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Crisis Preparedness Strategies and Tourism Resilience: Does Organisation Size Matter?

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Global crises, including pandemics, political instability, and climate-related disasters, have exposed critical vulnerabilities in the tourism sector. The increasing frequency and intensity of these crises raise critical questions about the preparedness of tourism organisations. Crisis preparedness is paramount in crisis management as it requires a well-developed crisis management plan that is critical in helping tourism organisations to react effectively during crises. This study investigates the relationship between crisis preparedness strategies and organisational resilience among tourism enterprises in Nairobi City County, Kenya, with particular attention to the moderating effect of organisational size. Using a descriptive cross-sectional design, data were collected from 284 licensed tourism organisations spanning micro, small, medium, and large enterprises. Quantitative analysis employing multiple linear regression revealed a strong positive association between crisis preparedness, measured through contingency planning and emergency capacity building, and organisational resilience ($R^2 = 0.671$, $p < 0.001$). Notably, while larger organisations benefited from structured systems and resource endowments, smaller enterprises demonstrated resilience through informal coping mechanisms and agility, although they often lacked formal preparedness frameworks. Importantly, the interaction effect of organisational size was non-significant, suggesting that the efficacy of preparedness strategies is universally beneficial across firm sizes. The findings have critical policy implications for Kenya's broader tourism resilience agenda. There is a clear need for differentiated policy approaches that recognise the varying capacities of small and large enterprises. The findings demonstrate the need for a shift from reactive crisis responses to proactive resilience planning, which must be institutionalised within organisational structures and supported through external partnerships.

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INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry is acutely vulnerable to crises, as evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted mobility, revenues, and operational structures worldwide (Cheer *et al.*, 2021). In Kenya, tourism remains a vital economic pillar, contributing accounts for 10.4% of GDP, 5.5% of formal employment and contributes 4.2% to National Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) and contributes 5.5% to formal employment (TRI, 2022).

Kenya's tourism industry has shown an impressive, consistent upward performance. However, despite being a leading economic pillar, the tourism industry in recent years has been impacted by crises that have happened within the country and others that have occurred elsewhere (Yaşar Dinçer *et al.*, 2024). For example, Kenya's international tourism arrivals have been characterised by fluctuations emanating from crises like political instabilities, climate change, incidents of terrorism, among others, leading to low tourism revenues, reduced employment, and in some instances loss of life and property (Njoya *et al.*, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the industry's vulnerability and the weaknesses of organisational structures (Bui *et al.*, 2021). Although the tourism industry has developed resiliency to disasters and crises in the past, there is a need for crisis preparedness, which is essential for organisational survival and sustainability (Rahman *et al.*, 2021). The pandemic presented an opportunity for a transformative change and for the government to rethink the future of tourism and enhance preparedness (Pyke *et al.*, 2021). While preparedness strategies such as scenario

planning, training, and emergency response mechanisms are promoted across the industry, their uptake and impact may vary based on firm size. This paper, therefore, seeks to address the research question: To what extent do crisis preparedness strategies influence tourism resilience, and does the size of the organisation moderate this relationship?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Resilience in Organisations

Resilience is one of the concerns about how tourism industry organisations and stakeholders can prepare for disruptions caused by natural disasters and crises (Liu *et al.*, 2024). Studies emphasise tourism resilience building at the destination level; however, examining the resilience of individual businesses is the first important step towards destination-wide resilience (Della Corte *et al.*, 2021). Understanding resilience can enable organisations to identify necessary interventions to both internal and external change in the environment while maintaining the system's integrity (Aydogan *et al.*, 2024).

Resilience goes beyond simply survival and necessitates a shift from reactive to proactive strategies in which resilience is integrated in the organisation's culture and structure, encouraging continual learning and adaptation (Omowole *et al.*, 2024). Jiang *et al.* (2021) view organisational resilience as a dynamic process rather than a desirable organisational status and resilience building as an ongoing process. A process view in the sense that resilience develops gradually with different elements across each crisis management stage, helping create continuous preparation and monitoring for future crises (Jiang *et al.*, 2021).

Thus, a process-focused approach to resilience is needed to help identify the possibility of effective coping and to align resilience elements to all stages of the crisis management lifecycle (Drammeh, 2024).

Organisational resilience can be attained when organisations utilise both their internal and external resources to build the capacity to anticipate, adapt, sustain, and enhance their performance in the face of unforeseen events that alter the business environment (Kokkranikal *et al.*, 2024). Because of the unpredictability of crises and the nature of the tourism industry, investing in organisational resilience is a more successful approach than just managing risk and crises (Hall *et al.*, 2023).

Crisis Preparedness

Crises reveal the extent of destination vulnerability, and they present an opportunity for better preparedness and long-term resilience building (Traskevich *et al.*, 2021). Crisis preparedness involves coming up with proactive and preventive measures aimed at developing a state of readiness to help prevent the potential crisis from escalating into a disaster (Ghaderi *et al.*, 2022). Crisis preparedness should therefore be of high concern for every business involved in the tourism industry. This requires tourism executives to anticipate, develop organisational capabilities to prevent, recover, and learn from crisis experiences (Liu *et al.*, 2024).

The level of crisis preparedness and planning is paramount in crisis management, and it requires a well-developed crisis management plan that is critical in helping tourism organisations to react effectively (Leta & Chan, 2021). This phase usually involves formulating formal crisis preparedness plans, forming and training crisis management teams in the pre-crisis period to ensure organisations are prepared for unexpected events (Wut *et al.*, 2021).

A crisis management plan needs to be developed and unified into the overall strategic plan of the tourism organisation, citing how to handle a crisis, the adaptation process, a crisis training manual,

and the collaborative endeavours with relevant stakeholders (Derham *et al.*, 2022). Resilient hospitality and tourist businesses should therefore implement long-term planning centred on continuous marketing innovation, emerging technology optimisation, human resource management, and changing customer behaviours for success and long-term recovery (Colmekcioglu & Dineva, 2022).

According to Casal-Ribeiro *et al.* (2023), the majority of crisis management frameworks in the literature share common aspects such as crisis planning, risk assessment, a collective mitigation response, and crisis communication. They do, however, point out that while most research focuses on the impacts caused, recovery strategies, and the post-crisis phase, there is a need for proactive crisis preparedness. This is because by participating in crisis preparedness, organisations and destinations can expedite their return to normalcy during a crisis by using lessons learnt to effectively navigate future crises. They recommend that both practitioners and scholars should develop proactive crisis planning plans (Casal-Ribeiro *et al.*, 2023).

Ghaderi *et al.* (2022) investigated crisis preparedness among Malaysian hospitality managers. The findings revealed that certain hotels were unprepared for crises, which was attributed to either a lack of necessary resources or a shortage of resources. However, the managers were willing to adopt a proactive crisis management approach, which would be achieved by establishing public-private partnership and allocation of adequate resources. They recommend that for crisis management to be effective, managers should be intentional and willing to prepare for potential crises and change the established practices.

Fabeil *et al.* (2018) investigated crisis preparedness and resilience of tourism businesses in the coastal area of Sabah. The authors found out that despite the tourism business operators in the area having experienced crisis events, the micro-sized resorts were not as well prepared and resilient as compared to the medium-sized ones.

This is because most focus on the reactive response and recovery efforts of the tourism industry rather than proactive strategic planning efforts that emphasise preparedness and reduction strategies (Filimonau & De Coteau, 2020).

Ritchie & Jiang (2019) indicate that despite the tourism industry being vulnerable to a growing number of natural disasters, health scares, and biosecurity risks, few tourism destinations and businesses are well prepared to handle the impacts they present. Khazai *et al.* (2018) also note that tourism management research has not given great attention to how tourism destinations prepare for and adjust to disaster situations. Thus, the need for this research, to understand how tourism organisations in Kenya prepare and adapt to crises.

Therefore, pre-crisis preparedness and readiness, as well as well-developed crisis management plans, are important in helping organisations to react effectively and to maintain future organisational development (Leta & Chan, 2021). Resilient organisations can achieve their core objectives in the face of adversity by developing situational awareness, reducing their vulnerability to disturbances, and improving their ability to prepare for and adapt effectively (Jiang *et al.*, 2021).

Organisation Size as a Moderator

Studies indicate that the size of an organisation and its business capacity are likely to influence how they are impacted and learn from a crisis (Aydogan *et al.*, 2024). For instance, large organisations that have multidivisional structures, more resources, and exhibit synergies in strategic coordination may have greater crisis readiness and/or crisis management systems in place (Islam *et al.*, 2023). Filimonau *et al.* (2020) also indicate that international chain-affiliated establishments, such as large hotels, have a higher capability to survive a crisis and demonstrate a higher level of organisational resilience as they tend to be better structured and hold more capital.

The size and age of a tourism organisation influence its financial performance during a crisis,

this is through the type and number of available resources, as well as their ability to introduce process innovations that will enable them to cope with the resulting turbulent environments (Prayag *et al.*, 2024). For example, older and larger organisations could have more knowledge and resources to develop crisis management procedures as compared to small organisations. On the other hand, tourism Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have limited resources, face financial hardships, and are the most vulnerable during crises (Rastegar *et al.*, 2023).

Aydogan *et al.* (2024) note that, as much as larger organisations might distribute risk, be better prepared to prevent crises, and have contingency plans to mitigate organisational disruptions, smaller tourism organisations have limited risk, a low level of bureaucracy, and might be more flexible during crises. Additionally, the authors note that the smaller organisations might lack human and financial capital and crisis management compliance to survive crises. Despite the significance of crisis preparedness, research has shown that most small tourism organisations often lack the essential time and resources to commit to crisis planning (Casal-Ribeiro *et al.*, 2023). In contrast, Helgeson & Lin (2025) observe that in smaller organisations, business owners have been found to have significant influence in adopting and implementing innovative techniques and decision-making during times of crisis.

Jiang *et al.* (2022) examined the key enablers and barriers tourism organisations employ to develop dynamic capabilities, taking into account their sector, age, and size. The findings indicate that knowledge-based, relational, human-related, and financial slack resources are critical enhancers of developing dynamic capabilities during disasters. The authors also indicate that larger tourism organisations had more financial resources to use as contingency funds for business renovations and redevelopment during the cyclone than small or medium-sized organisations that did not have savings. Therefore, tourism organisations should build strong dynamic capabilities that can shape strategic responses, drive strategic renewal

through open innovation and collaboration, and create effective business models that will ensure future survival and sustainability. Ibid

Research undertaken by Le & Phi (2021) revealed that large hotel chains were better equipped in pandemic crisis management as compared to small and medium-sized hotels. This is because larger hotels have stronger brands, strong financial support, better communication technologies, better lobbying power and a proven record of management experience (Le & Phi, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a descriptive cross-sectional design with a quantitative approach. The quantitative approach was used to measure objective facts based on the concepts formed from the study variables (Firdaus & Zufadilla, 2020). It also allowed the researcher to collect data from a large number of individuals, raising the likelihood that findings may be generalised to a larger population. The primary data tools included structured questionnaires. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS v.30, with multiple regression to test hypotheses.

Sampling Techniques

The study sampled 284 licensed tourism organisations in Nairobi City County. The tourism organisations range from hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and tour operators. The study employed simple random sampling to select managers and owners of tourism organisations in Nairobi City County. This technique allowed all elements of the population of interest to be chosen randomly, helping minimise bias (Taherdoost, 2021). Purposive sampling methods were also used in selecting the key informants for interviews.

Data Collection Techniques

The quantitative and qualitative data were collected by the use of the primary and secondary data collection techniques. The primary data was collected by the use of structured and semi-

structured questionnaires and key informant in-depth interviews. Secondary data was gathered through a desk review of published reports, peer-reviewed journals, and other documents related to tourism crisis management and resilience.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using quantitative techniques. A multiple linear regression was used to determine the influence of crisis preparedness strategies on organisational resilience. Before testing the hypothesis, a descriptive analysis was conducted to summarise respondents' perceptions of crisis preparedness strategies, with a particular emphasis on crisis preparedness plans and emergency response planning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Crisis Preparedness Strategies and Organisational Resilience

This research aimed to assess the influence of crisis preparedness strategies on organisational resilience. The results of crisis preparedness strategies reveal a generally positive outlook among participants as they expressed agreement and strong agreement across various dimensions of crisis preparedness strategies, as shown in Table 1. In regard to crisis preparedness plans, the majority of the participants indicated that their organisation has a written and up-to-date crisis preparedness plan, has developed a crisis contingency plan, maintains standard operating procedures and manuals, and has appropriate policies for cancellations or forward bookings during crises.

On emergency response planning, respondents also conveyed confidence in their organisation's emergency response strategies. The majority of the respondents affirmed that innovation, knowledge, and education foster a culture of safety during crises. The respondents agreed that their organisations continually develop employees' skills to manage critical emergencies, capacity-building for teams in contingency planning was similarly endorsed, and that staff are well prepared for critical emergencies.

Table 1: Perceptions of Crisis Preparedness Strategies

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
Crisis Preparedness Plans		
The organisation has a written and up-to-date crisis preparedness plan.	3.70	1.086
The organisation has developed a crisis contingency plan.	3.78	1.001
The organisation has standard operating procedures and manual.	4.26	0.772
The organisation has developed an appropriate policy and procedures to deal with cancellations or forward bookings.	4.28	0.817
Emergency Response Planning		
The organisation uses innovation, knowledge, and education to build a culture of safety during crises.	4.14	0.808
The organisation continually develops and strengthens employees' skills to handle critical emergency situations.	4.06	0.825
The organisation builds their teams' capacity contingency planning.	4.06	0.868
The organisation has prepared staff to handle critical emergency situations.	4.06	0.814

Notes: N = 280. Scale (*Range of Interpreting Means*): SD – Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.80), D – Disagree (1.80 – 2.60), N – Neutral (2.60 – 3.40), A – Agree (3.40 – 4.20), SA – Strongly Agree (4.20 – 5.00).

The Influence of Crisis Preparedness Strategies on Organisational Resilience

A multiple linear regression was conducted to assess the influence of crisis preparedness

strategies on organisational resilience. The regression results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Impact of Crisis Preparedness Strategies on Organisational Resilience

Regression Model 1	B	Std. Error	β	t	p-value
(Constant)	1.231	0.122		10.051	< .001
Crisis Preparedness Plans	0.328	0.042	0.398	7.875	< .001
Emergency Training and Capacity Building	0.381	0.040	0.482	9.537	< .001

Notes: Dependent Variable: Organisational Resilience. R = 0.819. R² = 0.671. Adj. R² = 0.669. F (2, 277) = 282.93***. Significance Levels: *p < 0.05. **P < 0.01. ***p < 0.001

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis indicate a strong relationship between the predictors—emergency training and capacity building, and crisis preparedness plans—and the dependent variable, organisational resilience. The model shows an R-value of 0.819, suggesting a high degree of correlation. The R² value is 0.671, which means that approximately 67.1% of the variance in organisational resilience can be explained by the predictors.

In addition, among the predictors, crisis preparedness plans have an unstandardized coefficient of 0.328, indicating that for each unit increase in the implementation of crisis preparedness plans, organisational resilience is expected to increase by 0.328 units, holding other

factors constant. This coefficient is also statistically significant ($t = 7.875, p < 0.001$).

Emergency training and capacity building show an unstandardized coefficient of 0.381. This suggests that each unit increase in emergency training and capacity building is associated with a 0.381 unit increase in organisational resilience, again holding other factors constant. The predictor is highly significant, evidenced by a ($t = 9.537, p < 0.001$). Overall, both predictors positively contribute to enhancing organisational resilience and demonstrate strong statistical significance. Thus, H₀₂ was rejected.

Moderating Effect of Organisational Size

Table 3: Organisational Size Distribution

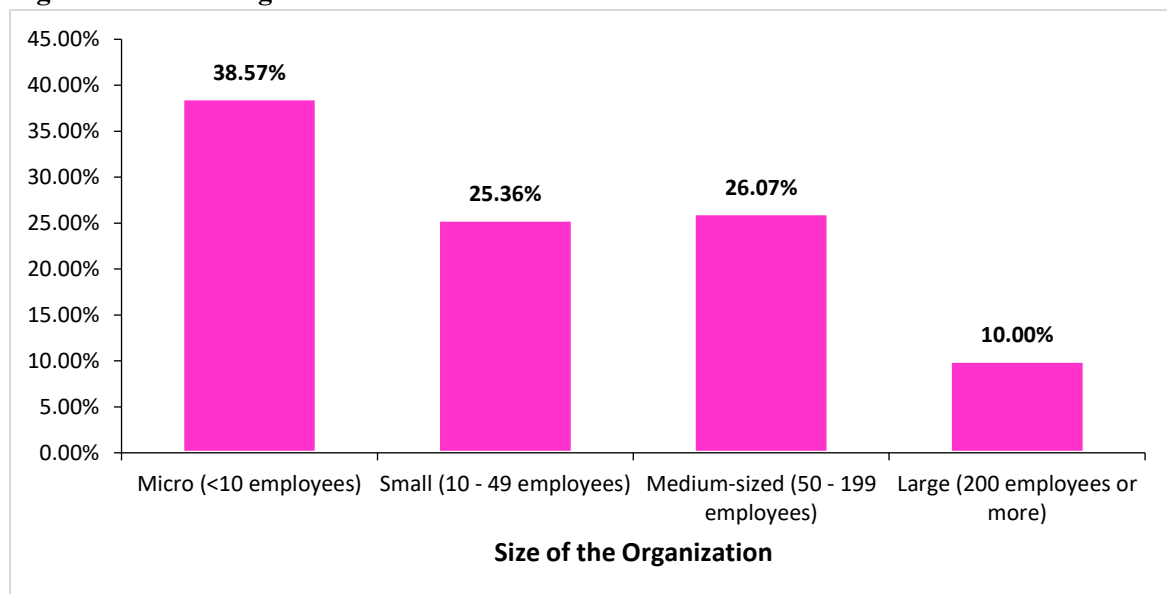
Size Category	Employee Range	Frequency	Percentage
Micro	1-10	103	36.3%
Small	11-50	97	34.2%
Medium	51-200	58	20.4%
Large	200+	26	9.2%

Organizational Size

The results of the size of the tourism organisations in the study are shown in Figure 1. The organisational size profile of the participants illustrates a diverse range of employee counts within the tourism organisations surveyed. The

micro enterprises accounted for 38.57%, the small organisations 25.36%, the Medium-sized organisations 26.07% and lastly the large enterprises represented 10.00%. This distribution reflects that the majority of tourism organisations are micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

Figure 1: Size of Organisation



Overview of Respondents’ Perspectives on Organisational Size

The respondents’ perceptions of organisational size provide insights into tourism organisations’ financial preparedness and support for innovation and recovery. According to the results in Table 4 majority of the respondents indicated that their organisation has sufficient financial capital for innovation and strategic planning and has secured adequate insurance coverage to protect against asset damage and loss.

However, the perception of having corporate financial backers to support recovery had mixed responses. This highlights an area for potential improvement, demonstrating that some tourism organisations may need to enhance their financial support networks to ensure effective recovery strategies. This suggests that many organisations feel adequately equipped to invest in new initiatives, reflecting a commitment to growth and adaptation.

Table 4: Descriptive Overview of Respondents' Perspectives on Organisational Size

Size of Organisation	Mean	Std. Dev
The organisation has enough financial capital for innovation and strategic planning.	3.97	0.935
The organisation has corporate financial backers able to provide investment funds to support recovery.	3.59	1.167
The organisation has enough savings to be proactive in the face of changing environments.	3.88	1.037
The organisation has a secured adequate insurance coverage to cover for asset damage and loss.	4.14	0.817

Notes: N = 280. Scale (*Range of Interpreting Means*): SD – Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.80), D – Disagree (1.80 – 2.60), N – Neutral (2.60 – 3.40), A – Agree (3.40 – 4.20), SA – Strongly Agree (4.20 – 5.00).

Tests for Crisis Preparedness and Organisational Size

To examine the direct and interactive impacts of crisis preparedness strategies and organisational size on organisational resilience, a three-step linear regression analysis was performed. According to the results in Table 5, Crisis Preparedness Strategies significantly and positively predict Organisational Resilience ($\beta = 0.819$, $p < 0.001$). Besides, about 67.1% ($R^2 = .671$) of the variance is explained by Crisis Preparedness Strategies alone, demonstrating a strong predictive ability. This finding suggests that better Crisis Preparedness directly promotes an organisation's ability to endure and recover from crises.

In Model 2, both Crisis Preparedness ($\beta = 0.728$, $p < 0.001$) and Organisational Size ($\beta = 0.144$, $p = 0.001$) positively predict Organisational Size. However, Organisational Size was found to have a small but significant positive effect, depicting that larger organisations tend to be slightly more resilient. This assertion is likely due to greater access to resources or established systems. With the inclusion of Organisational Size as a predictor, the explained variance increased by 1.2% ($\Delta R^2 = .012$). Even though the change was modest, it was statistically significant ($F = 10.841$, $p < 0.001$).

In Model 3, the interaction between Crisis Preparedness and Organisational Size is not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.224$, $p = 0.313$). This finding indicated that Organisational Size does not significantly moderate the nexus between Crisis Preparedness Strategies and Organisational Resilience. Although both Crisis Management Strategies and Organisational Size remained positively related to Organisational Resilience, the interaction term added no meaningful explanatory value. Nevertheless, across all regression models, Crisis Preparedness Strategies emerged as the strongest predictor of Organisational Resilience. This highlights the important role of proactive planning, resource allocation, and staff training in ensuring organisational survival and flexibility during crises.

While statistically significant in regression Model 2, Organisational Size contributed slightly to organisational resilience. This shows that small organisations can be equally resilient if they invest in effective Crisis Preparedness Strategies. The non-significant interaction effect demonstrated that the effectiveness of Crisis Preparedness Strategies does not depend on Organisational Size. In reality, preparedness benefits organisations of all sizes in equal measure, strengthening the collective value of strategic planning.

Table 5: Crisis preparedness and Organizational Size

Regression Model		B	Std. Error	β	t	p
1	(Constant)	1.228	0.122		10.041	< .001
	Crisis Preparedness Strategies	0.711	0.030	0.819	23.799	< .001
	(Constant)	1.142	0.123		9.294	< .001
2	Crisis Preparedness Strategies	0.632	0.038	0.728	16.706	< .001
	Organizational Size	0.104	0.031	0.144	3.293	.001
3	(Constant)	0.813	0.348		2.338	.020
	Crisis Preparedness Strategies	0.724	0.098	0.834	7.360	< .001
	Organizational Size	0.204	0.104	0.283	1.958	.051
	Interaction Term	-0.027	0.027	-0.224	-1.011	.313

Notes: Dependent Variable: Organisational Resilience. Product Term: Crisis Preparedness x Organisational Size.
Model 1 Summary: $R = .819$. $R^2 = .671$. $Adj. R^2 = .670$. $\Delta R^2 = .671$. $F(1, 278) = 566.409^{***}$
Model 2 Summary: $R = .827$. $R^2 = .683$. $Adj. R^2 = .681$. $\Delta R^2 = .012$. $F(1, 277) = 10.841^{***}$
Model 3 Summary: $R = .827$. $R^2 = .684$. $Adj. R^2 = .681$. $\Delta R^2 = .001$. $F(1, 276) = 1.022^{ns}$
 Significance levels: * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$. n.s – not significant.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that crisis preparedness strategies are fundamental determinants of organisational resilience in the tourism sector. By empirically establishing that proactive measures such as contingency planning, employee training, and resource allocation significantly improve a firm’s capacity to withstand and recover from crises, the research advances the understanding of resilience-building as a dynamic and context-dependent process. While organisational size contributed marginally to resilience—larger organisations possess advantages such as financial slack and institutionalised crisis management systems—small and micro enterprises showcased resilience through flexibility and rapid adaptation. However, the lack of a statistically significant interaction effect between preparedness and size underscores that preparedness benefits organisations of all scales equally when adequately implemented. The findings demonstrate the need for a shift from reactive crisis responses to proactive resilience planning, which must be institutionalised within organisational structures and supported through external partnerships. The tourism sector, particularly in developing economies, must embrace this paradigm to ensure sustainability amidst growing global uncertainties.

Policy and Practice Recommendations

The policy implications of this study are significant for Kenya’s broader tourism resilience agenda. First, there is a clear need for differentiated policy approaches that recognise the varying capacities of small and large enterprises. For small and micro enterprises, the government and industry bodies should develop scalable preparedness toolkits that offer simplified templates for risk assessment, emergency planning, and employee training. These should be made accessible through local business associations or digital platforms.

For medium and large firms, a more structured approach should be institutionalised. This includes mandating resilience planning and preparedness audits as part of the tourism licensing process. Such regulatory requirements can ensure that preparedness becomes a standardised component of business operations, particularly for firms with wider national and international exposure.

Public-private partnerships should be leveraged to create shared crisis simulation and preparedness training programs. These could include annual risk awareness campaigns, sector-wide drills, and scenario testing, which would benefit all sizes of firms while fostering a culture of preparedness.

and collaboration. Embedding preparedness training into vocational and professional tourism curricula can create a skilled workforce capable of managing crises effectively. Furthermore, financial incentives such as tax reliefs, subsidies, low-interest loans or matching grants could encourage tourism businesses to invest in preparedness infrastructure, including digital systems for real-time communication and remote operations.

Moreover, organisational managers and policymakers should prioritise crisis preparedness training, risk assessments, and scenario planning. Support programs for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) should concentrate on how strategic preparedness can be strengthened rather than simply focusing on increasing the scale or size. Besides, investment efforts in resilience should be strategy-focused, not size-dependent.

Finally, the Ministry of Tourism, together with the Kenya Tourism Board and other relevant agencies, should integrate crisis preparedness as a core pillar in national tourism development strategies. This includes mainstreaming crisis preparedness education within vocational tourism training curricula and supporting academic-industry partnerships to generate evidence-based solutions for sector-specific resilience challenges.

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