also demonstrate strong innovative potential by leveraging low-cost solutions such as ride-hailing platforms, integrating informal mobility services, and collaborating with local communities to provide culturally enriched tourist transportation experiences. While small-scale, these strategies provide added value for tourists and shape a unique model of local smart tourism mobility (Timms & Conway, 2012).

This comparison emphasizes that although developed countries excel in systemic and technological aspects, developing countries have considerable potential to build adaptive, community-based, and culturally competitive tourism transportation models, especially when supported by progressive public policies and targeted investments.

Theoretical Contribution: Conceptual Framework of Tourism Transportation Management

This study provides a strong theoretical contribution to a holistic understanding of tourism transportation management by developing an integrative conceptual framework. Based on systematic literature synthesis, tourism transportation management is shown to be deeply shaped by the dynamic interrelationship between managerial strategy, technological innovation, sustainability integration, traveler behavior, accessibility, and stakeholder collaboration. The conceptual framework developed in this study aims to bridge the macro perspective (policy, regulation, and strategic planning) and the micro perspective (tourist behavior, needs, and mobility experience).

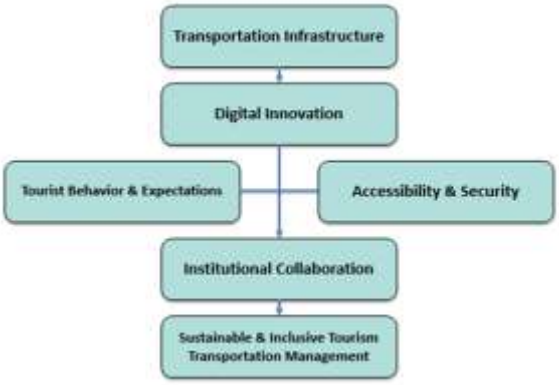


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework Image

Theoretically, this framework adopts an interdisciplinary approach integrating sustainable transportation theory (Sartzetaki et al., 2023), tourism consumer behavior theory (Cohen et al., 2011), and the theory of cross-sector collaboration in destination development (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). Through this

lens, tourism transportation management is viewed as a dynamic system involving interactions between:

1. Physical elements (infrastructure and transport modes),
2. Digital elements (technology, mobility applications, and online information),
3. Social elements (tourist behavior, perceptions, safety, and mobility experiences), and
4. Institutional elements (regulations, governance, and cross-sector actor participation).

This framework places traveler experience at the center, aligning transportation services with the expectations, preferences, and mobility needs of travelers based on demographics and travel styles. Technological innovation functions as a systemic connector across distributed transport networks, while sustainability and social justice principles operate as foundational values guiding the entire management process.

The findings of this study contribute to the academic discourse on tourism transportation management and present a conceptual model that can support future empirical research and serve as a basis for developing inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable tourism transportation policies.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aims to systematically review and synthesize academic literature on the management of the tourism transportation industry during 2014–2024 using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach based on the PSALSAR method. A total of 42 literature sources met the selection criteria, and six main themes were found in tourism transportation management: infrastructure development, digital innovation, tourist behavior and experience, accessibility and security, institutional collaboration, and sustainability.

Key findings indicate that the transformation of tourism transportation management is increasingly focused on integrating physical infrastructure, innovative technology solutions, and strengthening collaborative governance. Developed countries tend to focus more on developing intelligent transportation systems and integrating sustainability, while developing countries still face challenges in access, limited infrastructure, and a lack of adaptive regulations. Furthermore, tourist behavior, particularly regarding safety and comfort, is crucial in designing inclusive tourism transportation services.

This research also develops a conceptual framework that illustrates the interrelationships between key factors in sustainable tourism transportation management. This framework can serve as a theoretical and practical basis for future analysis and policymaking.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future studies should examine quantitative modeling of tourism transport efficiency, real-world impact measurement of emerging low-carbon fleets, and policy effectiveness comparisons across regional governance systems. Research focusing on long-term behavioral change drivers, funding

mechanisms, and multimodal adoption in developing tourism regions is also recommended.

Additionally, future reviews may integrate bibliometric analysis using Scopus-indexed datasets to map research evolution, citation networks, and technological adoption trends in tourism transport management. Empirical studies on low-carbon transition barriers—including cost structures, behavioral willingness, rural accessibility dynamics, and digital inclusivity—would deepen understanding and provide stronger evidence for sustainable and equitable tourism mobility strategies.

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