



Advancing Regenerative Tourism Responsibility through Immersive Sustainability Practices: The Mediating Role of Eco-Value Co-Creation

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Received: 10 June 2026

Accepted: 16 August 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32479/tp.25119>

ABSTRACT

This research seeks to examine the impact of immersive sustainability practices (ISP) on eco-value co-creation (EVC) and regenerative tourism responsibility (RTR) in tourism companies in Jordan, with a specific emphasis on the mediation effect of EVC. Through a survey of 302 tourism employees using snowball sampling and a structural equation modelling (SEM) approach, it examines the interconnections between regenerative experience design (RED), tourist immersion engagement (TIE), employee pro-environmental creativity (EPC) and institutional sustainability alignment (ISA) with EVC and RTR. The results demonstrate that RED, TIE, and ISA have a strong influence on EVC and RTR, but EPC does not. EVC significantly impacts RTR and mediates the relationships between other practices and RTR. The study offers new evidence of the connectedness of these practices and their impact on RTR. It underscores the significance of EVC, as a novel but important mediator, and provides practical implications for improving sustainability-oriented experiences and integrating tourism operations with a regenerative development agenda to create a more sustainable and resilient tourism industry.

Keywords: Regenerative Tourism Responsibility, Immersive Sustainability Practices, Eco-Value Co-Creation, Sustainable Tourism Management, Structural Equation Modelling

JEL Classifications: L83, Q56, Z32

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is a critical focus for the global tourism sector, given the pressing environmental challenges including climate change, loss of biodiversity, and resource scarcity (Mendez and Platt, 2026). Recent tourism literature has moved from traditional sustainability models to more transformative and regenerative practices that focus on ecosystem restoration, community prosperity, and long-term environmental value creation (Shamim et al., 2025). Despite this shift, previous studies have tended to focus on operational and compliance-focused sustainability practices, with little emphasis on immersive, experience-based approaches that engage tourists in sustainability

initiatives (Shamim et al., 2025; Wu and Zhang, 2024). In this context, ISP are increasingly acknowledged as a strategic approach for tourism enterprises to embed environmental considerations into experiential service offerings while engaging stakeholders. These go beyond merely “green washing” tourism by integrating sustainability into tourism experiences, thus linking economic performance with environmental and social sustainability. The need for sustainability transitions is especially pronounced in new tourism destinations like Jordan, where tourism is a critical sector for economic growth, yet also places significant demands on vulnerable ecosystems (Isa et al., 2026; Octafian et al., 2024). Jordan is particularly susceptible to climate change effects, such as water stress, desertification and ecosystem degradation, which

threaten the sustainability of its tourism economy (Wang, 2026). Although previous research has addressed sustainable tourism development and eco-tourism in these regions, it tends to offer piecemeal insight into isolated elements of sustainable tourism such as tourism policy or consumer behaviour, rather than holistic models that capture the dynamic relationship between business practices, stakeholder relations and sustainability outcomes (Naboni et al., 2025; Shamim et al., 2025). Consequently, there is little research on how to operationalise sustainability in tourism enterprises in developing countries.

In this changing landscape, ISP provide a new approach to sustainable tourism development by considering experiential, behavioural and institutional aspects of sustainability (Batool, 2025). For example, RED emphasises designing tourism experiences that proactively contribute to environmental regeneration and education, while TIE increases visitors' involvement in sustainability-focused activities, leading to pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours (Japir Bataineh et al., 2023). Meanwhile, ISA aligns tourism operations with regulatory and sustainability standards and national environmental policies. But the significance of employee-level factors (such as EPC) remains unclear in the existing literature, with conflicting and uncertain results for their impacts on sustainability outcomes (Octafian et al., 2024; Beeters and Centley, 2015). This suggests a significant knowledge gap on whether internal human capital capabilities play a role in achieving regenerative tourism goals. While such skills are increasingly being adopted, little is known about how they lead to broader sustainability outcomes. Specifically, EVC has emerged as an important but underdeveloped construct in tourism. While value co-creation has been extensively debated in the service and marketing fields, its environmental and regenerative aspects have been overlooked, particularly in tourism (Isa et al., 2026; Zaman et al., 2023). Furthermore, existing research has tended to emphasise the direct links between sustainability practices and outcomes, overlooking the underlying mechanisms that explain how and why these connections arise (Yeoman and McMahon, 2025; Roser et al., 2023). As a result, the mediating effect of EVC between immersive sustainability practices and RTR has remained largely unexplored, constituting an important theoretical and empirical gap.

This study builds on stakeholder theory (Wu and Zhang, 2024; Octafian et al., 2024) and the resource-based view (RBV) (Isa et al., 2026) to offer a theoretical framework. These theories have been extensively used to explain sustainability phenomena, but their joint application to explain immersive and experience-based sustainability practices and value co-creation in tourism is lacking. Stakeholder theory emphasises the need to consider the expectations and needs of multiple stakeholders, such as tourists, residents, government, and conservation groups, to meet sustainability goals (Mendez and Platt, 2026). Meanwhile, RBV stresses the importance of leveraging internal resources and capabilities (such as innovative sustainability initiatives, experience design and institutional fit) to create competitive advantage and value in the long run (Wang, 2026). By bridging these perspectives, a more holistic view of how tourism businesses draw on their resources and capabilities while managing

stakeholders can be achieved, thereby overcoming theoretical inconsistencies in previous research. In Jordan, previous studies have examined sustainable tourism development, eco-tourism and destination management (Octafian et al., 2024; Suryawan et al., 2025). Yet, empirical research that explores the interactions among multiple sustainability practices and how they enable regenerative outcomes through value co-creation processes within developing tourism economies with institutional and environmental challenges remains scarce. This restricts the transferability of the findings and calls for empirical and place-specific research approaches. In this context, the current study aims to explore the relationships between RED, TIE, EPC and ISA in tourism businesses in Jordan. The study explores how they impact EVC and RTR, particularly focusing on the mediating effects of EVC. To this end, this paper seeks to answer the following questions: RQ1: What are the impacts of RED, TIE, EPC and ISA on EVC and RTR? RQ2: What is the mediating role of EVC in these relationships, especially in Jordan's tourism industry? RQ3: What are the roles of experiential practices, stakeholder involvement and institutional fit in regenerative tourism responsibility?

The study is anticipated to have several theoretical and practical implications for sustainable tourism. Theoretically, it advances an integrated model that connects immersive sustainability practices with regenerative sustainability outcomes through the role of eco-value co-creation, filling in some of the important gaps regarding the role of experiential sustainability, value co-creation, and integrated modeling in tourism research. Practically, it provides insights for policy makers and tourism practitioners in Jordan through the identification of critical sustainability drivers, such as experiential design, stakeholder engagement and institutional alignment. Through the integration of tourism practices with the goals of environmental and social responsibility, this research offers a means to achieve a more sustainable, regenerative and resilient tourism industry.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This research builds on an ecological theoretical foundation integrating stakeholder theory and the RBV to understand how ISP drives regenerative tourism through EVC. This dual-theoretical perspective offers a holistic view of both the interpersonal interactions and internal resource and capability-based processes that influence sustainability performance in tourism firms. This theoretical combination is especially pertinent in complex service industries like tourism, where value co-creation occurs between multiple stakeholders in the tourism ecosystem, and firms draw on unique resources and capabilities (Wang, 2026; Japir Bataineh et al., 2023). Stakeholder theory suggests that for organizations to succeed and retain legitimacy, they need to take into account the expectations of a wide range of stakeholders, such as customers, employees, local communities, regulatory bodies and environmental organisations (Wu and Zhang, 2024; Naboni et al., 2025). This view is particularly relevant in the tourism industry, as tourism activities always involve intermingling among different stakeholders whose interests are closely linked to environmental

and socio-cultural considerations (Octafian et al., 2024; Beeters and Centley, 2025). Existing research has shown that stakeholder engagement plays a critical role in improving sustainability outcomes through increased trust, cooperation and collective ownership (Mendez and Platt, 2026; Shamim et al., 2025). For example, in sustainable tourism, the active engagement of tourists in environmental conservation programs has been shown to enhance environmental sustainability and pro-environmental attitudes (Suryawan et al., 2025; Zaman et al., 2023). Likewise, institutional fit with regulatory and sustainability policies has been shown to promote responsiveness to environmental issues (Japir Bataineh et al., 2023; Yeoman and McMahon, 2025). This evidence supports the inclusion of TIE and ISA as variables in the current study. Additionally, stakeholder theory offers a robust framework for conceptualising EVC as a co-creation process where stakeholders collectively create environmental, social and economic value (Roser et al., 2023; Yedla and Ajoon, 2022).

The current literature on service-dominant logic highlights that value is not only created by companies but through their interactions with stakeholders (Khamisu et al., 2026; Beeters and Centley, 2025). This co-creation is especially pertinent in tourism, where tourists play an active role in creating their own experiences and achieving sustainability goals (Magdy et al., 2026; Yedla and Ajoon, 2022). Yet, while the concept of co-creation is increasingly recognised, its environmental and regenerative aspects have been largely overlooked in emerging tourism markets. This research extends stakeholder theory by conceptualizing EVC as a key mediating factor that connects immersive sustainability practices to RTR, thus bridging a research gap. While stakeholder theory offers a relational and interactive understanding of sustainability, the RBV complements this view by emphasising the role of internal capabilities and strategic resources that help organisations attain competitive advantage and superior performance (Isa et al., 2026; Arroba et al., 2024). RBV suggests that companies can generate long-term value by leveraging valuable, rare, inimitable, non-substitutable (VRIN) resources (Batoool, 2025). In sustainable tourism, these resources encompass innovative sustainability initiatives and the ability to design and manage experiential offerings, as well as environmental management knowledge (Suryawan et al., 2025; Japir Bataineh et al., 2023). Previous empirical research has demonstrated that firms with relatively high levels of internal capabilities are more likely to effectively execute sustainability strategies, and deliver better environmental and economic performance (Hung and Tsou, 2026; Shamim et al., 2025).

In this research, RED and EPC are defined as important internal capabilities that reflect the firm's capacity to innovate and offer sustainability experiences. RED is a resource that allows tourism firms to develop experiences that promote ecological restoration and environmental education, whereas EPC relates to the creative capacity of employees to develop innovative sustainability strategies. Previous studies have indicated the significance of these capabilities, showing that employee-level innovation and creativity play a critical role in improving sustainability outcomes (Naboni et al., 2025; Wu and Zhang, 2024). However, empirical findings on the direct effect of employee creativity on sustainability

performance are mixed, suggesting the need for more research in integrated models like the one proposed in this study. Crucially, the RBV also offers a theoretical framework for explaining the interaction between internal capabilities and processes of external stakeholder engagement in creating value. Recent research shows that the success of sustainability efforts is not just reliant on internal resources but also on the ability to engage with stakeholders to harness these resources (Japir Bataineh et al., 2023; Suryawan et al., 2025). This is in line with the concept of EVC as an intermediary between internal resources (e.g., RED, EPC) and external stakeholder interactions (e.g., TIE, ISA).

This study bridges RBV and stakeholder theory to create a more comprehensive view of sustainability, which encompasses both resource and interaction perspectives. Moreover, previous tourism and sustainability research has increasingly recognised the need for integrated theoretical frameworks to tackle the challenges of sustainability (Wang, 2026; Mendez and Platt, 2026). Researchers integrating stakeholder theory and RBV have shown the complementary value of these theories in explaining sustainability performance in various industries, such as hospitality and tourism (Yeoman and McMahon, 2025; Isa et al., 2026). These studies offer empirical evidence supporting the proposed model, which implies that enterprises that effectively align resources and capabilities with stakeholder demands are likely to achieve greater sustainability performance. Overall, a combination of stakeholder theory and RBV provides a solid theoretical framework for this research. Stakeholder theory clarifies how tourism enterprises work with a variety of stakeholders in the creation of value, and RBV explains how resources and capabilities allow enterprises to implement sustainability policies. These theories offer a consistent framework to explore the links between ISP (RED, TIE, EPC, ISA, EVC and RTR). This synthesis not only fills important theoretical gaps in the literature but also offers a robust foundation for testing the proposed model in the context of tourism enterprises in Jordan.

2.1. Employee Pro-Environmental Creativity, Eco-Value Co-Creation and Regenerative Tourism Responsibility

EPC is vital in co-creating sustainable outcomes in tourism businesses through the creation of innovative ideas, solutions and practices that foster environmental value creation. In tourism enterprises, employees are often the front line of engagement with tourists and service delivery, and so their creative contribution is vital for incorporating sustainability practice into the experiential process (Batoool, 2025). Previous research has consistently highlighted that employees' creativity plays a vital role in enhancing firms' sustainability performance through adaptive responses to environmental threats and innovative service delivery (Suryawan et al., 2025; Octafian et al., 2024). Specifically, creative employees are more likely to initiate practices that enact environmental sustainability, encouraging co-participation between organizations and tourists, hence enhancing co-creation processes (Naboni et al., 2025; Beeters and Centley, 2025). EVC represents a processual construct in which value is co-produced through stakeholder interactions, especially in the service-based industry of tourism. Studies suggest that creativity among employees facilitates interactive value creation by promoting knowledge

exchange, co-participation, and experiential innovations (Zaman et al., 2023; Yeoman and McMahon, 2025). Moreover, pro-sustainability employee practices have been shown to have a positive impact on stakeholder collaboration, a critical aspect of co-creating environmental value in tourism. In the context of regenerative tourism, EPC is particularly important in the design and delivery of transformative experiences that actively engage tourists in sustainability initiatives, fostering mutual value creation (Shamim et al., 2025). Thus, EPC is likely to play a key role in improving EVC through innovative, experiential and participatory sustainability. This link is supported by findings that creative human capital is a strategic driver of collaborative sustainability and has a critical role in linking organisational intentions with stakeholder involvement (Wu and Zhang, 2024). Thus, increased EPC is likely to enhance EVC in tourism enterprises.

H₁: EPC has a positive influence on EVC.

EPC is emerging as a key enabler of sustainability transformation in tourism enterprises, especially in achieving long-term regeneration. In tourism enterprises, employees not only perform their work but also develop new environmental solutions that integrate sustainability into service offerings, delivery, and tourist experiences (Wang, 2026). Existing studies have shown that employee creativity in a sustainability context improves an organisation's adaptability and environmental performance, by generating new ideas for resource efficiency and waste minimization (Suryawan et al., 2025; Japir Bataineh et al., 2023). These creative skills are particularly valuable in tourism, as service interactions impact environmental sustainability and consumer behaviours (Yedla and Ajoon, 2022). RTR goes beyond traditional sustainability, focusing on restoration, community well-being and ecological balance. Research indicates that human capital-based innovation is crucial in achieving such regenerative goals by allowing organisations to transition from reactive to active sustainability practices (Roser et al., 2023). Environmentally creative employees are more likely to initiate practices that mitigate ecological impact and enhance social and environmental value creation (Hung and Tsou, 2026). Additionally, studies show that innovative employee conduct drives cultures that value sustainability and environmental responsibility, thus supporting regenerative practices at both the operational and strategic levels (Batool, 2025). In tourism, this means creating experiences that are not only harmless but also beneficial to the environment and local communities (Suryawan et al., 2025). Research also shows that employee-led sustainability programs enhance destination resilience and long-term ecological sustainability (Yeoman and McMahon, 2025). Consequently, it is anticipated that EPC will have a positive impact on RTR by helping tourism enterprises to embed innovative environmental practices into their operations, thereby contributing to more sustainable, restorative and responsible tourism outcomes.

H₂: EPC has a positive impact on RTR.

2.2. Regenerative Experience Design and Eco-Value Co-Creation

RED is an advanced EPC that involves designing visitor experiences to support environmental restoration and socio-ecological

understanding. RED differs from conventional service design in its emphasis on participatory learning, place-making and transformative visitor experiences that promote responsibility and stewardship rather than consumption. Research has suggested that experience-based sustainability programs considerably improve stakeholder engagement through an enhanced emotional and cognitive understanding of sustainability (Mendez and Platt, 2026; Suryawan et al., 2025). This level of experience is critical in promoting collaborative actions that move beyond individual awareness to collective action. EVC is enhanced when tourism experiences align with the needs for interaction between tourists, hosts, and suppliers. Research has demonstrated that immersive and participatory tourism experiences prompt co-innovation and co-creation of value in nature-based and cultural tourism activities (Başaran, 2025; Yeoman and McMahon, 2025). RED plays a role in this by incorporating sustainability narratives into the experiential journey, which allows tourists to engage in conservation and regeneration efforts (Wu and Zhang, 2024). In addition, innovation through experience in tourism has been shown to improve stakeholder synergy by building platforms for learning, engagement and environmental contribution (Batool, 2025; Yedla and Ajoon, 2022). Interactive platforms contribute to trust and collaboration, which are crucial in building co-created value systems in tourism ecosystems (Naboni et al., 2025). Research also indicates that experience-centric sustainability approaches enhance the willingness of tourists to participate in pro-environmental actions and contribute to destination sustainability efforts (Shamim et al., 2025). Thus, RED is likely to have a positive effect on EVC by enhancing tourism experiences to provide interactive sustainability platforms for co-created value through participation, engagement, and interaction with the environment. This positions RED as a critical experiential enabler for co-created eco-value creation in regenerative tourism.

H₃: RED has a positive influence on EVC.

2.3. Regenerative Experience Design and Regenerative Tourism Responsibility

RED is emerging as a core tourism competency that can turn traditional tourist experiences into tools for environmental restoration and socio-ecological improvement. RED differs from conventional sustainability strategies, which largely concentrate on reducing negative impacts, by prioritizing the creation of positive outcomes for environments and communities through tourism experiences. Existing research has emphasised that experiential sustainability interventions can profoundly influence visitor attitudes, and promote a sense of environmental stewardship during and beyond tourism experiences (Japir Bataineh et al., 2023; Wang, 2026). RTR represents next-gen sustainability where tourism businesses are actively involved in ecosystem and cultural regeneration and destination resilience. Studies suggest that when tourism experiences are deliberately designed with learning, participation and environmental contribution elements, they can improve and strengthen organisational responsibility towards sustainable development agendas (Roser et al., 2023; Yedla and Ajoon, 2022). These experiential structures help destinations shift from compliance-driven to regeneration-driven sustainability. Research also demonstrates that tourism experiences that include

environmental narratives and participation positively impact visitors' environmental awareness and subsequent long-term behavioural shift (Beeters and Centley, 2025; Octafian et al., 2024). These individual shifts support organisational initiatives for more sustainable and regenerative tourism. Further, experience-based sustainability initiatives have demonstrated enhanced destination stewardship through alignment of tourist experiences with environmental and community-based agendas (Hung and Tsou, 2026; Zaman et al., 2023). Furthermore, regenerative design strategies to strengthen the emotional connection to destinations, which in turn increases the sense of visitor responsibility and corporate responsibility for environmental outcomes (Başaran, 2025). This integration of experience and sustainability responsibility facilitates the creation of tourism systems that value ecological and community regeneration over short-term economic interests. Thus, RED is likely to have a positive effect on RTR through the integration of regenerative principles into tourism experiences, which will promote organizational accountability for environmental sustainability and destination regeneration.

H₄: RED has a positive effect on RTR.

2.4. Tourist Immersion Engagement and Eco-Value Co-Creation

TIE represents the degree to which visitors are mentally, emotionally and physically engaged in sustainability-focused tourism experiences. In the recent literature, immersion is acknowledged as a key factor that can convert tourists from passive consumers to active creators of environmental and cultural value. Existing research has shown that greater engagement by tourists leads to improved interactive learning, destination connection, and active participation in tourism environments (Wu and Zhang, 2024; Japir Bataineh et al., 2023). EVC is created when visitors transform from consumers to co-producers and engage in sustainable outcomes with tourism stakeholders and communities. Studies on experiential tourism demonstrate immersive involvement fosters co-construction of meaning, with tourists co-evolving environmental values and contributing to sustainable outcomes (Mendez and Platt, 2026; Hung and Tsou, 2026). This engagement is especially critical in nature- and culture-based tourism settings, where it impacts conservation and community development efforts (Suryawan et al., 2025). Research also indicates immersive tourism experiences foster destination ownership, which in turn encourages tourists to engage in pro-environmental behaviours and support conservation efforts (Magdy et al., 2026; Yeoman and McMahon, 2025). Moreover, in engagement-driven tourism settings, ongoing interactions among stakeholders can lead to more dynamic and co-evolved sustainability outcomes (Naboni et al., 2025). These processes are critical for co-evolving participatory ecosystems where value is both delivered and co-created through the engagement. Moreover, studies emphasise that immersive involvement boosts trust and relational commitment between tourists and service providers, leading to increased value co-creation in service ecosystems (Wang, 2026). Such relational dynamics are essential for integrating tourists into sustainability processes and so support co-creation outcomes at individual and destination levels. As such, TIE is anticipated to play a crucial role in EVC by promoting engagement, emotional attachment and

interaction among tourism stakeholders to enhance the co-creation of eco-value in regenerative tourism ecosystems.

H₅: TIE significantly influences EVC.

2.5. Tourist Immersion Engagement and Regenerative Tourism Responsibility

TIE can be understood as the level of tourists' psychological immersion and engagement in tourism experiences, such as those related to sustainability and environmental considerations. In contemporary tourism settings, immersive engagement is increasingly being recognised as a driver for shaping tourists' behaviour and promoting sustainability at the destination level. Existing research suggests that when engaged in immersive settings, tourists tend to absorb environmental information and engage in long-term sustainable travel behaviour (Shamim et al., 2025; Japir Bataineh et al., 2023). RTR goes beyond sustainability to prioritise the restoration of ecosystems and socio-cultural well-being through tourism. According to studies, tourism experiences with high engagement intensity play a critical role in shaping tourists' environmental awareness and engagement, resulting in greater support for conservation-based tourism activities and destination stewardship (Batoool, 2025; Roser et al., 2023). This engagement fosters a psychological bond between tourists and destinations, a critical factor in developing responsible intentions. Research also demonstrates that high engagement intensifies experiential learning, helping tourists comprehend environmental issues and their involvement in solving these problems (Magdy et al., 2026; Hung and Tsou, 2026). This, in turn, leads to more sustainable decision-making during and beyond tourism visits. Further research underscores that immersive tourism settings evoke emotions toward local stakeholders and ecosystems, enhancing regenerative perspectives and actions (Naboni et al., 2025; Zaman et al., 2023). Furthermore, tourism experiences built on engagement have been shown to boost destination loyalty and ethical responsibility to protect the environment, which motivates tourists to participate in regenerative tourism development (Wu and Zhang, 2024). Such psychological and behavioural changes are essential for promoting sustainable tourism development. Thus, TIE is likely to have a positive impact on RTR by increasing tourist engagement, raising environmental awareness, and positively impacting responsible environmental intentions that lead to regenerative tourism growth.

H₆: TIE has a positive impact on RTR.

2.6. Institutional Sustainability Alignment and Eco-Value Co-Creation

ISA captures how tourism firms incorporate formal policies, regulations and sustainability standards into their business practices and strategies. In modern tourism management, ISA is believed to be a critical enabler of collective sustainability efforts, as it facilitates alignment between business practices and environmental goals. Existing studies show that robust institutional structures play a critical role in improving sustainability practices by providing frameworks for accountability and shaping organisational behaviour towards sustainable practices (Beeters and Centley, 2025; Hung and Tsou, 2026). EVC is

increasingly recognised as a collective endeavour that relies not only on interactions between stakeholders, but also on enabling institutional contexts. Research indicates that when organisations have clear sustainability policies and governance structures in place, they are more likely to engage in collective practices which support the co-creation of environmental and social value (Wang, 2026; Japir Bataineh et al., 2023). Institutions create certainty and legitimacy, promoting collaboration among tourism stakeholders such as service providers, tourists, local communities, and others (Mendez and Platt, 2026). Research also shows that policy certainty and sustainability policies and guidelines improve inter-organizational collaboration and trust, which are critical for successful co-creation activities in tourism (Octafian et al., 2024; Roser et al., 2023). Likewise, conformity with sustainability standards has been demonstrated to enhance transparency and accountability, thus fostering stakeholder trust in engaging in value co-creation activities (Başaran, 2025). Further, institutional support mechanisms are crucial in facilitating knowledge exchange and co-innovation, which are crucial enablers of eco-value co-creation in service industries (Shamim et al., 2025). Such alignment, in turn, creates a conducive environment for developing and implementing sustainability initiatives together across a range of stakeholders, leading to improved system-level collaboration. Thus, ISA is anticipated to have a positive impact on EVC by offering a regulatory framework, facilitating coordination, and building trust among tourism stakeholders, thereby promoting the co-creation of environmental and socio-economic value in regenerative tourism systems.

H₇: ISA has a positive effect on EVC.

2.7. Institutional Sustainability Alignment and Regenerative Tourism Responsibility

ISA is the degree to which tourism organisations adopt formal environmental regulations, standards and governance practices in their approach to strategy and operations. In the tourism literature institutional fit is recognised as a critical factor influencing organisational legitimacy and long-term sustainability performance, as it aligns internal practices with the externally imposed standards for environmental sustainability (Octafian et al., 2024; Yedla and Ajoon, 2022). RTR is an advanced sustainability outcome that prioritises ecological restoration, community resilience, and long-term environmental benefits from tourism activities. Existing research indicates that robust institutional governance frameworks play a crucial role in increasing organisational accountability and fostering a long-term commitment to sustainable and responsible tourism (Magdy et al., 2026; Isa et al., 2026). Tourism firms operating in environments with clear regulatory and policy settings are more likely to engage in proactive rather than reactive environmental management strategies (Batoool, 2025). Moreover, empirical evidence shows that institutional enforcement and pressure have a significant impact on organisational sustainability performance, especially in high-impact industries like tourism (Yeoman and McMahon, 2025; Arroba et al., 2024). These institutional arrangements encourage enterprises to internalise sustainability objectives and embed them into their decision-making processes, enhancing their involvement in driving regenerative actions (Wu and Zhang, 2024). Further,

adherence to sustainability standards promotes transparency, which builds trust among stakeholders and contributes to sustainable environmental outcomes (Japir Bataineh et al., 2023). Further, institutional mechanisms provide systemic coordination among tourism stakeholders, allowing more uniform adoption of environmental practices within destinations. This has been demonstrated to enhance environmental outcomes and enhance destination resilience (Shamim et al., 2025). This is especially relevant in emerging tourism destinations where institutions play a vital role in the transition to sustainability. Hence, ISA is anticipated to have a positive impact on RTR by facilitating adherence to government regulations, enhancing organisational accountability, and embedding sustainability principles into tourism operations, which will ultimately lead to more responsible and regenerative tourism development practices.

H₈: ISA has a positive impact on RTR.

2.8 Mediating Role of Eco-Value Co-creation

EVC is a co-creation process where tourism stakeholders collaborate to create value for the environment, society and experience in destination systems. Co-creation is increasingly acknowledged in the contemporary tourism literature as a key process for translating stakeholder inputs into sustainability outcomes. Previous research shows that co-creation among tourists, employees and destination stakeholders boosts a sense of shared responsibility and promotes sustainability-oriented practices at enterprise and destination scales (Naboni et al., 2025; Wang, 2026). Interactive engagement allows stakeholders to participate in sustainability rather than simply consume, thereby supporting sustainable tourism initiatives (Zaman et al., 2023). RTR shifts tourism corporations' focus from impact reduction to ecological restoration and socio-cultural improvement. Studies indicate that shared value systems play a critical role in enhancing long-term commitment to sustainability, through collective environmental responsibility (Beeters and Centley, 2025; Hung and Tsou, 2026). Collaborative value creation between stakeholders enhances relational ties and responsibility for destination sustainability (Başaran, 2025). This collective ownership is critical for promoting regenerative tourism models that focus on ecosystem restoration and human well-being (Khamisu et al., 2026). There is also empirical evidence that shows that interactive value generation facilitates trust, mutual understanding and collective action among tourism stakeholders, which lead to responsible tourism transformation (Japir Bataineh et al., 2023; Magdy et al., 2026). These interrelational processes enable ongoing sustainability improvement and enhance destination resilience. As such, EVC is likely to have a positive impact on RTR by facilitating shared environmental responsibility, enhancing stakeholder partnerships, and promoting collective action for regenerative tourism. EVC in sustainability contexts provides creative solutions to environmental challenges; however, its influence on regeneration is largely achieved through stakeholder collaborations.

Existing studies suggest that employee innovation is more significant if it is translated into shared value systems that include multiple stakeholders (Octafian et al., 2024; Yeoman and McMahon, 2025). EVC offers the means through which

employee creativity is translated into collective outcomes, which in turn enhances the organisational responsibility for regeneration (Suryawan et al., 2025). RED improves sustainability outcomes by creating tourism experiences that promote engagement and awareness. But it requires a degree of interaction among stakeholders. Research shows that experiential sustainability programs have greater long-term impact when they promote collective engagement and meaning creation (Batoool, 2025; Arroba et al., 2024). EVC is the medium that turns designed experiences into collective regenerative responsibility (Wang, 2026). TIE impacts sustainability by enhancing emotional and behavioural engagement with destination experiences. However, immersion by itself is not enough unless it leads to co-action. Existing research shows that engagement-based tourism experiences are more beneficial to sustainability when they involve interaction and co-creation of value (Hung and Tsou, 2026; Octafian et al., 2024). EVC is the link between immersion and shared responsibility to regenerate (Roser et al., 2023). ISA offers institutional support and regulation for sustainability; but stakeholder engagement enhances its influence on regenerative outcomes. Studies show institutional support improves sustainability performance when it supports coordination and joint participation among tourism stakeholders (Isa et al., 2026; Wu and Zhang, 2024). EVC serves as the vehicle through which institutional support is operationalised and enabled, resulting in shared responsibility for regeneration throughout the tourism ecosystem (Hung and Tsou, 2026; Shamim et al., 2025). Conceptual model of this study is presented in Figure 1.

H₉: EVC has a positive influence on RTR

H₁₀: EVC mediates the relationship between EPC and RTR

H₁₁: EVC mediates the relationship between RED and RTR

H₁₂: EVC mediates the relationship between TIE and RTR

H₁₃: EVC mediates the relationship between ISA and RTR.

3. METHODS AND DATA

3.1. Sample Selection

The quantitative research gathered data via surveys of employees of tourism businesses in Jordan. The survey was carried out using purposive and snowball sampling techniques to ensure a fair representation of respondents who are knowledgeable about immersive sustainability practices and regenerative tourism practices. Purposive sampling seeks to include employees who are engaged with or hold expertise in RED, TIE, EPC and ISA, offering insights that are relevant to the research question. Snowball sampling, using referrals from the initial respondents, allowed the researcher to access a larger network of tourism

industry employees. Participants were invited via email, Facebook messenger and WhatsApp between April 2025 and July 2025. Out of 384 invitations, they were extended to employees of different levels in tourism enterprises. After removing inconsistencies and outliers, 302 responses were used to examine the conceptual model to ensure that the data was relevant and accurate for the analysis of ISP on EVC and RTR.

3.2. Measurement Instruments Design

The questionnaire was designed after a comprehensive review of literature and pre-test, and it was based on four parts: socio-demographic data, ISP, EVC and RTR. The measurement instruments were designed to measure RED, TIE, EPC and ISA based on existing literature (Arroba et al., 2024; Wu and Zhang, 2024; Naboni et al., 2025). Three statements for EVC were modified from previous studies (Başaran, 2025; Yedla and Ajoon, 2022; Isa et al., 2026), while four statements for RTR were created (Başaran, 2025; Wang, 2026; Arroba et al., 2024). Exploratory factor analysis was used to reduce 24 items to 21 by excluding three items that had weak factor loadings. The final version of the questionnaire had 21 items, rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

3.3. Overview of Analyses

Two techniques were used in the data analysis: IBM SPSS (Version 25.0) for demographic analysis and descriptive statistics, and SmartPLS (Version 4.0) for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM). A powerful quantitative method for testing relationships in a model with latent or unobserved variables (Raines-Eudy, 2000), SEM is also commonly used in tourism and sustainability studies. In this study, the two-step standard approach to analyse the measurement model in mediation analysis was used as described by (Yedla and Ajoon, 2022).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Sample Profile

The demographic information of respondents is provided in Table 1. The study sample demographic analysis shows that 61% of the sample were males and 39% females. The majority

Figure 1: Conceptual model

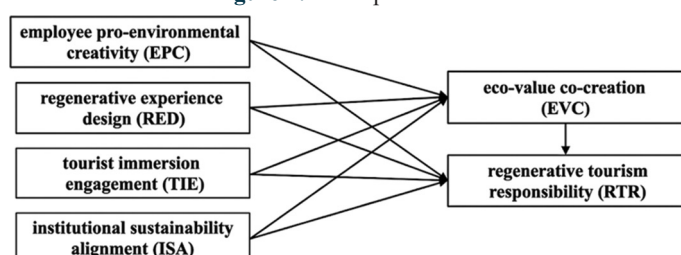


Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents (n=302)

Demographic variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	185	61.3
	Female	117	38.7
Age	Below 26 years	12	3.8
	26-36 years	131	43.4
	37-47 years	108	35.8
	48 years and above	51	16.8
Education	Diploma	34	11.3
	Bachelor's Degree	118	39.1
	Master's Degree	103	34.1
	PhD	18	6.0
	Professional/Other	29	9.6
Work experience	<1 year	6	2.0
	1-5 years	57	18.9
	5-10 years	68	22.5
	Above 10 years	171	56.6

were aged 26-36 years (43.2%), with 35.6% between 37 and 47 years, 17.4% aged 48 or above, and only 3.8% below 26 years. Most of the respondents had a Bachelor degree (38.9%) followed by a Master degree (34.1%), diplomas (11.2%), a PhD (6.1%) and/or a Professional degree or other degrees (9.7%). Regarding work experience, 56.8% had over 10 years, 22.4% had 5-10 years, 18.9% had 1-5 years, and 1.9% had <1 year.

4.2. Measurement Model Analysis

We assessed the constructs using factor loadings, reliability and validity. The factor loadings for all items were above the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Carmines and Zeller, 1979), indicating reliability. We tested construct measurement using Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). Both CA and CR exceeded 0.7 and CA values met Naboni et al., (2025) recommended value of 0.6, respectively, demonstrating reliability. Composite reliability scores for all constructs exceeded Wu and Zhang, (2024) recommended threshold of 0.7, demonstrating valid construct measurement. AVE values above 0.5 ensured adequate variance (Naboni et al., 2025). Table 2 shows convergent validity with factor loadings >0.6 (Yedla and Ajoon, 2022) and values between 0.735 and 0.864. McDonald's omega (ω) also provided satisfactory results Başaran, (2025), establishing good internal consistency (Figure 2).

4.3. Discriminant Validity

The validation of discriminant validity is confirmed when there are no redundant elements in the measurement model (Mendez and Platt, 2026). To do this, we compared the square root of the AVE with inter-constructed square correlations (Chin, 1998). The square root of the AVE values (0.772-0.871) in Table 3 is greater

than the square of the inter-constructed correlations. The HTMT ratios presented in Table 4 further confirm discriminant validity, with all values below the recommended threshold.

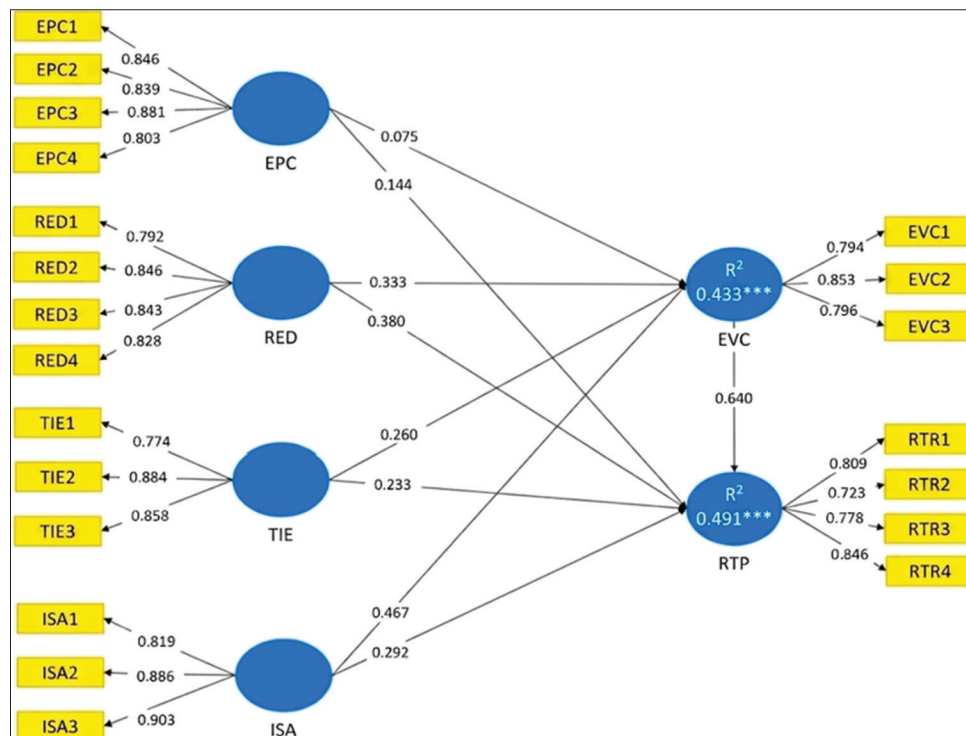
Table 2: Convergent validity, reliability and factor loading

Constructs	Items	Factor loading	CA	CR	AVE	ω
EPC	EPC1	0.846	0.868	0.876	0.721	0.852
	EPC2	0.839				
	EPC3	0.881				
	EPC4	0.803				
RED	RED1	0.792	0.862	0.869	0.704	0.848
	RED2	0.846				
	RED3	0.843				
	RED4	0.828				
TIE	TIE1	0.774	0.788	0.812	0.712	0.815
	TIE2	0.884				
	TIE3	0.858				
ISA	ISA1	0.819	0.836	0.828	0.763	0.845
	ISA2	0.886				
	ISA3	0.903				
EVC	EVC1	0.794	0.736	0.744	0.652	0.765
	EVC2	0.853				
	EVC3	0.796				
RTR	RTR1	0.809	0.799	0.816	0.624	0.802
	RTR2	0.723				
	RTR3	0.778				
	RTR4	0.846				

Table 3: Discriminant validity assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion

	ISA	RED	RTR	EVC	TIE	EPC
ISA	0.871					
RED	0.752	0.846				
RTR	0.538	0.519	0.772			
EVC	0.421	0.597	0.741	0.815		
TIE	0.636	0.649	0.279	0.321	0.851	
EPC	0.628	0.631	0.437	0.451	0.596	0.852

Figure 2: Measurement model



4.4. Structural Model Analysis

The structural equation modelling (SEM) approach was applied to test the path relationships in the structural model, which provides an indication of the accuracy and significance of these relationships. The variance inflation factor (VIF) for all relationships in both the outer and inner models was <3.3 , suggesting no multicollinearity (Naboni et al., 2025). Significant paths were found from EPC to EVC ($\beta = 0.341$, $P < 0.05$) and from EVC to RTR ($\beta = 0.378$). Additionally, significant paths were observed from RED to EVC ($\beta = 0.268$), TIE to RTR ($\beta = 0.241$), ISA to EVC ($\beta = 0.452$), ISA to RTR ($\beta = 0.309$), and EVC to RTR ($\beta = 0.624$). This supports H_3 , H_4 , H_5 , H_6 , H_7 , H_8 and H_9 . On the other hand, EPC had positive path coefficients to EVC and RTR but showed no significant effect on EVC and RTR ($\beta = 0.081$, $P > 0.05$; $\beta = 0.152$, $P > 0.05$), indicating that H_1 and H_2 are not supported. To assess the predictive relevance of mediation and endogenous variables (i.e., EVC and RTR), Q2 metrics were used. Predictive relevance values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 are considered weak, moderate and strong, respectively

(Wu and Zhang, 2024). The Q2 values for EVC and RTR shown in Table 5 are >0 , indicating predictive relevance for these constructs (Shamim et al., 2025). Further, the R^2 values also confirm the predictive power (Figure 3). The R^2 value for EVC was 0.433, suggesting moderate explanatory power. For RTR, the R^2 value was 0.491, suggesting strong predictive relevance (Chin, 1998).

4.5. Mediating Effect

This research also looked at the indirect effect of EVC on the link between ISP and RTR. Table 6 shows the results of the product of coefficients method used to calculate specific indirect effects. The indirect effects through EVC were found to be significant (Wu and Zhang, 2024; Başaran, 2025). Table 6 reveals that, except for H_{10} , the indirect effects for hypotheses H_{11} , H_{12} and H_{13} were significant ($P < 0.05$). The indirect effect is significant because the confidence intervals for the indirect effects did not include zero (Octafian et al., 2024). So, H_{11} , H_{12} and H_{13} are supported.

5. DISCUSSION

This study offers valuable empirical insights into the impact of ISP (RED, TIE, EPC and ISA) on EVC and RTR in tourism enterprises in Jordan. In summary, the findings confirm that sustainability-focused experiential and institutional mechanisms are key to shaping regenerative tourism, although there are variations in the magnitude and significance of relationships. First, the findings show there is no significant direct influence of EPC on EVC and

Table 4: Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	ISA	RED	RTR	EVC	TIE	EPC
ISA						
RED	0.876					
RTR	0.621	0.628				
EVC	0.792	0.745	0.891			
TIE	0.764	0.758	0.329	0.401		
EPC	0.731	0.734	0.486	0.542	0.689	

Figure 3: Structural equation model

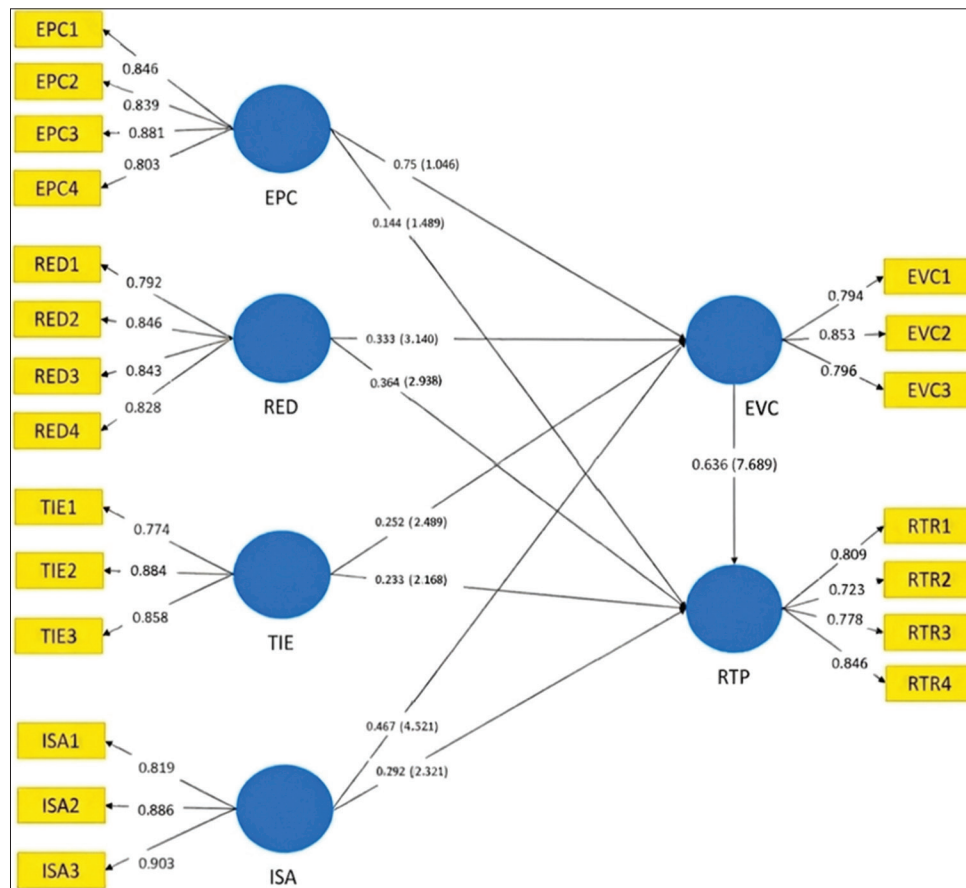


Table 5: Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Standard Beta	t statistics	P-values	Decision	VIF	Q2
H ₁	0.081	1.062	0.288	Rejected	1.742	
H ₂	0.152	1.517	0.128	Rejected	1.921	
H ₃	0.341	3.218	**	Accepted	2.401	
H ₄	0.378	2.976	**	Accepted	1.952	
H ₅	0.268	2.512	**	Accepted	1.884	
H ₆	0.241	2.203	**	Accepted	2.116	
H ₇	0.452	4.639	***	Accepted	2.587	0.421
H ₈	0.309	2.347	**	Accepted	2.298	
H ₉	0.624	7.812	***	Accepted	1.842	0.289

Table 6: Mediation effect

Hypothesis	Effects	Standard beta	Standard deviation	P-values	Confidence interval	Decision
H ₁₀	EPC → EVC → RTR	0.072	0.063	0.298	(-0.061, 0.281)	Rejected
H ₁₁	RED → EVC → RTR	0.224	0.071	0.002	(0.089, 0.368)	Accepted
H ₁₂	TIE → EVC → RTR	0.171	0.073	0.031	(0.035, 0.326)	Accepted
H ₁₃	ISA → EVC → RTR	0.321	0.085	0.000	(0.185, 0.502)	Accepted

RTR. This result echoes previous studies that show that employee-level green creativity may not necessarily lead to sustainable outcomes for the host organisation unless it is complemented with systems and mechanisms to integrate stakeholders (Mendez and Platt, 2026; Shamim et al., 2025). This finding is also consistent with research in tourism where employee sustainability initiatives were found to be ineffective in isolation due to limited absorption capacity (Beeters and Centley, 2025). However, this finding is also in contrast to other studies that highlight significant direct impacts of employee green creativity on sustainability performance (Naboni et al., 2025; Wang, 2026), suggesting that in emerging tourism economies like Jordan, institutional and experiential mechanisms may play a more critical role than employee-driven initiatives. Second, RED has a significant positive impact on EVC and RTR. This result is consistent with the experiential tourism literature, which indicates immersive and transformative tourism experience increases environmental concern and collective action (Wu and Zhang, 2024). (Suryawan et al., 2025) and Yeoman and McMahon, (2025) also found that experience-based sustainability interventions enhance tourist engagement and environmental protection. But some previous studies suggest that experience design is primarily linked to tourist satisfaction, rather than sustainability outcomes (Hung and Tsou, 2026), which partly differs from the current findings. This may be due to the regenerative nature of the current research, in which experience design is directly connected with ecological restoration, not just pleasure. Third, TIE has a positive impact on EVC and RTR, demonstrating its critical role in sustainability. This aligns with service-dominant logic and tourism engagement research, which highlight that immersive involvement enhances value co-creation (Arroba et al., 2024; Magdy et al., 2026). Research by Octafian et al., (2024) and Khamisu et al., (2026) also confirms that more tourist engagement results in increased environmental responsibility and intention. However, other studies show that immersion could only impact behavior with short-term effects rather than structural sustainability transformation (Japir Bataineh et al., 2023), bringing a slight contradiction. In this paper, the higher effect on RTR suggests that immersion is more influential in regenerative tourism systems. Fourth, ISA has a significant impact on EVC and RTR. This finding is well supported by institutional

theory, which suggests that institutions and governance structures influence firms' sustainability practices (Zaman et al., 2023; Wang, 2026). This result is consistent with Mendez and Platt, (2026) and (Roser et al., 2023), who point out that institutional pressure greatly improves sustainability compliance and inter-organizational environmental collaboration. Other research suggests that institutional mechanisms tend to induce symbolic rather than substantive sustainability practices (Naboni et al., 2025), which is not the case here. The significant effects reported here indicate that in the Jordanian tourism sector, institutional mechanisms are having a substantive impact on sustainability practices. Fifth, EVC has a strong positive and significant influence on RTR, supporting its role as a mediator. This finding confirms value co-creation theory, which highlights that sustainability is achieved through stakeholder engagement and value co-creation (Khamisu et al., 2026; Yedla and Ajoon, 2022).

Existing studies in tourism confirm the benefits of co-creation in improving destination sustainability and promoting a sense of environmental stewardship (Hung and Tsou, 2026; Roser et al., 2023). Other research by Wu and Zhang, (2024) and Magdy et al., (2026) also confirms that stakeholder collaboration is essential to achieve sustainability goals. Yet some research suggests that co-creation is symbolic in the tourism context (Batool, 2025), which is not supported by the results of this study. Finally, the mediation analysis supports full mediation by EVC of the links between RED, TIE, ISA and RTR, but does not support mediation by EPC. This suggests that institutional and experiential factors impact regenerative outcomes mainly through the effects of value co-creation. This finding is consistent with other mediation-based tourism sustainability studies that highlight the importance of interactional processes in converting sustainability practices into outcomes (Isa et al., 2026; Zaman et al., 2023). However, the absence of mediation for EPC is inconsistent with some studies that report significant indirect effects of employee creativity on sustainability performance via innovation (Shamim et al., 2025; Octafian et al., 2024). This may be due to differences in developing tourism economies where institutional and experiential processes outweigh individual-level factors. In summary, the results indicate that RTR is largely an outcome of experiential and institutional

factors at the system level rather than the isolated influences of individual creativity, thereby emphasising the need for holistic approaches to sustainability. This research adds to the literature by showing that EVC is not only a mediation mechanism but also a key transformation process for converting sustainability practices into regenerative outcomes (Naboni et al., 2025; Arroba et al., 2024).

6. CONCLUSION

This research offers a holistic view of the impact of immersive sustainability practices on RTR via EVX in Jordan's tourism sector. Our results reveal that RTR and tourist immersion engagement and institutional alignment with sustainability practices are major drivers of sustainability performance, while employee creativity has little direct impact. Crucially, EVC is found to be a key vehicle for translating sustainability practices into regenerative outcomes in tourism enterprises, underscoring its significance in tourism transformation. The integration of RBV and Stakeholder Theory provides a sound theoretical foundation to explain the interaction between internal and external factors to drive sustainability performance. The findings reveal that regenerative tourism performance is best achieved through an integrated approach, integrating experiential design, stakeholder relations and institutional fit. Overall, this study adds to the theoretical and empirical knowledge about regenerative tourism; and provides insights for creating more sustainable, participatory and environmentally-friendly tourism systems.

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

This research offers important theoretical insights by building on both RBV and Stakeholder Theory in the field of regenerative tourism. From an RBV standpoint, the research builds on understanding of how internal organizational capabilities (RED, TIE, EPC and ISA) serve as resources that drive sustainability outcomes. Whereas most RBV research has focused on competitive advantage and firm performance, this study shows that internal capabilities are not only value-creating resources but also facilitate a shift towards regenerative tourism via EVC. This builds on RBV by considering sustainability-focused experiential and behavioural resources in regenerative tourism. The study adds to Stakeholder Theory by deepening insights into the role of multi-actor dynamics in achieving sustainability in tourism. It shows that tourists, employees, institutions, and stakeholders at the destination level all participate in value creation, emphasising the role of relationships in tourism sustainability transitions. The study builds on stakeholder theory by showing how co-participation through EVC mediates sustainability practices to regenerative responsibility (RTR). It reframes the focus from bilateral stakeholder relations to networks of co-creation. Moreover, the dual use of RBV and stakeholder theory offers an integrated perspective that connects internal and external processes of developing capabilities and engaging stakeholders. This theoretical synthesis adds to tourism literature by providing a more holistic understanding of the processes that lead to regenerative outcomes through the integration of activities within and between organisations and stakeholders.

6.2. Practical Implications

This research offers several practical insights for tourism managers, policy makers and stakeholders. First, tourism businesses should focus on developing RED as a key strategic approach to improve sustainability. Through the creation of immersive tourism experiences and engaging activities, tourism enterprises can promote environmental restoration and education among tourists. Second, the study underscores the need to enhance TIE, as visitors who are highly engaged in the tourism experience may be more inclined to participate in sustainability efforts and create value for the environment. Third, decision-makers and tourism managers need to understand the importance of ISA for effective implementation of RTR strategies. Regulations, sustainability standards and governance are crucial for directing corporate actions and encouraging responsibility. Fourth, the research highlights that EVC should be fostered as a key operational strategy as it is a key driver of RTR. Moreover, although employee creativity is important, its limited direct effect suggests that organisations should emphasise the importance of embedding employee innovation in institutional and experiential systems. In sum, the results indicate that sustainable tourism development needs a holistic approach that integrates experience design, stakeholder involvement, and institutional support.

6.3. Limitation and Future Research Directions

This study is not without limitations. First, the study is confined to Jordanian tourism enterprises, and may not be generalised to different cultural or institutional settings. The model should be tested in other countries to improve generalizability. Second, the research is cross-sectional, which does not account for temporal changes in sustainability practices. Longitudinal research is advised to investigate causal inferences. Third, survey data are self-reported and can be prone to response bias, especially in capturing sustainability-related practices and perceptions. Objective measures of performance or mixed methods could be considered in future research. Fourth, while the study explores several constructs, it does not include moderating factors – such as digital transformation, environmental uncertainties or policy intensity – that can affect relationships between variables. Future research could also investigate other mediators like digital engagement, green trust or destination branding to enhance the explanatory power of the model. Finally, qualitative methods such as interviews or case studies could offer more insights into the implementation of regenerative tourism practices.

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