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Rural tourism initiatives and their relationship to collaborative governance and perceived value: A review of recent research and trends

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A B S T R A C T

Rural tourism is a form of landscape conservation and sustainable development that can help respond to the challenges of rural areas. Although growing rural tourism has emerged with a collective approach, managed mainly by local communities, more attention needs to be paid to how the beneficiaries, i.e., tourists, are involved in such initiatives. This study explores the participation of tourists in governance processes in the framework of collaborative governance and perceived value. The study employs a systematic literature review using the PRISMA protocol and VOSviewer software. The results indicate a growing interest in collaborative governance-based rural tourism research, with Spain and China as significant contributors. The importance of stakeholder participation is highlighted, although mechanisms for creating deliberative spaces or decision-making processes remain to be indicated. The difficulty of actively involving tourists in these processes is acknowledged, attributing this to the transitory nature of tourism. Finally, the study argues for more inclusive and participatory approaches to achieve sustainable outcomes in rural tourism initiatives.

1. Introduction

During the last decades, rural landscapes are facing different challenges and uncertainties shaped by climate change(IPCC, 2019; Mora et al., 2020), environmental degradation (Kristensen et al., 2016), rural-to-urban migration (Y. Wang et al., 2021), and the fulfilment of the international agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (FAO, 2018). Thus, there has been growing concern to preserve these landscapes' ecosystem services. Ecosystem services (ES) can be defined as the benefits that humanity can obtain from ecosystems (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA), 2005). The ES are therefore seen as collective outcomes 'co-produced' by the agricultural landscape, underpinned by social relations and interdependencies between individuals, producers, and beneficiaries, and between the living and non-living environment (Barnaud & Antona, 2014; Barnaud et al., 2018). According to the Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services (CICES), there are three types of ES: provisioning, regulating, and cultural services (Haines-Young & Potschin-Young, 11 C.E.). The latter includes rural tourism. The concept of rural tourism is multifaceted and can vary around the world (Li et al., 2020; L. E. Wang et al., 2013; Yubero & Chevalier, 2018). Most notions highlight that it is a form of tourism that relies on the beauty of the natural landscape, architecture, folk culture and other unique resources of rural areas (Karampela et al., 2019; Li et al., 2020; Sánchez-Zamora et al., 2014). In many rural areas, tourism is used as a conservation tool (Cortes-Vazquez, 2017) and is linked to sustainable development (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015). Rural tourism is not only an ES for the external society but also represents essential benefits for the rural areas that offer it, such as new investments in infrastructure, job creation and diversification of local income (Cunha et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). However, the configuration of a tourist space is influenced by the power dynamics established by different interest groups in specific rural territories, one of them being tourists (Frisvoll, 2012; Islam et al., 2018; Panzer-Krause, 2020; Roxas et al., 2020).

As an ES, the provision and maintenance of rural tourism requires a high level of coordination of actors and land use practices at the landscape level (Rival & Muradian, 2013; Zaga-Mendez et al., 2021), and such coordination shapes governance processes. The main public instruments implemented with such an approach include subsidies or taxes, ecological compensation, certifications and payments for ecosystem services(Berthet et al., 2022). These instruments have been criticised in several aspects for relying on experts' opinions rather than local stakeholders (Spangenberg et al., 2015), thus overlooking the different forms of know-how that could contribute to addressing rural

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dynamics (Berthet et al., 2022). Collective action for the management of ES, such as rural tourism, has been proposed as a powerful alternative to overcome the shortcomings of policy and market approaches (Linke et al., 2022; Muradian, 2013), as collaboration can help to resolve trade-offs between ES that lead to benefits or enable agreements between producers and beneficiaries of ES (Barnaud et al., 2018). For this collective action to emerge, it requires the construction of social networks based on trust and the frequent exchange of actors (Moyano, 2005). Tackling rural tourism with this approach implies that the actors (providers, tourists, and intermediaries) are conscious that they depend on each other to benefit from and maintain the ES and that their actions are interrelated and have an impact on both the quality and the stability of the tourist offer (Berthet et al., 2022; Duraiappah et al., 2014; Rastegar, 2022; Zaga-Mendez et al., 2021). Although growing rural tourism has emerged with a community or collective approach involving more horizontal forms of governance and managed mainly by local communities (Brambatti & Bartoszeck Nitsche, 2017; Idziak et al., 2015; Taylor, 2017), little attention has been paid to how the beneficiaries, i.e. tourists, are involved in such initiatives.

Thus, this paper contributes to recent debates in academia and public policy on governance in rural tourism initiatives, which are based on collective action and integration of tourists. To achieve this aim, a systematic literature review of rural tourism research was conducted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method. Applying theoretical perspectives on collaborative governance and perceived value, the main themes of the current research were organised, and future lines of research were identified. The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 overviews key concepts and analysis models on collaborative governance and perceived value. Section 3 presents the methodology of the systematic review. Section 4 presents the main results, and Section 5 provides a discussion of the results. Section 5 concludes and derives some perspectives for future research.

2. Theoretical background: Collaborative governance and perceived value

2.1. Governance

For this paper, the starting point is collaborative approaches in governance, i.e., in which a set of organisations collaborate by cooperating, networking and creating collective actions to promote public goals (Prentice et al., 2019). Thus, governance is defined as the set of processes and mechanisms of collective coordination of actors or agents of different nature (entrepreneurs, local associations, individuals, government, consumers, and others) that guide, direct, control, or manage a territory, a project or a network that pursues common and mutually beneficial goals (Torres-Salcido & Sanz-Cañada, 2018; Yubero & Chevalier, 2018). This implies moving from hierarchical or top-down approaches to horizontal or bottom-up ones (Ivette et al., 2021). This coordination can take place in different spheres, such as social (e.g. generation and transfer of knowledge or innovation) or economic (e.g. purchase and sale or logistics of goods and services) (Reina-Usuga et al., 2020; Thees et al., 2020).

In the context of tourism, governance is understood as the process of managing tourism destinations through the synergic and coordinated efforts of different actors, such as governments at different levels, the local community that implements the activities, the civil society that inhabits the host communities and the business environment related to the operation of the tourism system (Engels et al., 2019; Guimont & Lapointe, 2016; Leminen, 2013; Panzer-Krause, 2020; Spangenberg et al., 2015; Thees et al., 2020). Academic literature has identified nine forms of governance in which the involvement of actors depends on their degree of participation not only in the spaces for reflection but also in the decision-making processes. These forms of governance are good governance, network governance, local governance, destination governance, territorial governance, environmental governance, multilevel governance, corporate governance and meta-governance (Ivette et al., 2021; Thees et al., 2020; Van der Zee & Vanneste, 2015). The key to identifying whether a form of governance is collaborative is the notion of reflexivity, which is seen as a critical reflection on the social arrangements, norms and expectations that dominate the issues being addressed (Adkins, 2003) and in which implicit preconceptions about the status quo are reviewed (Hendriks & Grin, 2007). The process of reflexive governance is embedded in socio-political environments and influenced by territorial factors, which impact the outcomes of the debates and deliberations that come out of reflexivity (Kirwan et al., 2017). Theories of reflexive governance emphasise three factors: i) participation of actors of different natures and backgrounds, ii) creation of spaces for deliberation and collective learning; and iii) identification and implementation of solutions to shared problems (Rodríguez et al., 2018).

To address the analysis of collaborative governance processes, the literature highlights four categories that encompass collaborative frameworks (Bryson et al., 2015; Vangen et al., 2015).

- Starting conditions or characteristics: Explore the baseline situation and the unique features of the territory and/or the host community.
- Collaborative or interaction processes: The spaces and ways actors interact, reflect and make decisions.
- Governance structures: Coordination mechanisms or arrangements or agreements between actors
- Outcomes: Collaboration results, including joint working, a continuous learning process and improved accountability.

2.2. Perceived value

Consumer perceived value research has been of increasing interest since the late 1980s (Eggert & Ulaga, 2002). However, as Gallarza & Gil Saur (2006) argue, the literature on perceived value presents several difficulties. Firstly, the nature of the notion itself poses problems for its definition and conceptualisation (Zeithaml, 1988). In the marketing field, the literature indicates different terminologies associated with the notion of "value" (customer value - used by strategic marketing -, consumer value - specific to consumer behaviour -, perceived value - indicating an evaluative judgement). Secondly, methodological problems associated with perceived value, a concept of a subjective nature that gives rise to a certain ambiguity, preventing a uniform interpretation and consensual modelling of the term, have been pointed out (De chernatony et al., 2000).

Regarding the evolution of research on value, Oliver (1999) identifies two strands. The first strands take place mainly in the 1980s, where value is explained as a unidirectional cognitive perception associated with quality or utility. The theoretical foundation of this perspective is to be found in the theory of economic value. Under this perspective, value is understood as a set of characteristics desirable by the consumer in order to obtain a desired benefit. Contributions in this period consider value as a relationship between price and quality (Dodds & Monroe, 1985), as a variable that depends on price (Zeithaml, 1984) or as a notion related to utility (Schechter, 1985). The second strand of research on perceived value developed from the late 1980s onwards, and it is bidirectional, understanding value as a positive function of what the consumer receives and a negative function of what he or she sacrifices. This definition captures the idea of subjectivity (perception of the individual) and relativity of the concept (trade-off between benefits and sacrifices). Under this perspective, utility is not the only benefit derived from an act of purchase or consumption, while at the same time taking into account the effect on the perception of value of the sacrifices incurred by consumers (Zeithaml, 1988).

Thus, currently, value can be defined as a relative preference for a particular interactive consumer experience (Holbrook, 1999). This definition coincides with what other authors call "perceived value"

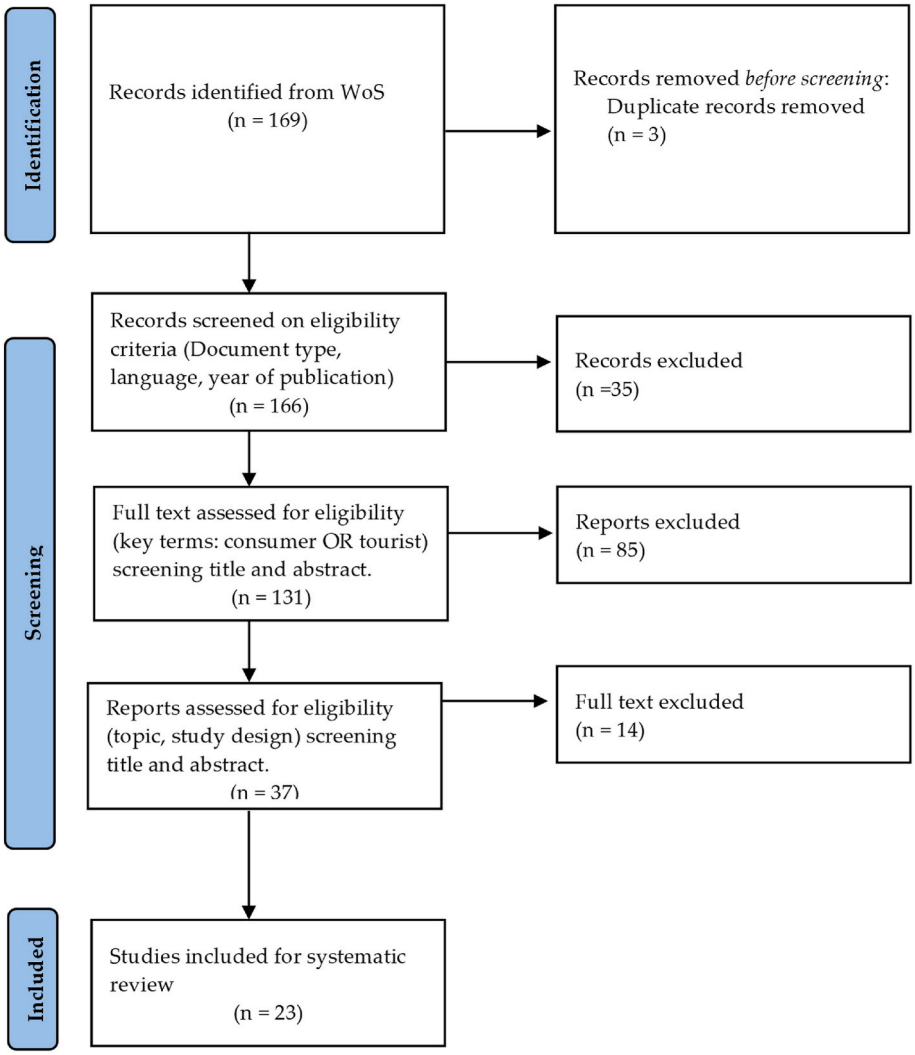

Fig. 1. PRISMA flowchart: Process of study selection.
Source: authors' own elaboration based on Page et al. (2021).

(Cronin et al., 2000; Grewal et al., 1998; Sweeney et al., 1999) since one of the characteristics of value described by Holbrook (1999) is its subjectivity. The concept of value is a further step in the evaluation of perceived service quality, as it involves incorporating, in addition to the sacrifices made, additional benefits other than quality (Gil Saura et al., 2015). Thus, it can be observed that there is consensus that perceived value is a consequence of quality (Caruana et al., 2000; Cronin et al., 2000; Grewal et al., 1998; Oh, 1999; Sirohi et al., 1998; Sweeney et al., 1999), where value is understood as a higher-order construct.

Therefore, to tackle the analysis of perceived value, the scientific literature reports different approaches, the most relevant being those of Holbrook (1999), Sheth, Newman, & Gross (1991), and Sweeney et al., 1999. Sheth, Newman, & Gross (1991) identify five types of values to consider: i) functional value (such as utility, e.g. reliability, durability or price); ii) social (as a symbolic value derived from a sense of group identity); iii) emotional (as an explicit recognition of the affective nature of value evaluations); iv) epistemic (as perceived utility as an alternative way of revealing curiosity and novelty; and v) conditional (as the perceived utility of an alternative as a result of circumstances faced by the consumer in his or her decision making).

On the other hand, Holbrook (1999) proposes one of the richest typologies of value dimensionality. This typology of value recognises three axes to classify the types of value that can arise in the consumption experience: i) extrinsic vs. intrinsic value, ii) self-vs. other-oriented value, and iii) active vs. reactive value. The combination of the three axes gives origin to eight types of value: efficiency, excellence, entertainment, aesthetics, status, esteem, ethics and spirituality. Nevertheless, some scholars have pointed out the need for more operationalisation of this approach for implementation in the consumer market for products and services (Oliver, 1999).

Finally, Sweeney et al., 1999 developed a scale for measuring perceived value based on the Theory of Consumption Value. The PERVAL scale is one of the few attempts to operationalise a proposal for measuring the value perceived by the consumer, proposing the measurement of the construct based on the evaluations made by the consumer himself at the point of sale, beyond definitions and theoretical conceptualisations. This scale includes: i) emotional value (feelings or affective states that a product generates), ii) social value (capacity of the product to increase the consumer's self-concept), iii) and functional value, composed of a) price (utility derived from the product due to the reduction of perceived costs in the short and long term); and b) quality (understood as product performance).

3. Materials and methods

3.1. Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PR ISMA)

This paper develops a systematic review based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). The systematic review was chosen because it allows us to analyse the evolution of specific topics in a given period, as well as to anticipate the emergence of other trending topics, thus mapping the frontier of knowledge and directing new research opportunities (Liu et al., 2022; Malapane et al., 2022). Generally, systematic review methods identify scholarly and scientific work trends, showing research typology, publication media, authorship leaders and their linkage by organisations and countries. For this, keywords are used in both the titles and the body of the papers (Guerrero-Bote et al., 2021; Szomszor et al., 2021). However, one of the main areas for improvement of this type of analysis was the absence of a specific methodology to standardise the procedure and thus avoid issues such as subjectivity (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA fills this gap by providing a protocol for conducting systematic reviews that involves a four-phase flowchart and a 27-item checklist to guide authors (Page et al., 2021). This is the main reason why it has been selected for this study.

Moreover, PRISMA is recognised for its comprehensiveness and reliability (Liberati et al., 2009; Malapane et al., 2022). In addition, Prisma has been used in different disciplines, for example, in reviews on the use of indigenous knowledge in Africa (Malapane et al., 2022), the governance of local food systems (Kang et al., 2022), ecosystem services in Latin America (Castro-Díaz et al., 2022), the evaluation of agricultural policies (Bastidas-Orrego et al., 2023); and Ergonomic researches in agricultural machinery (Qiu et al., 2023). The above studies demonstrate the suitability of PRISMA for literature review in rural tourism governance.

3.2. Search strategy

Web of Science (WoS), owned by Clarivate, was selected to search for relevant studies due to its high reliability and inclusivity of data (Dahesh et al., 2020; Malapane et al., 2022). The keywords terms used to collect the dataset of studies are ("community-based rural tourism" OR "rural Tourism") AND ("governance" OR "Collective action").

3.3. Conditions of admission

Studies that fulfilled the following conditions of admission were included in the systematic review.

- Document type: Only papers from peer-reviewed journals are considered, ensuring the studies' objectivity.
  •Language: Only studies published in English and Spanish were included. The first language allows a more significant number of studies to be obtained as it is one of the most widely used languages in scientific publications (Bocanegra-Valle, 2014) and the second language because rural tourism has had a vigorous development in Spanish-speaking countries.
  •Year of publication: 2010–2021
- Key terms: The terms "consumer OR tourist OR traveller" were used to refine the results found, as the intention was to explore the inclusion of beneficiaries in governance processes.
- Subjects: Only studies that tackle the process of collaboration or governance in rural tourism. Therefore, we exclude studies on rural tourism that do not cover multi-actor collaboration processes.
- Study design: Both conceptual and empirical studies were included.

Table 1
Classification of information.

Classification	Description
Basic information	Authors, Title, Publication year, Journal
Region	Location
Actors	Actors involved: Local community, external operators, tourists, government, and private organisations
Territorial features	Territorial features of rural tourism initiatives: • Cultural identity •Nature as the main asset •Peripheral or remote areas
Coordination mechanism	Forms of actor collaboration: •Main coordination mechanism •Actors' participation in coordination mechanisms
Tourists' perceived value	The measure of the value perceived by tourists, including each coordination mechanism: •Emotional value •Social value •Functional value

Source: authors' own elaboration.

3.4. Identification, screening and compilation of data

One hundred sixty-nine (169) studies were targeted following the search process using previously indicated keywords. The screening process, in which the inclusion of a study was decided based on the conditions of admission outlined above, followed the PRISMA guidelines. The selection of the studies had three phases. First, studies were selected from the dataset based on year of publication, paper type (only articles were selected) and language. Second, the key terms refined the subset of data obtained in the previous phase. Finally, studies that met the subject and study design were selected by examining the abstract and full text of the papers. Fig. 1 shows the flow chart of the study selection process.

3.5. Data analysis

The data analysis process consisted of two phases. First, the included studies data were exported to a plain text document and imported into the VOSviewer software to analyse and visualise the results. VOSviewer is a platform for displaying bibliometric networks of citations, co-authorships or co-occurrence of keywords (van Eck & Waltman, 2014). In this study, the general keywords and those selected by the authors were analysed using the different interfaces of this software, in line with the approach used by (Bortoluzzi et al., 2021; Kang et al., 2022).

Secondly, the most relevant information for the analysis was extracted after obtaining the final corpus of studies. The classification of the information was as follows: Basic information, region, actors, territorial features and coordination mechanism, and measures of perceived value (see Table 1). *Region* identifies the location of the empirical study, including the country and the specific area. *Actors* identify the participants in the governance process, including the local community, external operators, tourists, government, and private organisations. *The starting condition* identifies the type of territory in which the study is carried out, which could be cultural identity, nature or peripheral or remote areas. *The coordination mechanism* describes how the actors collaborate with each other. *Tourists' perceived value* includes the relationship between measures of perceived value and coordination mechanisms.

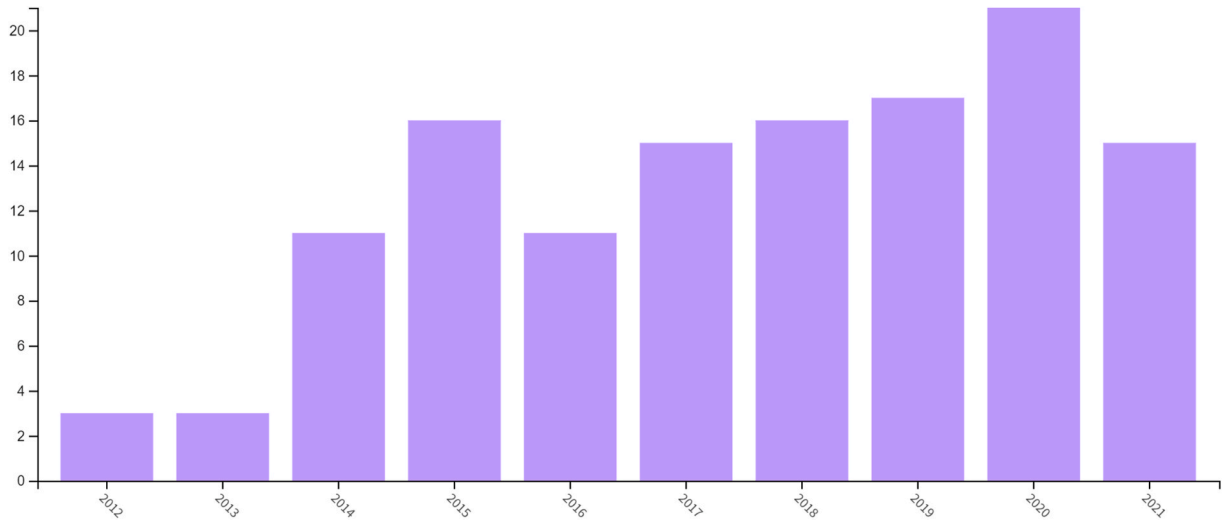

Fig. 2. Publications by year.
Source: authors' own elaboration based on Web of Science – WOS (2022).

Table 2
Top 10 countries.

Countries	Publications
Spain	16
China	15
England	9
Mexico	9
United States	9
Italy	8
Portugal	8
Australia	7
Colombia	7
Germany	7

Source: authors' own elaboration based on Web of Science – WOS (2022).

4. Results

4.1. Bibliometric analysis

4.1.1. Distribution of publications

Fig. 2 presents the distribution of the 131 publications which fulfil the first three eligibility criteria. Studies in this field have increased in the last five years of the period analysed, although in 2021, a slight decrease is evident. Table 2 depicts the leading countries in which the studies have originated, as follows: Spain (16), China (15), England (9), Mexico and the United States (9). Frequently observed journals are *Sustainability* (11), the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (10), *Tourism Planning Development* (8), *Tourism Planning and Development* (7), the *Journal of Rural Studies* (5), and *Tourism Geographies* (5).

4.1.2. Co-occurrence of keywords

Fig. 3 depicts the cluster network of keywords with at least two occurrences in the included studies. Rural Tourism (51), governance (39), innovation (22), and management are the most frequently mentioned keywords with the most linkages. Rural tourism is a keyword that has the most links with other keywords. It is clustered with sustainable development, tourism development, ecotourism, eco-environment, perceptions, and impacts. The keywords of governance and innovation belong to the same cluster, clustered with community, social network analysis, proximity, destinations, and clusters. The management keyword is clustered with collaboration, stakeholder, landscape, geography, sustainable rural tourism, model, and evolution. Finally, it is essential to highlight that keyword community participation is a unitary cluster.

Fig. 4 depicts the cluster network of the keywords selected by the authors that have at least two occurrences in the included studies. A feature of the structure of this network is that it is fragmented into two sub-networks. The fragments with the highest number of words (Fig. 4 –A) are the most selected keywords with the most linkages. These are: Rural Tourism (6), Tourism (4), and social network analysis (3) are the most frequently mentioned keywords with the most linkages. Rural tourism is a keyword with the most connections to other keywords. It is clustered with tourism development and eco-environment. The keyword of Tourism is clustered with governance and literature review. The keyword of social network analysis is clustered with proximity. In the fragment with the smallest number of words (Fig. 4 –B) are the words sustainable rural tourism and stakeholders, which create a unique cluster.

4.1.3. Network of Co-authorship by countries

Table 3 depicts the countries that are the leaders in producing publications in the included studies. Spain (5) and China (6) are the countries with the highest number of publications. Belgium (121), Poland (51), China (50) and Italy (45) are the countries with the highest number of citations. Moreover, due to the low number of linkages, countries do not create a cohesive network; thus, the link between Spain and Mexico and between France and Spain stands out.

4.2. Topics on governance

4.2.1. Actors

Multi-stakeholder participation differentiates the collaborative governance structure from other approaches, as legitimisation of decision-making processes and resource allocation prevails. Therefore, the main actors in rural tourism initiatives were first identified to understand who is involved in coordinating actions and, thus, in governance processes. Table 4 describes the main actors mentioned in the studies analysed, as well as the reference to the studies in which they were found. Six main categories of actors were identified: Local community, External operators, Tourists, Government and Private organisations. Given the high degree of heterogeneity of actors and governance structures, only some actors play an equal role in shaping coordination or collaboration mechanisms.

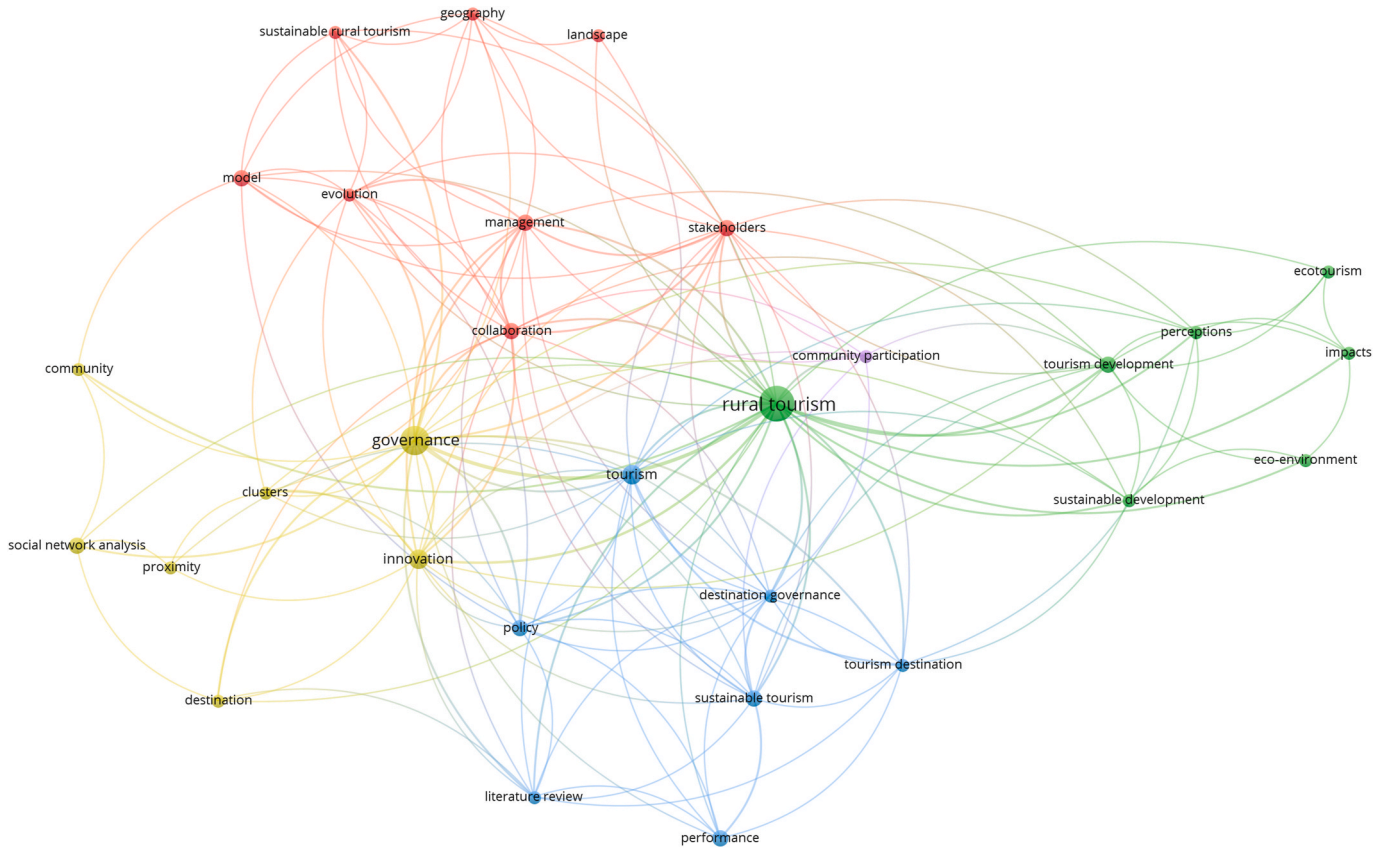

Fig. 3. Keyword Co-occurrences map.
Map Source: VOSviewer.

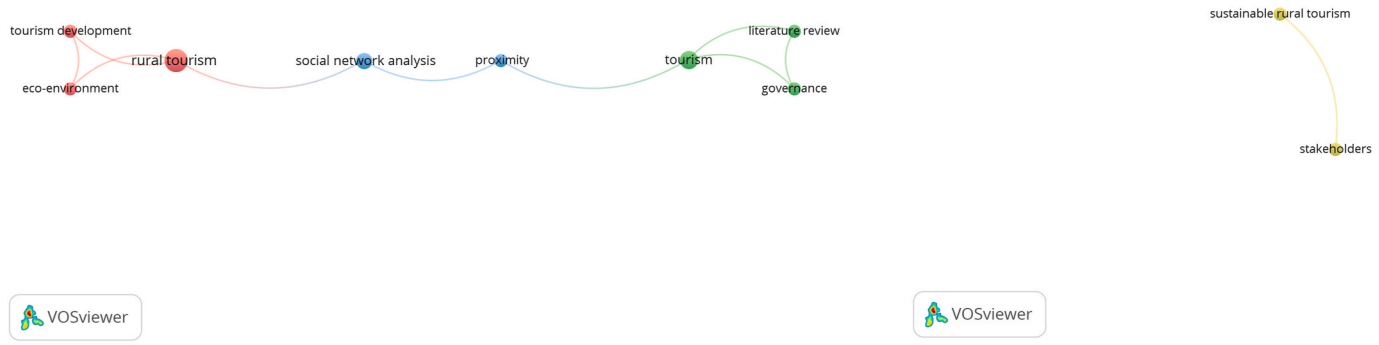

Fig. 4. Authors' keyword Co-occurrences map.
Map Source: VOSviewer.

4.2.2. *Starting conditions*

The starting conditions refer to the initial features of the rural territories under which the rural tourism initiatives were configured, as these will influence the governance processes. Table 5 shows that there are three main categories of territories in which this type of initiative takes place: i) Territory with a cultural identity, such as Magical Towns in Mexico (Rodríguez Herrera et al., 2018) or the heritagization in Portugal (García-Delgado et al., 2020) and China (Guan et al., 2019); ii) Territory with nature as the main asset, such as Plastiras Lake in Greece (Karampela et al., 2019) or Sierra de Aracena in Spain (Mercado Alonso, 2015); and iii) Peripheral territories, or areas with difficult access such as the Burin Peninsula in Canada (Stoddart et al., 2018).

4.2.3. *Coordination mechanisms*

A key aspect of governance is the coordination mechanisms established by the actors. The results show that such mechanisms can arise in two spheres: in the product's design and the offer's organisation process (Table 6). Thus, the product mechanisms include entrance fees, heritagization and certifications. On the other hand, organisational mechanisms include a living lab, destination management organisation (DMO), Corporate Community Involvement (CCI), network, associativism and Public-Private Committee (PPC).

Table 7 depicts the participation of the different actors in each of the coordination mechanisms. It is highlighted that in the product mechanisms, resident actors do not participate at all and that tourists only

Table 3
Co-authorship by countries.

Country	Total link strength	Documents	Citations
France	2	2	7
Spain	2	5	19
Chile	1	1	2
Mexico	1	2	3
New Zealand	1	1	17
China	1	6	50
Belgium	0	1	121
Brazil	0	1	3
Canada	0	1	4
Germany	0	2	21
Greece	0	1	11
Iran	0	1	20
Italy	0	1	45
Poland	0	1	51
United States	0	1	35

Source: authors' own elaboration based on VOSviewer data.

Table 4
Main actors in rural tourism initiatives.

Category of actor	Actor	Source
Local community	Residents	(Guan et al., 2019), (Thees et al., 2020), (Rodríguez Herrera et al., 2018; Tang et al., 2017; Taylor, 2017)
	Local community operators	(Brambatti & Bartoszeck Nitsche, 2017), (Figueroa et al., 2016), (García-Delgado et al., 2020), (Guan et al., 2019; Hernández Ramírez, 2017), (Idziak et al., 2015), (Karampela et al., 2019), (Tang et al., 2017; Taylor, 2017), (Thees et al., 2020), (Yang et al., 2019), (Yubero & Chevalier, 2018), (Salvatore et al., 2018), (Stoddart et al., 2018), (Ying et al., 2015)
External operators	Tourism operators	(Brambatti & Bartoszeck Nitsche, 2017),(García-Delgado et al., 2020), (Figueroa et al., 2016; Hernández Ramírez, 2017), (Idziak et al., 2015), (Salvatore et al., 2018), (Karampela et al., 2019), (Taylor, 2017; Yang et al., 2019; Ying et al., 2015), (Yubero & Chevalier, 2018)
Tourist	Individual trip tourists	(García-Delgado et al., 2020), (Idziak et al., 2015), (Mercado Alonso, 2015; Panzer-Krause, 2020), (Thees et al., 2020), (Ying et al., 2015)
	Coach trip tourists	Panzer-Krause (2020)
Government	National authorities	(Figueroa et al., 2016; Hernández Ramírez, 2017)
	Local authorities	(Figueroa et al., 2016), (García-Delgado et al., 2020), (Hernández Ramírez, 2017), (Karampela et al., 2019), (Rodríguez Herrera et al., 2018; Salvatore et al., 2018), (Stoddart et al., 2018), (Tang et al., 2017), (Yubero & Chevalier, 2018)
	Socio-cultural institutions	(García-Delgado et al., 2020), (Karampela et al., 2019), (Rodríguez Herrera et al., 2018), (Stoddart et al., 2018)
Private organisations	Incubators or advisors	(Brambatti & Bartoszeck Nitsche, 2017), (García-Delgado et al., 2020), (Idziak et al., 2015), (Karampela et al., 2019), (Rodríguez Herrera et al., 2018; Taylor, 2017; Yang et al., 2019), (Yubero & Chevalier, 2018)

Source: authors' own elaboration.

participate in the entrance fee mechanism. Moreover, in terms of organisational mechanisms, the living lab stands out for the participation of all actors, followed by formal or informal networks.

Table 5
Territorial features of rural tourism initiatives.

Category of tourism territory	Source
Cultural identity	(García-Delgado et al., 2020), (Guan et al., 2019), (Idziak et al., 2015), (Rodríguez Herrera et al., 2018; Taylor, 2017),
Nature	(Brambatti & Bartoszeck Nitsche, 2017), (Karampela et al., 2019), (Figueroa et al., 2016; Mercado Alonso, 2015; Panzer-Krause, 2020; Yang et al., 2019),
Peripheral or remote areas	(García-Delgado et al., 2020), (Panzer-Krause, 2020), (Modica et al., 2020), (Stoddart et al., 2018), (Tang et al., 2017)

Source: authors' own elaboration.

Table 6
Main coordination mechanism.

Mechanism		Description
Product	Entrance fees	Payment for entry to the territory
	Heritagization	The process of constituting something as a legacy, creating and recreating cultural and historical meanings and identities.
	Certifications	Fulfilment of stipulated requirements and third-party verification.
Organisation process	Living Lab	A mode of self-organisation that uses cooperative environments to create shared spaces for experimenting and testing innovative products and services (Thees et al., 2020)
	Destination Management Organisation (DMO)	An association within an urban area that is responsible for coordinating efforts to attract tourists to its territory (Nadalipour et al., 2019).
	Corporate Community Involvement (CCI)	Interactions between enterprises and community stakeholders based on forms of corporate philanthropy, business-community partnerships, community investment, etc. (Yang et al., 2019)
	Network (formal and informal)	Connections and agreements between different territory actors can be social or commercial.
	Associativism	Creation of a social-based organisation with aims related to the community's wellbeing.
	Public-Private Committee (PPC)	Participatory structures with clear objectives and defined functioning mechanisms.

Source: authors' own elaboration.

4.3. Topic on perceived value

Table 8 shows which measure of perceived value is linked to governance mechanisms in which tourists participate. Thus, it is highlighted that the value measure is interconnected with both product and organisational mechanisms. Furthermore, functional value (quality and price) is the aspect most considered when it comes to tourists' participation in governance, followed by emotional value. It is important to note that social value (capacity of the product to increase the consumer's self-concept) has not been reported by any study in this review. On another note, it is worth noting that the studies that reported the measure of emotional value were linked to the territory category with cultural identity.

5. Discussion

To tackle the analysis of collaborative governance in rural tourism, the three factors of analysis of reflexivity are taken up again. Firstly, in

Table 7
Actors' participation in the coordination mechanism.

Mechanism		Actors[a]						
Product		**R**	**LCO**	**TO**	**ITT**	**CTT**	**G**	**PO**
	Entrance fees		x	x	x	x	x	x
	Heritagization		x	x	x		x	x
	Certifications		x	x	x	x	x	x
Organisation process	Living Lab	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	DMO		x	x		x	x	x
	CCI	x	x	x				
	Network	x	x	x		x	x	x
	Associativism		x	x				x
	PPC		x	x			x	x

[a] R: Residents. LCO: Local community operators. TO: Tourism operators. ITT: Individual trip tourists. CTT: Coach trip tourists. G: Government. PO: Private organisations.
Source: authors' own elaboration.

Table 8
Measure of the perceived value by tourists including each coordination mechanism.

Mechanism		Perceived value			
		Emotional value	Social value	Functional value	
				price	quality
Product	Entrance fees			x	
	Heritagization	x			x
	Certifications	x		x	x
Organisation process	Living Lab	x		x	x
	DMO	x		x	x
	CCI				
	Network			x	x
	Associativism				
	PPC				

Source: authors' own elaboration.

the factor of participation of actors of different natures, the studies reviewed show the participation of actors of different levels and interests, which converge in tourist destinations and impact different stages of the coordination and operation of tourism activities. Secondly, in the factor of creation of spaces for deliberation and collective learning, there is evidence of a high disparity of such spaces, as some studies do not mention that such spaces are created (Figueroa et al., 2016; Hernández Ramírez, 2017), some only indicate that meetings have been held to socialise tourism projects, while others indicate that such spaces exist and how they are operationalised, as is the case of LL and DG (Guan et al., 2019; Nadalipour et al., 2019; Thees et al., 2020). Thirdly, in the factor of identification and implementation of solutions to shared problems, some studies show that the implementation of tourism projects has taken a top-down approach, especially in those projects in which the local community does not play a central role in the execution of tourism activities, as reported in (Taylor, 2017) when referring to community-based tourism in Mexico.

Moreover, it is interesting to identify how tourists are involved in the collaborative governance of rural tourism initiatives. The reviewed studies show that tourists are the least actively involved actors. Some studies do not report on the spaces for deliberation or consensus on solutions in which tourists participate (Brambatti & Bartoszeck Nitsche, 2017; Yang et al., 2019; Yubero & Chevalier, 2018). On the other hand, some studies limit themselves to collecting information from tourists through surveys on service perception, willingness to pay or the adoption of some rules during the stay in the tourist destination (Guan et al., 2019; Panzer-Krause, 2020; Ying et al., 2015). Although essential for establishing action and improvement plans, such information may not be considered a dynamic form of tourist participation in collaborative governance. Finally, some studies highlight the inclusion of tourists from product design stages to comprehensive impact assessments after some time of operation (Salvatore et al., 2018; Thees et al., 2020).

6. Conclusions

6.1. Theorical contribution

Rural tourism has emerged with a collective approach, mainly managed by local communities. However, there is still a need to address the participatory mechanisms through which beneficiaries, i.e. tourists, can be involved in such initiatives beyond the mere use of the service. This study explores the participation of tourists in governance processes in the framework of collaborative governance and perceived value. This approach represents a conceptual novelty for this research.

This study provides a framework of analysis that integrates collaborative governance, rural tourism and ecosystem services management in rural landscapes. The results contribute conceptually by highlighting the importance of the value tourists perceive and how this can be linked to different governance mechanisms. Including dimensions such as functional and emotional value provides a framework for understanding how tourist perceptions can influence the sustainability of rural tourism. Furthermore, this research suggests that studies on rural tourism with a collaborative governance approach are closely related to sustainability issues, indicating that collective coordination could be an innovative vehicle for achieving sustainability in tourism destinations.

6.2. Managerial contribution

The results of this research indicate that rural tourism is transitioning from hierarchical governance processes to horizontal governance. This implies three essential actions for tourism management: i) multi-sectoral coordination for decision-making not only in initiatives, but also at territorial level; ii) the revision and adaptation of traditional governance instruments; and iii) the inclusion of local knowledge both in the strategy and functioning of tourism organisations and in public policies.

In addition, the crucial role of collective action and the importance of building strong social relationships based on collaboration should be emphasised. Such collaborative networks can help overcome challenges and resolve conflicts associated with trade-offs between producers and beneficiaries of ecosystem services.

Finally, the bibliometric study indicates that only a few of the reviewed studies include a broad view of collaborative governance since, although in most of them the participation of actors with different interests and backgrounds is observed, it is not clear whether there is participation for deliberation and direct involvement in the decision-making process. Thus, it is also evident that tourists are the least involved actors in governance processes. Their involvement is through consultation on the functional and emotional values of the tourism experience. It is important to note, however, that involving tourists in

Table 9
Lines, questions, and trends for future research.

Research lines	Research Questions	Emerging Trends
Tourist Participation in Governance	What are the main motivations for tourists to participate in governance processes of rural destinations?	Increasing demand for authentic and sustainable tourism experiences, driving interest in direct tourist participation in governance.
Facilitation of Tourist Participation	What mechanisms can facilitate active tourist participation in governance processes?	Advances in digital technologies offer new opportunities for tourist participation in governance, through digital platforms and technological tools.
Collaborative and Reflective Governance Models	How can the values perceived by all stakeholders be integrated into collaborative and reflective governance models?	Interest in governance models that emphasise adaptability and the integration of diverse values and perceptions for sustainable development.
Collaborative Networks among Territorial Actors	How to promote effective collaborative networks that prevent co-optation of power by external agents?	Building collaborative networks among local actors for community empowerment and sustainability, resisting disproportionate external influence.
Inclusive and Participatory Approaches	How can rural tourism initiatives adopt more inclusive and participatory approaches?	The need for participatory approaches that include a wide range of voices, especially from local communities and tourists, in decision-making.
Perceived Value Analysis	How does the value perceived by tourists influence their satisfaction and willingness to participate in local governance?	The assessment of perceived value, both functional and emotional, is becoming a key factor in understanding the tourist experience and its impact on sustainability and participatory governance.

Source: authors' own elaboration.

these governance processes can be a complex task given the nature of tourism activity, where travellers generally seek to avoid creating a permanent link with the territory visited.

6.3. Social contributions

This research emphasises that rural tourism not only affects visitors and natural resources but also has significant implications for rural communities. This impact is reflected in job creation, income diversification and local infrastructure development, highlighting the importance of tourism as a potential source of social development. The results suggest that the effective participation of tourists in governance processes is a challenge. Thus, the need to find a balance between tourism development and the conservation of the cultural and natural values of rural communities is highlighted. This suggests that governance must carefully address the socio-economic aspects of tourism without compromising the integrity of rural environments.

It is essential to highlight that, given the characteristics of rural areas, many communities do not have the necessary knowledge and capacities to create spaces for discussion and to be part of the decision-making processes, which is why some actors in the territory, such as local governments and external operators take on the role of co-ordinators of actions and advisors to local communities. However, the vital point in this approach is the fine line between coordinating and subordinating local actors, as this implies moving from initial collaborative governance to hierarchical governance that does not contribute to the development of rural territories. Thus, collaborative governance processes, like any social process, require time to configure their own operation dynamics. Sometimes, tourism projects or initiatives with this approach, primarily when implemented with public funding, tend to have limited execution times and budgets to deliver results.

6.4. Limitations and future research

It should be noted that the results obtained in this research cannot be extrapolated to the entire field of study of rural tourism, as the results are based on studies identified through the Web of Science platform, the geographical representation might be biased towards regions or countries with a robust academic presence in the topic. Also, the review focused on academic studies published in peer-reviewed journals, which might exclude valuable information from project reports, government documents or other non-academic sources that could provide essential insights.

Finally, the study highlights six lines for future research. Table 9 shows each strand, with its related research question and current research trends based on the findings outlined above.

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Liliana Reina-Usuga: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Francisco Camino:** Writing – review & editing, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Gema Gomez-Casero:** Writing – review & editing, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Carol Angélica Jara Alba:** Writing – review & editing, Formal analysis, Conceptualization.

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