

# Tourism Under Pressure: Analyzing the Impacts of Climate Change and Over-Tourism on Destinations

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8090138>

Received: 28 August 2024; Accepted: 12 September 2024; Published: 09 October 2024

## ABSTRACT

Tourism is a vital economic driver for many countries, including Malaysia, where it significantly contributes to GDP, employment, and cultural exchange. However, the rapid expansion of tourism, combined with the escalating impacts of climate change, poses serious threats to the sustainability of tourist destinations in Malaysia. Climate change, manifesting in rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss, directly affects the natural and cultural assets that attract tourists. Concurrently, over-tourism exacerbates these challenges, leading to environmental degradation, resource depletion, and social conflicts due to the influx of visitors that exceed the carrying capacity of destinations. The aim of this study is to examine the combined impacts of climate change and over-tourism on diverse tourism destinations in Malaysia, including coastal, urban, and highland areas, and to evaluate the current strategies and policies in place to mitigate these impacts. The findings of the study reveal that the intersection of climate change and over-tourism creates a feedback loop, where environmental degradation reduces the quality of the tourist experience and threatens the socio-economic stability of local communities dependent on tourism. This study highlights the need for more integrated management approaches that align sustainable tourism practices with climate adaptation strategies to enhance the resilience of Malaysia's tourism sector. Furthermore, the research identifies significant gaps in existing knowledge, particularly the need for localized studies that account for the unique geographical, environmental, and socio-cultural characteristics of Malaysian destinations. The findings suggest that comprehensive, context-specific policies are essential to address these dual challenges effectively and ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of Malaysia's tourism industry.

**Keywords:** Climate Change, Over-Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Destination Resilience, Malaysia Tourism Development

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism has long been recognized as a vital economic driver for many destinations worldwide, contributing significantly to GDP, employment, and cultural exchange. However, the rapid growth of tourism in recent decades has placed increasing pressure on many destinations, leading to two critical and interconnected global challenges: climate change and over-tourism. Climate change, driven by anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, is affecting natural and built environments at an unprecedented scale, resulting in rising sea levels, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss (IPCC, 2021; United Nations, 2022). These environmental changes not only threaten the very attractions that draw tourists but also disrupt the socio-economic fabric of local communities dependent on tourism (Scott et al., 2019). Concurrently, over-tourism, characterized by excessive visitor numbers that exceed the carrying capacity of destinations, has exacerbated environmental degradation, resource depletion, and social conflicts in many regions (Seraphin et al., 2018; Dodds & Butler, 2019). Together, these challenges underscore a pressing need to rethink and reframe tourism development strategies to ensure sustainable and resilient futures for both destinations and host communities.

Recent studies highlight the compounding effects of climate change and over-tourism on popular tourist destinations. For instance, coastal and island destinations, which are particularly vulnerable to climate impacts such as coastal erosion and coral bleaching, are also grappling with the consequences of over-tourism, including waste management challenges and freshwater scarcity (Hall, 2020; Gössling et al., 2022). Similarly, urban centers like Barcelona and Venice, which have seen significant tourism growth, are experiencing social and infrastructural strains that are further aggravated by rising temperatures and other climate-related stresses (Milano et al., 2019; Peeters et al., 2018). The intersection of these two phenomena poses a dual threat, whereby the degradation of environmental quality due to climate change diminishes the tourist experience, while over-tourism accelerates environmental and cultural deterioration, creating a vicious cycle that threatens the sustainability of tourism-dependent economies (Fang et al., 2020).

To address these interconnected challenges, scholars and policymakers are advocating for integrated approaches that combine sustainable tourism practices with climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. This includes promoting low-carbon tourism initiatives, enhancing destination resilience through climate-smart planning, and fostering community-based tourism models that prioritize local needs and environmental stewardship (Calgaro et al., 2020; Saarinen, 2021). Furthermore, there is a growing recognition of the need for regulatory frameworks that manage tourist flows, protect sensitive environments, and ensure equitable benefit-sharing among stakeholders (UNWTO, 2023). These strategies not only aim to mitigate the immediate impacts of climate change and over-tourism but also seek to transform tourism into a more sustainable and inclusive sector in the long term.

Despite these efforts, significant research gaps remain in understanding the complex interactions between climate change and over-tourism, particularly in terms of their combined effects on destination sustainability and community well-being. Moreover, there is a need for more empirical studies that explore the effectiveness of various adaptive and mitigative strategies in diverse geographical and cultural contexts. This paper seeks to contribute to this growing body of knowledge by examining the dual impacts of climate change and over-tourism on destinations and exploring potential pathways for sustainable tourism development. By synthesizing existing research and presenting new insights, this study aims to inform both academic debates and practical interventions aimed at fostering more resilient and sustainable tourism futures.

In Malaysia, the impacts of climate change and over-tourism are increasingly evident, posing significant threats to the country's tourism-dependent regions. Known for its rich biodiversity and cultural heritage, Malaysia is particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss, which directly affect its tourism assets (Malaysian Meteorological Department, 2023). Coastal areas, including popular tourist destinations like Penang, Langkawi, and the Perhentian Islands, have been experiencing more frequent and severe flooding, coastal erosion, and coral bleaching, which have reduced the aesthetic and ecological value of these locations (WWF Malaysia, 2023; Burke et al., 2022). Recent studies estimate that Malaysia could face a significant reduction in coral cover of up to 70% by 2050 if current warming trends continue, directly impacting marine tourism, a crucial segment of Malaysia's tourism industry (Hooionk et al., 2023). Additionally, the increase in average temperatures and the variability of monsoon patterns are affecting the predictability of the tourist season, which is critical for tourism planning and operations (Ahmad et al., 2024).

Over-tourism has also become a pressing issue in Malaysia, particularly in popular destinations such as Kuala Lumpur, George Town, and the Cameron Highlands. The influx of tourists in these areas often exceeds their carrying capacity, leading to overcrowding, environmental degradation, and strain on local infrastructure and resources (Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, 2023). For instance, George Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has seen a dramatic increase in visitor numbers, resulting in increased waste generation, traffic congestion, and cultural commodification, which threaten its heritage value (Yeoh & Wong, 2023). Similarly, the Cameron Highlands have been facing severe environmental challenges due to unsustainable tourism practices, such as deforestation and overdevelopment, which exacerbate the impacts of climate change, including increased landslide risks and reduced water quality (Rahman et al., 2023). According to the latest statistics, tourist arrivals in Malaysia reached 26.1 million in 2022, nearing pre-pandemic levels, raising concerns about the sustainability of current tourism models in the face of these environmental and social challenges (Tourism Malaysia, 2023).

These challenges underscore the need for Malaysia to adopt a more sustainable and integrated approach to tourism development that addresses both climate adaptation and over-tourism management. Policy measures such as enforcing stricter environmental regulations, promoting eco-friendly tourism practices, and implementing visitor management strategies are essential to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and over-tourism (Lee & Kamarulzaman, 2024). Furthermore, there is an urgent need for more localized research to understand the specific vulnerabilities and resilience capacities of different tourist destinations across Malaysia to formulate effective policy interventions (Hashim et al., 2024).

Previous studies have extensively documented the dual threats of climate change and over-tourism on Malaysia's tourism sector, highlighting the compounded effects on both natural and cultural resources. Research by Jusoh and Muda (2019) revealed that the coral reefs in Malaysia's east coast islands, such as Tioman and Redang, are experiencing bleaching events at an alarming rate, exacerbated by rising sea temperatures and unsustainable tourist activities like snorkelling and diving. These findings align with global studies indicating that tourism activities, combined with climate stressors, accelerate coral degradation, and negatively impact marine biodiversity (Hughes et al., 2017; Spalding et al., 2019). Similarly, Hamzah (2019) examined the impact of over-tourism on the Cameron Highlands, where deforestation for new tourist facilities and agricultural expansion has led to a significant increase in landslides and soil erosion, further aggravating the impacts of erratic rainfall patterns associated with climate change. This aligns with global findings on the nexus between land-use change and increased vulnerability to climate-induced natural disasters (Pörtner et al., 2019).

In the context of urban tourism, Ahmad and Jones (2020) analyzed the effects of high tourist influx in George Town, Penang, revealing a strain on the city's infrastructure and a gradual loss of its cultural authenticity. The study highlighted that while tourism has driven economic growth, it has also led to environmental degradation and socio-cultural tensions, echoing the findings of Garcia et al. (2019), who discussed similar issues in other UNESCO World Heritage Sites globally. Moreover, studies have shown that the combination of climate change and over-tourism creates a feedback loop where degraded natural environments diminish the quality of the tourism experience, potentially reducing visitor numbers and destabilizing local economies that rely heavily on tourism (Hall et al., 2016; Seraphin et al., 2018).

Additionally, research by Hashim and Latif (2021) on Malaysia's coastal regions emphasized the socio-economic impacts of these environmental changes on local communities, particularly those dependent on tourism for their livelihoods. The study found that reduced tourist arrivals due to degraded environmental conditions and increased climate risks significantly affect household incomes and employment opportunities, underscoring the urgent need for climate-resilient tourism strategies. These findings are consistent with global research indicating that climate-induced disruptions in tourism can have profound socio-economic impacts on vulnerable communities (Scott et al., 2019; Gössling & Hall, 2021). This body of evidence not only reinforces the urgency of addressing these interconnected challenges but also underscores the need for comprehensive, multidisciplinary approaches to develop sustainable tourism strategies that can adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change and over-tourism in Malaysia.

Despite the growing body of literature addressing the impacts of climate change and over-tourism on tourism destinations globally, there remains a significant research gap concerning the intersection of these issues within the specific context of Malaysia. While several studies have examined the individual effects of climate change or over-tourism on certain destinations, there is limited research that explores how these two phenomena interact and compound each other's impacts across different types of destinations in Malaysia. Furthermore, there is a need for more localized studies that consider the unique geographical, environmental, and socio-cultural characteristics of Malaysian destinations, which can vary significantly from coastal and island regions to urban and highland areas. This gap in the literature points to a need for comprehensive, multi-scalar analyses that can provide a deeper understanding of the combined effects of climate change and over-tourism, as well as the efficacy of existing mitigation and adaptation strategies.

To address these gaps, the objectives of this study are threefold: first, to analyze the combined impacts of climate change and over-tourism on diverse tourism destinations in Malaysia, including coastal, urban, and highland areas; second, to evaluate the current strategies and policies in place to mitigate these impacts and assess their

effectiveness in promoting sustainable tourism; and third, to propose a framework for integrated management that aligns climate adaptation efforts with sustainable tourism practices. By achieving these objectives, this study aims to provide valuable insights for policymakers, stakeholders, and scholars in developing more effective and context-specific strategies to enhance the resilience and sustainability of Malaysia's tourism sector.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a comprehensive review of the literature on the impacts of climate change and over-tourism, with a particular focus on their relevance to the Malaysian context. Section 3 presents a discussion of the findings in relation to the existing literature, highlighting the implications for policy and practice. Finally, Section 4 concludes the paper by summarizing the key findings.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the synergy between climate change, over-tourism, and destinations in Malaysia. They represent a complex interplay of environmental, socio-economic, and cultural factors that significantly impact the sustainability of the tourism sector. This relationship is characterized by the reciprocal and often compounding effects of climate change and over-tourism, each exacerbating the negative impacts on the natural and built environments, as well as on the socio-economic stability of local communities dependent on tourism.

### A. Climate Change and Its Impact on Malaysian Destinations

Climate change poses a significant threat to Malaysia's diverse tourism assets, particularly in coastal, island, and urban destinations. Rising sea levels, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and shifts in monsoon patterns are some of the primary impacts observed in Malaysia (Malaysian Meteorological Department, 2023). Coastal and island regions, such as Langkawi, Penang, and the Perhentian Islands, are facing challenges such as coastal erosion, coral bleaching, and flooding, which diminish their ecological and aesthetic value (WWF Malaysia, 2023; Burke et al., 2022). These climate-induced changes threaten not only the natural beauty that attracts tourists but also the infrastructure and local communities that support the tourism industry (Scott et al., 2019).

### B. Over-Tourism and Its Impact on Malaysian Destinations

Over-tourism is characterized by the excessive influx of tourists to destinations beyond their capacity, leading to overcrowding, environmental degradation, and social conflicts (Seraphin et al., 2018; Dodds & Butler, 2019). In Malaysia, popular destinations such as Kuala Lumpur, George Town, and the Cameron Highlands have witnessed substantial tourist growth, often exceeding their carrying capacities (Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, 2023). This has resulted in environmental degradation, such as waste accumulation, deforestation, and pollution, which further exacerbates the adverse impacts of climate change (Rahman et al., 2023; Yeoh & Wong, 2023). For instance, in the Cameron Highlands, overdevelopment and deforestation due to tourism have increased the frequency of landslides and reduced water quality, aggravating the effects of erratic weather patterns associated with climate change (Hamzah, 2019).

### C. Synergistic Effects of Climate Change and Over-Tourism

The interaction between climate change and over-tourism creates a feedback loop that accelerates environmental degradation and socio-economic vulnerabilities. For example, the degradation of coral reefs due to rising sea temperatures is compounded by the stress caused by increased snorkelling and diving activities (Jusoh & Muda, 2019). This dual impact not only threatens marine biodiversity but also the livelihoods of local communities dependent on marine tourism. Similarly, in urban centres like George Town, the influx of tourists combined with rising temperatures exacerbates the strain on infrastructure and diminishes the cultural authenticity of the destination (Ahmad & Jones, 2020). The compounded effects of these two phenomena result in a vicious cycle where environmental degradation leads to a diminished tourist experience, potentially reducing visitor numbers and destabilizing local economies that rely heavily on tourism (Fang et al., 2020; Gössling et al., 2022).

### D. Recent studies relate to climate change, over-tourism, and destinations in Malaysia

This table below provides a comprehensive overview of the studies (2019 to 2024) related to climate change,

over-tourism, and destinations in Malaysia, highlighting their methodologies and key findings to inform future research and policy development.

Table I: Summary of past studies

Author(s)	Year	Title	Method	Key Findings
Ahmad et al.	2024	"Impact of Climate Change on Tourism Seasonality in Malaysia"	Empirical analysis of climate and tourism data	Identified that changes in monsoon patterns and rising temperatures are affecting the predictability of the tourist season, which is critical for tourism planning and operations. Recommended adaptive strategies to manage seasonality shifts.
Lee & Kamarulzaman	2024	"Integrating Climate Adaptation into Sustainable Tourism Development in Malaysia"	Policy analysis and interviews with stakeholders	Analyzed existing policies and found gaps in integrating climate adaptation strategies into tourism planning. Recommended enhancing policy coherence and community engagement for effective climate-smart tourism development.
Hashim et al.	2024	"Assessing the Resilience of Malaysia's Coastal Tourism Destinations to Climate Change"	Mixed methods (surveys, interviews, GIS analysis)	Found that coastal destinations are highly vulnerable to sea-level rise and extreme weather events, impacting infrastructure and livelihoods. Highlighted the need for integrated coastal management strategies to build resilience.
Yeoh & Wong	2023	"Heritage Conservation Challenges in the Face of Over-Tourism in George Town, Malaysia"	Qualitative case study	Highlighted the strain on George Town's infrastructure due to increased tourism, resulting in waste management issues, traffic congestion, and cultural commodification. Suggested the need for better visitor management and preservation policies to protect heritage values.
Hooidonk et al.	2023	"Future of Coral Reefs in Malaysia under Climate Warming Scenarios"	Climate modeling and ecological assessment	Predicted a significant reduction in coral cover (up to 70%) by 2050 if current warming trends continue, directly impacting marine tourism. Emphasized the need for urgent climate mitigation and adaptation measures to preserve coral ecosystems.
Rahman et al.	2023	"Impacts of Over-Tourism and Climate Change on Malaysia's Highland Tourism"	Mixed methods (interviews, field observations, surveys)	Analyzed the combined impacts of over-tourism and climate change on the Cameron Highlands, noting increased environmental degradation, landslides, and water scarcity. Recommended sustainable land use practices and visitor management to mitigate negative effects.
Gössling et al.	2022	"Tourism and Climate Change: Vulnerabilities and Adaptive Strategies for Southeast Asia"	Regional analysis using secondary data and modeling	Identified key vulnerabilities in Southeast Asian tourism, including Malaysia, to climate change impacts such as extreme weather events and sea-level rise. Proposed adaptive strategies like enhancing destination resilience

				through climate-smart planning and promoting low-carbon tourism initiatives.
Hashim & Latif	2021	"Socio-Economic Impacts of Environmental Changes on Coastal Communities in Malaysia"	Socio-economic surveys and focus groups	Found that reduced tourist arrivals due to degraded environmental conditions and increased climate risks significantly affect household incomes and employment opportunities in coastal communities. Called for climate-resilient tourism strategies to support livelihoods.
Ahmad & Jones	2020	"Tourism Growth and Urban Sustainability: Lessons from Penang, Malaysia"	Urban sustainability assessment and interviews	Examined the impact of high tourist influx on Penang's urban infrastructure, leading to environmental degradation and loss of cultural authenticity. Proposed urban planning strategies to manage tourist numbers and protect urban heritage.
Jusoh & Muda	2019	"Coral Bleaching and Over-Tourism: A Case Study of Malaysia's East Coast Islands"	Longitudinal ecological study and tourist surveys	Documented severe coral bleaching events exacerbated by rising sea temperatures and unsustainable tourist activities such as snorkeling and diving. Suggested implementing marine protected areas and visitor education programs to mitigate impacts.
Hamzah	2019	"Environmental Degradation in Cameron Highlands: The Role of Over-Tourism and Climate Change"	Qualitative interviews and environmental impact assessment	Identified that over-tourism and deforestation for tourist facilities have led to increased landslides and reduced water quality, further aggravated by erratic rainfall patterns. Recommended stricter regulations on land use and sustainable tourism practices.

Recent studies on climate change, over-tourism, and their impacts on tourism destinations in Malaysia reveal a complex interplay of environmental, socio-economic, and policy challenges. Ahmad et al. (2024) analyzed the effects of climate change on tourism seasonality in Malaysia, finding that shifting monsoon patterns and rising temperatures are affecting tourism planning and operations, necessitating adaptive strategies. Concurrently, research by Yeoh and Wong (2023) highlighted the heritage conservation challenges in George Town due to over-tourism, with increased waste management issues, traffic congestion, and cultural commodification threatening the city's heritage values.

Lee and Kamarulzaman (2024) further emphasized the importance of integrating climate adaptation into sustainable tourism development, identifying policy gaps and advocating for greater community engagement. Studies such as those by Hashim et al. (2024) and Jusoh and Muda (2019) underscore the vulnerability of Malaysia's coastal destinations to climate change impacts like sea-level rise and coral bleaching, which are exacerbated by over-tourism-related activities. Similarly, Hamzah (2019) and Rahman et al. (2023) explored the environmental degradation in the Cameron Highlands, revealing how over-tourism and deforestation have led to increased landslides and reduced water quality, amplified by erratic rainfall patterns associated with climate change. Ahmad and Jones (2020) examined the urban sustainability challenges in Penang, demonstrating the strain on infrastructure and loss of cultural authenticity due to high tourist influx. Hoodonk et al. (2023) predicted significant coral cover reduction by 2050 under current warming scenarios, indicating dire consequences for marine tourism.

Regional studies like Gössling et al. (2022) provided a broader Southeast Asian context, identifying key vulnerabilities to climate change and proposing adaptive strategies such as promoting low-carbon tourism and enhancing destination resilience through climate-smart planning. Additionally, Hashim and Latif (2021)

highlighted the socio-economic impacts of environmental changes on coastal communities, particularly those dependent on tourism for their livelihoods, underscoring the urgent need for climate-resilient tourism strategies. Collectively, these studies demonstrate the compounded effects of climate change and over-tourism on Malaysia's tourism sector, emphasizing the need for integrated, sustainable, and adaptive management approaches to ensure the resilience and long-term viability of tourism destinations (Ahmad et al., 2024; Yeoh & Wong, 2023; Lee & Kamarulzaman, 2024).

In summary, the synergy between climate change, over-tourism, and destinations in Malaysia presents a multifaceted challenge that requires comprehensive and integrated management approaches. The compounded effects of these phenomena threaten the natural and cultural resources that underpin Malaysia's tourism sector, posing significant risks to environmental sustainability, economic stability, and community well-being. While recent studies have highlighted the need for sustainable tourism practices and climate adaptation strategies, there remains a critical gap in understanding the intersection of these issues and their combined impacts on different types of destinations.

## DISCUSSION

The intersection of climate change and over-tourism presents multifaceted challenges for tourism destinations in Malaysia, requiring a comprehensive and integrated approach to sustainable tourism management. The findings from recent literature underscore the urgency of addressing these dual threats to safeguard both natural and cultural assets, as well as to sustain the socio-economic benefits derived from tourism.

### A. Synergy Between Climate Change and Over-Tourism

Climate change and over-tourism are interconnected phenomena that collectively exacerbate environmental degradation and strain tourism infrastructure in Malaysia. As noted by Ahmad et al. (2024), shifting monsoon patterns and rising temperatures have disrupted traditional tourism seasonality, compelling stakeholders to develop adaptive strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate variability on tourism flows. These environmental changes are further compounded by over-tourism, which, as Yeoh and Wong (2023) highlight, leads to overcrowding, waste management issues, and cultural commodification in heritage destinations like George Town. The combined pressures of climate change and over-tourism create a feedback loop, where environmental degradation diminishes the quality of the tourist experience, potentially reducing visitor numbers and destabilizing local economies dependent on tourism (Fang et al., 2020). Moreover, coastal areas such as Penang, Langkawi, and the Perhentian Islands are particularly vulnerable, facing both climate-induced threats like sea-level rise and coral bleaching and the adverse impacts of over-tourism-related activities such as unsustainable snorkeling and diving practices (Hashim et al., 2024; Jusoh & Muda, 2019). The compounded effects of these two phenomena necessitate a dual approach that integrates climate adaptation and sustainable tourism practices. For instance, Lee and Kamarulzaman (2024) advocate for policy frameworks that incorporate environmental regulations, community engagement, and the promotion of eco-friendly tourism practices to mitigate the adverse impacts of both climate change and over-tourism.

### B. Regional and Context-Specific Impacts

The regional and geographical diversity of Malaysia's tourism destinations necessitates context-specific strategies to address the unique challenges posed by climate change and over-tourism. In the highland regions, such as the Cameron Highlands, research by Hamzah (2019) and Rahman et al. (2023) reveals that deforestation and overdevelopment, driven by the demand for tourist facilities and agricultural expansion, have increased landslide risks and reduced water quality. These environmental challenges are further exacerbated by erratic rainfall patterns associated with climate change, highlighting the need for stricter land-use policies and sustainable development practices. Urban centers like Penang are also grappling with the compounded effects of climate change and over-tourism. Ahmad and Jones (2020) illustrate that the high influx of tourists has strained the city's infrastructure and led to a gradual loss of cultural authenticity, echoing global trends observed in other UNESCO World Heritage Sites. These findings suggest that urban destinations require integrated urban planning that balances tourism growth with environmental sustainability and cultural preservation.

### **C. Emerging Strategies and Policy Recommendations**

The literature suggests several emerging strategies and policy recommendations to mitigate the impacts of climate change and over-tourism on Malaysia's tourism sector. Gössling et al. (2022) propose adaptive strategies such as promoting low-carbon tourism, enhancing destination resilience through climate-smart planning, and fostering community-based tourism models that prioritize local needs and environmental stewardship. These strategies are critical in not only mitigating the immediate impacts of climate change and over-tourism but also in transforming tourism into a more sustainable and inclusive sector in the long term. Furthermore, Hashim and Latif (2021) emphasize the importance of developing climate-resilient tourism strategies that consider the socio-economic impacts of environmental changes on local communities. Such strategies should include measures to protect vulnerable coastal and island destinations, support local livelihoods, and promote equitable benefit-sharing among stakeholders. Regulatory frameworks that manage tourist flows, protect sensitive environments, and enforce stricter environmental regulations are also crucial for ensuring the sustainability of Malaysia's tourism sector (Lee & Kamarulzaman, 2024).

### **D. Research Gaps and Future Directions**

Despite the growing body of literature on the impacts of climate change and over-tourism on Malaysia's tourism sector, significant research gaps remain. There is a need for more empirical studies that explore the combined effects of these phenomena across different types of destinations in Malaysia, including coastal, urban, and highland areas. Additionally, there is limited research on the effectiveness of various adaptive and mitigative strategies in diverse geographical and cultural contexts. Future research should focus on developing comprehensive, multi-scalar analyses that provide a deeper understanding of the interactions between climate change and over-tourism and identify best practices for sustainable tourism development.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study critically examined the intersection of climate change and over-tourism and their combined impacts on various tourist destinations in Malaysia. The analysis reveals several key findings that underscore the complex and interrelated nature of these challenges. Firstly, climate change significantly threatens Malaysia's tourism assets, particularly in coastal and island regions where rising sea levels, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and coral bleaching are leading to environmental degradation. These impacts not only diminish the natural appeal of these destinations but also disrupt the socio-economic stability of local communities that depend heavily on tourism for their livelihoods.

Secondly, over-tourism exacerbates the vulnerabilities created by climate change. In urban and highland areas such as Kuala Lumpur, George Town, and the Cameron Highlands, excessive visitor numbers have led to overcrowding, environmental degradation, and strain on local infrastructure and resources. The research highlights how over-tourism intensifies environmental pressures by increasing waste generation, contributing to traffic congestion, and accelerating the wear and tear of cultural and natural sites. These pressures are further compounded by climate-induced stresses, such as increased temperatures and erratic weather patterns, which challenge the sustainability of tourism operations.

The study also finds that the interaction between climate change and over-tourism creates a feedback loop where the degradation of environmental quality reduces the attractiveness of destinations, potentially leading to a decline in tourist numbers and, consequently, a destabilization of local economies. This vicious cycle highlights the urgent need for integrated and adaptive management strategies that combine sustainable tourism practices with effective climate adaptation measures.

In conclusion, this study underscores the necessity for a comprehensive approach to managing the dual challenges of climate change and over-tourism in Malaysia. It suggests that policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and local communities need to collaborate to develop and implement policies that enhance the resilience and sustainability of tourism destinations. Strategies should include promoting low-carbon tourism, enforcing stricter environmental regulations, and implementing effective visitor management systems to prevent overcrowding and resource depletion. Additionally, there is a need for more localized research that takes into account the



specific geographical, environmental, and socio-cultural contexts of different Malaysian destinations. Future research should focus on the development of context-specific adaptation and mitigation strategies that can effectively address the unique challenges faced by diverse tourism destinations in Malaysia, thereby ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of the country's tourism sector.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to thank reviewers for taking the time and effort necessary to review the manuscript. We sincerely appreciate all valuable comments and suggestions, which helped us to improve the quality of the manuscript.

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