Adapting crisis recovery models to a multi-crisis tourism industry: The case of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This paper examines the evolution of crisis recovery models in the context of Sri Lanka's tourism industry, which has faced multiple overlapping crises since 2019, including the Easter Sunday attacks, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the economic crisis. Traditional crisis recovery models, such as Faulkner's Tourism Disaster Management Framework and Ritchie's Crisis and Disaster Management Framework, have proven inadequate in addressing the multi-crisis environment faced by Sri Lanka, where overlapping crises require continuous adaptation. Using a qualitative research approach, interviews with 192 stakeholders from the Sri Lanka Hoteliers Association and the Sri Lanka Inbound Tour Operators Association were conducted. The data were analysed using thematic, narrative, and grounded theory analysis to develop a new framework for crisis recovery that better addresses the complex, evolving nature of crises in the tourism sector. The findings suggest that traditional models need to evolve towards a dynamic, resilience-based approach that incorporates stakeholder collaboration, demographic-driven strategies, and continuous innovation. This research provides valuable insights into how the tourism industry can build resilience in the face of future crises, offering theoretical contributions and practical recommendations for both academia and industry stakeholders.

Keywords: Crisis recovery, Tourism resilience, multi-crisis environment, Stakeholder collaboration, Adaptive resilience, Sri Lanka tourism

Introduction

Sri Lanka's tourism industry has been a critical driver of its economy, contributing significantly to employment and foreign exchange earnings. Historically, Sri Lanka has been a popular destination for cultural, eco, and adventure tourism, offering unique experiences to international travellers (Ranasinghe, 2015). However, the sector has faced unprecedented challenges since 2019 due to a series of crises. The Easter Sunday terrorist attacks in April 2019 dealt a severe blow to tourist confidence, leading to a sharp decline in arrivals. Just as the industry began to recover, the COVID-19 pandemic further disrupted global travel, bringing the sector to a near standstill (Marwah & Ramanayake, 2021) In 2022, Sri Lanka's economic crisis exacerbated the situation, affecting the infrastructure necessary for tourism operations, including transportation, energy supply, and basic services (Sharma et al. 2022). This multi-crisis environment has exposed vulnerabilities within the tourism sector, necessitating an in-depth exploration of crisis recovery strategies.

Existing literature on tourism crisis recovery, including Faulkner's Tourism Disaster Management Framework and Ritchie's Crisis and Disaster Management Framework, provides valuable insights into how tourism destinations can recover from singular events (Mair et al. 2016; Becken, 2019). However, these models are largely cyclical in nature, assuming that crises occur as isolated events with a clear beginning and end (Ritchie & Jiang. 2019). In contrast, Sri Lanka's tourism sector has been exposed to overlapping crises, requiring

continuous adaptation rather than linear recovery. These gaps in existing models highlight the need for a new conceptual framework that better accounts for multi-crisis environments, where crises overlap and require ongoing, dynamic responses (Jurdana et al. 2020; Ritchie & Jiang. 2021).

The aim of this research is to assess how traditional crisis recovery models have evolved and adapted to the unique multi-crisis environment of Sri Lanka's tourism sector, focusing on resilience strategies, stakeholder collaboration, and the shifts in tourist demographics since 2019. The study seeks to explore how these models have adapted to the challenges posed by multiple overlapping crises, such as the Easter Sunday attacks, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing economic crisis. Additionally, the research will examine the resilience strategies developed by hoteliers and tour operators, particularly in response to significant changes in tourist behaviour and demographics, such as the rise of younger, budget-conscious travellers to propose a multi crisis management model.

The objectives of this research are threefold: first, to assess the applicability of existing crisis recovery models, including Faulkner's Tourism Disaster Management Framework and Ritchie's Crisis Management Framework, to the Sri Lankan context; second, to identify the new strategies and adaptations that have emerged within Sri Lanka's tourism sector in response to multiple overlapping crises; and third, to evaluate the role of stakeholder collaboration in fostering resilience and supporting recovery efforts in the face of a multi-crisis environment. The research will address the following key questions: How have traditional tourism crisis recovery models been applied or adapted to Sri Lanka's multi-crisis context? What new strategies have been developed by Sri Lanka's tourism sector to recover from the compounded impacts of multiple crises? Through addressing these questions, the research will offer both theoretical insights and practical frameworks for managing crises in the tourism industry, particularly in multi-crisis environments like Sri Lanka's.

Literature Review

Faulkner's Tourism Disaster Management Framework (TDMF)

Tourism crisis recovery models have been a major focus of research due to the industry's susceptibility to a wide range of disruptions, such as natural disasters, political instability, pandemics, and economic downturns. This research examines three key frameworks that have significantly contributed to the understanding of crisis recovery. They are Faulkner's Tourism Disaster Management Framework (TDMF), Ritchie's Crisis and Disaster Management Framework. Each framework provides important insights into crisis recovery, but recent challenges, particularly multi-crisis scenarios, expose gaps in these models that necessitate their evolution (Derham et al. 2022; Pongsakornrungsilp et al. 2021). The development of the conceptual framework for this study, focused on Sri Lanka's tourism sector, further highlights these evolving needs.

Faulkner's Tourism Disaster Management Framework (TDMF) (2001) was among the first comprehensive models addressing disaster recovery in tourism (Armstrong, 2008). It provides a cyclical approach with phases such as preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation, assuming crises are single events with clear recovery stages (Dayour et al. 2020). TDMF has been widely applied to disaster situations within tourism, particularly natural disasters like hurricanes and earthquakes (Derham et al. 2022). The model's structured

approach offers valuable insights into planning and mitigation strategies. However, recent literature points to limitations in this framework, especially in multi-crisis environments where events overlap, and recovery processes are continuous rather than distinct phases (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019). Faulkner's model assumes that crises operate independently, but this fails to account for the fluid nature of modern crises, where one crisis can disrupt recovery from another (Derham et al. 2022). For instance, Sri Lanka's tourism industry was still recovering from the Easter Sunday attacks when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, followed by the economic crisis (Fernando and Carr, 2024). The cyclic nature of TDMF does not adequately address the complexities of such overlapping events (Derham et al. 2022). Paraskevas et al. (2017) argue for the need for adaptive frameworks that can evolve with the complexity of crises. Similarly, Mair et al. (2016) contend that cyclical models like TDMF do not fully address the socio-political dimensions of crises, where long-term instability can delay recovery efforts. These critiques highlight the necessity for a more dynamic and flexible model that accounts for simultaneous crises and the continuous nature of the recovery process.

Ritchie's Crisis and Disaster Management Framework

Ritchie's Crisis and Disaster Management Framework (2004) extends Faulkner's model by emphasising long-term recovery and the importance of stakeholder collaboration (Ritchie, 2004). It recognises that crises have lasting effects and require a coordinated response from various stakeholders, including government bodies, tourism operators, and local communities (Ritchie and Jiang, 2021). Ritchie's framework stresses the need for planning, leadership, and coordinated efforts in both response and recovery phases (Ritchie, 2004). The model has been applied to crises such as terrorism, pandemics, and economic shocks (Ritchie & Jiang, 2021). Although Ritchie's model adopts a more strategic and collaborative approach to crisis recovery, it also faces limitations in dealing with the complexities of modern tourism crises. One key criticism is its assumption of a linear progression from response to recovery, which underestimates the non-linear nature of many contemporary crises (Casal-Ribeiro et al. 2023). The framework focuses heavily on long-term recovery strategies without adequately addressing the immediate, short-term needs that arise in multi-crisis situations. In the Sri Lankan context, for example, the tourism industry required rapid response mechanisms to manage the simultaneous impacts of health, security, and economic crises (Wickramasinghe & Naranpanawa, 2024). Furthermore, Ritchie's framework tends to view crises as external shocks, such as natural disasters or terrorist attacks, without fully considering internal challenges, such as financial strain, labour shortages, and changes in tourist behaviour (Coles et al., 2021). These internal challenges have become particularly significant following the COVID-19 pandemic, where the global tourism sector experienced a widespread downturn (Sampaio et al. 2023). Although Ritchie's framework highlights the importance of stakeholder collaboration, it does not fully capture the interconnectedness of modern crises, where economic, social, and political factors overlap (Ritchie, 2004). This has prompted calls for more integrated approaches that consider both internal and external factors influencing recovery processes (Casal-Ribeiro et al. 2023).

Limitations of Existing Models in Multi-Crisis Environments

The gaps identified in these three frameworks highlight the need for a new, integrated model that can address the complexities of the multi-crisis environment faced by the tourism industry. The conceptual framework developed for this research integrates elements from Faulkner's and Ritchie's, while addressing their limitations. This new framework emphasises continuous adaptation, collaborative resilience, and demographic-driven strategies, reflecting the reality that crises no longer occur in isolation but often overlap and compound each other. Businesses in the tourism sector must continuously adapt to these crises.

Conceptual Framework for Multi-Crisis Recovery

Recent literature supports this evolution of tourism crisis recovery frameworks. Ritchie & Jiang (2019) highlight the need for integrated and flexible recovery models that address both external shocks and internal challenges. Similarly, Apasrawirote & Yawised (2024) argue that adaptive resilience must go beyond business-level adaptation to include systemic changes, such as public policy interventions and infrastructure development. The conceptual framework developed in this research aligns with these perspectives by integrating adaptive resilience while emphasising the importance of collaborative efforts and demographic adaptability in addressing the evolving challenges of crisis recovery.

Development of the Interviews

The interview guide for this research was developed by drawing on key elements from Faulkner's Tourism Disaster Management Framework (TDMF) and Ritchie's Crisis and Disaster Management Framework, tailored to reflect the unique challenges of overlapping crises in Sri Lanka's tourism industry. Questions were designed to explore how businesses navigated the distinct phases of crisis management outlined in Faulkner's model—preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation. For example, respondents were asked about their preparedness before the Easter Sunday attacks and COVID-19, their immediate responses to these crises, and how the overlap of crises influenced their recovery and long-term mitigation strategies. Drawing from Ritchie's framework, the guide also included questions on the role of stakeholder collaboration and leadership, probing how partnerships with government bodies and other tourism operators affected recovery efforts. Additionally, questions addressed both external shocks (e.g., terrorist attacks, pandemics) and internal challenges (e.g., financial strain, labour shortages) to assess their combined impact on businesses. Finally, reflecting the need for continuous adaptation, the guide asked respondents how they adapted their services and operations in response to changing tourist demographics, as well as the role of innovation in developing new products and recovery strategies. This comprehensive approach ensured that the interviews provided insights into both the applicability of existing frameworks and the development of new strategies suited to a multi-crisis context.

Materials and Methods

This research adopts a qualitative methodology to investigate how the Sri Lankan tourism industry adapted to multiple crises between 2019 and 2023. Through interviews with key stakeholders, including hoteliers and tour operators, the study explores the applicability of established crisis recovery models and the emergence of new strategies. Thematic, narrative, content, framework, and grounded theory analysis were employed to analyse the data and develop a comprehensive understanding of evolving recovery models in a multi-crisis context. The qualitative approach is ideal for exploring the complex, dynamic nature of crisis recovery, particularly in situations where overlapping crises require continuous adaptation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The population for this study included 218 members from the Sri Lanka Hoteliers Association and 151 members from the Sri Lanka Inbound Tour Operators Association, ensuring that the core stakeholders in Sri Lanka's tourism industry were represented (Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO), 2024; Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka (THASL, 2024). Using the Yamane formula for finite populations, a sample size of 192 respondents was determined, with proportional representation from both hoteliers (113) and tour operators (79) (Stamatopoulos, 2022). Semi-structured interviews allowed respondents to provide detailed insights into the crises, while ensuring consistent exploration of key topics like the application of crisis recovery models and changes in tourist demographics. Interview questions were framed using Faulkner's TDMF and Ritchie's Crisis Management Framework to assess the models' relevance in a multi-crisis environment.

Thematic analysis identified recurring patterns such as financial strain, operational adaptation, and demographic changes (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Narrative analysis captured the personal and organisational impacts of the crises, while content analysis quantified key terms such as "resilience" and "adaptation" to highlight the most discussed issues (Elo et al., 2014). Grounded theory was then applied to systematically code and develop new categories and core themes, facilitating the creation of an evolved crisis recovery framework that reflects the non-linear adaptation strategies required for the Sri Lankan tourism sector (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Framework analysis validated these findings by comparing them with existing crisis recovery theories, showing how Faulkner's and Ritchie's into a more flexible, collaborative, and demographic-driven approach (Gale et al., 2013). Grounded theory provided the necessary flexibility to identify how traditional models need to adapt to the complex, overlapping nature of contemporary tourism crises (Charmaz, 2014).

In this study, content analysis and narrative analysis were employed as complementary techniques to provide both quantitative and qualitative insights into the adaptation strategies of Sri Lanka's tourism sector. Content analysis focused on systematically quantifying keywords and terms frequently mentioned by respondents, such as "adaptation," "financial strain," and "resilience," to gauge the prevalence of these issues across stakeholders. This method highlighted the most discussed topics, providing a numerical basis for identifying areas of major concern. Narrative analysis, on the other hand, captured the broader, storyline-like experiences and perceptions that emerged from these responses. By examining how themes like *Crisis Fatigue* and *Demographic Shift* were expressed in the participants' accounts, narrative analysis allowed us to interpret how respondents viewed their journey through successive crises. This dual approach not only emphasized the specific challenges faced but also contextualized them within a cohesive narrative framework, offering a

comprehensive understanding of how stakeholders collectively adapted and built resilience in response to overlapping crises

Results

Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis process in this study involved systematically coding and categorizing interview data to identify recurring patterns and themes related to the adaptation of crisis recovery models within Sri Lanka's tourism sector. This approach began with a thorough review of interview transcripts, where responses from 192 stakeholders were coded based on the core topics relevant to crisis recovery. Following the guidelines of Braun & Clarke (2019), initial codes were organized into broader themes, capturing the essence of each response. Key themes such as financial strain, operational adaptation, demographic changes, and stakeholder collaboration emerged, each representing a significant aspect of the respondents' experiences. This thematic framework served to structure the analysis of how Sri Lanka's tourism industry has adapted to overlapping crises, guiding the subsequent interpretation of results in a structured and cohesive manner. The findings from this thematic analysis were then cross-referenced with existing models to assess how traditional frameworks like Faulkner's and Ritchie's models might evolve to meet the unique demands of multi-crisis environments.

Table 1 Frequency of Themes Across 192 Respondents.

Theme	Frequency in Hoteliers (113)	Frequency in Tour Operators (79)	Total Frequency	Percentage of Total Respondents
Crisis Complexity	85	63	148	77%
Changing Tourist Demographics	92	71	163	85%
Operational Adaptation	87	66	153	80%
Financial Strain	94	65	159	83%
Stakeholder Collaboration	79	55	134	70%
Emerging New Strategies	61	46	107	56%

Source: Primary data collection

The most prominent theme that emerged from the interviews was the Changing Tourist Demographics, with 85% of respondents discussing this issue. This theme was particularly strong among hoteliers (92 instances), reflecting their need to adapt to the new demographic of tourists—primarily younger, budget-conscious travelers, a significant shift from the high-spending tourists prior to 2019. Crisis Complexity and Operational Adaptation also emerged as dominant themes, mentioned by 77% and 80% of respondents, respectively, emphasizing the industry's need to adapt to multiple crises in a short span of time. The Financial Strain theme was prevalent among 83% of respondents, highlighting the significant economic challenges faced by both hoteliers and tour operators, including debts, reduced revenue, and

increased operational costs. The Stakeholder Collaboration theme, mentioned by 70% of respondents, points to the importance of cooperation between various entities (hotels, tour operators, and government bodies) to navigate the crises. Finally, the theme of Emerging New Strategies was observed among 56% of respondents, indicating the evolution of innovative approaches to attract new demographics and improve resilience in the tourism sector.

Narrative Analysis

In the *Narratives* section, the analysis captures broader, storyline-like insights derived from recurring themes in participants' responses. Unlike the specific themes in the thematic analysis, which highlight distinct factors (e.g., financial strain, stakeholder collaboration), the narratives illustrate overarching patterns that reflect the collective experiences and perceptions of the respondents. These narratives provide context to understand how multiple themes interact to shape the respondents' overall experiences.

By organizing these insights into key narratives—such as *Crisis Fatigue*, *Demographic Shift*, *Operational Shifts*, *Financial Challenges*, and *Collaboration and Innovation*—the analysis contextualizes the compounded effects of ongoing crises on the tourism sector in Sri Lanka. This narrative approach sets the stage for understanding the main findings by showing how respondents not only responded to each theme but also wove them into coherent accounts of survival, adaptation, and resilience under multi-crisis conditions.

The following table 2 categorizes the key narratives that emerged.

Table 2 Key Narratives and Frequency of Their Occurrence.

Narrative	Frequency in Hoteliers (113)	Frequency in Tour Operators (79)	Total Frequency	Percentage of Total Respondents
Crisis Fatigue	71	51	122	63%
Demographic Shift	87	69	156	81%
Operational Shifts	75	57	132	69%
Financial Challenges	94	64	158	82%
Collaboration and Innovation	62	47	109	57%

Source: Primary data collection

The Demographic Shift narrative was the most frequently mentioned across both hoteliers and tour operators, with 81% of respondents discussing how the profile of tourists visiting Sri Lanka has changed significantly post-2019. Respondents noted that they are seeing more Gen Z travelers, backpackers, and budget-conscious tourists, which has forced them to rethink their service offerings and pricing strategies. For instance, one hotelier explained, "The luxury packages we used to offer don't appeal to these new tourists. We had to lower prices and offer budget rooms." This shift was similarly reflected in tour operators, many of whom said they had to adapt their itineraries and price points to appeal to solo travelers and small groups. Crisis Fatigue was another common narrative, cited by 63% of respondents. This theme reflects the exhaustion felt by both hoteliers and tour operators in dealing with multiple crises back-to-back without sufficient time to recover between events.

A tour operator noted, "We were just beginning to recover from the Easter attacks when COVID hit, and then came the economic crisis. It feels like we are always in survival mode." Financial Challenges was mentioned by 82% of respondents, revealing the widespread financial difficulties encountered due to decreased tourist numbers and revenue, compounded by debt and ongoing operational costs. Some respondents discussed taking loans to keep their businesses afloat, while others mentioned having to lay off staff. Operational Shifts and Collaboration and Innovation were also prominent narratives, with 69% and 57% of respondents discussing how they had to adjust their operations (e.g., reducing staff, closing sections of their hotels, or offering new travel packages). Collaboration between industry players and government bodies was cited as essential for long-term recovery and building resilience in the face of ongoing crises.

Content Analysis

The following table 3 presents the most common keywords mentioned during the interviews, providing evidence of how often certain crisis-related terms were discussed.

Table 3 Content Analysis – Frequency of Key Terms in Interview Transcripts.

Keyword/Phrase	Frequency in Hoteliers (113)	Frequency in Tour Operators (79)	Total Frequency	Percentage of Total Respondents
"Adaptation"	91	68	159	83%
"Budget travelers"	89	65	154	80%
"Government support"	63	48	111	58%
"Financial strain"	97	71	168	88%
"Resilience"	54	37	91	47%
"Collaboration"	72	53	125	65%

Source: Primary data collection

The term "Adaptation" was mentioned by 83% of respondents, signaling a strong emphasis on the need for constant changes in business models, operations, and strategies to survive in the face of the multiple crises. The frequent mention of "budget travelers" by 80% of respondents also underscores the change in tourist demographics that the sector has had to adapt to. One respondent noted, "Before 2019, we catered to high-end tourists, but now we see more backpackers and Gen Z travelers looking for budget options." The term "financial strain" was the most commonly used phrase, mentioned by 88% of respondents, illustrating the deep economic impact the crises have had on the industry. This is particularly reflected in statements about financial burdens, such as paying off loans and dealing with reduced revenues. In contrast, "government support" was mentioned by 58% of respondents, indicating that many industry players feel that more assistance is needed from public authorities to help them recover and build resilience. "Resilience" and "Collaboration" were also key terms, mentioned by 47% and 65% of respondents, respectively. These terms suggest that while

resilience is a growing focus, collaboration between stakeholders—particularly between hotels, tour operators, and the government—is seen as a crucial component of recovery.

Framework Analysis and Grounded Theory Development

The insights from thematic, narrative, and content analyses reveal that the three original crisis recovery models—Faulkner's TDMF, Ritchie's Crisis Management Framework, and the Adaptive Resilience model—are no longer fully applicable to the current realities of the Sri Lankan tourism industry. The industry has been forced to develop a new approach to crisis recovery that emphasizes multi-crisis adaptation, collaboration, and demographic-driven strategies. This new approach can be described as an evolution of the traditional models, leading to the development of a Grounded Theory of Evolved Crisis Management for Multi-Crisis Tourism Recovery.

The new crisis recovery framework for Sri Lankan tourism, derived from the analysis, indicates that traditional crisis management strategies are evolving to better fit the complex, multi-crisis environment faced by the industry. While the original models emphasized cyclical recovery, data from respondents suggest that a continuous and overlapping crisis management approach is more appropriate. The traditional recovery phases are no longer sufficient, as crises often overlap, requiring constant adaptation. Demographic-driven adaptation has become a central component of the recovery process, as both hoteliers and tour operators noted the shift in tourist demographics towards budget-conscious travelers. This shift requires immediate operational changes, such as adjusting pricing strategies and offering new types of services, while long-term strategies focus on building financial resilience and adapting to future crises. This evolved framework emphasizes the importance of stakeholder collaboration, demographic flexibility, and the need for a continuous, non-linear crisis management strategy to help the Sri Lankan tourism sector not just survive, but thrive, in a multi-crisis environment.

Table 4 Key Components of the New Crisis Recovery Framework for Sri Lanka.

Original Model Component	Adapted Component	Description of New Component Based on Data
Crisis Cycle (Faulkner's TDMF)	Continuous, Overlapping Crisis Cycle	Crises are no longer experienced as discrete events; they overlap, requiring constant adaptation rather than cyclical recovery.
Long-Term Recovery (Ritchie's)	Short- and Long-Term Adaptation	Recovery must be both short-term (reactive to immediate changes in tourist behavior) and long-term (sustainable resilience).
Resilience (Adaptive Resilience)	Resilience through Collaboration and Innovation	Resilience is built not just through flexibility but also through active collaboration between stakeholders and innovative approaches to tourism.

Source: Primary data collection

Discussion

The analysis of the qualitative data collected from 192 respondents in Sri Lanka's tourism sector reveals significant insights into how traditional crisis recovery models have evolved in response to the unique multi-crisis context experienced since 2019. The tourism industry in Sri Lanka has faced a series of overlapping crises—most notably, the Easter Sunday attacks, the COVID-19 pandemic, and an economic crisis. The findings indicate that the traditional cyclical models of crisis management, such as Faulkner's Tourism Disaster Management Framework (TDMF) and Ritchie's Crisis and Disaster Management Framework are insufficient in addressing the complexities of simultaneous crises. The study highlights a need for a more dynamic, continuous framework that better accommodates the interconnectedness of crises, changing tourist demographics, and the necessity of stakeholder collaboration and financial resilience.

Faulkner's TDMF, widely recognised for its structured, cyclical approach to disaster management, assumes that crises are discrete events with clear stages of recovery, from preparation to mitigation (Faulkner, 2013). However, the findings from this research suggest that in the context of Sri Lanka, where crises overlap and compound each other's effects, the cyclical nature of Faulkner's model does not suffice. Respondents consistently reported the need to adapt continuously to the evolving nature of the crises. For example, one hotelier explained that while health protocols were being managed due to COVID-19, the simultaneous economic crisis created additional financial strain, preventing a complete recovery. This aligns with Paraskevas et al. (2017), who argue that tourism recovery frameworks must evolve to accommodate multi-crisis environments where simultaneous shocks disrupt the linear recovery processes traditionally outlined by models like TDMF. Additionally, Mair et al. (2016) point out that many cyclical models do not consider the socio-political dimensions of crises, such as prolonged political instability, which further delays recovery. In Sri Lanka, the ongoing political and economic crises exacerbated the challenges posed by the pandemic, highlighting the limitations of Faulkner's TDMF. The findings of this research suggest that businesses need to remain in a constant state of readiness, adjusting their strategies in response to multiple crises occurring simultaneously, rather than progressing through distinct stages of recovery. This shift is consistent with recent studies, such as Ritchie & Jiang (2019), which suggest that crisis recovery frameworks in tourism must be more flexible and responsive to overlapping crises.

Ritchie's Crisis and Disaster Management Framework extends Faulkner's model by focusing on stakeholder collaboration and long-term recovery strategies. This research found that stakeholder collaboration is crucial for the Sri Lankan tourism sector's ability to recover. Nearly 70% of respondents emphasised the need for a coordinated approach between the government, tourism operators, and other stakeholders. However, the findings also suggest that the traditional models of stakeholder collaboration, as outlined in Ritchie's framework, are not fully applicable in a multi-crisis context. For example, respondents noted that navigating government regulations and visa policies posed challenges in attracting high-spending tourists from key markets. These issues were further complicated by a lack of government financial support for businesses trying to recover from the compounded crises. The need for deeper, more integrated partnerships between the government and tourism operators is increasingly important in environments where multiple crises interact. Lachhab et al. (2023) argues that stakeholder collaboration during multi-crisis events must go beyond immediate crisis management to incorporate long-term, proactive strategies that focus on

rebuilding trust and infrastructure. The findings from this research align with this perspective, indicating that Sri Lanka's tourism sector needs more sustained, long-term collaboration with the government to support ongoing recovery efforts. One tour operator noted that, "continuous dialogue with the government is needed, not just in response to crises, but to ensure future preparedness." This evolved approach to collaboration highlights the concept of collaborative resilience, where partnerships between stakeholders are crucial not only for crisis response but for sustained recovery and future crisis preparedness (Mair et al. 2016).

Moreover, the findings emphasise the importance of financial and operational resilience in surviving and recovering from multi-crisis contexts. Financial strain was a recurring theme among respondents, many of whom noted difficulties in managing debt and reducing operational costs in the wake of prolonged crises. Building financial resilience by managing liquidity, restructuring debt, and optimising operations has become central to recovery efforts. According to Sharma et al. (2021), resilience in tourism must extend beyond the immediate crisis to include strategies that ensure long-term financial stability and sustainability. The findings of this research support this view, highlighting the need for businesses to prioritise financial management as part of their broader recovery strategies.

Finally, continuous innovation emerged as a key strategy for maintaining relevance and competitiveness in the face of changing market conditions. Respondents highlighted the need to introduce new tourism products and services, such as eco-tourism, experiential travel, and digital solutions like online bookings and digital marketing. These findings are consistent with the growing body of literature on the importance of innovation in tourism recovery (Hussain, 2021). As businesses adapt to changing tourist demographics and preferences, continuous innovation becomes crucial for staying competitive in the global tourism market.

This research proposed a new crisis continuum model. This model developed from this research integrates elements of Faulkner's TDMF and Ritchie's Crisis and Disaster Management Framework while evolving these models to address the realities of a multi-crisis environment. Continuous innovation, Financial and Operational Resilience Strategies, collaborative resilience, and demographic-driven strategies form the foundation of this framework, reflecting the need for businesses to remain flexible, resilient, and responsive to overlapping crises. By integrating these concepts, the framework offers a dynamic, holistic approach to crisis recovery that aligns with the lessons learned from Sri Lanka's multi-crisis environment. This model presents significant implications for both academia and industry, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how tourism businesses can recover and build resilience in the face of complex, interconnected crises.
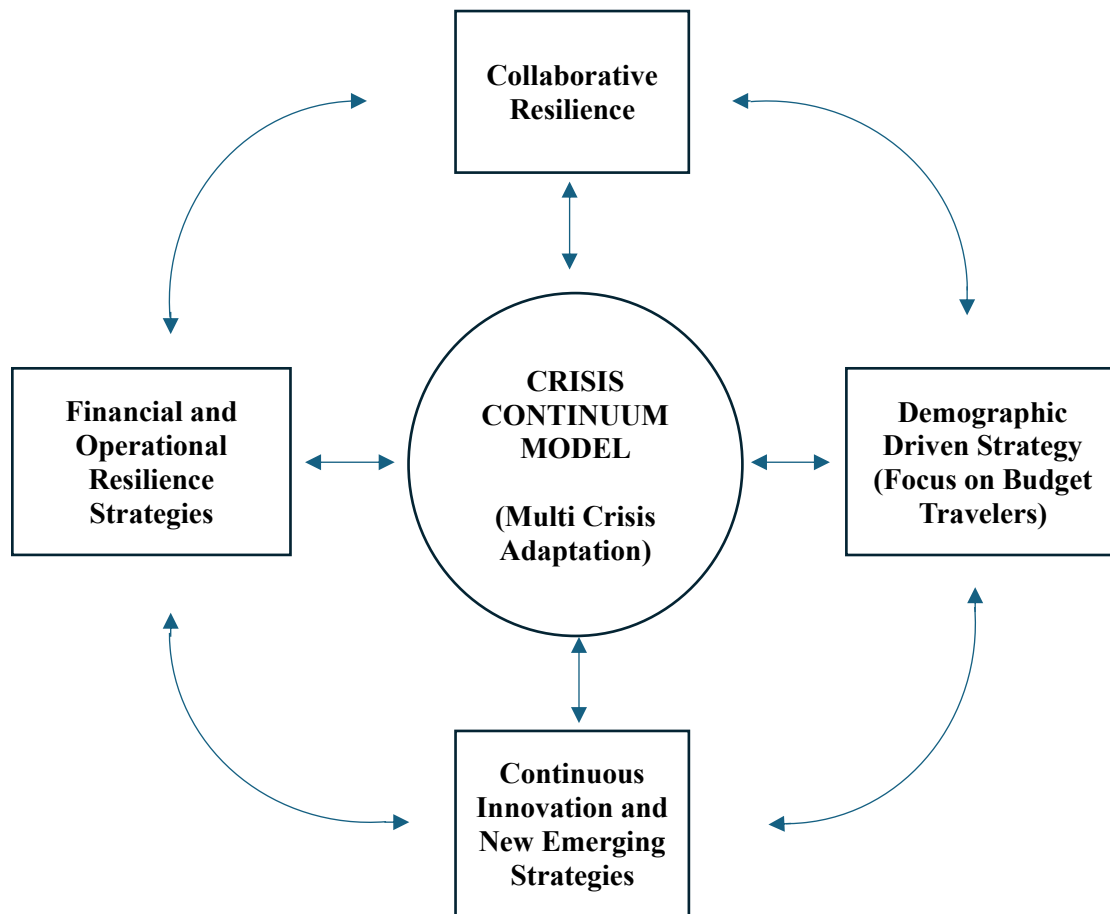
Figure 1 Proposed a new crisis continuum model.

Conclusions and Implications

This research explored the evolution of crisis recovery models in the context of Sri Lanka's tourism industry, which has faced a unique set of challenges due to overlapping crises since 2019. Traditional models, such as Faulkner's TDMF and Ritchie's Crisis and Disaster Management Framework, have proven insufficient in addressing the complexities of a multi-crisis environment, where crises are not isolated but intertwined. The study revealed that a new, dynamic framework is needed. Through qualitative analysis, a grounded theory was developed, illustrating how the tourism industry has shifted towards a more resilience-based approach that focuses on financial stability, operational flexibility, and collaborative innovation.

The findings of this research underscore the need for both academia and industry stakeholders to rethink existing crisis recovery models in light of the multi-crisis environment facing the tourism sector. For the academic community, this research demonstrates the limitations of cyclical crisis recovery models, such as Faulkner's TDMF and Ritchie's Crisis and Disaster Management Framework, which are largely based on singular, event-driven crises. Scholars should focus on developing more dynamic frameworks that account for the

continuous nature of crises and the interplay between external shocks and internal challenges, such as financial strain and changing tourist demographics. Future research should also explore how different demographic segments respond to crises and what resilience strategies are most effective for targeting emerging tourist markets, such as Gen Z travelers and budget-conscious tourists.

For industry stakeholders, particularly in Sri Lanka's tourism sector, the findings suggest that stakeholder collaboration is critical for building resilience. Government agencies, hoteliers, and tour operators must work together to develop integrated crisis management strategies, focusing on financial resilience, regulatory support, and infrastructure improvements. Businesses should also invest in digital solutions and eco-tourism offerings that cater to changing tourist preferences, helping to attract a more diverse range of visitors. Furthermore, industry players should engage in continuous innovation, adapting their products and services to meet evolving market demands.

Future research could explore the effectiveness of the proposed model in other multi-crisis contexts and assess the long-term impacts of sustained crises on the tourism labour market and economic recovery.

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