

Slow Tourism and Personal Sustainability: Existential Authenticity in Reciprocal Host–Guest Encounters

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Abstract:

The slow tourism literature has predominantly conceptualised the phenomenon through environmental, economic, societal, and cultural sustainability perspectives. This paper introduces an additional dimension by foregrounding the personal sustainability generated through slow tourism experiences for both hosts and guests. Building on Wang's notion of existential authenticity and Goffman's framework of impression management, the study develops a conceptual and theoretical account of personal sustainability in slow tourism. It argues that for tourists, slow tourism facilitates personal well-being and the pursuit of authenticity through immersion, self-reflection, and the experience of being "true to oneself." From the perspective of local residents, slow tourism enables a genuine performance of self within the backstage settings of everyday life in non-exploitative tourism encounters. By fostering existential authenticity and personal fulfilment for both tourists and hosts, the study positions personal sustainability as a critical complement to existing sustainability dimensions, while reinforcing the importance of inclusive community development and responsible consumption (SDG 11 and SDG 12) for long-term tourism vitality.

Keywords:

Slow Tourism, Personal Sustainability, Existential Authenticity, Host–Guest Relations, Sustainable Tourism.