

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.11325107

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: A PRISMA-GUIDED SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

Jael Dolores Zambrano-Mieles^{1*}, Dolores Narcisa Mieles-Cevallos² and Lourdes Janneth Suntasig-Tuasa^{3*} Velasco Rigoberto Zambrano Burgos⁴

¹Universidad Estatal de Milagro. Email: "mailto:jzambranom@unemi.edu.ec" jzambranom@unemi.edu.ec
Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2796-8420>

²Universidad Estatal de Milagro. Email: "mailto:dmielesc@unemi.edu.ec" dmielesc@unemi.edu.ec, Orcid:
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1681-2076>

³Universidad Estatal de Milagro. Email: "mailto:lsuntasigt@unemi.edu.ec" lsuntasigt@unemi.edu.ec, Orcid:
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2070-6468>

⁴Universidad Estatal de Milagro. Email: "mailto:vzambranob@unemi.edu.ec" vzambranob@unemi.edu.ec,
Orcid: "https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0295-3828" <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0295-3828>

Received: 25/08/2025
Accepted: 17/09/2025

Corresponding Author: Jael Dolores Zambrano-Mieles
(jzambranom@unemi.edu.ec)

ABSTRACT

The abstract must be between 200 and 300 words written in 'SC-Abstract' style. Scientific Culture is a peer-reviewed, open access international scientific journal, an open information vehicle of academic community with a global coverage and issues touching local and regional interest; it is intended as a starting point for presenting research devoted in the broad field of diachronical Cultural Heritage. The journal provides a broader coverage of studying ancient cultures with natural sciences focused on specific topics of global interest. Amongst the published themes emphasis is given to: Ancient cultures; hidden information in art by symbolism; composition of artifacts; parallels in ancient and recent cultural issues; the role of liberal arts to cultural background; cultural development and the question of independent, autochthonous, interactive patterns; theoretical approaches: archetypal concept and globalization effects; inter-, intra-settlement and environmental interactions on cultural evolution; art and science, virtual culture, cognitive archaeology via positive sciences etc.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable Tourism, Regional Development, Tourism, Community-Based Tourism, Sustainability, Prisma-Guided.

1. INTRODUCTION

Community-driven sustainable tourism has become a crucial strategy for enhancing economic growth, social harmony, and environmental conservation in local areas, especially in developing economies (Gantait et al., 2024; Yang & Bi, 2024; Odunga et al., 2024). This strategy seeks to synchronise economic advancement with the preservation of cultural and natural resources, prioritising community involvement in development initiatives. Its importance resides in providing concrete economic benefits, strengthening social connections, and enhancing environmental awareness, thus advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Suastuti et al., 2024). While sometimes used synonymously, community-based tourism (CBT) and community-driven tourism (CDT) denote separate yet interconnected ideas. CBT generally denotes tourism initiatives occurring within a community that seek to provide local advantages, frequently involving external entities in supportive capacities. Conversely, CDT prioritises independent leadership and communal decision-making across all phases of the tourist business, encompassing planning, management, and assessment. This study employs the term community-driven to emphasise instances where local stakeholders actively participate, create, control, and sustain tourist initiatives. Clarifying this distinction is essential for comprehending the diverse levels of community agencies and assessing the transformative capacity of tourism in regional development. Nevertheless, the execution of sustainable tourism faces considerable challenges that restrict its efficacy. Factors encompass insufficient infrastructure, constrained finance, opposition from specific community factions, and the lack of comprehensive state policies to support community-driven initiatives (Aliu et al., 2024; Indriastuty et al., 2024; Tinonetsana & Musariwa, 2024). These limitations are particularly evident in rural and underdeveloped regions, where communities frequently contend with limited resources to initiate tourism initiatives (Gomez and van Niekerk, 2022). Residents are vital to sustainable tourism, offering essential insights into their region's environment and requirements. Their knowledge includes conventional resource management, biodiversity conservation methods, and a deep understanding of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Adamowicz 2023; Luo et al. 2024; Kamakaula et al. 2024). Integrating local knowledge into development strategies allows regions to get culturally relevant and sustainable results, cultivating a sense of agency and accountability

among community members who actively influence tourism and heritage conservation initiatives. Notwithstanding these problems, sustainable tourism offers various benefits, such as employment generation, economic diversification, and the preservation of cultural and natural resources. It also promotes new governance frameworks that emphasise community engagement. The efficacy of these initiatives depends on communities' capacity to organise efficiently, develop local leadership, and establish collaborations with public and private entities to tackle systemic obstacles and enhance tourism advantages. This study performed a systematic analysis to analyse the prospects and constraints of sustainable local tourism, highlighting the essential role of community involvement in promoting regional development. This study synthesises existing research to identify good methods, highlight areas for improvement, and propose innovative strategies to inform future research and policy. This research provides ideas to enhance sustainable tourism frameworks and maximise their economic, social, and environmental effects.

2. METHODOLOGY

This investigation followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) paradigm to guarantee a comprehensive and transparent systematic review (Elsman et al., 2024). The approach comprises the subsequent steps:

2.1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The review included peer-reviewed articles published from 2020 to 2025 in journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), specifically within the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED) and the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) to guarantee high-quality sources. Eligible studies focus on sustainable local tourism, community engagement, and regional development. The exclusion criteria were non-peer-reviewed studies, duplicate records, and studies that did not directly address community participation or sustainable development. Only the articles published in English or Spanish were included.

2.1.1. Search Strategy

Searches employed terms such as "sustainable local tourism," "community-based tourism," "participatory tourism," "regional development," and "sustainability challenges," integrated with Boolean operators (AND, OR). The search string for

Scopus was: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("sustainable local tourism" OR "community-based tourism" OR "community participation" OR "participatory tourism") AND ("regional development" OR "local development" OR "community development") AND ("sustainability" OR "challenges" OR "opportunities"). The query for WoS was: TS=("sustainable local tourism" OR "community-based tourism" OR "community participation" OR "participatory tourism") AND ("regional development" OR "local development" OR "community development") AND ("sustainability challenges" OR "tourism opportunities" OR "sustainable practices").

2.1.2. Study Selection

The analysis commenced with 7,364 records, comprising 1,077 from Scopus and 6,287 from the Web of Science. Following the elimination of 316 duplicates, 7,048 distinct research persisted. The titles and abstracts were evaluated, resulting in 120 pertinent papers. After a comprehensive study and critical assessment, 28 studies were chosen for analysis. A PRISMA flow diagram (to be redrafted for submission) illustrates the selection process.

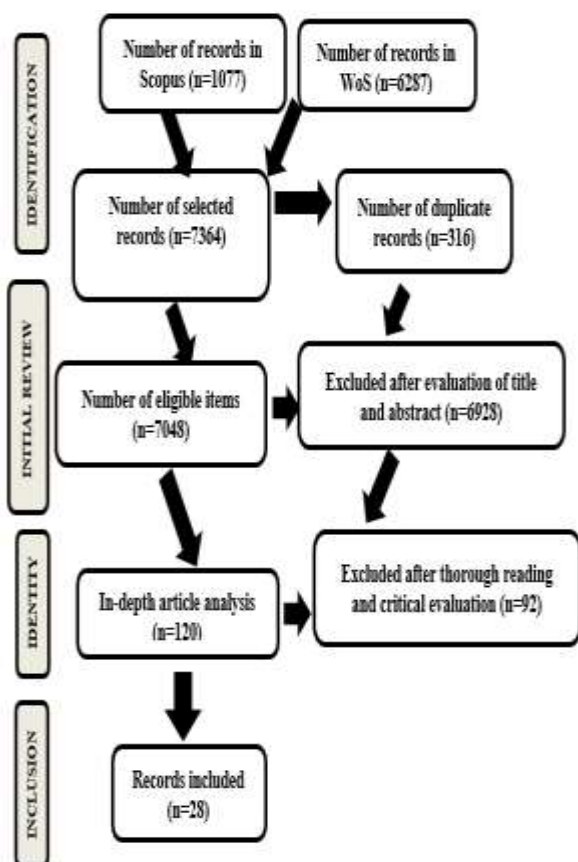


Figure 1: PRISMA Selection Flow Diagram.

2.1.3. Data Extraction

An automated deduplication technique was implemented using R (version 4.4.2) to preserve the integrity and uniqueness of the selected articles. The records from Scopus and Web of Science were consolidated into a singular CSV file utilising the rbind() method. Article titles were standardised by transforming them to lowercase and eliminating unusual characters. The left_join() function enabled the efficient detection of duplicate items, so ensuring the dataset's consistency and trustworthiness for future study.

2.1.4. Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis involved extracting data on authors, titles, publication years, sources, affiliations, and keywords. The analysis comprised three components:

- **Productivity Analysis:** Examining publication trends over time, conducted in R (version 4.4.2).
- **Collaboration Network Analysis:** Mapping institutional partnerships, visualized using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20).
- **Keyword Analysis:** Identifying thematic clusters through keyword co-occurrence, also visualized in VOSviewer (version 1.6.20).

2.1.5. Literature Analysis

The review addressed the research question: *What are the primary opportunities and barriers in implementing participatory sustainable tourism strategies within local communities?*

3. RESULTS

The analysis of 28 studies yielded the following insights:

3.1. Bibliometric Analysis

3.1.1. Publication Trends

The chronological distribution of publications (depicted in Figure 2) indicates a consistent increase in research output. In 2020, two articles were published indicating the early interest in the intersection of sustainable tourism, community participation, and regional development. This figure has risen to three articles by 2021. A significant increase transpired in 2022, with seven publications, perhaps indicating an intensified global emphasis on sustainability and the importance of participatory tourism. Research momentum persisted with six articles in 2023, culminating in a peak of ten publications in 2024, highlighting the field's

increasing significance in academic debate.

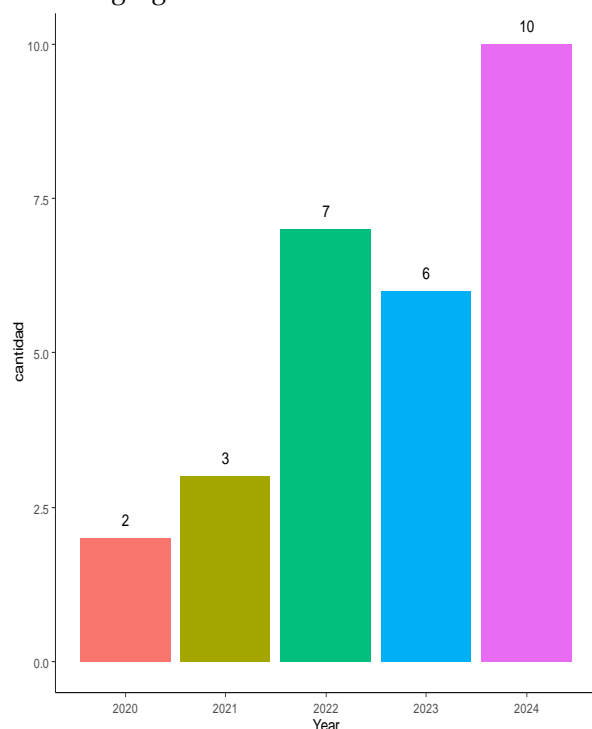


Figure 2: Annual Distribution of Scientific Publications.

Between 2020 and 2024, the volume of publications rose from 2 to 10 articles annually, indicating a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of almost 49.5%. This continuous increase highlights the increasing scholarly focus on the convergence of sustainable tourism, community engagement, and regional development, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.1.2. Institutional Collaboration Networks

The network visualisation, to be replicated as depicted in Figure 3, demonstrates the collaborative linkages among academic institutions engaged in sustainable tourism research. Each node denotes an institution, whereas the connected arcs indicate research collaboration on this subject.

Notable nodes comprise entities such as the "School of Business and Management," "Faculty of Business and Management," and "School of Tourism, Universitas," which demonstrate significant connectedness, underscoring their crucial contributions to the advancement of research in this domain. The robust interconnections across faculties specialising in business, tourism, and accounting underscore an interdisciplinary methodology that integrates economic, managerial, and social viewpoints in sustainable tourism research.

The network's relatively low density indicates

potential for improved interinstitutional collaborations, especially among faculties possessing complementary knowledge. Terms like "business," "management," and "tourism" commonly emerge in the discourse, highlighting the amalgamation of sustainability, economic strategies, and planning to tackle the complex difficulties of sustainable tourism.

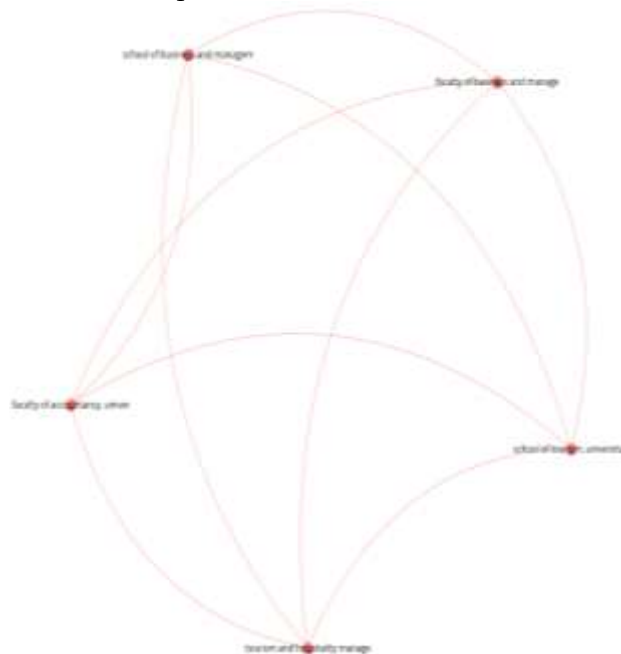


Figure 3: Collaboration Network between Academic Institutions.

The bibliometric dataset indicated a mean coauthorship index of 2.8 authors per paper, signifying a moderate level of collaborative research. The predominant collaboration patterns featured alliances between universities and research institutions in the Global South, indicating an increase in regional cooperation. Nevertheless, the comparatively low network density (Figure 3) suggests that there are prospects for enhanced integrated and cross-institutional collaboration, especially with interdisciplinary teams.

3.2. Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis

Figure 4 presents a co-occurrence map of author keywords, demonstrating the topic structure of the chosen articles. Each node signifies a keyword, with connections denoting co-occurrence in identical papers, so creating clusters that underscore significant research areas in sustainable tourism.

3.2.1. Central Theme: "Community Participation"

The keyword "community participation" emerges as the most dominant node, underscoring its critical

role in sustainable tourism research. Its extensive connections to terms like sustainable development, community-based tourism, and sustainability highlight its centrality in linking various research dimensions.

3.2.2. Identified Thematic Clusters

- **Red Cluster:** Centers on sustainability and sustainable development, incorporating terms like “sustainable practices,” “environmental impact,” “circular economy,” and “climate change.” This cluster emphasizes strategies to mitigate environmental effects in tourism development.
- **Green Cluster:** Focuses on community-based tourism, local development, ecotourism, and conservation, highlighting the pivotal role of communities in managing and advancing sustainable tourism initiatives.
- **Yellow Cluster:** Encompasses social and health-related themes, including “public health,” “social participation,” and “health promotion,” reflecting the interplay between sustainable tourism and community well-being.
- **Blue Cluster:** Includes terms such as “tourism development,” “governance,” “empowerment,” and “collaboration,” indicating a focus on organizational and managerial frameworks.

The interrelation of these clusters highlights the interdisciplinary character of sustainable tourism research, incorporating environmental, social, economic, and governance viewpoints. Newly coined words such as “COVID-19” and “resilience” indicate the pandemic's impact, prompting novel

research directions on sustainable recovery. The map (Figure 4, to be recreated) highlights community engagement as a fundamental element of sustainable tourism, interconnected with environmental sustainability, conservation, social welfare, and governance. These areas collectively represent a holistic strategy for tackling the benefits and problems associated with sustainable local tourism.

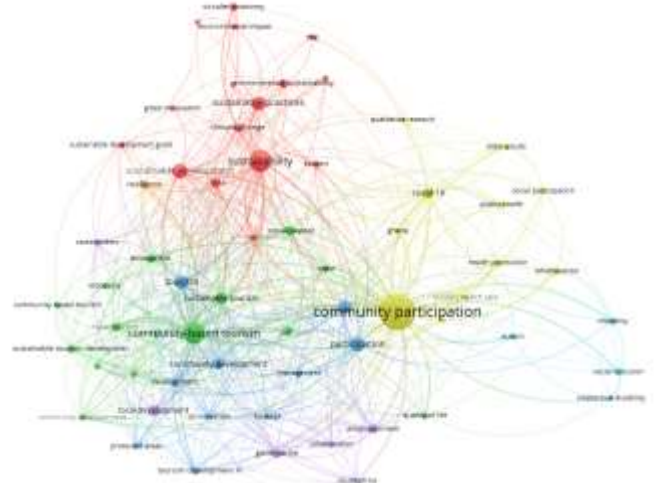


Figure 4: Keyword Co-occurrence Map.

3.3. Literature Analysis

This section consolidates findings from 28 studies investigating the influence of community-based tourism on sustainable development. A summary table (to be reconstructed as Table 1) delineates the principal findings of each study and their significance to the research enquiries. This analysis discerned consistent trends, problems, and opportunities among several community-based tourism efforts, establishing a solid basis for the study's conclusions.

Table 1: Synthesis of Findings and Analysis of Studies on Community-Based Tourism.

Author(s)	Title	Main Findings	Opportunities/Challenges Identified	Contribution to Research Question
Montoya (2024)	External actors, tourism and rural crisis. Reflections from the Sierra de Huelva (Andalusia)	External actors generate employment and increase tourism but externalize benefits and reduce local profitability.	Opportunity: Economic diversification. Challenge: Displacement of local control and increased inequality.	Highlights the importance of participatory governance to counter external dominance.
Canales-Gutiérrez & Pacheco-Vizcarra (2024)	Rural tourism in Quechua communities on Lake Titicaca	194% increase in tourists; 21.8% rise in income; improved services through training and revolving funds.	Opportunity: Economic empowerment. Challenge: Need for holistic ecosystem strategies.	Demonstrates economic benefits of CBT aligned with sustainable practices.
Saavedra & Muñoz (2024)	Community Involvement in Child Development Support Systems and Programs	Community participation improves implementation and sustainability of child-focused programs.	Opportunity: Community empowerment. Challenge: Predominance of externally driven initiatives.	Emphasizes community-led models for sustainable policy implementation.
Venceslao et al. (2024)	Community participation in secondary schools from an intercultural perspective	Participation fosters coexistence and democratic values but suffers from weak integration among stakeholders.	Opportunity: Social cohesion. Challenge: Low stakeholder involvement.	Highlights participatory gaps and intercultural inclusion for community development.
Hariyadi et al. (2024)	The Role of Community-Based Tourism in Sustainable Tourism Village in Indonesia	Increased income and cultural preservation through local wisdom and environmental awareness.	Opportunity: Rural revitalization. Challenge: Ensuring benefit equity and long-term planning.	Supports CBT's role in economic and cultural sustainability in rural contexts.
Indrianto et al. (2024)	Exploration of the Teaching and Learning Model Using the Design Thinking Method	Design Thinking promotes innovation, collaboration, and environmental awareness in CBT.	Opportunity: Creative tourism models. Challenge: Social and cultural barriers.	Introduces Design Thinking as a participatory tool to overcome CBT.

				challenges.
Gascón & Milano (2024)	Community-Based Tourism: A Global South Perspective	Identifies 'duality dilemma' in community tourism: equity efforts vs. benefit concentration.	Opportunity: Improved quality of life. Challenge: Inequitable benefit distribution.	Highlights how local context and paradigms influence CBT outcomes.
Odunga et al. (2024)	Cultural Tourism in Western Kenya	Improves income and engagement; community perceptions influence tourism success.	Opportunity: Cultural entrepreneurship. Challenge: Rising costs and inequality.	Emphasizes the importance of perceptions and tailored strategies.
Suastuti et al. (2024)	Policy License for Tourism Businesses in Indonesia	Centralized licensing hinders local tourism governance.	Opportunity: Localized policy control. Challenge: Governance conflicts.	Advocates for devolved authority to strengthen CBT frameworks.
Lee & Sam (2024)	Community Sustainability Through CBT	Bottom-up and top-down approaches revitalize rural communities.	Opportunity: Community revitalization. Challenge: Demographic decline.	Illustrates integrated planning as a tool for CBT sustainability.
Ribera (2023)	Social Dynamics and Structural Coupling	Community leadership and sociocultural alignment improve program sustainability.	Opportunity: Cultural integration. Challenge: Misaligned global models.	Demonstrates role of sociocultural compatibility in participation success.
Canclini et al. (2023)	Cultural Tourism and Local Communities in Cabildo, Argentina	Cultural circuits foster intergenerational identity but lack coordination.	Opportunity: Heritage conservation. Challenge: Stakeholder fragmentation.	Underlines public agency role in participatory cultural tourism.
Gascón (2023)	The Participatory Process in Community-Based Tourism: An Ethnographic Analysis	Effective CBT requires strong organization and sector knowledge; risks include conflict and inequality.	Opportunity: Sustainable participatory models. Challenge: Intra-community conflict.	Highlights structural conditions for successful participatory tourism.
Vela Riera et al. (2023)	El turismo comunitario y su impacto en el desarrollo socioeconómico de la comunidad Valdivia	Tourism improves life quality and infrastructure; hindered by limited funding and marketing.	Opportunity: Socioeconomic development. Challenge: Infrastructure and funding gaps.	Demonstrates CBT potential with proper strategic planning and promotion.
Mora-Forero & Nieto-Mejía (2023)	Analysis of the Solidarity Economy in Rural Tourism	Empowerment and collective organization improve cohesion and sustainability.	Opportunity: Social cohesion. Challenge: Agricultural dependence.	Shows role of solidarity economy in inclusive tourism development.
Boscán Carroz et al. (2023)	Emprendimiento peruano en el marco del desarrollo sostenible	Positive link between entrepreneurship and SDGs; limited community involvement.	Opportunity: Innovation. Challenge: Weak community integration.	Reveals the need to integrate communities into entrepreneurial sustainability models.
Bozzato & Pollice (2022)	Perspectives for Community-Driven Tourism in Cape Verde	Exogenous tourism undermines sustainability; community hotels proposed as alternative.	Opportunity: Cultural preservation. Challenge: Foreign dependency.	Supports shift toward local-driven tourism and heritage protection.
Garzón & Toloza (2022)	Coevaluación de condiciones de viabilidad en turismo comunitario en Colombia	CBT has potential but is limited by lack of organization and funding.	Opportunity: Cultural resources. Challenge: Informality and lack of planning.	Identifies conditions required for CBT viability and success.
Oppliger & de Oliveira (2022)	Tourism for Sustainable Development in Quilombola Community	Tourism potential exists but lacks community interest and preparation.	Opportunity: Nature-based tourism. Challenge: Organizational capacity.	Points to planning and training needs for effective CBT.
Arratia et al. (2022)	Cooperativismo como herramienta para turismo comunitario	Cooperatives enhance cohesion and local empowerment; leadership issues persist.	Opportunity: Governance innovation. Challenge: Internal conflicts.	Proposes cooperativism as a driver of sustainable CBT models.
Russell (2022)	Supporting Community Participation in a Pandemic	Community engagement fosters resilience and social cohesion during crises.	Opportunity: Crisis resilience. Challenge: Resource constraints.	Shows value of asset-based participation in extreme scenarios.
De La Llave et al. (2022)	CBT and Multidimensional Poverty Reduction	Reduces poverty in education, health, and QoL; success linked to social capital.	Opportunity: Poverty alleviation. Challenge: Unequal benefit distribution.	Confirms CBT's potential in rural development when inclusivity is ensured.
Gomez & van Niekerk (2022)	A social innovation model for equitable access to quality health services	Social innovation improved access, promoted empowerment, and addressed rural health inequities.	Opportunity: Integrative community health. Challenge: Vulnerable contexts.	Shows how community-driven innovation enhances sustainability and inclusion.
Trejo et al. (2021)	Community Participation in the Formulation of Tourism Public Policy	Participation legitimizes tourism policies; Usiacuri case: empowerment, code of ethics, and certification.	Opportunity: Policy legitimacy. Challenge: Sustained coordination.	Reinforces organized participation as key to sustainable tourism governance.
Pascoli (2021)	Community Involvement in Tourism: Exploring the Place Image Guided by the Locals	Local narratives enhance authenticity but differ from official images.	Opportunity: Cultural promotion. Challenge: Misalignment with official tourism.	Illustrates how community vision enriches sustainable tourism identity.
Yan et al. (2021)	Evaluation of the Water Environment Carrying Capacity of a River Basin	Combined AHP and SD models optimize sustainability through scenario planning.	Opportunity: Balanced development. Challenge: Environmental thresholds.	Demonstrates how multidimensional tools can support sustainable planning.
Ramos Zúñiga et al. (2020)	CBT in the Honduran Caribbean: East End and Chachahuat	Income and education benefits achieved; lack of support remains a barrier.	Opportunity: Local empowerment. Challenge: Weak institutional coordination.	Supports CBT as a development tool with strong integration frameworks.
Anzaldúa-Soulé et al. (2020)	Turismo Comunitario Sustentable en la Microrregión Costa Chica-Montaña	Five-phase tourism model reduced poverty and increased participation.	Opportunity: Marginalized community development. Challenge: Need for multisectoral support.	Validates CBT as a transformative model for vulnerable populations.

4. DISCUSSION

This study reveals the complex obstacles and opportunities present in community-based tourism across various geographic and social situations. This analysis offers a detailed comprehension of the elements affecting the sustainability and

effectiveness of these programs, emphasising their limitations and revolutionary potential. A fundamental difficulty is the absence of resilient community organisations and governance frameworks. Inadequate organisational structures hinder successful tourism management, a problem worsened by internal disputes and the unequal

allocation of economic advantages, especially in rural areas with scarce leadership and training resources. In Colombia, informality and insufficient financing have hindered the sustainable growth of community-based tourism, jeopardising its long-term survival (Garzón and Toloza, 2022). Dependence on external entities constitutes another substantial obstacle. Although external involvement typically enhances tourism activity and revenue, it often redirects advantages from local communities, undermines local control, and exacerbates economic inequalities. This dynamic is seen in Sierra de Huelva, where external entities elevate investment expenses, diminish local profitability, and incite community discord (Montoya 2024). Insufficient governmental and institutional support constrains communities' access to resources, infrastructural advancement, and destination marketing. In areas like Cabo Verde and Honduras, the lack of inclusive policies has revealed structural obstacles, impeding the advancement of sustainable tourism (Bozzato & Pollice, 2022; Ramos Zúniga et al., 2020). Moreover, environmental and cultural degradation resulting from resource overexploitation and cultural gentrification provide persistent threats to the sustainability principles of community-based tourism (Canclini et al., 2023). Conversely, community-based tourism has significant prospects. This substantially aids in employment and income generation, alleviating multidimensional poverty. In Llachón and Chachahuat, tourism has diversified income streams, strengthened local economies, and enhanced living standards (Canales-Gutiérrez & Pacheco-Vizcarra, 2024; Ramos Zúniga et al., 2020). This approach enhances social cohesion and empowerment through participatory decision-making, thereby promoting democratic values and reinforcing community bonds, especially among women and youth, as evidenced by initiatives in Indonesia and Mexico (Hariyadi et al., 2024; Anzaldúa-Soulé et al., 2020). The conservation of cultural and natural heritage constitutes another significant advantage. Integrating local identity and resources into tourism initiatives enables communities to improve visitor experiences while preserving their customs and habitats, as evidenced in Dermaji Village and Cabildo (Lee & Sam, 2024; Canclini et al., 2023). Innovative techniques, such as Design Thinking, have demonstrated efficacy in promoting collaborative and creative solutions to social, cultural, and environmental concerns within community-based tourism (Indrianto et al., 2024). Notwithstanding these limitations, community-based tourism possesses significant potential as a

driver of sustainable development. Mitigating structural obstacles, promoting participatory governance, and enhancing local capacities are crucial for optimising socioeconomic and environmental advantages.

4.1. Geographic Context and Regional Disparities

The efficacy and viability of community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives are significantly shaped by the geographic and socio-institutional contexts in which they operate. Rural, coastal, mountainous, and peri-urban regions have significantly divergent outcomes due to disparities in infrastructural access, institutional assistance, market connectedness, and sociocultural cohesion. CBT initiatives in isolated Andean or Amazonian villages frequently encounter logistical and infrastructural obstacles that restrict tourism influx and elevate operational expenses (e.g., Canales-Gutiérrez & Pacheco-Vizcarra, 2024; Garzón & Toloza, 2022). Conversely, coastal areas like the Honduran Caribbean and Cabo Verde have proximity to established tourism circuits but face challenges related to foreign management and restricted local ownership (Ramos Zúniga et al., 2020; Bozzato & Pollice, 2022). Institutional density also influences the efficacy of CBT. Examples from nations with decentralised tourism governance, like Indonesia and Mexico, illustrate how regional authorities and local leaders can implement participatory models tailored to distinct requirements (Hariyadi et al., 2024; Anzaldúa-Soulé et al., 2020). In contrast, centralised systems, as seen in regions of Africa and Latin America, frequently marginalise community perspectives and impede responsiveness to local issues (Suastuti et al. 2024). Furthermore, cultural identity and social capital differ by region, influencing community cohesion and the propensity to cooperate. Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities often base CBT activities on traditional wisdom and territorial rights, resulting in unique tourism products while simultaneously confronting historical marginalisation and institutional disregard. Consequently, forthcoming methods ought to customise CBT models to particular geographic and institutional contexts by utilising local resources, while mitigating contextual constraints. Comparative regional research is crucial for comprehending these differences and promoting more equitable and resilient tourism structures.

4.2. Limitations

This study possesses certain limitations that merit

discussion. The analysis was confined to papers published in English and Spanish, potentially excluding significant research in other languages and constraining the range of viewpoints. Secondly, the diversity of geographic and socioeconomic circumstances in the examined research hinders generalisation, as community-specific factors profoundly influence outcomes. The prevalence of short-term assessments in the literature obstructs understanding of the long-term viability of community-based tourism initiatives. Moreover, marginalised people, including those experiencing extreme poverty or social exclusion, are inadequately represented, limiting the comprehension of tourism's effects in these circumstances. The absence of a standardised definition of "community tourism" across studies poses obstacles for consistent comparisons and the formulation of universal standards. This review may be influenced by publication bias, as research demonstrating successful or favourable outcomes in community-based tourism are more likely to be included in academic databases. Failed or terminated initiatives, which may offer essential insights into institutional deficiencies, community alienation, or implementation errors, are frequently underreported or omitted from peer-reviewed literature. The underrepresentation may skew the comprehensive assessment of CBT efficacy and must be rectified in forthcoming research by using grey literature, case reports, and alternative data sources. To address these constraints, subsequent research should employ a broader range of methodological approaches. Meta-analyses provide consolidated insights from comparable datasets, enhancing generalisability. Longitudinal case studies are crucial for monitoring the development and sustainability of CBT activities over time. Mixed-methods research, especially when using interactive tools and local narratives, would enhance the comprehension of community dynamics and marginalised voices. Furthermore, the inclusion of grey and unconventional sources may mitigate publication bias. The establishment and acceptance of a standardised operational definition of CBT would for more rigorous cross-study comparisons and theoretical advancements.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis yielded the following conclusions:

1. **Socioeconomic Benefits:** Community-based tourism significantly enhances quality of life in rural and marginalized areas through job creation, income growth, and poverty

reduction. However, these outcomes depend on robust social cohesion, effective leadership, and resource access.

2. **Heritage Conservation:** Integrating cultural and natural resources into tourism strategies fosters authenticity and strengthens community ties to heritage sites, although protective regulations are necessary to prevent cultural gentrification and environmental harm.
3. **Structural Challenges:** Barriers such as weak organization, internal conflicts, reliance on external actors, and insufficient institutional support undermine equitable benefit distribution and long-term project sustainability.
4. **Value of Participatory Models:** Collaborative approaches, including Design Thinking and participatory governance, are critical for overcoming socioeconomic challenges, necessitating investment in local capacity-building.
5. **Need for Policy Support:** Inclusive public policies and cross-sectoral collaboration are vital to ensuring financial sustainability, improving infrastructure, and promoting equity in community-based tourism.

Community-based tourism is a potent mechanism for sustainable development when supported by inclusive strategies. Addressing identified challenges through equitable policies and community empowerment is crucial for maximizing impact. Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies and innovative governance models to enhance the sustainability of these initiatives.

5.1. Practical Strategies to Enhance Community-Based Tourism

1. **Building Community Capacity:** Robust organizational structures are vital for effective tourism management. Training programs in leadership, strategic planning, and business management should empower communities while promoting cooperatives and the inclusive participation of women, youth, and minorities to enhance social cohesion.
2. **Securing Financial Resources:** Addressing funding shortages requires mechanisms, such as microcredit, revolving funds, and government subsidies. Tax incentives for sustainable ventures and partnerships with value-aligned investors can ensure their long-term viability.
3. **Enhancing Infrastructure:** Investments in

accessible transportation, water, sanitation, and signage are essential for improving destination appeal. Incorporating of renewable energy sources and accessible facilities for people with disabilities reinforces sustainability and inclusivity.

4. **Formulating Supportive Policies:** Several case studies reviewed in this study illustrate how well-designed public policies can strengthen community-based tourism (CBT). For example, in Usiacurí, Colombia, the implementation of a collaborative policy framework involving the community, local government, and academia has resulted in a code of ethics, community accreditation, and sustainable tourism designation (Trejo et al., 2021). Similarly, in Dermaji Village, Indonesia, the integration of environmental commitments into local policies supported tourism based on traditional knowledge and conservation practices, which led to increased income and stronger community cohesion (Hariyadi et al., 2024). In Guerrero, Mexico, a five-phase CBT planning model backed by government and NGO support enabled indigenous and Afro-Mexican communities to reduce poverty through inclusive tourism (Anzaldúa-Soulé et al., 2020). These examples show that policy interventions that are participatory, context-sensitive, and long-term-oriented can significantly enhance the sustainability and equity of CBT initiatives.

5. **Promoting Heritage Conservation:** Educational campaigns should raise awareness among communities and tourists about preserving cultural and natural assets and integrating these elements to enrich tourism experiences while maintaining authenticity.

6. **Fostering Collaborative Networks:** Partnerships among communities, governments, universities, and the private sector can share resources and best practices. Regional marketing collaboration amplifies destination visibility and unique identities.

5.2. Practical Strategies to Enhance Community-Based Tourism (Continued)

1. **Leveraging Innovation and Technology:** Technological advancements offer significant potential to address structural barriers in community-based tourism. Digital tools for reservation systems and destination marketing can expand access to global markets.

Additionally, innovative methodologies like Design Thinking foster collaboration and creative problem-solving in tourism development. Implementing digital monitoring systems to track environmental and social impacts ensures alignment with sustainability goals.

2. **Advancing Participatory Governance:** Effective governance is critical for sustainable tourism success. Engaging community representatives in decision-making processes ensures that strategies reflect local priorities and needs. Transparent mechanisms for resource allocation and benefit sharing build trust among stakeholders. Strengthening local leadership through targeted training and strategic planning further enhances the sustainability and resilience of tourism initiatives.

While these strategies provide a robust framework to enhance community-based tourism, their effectiveness is highly context dependent. Regional differences in governance structures, institutional capacities, cultural values, and community organizations necessitate adaptation to local realities. Therefore, these recommendations should be viewed as guiding principles that require customization through participatory planning and stakeholder engagement in each specific setting.

5.3. Future Research Directions

Based on the research gaps identified in this systematic and bibliometric review, several avenues for future empirical inquiry are proposed:

1. **How do different models of participatory governance impact the long-term sustainability of community-based tourism projects?**

Comparative studies could examine the effectiveness of decentralized versus hybrid (top-down and bottom-up) governance models in different cultural and institutional contexts.

2. **What are the measurable impacts of design-thinking methodologies on the economic, social, and environmental outcomes of sustainable tourism initiatives?**

Empirical work could test the applicability and replicability of creative problem-solving methods across regions.

3. **How does the degree of community empowerment influence the distribution of tourism-related benefits within marginalized populations?**

Quantitative studies could explore correlations between empowerment indicators and income diversification, poverty reduction, or cultural preservation.

4. What are the effects of institutional collaboration (e.g., between universities, governments, and community groups) on the scalability of tourism initiatives?

Longitudinal case studies could assess whether collaborative networks strengthen resilience and adaptability in tourism ecosystems.

5. To what extent does the integration of local ecological knowledge shape tourists'

perceptions and sustainability outcomes?

Mixed-methods research could analyze how local wisdom contributes to authenticity, environmental stewardship, and visitor satisfaction.

These questions aim to guide future empirical studies that move beyond conceptual synthesis toward actionable, context-specific insights. Testing these hypotheses could help policymakers, researchers, and practitioners develop more inclusive, resilient, and community-centered tourism frameworks.

Acknowledgments: Thanks to the Universidad Estatal de Milagro and the Journal Scientific Culture

REFERENCES

- Anzaldúa-Soulé, K. R., Sandoval-Melo, B., Lorenzana-Núñez, O., & Avilez-Pineda, H. (2020). Sustainable community tourism, in the costa chica-montaña microrregions of the state of guerrero, México. *Revista Venezolana de Gerencia*, 25(90), 546-562. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.37960/rvg.v25i90.32400>
- Arratia, E. M., Palmas Castrejón, Y. D., Jiménez Ruíz, A. E., & Serrano Barquín, R. D. C. (2022). Cooperativism as a tool for Community Based Tourism. The answer from the literature. *PASOS Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 20(1), 195-208. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2022.20.013>
- Boscán Carroz, M. C., Meleán Romero, R. A., Chávez Vera, K. J., & Calanche Urribarri, Á. (2023). Peruvian entrepreneurship in the framework of sustainable development. *Retos(Ecuador)*, 13(26), 223-236. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.17163/RET.N26.2023.03>
- Bozzato, S., & Pollice, F. (2022). Perspectives for community-driven tourism in Cape Verde. *PASOS Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 20(3), 549-561. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2022.20.038>
- Canales-Gutiérrez, A., & Pacheco-Vizcarra, M. Y. (2024). Rural tourism in Quechua communities on Lake Titicaca: An alternative for improving economic income. *PASOS Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 22(2), 339-355. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2024.22.023>
- Canclini, E., Pupio, M. A., & Cara, R. B. (2023). Cultural tourism, heritage and local communities: The case of Cabildo (Buenos Aires, Argentina). *PASOS Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 21(3), 609-624. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2023.21.042>
- De La Llave, A. N., Monroy, H. C., & Castrejón, Y. D. P. (2022). Analysis of the relationship between the establishment of Community Based-Tourism and multidimensional poverty reduction in rural households. *Journal of Tourism Analysis*, 29(2). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.53596/jta.v29i2.417>
- Elsman, E. B. M., Mokink, L. B., Terwee, C. B., Beaton, D., Gagnier, J. J., Tricco, A. C., Baba, A., Butcher, N. J., Smith, M., Hofstetter, C., Aiyegbusi, O. L., Berardi, A., Farmer, J., Haywood, K. L., Krause, K. R., Markham, S., Mayo-Wilson, E., Mehdipour, A., Ricketts, J., ... Offringa, M. (2024). Guideline for reporting systematic reviews of outcome measurement instruments (OMIs): PRISMA-COSMIN for OMIs 2024. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 22(1), 48. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12955-024-02256-9>
- Garzón, D., & Toloza, A. (2022). Co-evaluation of viability conditions in community-based tourism initiatives in Colombia. *PASOS Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 20(4), 837-857. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2022.20.056>
- Gascón, J. (2023). THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS IN COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS. *AIBR Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana*, 18(1), 41-65. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.11156/aibr.180103>
- Gascón, J., & Milano, C. (2024). Community Based Tourism: A Global South Perspective. *Tourism and Management Studies*, 20(3), 27-37. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.18089/TMS.20240303>
- Gomez, M. M. B., & van Niekerk, L. (2022). A social innovation model for equitable access to quality health services for rural populations: A case from Sumpaz, a rural district of Bogota, Colombia. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 21(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-022-01619-2>

- Hariyadi, B. R., Rokhman, A., Rosyadi, S., Yamin, M., & Runtiko, A. G. (2024). THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM VILLAGE IN INDONESIA. *Revista de Gestao Social e Ambiental*, 18(7). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n7-038>
- Indrianto, A. T. L., Oktavio, A., Azmi, A., Abdullah, A., Isa, N. M., Adityaji, R., & Subadi, L. C. (2024). EXPLORATION OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING MODEL USING THE DESIGN THINKING METHOD IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM. *Revista de Gestao Social e Ambiental*, 18(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.24857/RGSA.V18N1-061>
- Lee, L., & Sam, T. H. (2024). COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM. *Revista de Gestao Social e Ambiental*, 18(3). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n3-120>
- Montoya, J. M. Á. (2024). External actors, tourism and rural crisis. Reflections from the Sierra de Huelva (Andalusia). *Gazeta de Antropologia*, 40(2). Scopus.
- Mora-Forero, J. A., & Nieto-Mejia, A. (2023). Analysis of the solidarity economy in rural tourism. *DYNA (Colombia)*, 90(228), 74-82. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.15446/dyna.v90n228.108608>
- Odunga, S., Szente, V., & Szabó, K. (2024). Community Support and Socioeconomic Impacts of Cultural Tourism Development in Western Kenya. *Tourism and Hospitality*, 5(4), 1510-1524. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp5040084>
- Oppliger, E. A., & de Oliveira, A. K. M. (2022). TOURISM AS AN ECONOMIC POSSIBILITY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUILOMBOLA COMMUNITY OF FURNAS DOS BAIANOS, AQUIDAUANA, MATO GROSSO DO SUL. *Revista Brasileira de Gestao e Desenvolvimento Regional*, 18(2), 87-97. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.54399/rbgdr.v18i2.6498>
- Pascoli, M. (2021). Community involvement in tourism: Exploring the place image guided by the locals. *Cuadernos Europeos de Deusto*, 64, 111-136. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.18543/CED-64-2021PP111-136>
- Ramos Zúniga, T. V., Chávez Dagostino, R. M., & Schlemmer Alcântara, L. C. (2020). Community-based tourism in the Honduran Caribbean: The case of the communities of East End and Chachahuat. *PASOS Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 18(5), 707-719. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.pasos.2020.18.051>
- Ribera, J. M. (2023). Social dynamics and structural coupling: Two key, yet often neglected, elements of community participation in Global Health projects. *Revista de Antropologia Social*, 32(2), 155-168. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.5209/raso.91743>
- Russell, C. (2022). Supporting community participation in a pandemic. *Gaceta Sanitaria*, 36(2), 184-187. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gaceta.2021.01.001>
- Saavedra, R. Q., & Muñoz, X. R. (2024). Community Involvement in Child Development Support Systems and Programs: A Systematic Literature Review. *Psykhē*, 33(1), 1-17. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.7764/psykhe.2021.45375>
- Suastuti, E., ul Haq, H., Muishot, G., Djamiati, T. S., & Arif, F. (2024). Reconstruction of The Policy License for Tourism Businesses: Challenge and Opportunity for Social Welfare. *Bestuur*, 12(1), 82-103. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2022.105384>
- Trejo, G. Z., Freitas, Z. M., & Caridad, M. I. C. (2021). Community participation in the formulation of tourism public policy: Systematizing your legitimizing process. *Juridicas CUC*, 18(1), 497-518. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.17981/JURIDCUC.18.1.2022.20>
- Vela Riera, P. A., Mendiburu Rojas, A. F., López Aguilar, W. P., & Bustamante Piguave, F. E. (2023). Community tourism and its impact on the socioeconomic development of the Valdivia community on the Santa Elena peninsula in Ecuador. *RISTI - Revista Iberica de Sistemas e Tecnologias de Informacao*, 2023(E64), 71-87. Scopus.
- Venceslao, M., Marí, R., & Esteban, B. (2024). Community participation in secondary schools from an intercultural perspective. *Pedagogia Social*, 44, 87-101. Scopus. https://doi.org/10.7179/PSRI_2024.44.05
- Yan, B., Wang, Y., Li, G., & Ding, X. (2021). Comprehensive evaluation of the water environment carrying capacity of a river basin: A case study of the Weihe River Basin in China. *Water Policy*, 24(1), 31-48. <https://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2021.097>