



**SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION ON THE MARKETING COMMUNICATION: A  
BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW FROM 1985 TO 2022**

**PRODUCCIÓN CIENTÍFICA SOBRE LA COMUNICACIÓN DE MARKETING: UNA  
REVISIÓN BIBLIOMÉTRICA DE 1985 A 2022**

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective.** The present manuscript focused on the analysis of scientific production on marketing communication in the tourism industry in the period from 1985 to 2022. **Design/Methodology/Approach.** A descriptive bibliometric study was carried out to classify and analyze scientific production on the basis of indicators. The processing and analysis of the information was made possible with the use of Rstudio.cloud and Endnote X9 software. **Results/Discussion.** The results show that the year 2022 was the year with the

highest scientific output, the Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, and the countries USA and Australia contain the highest number of scientific publications, and Maja Šerić is the most prolific author. The strongest lines of cooperation are between Australia, China, Spain and the USA. Marketing communication, social media, integrated marketing communication and destination image and sustainable tourism are the topics most addressed by researchers along with the impacts caused by Covid-19. **Conclusions.** The study provides valuable information to the research field by presenting a vision of marketing communication in tourism that can guide future researchers in their search for new research. **Originality/Value.** It provides an overview of marketing communication in tourism based on the above-mentioned indicators and offers important data as an information resource for decision making by managers and academics in research, projects and investments. **KEYWORDS:** Promotional communication; Sustainability; Destination image; Integrated marketing communication; Marketing communication; Promotional strategies; Covid-19.

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** El presente manuscrito se enfocó en analizar la producción científica sobre la comunicación de marketing en la industria turística en el período de 1985 a 2022. **Diseño/Metodología/Enfoque:** Se realizó un estudio bibliométrico de carácter descriptivo en el cual se clasificó y analizó a partir de indicadores la producción científica. El procesamiento y análisis de la información fue posible con el empleo de los softwares Rstudio.cloud y Endnote X9. **Resultados/Discusión:** Los resultados muestran que el año 2022 fue el de mayor producción científica, la revista Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, y los países EUA y Australia son los que contienen mayor cantidad de publicaciones científicas y Maja Šerić es el autor más prolífico. Las líneas de colaboración más fuertes se realizan entre, Australia, China, España y Estados Unidos. La comunicación de marketing, social media, comunicación integrada de marketing y la imagen del destino y turismo sostenible son los temas más abordados por los investigadores junto a los impactos provocados por el Covid-19. **Conclusiones:** El estudio proporciona información valiosa al campo de investigación, al presentar una visión sobre la comunicación de marketing en el turismo, que puede orientar a futuros investigadores en la búsqueda de nuevas investigaciones. **Originalidad/Valor:** Se brinda una visión general sobre la comunicación de marketing en el turismo a partir de los indicadores mencionados, ofreciendo datos importantes como recursos de información para la toma de decisiones por parte de gestores y académicos en investigaciones, proyectos e inversiones. **PALABRAS CLAVE:** Comunicación promocional; Sostenibilidad; Imagen del destino; comunicación integrada de marketing; Comunicación de marketing; estrategias promocionales; Covid-19.

## INTRODUCTION

Marketing communication is an important research topic in the field of tourism. It is a key tool to attract and persuade tourists to visit and consume products and services within tourism destinations. Marketing communication in tourism includes advertising, public relations, direct marketing, promotions and events, among others. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on tourism today, therefore it is important to examine how this pandemic has energized marketing communication in terms of tourism recovery by attracting tourists to tourism destinations.

In this sense, the examination of the scientific production on marketing communication in tourism and hospitality can provide valuable information on the progress in this field and in the understanding of this research topic, revealing the existing gaps in research. This analysis can help to identify the most important research topics and possible future research directions.

Therefore, the present manuscript aims to conduct an analysis of the scientific production on marketing communication in tourism and hospitality, with the aim of detailing the main themes and trends in the exploration of this topic and possible areas for future research. In addition, the theoretical and practical implications of the findings will be addressed with the tendency to provide suggestions for future research and practice in the field of tourism.

## *Literature review*

Marketing communication, as a research topic in tourism, is constantly evolving and has generated a significant number of publications in recent decades. According to Ahmadi et al. (2023) and Almeida et al. (2012), marketing communication in tourism focuses on the promotion of tourism destinations, hotels, restaurants, travel agencies and other tourism services through various communication techniques such as advertising, public relations, content marketing, social media, email marketing, influencer marketing, events, among others.

The review of the literature on the subject has allowed us to appreciate how different topics related to the research area under study have been explored. Authors such as Wimonchailerk (2021) have studied how communication affects tourists' perception of the quality of tourism services and their satisfaction. This makes marketing communication an effective tool for improving the tourism experience and generating long-term customer loyalty (Stavrianea & Kamenidou, 2022).

The importance of culture in effective communication with tourists has been studied. According to Šerić & Vernuccio (2020), understanding cultural differences between tourists and hosts is fundamental for effective communication in tourism marketing. Therefore, marketing communication in tourism should be adapted to the cultural peculiarities of tourists and local communities.

In the same vein, market segmentation becomes important in order to adapt marketing communication to the characteristics of tourists. According to Almeida et al. (2021); Loda et al. (2010) and Pizzuto & Sciortino (2021), it is fundamental to adapt marketing messages to the specific needs and preferences of different tourist segments.

Palazzo et al. (2021) have examined the importance of collaboration between different tourism stakeholders for effective communication with tourists. According to the authors, collaboration between destinations, tourism businesses, and governments is essential for effective communication and successful tourism promotion that benefits all tourism stakeholders.

Bayev et al. (2020) and Hristoforova et al. (2019) addressed marketing communication in the context of digital transformation. As a result of changes in the way tourists seek information and make travel decisions, marketing communication in tourism must adapt to this new reality.

On the other hand, issues related to tourism destination branding (Li & Mahamood, 2022; Liang & Wang, 2023), reputation management (Korená & Pártlová, 2023), corporate social responsibility (Pérez & García De Los Salmones, 2023), crisis communication (Oltra González et al., 2021; Šerić & Vernuccio, 2022), personalization of marketing messages (Rodríguez-Molina et al., 2019; Šerić & Mikulić, 2023). According to Bordian et al. (2023); Bordian & Gil-saura (2021) and Lukáč et al. (2021), marketing communication in tourism must be sustainable and respectful of the environment and local communities in order to be effective in the long run.

Undoubtedly, the existing literature on marketing communication in tourism is extensive and diverse. Identifying the most relevant trends and themes in this literature can provide valuable information for bibliometric analysis in this field. As a result, it is important to continue researching this topic to better understand the changes and trends in marketing communication in tourism and how it can be improved to attract and persuade tourists to visit and consume products and services in tourism destinations.

The analysis of the scientific production on marketing communication in tourism is essential for several reasons. It provides a general overview of the current state of knowledge in the field and ongoing research trends. It helps to identify the most important research topics, existing research gaps and areas where further exploration and future directions of research in the field of tourism are needed.

In this sense, bibliometrics is a technique that allows the analysis of the scientific production and dissemination of knowledge in a given thematic area. In the field of tourism, there has been a significant

increase in the number of publications related to the subject in the last years of the current millennium (Díaz-Pompa et al., S/F), bibliometrics is increasingly used to derive trends and patterns in research (Díaz-Pompa et al., S/F; López-Bonilla & López-Bonilla, 2020; Peña Sánchez et al., 2019). Provide valuable information on the most influential authors and institutions in the field, as well as the most important topics and research areas (Köseoglu et al., 2016; Pérez-Labrada et al., 2022).

The acceptance of bibliometrics in tourism can be seen in the increasing number of studies on the topic (Zengin & Atasoy, 2021). Topics such as tourism sustainability (González-Infante et al., 2021; Niñerola et al., 2019), innovation and technology in tourism (Pérez-Labrada et al., 2022), and tourism demand (Zhang et al., 2020) have been addressed. Bibliometrics has also been used to analyze scientific production in specific tourism modalities, such as hotel management (Nusair, 2020), rural tourism (Guan & Huang, 2023), creative tourism (Serrano-Leyva et al., 2021), tourism education (López-Bonilla & López-Bonilla, 2020), and cultural tourism (Díaz-Pompa et al., 2022), among others.

With regard to the subject of the present study, there is research that is closely related to marketing communication in tourism. Martí-Parreño & Gómez-Calvet (2020) conducted an analysis of communication through social networks. The researchers point out that this is a key element to communicate tourism products and services to consumers. The main findings suggest a growing number of researches on this topic. Prominent keywords used by researchers include social networks, sustainable tourism and ecotourism. The authors Sousa et al. (2022) conducted a bibliometric study in which they examined the scientific production related to virtual reality in tourism promotion, in this case taking into account manuscripts in the Web of Science and Scopus databases. The analysis concluded that although the potential of virtual reality is recognized, its use in tourism is rare. These results show scientific growth and constitute valuable theoretical, methodological and practical tools for researchers to expand this field of research. However, the main limitations are found in the degree of obsolescence, the period under study, the databases analyzed or the context under study. Consequently, these limitations weigh on the relevance of the present research.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of the scientific production on marketing communication in tourism in order to identify the main issues and trends in research on this topic and possible areas for future research. In addition, the theoretical and practical implications of the findings will be discussed and recommendations for future research and practice in the field of tourism will be offered. This bibliometric analysis provides an overview of the current state of knowledge in the field of marketing communication in tourism.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this paper the bibliometric method is used for the analysis of bibliographic data. Bibliometrics allows the measurement and evaluation of scientific production with respect to a given research topic. The Scopus database is taken into consideration, which allows the collection of high quality manuscripts for the analysis of production, collaboration and conceptual analysis, determining research trends and the main topics covered by articles in the field of marketing communication in tourism. The reason for taking data from Scopus is due to the possibility of having a larger spectrum of the number of quality journals in the field of tourism (Serrano-Leyva et al., 2021).

The data were searched using the equation that includes the following keywords in the title, abstract and key descriptors: ("promotional communication" OR "marketing communication" OR "promotional strategies") AND ("tourism" OR "travel" OR "hospitality"). The collected data were exported into a file (\*.csv). Subsequently, the data reduction and normalization process was carried out using Openrefine, filtering, eliminating false positives, duplicates and standardizing the inconsistencies detected in the spelling of authors' names. Finally, a total of 284 documents, limited to the last 37 years (1985-2022), were included.

The data were processed using the Bibliometrix package (version 3.0.4) installed and loaded in the RStudio environment (version 1.4.1103). Biblioshiny is a tool with a very intuitive interface that, according to Silva et al. (2022), allows the mapping of scientific production from a wide range of functionalities for the analysis

and construction of graphs. It is currently gaining acceptance in the academic community and is considered one of the most comprehensive research tools for bibliometric studies.

The data set used in the bibliometric study is summarized in Table 1. It shows that the study covered a period of 37 years. The data collected (284) were published in 160 different sources. The average number of citations per paper is 24.63, which indicates that the scientific articles included in the study have been cited with some frequency, and the average number of citations per year per paper is 2.633, which explains that the papers included in the study have received on average more than 2 citations per year. A total of 14607 references were included in the analyzed manuscripts. A total of 663 authors were identified who contributed to the papers included in the study. Sixty-three papers were written by a single author, while 600 papers were written by multiple authors. Collaboration among authors is common in the papers included in the study, with an average of 2.54 co-authors per paper and a collaboration index of 2.76, indicating that collaboration among authors is significant in the papers included in the study.

**Table 1.** Main Information

<b>Description</b>	<b>Results</b>
<b>MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA</b>	
Timespan	1985:2022
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	160
Documents	284
Average years from publication	8,21
Average citations per documents	24,63
Average citations per year per doc	2,633
References	14607
<b>DOCUMENT TYPES</b>	
article	284
<b>DOCUMENT CONTENTS</b>	
Keywords Plus (ID)	326
Author's Keywords (DE)	963
<b>AUTHORS</b>	
Authors	663
Author Appearances	720
Authors of single-authored documents	63

Authors of multi-authored documents	600
<b>AUTHORS COLLABORATION</b>	
Single-authored documents	66
Documents per Author	0,428
Authors per Document	2,33
Co-Authors per Documents	2,54
Collaboration Index	2,76

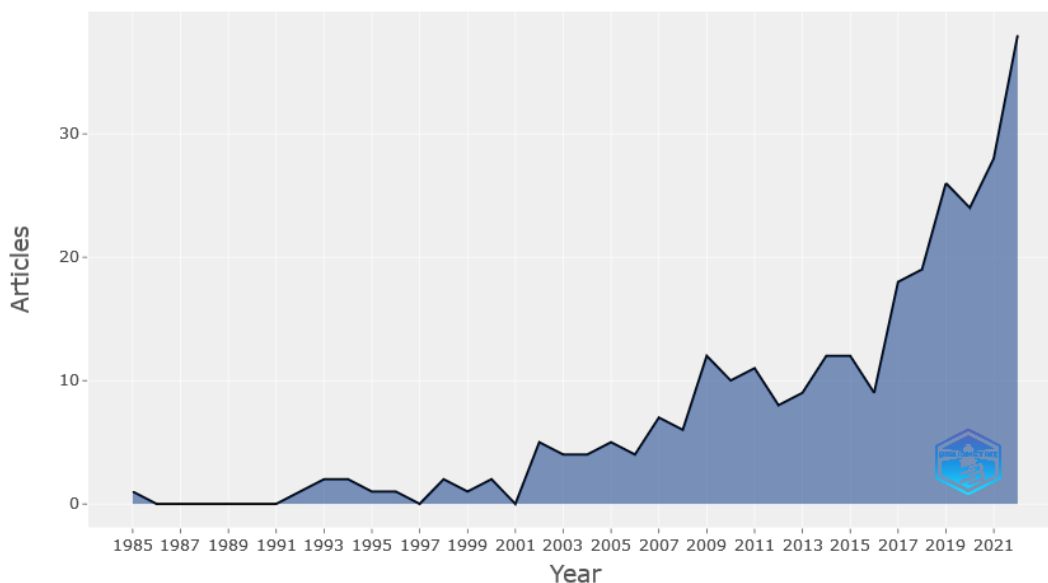
**Source:** Biblioshiny

## RESULTS

### Scientific production by year

Figure 1 shows a constant increase in the number of articles published from 1985 to 2022, with an increasing trend in the last five years. From 2016 onwards, the number of research articles increased steadily, with 2022 standing out as the year with the highest number of scientific articles published.

**Figure 1.** Scientific production by year



**Source:** Results in Biblioshiny

### Most prolific authors

Among the 20 authors considered to have the highest scientific production in the field (three or more publications) in the period under study (Fig. 2). Maja Šerić stands out as the researcher with the highest production with 7 published papers. Pike, S. follows with 5 papers and five authors occupy the third position with three published manuscripts each. The rest of the authors are between 2 and less published papers.



**Source:** Results in Biblioshiny

**Papers with the Most Global and Local Citations**

Regarding the papers with the most global citations, Table 2 lists the researches with the highest number of citations. Among the most representative researches are (Bruhn et al., 2012) in the journal *Management Research Review* with 376 citations, with an average of 31.3333 citations per year. They are followed by (Kim et al., 2007) with 346 total citations and an average of 20.3529 citations per year and (Hudson et al., 2015) with 309 citations, both manuscripts located in the journal *Tourism Management*. The remaining papers in the list have significantly fewer citations, ranging from 85 to 297 citations. It is interesting to note that some papers in the list were published in different journals, but all are related to the field of tourism and hospitality. Most of the papers in the list were published in high-impact journals in the field of tourism and hospitality, suggesting that these journals are important for the dissemination of research in this field.

**Table 2.** Papers with the highest impact by number of citations

<b>Paper</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Total Citations</b>	<b>TC per Year</b>	<b>Normalized TC</b>
Are social media replacing traditional media in terms of brand equity creation?.	Bruhn, Schoenmueller & Schäfer	2012	Management Research Review	376	31,333	5,10696
Gender differences in online travel information search: Implications for marketing communications on the internet.	Kim, Lehto & Morrison	2009	Tourism Management	346	20,352	3,37796
The effects of social media on emotions, brand relationship quality, and word of mouth: An empirical study of music festival attendees.	Hudson, Roth, Madden & Hudson	2008	Tourism Management	309	34,333	7,74113
Promoting tourism destination image.	Govers, Go & Kumar	2013	Journal of Travel Research	301	17,705	2,93863
User generated content: The use of blogs for tourism organisations and tourism consumers.	Akehurst	2019	Service Business	297	19,8	8,21198
Believe it or not: Credibility of blogs in tourism.	Mack, Blose & Pan	2014	Journal of Vacation Marketing	148	9,25	3,77872
The effects of cognitive, affective, and sensory attributes on hotel choice.	Kim & Perdue	2010	International Journal of Hospitality Management	147	13,363	3,92582
The effectiveness of marketing communication and importance	Krizanova, Lazaroiu,	2010	Sustainability	120	24	6,07004



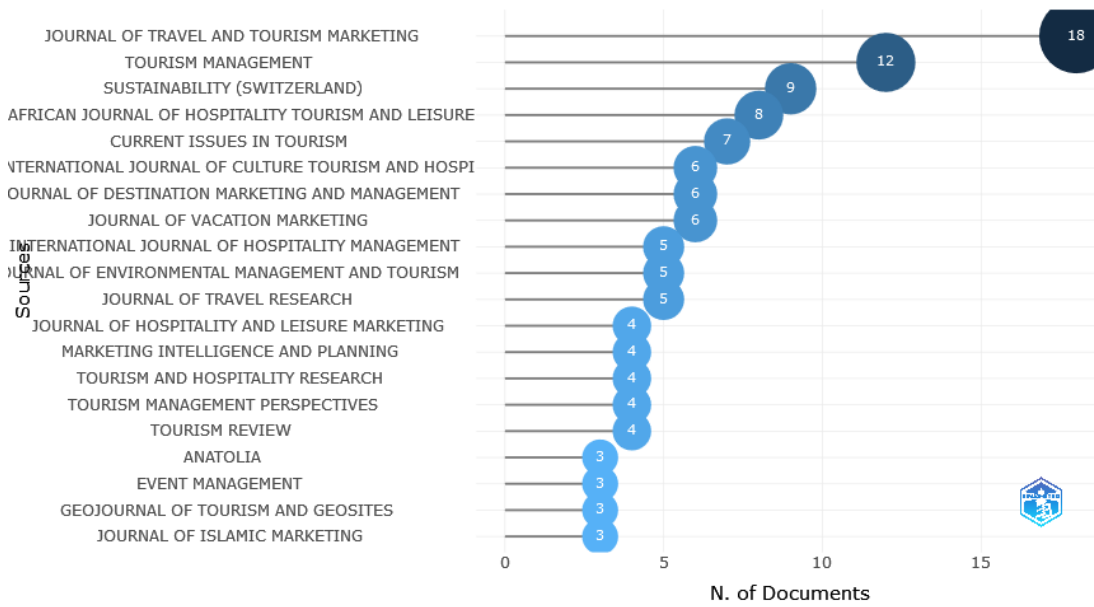
of its evaluation in an online environment.	Gajanova, Kliestikova, Nadanyiova & Moravcikova		(Switzerland)			
Investigating attitudes towards three South American destinations in an emerging long haul market using a model of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE).	Bianchi, Pike & Lings	2009	Tourism Management	118	11,8	4,45283
Travel motivation of tourists to kruger and Tsitsikamma national parks: A comparative study.	Kruger & Saayman	2008	African Journal of Wildlife Research	107	7,6429	2,35165
Understanding the motivation and travel behavior of cycle tourists using involvement profiles.	Ritchie, Tkaczynski & Faulks	2013	Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	100	7,1429	2,1978
How can integrated marketing communications and advanced technology influence the creation of customer-based brand equity? Evidence from the hospitality industry.	Šerić, Gil-Saura & Ruiz-Molina	2014	International Journal of Hospitality Management	87	8,7	3,28302

**Source:** Own elaboration

### Most influential scientific journals

Regarding the most representative journals by the number of scientific publications, Figure 4 shows that the Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing is the most relevant journal in the field with 18 published articles. Tourism Management, Sustainability (Switzerland), African Journal of Hospitality Tourism and Leisure and Current Issues in Tourism are the four most relevant journals with 12, 9, 8 and 7 articles published respectively. Some journals on the list are widely recognized as important in the field, such as Tourism Management and International Journal of Hospitality Management, among others.

**Figure 4.** Most productive scientific journals.



Source: Results in Biblioshiny

**Journals with more local citations**

Among the journals with the highest impact in terms of total citations (Figure 5), Tourism Management stands out with a total of 1164 citations. This suggests that this journal is very influential in the field of tourism and hospitality; this source presents an interdisciplinary approach in examining international, national and regional tourism, as well as specific management issues. The next three most cited journals are Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, Journal of Travel Research and Journal of Vacation Marketing with 792, 425 and 411 citations respectively. It is interesting to note that these journals also appear on the list of most cited journals. This suggests that there is a significant overlap between the field of tourism and hospitality and the field of marketing.

**Figure 5.** Highest impact journal by number of citations.

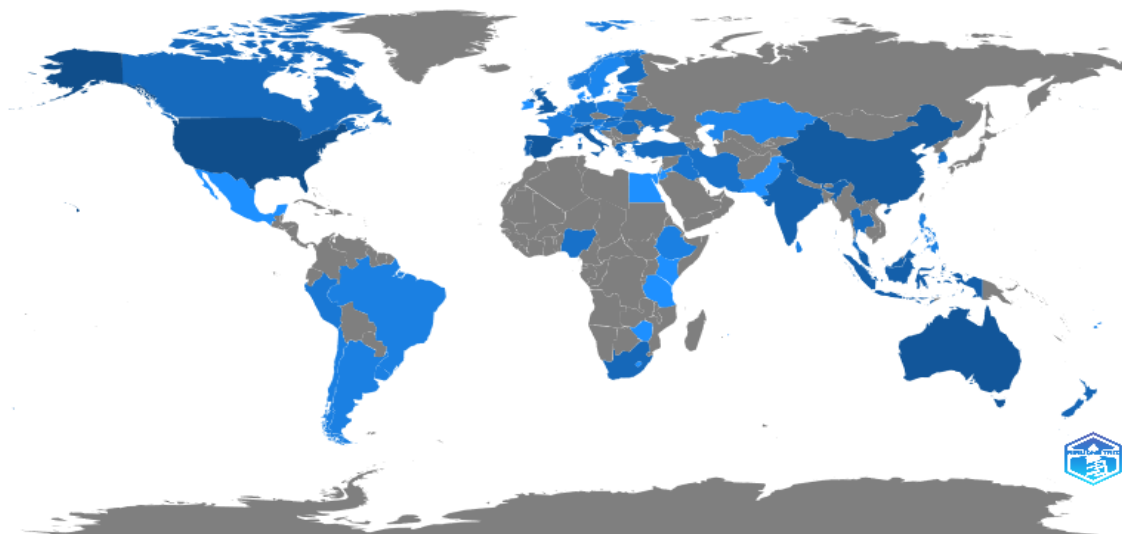


Source: Results in Biblioshiny

### Scientific production by region/country

At the international level, the topic is very widespread; the map in Figure 6 shows the territories with the highest records in terms of scientific production in the most intense shades of blue. In this case, the USA, Spain, Australia and China are the countries responsible for 44% of the scientific articles published on marketing communication in tourism. Other countries with a notable scientific production are the United Kingdom, Italy, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Portugal and Slovakia. The distribution of scientific production is uneven, with some countries publishing far more articles than others. For example, the United States published almost twice as many articles as the next country on the list, Australia.

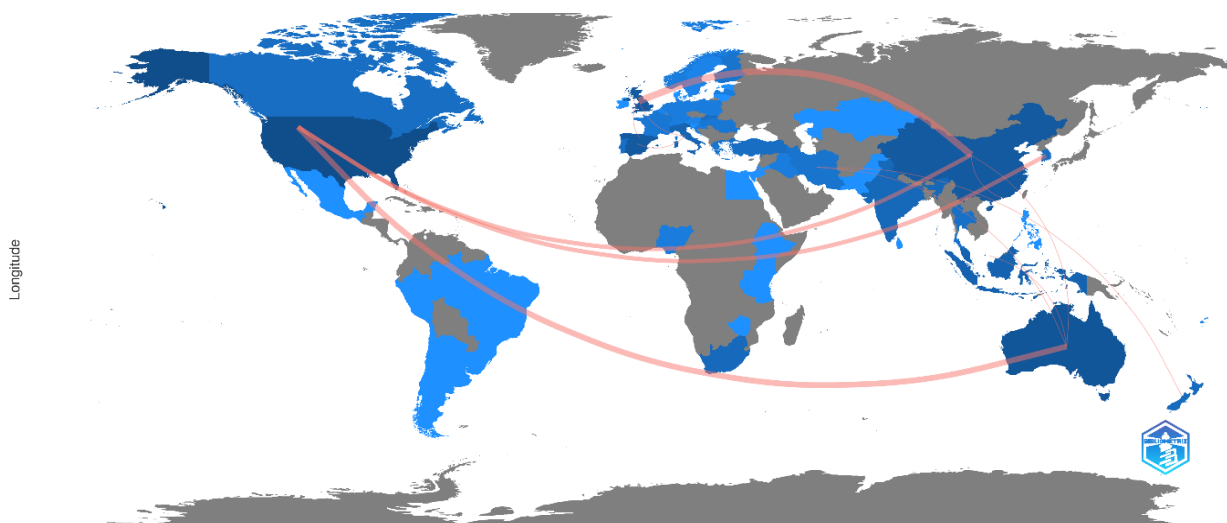
**Figure 6.** Scientific production by country



**Source:** Results in Biblioshiny

In terms of collaboration between countries (Figure 7), the results show that the United States has important collaborations with China, Korea and Australia. Australia and China are also important countries for international collaboration, appearing in the list 7 and 9 times respectively. In contrast, many collaborations occur only once, suggesting that they may be more casual or less established.

**Figure 7.** International collaboration map

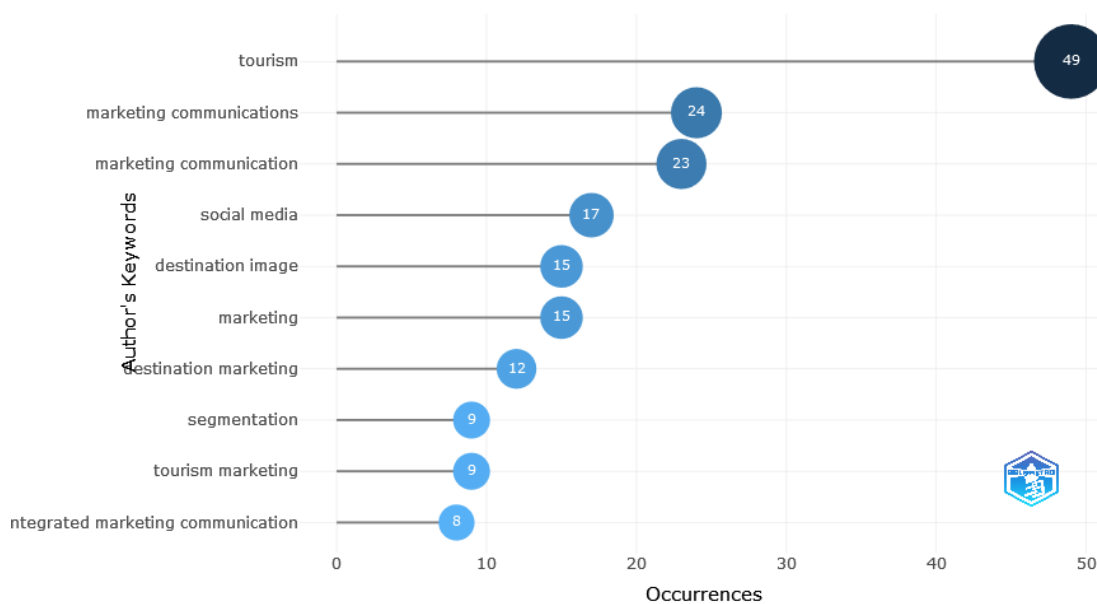


## Thematic analysis

### Most relevant keywords

Figure 8 shows the top keywords, which represent the words or topics most frequently addressed by the different researchers. The keyword "tourisms" is the most frequent word in the field, appearing 49 times in the manuscripts and the word marketing communication 47 times. This indicates that there is a great interest in understanding the role of communication in tourism. The word social media is the third most common word in the field, appearing 17 times. Destination image is an important topic in the field and researchers are interested in understanding destination marketing and the role of integrated marketing communication.

**Figure 8.** Top keywords



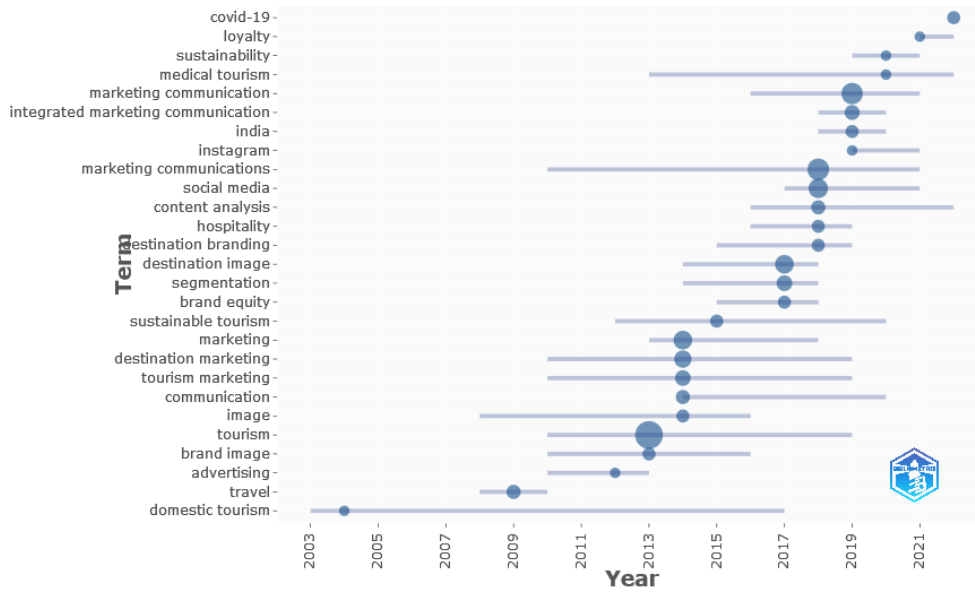
Source: Results in Biblioshiny

### Trend topic

A trend topic analysis was conducted (Figure 9), which shows the most frequently used terms in the field of research by year on a scale from 2003 to 2022. This analysis provides a better understanding of the trending topics in the marketing communication literature over the years. The descriptor "marketing communication" has been the most frequent and trending topic in the field for several years, appearing in the list as one of the most frequently repeated descriptors with 47. This indicates a strong interest in understanding the role of marketing communications in tourism destinations and the hospitality industry. Social media is another important and recurring topic in the field.

Destination marketing, destination image and integrated marketing communication also appear in the list with frequencies of 15, 12 and 9 respectively. The descriptor "Marketing communication" has been trending in the field since 2010, "Social media" has been included since 2017, "Destination marketing" and "Destination image" have been included since 2010 and 2014 respectively, while "Integrated marketing communication" has been included since 2018. Other descriptors have been incorporated in recent years, including the most frequent "Instagram" and "Sustainability" from 2019, "Loyalty" from 2021, and Covid-19. The COVID-19 pandemic is an important topic in the field. However, it is only recorded in 2022, which shows that research on this topic has increased recently.

**Figure 9.** Keyword trend topic.



**Source:** Results in Biblioshiny

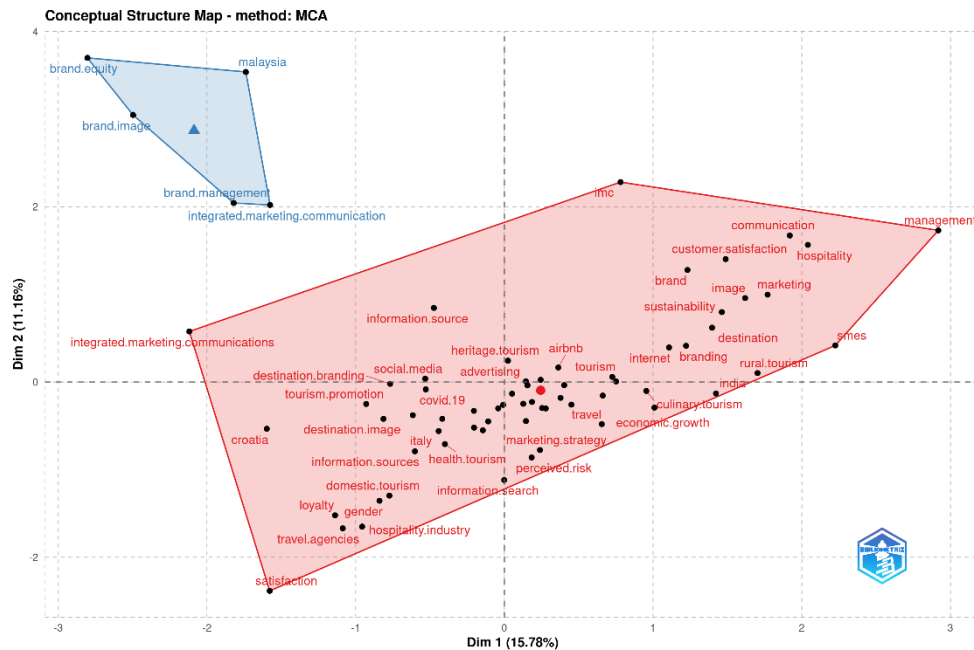
### Conceptual structure map

Multiple correspondence analysis (Figure 10) makes it possible to outline the conceptual structure of a given research area. This technique identifies groups of manuscripts that articulate common concepts (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). For their representation, a two-dimensional map is used, in which the data are interpreted taking into account the relative positions of the points and their distribution along the dimensions; if the words have a very similar distribution, the closer they are represented within the map (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Regarding the research object, the representation of the conceptual structure of research on marketing communication in the Scopus database shows the formation of two clusters. The first cluster (blue color) has 5 keywords. Considering the distribution of keywords within this cluster, it is clear that the most related words in the articles are related to brand management, brand value, brand image and integrated marketing communication.

The second cluster is made up of 45 keywords (red color), in the plan it can be seen that there is a greater concentration and closeness between the keywords, which shows that they have been treated as a whole by a greater number of studies. According to the degree of proximity, it can be seen that image, authenticity, customer satisfaction, sustainability, Internet and tourism modalities such as cultural, rural and gastronomic tourism stand out as the most analyzed. On the other hand, the words closest to the center of the map indicate that they have received greater attention in recent years, these are social media, advertising, covid-19 and marketing strategies.

**Figure 10.** Map of the conceptual structure of marketing communication.



Source: Results in Biblioshiny

### Strategic map of research topics

With the construction of the thematic map, the current state of a particular research area and its sustainability in the future is known. Through this analysis, knowledge is provided to scholars and interested parties about the possibilities of future research progress in the thematic areas within the field of inquiry (Cobo et al., 2018). The thematic analysis is performed by considering the authors' keywords and the connections between them to identify themes, which are characterized by two basic measures (density and centrality). Density is represented on the vertical axis, while centrality occupies the horizontal axis (Cobo et al., 2011).

Figure 11 represents the research field related to marketing communication in tourism and is visualized as a set of research topics mapped in a two-dimensional strategic diagram and classified into 4 groups, namely:

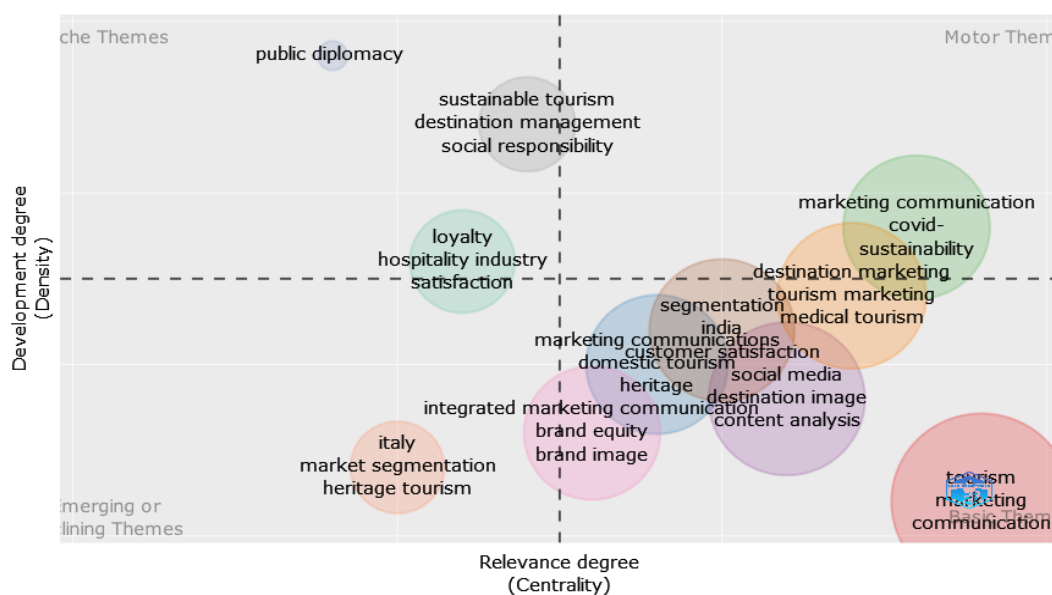
The first quadrant (top right) contains the themes that have achieved good development and are important for shaping the research field. With a strong centrality and high density, they are referred to as the driving topics of the research field (Cobo et al., 2018). Two fundamental nodes are found in this quadrant, the first one integrating marketing communication, sustainability and covid-19 and the second cluster focusing attention on tourism marketing and destination marketing (Băcilă et al., 2022; Bordian & Gil-saura, 2021; Campo & Alvarez, 2014; Darázs & Šalgovičová, 2021; Güzel Şahin, 2019; Rodríguez-Vázquez et al., 2023). These issues are fundamental to the shaping of the research field and have been extensively investigated in the recent literature, as can be seen from the citations of the articles mentioned in this study.

The second quadrant (upper left) includes topics that are highly specialized and peripheral, because of their characteristics and degree of importance they constitute marginal topics for the research field. These topics are characterized by well-developed internal linkages but unimportant external linkages (Cobo et al., 2018). In this quadrant, there is a first node that includes destination management and social responsibility and the second node includes loyalty and satisfaction (Ahn, 2017; Bordian & Gil-saura, 2021; Casais & Sousa, 2019; Othman et al., 2021; Pérez & García De Los Salmones, 2023). These issues are important, but less explored than the driving themes.

The third quadrant 3 (lower left) is composed of the themes that are emerging or disappearing. The themes in this quadrant have low density and low centrality meaning that they are underdeveloped and marginal (Cobo et al., 2018). In this quadrant is a node shaped by market segmentation and cultural tourism (Lukáč et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2009). These topics have not yet been widely investigated in the field of marketing communication research in tourism, but they are emerging as relevant themes.

The fourth quadrant (lower right) circumscribes the cross-cutting and general themes, called basic themes, these themes are characterized by being important to the research field, but are not developed (Cobo et al., 2018). Five fundamental nodes are located in this quadrant, the first node by size is the most explored of all the themes and contains marketing communication as its main theme (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Almeida et al., 2012; Cahyaningrum & Mayangsari, 2014), the second node is made up of topics related to social media, the image of tourism destinations and highlights the use of content analysis as the main tool for its exploration (Băcilă et al., 2022; Boubaker & Dauxert, 2020; Cheng et al., 2017). The third node encompasses research related to marketing communication and inbound tourism (Brida et al., 2017; Roth-Cohen & Lahav, 2019), the fourth node is shaped by integrated marketing communication, brand image and brand equity (Bordian et al., 2023; Bordian & Gil-saura, 2021; Kushwaha et al., 2020; Liang & Wang, 2023; Reindrawati et al., 2019; Šerić & Mikulić, 2023; Šerić & Vernuccio, 2020). These issues are important to the research field, but there is still much to explore in terms of their relationship to marketing communication in tourism.

**Figure 11.** Strategic map of marketing communication in tourism.



Source: Results in Biblioshiny

## DISCUSSION

Marketing communication in tourism is a topic that has gradually gained the attention of the academic community in recent years. The results show a discrete increase in the number of papers published from 1985 to 2022. In particular, the number of papers increases in recent years (2018-2022), with 2022 being the year with the highest number of manuscripts published on the topic, with a total of 37. The results of the study show that marketing communication in tourism is a topic that has gained relevance in the academic community over the years, as confirmed by studies on other aspects of marketing communication (Martí-Parreño & Gómez-Calvet, 2020; Sousa et al., 2022).

This increase in academic output may indicate that marketing communication in tourism has become a topic of interest and relevance to researchers today. It suggests that scholars are paying more attention to this topic and focusing on researching and developing new perspectives and approaches in this area. It is important to note that tourism is a constantly evolving and changing economic sector and marketing communication plays

an important role in the promotion and marketing of tourism destinations (Singh et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2009; Zaušková et al., 2016). Therefore, increased academic attention to this topic may have significant implications for tourism practice and management. As a result, it is expected that this trend will continue in the future and that new perspectives and approaches will continue to be developed in this area for more effective and sustainable tourism management.

Looking at the most cited papers, it can be seen that a considerable number of them have received a significant number of citations, so they are considered to have had the greatest impact on the field under study. One of the most cited papers is that of (Bruhn et al., 2012), which examines whether social networks are replacing traditional media in the creation of brand value. This study has been cited a total of 376 times, with an average of 31.3333 citations per year and a normalization of 5.10696. These articles are highly cited and contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge in this area of research. The results of the study also show that most of the highly cited articles were published in specialized journals in tourism and hospitality, such as *Tourism Management*, *Journal of Travel Research* and *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, which is in line with previous research showing the role of these journals in the dissemination of scientific knowledge related to marketing communication in tourism (Martí-Parreño & Gómez-Calvet, 2020; Sousa et al., 2022).

It is interesting to note that among the most cited documents in the list are various topics such as the use of social networks, the influence of blogs, the generation of content by users, the image of tourist destinations, the choice of hotels, among others. These results are indicative of the topics that are currently influencing marketing communications in tourism.

The results of the study on the most relevant journals in the field show that the *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* is the journal with the highest scientific production in the field, with 18 articles published. The next most productive journals are *Tourism Management*, *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *African Journal of Hospitality Tourism and Leisure* and *Current Issues in Tourism* with 12, 9, 8 and 7 articles respectively. Among the journals with the highest impact in terms of citations in the field of tourism and hospitality, those responsible for most of the scientific production in the field and with a significant impact in terms of citations stand out. Specifically, the journal *Tourism Management*, with a total of 1164 citations, which shows that this journal is very influential in the field of tourism and hospitality, similar result to the study of Martí-Parreño & Gómez-Calvet (2020); Palácios et al. (2021) and Sousa et al. (2022). The next three most cited journals are *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, *Journal of Travel Research* and *Journal of Vacation Marketing* with 792, 425 and 411 citations respectively.

Scientific production by country shows how a small number of countries are responsible for the largest number of scientific articles on the subject, while others have a more limited scientific production. At the top of the list are the USA, Spain, Australia and China, which are responsible for more than 40% of the manuscripts published. This is consistent with previous findings that have highlighted the importance of these countries as leaders in scientific production in various fields, including tourism (Palácios et al., 2021; Sousa et al., 2022). Other countries with significant scientific production include the United Kingdom, Italy, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Portugal, and Slovakia. These results indicate that research on marketing communication in tourism is not limited to a single country or geographic region, but is a topic of interest at the global level, although it is a topic that is less addressed in the Latin American context. As pointed out by Ahmed et al. (2018) and Băcilă et al. (2022), research on marketing communication in tourism is important for the promotion of destinations, the brand image of these destinations, and the development of sustainable tourism globally.

However, it is important to note that the distribution of scientific production is uneven, with some countries publishing many more articles than others. For example, the United States published more than any other country. This may be due to factors such as investment in research and development, the resources available to conduct research, and the academic and scientific culture of each country (Pérez-Labrada et al., 2022).

In terms of collaboration between countries, Australia and China emerge as leaders in this section. Spain and Malaysia also stand out in terms of international collaboration. It is interesting to note that some



collaborations are more frequent than others, and that some collaborations occur only once, suggesting that they may be more casual or less established. On the other hand, most of the collaborations in the list involve countries within the same region, such as many Southeast Asian or East Asian countries. However, there are some collaborations between countries in different regions, such as Australia and New Zealand, or Australia and Argentina. The results show that international collaboration is significant in promoting research and innovation in marketing communication, encouraging researchers to share knowledge, resources, and perspectives (Millones-Gómez et al., 2021; Ronda-Pupo et al., 2015). International collaboration adds value to scientific production by helping to promote diversity and inclusion in the field of different perspectives, involving researchers from different cultural and disciplinary backgrounds. At the same time, it does not exclude the possibility that some international collaborations may be affected by linguistic, cultural or geographical barriers (González-Infante et al., 2021). It is beneficial for scientists to seek solutions to these barriers and for universities to encourage collaboration with colleagues from other countries for greater progress in research in this area of exploration.

The results of the bibliometric study show that marketing communication in tourism is strongly associated with terms such as "tourism", "marketing communication", "social media", "destination image", "marketing" and "destination marketing". These terms suggest that the promotion and marketing of tourism destinations is a central theme of marketing communication in tourism. In addition, the term "segmentation" appears in the keyword analysis, suggesting that scholars pay attention to the segmentation of tourism markets and the need to tailor marketing communication to different consumer groups.

The analysis also shows that technology-related terms such as "social media" and "user-generated content" are becoming increasingly relevant in tourism marketing communications. These terms suggest that social media platforms and the creation of user-generated content are important tools in the promotion and marketing of tourism destinations. However, despite a growing academic effort in recent years to better understand the use of social media in tourism, research in the specific area of sustainable tourism seems to be scarce (Martí-Parreño & Gómez-Calvet, 2020). In addition, it is interesting to note that the term "Covid-19" appears in the keyword analysis, which suggests that the pandemic has had a significant impact on marketing communication in tourism and has led to the need to adapt promotion and marketing strategies to the new conditions. The results of the keyword analysis suggest that marketing communication in tourism is a topic that focuses on the promotion and marketing of tourism destinations, the segmentation of tourism markets, and the need to adapt to technological changes and new conditions, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

The strategy map provides valuable information on trends and new factors to be studied in the field of marketing communication in tourism. It suggests that there are certain research topics that are highly cohesive and connected to other topics, as the two basic nodes of this quadrant are marketing communication, sustainability and covid-19, and tourism marketing and destination marketing, while other emerging topics, such as market segmentation and cultural tourism, have a low level of connection to other research topics in the field. This provides tourism researchers and practitioners with information on the most important research areas and possible points of connection between different research topics. On the other hand, foundational themes, marketing communication, social media, destination image, marketing communication and domestic tourism, integrated marketing communication, image and brand equity, are characterized as important themes.

In terms of research trends, the bibliometric study shows that marketing communication, sustainability, tourism marketing and destination marketing are central and fundamental topics in the field of research. In addition, there is a tendency to explore the relationship between marketing communication in tourism and corporate social responsibility, loyalty and satisfaction, brand image and brand equity. There is also a growing interest in market segmentation and cultural tourism.

As for new lines of research based on the results of the thematic map, topics such as the relationship between tourism marketing communication and digital transformation, personalization and customer experience, and collaboration between different tourism stakeholders in effective communication with tourists can be explored. In addition, you can explore tourism marketing communication strategies and practices in different geographical and cultural contexts and their impact on local and regional economies. Further explore the links

between the different research topics to advance knowledge in the field and provide more comprehensive solutions to the challenges facing the tourism industry.

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the scientific production on marketing communication in tourism reveals a growing trend. It indicates a greater interest and attention from the scientific community, which reinforces the value and relevance of the topic today. The study highlights 2022 as the year with the highest amount of scientific production, partly due to the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, where many companies found an outlet in the search for ways to attract tourists and promote the products and services of different tourist destinations, with the aim of accelerating the recovery of tourism.

Marketing communication in tourism is an increasingly important topic within the scientific community. The research that has had the greatest impact on the impact of citations, closely related to marketing communication, is the use of social networks, the influence of blogs, the generation of content, the image and brand value of tourist destinations and the choice of hotels. The countries that top the list of scientific production are the USA, China, Australia and Spain, but there is also a considerable amount of scientific production from other geographical regions, although it is a topic that is less addressed in the Latin American context.

International collaboration is essential to promote innovation and diversity in the field, but the existence of linguistic, cultural and geographic barriers can hinder these collaborations. The countries that stand out in terms of collaboration are Australia and China, followed by Spain and Malaysia.

The strategy map provides valuable information on trends and emerging factors to be studied in the field, including marketing communication, sustainability, and COVID-19, along with tourism marketing and destination marketing as the topics most closely related to other research topics related to marketing communication in tourism. Market segmentation and cultural tourism are emerging topics, while marketing communication, social media, destination image, marketing communication and inbound tourism, integrated marketing communication, brand image and brand value, these are characterized as important topics. The analysis of this field of research leaves open new areas of exploration, such as marketing communication in tourism and digital transformation, personalization and customer experience, and collaboration between different tourism stakeholders in effective communication with tourists, among others.

The main theoretical implications of the study are given, as it allows identifying the trends in research related to marketing communication in tourism. It shows the thematic areas that have been most researched and the most relevant authors in the field. On the other hand, it helps researchers to identify less explored areas of research and to discover new lines of research.

Among the practical implications for the tourism industry, these findings suggest that tourism businesses and destinations can benefit from a better understanding of marketing communication and how to find new ways to attract tourists and promote products and services within tourism destinations. Managers of tourism businesses and destinations can make more informed decisions and develop more effective strategies to improve the image and brand value of tourism destinations.

Finally, the study has the limitation that, with the search strategy used, some papers may not have been identified. On the other hand, the research was limited to the use of original articles in the Scopus database as the main unit of analysis. The inclusion of other databases and the extension to other materials such as books or academic materials could provide a more general overview of this area of research. In addition, other related studies such as systematic reviews and meta-analyses may be conducted.

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