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## EVALUATIVE BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF RECENT TRENDS IN RURAL TOURISM LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT

The development of academic thought is a slow but unquestionable process that leads to a more advanced intellectual structure of the research area. The global growth of tourism demand in rural areas has conditioned the accelerated development of rural tourism, and thus the growing interest of the academic community in this tourism specialism. In this regard, the paper aims to provide insight into recent trends in rural tourism literature and examine the intellectual structure of this discipline. A detailed review of relevant literature published in the Web of Science (WoS) tourism journals and the application of evaluative bibliometric analysis identified the predominant interests of authors and dominant research niches, the most common research regions, the most frequently used research methods, papers that had the highest impact on modelling scientific thought within the subject area, the most productive and influential journals, as well as the authors who have left the most profound trace in the analyzed discipline in the past ten years. It is expected that the paper stimulates academic discussion on the relatively steady interest of researchers and the need for further and more dynamic intellectual development in the field of rural tourism.

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## Introduction

Rural areas in the last decade are going through a global crisis, as the traditional rural way of life is slowly disappearing, so the development of tourism in these areas is crucial for its preservation and prevention of assimilation with the urban lifestyle (Gao & Wu, 2017). Thus, rural tourism relies on rural “backwardness” in terms of authenticity and history, however, in the same time, it is a factor of the development and modernization of rural areas (Hjalager et al., 2018).

There is no universal definition of rural tourism, however, based on the existing literature in the field, it is commonly stated that rural tourists visit rural areas motivated by a desire for cultural and historical heritage (Blažević et al., 2018), by experiencing nature and acquaintance of local population and their customs (Cvijanović et al., 2017b; Hjalager et al., 2018) and in regard with several other reasons. Laureiro (2014) argue that rural tourism is inspired not only by the natural characteristics of the rural area but also by a whole array of accompanying “activities” (history, culture, food, customs). In contrast, some authors (Cvijanović et al., 2017a; Devesa et al., 2010) consider that the natural characteristics of the rural areas are the only important factor in the development of this type of tourism. The narrower understanding of rural tourism is also accepted by Martín and Hererro (2012), emphasizing that the central motivating moment for this type of tourism is direct contact with the rural way of life.

Park et al. (2015), point out that rural tourism is only an alternative activity in rural areas where traditional economic activities have not taken root. On the other hand, Philips et al. (2013) state that the development of rural tourism complements traditional agricultural production and reduces the risk of uncertainty of agricultural yields as the dominant source of income, which leads to faster development of rural areas. The development of rural tourism is not only a matter of local character but is a subject of broader interest (regional and national), because it generates employment and increases state revenues (Rid et al., 2014). “Rural tourism is an agent of change and an important factor of economic development with the potential to reduce the gap between rich and poor” (Su et al. 2019, p. 272) and to ensure a more even distribution of national income.

Based on the above mentioned, this paper aims to deploy bibliometric analysis of contemporary Web of Science (WoS) literature on rural tourism, to point out recent trends expressed and monitored by the academic community in terms of subject, geographical area and research methodology, as well as to identify scientific journals, papers and authors who have made the most significant contribution to modelling scientific thought within the research area in the past decade.

## Materials and methods

Following the example of numerous papers in the field of tourism (Evren & Kozak, 2013; Hall, 2011; Koseoglu et al., 2016; Nusair et al., 2019), the research was grounded on evaluative bibliometric analysis that provides an objective insight into the intellectual structure of a particular area. Harzing’s Publish or Perish 6.45 software was used to

conduct the bibliometric analysis. In the first step, this software was used to search for papers using keyword 'rural tourism'. The software search resulted in an initial output of 200 bibliographic items, which was then filtered by enclosing: 1) papers published in the period 2010-2019 in WoS tourism journals; 2) papers designated as an original scientific paper, review scientific paper or case study (research notes, conference reports, commentaries, research letters and editorials are omitted), 3) papers that have achieved ten or more Scopus citation per year. By applying the criteria mentioned above, a final sample of 27 papers was formed, later on, divided into two comparative five-year periods (2010-2014 and 2015-2019) to monitor the development of theoretical thought and the discipline of rural tourism in general.

In the second step, an annotated literature review was performed for each of the mentioned subperiods in order to come up into the current interests of the authors and the essence of the researched area, all in order to better understand the prevailing trends and possible directions of further development of this tourism specialism. Then, the analysis of key words was followed, which, for the sake of clear visualization of the dominant research niches, was presented not only by a spreadsheet but also by word cloud. At the same time, with an aim to compare the interests of the authors, the representation of the prevailing themes within the two comparative subperiods was examined. Finally, in addition to keyword analysis, citation analysis (specifically, Google Scholar and Scopus citation analysis) was conducted as a reliable indicator of the impact of the papers and the authoritativeness of the authors. It is essential to point out here that Scopus citations carry more weight since scientific journals are subject to strict control and quality analysis when referring to the Scopus index database. At the same time, Google Scholar operates on the principle of free and uncontrolled access. Also, Google Scholar is often characterized by duplicate entries, incomplete metadata, and the presence of non-scholarly publications (Martín-Martín et al., 2018), which can create a distorted picture of the citation and significance of individual papers. Nevertheless, the inclusion of this database is justified by the fact that it provides extra coverage of relevant literature compared to the Scopus index database, and therefore provides a broader picture of the researched issues.

## **Results and discussion**

### **Search results and review of contemporary rural tourism literature**

This paper examines the WoS literature on the topic of rural tourism published within the ongoing decade (2010-2019). For the purpose of comparative analysis, the selected papers were divided into papers published in the period 2010-2014 (Table 1) and papers published in the period 2015-2019 (Table 2). In addition to the basic metadata, the regions in which the research was conducted, as well as the methodology applied in the research are recorded in Tables 1 and 2.

Within the first five-year period, the following papers and questions to which the authors offered answers were singled out. Látková and Vogt (2012) examined the attitude of

the local population regarding tourism development and found that it is crucial for the development of the tourism industry. The results of the survey showed that the local population has a positive attitude towards tourism development. Devesa et al. (2010) examined the relationship between satisfaction and motivation of rural tourists on the example of one rural area in Spain concluding that satisfaction, although it is found as most important, is not the sole motivating factor. Different groups of tourists are motivated by different contents. The limitation of their research to one rural area prevents generalization, however, it provides some guidelines to managers on which specific attributes they must focus on to attract tourists (natural environment, cultural and historical heritage, well-marked hiking routes). Also, the creation of a unique, internationally acceptable questionnaire on the topic of tourist satisfaction is, in the opinion of the author, a challenge to strive for.

The issue of tourist satisfaction was also addressed by Loureiro and Kastenzholz (2011). On the example of tourists from rural areas in Portugal, they concluded that satisfaction is related to the reputation of the site, where managers are crucial who must emphasize the production of autochthonous food and organization of cultural events in which tourists are particularly interested. Similarly, almost identical conclusions were reached by Philips et al. (2013) who examined the satisfaction of tourists as a factor in revisiting a tourist place. In addition, managers must be aware of the fact that the sale of arrangements depends on the innovation of online sales and the simplicity of the transaction realization since the standard way of booking is replaced by online purchase of arrangements (Martin & Herrero, 2012). In her second paper on this topic, Loureiro (2014) upgraded her previous research and concluded that the reputation of a locality depends on the degree of excitement that will affect a memorable experience of the place, and consequently attract tourists.

Rid et al. (2014) noticed the necessity of segmentation of the tourist market, which must be based on the wishes of tourists. Tourists rarely visit a tourist destination driven by a desire for a spiritual experience, although, according to research conducted by Sharpley and Jepson (2011), it can make a significant contribution to overall satisfaction. In addition, tourism development, with respect to satisfaction and wishes of tourists, is not possible without its social component. This issue has been addressed by Zhao et al. (2011), as they have highlighted its importance. The same authors focused their attention on an urge to acquaint the local population with the benefits of tourism, that was additionally confirmed within the Park et al. (2012) study as well. According to Mbaiwa and Stronza (2010), tourism development in rural areas will raise the living standard of the population faster than in communities that have already achieved a certain level of economic growth.

**Table 1.** Search results for rural tourism literature published in WoS tourism journals in the period 2010-2014

Author(s)	Title	Journal	Region	Method(s)
Devesa, M., Laguna, M., & Palacios, A. (2010)	“The role of motivation in visitor satisfaction: Empirical evidence in rural tourism”	<i>Tourism Management</i>	Spain	ANOVA, factor and cluster analyses
Látková, P., & Vogt, C. A. (2012)	“Residents’ attitudes toward existing and future tourism development in rural communities”	<i>Journal of Travel Research</i>	/	Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model
Loureiro, S. M. C., & Kastenholz, E. (2011)	“Corporate reputation, satisfaction, delight, and loyalty towards rural lodging units in Portugal”	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Portugal	Partial least squares–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)
Loureiro, S. M. C. (2014)	“The role of the rural tourism experience economy in place attachment and behavioral intentions”	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Portugal	Partial least squares–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)
Martín, H. S., & Herrero, Á. (2012)	“Influence of the user’s psychological factors on the online purchase intention in rural tourism: Integrating innovativeness to the UTAUT framework”	<i>Tourism Management</i>	Spain	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)
Mbaiwa, J. E. & Stronza, A. L. (2010)	“The effects of tourism development on rural livelihoods in the Okavango Delta, Botswana”	<i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>	Botswana	Case study
Park, D.-B., Lee, K.-W., Choi, H.-S., & Yoon, Y.-S. (2012)	“Factors influencing social capital in rural tourism communities in South Korea”	<i>Tourism Management</i>	South Korea	Binary logistic regression model
Phillips, W., Wolfe, K., Hodur, N., & Leistriz, F. L. (2013)	“Tourist word of mouth and revisit intentions to rural tourism destinations: A case of North Dakota, USA”	<i>International Journal of Tourism Research</i>	USA	Case study
Rid, W., Ezeudji, I. O., & Pröbstl-Haider, U. (2014)	“Segmentation by motivation for rural tourism activities in The Gambia”	<i>Tourism Management</i>	Gambia	ANOVA and factor analyses
Sharpley, R., & Jepson, D. (2011)	“Rural tourism: A spiritual experience?”	<i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	England	No specific method
Zhao, W., Ritchie, J. R. B., & Echtner, C. M. (2011)	“Social capital and tourism entrepreneurship”	<i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	/	No specific method

Source: Author’s research

Within the second five-year period, the paper which analysis will provide insight into even more recent trends and comparison with the previously analyzed period were singled out. According to Campón-Cerro et al. (2017), a decade behind us is characterized by a steady increase in tourism demand in rural areas. One of the reasons is the increased marketing activity and the ability of managers to create such an offer that will not only satisfy the tourist expectations but also make him a loyal guest. Loyalty is also achieved by realizing the expectations of tourists, which is not an easy task and shows that a positive experience has a positive correlation with loyalty (Kastenholz et al., 2018). However, loyalty is not only affected by a positive experience, but it depends on several factors: connection with the local population, local food, local beer and others (Murray & Kline, 2015). Frisvoll et al. (2015) indicated that a limited number of studies on the impact of local food on tourism development. In addition, in their research, they concluded that 25% of tourists singled out food as the most crucial factor in choosing a particular destination. According to Sidali et al. (2015), the specificity of local food is vital in attracting tourists, but insufficient marketing activity reduces promotion through local food to the experiences of previous tourists. It is essential to point out that the connection with the local population is a subject of mutual interest, given that good relation with tourists positively affect the pride of the local population and have positive effects on the quality of life (Xue et al., 2017). The pride of the local population is so pronounced that they are more willing to non-economic than economic assistance (Strzelecka et al., 2017). The economic benefits, i.e. the possibilities of earning from tourism, are apparent, but tourism is still an activity in which the more affluent layers of society are mostly involved. Tourism does not have a significant share in income generation for that part of the population that cannot be included in that group (Su et al., 2019). According to Wang and Yotsumoto (2019), not only there is not enough interest in entrepreneurial activity, but a whole range of administrative problems related to the preservation of cultural heritage makes entrepreneurial intentions challenging to realize. For this reason, there is a “conflict” of residents with local authorities, because they demand the distribution of income from tourism, although they do not participate in its creation.

Rural tourism is one of the main factors of rural development - a fact that is not given a deserved place (Gao & Wu, 2017). For the concept of rural tourism to take place it deserves, local and public authorities must support it in terms of investment activity, that will eventually lead to launching a whole range of activities and industries. One of the necessary items is undoubtedly innovation in the broadest sense of the word. However, there is a cost-effectiveness problem that is realistic in the long run. It is often the case that there is no interest or time for this long term (Hjalager et al., 2018). The importance of state intervention was also emphasized by Lane and Kastenholz (2015) in their case study. However, the peripheries have rarely been part of national tourism policies. Therefore, the transition and revision of the same are necessary for tourism in rural areas has received a deserved place (Salvatore et al., 2018). An analysis of the importance of rural tourism development was also performed by Rasoolimanesh

et al. (2017a) based on the attitudes of the local rural population. The analysis gave conflicting views which are conditioned by the economic gains from tourist visits. Those directly involved in the tourism offer had a positive attitude, while those who were not included in the offer had a negative one. Rasoolimansh et al. (2017b) conducted a similar study on the example of residents of urban destinations arguing that a unique positive attitude of those directly and indirectly involved in the tourism industry. On the other hand, Park et al. (2015) emphasizing the rarity of research dealing with the impact of social capital on the development of rural tourism, concluded that it is important how residents perceive the socio-economic impacts of tourism. Residents' support of the rural tourism development depends on the adequacy of the management of the negative consequences of social capital.

**Table 2.** Search results for rural tourism literature published in WoS tourism journals in the period 2015-2019

Author(s)	Title	Journal	Region	Method(s)
Campón-Cerro, A. M., Hernández-Mogollón, J. M., & Alves, H. (2017)	“Sustainable improvement of competitiveness in rural tourism destinations: The quest for tourist loyalty in Spain”	<i>Journal of Destination Marketing and Management</i>	Spain	Partial least squares–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)
Frisvoll, S., Forbord, M., & Blekesaune, A. (2016)	“An empirical investigation of tourists’ consumption of local food in rural tourism”	<i>Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism</i>	Norway	Questionnaire techniques
Gao, J., & Wu, B. (2017)	“Revitalizing traditional villages through rural tourism: A case study of Yuanjia Village, Shaanxi Province, China”	<i>Tourism Management</i>	China	Case study
Hjalager, A., Kwiatkowski, G., & Larsen, M. Ø. (2018)	“Innovation gaps in Scandinavian rural tourism”	<i>Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism</i>	Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway and Sweden)	Case study
Kastenholz, E., Carneiro, M. J., Marques, C. P., & Loureiro, S. M. C. (2018)	“The dimensions of rural tourism experience: Impacts on arousal, memory, and satisfaction”	<i>Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing</i>	Portugal	Tourist Experience Scale – TES
Lane, B., & Kastenholz, E. (2015)	“Rural tourism: The evolution of practice and research approaches – towards a new generation concept?”	<i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>	/	No specific method
Murray, A., & Kline, C. (2015)	“Rural tourism and the craft beer experience: Factors influencing brand loyalty in rural North Carolina, USA”	<i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>	USA	Case study

Author(s)	Title	Journal	Region	Method(s)
Park, D.-B., Nunkoo, R., & Yoon, Y.-S. (2015)	“Rural residents’ attitudes to tourism and the moderating effects of social capital”	<i>Tourism Geographies</i>	South Korea	Multi-group analysis
Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Roldan, J. L., Jaafar, M., & Ramayah, T. (2017a)	“Factors influencing residents’ perceptions toward tourism development: Differences across rural and urban world heritage sites”	<i>Journal of Travel Research</i>	Malaysia	Partial least squares–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)
Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Ringle, C. M., Jaafar, M., & Ramayah, T. (2017b)	“Urban vs. rural destinations: Residents’ perceptions, community participation and support for tourism development”	<i>Tourism Management</i>	Malaysia	Partial least squares–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)
Salvatore, R., Chiodo, E., & Fantini, A. (2018)	“Tourism transition in peripheral rural areas: Theories, issues and strategies”	<i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	Italy	Cluster analysis
Sidali, K., L., Kastenzholz, E., & Bianchi, R. (2015)	“Food tourism, niche markets and products in rural tourism: Combining the intimacy model and the experience economy as a rural development strategy”	<i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>	/	No specific method
Strzelecka, M., Boley, B. B., & Strzelecka, C (2017)	“Empowerment and resident support for tourism in rural Central and Eastern Europe (CEE): The case of Pomerania, Poland”	<i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>	Poland	Structural equation modeling (SEM)
Su, M. M., Wall, G., Wang, Y., & Jin, M. (2019)	“Livelihood sustainability in a rural tourism destination - Hetu Town, Anhui Province, China”	<i>Tourism Management</i>	China	Case study
Wang, L., & Yotsumoto, Y. (2019)	“Conflict in tourism development in rural China”	<i>Tourism Management</i>	China	No specific method
Xue, L., Kerstetter, D., & Hunt, C. (2017)	“Tourism development and changing rural identity in China”	<i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	China	Case study

Source: Author’s research

Based on the above mentioned, the following conclusions can be drawn. In the literature review related to the period 2010-2014, the papers dealing with the loyalty and satisfaction of tourists are the most common. The conclusions reached by the authors are almost identical, even though the analyses are territorially separate. The period after 2014 was marked by papers on a similar topic. Thus, the interest of the authors in both comparative periods is mainly focused on the satisfaction of tourists and the creation of their loyalty with an emphasis on the role of managers and their knowledge



and skills to make the destination attractive. However, the papers that, in addition to tourism demand, are focused on the offer side and in which the emphasized role of the state as a necessary subject in the development of rural tourism and its intervention can be seen, can also be found. It is important to note that there is a lack of studies dealing with comparative analysis of the development of rural tourism in different areas, which should undoubtedly be an inspiration to future authors of papers in this field.

A comparative analysis of Table 1 and Table 2 also indicates that most surveys (36%) in the first subperiod were conducted in Spain and Portugal, while China dominated as the host country of the survey (25%) in the second subperiod. This finding suggests the gradual shifting of the interests of researchers in the field of rural tourism from European countries to Asian countries. Finally, the first subperiod was dominated by three research methods: Partial least squares - structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) technique, Case study and ANOVA and factor analyses with an individual share of 18% and cumulative of 55%, while Case study method doubled its participation in the second subperiod, PLS-SEM technique retained the same participation, and ANOVA and factor analyses were not applied in any research.

### Results of evaluative bibliometric analysis

The papers on the topic of rural tourism described in the previous subtitle, selected by searching the WoS tourism journals, served as a sample for conducting an evaluative bibliometric analysis. In the first step, the journal distribution of the papers was proposed, to single out the most productive WoS tourism journals in the context of the research area (Table 3).

**Table 3.** The distribution of the papers across the journals

Journal	Number of the papers	2010-2014	2015-2019
<b>Tourism Management</b>	8	4	4
<b>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</b>	5	1	4
<b>Annals of Tourism Research</b>	4	2	2
Journal of Travel Research	2	1	1
International Journal of Hospitality Management	2	2	0
Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	2	0	2
Journal of Destination Marketing and Management	1	0	1
International Journal of Tourism Research	1	1	0
Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	1	0	1
Tourism Geographies	1	0	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>16</i>

Source: Author's research

The analysis determined the dominant share of the scientific journal *Tourism Management*, which participates in the total production of sampled papers with 30%. At the same time, a high degree of concentration of papers is evident, since 63% of the selected papers were published in only three journals: *Tourism Management*, *Journal*

of *Sustainable Tourism* and *Annals of Tourism Research*. It should be noted that the distribution of papers across two comparative periods is uniform in the case of *Tourism Management* and *Annals of Tourism Research*, while the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* records significantly higher production of papers in the field of rural tourism in the last five years, which indicates to the potentially greater importance of this journal for the subject area in the coming period.

In the continuation of the bibliometric analysis, the analysis of keywords was conducted in order to determine the dominant topics and issues that occupy the attention of researchers (Table 4). A total of 170 keywords were singled out from individual papers, where only keywords that were repeated three or more times are shown in a table, and different words of the same meaning are recorded as a one.

**Table 4.** The most commonly used keywords within the sample

Keyword	Number of repetitions	2010-2014	2015-2019
rural tourism	19	8	11
(tourism) development	6	2	4
(tourist) satisfaction	5	3	2
(tourist) loyalty	5	3	2
residents' attitudes	5	2	3
community (tourism) benefits	5	2	3
PLS-SEM technique	4	1	3
destination image	4	2	2
social capital	3	2	1
experience economy	3	1	2
sustainable livelihoods	3	1	2
innovation	3	1	2
food specialties	3	0	3

Source: Author's research

Following the example of Dimitrovski et al. (2019), in addition to the table view, a word cloud was also prepared "in order to provide a visual representation of the most frequently cited keywords and most frequent topics within the analyzed papers" (p. 31) (Figure 1).



**Table 5.** Papers distribution of Google Scholar and Scopus citations

Papers/Authors	Google Scholar citations			Scopus citations		
	Total	per author	per year	Total	per author	per year
Campón-Cerro, A. M., Hernández-Mogollón, J. M., & Alves, H. (2017)	109	36,33	36,33	41	13.67	13.67
<b>Devesa, M., Laguna, M., &amp; Palacios, A. (2010)</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>187,33</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>22.2</b>
Frisvoll, S., Forbord, M., & Blekesaune, A. (2016)	73	24.33	18.25	43	14.33	10.75
<b>Gao, J., &amp; Wu, B. (2017)</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>23.67</b>
Hjalager, A., Kwiatkowski, G., & Larsen, M. Ø. (2018)	51	17	25.5	33	11	16.5
Kastenholz, E., Carneiro, M. J., Marques, C. P., & Loureiro, S. M. C. (2018)	60	15	30	28	7	14
Lane, B., & Kastenholz, E. (2015)	172	86	34.4	77	38.5	15.4
<b>Látková, P., &amp; Vogt, C. A. (2012)</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>61.25</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>28</b>
Loureiro, S. M. C., & Kastenholz, E. (2011)	336	168	37.33	158	79	17.56
<b>Loureiro, S. M. C. (2014)</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>59.17</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>30.17</b>
<b>Martín, H. S., &amp; Herrero, Á. (2012)</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>245.5</b>	<b>61.38</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>30.25</b>
Mbaiwa, J. E. & Stronza, A. L. (2010)	236	118	23.6	114	57	11.4
Murray, A., & Kline, C. (2015)	137	68.5	27.4	65	32.5	13
Park, D.-B., Lee, K-W., Choi, H-S., & Yoon, Y-S. (2012)	171	42.75	21.38	80	20	10
Park, D.-B., Nunkoo, R., & Yoon, Y.-S. (2015)	91	30.33	18.2	51	17	10.2
Phillips, W., Wolfe, K., Hodur, N., & Leistriz, F. L. (2013)	197	49.25	28.14	82	20.5	11.71
Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Roldan, J. L., Jaafar, M., & Ramayah, T. (2017a)	84	21	28	50	12.5	16.67
<b>Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Ringle, C. M., Jaafar, M., &amp; Ramayah, T. (2017b)</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>46.25</b>	<b>61.67</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>25.75</b>	<b>34.33</b>
Rid, W., Ezeudji, I. O., & Pröbstl-Haider, U. (2014)	190	63.33	31.67	81	27	13.5
Salvatore, R., Chiodo, E., & Fantini, A. (2018)	51	17	25.5	26	8.67	13
Sharpley, R., & Jepson, D. (2011)	431	215.5	47.89	154	77	17.11
Sidali, K., L., Kastenholz, E., & Bianchi, R. (2015)	230	76.67	46	97	32.33	19.4
Strzelecka, M., Boley, B. B., & Strzelecka, C. (2017)	50	16.67	16.67	36	12	12
Su, M. M., Wall, G., Wang, Y., & Jin, M. (2019)	47	11.75	47	30	7.5	30
Wang, L., & Yotsumoto, Y. (2019)	35	17.5	35	17	8.5	17
Xue, L., Kerstetter, D., & Hunt, C. (2017)	58	19.33	19.33	33	11	11
Zhao, W., Ritchie, J. R. B., & Echtner, C. M. (2011)	223	74.33	24.78	106	35.33	11.78

Source: Author's research

The largest number of Google Scholar and Scopus citations were made by Martín and Herrero (2012), Látková and Vogt (2012) and Devesa et al. (2010). However, as the number of citations per year is a more relevant indicator of the impact of papers (Dimitrovski et al., 2019), the papers of Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017b), Martín and Herrero (2012) and Loureiro (2014) have mostly contributed to the modelling of scientific thought, having in mind the year of publication of the paper. The mentioned papers achieved over 30 Scopus citations per year, which is a desirable result having in mind the demanding criteria for referring literature sources in this index base. When it comes to individual authors, the most profound impact in the analyzed area in the last decade, both in terms of the number of published authorial and co-authorial papers and the number of realized citations, was referred to Professor Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro from the University of Aveiro in Portugal.

In the second part of the citation analysis, based on the distribution of Google Scholar and Scopus citations across the journals, the most influential sources of literature within the researched tourism specialism were identified (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Journals distribution of Google Scholar and Scopus citations

Journal	Google Scholar citations		Scopus citations	
	Total	per paper	Total	per paper
<b>Tourism Management</b>	<b>1,817</b>	227.13	<b>846</b>	105.75
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	825	165	389	77.8
Annals of Tourism Research	763	190.75	319	79.75
Journal of Travel Research	574	287	274	137
<b>International Journal of Hospitality Management</b>	691	<b>345.5</b>	339	<b>169.5</b>
Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	124	62	76	38
Journal of Destination Marketing and Management	109	109	41	41
International Journal of Tourism Research	197	197	82	82
Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	60	60	28	28
Tourism Geographies	91	91	51	51

Source: Author's research

In line with the largest production of papers, the scientific journal *Tourism Management* also received the largest number of citations, which is not surprising considering the reputation and impact factor of this journal (IF 2019 = 7.432), which carries the epithet of the most influential journal in the field of tourism for years. However, it should be noted that the largest number of citations per paper was made by the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, highlighting the enviable selection of papers by the journal review and editorial board.

## Conclusions

The review of contemporary literature on rural tourism published in the most prestigious tourism journals in the world and the evaluative bibliometric analysis conducted pointed to the following conclusions:

- In the last decade, the interest of the academic community has been mostly established and focused on issues of tourist satisfaction and loyalty, attitudes and perceptions of the local population, as well as on the crucial role of the management structure in recognizing, respecting and fulfilling the wishes and needs of tourists;
- Relatively stable interests of the authors indicate the need for more dynamic development of academic thought and structure of the subject area, and culinary tourism based on local food specialities, comparative analyses of rural tourism development and research of the impact of social capital on the development of this tourism activity stand out as insufficiently researched areas and potential directions of future research;
- When it comes to the geographical areas in which the research was conducted, there is a noticeable shift of interest of researchers from European to Asian countries, led by China, while among the research methods the most used are Case study and PLS-SEM technique;
- Bibliographic units that have made the outstanding contribution to modelling academic thought within the research area in the past decade are Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017b), Martín and Herrero (2012) and Loureiro (2014);
- The most productive and most cited member of the academic community whose focus is the discipline of rural tourism is Professor Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro from the University of Aveiro in Portugal;
- Among the sources of literature, the scientific journal *Tourism Management* takes the first place in terms of the number of published papers and citations. In contrast, the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, has gathered the largest number of citations per paper, can be attributed as the most promising journal in the context of influence.

The theoretical contribution of the paper is reflected in the fact that, according to the cognitions of the authors, it is the first research of its kind conducted in the field of rural tourism. Also, the paper provides insight into recent trends in rural tourism literature, relatively stable interests of authors, insufficiently researched areas and possible directions of future research, acting as a generator of changes and further development of the rural tourism area. On the other hand, the identified growing interest of members of the academic community in culinary tourism sends a message to rural tourist destinations and tourism service providers to direct marketing activities to promote local food specialities that play an increasingly important role in attracting modern tourists. The above mentioned reflects the practical repercussions of the paper and the

research realized in it. A fundamental limitation of the paper is the absence of relational bibliometric analysis and content analysis that would provide an even more in-depth insight into the researched issues. This limitation of a paper should serve as an idea for authors interested in future research in this area.

### Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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