Review of the Scientific Literature on Airbnb: Past, Present and Future

Revisión de la Literatura Científica sobre Airbnb: Pasado, Presente y Futuro

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Abstract

Airbnb has undergone an evolution that has increasingly captured the attention of the research community since its inception. This interest is due to the varied and significant impacts that Airbnb has had on the accommodation sector, encompassing everything from enhanced accessibility to concerns about housing affordability. The present study analyses the general trend of Airbnb, the leading short-term rental platform. An exhaustive analysis of 385 articles that include the keywords "Airbnb" and "rental" and are indexed in Web of Science (WoS), was conducted. This analysis identifies the most influential themes, examines the most cited articles, and highlights the predominant authors and the most prolific institutions, in addition to exploring the geographical connections between them. This article provides a comprehensive, 360-degree view of the literature on the platform,

offering a unique study that covers the most recent period and analyses the areas related to all publications indexed in WoS. The study is proposed as a tool and a guide for academics, facilitating the identification of future development paths in this dynamic field.

Resumen

Airbnb ha experimentado una evolución que, con el pasar de los años desde su lanzamiento, ha capturado crecientemente la atención de la comunidad investigadora. Este interés se debe a los impactos variados y significativos que Airbnb ha tenido en el sector del alojamiento, abarcando desde una mayor accesibilidad hasta inquietudes relacionadas con la asequibilidad de la vivienda. El presente estudio analiza la tendencia general de Airbnb, la plataforma líder de alquiler a corto plazo. Se realiza un análisis exhaustivo de 385 artículos que incluyen las palabras clave "Airbnb" y "alquiler", y que están indexados en la Web of Science (WoS). En este análisis, se identifican los temas más influyentes, se examinan los artículos más citados, y se destacan los autores predominantes y las instituciones más prolíficas, además de explorar las conexiones geográficas entre ellos. Este artículo proporciona una visión integral 360º de la literatura sobre la plataforma, ofreciendo un estudio único que cubre el período más reciente y analiza las áreas relacionadas con todas las publicaciones indexadas en WoS. El estudio se propone como una herramienta y guía para los académicos, facilitando la identificación de futuras vías de desarrollo en este dinámico campo.

1 Introduction

Airbnb is one of the most significant and popular sharing economy platforms worldwide. Not only does this platform allow new services to be created, but it also empowers consumers, enables forms of socialisation between hosts and guests, and introduces tourism to new destination areas.

This approach not only opens up unusual tourist paths but also helps travellers to experience destinations from a more authentic, local perspective, effectively breaking the "tourist bubble" (Unger et al., 2020). Moreover, Airbnb democratises participation in tourism by allowing local residents to become hosts, thereby fostering community-based tourism and contributing to local economies (Wallace et al., 2022; DiNatale et al., 2018; Ki & Lee, 2019).

Airbnb is a digital platform that enables individuals to let their private living spaces, such as homes or rooms, to travellers for short-term stays (Mody et al., 2017). Since its inception, Airbnb has appealed to a wide array of travellers, including couch surfers, rapidly gaining popularity for its unique accommodations and the opportunity to explore destinations through the lens of local life, sharing experiences with residents (Schuckert et al., 2018).

In the recent literature on Airbnb, various studies have examined key aspects from both customer and supplier perspectives. It has explored how trust, motivation, and satisfaction affect booking intentions, highlighting the importance of these elements for customer loyalty (Liang et al., 2018, Tiamiyu et al., 2020). Additionally, service quality is related to customer loyalty (Priporas et al., 2017). The platform's contribution to socio-spatial inequalities in urban areas has also been studied (Roelofsen, 2018), and from a management perspective, so have factors such as location and accommodation features that influence pricing strategies (Bode et al., 2022).

The accommodation services provided by this platform are in direct competition with those offered by low-end hotels (Yang et al., 2022) and hostels (Koh & King, 2017). However, due to more affordable prices, extra facilities (access to a kitchen) or extra space, among other things (Guttentag, 2015), some guests in accommodation secured via the sharing economy decide to stay longer in specific locations.

Airbnb and similar platforms are disrupting the tourism industry by altering lodging options, impacting local economies and community dynamics, thereby leading to overcrowding and over-commercialisation (Nofre et al., 2018), and damage to feelings of belonging to a place (Amore et al., 2020), and prompting discussions on regulatory responses (Guttentag, 2015).

Besides the aforementioned negative impacts, these platforms create unplanned tourism hotspots in residential areas, not typically geared towards tourist influx, disrupting local communities. Their informal rental structure frequently results in tax evasion and fosters the growth of the grey economy. Moreover, these platforms introduce precarious, low-wage labour forms, undermining social security rights. This situation creates an uneven playing field, offering unfair competition to traditional tourist accommodations and consequently disrupting the established hotel industry by diverting traditional customer bases (Ahuja & Lyons, 2019; Freytag & Bauder, 2018; Guttentag & Smith, 2017).

This trend of change may also transform local residences into tourism lodgings, cause the commercialisation of residential neighbourhoods, and speed up the residential segregation process.

In this context, there are two types of owner-operators on the Airbnb platform. First, there are those whose goal is to make extra income by letting part or the whole of their apartment to tourists, in some cases to be able to afford their housing costs in the city. Indeed, in some cases, this may be the only source of income (Cox & Haar, 2020). The claims invoked here are the right to own property, the right to do what one wishes with one's property, and sometimes the right to live in a certain part of the city (which would not be possible without the extra income from rentals) (Cox & Haar, 2020). Second, there are professional hosts specialising in the short-term rental business; professionalisation, concentration and monopolisation mean that some profiles can have up to 211 listings in the same city (Negi & Tripathi, 2022).

In recent years in particular, the market has afforded many opportunities to take advantage of low interest rates on loans and mortgages offered by banks. Consequently, many owners have taken an investment opportunity, which may have required significant financial outlay in the renovation of a building or part of a building (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2022). These owners (who may be individual operators, micro-companies or part of larger business

operations) therefore claim the right to a return on their investment which has, as is often alleged, contributed to the general level of "improvement" of a neighbourhood and therefore to the common good (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2022).

Analyses of gentrification are complemented by specific articles on touristification that, by analysing quantitative indicators, offer a solution for decongesting certain neighbourhoods (Cerda-Mansilla et al., 2022).

It is worth noting that studies focusing on New York (Stabrowski, 2017), Sofia (Roelofsen, 2018), Seoul, (Ki & Lee, 2019) and London (Shabrina et al., 2022) found that Airbnb listings were predominantly operated by commercial hosts, which refers to individuals or entities that operate multiple listings or engage in frequent, business-like rental activities. In contrast to the original sharing economy concept, which was previously associated with the positive value of sharing and primarily targeting access to under-utilised physical assets by non-professional hosts, Airbnb has turned into an organisation in which accommodation is provided and managed by professionals.

This shift towards a more professional and commercial model is further evidenced by the fact that a significant portion of Airbnb's business comes from hosts operating multiple units. As Dogru et al. (2020) suggest, this indicates that Airbnb should be more accurately characterised as a lodging corporation rather than merely a platform in the sharing economy. This suggests that Airbnb acts as an intermediary for operators who manage multiple properties, rather than merely facilitating individual home rentals.

Interestingly, this evolution in Airbnb's business model can be contextualised within broader economic shifts. The 2008 recession triggered the sharing economy movement on a global scale (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). And recently, an economic crisis has occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with especially severe effects on tourism and, therefore, on the collaborative economy platforms providing tourists with accommodation.

The implementation by governments of social-distancing measures in response to the pandemic resulted in a duality of effects. Numerous countries implemented lockdown for several months to slow the spread of the virus and to alleviate the strain on healthcare systems. As a result of decreased tourist activity, short-term rental accommodations

adapted by offering long-term rentals (Sequera et al., 2022). Given researchers' keen interest in Airbnb and its multifaceted impacts, the aim of this study is to get an overview of such interest in terms of how it stands out in the literature (Ikeji & Nagai, 2021).

There are several articles in the literature evaluating rentals in the sharing economy, specifically focusing on Airbnb (Chua et al., 2019). However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, findings linked to the evaluation of such activity in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic are limited, as the previously mentioned articles focused on specific concepts or regions. Many articles do indeed relate to Airbnb, but the main contribution of this study is that it reviews the literature on rentals to get an overview of what has happened worldwide in recent years, including during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

This article focuses on providing a literature review of published articles on Airbnb and rentals over the past few years, identifying key journals, categories, the co-occurrence of keywords, co-cited journals, author citations, the bibliographic coupling of countries, and relevant documents that have advanced academic research on this topic. The study is based on a literature review using the Web of Science database to evaluate articles containing the keywords "rental" and "Airbnb". However, this specific analysis focuses particularly on keywords to uncover the clusters that academia is concentrating on within the sector. Additionally, by studying the overlay, the sector trend towards adopting new terminologies and concepts is observed. Furthermore, by examining citations and co-occurrences, the relationships between authors, institutions, countries, journals, and significant documents are identified. This type of analysis is important for supporting universities and students (Ryan, 2015), thereby helping them to conduct more detailed research and studies focusing on a specific topic. Thus, the objective is to understand the state of the art on the topic in order to identify future research topics.

The structure is as follows. First, the literature review is introduced. Second, the methodology used, and the analyses performed are set out in detail. Third, the results are presented in a section-structured way so that they may be better understood. Lastly, the conclusions are drawn, focusing on identified future topics for research.

2 Literature review

A literature review is a precise approach to introducing the most relevant theories, perspectives, ideas and conclusions related to a specific topic (Tranfield et al., 2003). It also provides information about current challenges and trends in the research field (Snyder, 2019). The most significant advantage of this type of analysis is the evaluation of an enormous amount of data (Touray, 2020). The techniques involved in a literature review differ, though quantitative and qualitative approaches are highly relevant in all such reviews performed in different research fields (Nutley & Davies, 1999).

Bibliometrics is another approach used to perform a literature review, and its main advantage is that it enables the output of the most relevant authors, institutions, journals and countries in the field of study to be evaluated. Drawing on these analyses, it is also possible to extract further relevant information about the challenges, trends and future lines of research in the evaluated area (Benckendorff & Zehrer, 2013).

In the current literature, it is possible to find review articles related to the field of tourism, hospitality and leisure (Agarwal & Steinmetz, 2019, Mulet-Forteza et al., 2019; Ustunel et al., 2021). Such articles are based on the extraction of the most relevant information with regard to authors and countries, and one of the main conclusions drawn in them is that this type of study in the tourism and hospitality field has been conducted significantly later than in other fields of study.

Indeed, Crouch (1994) was the first researcher to evaluate this field from the mentioned approach. The exponential interest in the area shows that knowledge is increasing.

Due to rising interest, it is possible to find recent bibliometric studies in the field of the collaborative economy in the tourism accommodation sector. For instance, Etxezarreta-Etxarri et al. (2021) examined its impact on the residential market. Complementing this perspective, the research by La et al. (2021) outlines the evolution of sharing accommodation according to three distinct stages: emergence (2012–2015), development (2016–2018), and outbreak (2019–2020). Further expanding on these themes, Vila-Lopez & Küster-Boluda (2021) identify significant impacts of the platform economy on trust, innovation and over-tourism management in the post-pandemic era, these themes of sustainability and

authenticity (Mody et al., 2021). Additionally, Güzeller & Çeliker (2018) provide an analysis of publication and citation structures, highlighting a strong focus on European contributions. Completing this, Mulet-Forteza et al. (2021) points out a predominantly Western perspective in sharing economy studies, thereby highlighting a gap in understanding from non-Western contexts.

The "collaborative economy" involves sharing assets and services between individuals, often via digital platforms. In tourism, this is exemplified by platforms like Airbnb, which have transformed accommodation options, offering alternatives to traditional services. However, this has also raised concerns about impacts on local housing markets and the need for regulatory oversight. Drawing on Etxezarreta-Etxarri et al. (2021), this bibliometric study contributes to the literature as a whole, regardless of the timeline. The results obtained from it refer to the period from 2014 to 2023, thereby showing the most significant trends in the research area over the past seven years, which, as mentioned previously, coincides with the pre- and post-COVID-19 pandemic period.

Regarding the focus of the study, Airbnb offerings now go beyond accommodation, with activity recommendations and guidance by locals being posted on the site to directly expand the services available. By 2022, there were more than six million active listings worldwide via the platform (Airbnb, 2023). The company started operating in 2007, when just two different hosts welcomed some guests to the city of San Francisco. After that, the idea continued to expand and now there are more than four million hosts.

This significant evolution and diversification of Airbnb's offerings underscore the importance and relevance of this study, which focuses on evaluating and assessing the literature published on rentals via Airbnb, capturing the breadth and implications of its growth in the tourism and hospitality sector.

3   Methodology

In this study, VOSViewer's bibliometric techniques (co-citation, keyword co-occurrence, and bibliographic coupling) were employed to analyse the literature. Co-citation analysis, as described by McCain (1990), assesses the connection between articles based on their joint citations in other papers. This method is significant as it helps identify the most influential

articles and how they are interrelated, offering insights into the foundational works and key themes in the field. The co-occurrence of author keyword analysis graphically represents authors' study topics. This is crucial for understanding the focus areas and terminological frameworks within the field. Bibliographic coupling, meanwhile, examines articles with shared references, indicating how research clusters around certain foundational texts. This approach provides a perspective on the intellectual lineage and thematic cohesion of the article. And third and lastly, that bibliographic coupling involves representing the citation of one document in two other documents (Kessler, 1963). Collectively, these techniques not only map the structural and thematic landscape of the research field but also offer insights into the articles' content, their contributions to the topic, and the evolution of discourse over time.

This analysis was performed using the Web of Science (WoS) database. Other typical databases can be used for this type of analysis, but WoS is the most influential among academics (Merigo et al., 2015). The keywords used for the search were "Airbnb" and "rental". The keyword "Airbnb" was chosen because it is the best-known short-term accommodation platform in the sharing economy. Its widespread recognition makes it a critical subject of analysis to understand trends, impacts, and operational strategies within this sector. Also "rental" was chosen because it has both a long- and a short-term vision in the market, which allows for an examination of the rental industry as a whole, capturing housing and accommodation issues ranging from temporary tourist stays to long-term residential leases.

Data were collected on 25 January 2023. All articles published up to then were taken into consideration, as were all WoS categories. A total of 385 articles published between 2014 and 25 January 2023 were identified).

Figure 1. Years included in the analysis versus the total number of articles published
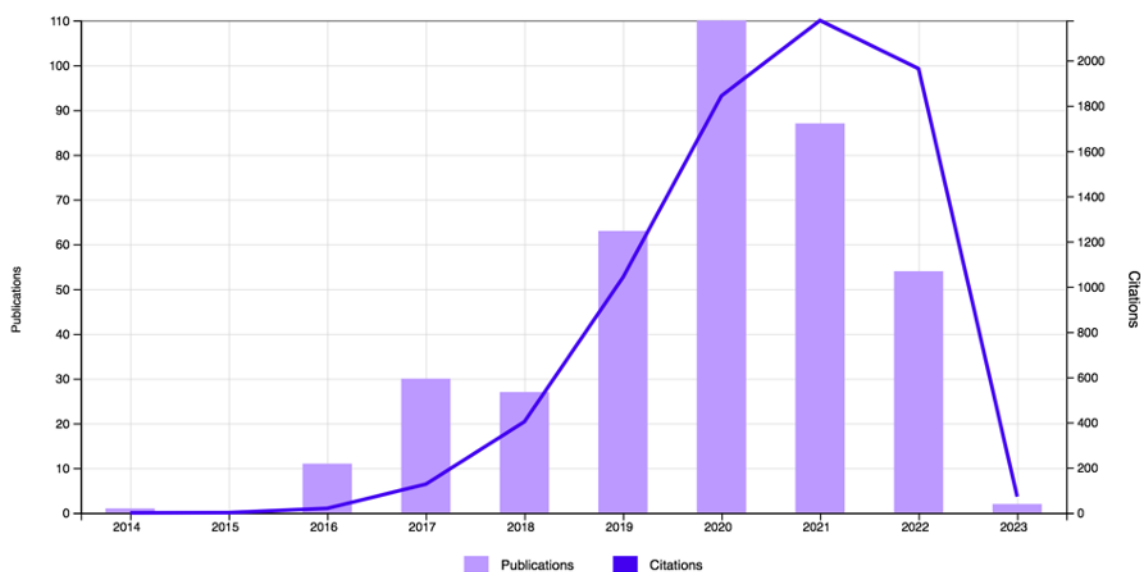
Source: Web of Science

Figure 1 shows that the first article about Airbnb was published in 2014 (Zekanovic-Korona & Grzunov, 2014), even though Brian Chesky, Jose Gebbia and Nathan Blecharcyk had founded the platform in California in 2008. There is, therefore, a gap of six years between the platform's market launch and the first published study about it. It also shows that the peak years for publications were 2019 to 2022, indicating the growing interest in the topic.

Table 1. Number of articles published between 2014 and 2023 in the top 10 journals included in the analysis

RANKING	JOURNALS	NUMBER OF ARTICLES	MAIN TOPICS OF RESEARCH
1	Current Issues in Tourism	17	Trust 24% Supply 18% Neg. impacts 19% Rental regulation 29%
2	International Journal of Hospitality Management	15	Trust 33% Supply 13% Neg. impacts 13% Rental regulation 27% Academic research 13%

3	Sustainability	11	Trust 9% Neg. impacts 45% Sustainability 45%
4	Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space	8	Supply 25% Neg. impacts 25% Rental regulation 50%
5	Tourism Management	8	Supply 13% Neg. impacts 25% Sustainability 63%
6	Annals of Tourism Research	7	Trust 43% Supply 14% Neg. impacts 29% Rental regulation 14%
7	International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research	7	Trust 57% Neg. impacts 14% Rental regulation 14% Digital marketing 14%
8	European Journal of Tourism Research	5	Trust 17% Supply 33% Neg. impacts 17% Rental regulation 33%
9	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	5	Supply 80% Rental regulation 20%
10	International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis	5	Supply 20% Neg. impacts 20% Rental regulation 60%

Source: Web of Science

Table 2. Number of articles published between 2014 and 2023 in the top 10 WoS categories included in the analysis (note that some articles fall into more than one category)

RANKING	CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF ARTICLES

1	Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism	136
2	Environmental Studies	59
3	Geography	57
4	Urban Studies	55
5	Management	39
6	Economics	35
7	Computer Science, Information Systems	25
8	Business	24
9	Computer Science, Theory and Methods	24
10	Regional Urban Planning	21

Source: Web of Science

Table 1 shows that, out of the 385 articles considered, 88 (22%) were published in the top 10 journals. All of these are linked to the fields of tourism, hospitality, sustainability, management and the economy. Additionally, the last column has been used to categorise articles into distinct themes such as trust, supply, negative impacts, rental regulation, sustainability, and digital marketing. Notably, there is a significant number of articles related to rental regulation.

Regarding the WoS categories shown in Table 2, 96% of the journals fell into at least one of these 10 categories, since one journal could be indexed in more than one category. The WoS categories include tourism, urban studies, economy and geography.

Once the articles for consideration had been identified (385) and downloaded from the WoS database, the software tool VOSViewer was used (van Eck & Waltman, 2010) to apply various types of bibliometric techniques. VOSViewer allows bibliometric data to be visually depicted. Both analyses conducted, compiling information under a full counting system (Mulet-Forteza et al., 2022), provide a one-unit point to each author contributor in an article (Mulet-Forteza et al., 2020). Data obtained from WoS have been cleaned and unified to avoid duplicities in the results (Martinez-Garcia et al., 2023). For example, certain keywords were recorded in various forms, such as changing "short-term rentals" and "short term rentals" to

"short-term rental", "to-peer accommodation" to "peer-to-peer accommodation", or singularising plurals like "hotels" and "economies" to "hotel" and "economy". The same is applicable to authors like "Gant, AC" and "Cocola-Gant, A", who are, in fact, the same author.

4 Results

4.1 Co-occurrence keywords

Co-occurrence of all article keywords calculates the number of co-occurrences of keywords when they appear together in articles. Figure 2 shows the 50 most representative keywords in the articles, which were repeated at least five times.

Figure 2. Co-occurrence network of keywords of the articles
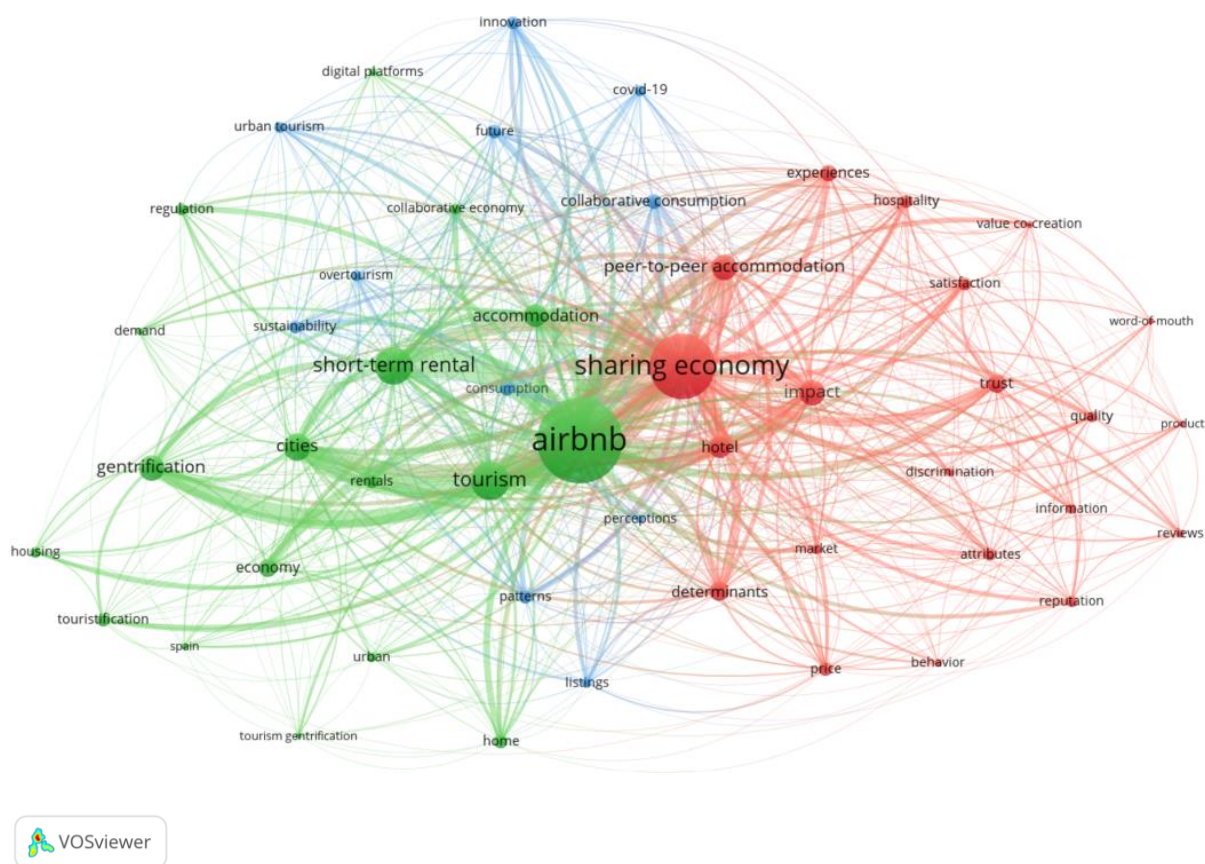
Source: VosViewer

Figure 2 shows that the keywords "Airbnb" and "sharing economy" are closely and strongly related, because articles focusing on Airbnb also focus on the sharing economy. Going into depth, the words included in the red cluster are associated with the "sharing economy" and the hospitality industry in general. The keywords in the articles analysed focus mainly on guest experience analysis, as indicated by words such as "trust", "satisfaction" and "experiences". Moreover, it is possible to see that "reviews" is a keyword in this cluster alongside "attributes", which are deemed to measure "satisfaction", "price" and "quality". These keywords are elements that guests assess when asked to write a review and to rate a property on Airbnb. Thus, these keywords examine topics such as the economic benefits of the collaborative economy for hospitality businesses, the attributes of successful hospitality businesses in the platform economy, and the level of trust, as well as the "peer-to-peer" aspect. In the deeper analysis, the red cluster also contains keywords linked to the methodology used in the articles under consideration, mainly "sentimental analysis" and "machine learning".

Meanwhile, the green cluster includes "Airbnb", "gentrification", "tourism", "short-term rental", "economy", "accommodation" and "home" as bigger nodes. These keywords are related to urban development and tourism management in the region. They analyse sharing economy-related problems in the destination, such as those potentially leading to the displacement of low-income residents and resulting in a lack of affordable housing caused by the gentrification of some neighbourhoods. In this respect, this cluster seems to be the most critical one in relation to the sharing economy phenomenon. It includes the terms "touristification", "tourism gentrification", "housing affordability" and "holiday rental". The articles containing these keywords focus on the impact of Airbnb on the economy and the geographic planning of destinations.

Finally, the blue cluster is linked to new problems that destinations must deal with in the sharing economy, such as regulations for this new activity, or "overtourism" related particularly to "urban tourism", which is again close to the green cluster. Moreover, the blue cluster is related to new challenges and trends in research into this topic, such as "innovation" and "sustainable" tourism.

It is critical to understand the collaborative roles of both the tourism industry and governmental bodies in leveraging new tools for sustainability and innovation for the future of this sector. Moreover, sustainable initiatives in cities have benefits for the collaborative consumption economy in general. Also worthy of mention is "covid-19", which appears in the blue cluster.

VOSViewer also allows visualising the evolution, over the years, of the most repeated keywords in the articles through an overlay map. Figure 3 takes into consideration a citation threshold of 5 and the 50 most representative co-citation keywords from the first article published in 2014 to the last one in 2023. However, as can be observed, the most representative words are concentrated in the period between 2018 and 2021, which are the years with the highest numbers of articles.

Figure 3. Overlay of co-occurrence network of keywords
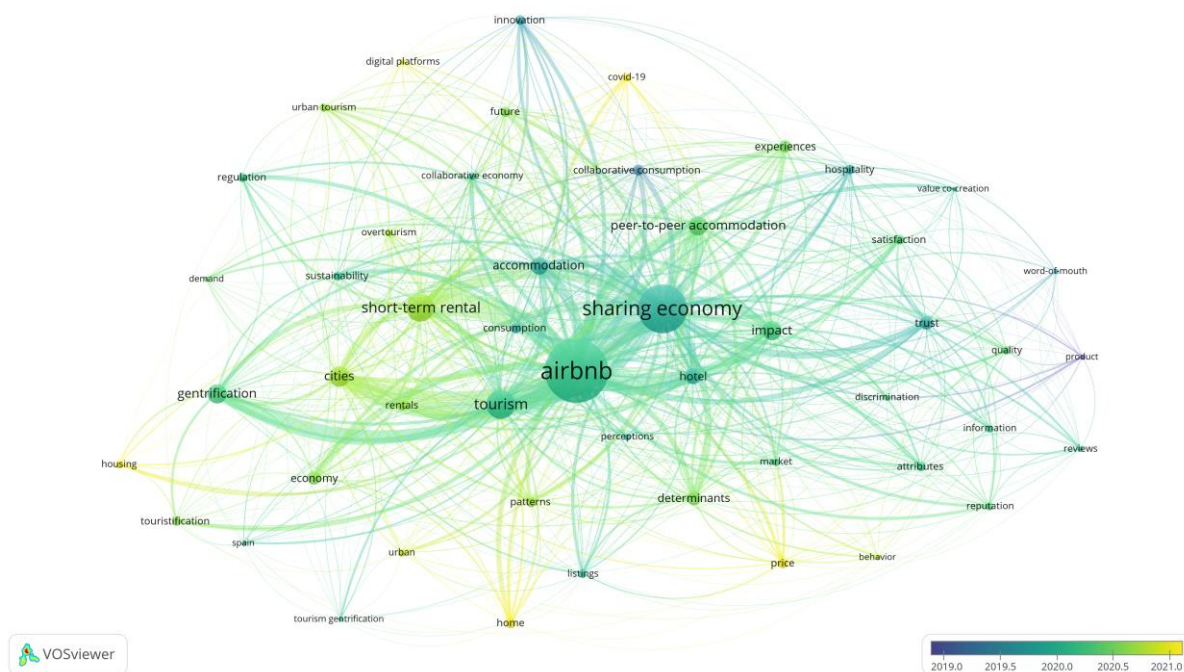
Source: VosViewer

Figure 3 shows that before the pandemic era, terms related to "product" and "collaborative consumption" were investigated. At the end of 2019, words such as "innovation" and "collaborative economy" appeared on the scene.

Also in 2019, concepts such as "gentrification" and "regulation" emerged. These concepts determined the market trend and highlighted the concerns of city councils and city dwellers. In addition, words like "price" and "demand" are very significant since accommodation of the type under discussion has somehow disrupted the market and influenced how prices are set, both in the short- and long-term rentals markets (Wang & Nicolau, 2017).

Then, as Figure 3 also shows, more intangible characteristics related to "trust", "word of mouth", "sustainability" and "reviews" were investigated starting at the beginning of 2020. As the Figure shows, the second half of 2020 includes terms related to "reputation", "satisfaction" and "value co-creation" linked to "experiences", while articles related to the "regulation" of Airbnb also gained in significance.

It was not until 2021 that the word "COVID-19" appeared for the first time in the literature studied, and likewise, the word "future" in relation to business. Furthermore, in the deeper analysis, the term which gained prominence in 2021, "platform economy", a concept used in more recent articles, indicates a digital-driven economic system where online platforms facilitate exchanges between consumers and providers of goods and services (Brydges et al., 2021; Shabrina et al., 2022). The evolution and boom of platforms, specifically for rentals, has created a new group of concepts and terms, not only in the market but also in society. These include "collaborative consumption", "accommodation platform" and "platform economy", among others.

4.2 Co-citations of journals

A co-citation analysis was performed by including the different journals found in the data extracted from the database analysed. Figure 4 shows the results of the co-citation analysis. The parameters considered in order to create the chart were a minimum threshold of 100 documents and 17 typical connections.

**Figure 4. Co-citation of journals**
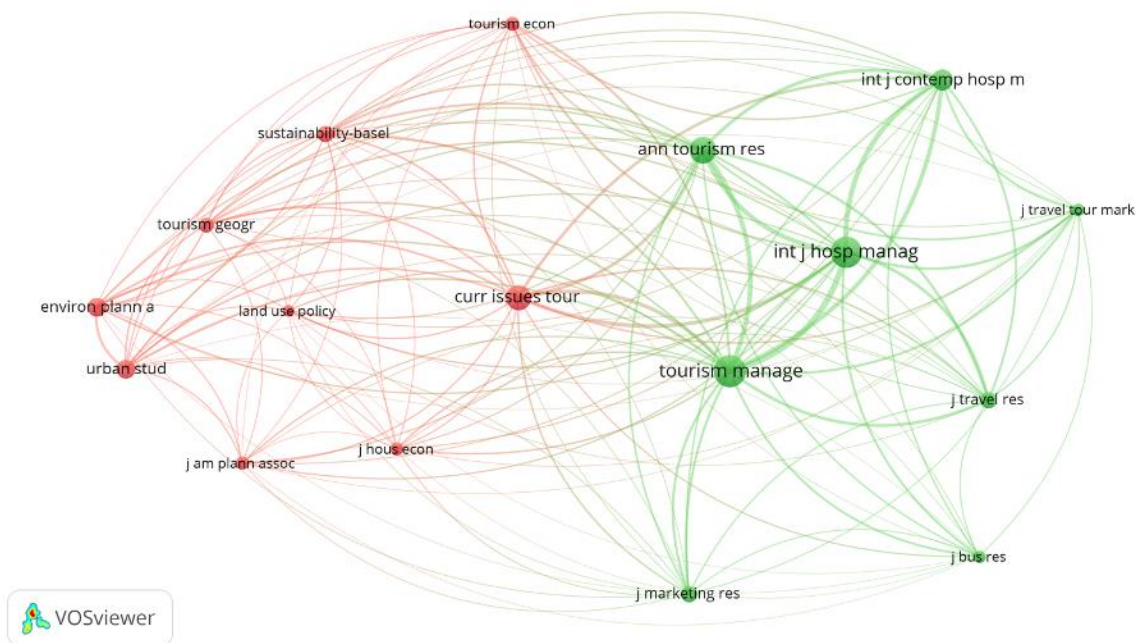
Source: VosViewer

It is important to mention that the size of the node is somewhat proportional to the number of citations, and that the connections show the journals that mostly co-cite one another. To create Figure 4, a threshold of 100 was applied to obtain a chart of the most relevant journals in the field of study while avoiding overcomplexity. Therefore, it is possible to see two main nodes with other secondary nodes. The main nodes are related to Urban Studies and Planning (red group), Tourism Management, and the International Journal of Hospitality Management (green group). These journals are indexed in the categories of Environmental Studies (Urban Studies and Tourism Management) and Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism (Tourism Management and the International Journal of Hospitality Management) all of them Q1 in Journal Citation Reports 2022 (JCR).

These results mean that although there are two main clusters related firstly to urban studies and secondly to hospitality and tourism management, the topics published in these journals are closely interrelated since tourist activity is based on the territory (destination) and accommodation consumption. Moreover, ultimately, both are closely linked to sustainability, planning and geography.

4.3 Authors

Figure 5. Author citation analysis when considering a citation threshold of 70 and the 17 most representative co-citation keywords
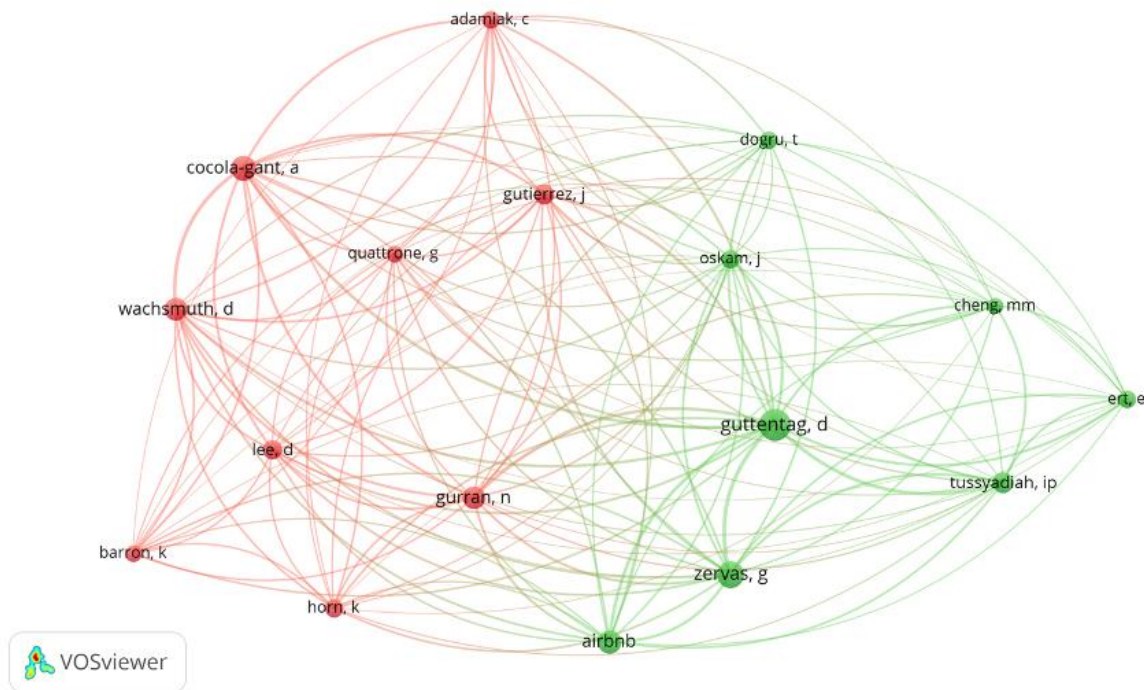
Source: VosViewer

Figure 5 shows the most co-cited authors in an article, bearing in mind that WoS data includes only the first author of a cited document. Other authors are not considered in a co-citation analysis of cited authors.

The Citations attribute indicates the number of citations received by a document or the total number of citations received by all documents published in this case by an author. When working with co-citation links, the Citations attribute indicates the number of citations of a cited author (van Eck & Waltman, 2021). With a threshold of 70 citations per document and a maximum of 17 selected documents, the most cited authors are Guttentag (259 citations), Zervas (185), Cocola-Gant (166), Airbnb (142), Wachsmuth (137), and Gurran (135).

It is worth noting that there is a clear relationship between Figures 4 and 5. Authors in the green cluster (Figure 5) publish in journals related to tourism management and hospitality management, which are the areas shown in the green cluster of Figure 4.

Guttentag (2019) provides relevant data with additional information about Airbnb and its rapid growth. It is therefore confirmed that Guttentag (2019) is one of the most cited authors because his study offers the most comprehensive analysis.

By evaluating the Airbnb platform environment from literature findings, the analysis identified six different categories of analysis: guests, hosts, supply and destinations, regulations, impacts on the tourism sector, and company. This is important because each category has a set of variables affecting services that could be studied in greater detail in order to understand the context from different perspectives.

Moreover, Guttentag and Smith (2017) provide some useful information, since they discuss the environment for accommodation platforms as well as elements that support such exponential growth and that put pressure on the hotel industry, thereby affecting their revenues, prices and rates.

Cocola-Gant has contributed to the topic with two articles (Cocola-Gant, 2016; Cocola-Gant & Gago, 2021). The article published in 2016 focuses on research into the new gentrification battlefront of holiday rentals in the city of Barcelona. In the one published in 2021, the author analyses buy-to-let investment and tourism-driven displacement in cities, specifically Lisbon.

Meanwhile, Wachsmuth and Weisler (2018) contends that Airbnb has ushered in a novel stream of potential income in the housing sector, which is consistent yet varies across different regions, leading to a novel type of rental disparity in neighbourhoods that are culturally attractive and globally renowned. This rent gap can be exploited easily by different housing actors, including developers and property owners, and can happen quickly, even before property income decreases. The most important contribution by Zervas et al. (2017) is the detailed empirical analysis of Airbnb's specific economic impact on the hotel industry, demonstrating how this key player in the sharing economy is not only generating additional

economic activity but also fundamentally reshaping competition in the accommodation sector.

It is interesting to mention that Gurran and Phibbs (2017) found the need for urgent urban policy and planning responses to address the impacts of online accommodation platforms like Airbnb in Sydney. Their research highlights the extension of Airbnb into residential areas, exacerbating rental demand and potentially removing homes from the permanent rental market, thus increasing rent pressures. This underscores the necessity for local planners to assess and revise urban planning controls, considering neighbourhood impacts and the housing market.

4.4 Bibliographic coupling for relevant countries

Figure 6. Bibliographic coupling with a citation threshold of 5 for the 12 most relevant countries
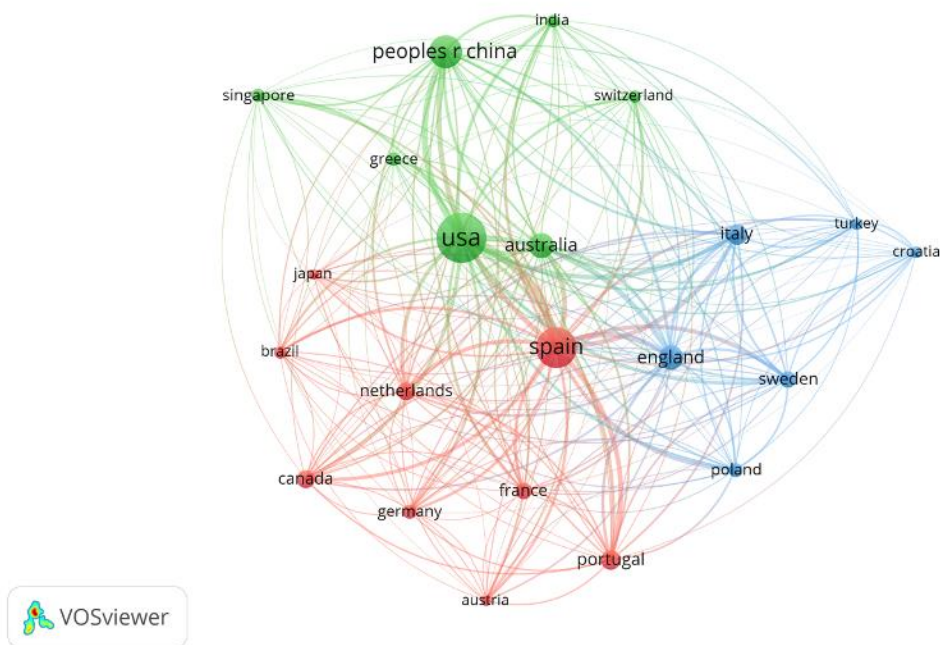
Source: VosViewer

Figure 6 shows the most relevant countries for bibliographic coupling citation, which is divided into 15 different nodes. These nodes are divided into three different clusters. The red nodes are associated with Spain, Portugal, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Canada, Brazil and Japan. Detailing the organisations and institutions that contribute to this topic, we obtained the University of Lisbon (Portugal) and the Universities of Malaga, Seville and Granada (Spain), among others. In light of the fact that Spain is one of the top five tourism destinations worldwide, it makes sense that Spanish institutions are interested in studying the effect of accommodation platforms in the tourism sector.

The green node is associated with Australia, the United States, China, India, Singapore, Greece, Austria and Switzerland. As previously detailed, the institutions in each country that we believe are related to research in this field are the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Harbin Institute of Technology, Nankai University, the University of Sydney, Pennsylvania State University, and the National University of Singapore. Thus, it can be noted that there is not just one university or set of universities researching the topic, but a huge, interconnected number of schools, faculties and international organisations all over the world trying to identify the key elements of the collaborative economy, specifically in relation to Airbnb, and the effects on the economy, tourism, society and social behaviour. Within the

study of organisations and institutions, two American universities were identified, which are significant for the study of our topic: Pennsylvania State University and University College London, both of which are ranked among the top 20 universities worldwide (Webometrics, 2022).

The blue nodes are linked to Italy, England, Turkey, Croatia, Poland and Sweden. Examples include University College London and Uppsala University in Sweden. It is interesting to see how the connections are not exclusively between countries located in the same node, but occur rather among all of them. There is evidence in the literature that justifies the existence of global collaboration between and among researchers, creating connections in different countries (Kwiek, 2021).

Meanwhile, it should be noted that most institutions and universities conduct studies in the country where the organisation is located. It is also true to say that there is a tendency to compare different destinations with cities that are benchmarks in world tourism, such as New York (Deboosere et al., 2019; Minor, 2018; Stabrowski, 2017; Hofmann, 2019) and London (Radnovic et al., 2019; Ghosh et al., 2023; Shabrina et al., 2022).

Within the studies carried out in Europe, there is a tendency to compare cities in Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany (Aguilera et al., 2021; Falk & Yang, 2021). When institutions from outside Europe conduct research on Europe, they also compare these cities (Demir & Emekli, 2021; Radnovic et al., 2019). Some of their studies analyse case studies from prominent cities such as London, Barcelona, Lisbon, Paris, Rome, Amsterdam and Berlin.

Authors such as Gutierrez and Domenech (2022) and Martin (2016) analysed Barcelona and Madrid. Meanwhile, a study by a Swedish institution (Yrigoy, 2019) investigated the Canary Islands, and a study by Huebscher et al. (2020) from Germany investigated the Balearic Islands. Another author, Cocola-Gant, collaborates with Portuguese institutions to analyse cities such as Lisbon and Porto, and with organisations based in the United Kingdom to analyse the city of London, in the main.

Additionally, there is a clear relationship between studies by Chinese, Australian and American affiliated authors. For instance, the author Cheng has conducted studies involving

organisations from the three aforementioned countries. Furthermore, we recognise that proximity and simplified visa procedures facilitate easier management of collaborations. Most of the organisations in the United States perform internal analyses based on cities like New York or Los Angeles. Zervas, Guttentag and Edelman are affiliated to organisations in the United States, and they study topics such as agglomeration, privacy rights, law, investment and the socioeconomics of Airbnb. Authors affiliated to Chinese institutions also study cities like Singapore. A logical situation is also understood to exist, which refers to sharing Asian culture and to proximity in terms of geolocation.

There are, nevertheless, specific cases where researchers from an institution analyse a distant city or destination. This is the case of authors from King Saud University in Saudi Arabia who have analysed the city of Amsterdam. However, in most articles, the location where the studies are conducted coincides with the location of the institution to which the authors are affiliated. This is the case, for example, of Navarrete Escobedo (2020) from the University of Guanajuato, who analysed gentrification in a Mexican historic district. It is worth noting, however, that the study by Negi and Tripathi (2022) from Doon University in India focuses its analysis on Europe, the United States/Canada, and Asian countries like China, Singapore, South Korea and India, in order to identify knowledge gaps and set future research directions.

4.5 Bibliographic coupling for relevant documents

Figure 7. Bibliographic coupling with a citation threshold of 60 for the 26 most relevant documents
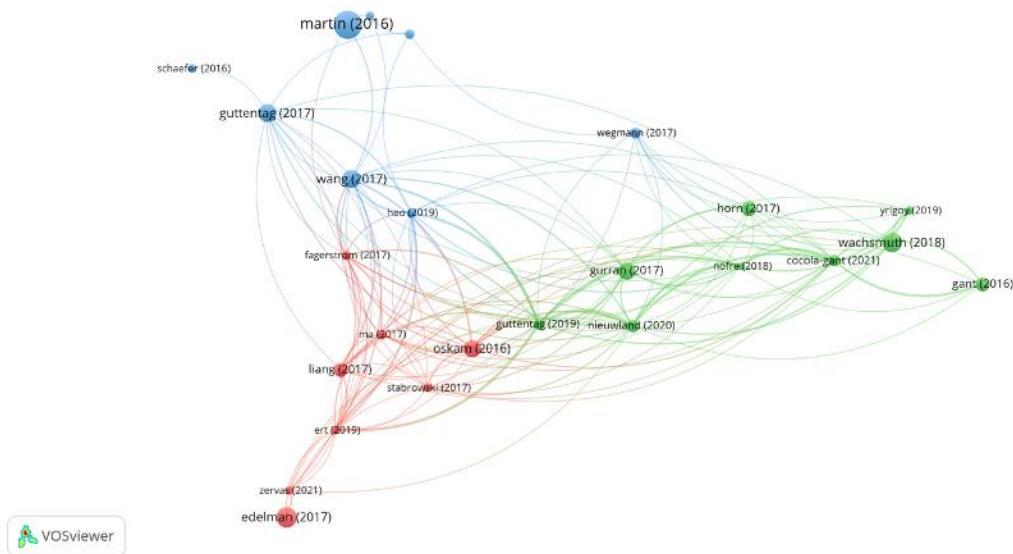
Source: VosViewer

Bibliographic coupling among documents was analysed in order to observe the evolution thereof over the years (Figure 7). Bibliographic coupling is a link between two articles citing the same document. The number of bibliographic coupling links between two documents is equal to the number of pairs of cited references in the two documents with the same match key. When a citation or bibliographic coupling network is constructed at the aggregate level of sources, authors, organisations or countries, citation or bibliographic coupling links are aggregated from individual document level to the aggregate level (van Eck & Waltman, 2021).

In bibliographic coupling, the article by Martin (2016) stands out as the most cited document (695 citations). The article not only discusses the short-term rental platform Airbnb, focused on accommodation, but also other sectors such as transportation and gifts. Martin's hypothesis postulates that the platform economy is often viewed from conflicting perspectives, with some seeing it as a promising solution for promoting sustainability and others perceiving it as a disturbing manifestation of neoliberalism. Along similar lines, the study by Wang and Nicolau (2017) concerns the identification of the determining factors of price in accommodation supply, based on the collaborative economy in the digital market. It was cited 295 times with a link strength of 44.

For a given item, the Links and Total link strength attributes, respectively, indicate the number of links between one item and another or others, and the total strength of the links

between one item and another or others. For example, in the case of co-authorship links between researchers, the Links attribute indicates the number of co-authorship links between one researcher and another or others. The Total link strength attribute indicates the total strength of the co-authorship links between one researcher and another or others (van Eck & Waltman, 2021).

In 2017, an article by Edelman et al. (2017) was highly cited (361 citations). Edelman conducted an experiment focusing on the significant bias observed in acceptance rates for guests with white names compared to those with African American names. It concluded that individuals with distinctively African American names were 16% less likely to be accepted.

In 2018, the article with the highest number of citations (327) was the one by Wachsmuth and Weisler (2018), published in the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology. In 2019, the article with the strongest link strength (73) of the entire chart was the one by Guttentag (2019), also published in the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology.

It is worth noting the articles by Cocola-Gant and Gago published in 2021 with a link strength of 48 and 131 citations, and the one by Nieuwland and van Melik published in 2020 with a link strength of 55 and 136 citations. In both cases, a high number of citations has recently been published, so they are expected to surpass other articles in terms of the number of citations over the years. In other words, the impact of these most recent articles will be higher, due also to the increasing interest in the topic and the cross-disciplinary approach to it. In both cases, gentrification and regulations are studied, as is how cities can deal with the perceived negative externalities of short-term rentals. Thus, the most recent research seems to be focusing on gentrification and its impacts on the future of the short-term platforms.

5   Conclusions

Although Airbnb had hit the market in 2008, the first article to deal with it was not published until 2014. Academia has been slow to investigate the collaborative economy phenomenon in the rental market, using the Airbnb platform as a data source. This indicates that researchers have been conservative in their approach, with most of the research on this topic emerging a decade later.

The topic of rentals on Airbnb, as analysed in this article, experienced a peak in interest between 2019 and 2021. The primary issues examined included the platform's impact on cities, the economic benefits of the collaborative economy, and its potential to shape urban economies and gentrification patterns. Additionally, there was a noticeable upward trend in the number of articles published on this topic in 2020.

In WoS, most articles have been indexed under the categories Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism, followed by Environmental Studies, Geography and Urban Studies; this is understandable given the topic under study. However, articles in the Law area are absent, so this could be a subject of future studies. In other words, everything related to the regulation of the phenomenon of short- and long-term rentals via platforms such as Airbnb, and the consequences of such regulation on the rental market and on the population of the different destinations require studying. This study, therefore, contributes to the identification of research domains that have received limited attention, and to the latest research patterns in the field. It is important to recognise the evolving terminology and perception of the Airbnb platform. Initially grouped under the "sharing economy", its classification has shifted through various terms such as "P2P internet platform", "P2P accommodation", "lodging corporation", "platform economy", "collaborative economy", "lodging industry", and "platform capitalism". However, recent consensus is increasingly aligning towards defining Airbnb as a "short-term rental platform". This evolution in terminology not only mirrors a deeper comprehension of Airbnb's business model but also underscores its significant impact on the tourism and hospitality sector.

This article stands out from the existing literature as it incorporates the most recent data up to 2023, offering added value by identifying key trending keywords that will shape the research agenda in the coming years. It also synthesises significant contributions from journals, authors, documents, institutions, and countries that are pivotal in the sector. This study found that there are three main areas of interest. The first includes guests and their experiences of the short-term rental platform, Airbnb, online reviews, ratings and trust, among other topics. These have served to gain a better understanding of users' experiences of Airbnb and to obtain data for research about the collaborative economy, mainly by users voluntarily expressing their opinions as opposed to other typical primary data sources such

as surveys and interviews, in which users are asked to take part. However, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of customer sentiment towards the sector or specific brands, it is imperative to delve deeper into sentiment analysis. This should not only encompass comments on the platforms themselves but also extend to social media interactions and advertising campaigns. Such a multifaceted approach would offer a broader perspective on the sentiment analysis of customers. Studies on Airbnb in the rental market could be expanded through the analysis of reviews, but there remains an open question concerning the representativeness of people reviewing a service on Airbnb out of the total population who have actually experienced the service.

The second main area of interest concerns topics relating to the implications of the platform in the rental market, such as the economic impacts and effects on the housing market, and how both tourists' and residents' use of it leads to rental gentrification. Studies in this area apply the rent gap theory to the process of touristification, which leads to a morphological transformation of a community into a tourism commodity (Yrigoy, 2019). One interesting future line of research would be the evaluation of the accommodation platform's impact on the promotion of rural tourism and the measurement thereof. Another would be the comparison of accommodation platforms' impact in various OECD and European countries, which could be done with geolocalised rental data and other tourism-related data, using a spatial analysis methodology. Furthermore, some of the most recent articles have discussed market evidence, as clients switched the priority of their habits and interests during the pandemic.

The third and last main area of interest relates to the consequences of the collaborative economy, such as overtourism, and to regulation and sustainability. These topics are the ones with the greatest potential for future research, especially new studies on the consequences of new regulations governing this phenomenon and these platforms, and studies on striving to achieve more sustainable tourism. In this sense, tourists' energy consumption patterns could be analysed according to the type of accommodation chosen, for instance whether staying at a private individual's home means that a guest's energy consumption is closer to that of a resident or that of a tourist staying in a hotel. This would

cast light upon whether some practices or more sustainable than others in terms of accommodation type.

From the overlay figure, we can see that most recent publications are based on the adaptation of the sector to the 2030 goals of the European Union, which focus on sustainability and innovation in the tourism, leisure and hospitality industry. The literature is internally related to these aspects by studying concepts such as price, quality, the type of reviews, innovation in the sector, and the future of tourism. The trend that we will see in upcoming studies in the literature will be increasingly related to aspects such as improving service in the platform economy, with all the focus being put on customer satisfaction. The client is still the boss of any company since every company has to adapt to constant changes to secure client bookings.

Based on the results obtained, it is concluded that the research agenda in the coming years will result in more articles being published about gentrification. The services offered by accommodation platforms in that economy complement those offered by hotels and, as a result, the hotel industry has been seriously affected. This has forced the hotel industry to improve the services it offers clients in order to attract them (Cabral & Coelho Marques, 2020).

According to authors' university affiliations, Spain, the United States and China have the highest number of published documents. In this regard, there is a match between each author's country and the geographic scope of the data used in most instances. This is surprising, considering that Airbnb data are equally available for all countries. Also, there is a growing trend to compare study-abroad destinations in different countries, with popular tourist cities like New York and London.

Research in this area is conducted by universities and institutions the world over. This topic affects all countries, since accommodation platforms are available globally. Consequently, there are strong relationships between different universities and research centres studying hospitality, tourism management, and economics in general. It would be worth investigating whether the policies implemented by universities to attract international students have an impact on the formation of lasting relationships between and among researchers from different countries, which could ultimately influence the direction of future research.

Furthermore, research could focus on whether changes in visa-granting policies for foreign students or the transition from in-person to online instruction, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will affect the nature of future research.

Finally, while there was an increase in citations of articles analysed up to 2021, there has been a noticeable decline from 2022 onwards. However, this trend should not necessarily be interpreted as an indication that the research in this field quickly becomes redundant or outdated. Rather, it is important to consider that more recent documents simply require time to be recognised and cited. The decline in citations does not imply that the most heavily cited articles fail to contribute new knowledge or theoretical insights. Instead, it may reflect a natural delay in the accumulation of citations as scholarly recognition often takes time to develop. Research needs to ensure that it advances the field by providing theoretical underpinnings and explanations as to why things happen rather than simply finding out and describing what is happening. The latter might be critical for the industry at a given point in time, but not very conducive to knowledge creation and advancement.

The main limitation of this study relates to the database used to conduct it, which was Web of Science. If a different database had been used, the results would probably have been slightly different. Another limitation involves the two keywords chosen for this study, which were specifically selected to explore the synergy between Airbnb and rental services. This choice may have influenced the study's focus and findings.

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