Tatiana David-Negre / Juan M. Hernández / Patricia Picazo-Peral / Sergio Moreno-Gil

The Ibero-American Network of Tourism Research: A Methodology of Analysis of Collaboration Through Co-authorships

Abstract

Research collaboration in tourism is critical to generating innovative knowledge and economic development. The present study aims to analyze the collaboration patterns through co-authorships in the scientific publications of Ibero-American authors in a crucial decade, representing the first generation of authors with international diffusion in Ibero-American tourism research. A Social Network Analysis was applied, distinguishing between publications in Ibero-American and English-speaking international tourism journals. The results identify different types of most outstanding authors, universities and countries and their implications. Finally, the study explains how this collaboration takes place and fosters future research collaboration in tourism in this region.

Keywords: social network analysis, bibliometric methodology, co-authorship, Ibero-American journals, research methodology, scientometrics

1. Introduction

Academic collaboration is fundamental for advancing science (Aldieri et al., 2018; Ye et al., 2013). State public research policies and universities have focused on strengthening internationalization and scientific production (de Wit, 2019; Ghani et al., 2022; Picazo-Peral & Moreno-Gil, 2013). However, they have omitted mainly to undertake a prior in-depth analysis of the academic collaboration situation, which is fundamental for ensuring well-defined strategies are established (Cai et al., 2021; Moreno-Gil et al., 2020), to better understand the results, plan the improvement in the research agenda and increase the competitiveness of the destinations (Scott & Ding, 2008).

Different methodologies are available for analyzing literature (García-Lillo et al., 2023; Lages et al., 2023; Perez-Vega et al., 2022). Nevertheless, recent research has shown that these methods may not produce results that are both analytical and visually clear (Mukherjee et al., 2022). Therefore, the Social Network Analysis methodology was used extensively in tourism research (e.g., Racherla & Hu, 2010; Ye et al., 2020; Zhang

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et al., 2022). This methodology is suitable for analyzing collaboration networks as it allows us to know the importance of the actors in the network.

For this study, we analyzed the co-authorships in three areas: collaboration among researchers, an institutional collaboration between universities and research centres, and collaboration between countries to deepen the understanding of international collaboration.

Furthermore, scientific research and production have experienced sustained growth in recent decades in Ibero-America, particularly in the tourism sector, driven by increased publications in indexed journals and greater dissemination of international research (López-Bonilla & Granados-Perea, 2017; Mehraliyev et al., 2019). Moreover, developing countries generally have been under-analyzed (Moreno-Gil et al., 2020).

The tourism industry is a field of indisputable relevance as it is a vital tool in the development of nations (León-Gómez et al., 2021), having even greater importance in Ibero-American countries (Moreno-Gil et al., 2020; World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC], 2022). In addition, tourism research has experienced enormous growth in recent years with more specialized journals and published articles (Picazo-Peral et al., 2013; Racherla & Hu, 2010; WTTC, 2022). However, there is a gap in the literature in understanding the research map in non-leading geographical areas and non-English speaking journals (Moreno-Gil et al., 2020).

Therefore, this paper aims to study the collaboration patterns in the Ibero-American tourist research community to understand a critical decade, representing the first generation of authors with international diffusion in Ibero-American tourism research, particularly the relationship between authors, institutions and countries.

2. Literature review

There is a consensus on the importance of tourism research (Moreno-Gil et al., 2020; Mulet-Forteza et al., 2018; Persson-Fischer et al., 2021), with a positive relationship between the collaboration of researchers and the increase in the country's tourism competitiveness (Scott & Ding, 2008) being identified. Moreover, research and scientific production in the Ibero-American tourism context has increased recently (López-Bonilla & Granados-Perea, 2017).

Likewise, there is a need to strengthen collaboration structures and tourism knowledge networks: interresearchers, inter-university and internationally (Picazo-Peral et al., 2015) since these networks form the pillars of the discipline development (Mehraliyev et al., 2019; Muriithi et al., 2016). Researchers with numerous collaborations and academic institutions offering collaboration programs tend to be the most productive (Lee & Law, 2011; Racherla & Hu, 2010). International collaboration could improve the quality of research, enhance its dissemination and contribute to scientific knowledge (Mehraliyev et al., 2019). Therefore, promoting international networks with partners that provide excellence in tourism research is essential.

Analysis of co-authorships in tourism studies

Co-citation and co-authorships are the most common methods for studying collaboration in research (Racherla & Hu, 2010; Su et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the bibliometric study that analyzes the number of publications, the number of citations or the co-dating method does not show the importance of the researchers or collaborative networks. Therefore, the co-authorship analysis is considered the most appropriate for studying scientific collaboration as it shows the visible and direct relationships between researchers (Ye et al., 2013).

Social Network Analysis (SNA) has been considered one of the best methodologies for studying collaboration because it can study the whole of the scientific community as a network and the structure of their collaboration (Donthu et al., 2021; Mukherjee et al., 2022). In addition, the visual representation of such



networks offers a broad understanding of the knowledge structure (García-Lillo et al., 2023; Mukerji & Chauhan, 2020).

The articles on co-authorships where SNA has been applied have covered different fields of study (Donthu et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2005; Moody, 2004; Newman, 2001; Newman, 2004; Mukerji & Chauhan, 2020; Şimşek & Kalıpçı, 2023). In the field of tourism, most of them carry out collaboration analysis for only one variable: authors, countries or institutions, or between authors and countries, and have limited the analysis to a subtopic or journals from a single geographical area, international English-speaking journals, or journals published in a specific location (Atabay & Güzeller, 2021; Benckendorff, 2010; Köseoglu et al., 2019; Şimşek & Kalıpçı, 2023; Zhang, 2015; Zhang et al., 2022).

The main difference between the present study and the earlier literature above is that it integrates the geographic (Ibero-America), meta-level (country, university and authors), and language and cultural approaches (helps to understand scientific colonialism).

3. Data

Following Zhao and Ritchie (2007), the top tourism journals ranked on Latindex, Scopus, and Web of Science were selected since most Spanish and Portuguese publications are not listed in Scopus and Web of Science. Secondly, 15 tourism experts from Ibero-America were consulted to refine the list. Finally, the authors decided that a) all the tourism journals had to be internationally recognized, b) they had to be focused and broadly cover tourism as a research field, and c) they had to have a constant periodicity of publications in time. All the analyzed English-language journals are Q1 ranked. The present study analyzes 33 Ibero-American and English-speaking tourism journals (Table 1): 9 journals mainly in Portuguese, 9 in Spanish and 15 English-speaking international journals.

We analyzed every article that contained at least one author belonging to an Ibero-American academic institution at the time of publication. Non-Ibero-American authors who co-author with Ibero-American institutions are included in the network to understand it entirely. This decision was made to focus on the scholarly output from Ibero-American institutions rather than solely on the authorship of individuals identifying as Ibero-American. It was also decided to analyze the capacity for scientific production and knowledge generation within Ibero-American countries from an internal perspective, specifically from the viewpoint of the Ibero-American institutions.

The study covers almost a decade of research (2006-2014). This period is when there was a more significant increase in the number of articles in Business, Management and Accounting in the Scimago Journal & Country Rank in Latin America. Furthermore, the number of cited documents has more than doubled compared to the previous period. Likewise, the most significant increase in journals and articles in the JCR's Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism category occurred during the period studied. This period represents the first generation of authors with international diffusion in Ibero-American tourism research (López-Bonilla et al., 2017). Understanding this period and how the research collaboration led to a radical increase in tourism knowledge in Ibero-America helps understand how this process took place and serves as a model for other regions and developing countries to foster their international tourism research. This analysis helps to understand the future of tourism research, as "greater collaboration is occurring and a new generation of leading authors seems to be emerging" (McKercher & Tung, 2015).

This research analyzes a critical decade representing this region's international take-off of tourism research. It aims to help understand how this collaboration occurred by analyzing 4899 authors from 1028 institutions in 54 countries. The wide variety of journals, the large number of articles analyzed, and the extensive period covered allow us to draw solid conclusions on the current academic collaboration in tourism in Ibero-America.

Table 1

Sample of analyzed journals

Journals

Brazilian

Caderno Virtual de Turismo

Revista Brasileira de Pesquisa em Turismo

Revista de Cultura e Turismo

Revista Observatório de Inovação do Turismo

Revista Turismo em Análise

Turismo - Visão e Ação

Turismo e Sociedade

Spanish

Análisis turístico

Cuadernos de Turismo

Estudios Turísticos

Papers de Turisme

Pasos

RESTMA

Other Latin American

El Periplo Sustentable - México

Estudios y Perspectivas en Turismo - Argentina

Gestión Turística - Chile

Portuguese

Revista Turismo & Desenvolvimento

Tourism & Management Studies

English-speaking international journals

Annals of Tourism Research

Cornell Hospitality Quarterly

International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management

International Journal of Hospitality Management

International Journal of Tourism Research

Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research

Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management

Journal of Sustainable Tourism

Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing

Journal of Travel Research

Journal of Vacation Marketing

Tourism Analysis

Tourism Economics

Tourism Geographies

Tourism Management

4. Methodology

SNA has been used to examine co-authorship patterns in tourism research in Ibero-America and show the relationships between different nodes (Borgatti et al., 2013). Two authors are connected if they have an article in common (co-authorships), and two institutions or countries are connected if their researchers have collaborated.

The software of SNA UCINET 6.591 (Borgatti et al., 2013) has been used to analyze the network structure and the NetDraw software to represent networks.

Metrics used

Degree centrality: the number of nodes' immediate links (Freeman, 1979). This is the number of co-authors that each researcher has. Authors with a high degree of centrality are considered active and influential in the academic community (Ye et al., 2013).



Bonacich centrality is determined by the centrality of the nodes to which it is connected (Bonacich, 1987). Therefore, it allows less influential authors to gain recognition according to the relevance of their co-authors (Peláez-Verdet & Ferrera-Blasco, 2017).

Betweenness centrality: the number of times a researcher appears in an intermediary role between two others (Borgatti et al., 2013; Freeman, 1979). Critical points for the distribution of information among researchers (Ye et al., 2013) since they are on the shortest path between other nodes (Benckendorff & Zehrer, 2016; Casanueva et al., 2014).

5. Results and discussion

5.1. Cross-country collaboration analysis: English-language journals

In the first place, collaborations between 41 countries are analyzed through 558 articles published in English-language journals for almost a decade.

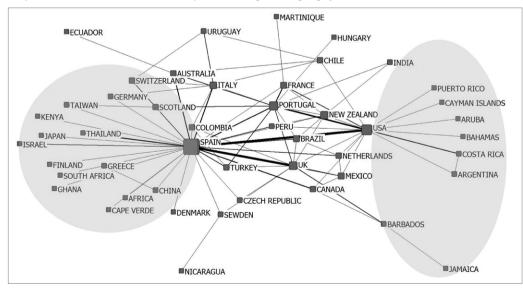
The countries that appear in the first three positions of the centralities analyzed - Spain, the USA and Portugal -can be considered vital since they have a more significant number of co-authorships and collaborate with many others. These connect the Ibero-American academia with institutions from other countries to publish in English-speaking tourism journals. The United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Italy also appear.

Some countries only have a high degree of collaboration (Brazil, Mexico, Chile), so they do not play a central role in the international connection of the network. Others (e.g., Turkey and the Netherlands) only have a high Bonacich rating, which helps them connect with others from extensive international relations. Finally, those countries that rank high in betweenness centrality (Switzerland or Scotland) are vital in connecting different countries.

In Figure 1, we can observe that Spain and Portugal are characterized by leading the network and being connectors with the United States, followed by the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, Spain collaborates with both Ibero-American and English-speaking countries.

Finally, African and Asian countries are linked to English-language journals throughout Spain. However, many South American or Central American countries are linked to English-language journals throughout the United States.

Figure 1
Graph of the network of countries that publish in English-language journals



Note. Nodes represent countries, and lines represent collaboration between countries. Node size increases with betweenness centrality, and line thickness increases with the number of collaborations. Nodes with zero degrees are not shown.

5.2. Analysis of collaboration between countries: Ibero-American journals

Following this, collaborations between 39 countries were analyzed through 3,325 articles published in Ibero-American journals, a network with more articles.

Spain, Brazil, and, to a lesser extent, Portugal occupy the first positions in the three types of centralities, which is why they are critical countries for connecting the network. In this case, English-speaking countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand) have less relevance than in the previous network. However, Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Italy have become more relevant.

Figure 2 shows a powerful three-way collaboration between Spain, Brazil and Portugal. Unlike the previous graph, Brazil and Portugal increase their importance here. Some countries, such as Spain and Portugal, connect to other countries to publish both in Ibero-American and English-language journals; others, such as Brazil and Mexico, act as the best connectors for only Ibero-American journals; and countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom act as connectors for English-speaking journals.

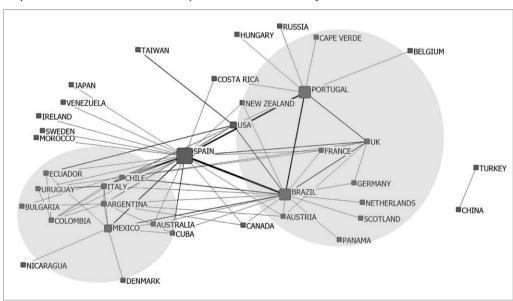


Figure 2
Graph of the network of countries that publish in Ibero-American journals

Note. Nodes represent countries, and links represent collaborations between countries. Node size indicates betweenness centrality (the number of direct collaborations the country has). Link size indicates the number of collaborations, and a thicker line indicates more collaboration. Isolated nodes (less than one degree) are not shown.

5.3. Analysis of collaboration between institutions: English-speaking journals

Subsequently, 558 articles from 241 universities published in English-language journals were analyzed.

The University of the Balearic Islands (UIB) is the most central institution according to the three centralities, followed by the Technical University of Lisbon (UTL), the University of Barcelona (UB), the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM), the University of Algarve (UAlg) and the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC).

Figure 3 shows those institutions with a greater betweenness centrality and their primary relationships with other institutions. To the right of the graph, a reasonably large group is identified where the main actors

are located geographically close to each other (UIB, UB, and UAM), most of which belong to Europe. To the left of the graph, we identify a group that is further away geographically and whose leading actor is the ULPGC.

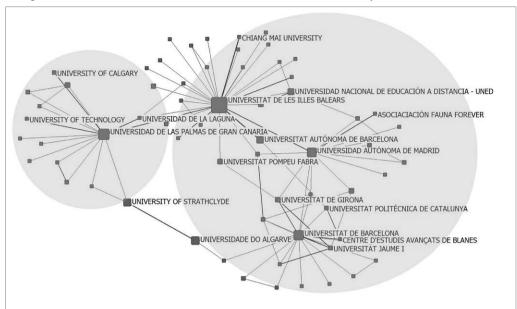


Figure 3
The ego network of the four institutions with the most betweenness centrality

5.4. Analysis of collaboration between institutions: Ibero-American journals

Subsequently, the co-authorships are analyzed in a network of 888 institutions and 3,326 articles published in Ibero-American journals.

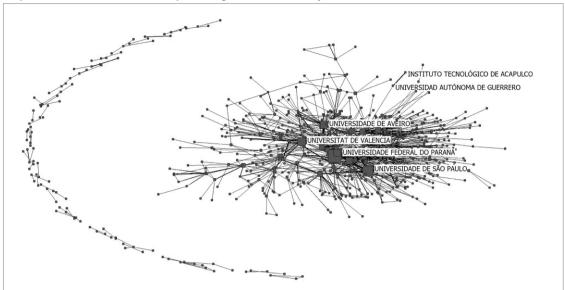
The most central universities in all aspects are positioned as the key institutions since they usually collaborate with different institutions where Brazilian and Portuguese universities predominate. Some universities appear in the degree and betweenness centrality ranking but not in Bonacich, so their collaborators are usually not very active with other universities (e.g., UAlg and UV).

Other universities do not have a high degree centrality; that is, they do not collaborate with many universities, but they do cooperate with key institutions (e.g., Universidade Nove de Julho (UNInove) and Universidade Federal de Santa María (UFSM)).

Finally, some universities help connect others (e.g., University of Aveiro (UAveiro, UV, Complutense de Madrid (UCM) and ULPGC), the first Spanish universities to be in the betweenness centrality ranking. These universities could represent the bridge between the research from Spanish universities and the rest of Ibero-America to publish in Ibero-American journals.

In Figure 4, a very dense nucleus of collaborating institutions can be identified. The Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), the University of Sao Paulo (USP), the UV and the UAveiro connect more institutions. It is also observed how some peripheral institutions have a very high degree of collaboration.

Figure 4
Graph of the network of institutions publishing in Ibero-American journals



Note. An ego network is the part of a network focused on a particular node (Borgatti et al., 2013). The nodes represent institutions and the lines of collaboration between institutions. Node size increases with betweenness centrality (those institutions that connect to the others), and line thickness increases with degree centrality (the number of collaborations between institutions). Nodes with zero degrees are not shown.

5.5. Analysis of co-authorships: English-speaking journals

Subsequently, the co-authors are analyzed in a network of 784 authors and 558 articles published in English-language journals.

Only four authors appear in the three rankings: Carlos Pestana Barros, Antónia Correia, Javier Rey Maquieira and João Albino Silva. And only Carlos Pestana Barros and Antónia Correia, occupy the top two positions in the three centralities, making them the authors with the most co-authors and the highest collaboration rates.

Some authors with a high degree of centrality do not appear when the influence of their co-authors is included (e.g., Enrique Claver Cortés, Juan Luis Nicolau, Miguel Á. Rodríguez Molina or Patrícia Oom Do Valle). They are probably the most influential within the network, and those who can share more information (Ye et al., 2013) have an advantageous position since their field of choice is broader. They have less dependency (Casanueva et al., 2014).

Others that do not have a high degree of centrality appear among the first in terms of Bonacich centrality (e.g., Carlos M. Santos, António Luís Silvestre, Metin Kozak, Richard Butler or Geoffrey Crouch). This is probably because their co-authors have a reasonably high collaboration rate, although they have collaborated with a few authors. Some well-known international researchers in tourism (they do not belong to Ibero-American institutions but co-author with them) are included in this list and are well-connected with this region (Elisabeth Kastenholz, Metin Kozak or Richard Butler). These researchers have great potential to become even higher-level influential researchers (Ye et al., 2013) since they are connected to influential authors and can be selective when choosing who to publish or relate to. The presence of many non-Ibero-American authors in the Bonacich centrality stands out, given that they are authors of worldwide prestige in their area.

Lastly, authors with high betweenness centrality (Antoni Riera Font or Dolores García) are considered ambassadors since they act as connectors between others and are ideal for arranging academic visits due to their extensive contacts.

5.6. Analysis of co-authorships: Ibero-American journals

The co-authorship network of Ibero-American journals comprises 4,268 authors and 3,332 articles.

Table 2 shows that José Manoel Gândara and Carlos Costa are key actors within the collaboration network. However, these authors do not coincide with the co-authorship network of English-speaking journals. Few researchers have a good position in degree, Bonacich and betweenness centrality. The main agents in this network are mostly Brazilian and Portuguese, with Jose Antonio Fraiz Brea being the most outstanding Spanish author. Moreover, the network of authors collaborating in English-language and Ibero-American journals differs ostensibly.

Table 2
Centrality measures for the co-authorship network in Ibero-American journals

| <u></u> | | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------|----|--------------------------|--------|------------------------|---------|
| Rank | Degree | | Bonacich | | Betweenness | |
| 1 | Carlos Costa | 69 | Carlos Costa | 10.501 | José Manoel Gândara | 122,997 |
| 2 | José Manoel Gândara | 52 | José Manoel Gândara | 4.083 | Carlos Costa | 93,269 |
| 3 | Carlos A. Cioce Sampaio | 22 | Ericka Amorim | 2.197 | Ericka Amorim | 74,163 |
| 4 | Fco. Antônio Dos Anjos | 20 | Ana Maria Ferreira | 1.889 | Elisabeth Kastenholz | 47,241 |
| 5 | José Antonio Fraiz Brea | 20 | Manuel Salgado | 1.749 | Zélia Breda | 42,809 |
| 6 | Júlio Da Costa Mendes | 19 | Eva Milheiro | 1.735 | Thays Domareski | 41,839 |
| 7 | M.a de Lourdes* | 19 | Nuno Lopes | 1.634 | Silvio L. Gonçalves | 41,254 |
| 8 | Tomás López Guzmán | 19 | Jorge Umbelino | 1.562 | Renata Coppieters | 38,570 |
| 9 | Elisabeth Kastenholz | 18 | José Antonio Fraiz Brea | 1.548 | Álvaro Luis de Melo | 33,608 |
| 10 | Graciela Cruz Jiménez | 18 | Fernando Florim De Lemos | 1.535 | Eurico De Oliveira | 33,154 |
| 11 | Maribel Osorio García | 18 | Rui Santiago | 1.518 | Sara J.Gadotti | 32,062 |
| 12 | Milton Augusto | 17 | Isabel Martins | 1.501 | Roberta Leal Raye | 29,070 |
| 13 | Edegar Luis Tomazzoni | 16 | José Miguel Brás | 1.501 | Edegar Luis Tomazzoni | 28,940 |
| 14 | João Albino Silva | 16 | Américo Lopes | 1.482 | Fco. Antônio Dos Anjos | 28,688 |
| 15 | Natanael Reis Bomfim | 15 | Ana Mota | 1.482 | Júlio Da Costa Mendes | 28,029 |

Note. Dark shading means the researcher appears in all three columns, while light shading means they appear in two columns.

6. Conclusions and implications

This study examines collaboration between authors from Ibero-American institutions for almost a decade (2006-2014) in 33 journals (Ibero-American and English-speaking journals), 3,913 articles, 4,899 authors, 1,028 universities and 54 countries. An in-depth diagnosis of academic collaboration in tourism in a region and a field of research that has received little attention (Svensson et al., 2009) and over a broad period that exceeds those applied in previous studies (Scott et al., 2007; Hu & Racherla, 2008). Understanding the international take-off of tourism research in this region helps design research plans for innovation, enhance destination competitiveness and growth planning, and facilitate top-down and bottom-up investigation.

The results are helpful to new and senior academics, highlighting the strong correlation between academic collaboration and regional competitiveness (Scott & Ding, 2008), academic productivity (Lee & Law, 2011), and internationalization (Picazo-Peral & Moreno-Gil, 2013). Academics aiming to reposition themselves centrally should collaborate with key authors and institutions (Benckendorff, 2010). These findings support establishing policies to promote academic collaboration such as scholarships, seminars, research visits or international agreements, helping authorities improve internationalization and universities enhance productivity, collaborative networks in projects and internationalization.

The development of networks of excellence, competitive teams (high Bonacich centrality) and ambassadors of the discipline (Betweenness) is facilitated by connecting key institutions and academics, who act as nodes fostering visits and connections.

In addition, the results underscore the influence of culture, geographic location and language (Atabay & Güzeller, 2021; Lee & Bozeman, 2005), showing the differences between the publishing networks in Spanish and Portuguese and English-speaking top-tier journals, with there being more significant publication challenges in Latin America due to the potential negative bias, conceptualization issues and language barriers (Fastoso & Whitelock, 2011). For this reason, these studies are necessary for designing policies to enhance collaboration for publications in the leading English-speaking international journals in tourism (Ülker et al., 2023). The results show greater collaboration between authors who publish in English-language journals compared to Ibero-American journals.

The results provide more significant insights into scientific colonialism (Murphy & Zhu, 2012), which affects tourism flows by creating barriers and fostering one-way travel from developed to developing countries (Balli et al., 2016). The same applies to research publications that consider the English–speaking language, where "the limited attention given by anglophones to literature in other languages is a notable long-term condition" (Whitehand, 2005). This generates a "missing body of knowledge for scholars working in English" that does not show the variations in different regions' physical, social, cultural, and economic contexts (Richards et al., 2022).

The study allows us to manage integrating the Ibero-American and international English-speaking networks. There is a small presence of many Latin American and Caribbean countries in the English-speaking network. Spain and Portugal lead the network connecting the Latin American countries with the international network, and the USA plays a crucial role in connecting South and Central America. However, Brazil and Mexico play a predominant role in the Ibero-American network. The institutions located in Spain and Portugal, as well as in the capital and central cities and leading tourism destinations, play a dominant role. Regarding authors, a few international (English-speaking) co-authors connect with a few crucial Ibero-American nodes associated with many Ibero-American researchers, acting as connecting hubs.

Furthermore, the results confirm that a few authors contribute to many co-authorships, and the majority only publish a few articles. Being a 'broker' depends on the configuration of the network and the ability to connect with other nodes. Future research should integrate these networks to design a growth agenda better so the methodology can be valid for analyzing collaboration in different disciplines.

The results provide guidelines for overcoming linguistic, cultural, and scientific challenges in the Ibero-American Network of Tourism Research through collaboration and inclusivity. Key strategies include providing language accessibility and translation services tailored to Ibero-American authors to minimize language barriers and facilitate communication. Additionally, encouraging training and research capacity building specifically targeted towards Ibero-American researchers empowers them with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective collaboration and contribution to the field. Launching special issues in international journals dedicated to authors from Ibero-American institutions can promote the discussion of topics and peculiarities relevant to their region. It's essential to foster the role of ambassadors and other identified profiles within the network to facilitate communication, mediate cultural differences, and promote inclusivity. Furthermore, fostering open-access publishing and knowledge-sharing initiatives makes research findings more accessible to researchers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. By implementing these strategies, the Ibero-American Network of Tourism Research can create a more inclusive, collaborative, and equitable research environment, ultimately enhancing the quality and impact of research within the network and contributing to the region's development and the global tourism literature.

Some limitations of this research are based on the non-selection of papers from Ibero-American authors belonging to non-Ibero-American institutions. The focus is on examining academic production from Ibero-American institutions instead of solely on the authorship of people identifying as Ibero-American. While

comprehensive, the selection process and the number of journals analyzed do not include all the tourism journals and regions in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, tourism papers published in "nontourism journals", books, book chapters, and conference proceedings have not been included. The study maintains a restrictive criterion to ensure clarity in the selection of articles. Future research could address other types of collaboration (Moreno-Gil & Picazo-Peral, 2015) and analyze the structural, social and individual factors that influence the development and success of collaborative networks and internationalization. The present study pretends to understand the genesis of knowledge generation, its network expansion from Ibero-America, and its subsequent development. However, future research can analyze the last and coming years of tourism research in Ibero-America and performance comparisons and extract lessons learned from those periods analyzed.

Finally, future research should explore how "we may be returning to an era of knowledge transfer now formalized via journal outputs and a tracked and evidenced pathway" (Phillips et al., 2020) to design a growth agenda in the economy of Ibero-America properly.

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