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Literature Reviews

The role of stakeholder engagement in the promotion and development of tourism: a systematic literature review between 2015 and 2025

O papel do engajamento das partes interessadas na promoção e no desenvolvimento do turismo: uma revisão sistemática da literatura entre 2015 e 2025

El papel de la participación de las partes interesadas en la promoción y el desarrollo del turismo: una revisión sistemática de la literatura entre 2015 y 2025

Anderson Antônio de Lima[1], Marcos Antônio Maia Lávio de Oliveira[1], Lupércio Aparecido Rizzo[2]

[1]São Paulo College of Technology (FATEC), São Paulo, SP, Brazil.
[2]Senac University Center (SENAC), São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

Keywords:

Tourism;
Stakeholders Engagement;
Sustainable Development;
Governance;
Social Transformation.

Abstract

This systematic review examines the evolution of stakeholder engagement in tourism development between 2015-2025, analyzing 94 articles from 42 countries using the PRISMA protocol (Page *et al.*, 2021). The research identifies five critical gaps in the literature: theoretical fragmentation, Global North epistemological bias, inadequacy of adaptive approaches, absence of transformative impact assessments, and disconnection between digital transformation and democratic participation. The analysis reveals six main thematic categories: governance and public policies (29.8%), sustainability and social responsibility (26.6%), crisis management and resilience (18.1%), technology and digital innovation (14.9%), community development (6.4%), and engagement strategies (4.3%). The results document a paradigmatic transformation from consultative approaches to collaborative co-governance models, with growing integration of digital technologies and social justice principles. Three emerging paradigms converge: systemic transformation, epistemic justice, and socioecological regeneration. As its main original contribution, this study proposes the TRANSFORM-T model, an integrative framework developed by the authors from the thematic synthesis of the reviewed corpus. The model articulates eight interdependent dimensions of transformative stakeholder engagement: Accountability, Responsibility, Networking, Sustainability, Organization, Resilience and Adaptability, Empowerment and Capacity-building, and Technology. The study offers theoretical contributions by synthesizing fragmented literature into a coherent framework, significant managerial implications through actionable implementation guidelines, and a comprehensive research agenda identifying five critical priority areas for future investigation.

Palavras-chave:

Turismo;
Engajamento das partes interessadas;
Desenvolvimento sustentável;
Governança;
Transformação social.

Resumo

Esta revisão sistemática examina a evolução do engajamento das partes interessadas no desenvolvimento do turismo entre 2015 e 2025, analisando 94 artigos de 42 países por meio do protocolo PRISMA (Page *et al.*, 2021). A pesquisa identifica cinco lacunas críticas na literatura: fragmentação teórica, viés epistemológico do Norte Global, inadequação de abordagens adaptativas, ausência de avaliações de impacto transformador e desconexão entre transformação digital e participação democrática.A análise revela seis categorias temáticas principais: governança e políticas públicas (29,8%), sustentabilidade e responsabilidade social (26,6%), gestão de crises e resiliência (18,1%), tecnologia e inovação digital (14,9%), desenvolvimento comunitário (6,4%) e estratégias de engajamento (4,3%). Os resultados documentam uma transformação paradigmática, passando de abordagens consultivas para modelos de cogovernança colaborativa, com uma integração crescente de tecnologias digitais e princípios de justiça social. Três paradigmas emergentes convergem: transformação sistêmica, justiça epistêmica e regeneração socioecológica. Como sua principal contribuição

original, este estudo propõe o modelo TRANSFORM-T, uma estrutura integrativa desenvolvida pelos autores a partir da síntese temática do corpus analisado. O modelo articula oito dimensões interdependentes do engajamento transformador das partes interessadas: prestação de contas (accountability), responsabilidade, formação de redes, sustentabilidade, organização, resiliência e adaptabilidade, empoderamento e capacitação, e tecnologia. O estudo oferece contribuições teóricas ao sintetizar uma literatura fragmentada em uma estrutura coerente, implicações gerenciais significativas por meio de diretrizes de implementação práticas, e uma agenda de pesquisa abrangente que identifica cinco áreas prioritárias críticas para investigações futuras.

Palabras clave:

Turismo;
Participación de las partes interesadas;
Desarrollo sostenible;
Gobernanza;
Transformación social.

Resumen

Esta revisión sistemática examina la evolución de la participación de las partes interesadas en el desarrollo turístico entre 2015 y 2025, analizando 94 artículos de 42 países mediante el protocolo PRISMA (Page *et al.*, 2021). La investigación identifica cinco brechas críticas en la literatura: fragmentación teórica, sesgo epistemológico a favor del Norte Global, insuficiencia de enfoques adaptativos, ausencia de evaluaciones de impacto transformador y una desconexión entre la transformación digital y la participación democrática. El análisis revela seis categorías temáticas principales: gobernanza y políticas públicas (29,8 %), sostenibilidad y responsabilidad social (26,6 %), gestión de crisis y resiliencia (18,1 %), tecnología e innovación digital (14,9 %), desarrollo comunitario (6,4 %) y estrategias de participación (4,3 %). Los resultados documentan una transformación paradigmática: el paso de enfoques consultivos a modelos de cogobernanza colaborativa, con una creciente integración de tecnologías digitales y principios de justicia social. Convergen tres paradigmas emergentes: la transformación sistémica, la justicia epistémica y la regeneración socioecológica. Como principal contribución original, este estudio propone el modelo TRANSFORM-T, un marco integrador desarrollado por los autores a partir de la síntesis temática del corpus analizado. El modelo articula ocho dimensiones interdependientes de la participación transformadora de las partes interesadas: rendición de cuentas, responsabilidad, creación de redes, sostenibilidad, organización, resiliencia y adaptabilidad, empoderamiento y desarrollo de capacidades, y tecnología. El estudio aporta contribuciones teóricas al sintetizar una literatura fragmentada en un marco coherente; ofrece implicaciones de gestión significativas mediante directrices de implementación prácticas; y plantea una agenda de investigación integral que identifica cinco áreas prioritarias críticas para futuros estudios.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector emerges as one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, contributing significantly to global economic development and representing approximately 10% of global employment. This multidimensional complexity of tourism demands an integrated approach that recognizes the diversity of actors involved and their respective needs, expectations, and power relations. The systemic nature of tourism activity, characterized by interdependencies between multiple sectors, geographical and temporal scales, makes collaborative engagement between stakeholders not only desirable but fundamental for the viability and sustainability of tourism development (Sharpley, 2018).

The concept of stakeholder, since its original conceptualization, has found growing application in the tourism context, where multiple interest groups interact in a complex system of interdependent relationships characterized by power asymmetries, conflicts of interest, and potential synergies. Contemporary literature demonstrates that effective stakeholder engagement constitutes a fundamental element for the success of tourism initiatives, especially in contexts of sustainability, crisis management, and digital transformation. This relevance became even more evident in the face of multifaceted challenges that emerged in recent decades (Reed *et al.*, 2022).

The contemporary context has exponentially amplified the importance of collaborative stakeholder engagement in tourism. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed systemic vulnerabilities and critical dependencies, while growing challenges related to climate change, persistent social inequalities, overtourism, and accelerated technological transformations made collaboration between stakeholders a sine qua non condition for recovery and resilient development of the sector (Zenker & Kock, 2020). Simultaneously, the emergence of new paradigms such as regenerative tourism, tourism justice, and decolonization questions traditional development models and demands fundamental reconfiguration of relationships between stakeholders.

Although stakeholder engagement is recognized as crucial for sustainable tourism development, academic literature presents critical fragmentation and gaps that significantly limit theoretical and practical advancement in the field. This fragmentation manifests in multiple dimensions and compromises the ability to understand, evaluate, and improve stakeholder engagement processes in contemporary tourism. The first critical gap refers to the absence of integrated conceptual systematization, where existing studies approach engagement in a fragmented and

isolated way, focusing on specific aspects such as community participation, crisis management, or destination governance, but lack a systemic vision that articulates these dimensions in a theoretically grounded framework (Reed *et al.*, 2022).

The second critical gap manifests in problematic geographical and epistemological concentration, where literature presents systematic bias toward Global North contexts, particularly Europe and North America, with limited representation of Global South realities. This disparity not only compromises the universal applicability of findings but perpetuates colonial knowledge dependencies and neglects specific dynamics of developing countries, where tourism frequently assumes a central role in economic development strategies and where engagement processes face unique challenges related to limited resources, power asymmetries, and colonial legacies (Santos, 2007). The third critical gap emerges from temporal and methodological inadequacy, where the accelerated transformation of the post-pandemic tourism sector, combined with growing digitalization and the emergence of social justice movements, created new challenges that have not been adequately systematized in the literature.

Given these critical gaps, fundamental research questions emerge that guide this investigation: How has stakeholder engagement in contemporary tourism development evolved and what paradigmatic transformations characterize this field of knowledge? Specifically, it seeks to understand what patterns and trends characterize scientific production on stakeholder engagement in tourism, which theories and conceptual frameworks predominate in contemporary literature, which contextual factors and strategies demonstrate effectiveness in promoting authentic collaboration, how different emerging paradigms are reconfiguring engagement practices, and what integrative conceptual model can articulate the multiple dimensions of engagement to guide future research and transformative practices.

This study has as its general objective to conduct a systematic literature review on stakeholder engagement in tourism development, focusing on scientific production from the period 2015-2025, aiming to systematize fragmented knowledge, identify emerging paradigmatic transformations, and develop an integrative conceptual framework to guide future research and transformative practices. Specifically, it seeks to map and characterize scientific production by identifying geographical, temporal, and thematic distributions, identify and critically analyze the main themes and theories present in the literature, examine emerging paradigmatic transformations relating them to contemporary challenges, develop an integrative conceptual framework that articulates the multiple dimensions of engagement, and identify critical gaps to formulate a specific agenda for future research.

To make the proposed contribution explicit from the outset, this study advances the TRANSFORM-T framework, an analytical structure organized around eight interdependent dimensions of stakeholder engagement. Unlike traditional tourism development models, which tend to treat participation as a sequence of consultative stages and to address governance, sustainability, and technology as separate domains, the framework treats these dimensions as mutually constitutive elements of a single adaptive system.

The dimensions span transparency and accountability, shared responsibility and equity, adaptability and resilience, relational networking, sustainability across environmental, social, economic, and cultural domains, capacity training, organizational structure, participatory monitoring, empowerment through power redistribution, and the inclusive use of technology. By anticipating these pillars here, the article clarifies that its purpose is not only to map existing gaps but also to offer an integrative structure capable of articulating them.

From a social and environmental perspective, the research contributes to the advancement of more just, inclusive, and sustainable practices in tourism, promoting development models that prioritize community well-being and environmental conservation. The temporal relevance of this research is particularly significant, considering the accelerated structural transformations in the tourism sector resulting from convergent factors such as climate change, digital revolution, and the emergence of new development paradigms, making understanding how different stakeholders can collaborate effectively a strategic priority for resilient recovery and regenerative development of global tourism.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Fundamentals and evolution of stakeholder theory in tourism

Stakeholder theory in tourism has evolved from instrumental applications focused on relationship management to transformative approaches that question power structures and promote social justice. The conceptual foundations were established by defining stakeholders as groups that affect or are affected by organizations, subsequently

refined through the attributes of power, legitimacy, and urgency (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997). The intellectual origin of the field is usually traced to Freeman (1984), who defined a stakeholder as any group or individual that can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organization's objectives, a formulation that grounds the later refinements applied to tourism.

Pioneer applications in tourism focused primarily on stakeholder identification and management for sustainable development (Sautter & Leisen, 1999; Byrd, 2007). Contemporary literature transcends managerialist perspectives to incorporate critical theories of power, justice, and social transformation, reflecting recognition that authentic engagement requires power redistribution rather than merely symbolic consultation (Bramwell & Lane, 2011).

Recent developments significantly expand the traditional stakeholder concept. Digital transformation created hybrid stakeholders that operate simultaneously in physical and digital spaces, requiring new engagement frameworks (Buhalis *et al.*, 2019). Climate change positioned future generations as critical stakeholders, even without direct voice in current decision-making processes. The concept expanded to include non-human stakeholders, such as ecosystems and biodiversity, arguing for the need for representation through guardians or legal advocates.

2.2 Regenerative tourism and epistemic justice

The regenerative tourism paradigm emerged as a response to the limitations of sustainable tourism, transcending defensive approaches to promote active regeneration of socioecological systems. This paradigm conceptualizes practices that enable communities to develop ways of thinking and building capacity to incorporate tourism processes that defend human and non-human health and well-being (Ateljevic, 2020).

The concept of tourism justice gained academic and practical prominence, positioning equity, decolonization, and community self-determination as central imperatives (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). A just tourism transformation framework integrates equitable distribution of benefits, recognition of cultural diversities, and substantive participation in decision-making processes. This perspective challenges persistent colonial structures and promotes alternative epistemologies based on indigenous and traditional knowledge.

Decolonization in tourism means deliberate dismantling of exploitative power dynamics through reparation of damages caused by extractive tourism development (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Regenerative tourism must assume fundamental responsibility with indigenous places, transcending superficial harmony to address historical and contemporary injustices. Systematic epistemicide marginalized Global South knowledge in tourism literature, perpetuating conceptual dependence on the Global North (Santos, 2007).

Addressing this epistemic asymmetry requires engaging directly with scholarship produced in the Global South. In the Brazilian context, a consolidated body of work on community-based tourism (Turismo de Base Comunitária) has examined how local communities organize participation, governance, and benefit sharing under conditions of marked power asymmetry (Bartholo *et al.,* 2009).

Studies set in the Brazilian Northeast and in conservation territories show that community tourism can strengthen self-determination and territorial identity, while also exposing the limits of externally driven models (Coriolano, 2009; Ferreira, 2014).

This literature questions whether participation actually translates into effective decision-making power, a concern that resonates with broader critical assessments of community-based tourism that caution against assuming that local involvement is inherently empowering (Blackstock, 2005; Irving, 2009). Incorporating these contributions counterbalances the Global North concentration identified in this review and grounds the discussion of stakeholder engagement in realities where tourism is closely tied to development and social inclusion agendas.

2.3 Digital transformation and algorithmic governance

Intensified post-pandemic digitalization fundamentally transformed stakeholder engagement modalities, creating unprecedented possibilities and new challenges of exclusion and control. Digital platforms facilitate participation of geographically dispersed and traditionally marginalized stakeholders, but also introduce algorithmic biases that can amplify existing inequalities (Gretzel *et al.*, 2015).

Generative artificial intelligence is reinventing tourism business models and stakeholder engagement processes. The growing use of algorithmic approaches to analyze tourism data and extract insights for collaborative decision-making requires robust frameworks for digital governance and algorithmic justice (Ivanov & Webster, 2019).

Digital inclusion paradoxes reveal that while technologies democratize access to participation, they simultaneously create new forms of exclusion based on digital literacy, technological access, and algorithmic biases. Algorithms are not neutral, incorporating values and prejudices of their developers, with significant implications for representativeness and equity in stakeholder engagement (Noble, 2018).

Public and private entities must collaborate to develop ethical standards that ensure responsible use of big data in tourism, including algorithmic transparency, informed consent, and democratic accountability. Digitalization will continue driving more continuous and high-quality experiences, contributing to Sustainable Development Goals, but it requires inclusive and participatory governance (Mittelstadt *et al.*, 2016).

2.4 Collaborative governance and co-creation

Collaborative governance frameworks have evolved significantly to respond to growing complexities of contemporary tourism development. Polycentric governance structures, characterized by multiple centers of authority and distributed decision-making processes, show greater adaptive capacity and democratic legitimacy compared to traditional hierarchical models (Ostrom, 2010; Bramwell & Lane, 2011).

Destinations with collaborative innovation ecosystems demonstrated greater resilience during the pandemic, characterized by inclusive governance structures, multidirectional communication platforms, transparent decision-making processes, feedback and learning mechanisms, and distributed leadership among multiple stakeholders (Hall *et al.*, 2020).

The concept of adaptive co-management in tourism integrates principles of adaptive management with co-management processes between stakeholders. This approach emphasizes continuous learning, controlled experimentation, and incremental adjustments based on feedback from multiple perspectives (Armitage *et al.*, 2009).

A typology of stakeholder engagement models identifies four archetypes: consultative (stakeholders inform decisions), collaborative (stakeholders participate in decisions), co-management (stakeholders share decision-making authority), and empowerment (stakeholders control decisions and resources). Transition between archetypes requires significant structural transformations in power relations and resource distribution.

2.5 Transformative resilience and collaborative adaptation

Literature on socioecological resilience offers crucial insights for transformative engagement in the face of accelerated environmental and social changes. The concept has evolved from basic resilience (ability to return to original state post-disturbance) to adaptive resilience (ability to adjust while maintaining functionality) and transformative resilience (ability to transform fundamental structures) (Folke *et al.*, 2010).

Deliberate transformation is conceptualized as an intentional process of systemic change that transcends incremental adaptation, requiring fundamental alterations in values, governance structures, and power relations. In the tourism context, this implies redesigning development models, redistributing benefits, and recognizing multiple forms of knowledge (O'Brien, 2012).

Seven principles for building socioecological resilience applicable to tourism were refined: maintain diversity and redundancy of stakeholders and strategies, manage connectivity between scales and sectors, manage slow variables that influence long-term transformations, foster complex adaptive systems thinking, encourage experimental learning, expand genuine participation, and promote polycentric governance (Biggs *et al.*, 2015).

The panarchy concept was introduced to understand interconnected adaptive cycles at multiple temporal and spatial scales. In tourism, this implies recognizing that local transformations are embedded in regional, national, and global dynamics, requiring multi-scalar engagement strategies (Gunderson & Holling, 2002).

Taken together, these strands do not form a settled consensus but rather a field marked by unresolved tensions. Instrumental readings of stakeholder theory, focused on identifying and managing actors to secure organizational objectives, sit uneasily alongside critical and decolonial perspectives that treat engagement as a matter of power redistribution and epistemic justice. Likewise, the promise of digital platforms to widen participation stands in tension with evidence that algorithmic mediation can reproduce exclusion.

Resilience thinking adds further tension, since the same vocabulary is used both to defend the continuity of existing arrangements and to justify their transformation. Reading the literature through these tensions, rather than as a

cumulative progression, clarifies why the field remains fragmented and why an integrative framework must hold competing logics together instead of resolving them prematurely.

3 METHODS

This study adopts a systematic literature review following the PRISMA protocol (Page *et al.*, 2021) adapted for systemic transformation contexts. The temporal period (2015-2025) allows analysis of complete transformations, capturing pre-pandemic foundations (2015-2019), disruption period (2020-2021), and transformative emergence (2022-2025).

A systematic literature review constitutes a rigorous and transparent research methodology that seeks to identify, evaluate, and synthesize all relevant empirical evidence on a specific research question, following a pre-established protocol and explicit criteria to minimize biases and maximize reliability (Higgins *et al.*, 2019; Page *et al.*, 2021). Unlike traditional narrative reviews, systematic reviews employ systematic and explicit methods to search, select, and critically evaluate studies, offering comprehensive and impartial synthesis of available knowledge.

The PRISMA model was developed as an extension and refinement of the QUOROM statement (Quality of Reporting of Meta-analyses) to improve the quality of reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Moher *et al.*, 2009). The PRISMA 2020 version, published by Page *et al.* (2021), represents a update that reflects methodological advances and expands applicability to various types of systematic reviews.

The theoretical foundation for selection procedures following the PRISMA protocol is based on the need for transparency and methodological rigor in systematic reviews, especially in interdisciplinary fields such as tourism. The PRISMA 2020 protocol (Page *et al.*, 2021) represents significant evolution in the standardization of systematic reviews, emphasizing the importance of structured processes that minimize selection biases and maximize the quality of included studies. In the context of stakeholder engagement in tourism, this approach is particularly relevant due to the epistemological and methodological diversity of the field, which can result in conceptual fragmentation if not adequately systematized.

3.1 Search strategy and databases

Nine databases were selected for their comprehensive coverage: Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SAGE Journals, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis Online, SpringerLink, JSTOR, and ProQuest Academic.

To ensure auditability, the search was executed in the title, abstract, and keywords fields of each database, using the field tags appropriate to each platform (for example, TITLE-ABS-KEY in Scopus and the Topic field, TS, in Web of Science). Boolean operators and truncation were adapted to the syntax of each interface while preserving the same conceptual structure. As a representative example, the query executed in Scopus combined the two term blocks as follows: TITLE-ABS-KEY (("stakeholder engagement" OR "stakeholder participation" OR "stakeholder involvement" OR "stakeholder collaboration" OR multi-stakeholder) AND ("tourism development" OR "tourism planning" OR "destination management" OR "sustainable tourism" OR "tourism governance" OR "tourism transformation")), with the date filter restricted to the period from 2015 to 2025. The block of emerging terms was run as a complementary search and merged with the main results before duplicate removal. The complete set of strings applied to each of the nine databases is provided as supplementary material.

Inclusion Criteria: Peer-reviewed articles published between January 2015 and January 2025; Central or significant focus on stakeholder engagement in tourism; Languages: English, Portuguese, Spanish, French; Full-text availability; Substantial empirical or theoretical contribution; Score ≥30/50 on quality scale. Exclusion Criteria: Only tangential focus on stakeholders or tourism; Absence of empirical data or limited theoretical contribution; Methodological or conceptual duplication; Inadequate methodological quality; Grey literature, dissertations, technical reports. Because the search window runs from January 2015 to January 2025, the corpus covers a ten-year span whose final year is represented only partially; this is reflected in the temporal analysis and in the wording of the study's coverage. Each of the 94 included studies is individually identified in the corresponding table, which reports authorship, year, context, methodological approach, database of retrieval, thematic category, and quality score, so that the composition of the corpus can be audited in full.

The methodological quality of the eligible studies was assessed with a 50-point scale organized into five dimensions, each worth up to 10 points: theoretical framework, methodological design, analytical consistency, contribution to the field, and clarity of presentation. Within each dimension, scores were assigned according to defined bands,

where 0 to 3 indicated weak or absent treatment, 4 to 7 indicated adequate treatment, and 8 to 10 indicated strong and well-justified treatment. Studies reaching at least 30 points were retained, which corresponds to consistent performance across the five dimensions rather than excellence in a single criterion.

The instrument was adapted by the authors from established quality-appraisal criteria for mixed-method evidence syntheses, and was applied uniformly to conceptual, empirical, and review studies by scoring each dimension against the same bands, so that designs of different natures were judged on the adequacy of their reporting rather than on a single preferred method. The complete instrument, with the descriptors of each item within the five dimensions and the per-study scores by dimension, is provided as Supplementary Material and is also reported in the table of the 94 included studies.

The final sample scored between 30 and 48 points, with a mean of 37.4, indicating a body of work of solid but uneven quality. Applying explicit bands to each dimension reduced subjectivity in scoring and made the selection threshold reproducible.

Title and abstract screening was conducted independently by two reviewers. Disagreements about inclusion were first discussed between the two reviewers, and cases that remained unresolved were referred to a third reviewer, whose decision was final. Agreement between the two reviewers at the screening stage reached 87 percent, and reporting this measure documents the consistency of the selection process and complements the transparency provided by the PRISMA flow.

This value is a simple percentage agreement, calculated as the number of records for which both reviewers reached the same inclusion decision divided by the total number of records screened at the title and abstract stage; it is not a chance-corrected coefficient, which is acknowledged as a limitation. The quality appraisal itself was likewise conducted independently by the two reviewers, and divergences in dimension scores were resolved by discussion and, when necessary, by the third reviewer, following the same protocol used at screening.

The analysis of article distribution by database reveals important patterns about the academic geography of knowledge in stakeholder engagement in tourism. The predominance of Scopus and Web of Science as primary sources (45.7% of the combined sample) reflects not only the comprehensive coverage of these databases but also systematic biases in the production and indexing of academic knowledge. This concentration in Global North databases may perpetuate what Santos (2007) calls epistemicide, marginalizing knowledge produced in Global South contexts.

Literature on the geopolitics of knowledge highlights that the hegemony of Anglo-Saxon databases significantly influences which theoretical and methodological perspectives gain international visibility (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). In the tourism field, this is particularly problematic, considering that many innovations in stakeholder engagement emerge from non-Western contexts, especially in countries where community tourism and participatory practices have deep cultural roots. Table 1 presents the detailed PRISMA protocol procedures applied in this systematic review.

When a study was retrieved from more than one database, it was counted only once and attributed, after duplicate removal, to the first database in which it was identified, following the search order Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and the remaining sources. The complete search strings executed in each of the nine databases, with the fields searched and the syntax adaptations required by each platform, are provided as Supplementary Material; the manuscript reports the Scopus strategy as a worked example.

Table 1 - PRISMA protocol application and selection process

PRISMA Phase	Criteria	Results (n)	Process Description
Identification	Database search across 9 sources using primary and emerging search terms	1,847	Initial search conducted January 2025 covering publications 2015-2025
Screening	Duplicate removal, title/abstract screening against inclusion criteria	1,203	644 duplicates removed; independent dual screening by two reviewers
Eligibility	Full-text review for substantive focus, methodological quality, contribution significance	312	891 excluded: tangential focus (456), insufficient data (289), language (146)
Quality Assessment	50-point scale evaluating theoretical framework, methods, analysis, contribution, presentation	94	218 excluded with score <30; final sample scored 30-48 points (mean=37.4)
Final Inclusion	Articles meeting all criteria with quality score ≥30 points	94	Final sample representing 42 countries, 6 thematic categories

Source: Authors (2026).

Finally, the 94 articles selected to compose the sample of this systematic literature review are presented in table 2. It should be noted that due to the inclusion of nine databases and the rigorous article selection process, the selected articles have adherence to the proposed objectives to support this research. The table presents the number of articles collected from each of the nine databases.

Table 2 - Final sample of research (continue)

ID	Authors	Year	Title	Research Question / Focus
S01	Azwar, H., Hanafiah, M. H., Zahari, M. S. M., Gani, A., & Ferdian, F.	2025	Does Penta-Helix Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration Serve as a Sustainable Development Strategy for Community-Based Tourism (CBT)?: A Qualitative Inquiry of Agam Regency, Indonesia	This qualitative investigation explores community-based tourism (CBT) through the lens of the Penta-Helix multi-stakeholder collaboration model, examining its effectiveness, outcomes, limitations, and future strategic directions.
S02	Samal, R., & Dash, M.	2024	Stakeholder engagement in advancing sustainable ecotourism: an exploratory case study of Chilika Wetland	This study aims to comprehensively analyze the multifaceted impacts of ecotourism on local communities, with due consideration given to its environmental, social, and economic dimensions.
S03	Franzén, R., Edelman, K., Gonzalez, O. D., & Lemmetyinen, A.	2024	Navigating sustainability: Enhancing coastal and marine tourism through green skills, co-creation, and multi-stakeholder engagement	Purpose-Coastal and marine tourism, consolidated by national and local governments' aspirations to improve the vitality of the economy by developing the tourism sector, is considered one of the key contributors to the EU's blue growth.
S04	Hendrayani, Y., Zen, I. S., Uljanatunnisa, & Maryam, S.	2025	Nglanggeran Village: A Model for Sustainable Tourism Through Multi-Stakeholder Engagement and Corporate Social Responsibility	This study provides a promising model for local and international rural communities, demonstrating how strategic CSR initiatives and collaborative approaches favor sustainable tourism in villages via multi-stakeholder collaboration, involving private sectors, local governments, academia, and communities.
S05	Thees, H., Pechlaner, H., Olbrich, N., & Schuhbert, A.	2020	The Living Lab as a Tool to Promote Residents' Participation in Destination Governance	This article tackles the research gap that exists in the combination of the LL mechanisms and destination governance (DG).
S06	Salman, A., Jaafar, M., Mohamad, D., & Khoshkam, M.	2023	Understanding Multi-stakeholder Complexity & Developing a Causal Recipe (fsQCA) for achieving Sustainable Ecotourism	This study focused on the multiple stakeholders' complexity and management for achieving sustainable ecotourism in Penang Hill in Malaysia.
S07	Wang, Z. Y.	2021	Diversified collaborative governance of global travel ecological environment based on stakeholder theory	Based on this, this paper explores its value orientation and explains the motivation of ecological environmental governance.
S08	Spadaro, I., Pirlone, F., Bruno, F., Saba, G., Poggio, B., & Bruzzone, S.	2023	Stakeholder Participation in Planning of a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism Destination: The Genoa Integrated Action Plan	This paper disseminates the research that led to the structuring of guidelines for a breakthrough and inclusive municipal-level action plan for the promotion of sustainable tourism, as part of the Tourism Friendly Cities project.
S09	Gracan, D., Zadel, Z., & Pavlovic, D.	2018	The Stakeholders of Nautical Tourism Process in Destination Network: Topological Positions and Management Participation	In this respect, it was important to investigate their topological position in relation to other destination stakeholders in order to assess the potential of their common influence on the central actors of destination management, i.e., key destination decision making.
S10	Salman, A., Jaafar, M., Mohamad, D., Khoshkam, M., Rahim, R. A., & Nor, S. A. M.	2024	Stakeholder management for sustainable ecotourism destinations: a case of Penang Hill Malaysia	Hence, the primary aim of this study was to examine the perspectives of key stakeholders with regards to the sustainability of ecotourism and the management of stakeholders.
S11	Bichler, B. F., & Lösch, M.	2019	Collaborative Governance in Tourism: Empirical Insights into a Community-Oriented Destination	The objectives of this paper are to determine the drivers and barriers of CG in a community-oriented destination in South Tyrol (Italy).
S12	Tham, A.	2018	Sand, surgery and stakeholders: A multi-stakeholder involvement model of domestic medical tourism for Australia's Sunshine Coast	This paper explores the developments of domestic medical tourism for Australia's Sunshine Coast.
S13	Hoang, L. C., & Nguyen, D. H.	2025	Bridging the nexus between sustainable destination gestalt and tourists' value co-creation with the site: an analysis in a collectivism-oriented nation	Purpose With limited empirical research on sustainable destination branding and tourists' active participation in sustainability initiatives, this study aims to fill this gap by examining whether and how sustainable destination gestalt influences tourists' value co-creation.

Table 2 - Final sample of research (continue)

ID	Authors	Year	Title	Research Question / Focus
S14	Shrestha, R. K., & Decosta, J. N. P. L.	2025	A Socio-Cognitive Approach to Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for Indigenous Tourism Development: The Case of Nepal's Newars	This research examines the underlying attitudes, beliefs and values that shape structural and functional interactions in collaboration for Indigenous tourism development.
S15	Kumari, V., Tiwari, R., & Jamgade, S.	2025	Tourism on Two Wheels: Stakeholder Engagement and Destination Development in Bicycle Tourism	Using a constructivist grounded theory approach, this study investigated the themes influencing the attitudes, perceptions, and willingness of tourists and service providers, and developed a conceptual model, illustrating how these stakeholders co-create a bicycle tourism destination.
S16	Sobhani, P., Esmaeilzadeh, H., Sadeghi, S. M. M., Wolf, I. D., & Deljouei, A.	2022	Relationship Analysis of Local Community Participation in Sustainable Ecotourism Development in Protected Areas, Iran	Hence, this study investigates local community participation in Lar National Park (LNP) and the Jajrud Protected Area with the Sustainable Use of Natural Resource Areas (JPA) in Iran and evaluates how this influences the sustainability of ecotourism.
S17	Mandic, A., & Kennell, J.	2021	Smart governance for heritage tourism destinations: Contextual factors and destination management organization perspectives	Smart tourism advocates claim that technologically-driven innovations can help DMOs to optimise tourism development by addressing issues such as carrying capacity, stakeholder management and community involvement.
S18	Roxas, F. M. Y., Rivera, J. P. R., & Gutierrez, E. L. M.	2020	Mapping stakeholders' roles in governing sustainable tourism destinations	Addressing concerns on sustainability, environmental conservation, and local community involvement has become increasingly challenging.
S19	Pornprasit, P., & Rurkkhum, S.	2019	Performance evaluation of community-based ecotourism: a case study in Satun province, Thailand	The objective of the study reported in this paper was to assess the performance of community-based ecotourism (CBET) management at tourist destinations in Thailand.
S20	Islam, M. W., Ruhanen, L., & Ritchie, B. W.	2018	Adaptive co-management: A novel approach to tourism destination governance?	This review paper presents a critical review and synthesis of the ACM literature, identifying synergies and opportunities for enhancing tourism governance practices in protected area contexts through an ACM approach.
S21	Suryawan, I. W. K., Suhardono, S., Gunawan, V. D., Lee, C. H., Nguyen, V., & Rahman, A.	2025	Factors Influencing Community Segmentation and Participation in Ecotourism of Bali Barat National Park	This study provides an in-depth analysis of the factors influencing local community segmentation and participation in ecotourism initiatives within Bali Barat National Park, a protected area.
S22	Miocic, B. K., Razovic, M., & Klarin, T.	2016	Management of sustainable tourism destination through stakeholder cooperation	Destination presents a set of different organizations and individuals who can work towards realising the same objectives or their objectives can be diametrically opposed.
S23	Dong, X. D., & Nguyen, T. Q. T.	2023	Power, community involvement, and sustainability of tourism destinations	This paper reports a qualitative case study to explore power relations between stakeholders concerning the sustainability of tourism destinations.
S24	Kantsperger, M., Thees, H., & Eckert, C.	2019	Local Participation in Tourism Development-Roles of Non-Tourism Related Residents of the Alpine Destination Bad Reichenhall	This study applies an adapted approach of the traditional view on local participation in tourism development.
S25	Hatipoglu, B., Alvarez, M. D., & Ertuna, B.	2016	Barriers to stakeholder involvement in the planning of sustainable tourism: the case of the Thrace region in Turkey	This study aims to identify the barriers to stakeholder involvement during the planning process of sustainable tourism development of the Thrace region in Turkey.
S26	Xu, J., Shi, P. H., & Chen, X.	2025	Exploring digital innovation in smart tourism destinations: insights from 31 premier tourist cities in digital China	Purpose This study aims to unveil the pivotal components and implementation pathways in the digital innovation of smart tourism destinations, while constructing a theoretical framework from a holistic perspective
S27	Nguyen, H. V., Diane, L., & Newsome, D.	2020	Kinh and ethnic tourism stakeholder participation and collaboration in tourism planning in Sapa, Vietnam	Purpose - This paper aims to explore the Kinh and ethnic stakeholders' participation and collaboration in tourism planning in Sapa, Vietnam.
S28	Shang, F., Goh, H. C., & Masud, M. M.	2025	Stakeholder perceptions of tourism's impacts on the ecological environment of island destinations based on a systematic review and meta-analysis	This study intends to update and synthesize knowledge through a systematic review and meta-analysis on stakeholders' perceived ecological impacts of island tourism.

Table 2 - Final sample of research (continue)

ID	Authors	Year	Title	Research Question / Focus
S29	Romero, A. V., Durán-Román, J. L., Rio, J. A. J. D., & Collado-González, J. C.	2025	Business management of sustainable destinations and its effect on ecotourism entrepreneurship to mitigate overtourism	The study examines the three pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) and their impact on entrepreneurial efforts within the tourism sector.
S30	Mandic, A., Séraphin, H., & Vukovic, M.	2024	Engaging stakeholders in cultural tourism Living Labs: A pathway to innovation, sustainability, and resilience	This study explores the motivations and benefits driving stakeholder engagement in Living Labs (LLs) for sustainable cultural tourism, with a focus on a case study in Split, Croatia.
S31	Wikantiyoso, R., Cahyaningsih, D. S., Sulaksono, A. G., Widayati, S., Poerwoningsih, D., & Triyosoputri, E.	2021	Development of Sustainable Community-Based Tourism in Kampong Grangsil, Jambangan Village, Dampit District, Malang Regency	This discussion aims to find a sustainable community-based development model through a multi-stakeholder participatory approach.
S32	Gajic, T., Vukolic, D., Spasojevic, A., Blesic, I., Petrovic, M. D., Bugarcic, J., Bugarcic, M., Draskovic, B. D., & Milivojevic, M.	2025	Exploring Attitudes on the Sustainable Balance Between Nature Conservation and Economic Development Through Ecotourism-Lessons from EU and Non-EU Countries	This study examines attitudes toward achieving a sustainable balance in ecotourism using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, focusing on economic and environmental factors shaping sustainable practices.
S33	Rivera, J. P. R., Gutierrez, E. L. M., & Roxas, F. M. Y.	2024	Re-thinking Governance in Tourism: Harnessing Tourism's post-COVID-19 Economic Potential	Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, tourism stakeholders were actively addressing sustainability, environmental conservation, and local community involvement challenges.
S34	Lukoseviciute, G., Henriques, C. N., Pereira, L. N., & Panagopoulos, T.	2024	Participatory development and management of eco-cultural trails in sustainable tourism destinations	This research aims to provide a sustainable strategy for developing ecocultural trails, applying a qualitative approach and stakeholder participation.
S35	Ngo, T., Lohmann, G., & Hales, R.	2018	Collaborative marketing for the sustainable development of community-based tourism enterprises: voices from the field	This paper examines stakeholder engagement in the collaborative marketing of community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs).
S36	Pham, K., Andereck, K. L., & Vogt, C. A.	2025	Stakeholders' involvement in an evidence-based sustainable tourism plan	This study examines a sustainable tourism planning process focusing specifically on stakeholder involvement and the use of co-created evidence.
S37	Lapuz, M. C. M.	2023	The role of local community empowerment in the digital transformation of rural tourism development in the Philippines	This study contributes to the academic landscape on rural tourism development that determined specific factors of community empowerment essential in the digital transformation of tourism management processes.
S38	Seyedabolghasemi, M. A., Kilic, H., Avci, T., Eluwole, K. K., & Lasisi, T. T.	2022	Residents' Perceptions of Sustainable Tourism Destination Recovery: The Case of Northern Cyprus	The current study seeks to understand the perceptions of residents of Northern Cyprus as key tourism stakeholders concerning the impacts of COVID-19 to the island's tourism activities and recommendations for recovery post pandemic.
S39	Zhu, G. N., Li, X. D., & Zhang, Y. X.	2021	Multi-Stakeholder Involvement Mechanism in Tourism Management for Maintaining Terraced Landscape in Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (IAHS) Sites: A Case Study of Dazhai Village in Longji Terraces, China	Based on the statistical data and the data from household interviews, this study analyses the development history of Dazhai tourism.
S40	Deng, A. M., Lu, J. Y., & Zhao, Z. Y.	2021	Rural destination revitalization in China: applying evolutionary economic geography in tourism governance	Three cases in this study illustrate the importance of initial conditions and how stakeholder collaboration can mitigate these deficiencies.
S41	Feyers, S., Stein, T., & Klizentyte, K.	2020	Bridging Worlds: Utilizing a Multi-Stakeholder Framework to Create Extension-Tourism Partnerships	This paper addresses a study that examined what support tourism destinations in Florida need from the Cooperative Extension Service to better utilize natural areas as responsible tourism attractions to benefit the local community, economy, and biodiversity (i.e., ecotourism).
S42	McComb, E. J., Boyd, S., & Boluk, K.	2017	Stakeholder collaboration: A means to the success of rural tourism destinations? A critical evaluation of the existence of stakeholder collaboration within the Mournes, Northern Ireland	In fact, in the context of rural tourism destinations stakeholder collaboration can be particularly advantageous in addressing specific factors relevant to rural tourism destinations that may inhibit the success of the destination.

Table 2 - Final sample of research (continue)

ID	Authors	Year	Title	Research Question / Focus
S43	Buonincontri, P., Micera, R., & Papaluca, O.	2025	A technology-enabled framework for stakeholder engagement in a destination management system: Evidence from DMS Puglia	Despite the importance of this topic, tourism studies lack a univocal framework for destinations aiming to develop a destination management system (DMS) focused on empowering stakeholder engagement.
S44	Reggers, A., Grabowski, S., Wearing, S. L., Chatterton, P., & Schweinsberg, S.	2016	Exploring outcomes of community-based tourism on the Kokoda Track, Papua New Guinea: a longitudinal study of Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques	This paper examines the development and outcomes of CBT over a 10-year period since 2004.
S45	Dodds, R.	2025	Balancing Tourism Development and Sustainability: A Multi-Stakeholder Approach in Tofino over 15 Years	Therefore, the purpose of this research was to examine qualitative research spanning 15 years using a multi-stakeholder approach to understand impacts, issues, and solutions relating to tourism development in Tofino, Canada.
S46	Geremew, Y. M., & Kleynhans, C.	2025	Staycation as a Means of Synergising Resilience and Stakeholder Collaboration for Sustainable Tourism Development: A Roadmap for Crisis Management	This study investigates how staycations enhance the experiences of staycationers and foster stakeholder collaboration to promote sustainable tourism.
S47	Rodríguez-Herrera, I. M., Casado-Montilla, J., López-Molina, D., & Pulido-Fernández, J. I.	2025	Applying Stakeholder Theory and Social Network Analysis when studying the social capital of tourism destinations	This study integrates Stakeholder Theory and Social Network Analysis to evaluate and strengthen social capital in tourism destinations, focusing on P&D and thereby revealing a complex network of relationships characterised by moderate levels of trust.
S48	Romao, J., Palm, K., & Persson-Fischier, U.	2023	Open spaces for co-creation: a community-based approach to tourism product diversification	This study aims to contribute to this body of knowledge by assessing the potential of a participatory planning method centred on the strategic diversification of tourism products.
S49	Kiryluk, H., Glinska, E., Ryciuk, U., Vierikko, K., & Rollnik-Sadowska, E.	2021	Stakeholders engagement for solving mobility problems in touristic remote areas from the Baltic Sea Region	The aim of the paper is to fill this gap on example of project dedicated to six Baltic Sea Regions.
S50	Tse, S. W. T., & Tung, V. W. S.	2025	Advocating Sustainable Tourism in China: A Transitory, Top-Down Stakeholder Engagement Perspective	To address this gap, this study examines how Chinese Generation Z evaluates their government's efforts in driving community engagement toward sustainable tourism in China.
S51	Huang, C. K.	2025	Constructing sustainable CBT in a remote fishing village: university-community stakeholder collaboration	This study identifies four major collaboration gaps: first, Challenges in cross-domain integration and self-adjustment between the university's planning office and the main programme team; second, Lack of deep engagement experience between the university team and community residents; third, Insufficient community...
S52	Nguyen, T. Q. T., & Hoang, T. T. H.	2023	Stakeholder Involvement and the Attainment of SDGs at Local Tourism Destinations: A Case Study in Vietnam	This paper explores how the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be achieved at local tourism destinations through the collective efforts of stakeholders.
S53	Pröbstl-Haider, U., Lund-Durlacher, D., Antonschmidt, H., & Hödl, C.	2018	Mountain bike tourism in Austria and the Alpine region-towards a sustainable model for multi-stakeholder product development	This paper interrogates the polarized and heated discussions about mountain bike tourism in Austrian forests, with several organizations favoring permitting biking on all forest roads, using claimed tourism development opportunities, while other stakeholders including hikers, hunters and landowners wish to restrict...
S54	Park, E., Kim, Y., & Choi, H.	2024	Institutional approach for ecotourism collaboration between South Korea and Japan: exploration of criteria for ecotourism joint-certification	This study proposes a joint-certification standard that ensures high satisfaction and a desirable ecotourism foundation.

Table 2 - Final sample of research (continue)

ID	Authors	Year	Title	Research Question / Focus
S55	Phukamchanoad, P.	2025	The role of urban food street stakeholders in sustainable tourism: Case study of Bangkok, Thailand	This study aims to examine the role of stakeholders in managing urban food streets, develop an ecosystem framework for food street management, and explore stakeholder involvement in food street operations in Bangkok.
S56	Fadlurrahman, Nugraha, J. T., Mukti, A., Orbawati, E. B., Ikhtiara, S., & Amaliatulwalidain	2025	Strengthening community-based tourism through the 4P model: the selected coastal tourism case in Indonesia	This study examines partnership practices in the development of CBT at Pantai Panjang (Long Beach), Bengkulu Province, Indonesia, and evaluates its achievements to propose a Public-Private-People Partnership (4P) model.
S57	Dolezal, C., & Novelli, M.	2022	Power in community-based tourism: empowerment and partnership in Bali	Drawing upon SDG17 - Partnerships for the Goals - and specifically focusing on SDG17.9 - Capacity building, SDG17.14 - Enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development, and SDG17.16 and SDG17.17 - Multi-stakeholder partnerships, this paper investigates the social empowerment that results from interactions...
S58	Nigg, J. J., & Eichelberger, S.	2021	Sustainable Product Development for Accessible Tourism: Case Studies Demonstrating the Need for Stakeholder Collaboration	Therefore, this study examines product development for accessible tourism through four case studies that have developed and implemented products for people with disabilities in the past.
S59	Pérez-Pineda, F., Alcaraz, J. M., & Colón, C.	2017	Creating sustainable value in the hospitality industry: a (critical) multi-stakeholder study in the Dominican Republic	This paper identifies sustainable initiatives reported by sustainability-champion hotels in the Dominican Republic, while contrasting them against the views of key stakeholders.
S60	Mnguni, S., & Leonard, L.	2025	Reflexive water governance and efficiency in tourism hospitality operations in Dinokeng game reserve South Africa	This study explored reflexive water governance in the tourism and hospitality sectors through an in-depth case study of game lodges operating in and around the Dinokeng Game Reserve, Gauteng Province, South Africa.
S61	Khazaei, A., Elliot, S., & Joppe, M.	2017	Fringe stakeholder engagement in protected area tourism planning: inviting immigrants to the sustainability conversation	This qualitative study, conducted during the development of Canada's first National Urban Park, addresses this need by providing a deeper understanding of immigrants' engagement in planning.
S62	Kristjánsdóttir, K. R., Olafsdóttir, R., & Ragnarsdóttir, K. V.	2017	Stakeholder Participation in Developing Sustainability Indicators for a European Northern Periphery Tourism System	This study aims to develop and assess systemic sustainability indicators for tourism in Vatnajkull National Park (VNP), Iceland, and adjacent communities, based on public participation, and to discuss the usefulness of the approach in NP tourism.
S63	Blanco-Gregory, R., Sánchez, M. S. O., & Calleja-Aldana, M.	2025	The UNESCO Environmental Corridor of Extremadura: Tourism and Governance as Tools for Social Sustainability	This study focuses on the UNESCO Environmental Corridor of Extremadura, using data from the Tourism Observatory of Extremadura and visitor surveys to define its tourist scope.
S64	Hussain, Z., Kim, S., & King, B.	2025	Are we in the same boat? Multi-stakeholder perceptions of the impacts of domestic resort tourism and sustainability in a small island developing state	This study draws upon and extends stakeholder theory and collaboration theory by examining the current state and future viability of sustainable domestic resort tourism in the Maldives.
S65	Amri, I., Giyarsih, S. R., & Rus-lanjari, D.	2025	Enhancing tourism safety: an assessment of institutional preparedness for tsunami risk reduction in coastal destinations	This paper investigated the preparedness of tourism in the institutional landscape in facing the tsunami hazard in the coastal region of Bantul, Indonesia.
S66	Eckert, E.	2022	Reconciling Scientific, Political and Participatory Perspectives on Sustainable Tourist n Indicator Development for Destination Sustainability Assessment	Despite the development of approaches that address this debate, there has been little agreement on the broader methodological and conceptual foundations of STI development.
S67	Ozgit, H., & Zhandildina, D.	2021	Investigating stakeholder awareness of the sustainable development goals and tourism stakeholder collaboration: the case of North Cyprus	Purpose The aim of the study is to consider the extent to which the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) agreed by United Nations member states contribute to sustainable tourism and to relevant targets in North Cyprus.

vTable 2 - Final sample of research (continue)

ID	Authors	Year	Title	Research Question / Focus
S68	Saito, H., & Ruhanen, L.	2017	Power in tourism stakeholder collaborations: Power types and power holders	The purpose of this study was to identify and categorise the various types of power that influence stakeholder collaborations in tourism destination planning and management and determine which stakeholder groups hold these powers.
S69	Kaul, N., Bhandari, H., Deshpande, A., Mittal, A., & Raut, R.	2025	Exploring cultural heritage management research in tourism: Insights through the lens of destination management and nomological networks	This paper addresses research gap in linking heritage conservation with destination management by conducting a systematic bibliometric and scientometric review of cultural heritage tourism research published between 2015 and 2024.
S70	Legendre, T. S., Ding, A. N., & Back, K. J.	2024	A bibliometric analysis of the hospitality and tourism environmental, social, and governance (ESG) literature	Applying the bibliometric analysis approach, this study analyzed a total of 704 peer -reviewed hospitality and tourism research papers retrieved with ESG-related keywords.
S71	El Archi, Y., Benbba, B., Zhu, K., El Andaloussi, Z., Pataki, L., & Dávid, L. D.	2023	Mapping the Nexus between Sustainability and Digitalization in Tourist Destinations: A Bibliometric Analysis	This paper aims to map the intersection between sustainability and digitalization in tourist destinations using a bibliometric analysis.
S72	Lee, J. H.	2022	Managing conflict by mapping stakeholders' views on ecotourism development using statement and place Q methodology	Accordingly, many studies addressed the conflict concerning ecotourism sites, but there have been limitations, as studies based on interviews and questionnaires had difficulty in linking to specific spatial planning, and natural data-based research and public participation geographic information system had...
S73	Martini, U., Buffa, F., & Notaro, S.	2017	Community Participation, Natural Resource Management and the Creation of Innovative Tourism Products: Evidence from Italian Networks of Reserves in the Alps	The paper analyses value co-creation and social innovation focusing on a new approach to the management of Natura 2000 areas: the Networks of Reserves (NoRs).
S74	Hu, X., Lovelock, B., Ying, T. Y., & Mager, S.	2019	Stakeholder Collaboration on Policymaking for Sustainable Water Management in Singapore's Hotel Sector: A Network Analysis	Taking Singapore's hotel sector as a case, this study explores how stakeholder relationships contribute to participatory policymaking on sustainable water management.
S75	Gore, S., Borde, N., & Desai, P.	2025	Tourism by design or default? aligning practice with tourism governance in Goa	The study examines the governance structures and policy frameworks for tourism planning in Goa, India.
S76	Papageorgiou, K., Milioris, K., & Kikilia, E.	2025	Innovating Destination Planning: The Role of Local Development in Sustainable Tourism	This article examines how sustainable local development can be integrated into destination planning, offering a more balanced approach that benefits both local communities and the tourism industry.
S77	Kabbara, N., El Hajj, B., & Baba, I.	2025	Advancing sustainable tourism in Lebanon through hotel sustainability practices and stakeholder collaboration toward achieving sustainable development goals	This study examines sustainability practices within Lebanon's hotel sector, exploring key constraints and opportunities for improvement.
S78	Mercado, J. M. T., Bautista, B. M., & Zerrudo, E. B.	2023	Taoid: communal heritage tourism through a multi-stakeholder approach in the Philippines	Using qualitative research methods, this article assesses stakeholders' perspectives and views on implementing sustainability and development in a municipality in the Philippines.
S79	Sengel, Ü., Genç, G., Iskin, M., Çevrimkaya, M., Zengin, B., & Sariisik, M.	2023	The impact of anxiety levels on destination visit intention in the context of COVID-19: the mediating role of travel intention	Purpose - This study aims to investigate the effect of tourists' anxiety levels regarding pandemic on their intention to travel and intention to destination visit as a reflection of risk perception.
S80	Della Spina, L., & Giorno, C.	2021	Cultural Landscapes: A Multi-Stakeholder Methodological Approach to Support Widespread and Shared Tourism Development Strategies	Starting from the most recent international debate on the theme of cultural landscape, this study explores the theme of landscape as a 'common good' and as a field of investigation and experimentation of an innovative model of long-term sustainable tourism development.

Table 2 - Final sample of research (concluded)

ID	Authors	Year	Title	Research Question / Focus
S81	Loehr, J., Dwipayanti, N. M. U., Nastiti, A., Powell, B., Hadwen, W., & Johnson, H.	2021	Safer destinations, healthier staff and happier tourists: Opportunities for inclusive water, sanitation and hygiene in tourism	This study presents a system-wide Inclusive WASH in tourism framework for destinations.
vS82	Arpa, N. Y.	2017	Planning and management of ecotourism in the protected areas: case on Ilgaz Mmountain National Park in Turkey	The plan has four phases and issues to be addressed in implementing each of these phases are discussed in detail by planners, site managers and other key stakeholders.
S83	Saputra, R., Havlicek, T., Karya, D., & Suri, D. M.	2025	Integrating System Thinking and Network Analysis To Transform Village Tourism: Evidence from Riau Province, Indonesia	The purpose of this research is to identify the factors causing a lack of long-term viability and to recommend a systems approach to solving the problem.
S84	Al Mahrizi, A. S. K., Gray, T., Gregory-Smith, D., & Stead, S. M.	2024	The role of Stakeholder Participation in Oman's Tourism Planning System	This paper assesses whether stakeholder participation (SP) in tourism planning decision-making would enhance or inhibit the country's strategy of sustainable tourism development.
S85	Paddison, B., & Hall, J.	2024	Regenerative tourism development as a response to crisis: harnessing practise-led approaches	As destinations reimagine their future, a holistic approach that addresses social and ecological perspectives through collaboration, stewardship and environmental ethics is required.
S86	Long, B. Y., Yusof, N. S., & Azmy, M. M.	2024	Factors Influencing the Sustainability of Food Tourism Destinations: Evidence from the World Heritage Site of Guilin	This study examines the sustainability factors critical to developing food tourism within World Heritage Sites (WHSs), leveraging the unique natural, social, and cultural resources inherent to these locations.
S87	Thananusak, T., & Suriyankiet-kaew, S.	2023	Unpacking Key Sustainability Drivers for Sustainable Social Enterprises: A Community-Based Tourism Perspective	This study unpacked the key sustainability drivers for successful social enterprises or community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs), based on a study of a Thailand's Best Responsible Tourism award-winner at Sapphaya Community in Chai Nat Province.
S88	Putro, H. P. H., Pradono, P., & Setiawan, T. H.	2021	Development of Multi-Actor Multi-Criteria Analysis Based on the Weight of Stakeholder Involvement in the Assessment of Natural-Cultural Tourism Area Transportation Policies	In this study, the authors developed a multi-actor multi-criteria analysis method by adding the weight of stakeholder involvement when making decisions about transportation policies that support sustainable mobility in protected natural-cultural tourism areas.
S89	Antonio, I., Simone, P., Lea, I., & Mario, T.	2020	Communicating the stakeholder engagement process: A cross-country analysis in the tourism sector	The objective of this paper is to analyze the disclosure of SE, observing the content of nonfinancial reports and company websites of all companies belonging to the Global Reporting Initiative database.
S90	Wanner, A., & Pröbstl-Haider, U.	2019	Barriers to Stakeholder Involvement in Sustainable Rural Tourism Development-Experiences from Southeast Europe	Participative planning approaches are vital to sustainable development in rural areas.
S91	Msayleb, N., Boustani, N. M., Abidib, S., Athiman, K., & Be-jaoui, B.	2025	Stakeholder participation and crisis- responsive strategies in the Mediterranean blue bioeconomy-insights from Lebanon under Co-Evolve4BG project	Introduction This study investigates the long-term impacts of health emergencies-specifically the COVID-19 pandemic-on coastal tourism systems across the Mediterranean, with a particular focus on the Batroun pilot site in Lebanon.
S92	Suriyankietkaew, S., Krittaya-ruangroj, K., Thinthan, S., & Lumlongrut, S.	2025	Community Capitals Framework for Sustainable Development: A Qualitative Study of Creative Tourism in Ban Chiang World Heritage Site	This study explores creative tourism strategies in community-based tourism for sustainable development, focusing on the millennium-old Ban Chiang UNESCO World Heritage site in Thailand.
S93	Lalicic, L., & Weber-Sabil, J.	2021	Stakeholder engagement in sustainable tourism planning through serious gaming	In conceiving the process of tourism planning as a strategic plan with dependent actors, resources, objectives, and challenges in a multi-layered decision-making process, creating or re-creating such strategic games can be beneficial to promote the understanding and change of belief systems among stakeholders.
S94	Petersik, L.	2019	The Responsibility of the Destination: A Multi-stakeholder Approach for a Sustainable Tourism Development	Focus derived from title: The Responsibility of the Destination: A Multi-stakeholder Approach for a Sustainable Tourism Development

Source: Authors (2026).

3.2 Data synthesis and construction of the TRANSFORM-T Model

Beyond the selection process, the analysis of the 94 included studies followed a thematic synthesis procedure (Thomas & Harden, 2008), informed by the principles of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The synthesis proceeded in three stages. In the first stage, the content of each study was coded line by line, generating descriptive codes that captured the engagement practices, mechanisms, and outcomes reported by the authors. In the second stage, the descriptive codes were grouped into broader descriptive themes through constant comparison, which produced the six thematic categories reported in Section 4 and consolidated recurrent attributes of engagement. In the third stage, the descriptive themes were developed into analytical themes that moved beyond the content of individual studies, and it was at this stage that the dimensions of the TRANSFORM-T model were derived, later consolidated into eight (Section 4.1).

Each dimension corresponds to a cluster of codes that appeared consistently across categories and contexts, which is why the dimensions are presented as interdependent rather than independent. Coding was carried out by two researchers, and the resulting category structure was reviewed jointly to verify that every dimension could be traced back to evidence in the corpus. This procedure makes the construction of the model an explicit and traceable outcome of the systematic analysis rather than an a priori proposition.

To make this analytical trajectory explicit and auditable, Table X illustrates how corpus evidence was translated into descriptive codes, analytical themes, and the dimensions of the model. The number of studies supporting each dimension is also reported, which reveals that the dimensions are unevenly grounded in the corpus. Relational articulation, sustainability, technology, organization, and empowerment are directly derived from a large share of the studies, whereas responsibility, training, adaptability, monitoring, and transparency are supported by a smaller number of studies and are therefore proposed as normative components of the framework whose consolidation belongs to the future research agenda.

Table 3 - Evidence theorical of model dimensions

Corpus evidence (illustrative anchor studies)	Descriptive code	Analytical theme	Model dimension	Studies (n)
Ally et al. (2025), Buonincontri et al. (2025), Noor et al. (2025)	Cross-actor partnerships and collaborative ties	Relational infrastructure of engagement	Networking	66
Mananda et al. (2025), Martins et al. (2025), Lekaota (2015)	Environmental, social and regenerative integration	Sustainability as engagement purpose	Sustainability	59
Mavitha et al. (2025), Oliveira et al. (2015), Sakypbek et al. (2025)	Digital platforms, smart tools and data mediation	Technological mediation of participation	Technology	58
Azizpour et al. (2016), Sakypbek et al. (2025), Esparza-Huamanchumo et al. (2025)	Governance structures, coordination and planning	Institutional organization of engagement	Organization	56
Hernández Valdés et al. (2025), Andiani et al. (2025), Fadlurrahman et al. (2025)	Power redistribution, voice and community control	Empowerment and agency	Empowerment	43
Hanita et al. (2024), Kausar et al. (2025), Satar et al. (2024)	Crisis response, recovery and adaptive capacity	Resilience under disturbance	Resilience	21
Koe et al. (2025), Andereck et al. (2025), Ally et al. (2025)	Ethics, equity and accountability obligations	Responsibility and fairness	Responsibility	15
Hubner et al. (2025), Rahmafitria et al. (2021), Sakypbek et al. (2025)	Capacity building, skills and knowledge transfer	Capability development	Training	15
Sriwanna et al. (2025), Liu et al. (2025), Alam (2025)	Flexibility, learning and iterative adjustment	Adaptive learning	Adaptability	13
Damian et al. (2023), Yeap et al. (2024), Damian et al. (2022)	Evaluation, indicators and feedback	Monitoring and assessment	Monitoring	13
Orea-Giner et al. (2025), Calisto et al. (2023), Sakypbek et al. (2025)	Information access, disclosure and trust	Transparency and legitimacy	Transparency	11

Source: Authors (2026).

The boundaries between conceptually adjacent dimensions were defined by coding rules: adaptability was coded when studies emphasized iterative learning and adjustment, and resilience when they emphasized recovery from disturbance; responsibility was coded for ethical and equity obligations, and empowerment for redistribution of decision power; organization was coded for internal governance structures, and networking for ties across autonomous actors. Table 3, presented of dimension model.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Temporal evolution of the field

Because the objective of this review is to examine how stakeholder engagement evolved between 2015 and 2025, the corpus was split into two intervals, 2015 to 2019 and 2020 to 2025, and the thematic composition of each was compared. The earlier interval comprises 17 studies and the later 77, so the percentages for the smaller interval are read as indicative rather than conclusive.

The comparison shows a discernible shift. In 2015 to 2019 the field was led by governance and public policies, with engagement strategies and technology also prominent and sustainability almost absent. In 2020 to 2025 sustainability and social responsibility rises to become co-dominant with governance, community development grows, and engagement strategies as a stand-alone concern contract, which is consistent with a movement from consultative and managerial framings toward sustainability, regeneration, and community-centred concerns.

The thematic categorization of studies that is presented in table 4, reflects fundamental paradigmatic transformations in the field of stakeholder engagement in tourism. The predominance of the Governance and Public Policies category (29.8%) indicates growing recognition that effective stakeholder engagement transcends managerial practices to constitute a central issue of democracy and social justice. This trend aligns with literature on collaborative governance, which emphasizes the need for institutional structures that facilitate genuine participation rather than tokenistic consultation (Bramwell & Lane, 2011).

The significant representation of the Sustainability and Social Responsibility category (26.6%) reflects the evolution from defensive approaches to regenerative paradigms that seek positive contribution to socioecological systems. This transformation is theoretically grounded in the critique of the limitations of the traditional sustainability concept, which frequently perpetuates the status quo instead of promoting the systemic transformation necessary to address climate and social crises (Hall *et al.*, 2020).

Table 4 - Thematic categorization of the sample

Thematic Category	Articles (n)	Percentage
Governance and Public Policies	28	29.8%
Sustainability and Social Responsibility	25	26.6%
Crisis Management and Resilience	17	18.1%
Technology and Digital Innovation	14	14.9%
Community Development	6	6.4%
Engagement Strategies	4	4.3%
Total	**94**	**100.0%**

Source: Authors (2026).

The analysis of methodological characteristics that is presented in table 5 reveals important trends in the epistemological evolution of the field. The predominance of qualitative approaches (56.4%) indicates recognition that stakeholder engagement constitutes a complex phenomenon that requires interpretive understanding of relational, cultural, and political dynamics that can hardly be captured through exclusively quantitative methods. This trend aligns with arguments by Reed *et al.* (2022) about the need for participatory methods that recognize stakeholders as co-producers of knowledge rather than merely research objects.

The significant representation of single case studies (58.5%) reflects both the limitations and methodological potentialities of the field. While case studies provide contextualized analyses essential for understanding cultural and geographical specificities of stakeholder engagement, the resulting fragmentation limits the capacity to identify generalizable patterns and develop robust theories. This tension between contextual depth and theoretical generalization constitutes a central epistemological challenge that requires the development of more sophisticated comparative methodologies (Yin, 2018).

Table 5 - Methodological Characteristics of Studies

Methodological Characteristic	Articles (n)	Percentage
Qualitative Approach	53	56.4%
Mixed Methods	30	31.9%
Quantitative Approach	11	11.7%
Single Case Study	55	58.5%
Comparative Case Studies	28	29.8%
Longitudinal Studies	11	11.7%

Source: Authors (2026).

4.2 The TRANSFORM-T Model: framework for transformative engagement

The development of the TRANSFORM-T model emerges from the theoretical need to transcend fragmented approaches to articulate an integrative framework that recognizes systemic interdependencies between multiple dimensions of transformative engagement. Literature on complex adaptive systems emphasizes that sustainable transformation requires holistic understanding of how different elements mutually influence each other, creating emergent properties that transcend individual contributions (Folke *et al.*, 2010).

The TRANSFORM-T model is presented here as an interpretive synthesis of the reviewed literature, that is, an analytical framework that organizes the patterns identified in the corpus, rather than a normative prescription or an empirically validated instrument. As described in Section 3.2, each of its dimensions was derived inductively from the thematic synthesis of the 94 studies, and the model should be read as a structured summary of how the field has addressed transformative engagement, open to empirical testing in future work.

Following the uneven empirical grounding reported in Section 3.2, the original set of eleven candidate dimensions was consolidated into eight, on analytical rather than cosmetic grounds. Adaptability, which overlapped conceptually with resilience and was weakly supported, was merged into a single Resilience and Adaptability dimension.

Training was folded into Empowerment and Capacity-building, since capacity development operates as a means of empowerment. Transparency and Monitoring, the two most weakly grounded dimensions, were combined into a single Accountability dimension, of which information disclosure and evaluation are complementary faces. The remaining dimensions, Responsibility, Networking, Sustainability, Organization, and Technology, were retained with sharpened definitions to keep the boundaries between adjacent constructs distinct.

A note on the model's label is warranted. Following the consolidation described above, the framework comprises eight dimensions (Accountability, Responsibility, Networking, Sustainability, Organization, Resilience and Adaptability, Empowerment and Capacity-building, and Technology), which do not map letter by letter onto the name TRANSFORM-T. The name is retained as a mnemonic label for continuity with the framework's development rather than as a strict initialism. The final T denotes Technology, treated as a dimension that cuts across the others. Readers should therefore interpret the eight dimensions analytically, according to their derivation from the corpus, and not as determined by the letters of the model's name.

More precisely, the model is best understood as both inductive and theoretically oriented. The dimensions emerged inductively from the coding of the 94 studies, as described in Section 3.2, and were subsequently organized and interpreted through the lens of complex adaptive systems and transformation theory, drawing on Folke *et al.* (2010) and O'Brien (2012). The external references therefore do not generate the dimensions; they provide the interpretive vocabulary used to articulate relationships among dimensions that were already present in the corpus.

The implementation indicators in Table 6 that are not traceable to specific studies are, accordingly, theoretically derived proposals rather than empirical findings, and are marked as such.

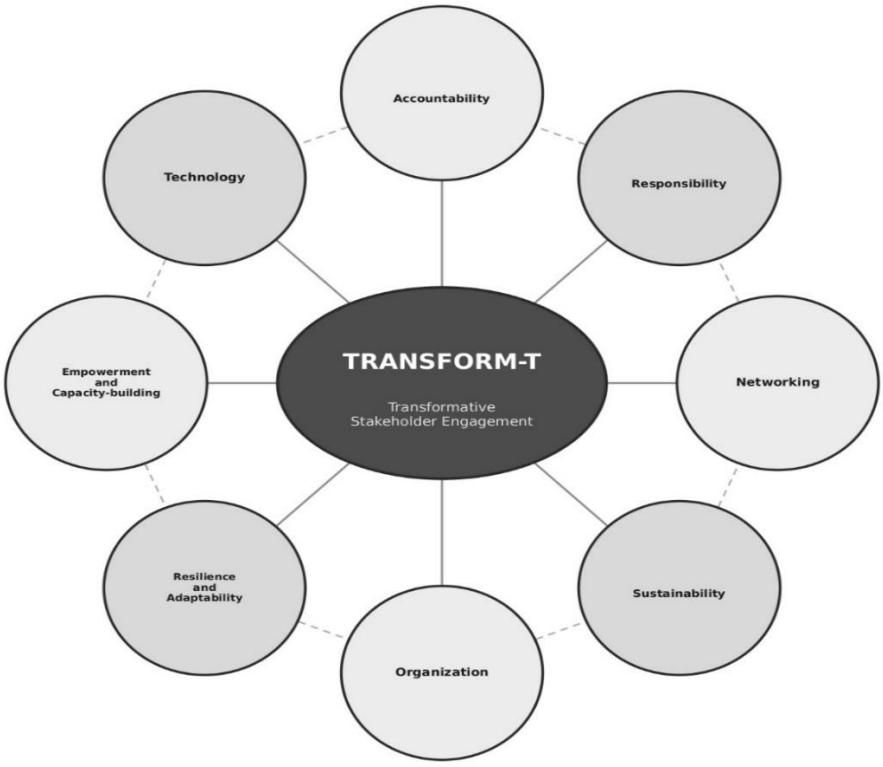
The model is theoretically grounded in the convergence between three emerging paradigms identified in the literature: systemic transformation, which emphasizes the need for structural change instead of incremental adjustments; epistemic justice, which recognizes multiple forms of knowledge as equally valid; and socioecological regeneration, which seeks positive contribution to the health of integrated systems. This convergence reflects paradigmatic evolution from defensive approaches to proactive models that position stakeholder engagement as a potential driver of structural change in tourism development (O'Brien, 2012).

Table 6 - TRANSFORM-T Model - consolidated framework of eight interdependent dimensions

Dimension	Definition & Key Practices	Implementation Indicators
Accountability (Transparency and Monitoring)	Information accessibility, decision visibility, progress tracking and evaluation. Proactive communication, accessible documentation, participatory indicators, and feedback that together sustain accountability.	Public meeting minutes, accessible budget data, documented decision rationale, regular progress reports, participatory evaluation sessions, feedback-loop documentation.
Responsibility	Ethical obligations, mutual accountability, commitment to collective well-being; differential capabilities recognized according to power and resources.	Equity impact assessments, benefit-sharing agreements, historical justice initiatives, marginalized-group support programs.
Networking	Relationship building, partnership formation, collaborative infrastructure; diverse participants connected through bridging mechanisms.	Partnership agreements, cross-sector collaborations, stakeholder mapping updates, network density metrics.
Sustainability	Environmental, social, economic, and cultural integration within long-term horizons; balancing present needs with future obligations.	Environmental impact assessments, social equity metrics, economic viability analyses, cultural heritage preservation plans.
Organization	Institutional structures, procedural frameworks, coordination mechanisms; clear roles, defined processes, and adequate resources.	Formal governance structures, documented procedures, resource allocation adequacy, role clarity assessments.
Resilience and Adaptability	Disturbance recovery and adaptive capacity combined with flexibility and learning; maintaining functionality while adjusting and evolving through iterative experimentation.	Crisis response effectiveness, recovery-time metrics, system redundancy, pilot-project evaluations, feedback integration, strategy revision frequency.
Empowerment and Capacity-building	Power redistribution, voice amplification, and agency enhancement supported by capacity building, skill development, and knowledge transfer; substantive influence over resources, policies, and implementation.	Decision authority distribution, resource control measures, marginalized-group representation, training completion and applied-competency demonstrations.
Technology	Digital tools, platforms, and systems mediating interactions; virtual meetings, online consultations, and AI applications with an accessibility focus.	Digital platform usage rates, accessibility compliance, digital-divide bridging initiatives, algorithmic transparency measures.

Source: Authors (2026).

Figure 1 - The TRANSFORM-T model represented as an interconnected system of eight interdependent dimensions



Source: Authors (2026).

Systemic Characteristics of the TRANSFORM-T Model: Interdependence, where dimensions are mutually constitutive and reciprocally reinforcing, creating positive feedback loops that amplify transformative capacities; Emergence,

where systemic properties emerge from interactions between dimensions, generating collective capacities superior to individual contributions; Adaptability, where the model is sufficiently flexible to adapt to diverse cultural, geographical, and technological contexts while maintaining fundamental principles; Scalability, applicable from local initiatives to global networks, with multi-scalar articulation mechanisms; and Temporality, recognizing different transformation rhythms, integrating incremental and disruptive changes in long-term trajectories. Table 6 presents the complete TRANSFORM-T model. Figure 1 represents the TRANSFORM-T model as an interconnected system of eight interdependent dimensions.

4.3 Theoretical contributions

This systematic review makes six theoretical contributions to stakeholder engagement literature in tourism. First, it synthesizes fragmented theoretical approaches into an integrated framework, addressing critical gaps in conceptual systematization identified in literature. While previous studies approached engagement through isolated lenses such as community participation, crisis management, or destination governance, this research demonstrates how these dimensions interconnect within complex adaptive systems (Folke *et al.*, 2010). This integration advances theory by revealing emergent properties arising from dimensional interactions that cannot be understood through reductionist analyses.

Second, the research documents paradigmatic transformation from instrumental to transformative stakeholder engagement, evidencing epistemological evolution from managerialist approaches focused on organizational effectiveness toward critical perspectives questioning power structures and promoting social justice (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). This paradigmatic shift reflects broader movements in organizational studies, political science, and environmental sociology, positioning stakeholder engagement as central mechanism for systemic transformation rather than merely technical management tool. The identification of three converging paradigms (systemic transformation, epistemic justice, and socioecological regeneration) provides theoretical foundation for understanding contemporary engagement evolution.

Third, the study extends stakeholder theory by incorporating non-traditional actors including hybrid digital-physical stakeholders, future generations and non-human entities such as ecosystems and biodiversity. This conceptual expansion challenges anthropocentric and presentist biases in traditional stakeholder theory, opening new research avenues on intergenerational justice, ecological representation, and algorithmic governance. The recognition of hybrid stakeholders operating simultaneously in physical and digital spaces addresses critical gap in literature regarding digital transformation implications for stakeholder relationships (Gretzel *et al.*, 2015).

Within this expansion, the framework gives explicit place to algorithmic governance and artificial intelligence as factors shaping democratic participation in tourism. This intersection between automated decision systems and stakeholder voice remains comparatively underexplored in the tourism governance literature, and making it an explicit dimension of the framework is one of the more distinctive aspects of the present contribution.

Fourth, the research contributes methodologically by documenting field epistemological evolution toward interpretive and participatory approaches. The predominance of qualitative methods (56.4%) and mixed approaches (31.9%) reflects recognition that stakeholder engagement constitutes complex phenomenon requiring deep contextual understanding. However, the analysis also reveals methodological limitations including case study fragmentation (58.5%) and longitudinal study scarcity (11.7%), suggesting need for more sophisticated comparative and longitudinal methodologies capturing both contextual specificities and generalizable patterns across diverse settings.

Fifth, the study makes critical contribution by exposing and problematizing geographical and epistemological knowledge concentration. The systematic Global North bias (55.3% Europe and North America) contrasted with Global South under-representation reveals what Santos (2007) terms epistemicide, marginalizing alternative knowledge systems and perpetuating colonial dependencies. This finding challenges universalist pretensions of dominant stakeholder engagement theories, demonstrating need for epistemological decolonization incorporating indigenous ontologies, traditional knowledge systems, and alternative development paradigms emerging from Global South contexts.

Sixth, the TRANSFORM-T model advances theory by articulating eight interdependent dimensions within a systemic framework recognizing complexity, emergence, and transformation. Unlike previous models treating engagement dimensions as independent variables, TRANSFORM-T conceptualizes them as mutually constitutive elements within complex adaptive systems. This systemic conceptualization enables understanding how dimensional interactions

create emergent properties transcending individual contributions, providing theoretical foundation for analyzing feedback loops, nonlinear dynamics, and transformation thresholds characterizing authentic stakeholder engagement processes.

4.4 Managerial implications

The findings generate practical implications for destination managers, tourism operators, policymakers, and community leaders seeking to implement transformative stakeholder engagement. The first implication concerns necessity of institutionalizing participatory processes through permanent structures rather than ad hoc consultations. Analysis reveals that destinations with established engagement mechanisms demonstrated greater (as interpreted by the authors, not measured comparatively in this review) pandemic resilience, mobilizing collective action more effectively than those lacking collaborative foundations.

Managers should establish formal stakeholder councils, participatory planning committees, and multi-stakeholder platforms with clear mandates, adequate resources, and decision-making authority. These institutional structures must transcend symbolic representation toward substantive participation in resource allocation, policy formation, and implementation oversight.

The second managerial implication addresses digital technology integration while ensuring inclusion and equity. Growing digitalization creates both opportunities and challenges for stakeholder engagement. Managers must develop digital engagement strategies incorporating virtual meetings, online consultation platforms, and social media interaction while actively addressing digital divides. Practical actions include providing technology access and training for digitally marginalized groups, ensuring platform accessibility for people with disabilities, offering engagement options in multiple languages, and implementing algorithmic transparency measures in automated decision systems. Organizations should establish ethical frameworks governing data collection, storage, and utilization, ensuring stakeholder consent and privacy protection.

The third implication involves transformative capacity development through comprehensive training programs. Many engagement barriers stem from capability gaps rather than motivation deficits, including limited facilitation skills, technical expertise deficits, and strategic planning difficulties. Managers should invest in capacity building programs employing participatory pedagogies, culturally appropriate methods, and practical application opportunities. Training should target multiple stakeholder groups including community members requiring technical skills for effective participation, tourism operators needing collaborative governance understanding, public officials requiring participatory process facilitation capabilities, and civil society organizations demanding advocacy and negotiation competencies. Capacity building must recognize power asymmetries, providing marginalized groups with additional support enabling meaningful participation.

The fourth managerial implication concerns implementation of participatory and adaptive monitoring systems tracking both process quality and outcome achievement. Traditional monitoring approaches focus exclusively on quantifiable results, neglecting qualitative dimensions including power redistribution, relationship transformation, and learning processes. Managers should develop comprehensive monitoring frameworks incorporating process indicators measuring engagement quality such as participation breadth and depth, decision-making influence, conflict resolution effectiveness, and trust relationship development. Outcome indicators should capture both tangible results including resource distribution equity, environmental impact reduction, and economic benefit sharing, and intangible transformations such as social capital enhancement, institutional capacity strengthening, and knowledge co-creation. Monitoring should employ participatory methods recognizing stakeholders as evaluation partners rather than merely data sources.

The fifth critical implication addresses multi-scalar articulation connecting local initiatives with regional networks, national policies, and international frameworks. Tourism operates within nested scales where local decisions embed in broader political, economic, and environmental dynamics. Managers must develop strategies enabling coherent engagement across multiple scales through vertical integration mechanisms connecting local stakeholder councils with regional tourism organizations, national government agencies, and international networks; horizontal coordination facilitating knowledge exchange and mutual learning among destinations facing similar challenges; and bridging institutions translating between scales, facilitating information flow and resource mobilization across governance levels. Multi-scalar engagement requires recognizing that power and resources concentrate at certain scales, necessitating strategic coalition building and advocacy to influence higher-level policies affecting local contexts.

The sixth managerial implication involves implementing transparency and accountability mechanisms building trust and enabling informed participation. Transparency requires proactive information dissemination through accessible documentation of decisions, budgets, and evaluation results; clear explanation of constraints, trade-offs, and decision rationale; timely communication about relevant developments and opportunities for input; and honest acknowledgment of conflicts, failures, and learning processes. Accountability mechanisms should include stakeholder feedback systems enabling concerns and complaints to be raised and addressed; regular reporting on commitments, progress, and challenges; independent evaluation processes assessing both achievements and shortcomings; and clear consequences for non-compliance with agreed-upon commitments and standards.

Implementation of these managerial implications requires recognizing that transformative engagement constitutes long-term investment rather than short-term cost. Initial resource requirements for establishing participatory structures, capacity building programs, and monitoring systems may appear, but evidence demonstrates that collaborative approaches generate multiple benefits including enhanced innovation through diverse perspective integration, increased legitimacy and social license for tourism development, greater resilience through distributed capacities and trust relationships, improved environmental and social outcomes through integrated decision-making, and reduced conflict and opposition costs through proactive engagement and relationship building.

4.4.1 Guidelines for destination managers

For municipal tourism councils: establish a standing participatory council with a written mandate, published agendas and minutes, and seats reserved for community and traditionally underrepresented groups. For destination management organizations: integrate the TRANSFORM-T dimensions into planning cycles by setting transparency, equity, and capacity-building targets, and by reporting on them annually. For regional tourism governance networks: create coordination routines that connect local councils to regional and national levels, share learning across destinations facing similar pressures, and define clear procedures for resolving conflicts across scales.

Across all three levels, managers should treat digital tools as a means to widen participation, pairing every online consultation with an offline alternative so that access to technology does not determine access to decision-making. Figure 2 presents a systemic representation of the six managerial implications and their mutual reinforcement.

Figure 2 - Systemic representation of the six managerial implications of research



Source: Authors (2026).

Rather than repeating the managerial implications discussed in Section 4.3, the operational content of each dimension is summarized in consolidated form in Table 6, which pairs every dimension with its key practices and implementation indicators. Readers seeking dimension-level guidance are referred to that table; the paragraphs below therefore do not restate each dimension individually, avoiding the redundancy between implications, guidelines, and implementation that would otherwise arise.

4.5 Future research agenda

The formulation of the future research agenda is based on the identification of critical gaps that limit theoretical and practical advances in the field of stakeholder engagement in tourism. Literature on transformative science highlights that academic research must transcend description of phenomena to actively contribute to solutions for complex societal challenges (O'Brien, 2012). In the tourism context, this implies developing applicable knowledge to address climate crises, social justice demands, and technological transformations that fundamentally redefine relationships between stakeholders.

The prioritization of Transformative Impact Assessment as maximum urgency reflects recognition that the field lacks robust methodologies to measure real power redistribution and systemic transformation. Literature on participatory program evaluation emphasizes the need for indicators that capture qualitative changes in power relations, rather than merely quantifying superficial participation (Reed *et al.*, 2022). Table 7 presents the comprehensive future research agenda.

Table 7 - Future research agenda - stakeholder engagement in tourism (2025-2035)

Research Priority	Key Research Questions	Methodological Approaches	Urgency
Transformative Impact Assessment	Can stakeholder engagement be shown to redistribute power, and what would count as evidence that structural transformation, rather than improved consultation, has actually occurred?	Longitudinal comparative studies, participatory action research, social network analysis, power mapping	Critical
Emerging Technologies & Digital Democracy	As algorithmic systems increasingly mediate tourism decisions, whose voice do they amplify and whose do they silence, and what governance arrangements could keep artificial intelligence accountable to communities?	Digital ethnography, algorithm audits, experimental designs, mixed reality prototyping	Critical
Justice & Decolonization	What would tourism governance look like if Global South and indigenous knowledge systems set the terms of participation, rather than being added to frameworks designed elsewhere?	Decolonial methodologies, indigenous research partnerships, critical discourse analysis	High
Polycentric Multi-Scalar Governance	When local, national, and global decisions collide, which scale prevails, and how can engagement be designed so that local communities are not overruled by higher-level interests?	Multi-level case studies, institutional analysis, network governance research	High
Socioecological Regeneration	Can tourism move from reducing harm to actively regenerating ecosystems and communities, and what evidence would demonstrate net positive socioecological outcomes?	Socioecological systems research, regenerative assessment frameworks, place-based studies	Medium

Source: Authors (2025).

The first research priority, Transformative Impact Assessment, requires developing sophisticated methodologies capturing qualitative transformations transcending quantitative participation metrics. Current evaluation approaches predominantly measure superficial indicators such as meeting attendance, stakeholder satisfaction, and consultation frequency, while neglecting fundamental power redistribution, relationship transformation, and systemic change processes. Future research should develop multi-dimensional assessment frameworks integrating process indicators capturing engagement quality dimensions including decision influence depth, conflict resolution effectiveness, trust relationship evolution, and knowledge co-creation; structural indicators measuring power redistribution through resource control, decision authority, representation in governance bodies, and policy influence; outcome indicators assessing tangible results including benefit distribution equity, environmental impact reduction, social capital enhancement, and community capacity strengthening; and transformation indicators evaluating systemic changes in institutional structures, normative frameworks, relationship patterns, and knowledge systems. Methodologically, this requires combining longitudinal comparative studies tracking engagement evolution across multiple destinations and timeframes, participatory action research positioning stakeholders as evaluation partners, social network analysis mapping relationship changes and power dynamics, and power mapping techniques revealing authority distribution and influence patterns.

The second critical priority, Emerging Technologies and Digital Democracy, addresses urgent questions about artificial intelligence, algorithmic governance, and digital platform implications for stakeholder engagement. The rapid AI system integration into tourism planning, marketing, and management creates both opportunities for enhanced participation and risks of algorithmic bias amplifying existing inequalities. Research must examine how generative AI affects stakeholder voice and representation, what governance frameworks ensure algorithmic transparency and accountability, how to bridge digital divides enabling inclusive technology access, what ethical principles should guide data collection and utilization, and how virtual and augmented reality technologies can enhance engagement while maintaining human agency. Methodological approaches should include digital ethnography documenting stakeholder technology experiences, algorithm audits revealing bias and discrimination in automated systems, experimental designs comparing different technological engagement modalities, mixed reality prototyping testing innovative virtual participation formats, and participatory design processes involving stakeholders in technology development. This research area proves particularly urgent given accelerating technological transformation requiring proactive governance rather than reactive regulation.

The third priority, Justice and Decolonization, addresses fundamental questions about tourism relationship reformation with indigenous peoples, marginalized communities, and colonially oppressed populations. Current engagement approaches frequently perpetuate colonial power dynamics through Eurocentric frameworks, extractive consultation processes, and appropriation of indigenous knowledge without adequate recognition or compensation. Research must investigate how to operationalize tourism justice beyond rhetorical commitments, what mechanisms enable authentic epistemic decolonization validating alternative knowledge systems, how to implement reparative justice addressing historical injustices and ongoing exploitation, what governance models support genuine indigenous self-determination, and how to transform tourism education incorporating diverse epistemologies and decolonial pedagogies.

Methodologically, this requires decolonial research approaches centering indigenous ontologies and knowledge systems, indigenous research partnerships ensuring community control over research processes and outcomes, critical discourse analysis revealing colonial continuities in tourism development, participatory historical analysis documenting colonial impacts and resistance, and community-based action research supporting grassroots transformation initiatives. This research proves essential for addressing persistent injustices and imagining alternative tourism futures beyond colonial legacies.

The fourth priority, Polycentric Multi-Scalar Governance, investigates how engagement processes across local, regional, national, and global scales interact creating both synergies and tensions. Tourism operates within nested governance systems where local decisions embed in broader political economic structures, yet literature predominantly focuses on single-scale analyses neglecting cross-scale dynamics. Research must examine how local stakeholder initiatives connect with regional destination management, how regional governance articulates with national tourism policies, what mechanisms enable effective coordination across governmental jurisdictions, how to manage scale mismatches where ecological or social systems cross administrative boundaries, and what role transnational networks play facilitating knowledge exchange and collective action.

Methodological approaches should include multi-level comparative case studies analyzing governance across scales, institutional analysis examining formal and informal coordination rules, network governance research mapping multi-scalar relationships, political ecology approaches revealing power dynamics across scales, and participatory modeling facilitating stakeholder engagement in multi-scalar planning. This research area addresses growing recognition that effective engagement requires vertical integration connecting scales and horizontal coordination within scales.

The fifth priority, Socioecological Regeneration, explores how stakeholder engagement enables tourism transition from extractive models depleting resources toward regenerative approaches actively restoring human and ecological systems. While sustainability frameworks emphasize minimizing negative impacts, regenerative paradigms position tourism as potential catalyst for positive transformation through ecosystem restoration, cultural revitalization, and community empowerment. Research must investigate what engagement practices facilitate ecological restoration through tourism, how collaborative governance supports regenerative development, what indicators measure regenerative outcomes beyond sustainability metrics, how indigenous stewardship models inform regenerative tourism, and what business models enable regenerative practices while maintaining economic viability.

Methodologically, this requires socioecological systems research examining human-environment interactions, place-based longitudinal studies documenting regeneration processes, participatory action research supporting

community-led initiatives, regenerative assessment frameworks measuring positive impacts, and comparative studies identifying enabling conditions for regenerative transformation. This research proves increasingly relevant as climate and biodiversity crises demand transitions beyond sustainability toward active restoration and regeneration.

These five research priorities collectively represent critical frontiers for stakeholder engagement scholarship requiring substantial investment of intellectual and financial resources over the coming decade. Success demands collaborative efforts among academic researchers, tourism practitioners, policymakers, and community stakeholders, transcending traditional disciplinary and sectoral boundaries. Funding agencies should prioritize these research areas through targeted calls recognizing transformative potential for addressing contemporary global challenges. Universities should support interdisciplinary research teams combining diverse expertise and collaborative partnerships with practitioners and communities.

Academic journals should encourage methodological innovation and epistemological diversity, creating spaces for alternative knowledge forms and research approaches. Researchers must commit to engaged scholarship actively contributing to solving real-world problems rather than merely documenting them, positioning research as collaborative endeavor with stakeholders as knowledge co-producers.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This systematic review of 94 articles on stakeholder engagement in tourism (2015-2025) documents significant paradigmatic transformation from consultative approaches to transformative co-governance models. The analysis reveals convergence between three emerging paradigms: systemic transformation, epistemic justice, and socioecological regeneration that fundamentally redefine theoretical understandings and practices of stakeholder engagement.

The main findings demonstrate: (1) conceptual expansion of stakeholders to include non-traditional, hybrid, and non-human actors; (2) evolution from linear models to circular and emergent engagement frameworks; (3) growing integration of digital technologies with inclusive governance; (4) emergence of decolonial approaches and alternative epistemologies; and (5) transition from adaptive resilience to transformative resilience.

The main contribution of this research is the development of the TRANSFORM-T model as an integrative framework that articulates eight interdependent dimensions of transformative engagement: Accountability, Responsibility, Networking, Sustainability, Organization, Resilience and Adaptability, Empowerment and Capacity-building, and Technology. This model is offered as a promising integrative synthesis whose explanatory capacity, applicability, and the adequacy of its indicators still require empirical examination, rather than as a validated operational blueprint.

This systematic review presents several limitations that offer opportunities for future research. First limitation: linguistic and geographical bias persists despite inclusion efforts, with under-representation of Global South knowledge and non-Western epistemologies. Second limitation: predominance of single case studies (58.5%) limits generalization and understanding of cross-contextual dynamics. Third limitation: scarcity of longitudinal studies (11.7%) restricts understanding of long-term transformative trajectories. Fourth limitation: focus on processes rather than transformative results limits evidence about the effectiveness of different approaches.

It should also be noted that the contribution of this study is primarily integrative. The TRANSFORM-T model organizes and connects concepts that already circulate in the literature rather than introducing entirely new constructs, and its value lies in articulating fragmented insights into a coherent and testable structure. Recognizing this scope guards against overstating the originality of the framework and clarifies the kind of advance it offers.

Finally, this review demonstrates that the field is at a moment of paradigmatic inflection, transitioning from fragmented and instrumental approaches to integrative and transformative frameworks that recognize systemic complexity and the need for structural change to address contemporary challenges of global tourism. The TRANSFORM-T model offers contributions to this transition, but requires empirical validation, contextual adaptation, and continuous refinement through practical applications and future research.

The proposed research agenda for 2025-2035 prioritizes five critical areas that can catalyze theoretical and practical advances: transformative impact assessment, emerging technologies and digital democracy, justice and decolonization, polycentric multi-scalar governance, and socioecological regeneration. These priorities reflect the urgency of developing applicable knowledge to address climate crises, social justice demands, and technological transformations that fundamentally redefine the future of global tourism.

This article contributes to literature on stakeholder engagement in tourism, offering comprehensive synthesis of recent developments and an integrative framework to guide future research and practices. This model is offered as a promising integrative synthesis whose explanatory capacity, applicability, and the adequacy of its indicators still require empirical examination, rather than as a validated operational blueprint. The theoretical contributions advance understanding of paradigmatic transformations, conceptual expansions, and epistemological evolution characterizing the field. The managerial implications provide practical guidance for implementing transformative engagement through institutionalization, digital inclusion, capacity development, monitoring systems, and multi-scalar articulation. The research agenda identifies critical priorities requiring sustained scholarly attention and collaborative effort among researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and communities.

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Data Availability Statement

All relevant data are available within the text.

About the authors

Anderson Antônio de Lima
Postdoctoral researcher in Administration (ESPM) and Education/Production Systems (UNIPLAC); PhD and Master's in Administration (Uninove; Unip); MBA in People Management; Bachelor's degree in Administration and Managerial Processes. Assistant Professor at UNIVESP, FATEC/SP, and SENAC. Researches management, marketing, competitiveness, and strategy, focusing on finance, economics, innovation, projects, design thinking, and stakeholders. Advisor for MBA capstone projects/theses at USP, associate editor at RIAE, and reviewer for journals and academic events.
Contributions: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Methodology, Project administration, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.
E-mail: andersonantoniodelima@yahoo.com.br
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6014-2922

Marcos Antônio Maia Lávio de Oliveira
PhD and Master's in Administration; postgraduate degrees in Logistics, Occupational Safety, Public Management, and Project Management; Bachelor's degrees in Administration, Logistics, Production Engineering, Public Management, Quality Management, and Economic Sciences. Professor and consultant in Logistics and Transportation; evaluator for INEP/MEC and consultant for CEE/SP; member of CRA/SP; Director at FATEC Itapevi/SP; founding member of the Materials Productive Chains Excellence Group (SENAC). 23 years of teaching experience and 14 years in the financial sector. Author of the book Gestão Estratégica.
Contributions: Data curation, Formal analysis, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – review & editing.
E-mail: marcos.maia@fatec.sp.gov.br
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7640-7059

Lupércio Aparecido Rizzo
PhD in Philosophy of Education (USP), Master's in Education, and postgraduate degree in Higher Education Didactics (UNINOVE); Bachelor's degree in Pedagogy (FATI, 2006). Professor and coordinator of HR Management and Managerial Processes Technology Management programs at Senac SP, as well as content author. Professor of Education and Philosophy of Education at USCS. Researcher in a research group focused on MEC/INEP. Inclusion in Prouni, with research funded by CAPES and linked to the Education Observatory.
Contributions: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft.
E-mail: lupercio.arizzo@sp.senac.br
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1288-4024