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Towards an ICT-led tourism governance:
A systematic literature review

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Abstract
The aims of the present paper are to identify the gaps in the current literature on tourism governance and to propose an ICT-led model of tourist destination governance. By utilizing a systematic literature review of existing literature on the issue of tourism governance, the present paper reviews 85 articles from 419 refereed articles published from the period of 1994 to 2019, employing thematic analysis to examine the data. The review reveals the gap in an ICT-based model of tourist destination governance. Based on a systematic review of recent articles, the results display elements through which effective destination governance is ensured have been identified.

Keywords: Governance, tourist destination governance, tourism governance, e-governance, e-government, information and communications technology (ICT)

1. Introduction

The concept of governance has become a popular research area in the social sciences within the last ten years. It has assumed a significant role in the agenda of scholars as an area of research from a diverse range of disciplines (Pechlaner *et al.,* 2012). Particularly after World War II, the significance of governance has seen an increase internationally, and has been widely adopted by several international political bodies (Laws *et al.,* 2011) as well as receiving considerable attention from governments. The notions of government and governance are vastly different approaches, even though their denotations are identical. Governance concerns new processes of governing, or a changed condition of an ordered rule by which society is governed (Rhodes, 1997b; Rhodes, 2007:4; Stoker, 1998). It can also be claimed that governance is regarded as an important issue for both tourism policy and planning literature (Hall, 2011b).

The concept of governance can also be applied to tourist destinations, as they encapsulate a number of diverse public and private units, as well as political bodies (Beritelli *et al.,* 2007; Pehlaner, Volgger & Herntrei, 2012). Governance addresses decision-making processes, in other words, the implementation of decisions and structures deriving from multiple actors including civil society (Bichler, 2019; DeLorenzo & Techera, 2019). In its purest form, governance refers to the system in which actors collectively govern, organize and coordinate the actions of stakeholders to obtain common outcomes (Scott & Marzano, 2015). It can equally refer to networks (Amore & Hall, 2016), cooperation and coordination (Islam, Ruhanen & Ritchie, 2018a), collaboration (Barandiarán *et al.,* 2019; Gezhi *et al.,* 2020), sharing power (Valente, Dredge & Lohmann, 2015) which are among a diverse range of actors that are generated by public and private sector representatives (Ruhanen, Scott, Ritchie & Tkaczynski, 2010), taking place at local, regional and national levels (Kagermeier *et al.,* 2018). These actors are often defined as stakeholders who are usually positioned to provide visitors with tourism products and services (Islam, Ruhanen & Ritchie 2018b).

The advent of ICT brought new technological developments for destinations and tourists, such as intelligent systems, the Internet of Things (IoT) and cloud computing. These forced destinations to adopt and develop applicable models (Femenia-Serra *et al.,* 2019). Among these models, smart tourism reflects a different phase in the expansion of ICT applied to tourism, identified by the linkage of the physical aspect with governance (Celdrán-Bernabeu *et al.,* 2018; Ivars-Baidal *et al.,* 2019). In this vein, the progress of ICT is expected to stimulate increased communication and collaboration among tourists and destination stakeholders, enabling them to accomplish the desired objectives of both sides (Jovicic, 2019). On the one hand, an effective and sustainable governance approach would be reeached by the process of inclusive and participatory decision-making at destinations (Çakar & Uzut, 2020; Thees *et al.,* 2020) including the use of ICT, which paves the way in which the intensity of interaction between tourism stakeholders can be increased (Femenia-Serra & Ivars-Baidal, 2021), which refers to the application of e-governance.

Considering the extant literature with regards to the concept of tourism driven by ICT or e-governance, there is a scarcity of theoretical models -- those investigating the possible impacts and benefits of ICT on effective governance within destination governance -- to be commonly adopted by destinations with the aim of achieving effective governance. This gap is remarkable given that the field of tourism governance is formed as an area of research with special issues (Pechlaner *et al.,* 2010), edited books (Hall, 2004; Laws *et al.,* 2011; Saarinen & Gill, 2019) and systematic reviews (Borges *et al.,* 2014; Bichler, 2019). To fill the current gap, the present systematic review adopts an integrated approach and is thereby designed to offer a model of effective destination governance on which the viability of tourist destinations could be based. In this vein, the present paper has the following objectives of:

1. Eliciting the current gaps and synthesise the previous research findings noted in leading hospitality and tourism peer-reviewed journals on the issue of tourism governance in extant literature;
2. Proposing an ICT-based model of tourist destination governance in order to achieve effective governance for main tourism stakeholders.

The present paper is structured as follows. The first section describes and elaborates both the introduction and methodology of the study. The second section takes the form of a literature review and introduces the concept of governance, including its development process and theoretical grounding. The next section presents the implications of ICT progress in hospitality, tourism and e-governance. The concluding section provides information on ICT and e-governance.

2. Literature Review
2.1 The concept of governance as an approach within Social Science
There is no commonly-accepted definition of governance, with severeal varying ones in the existing literature (Ndivo & Okech, 2020; Ruhanen *et al.,* 2010). The concept of governance is described by Scott, and Marzano (2015) as "the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority necessary to manage a nation's affairs" (p. 181). Another definition related to governance is made by Hall as "the act of governing" (2011a: 439). Fukuyama presents another definition as "a government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services, regardless of whether that government is democratic or not" (2013: 350).

A broader definition of governance was developed by Stoker (1998) and relies upon five propositions (Goodwin, 1998:8; Sharpley, 2005:181 & Stoker, 1998: 18). Each proposition aims to identify aspects of governance for consideration. Governance is described as encompassing:
- A series of associations and actors that are stemming from but are beyond government;
- The blurring of borders and responsibilities for overcoming social and economic matters;
- Power dependence associated with the relationships between associations towards joint action;
- Sovereign networks of participants;
- Acknowledgement of the capacity to complete assignments that do not depend on the power of the government to direct or use its authority, perceiving governments as able to benefit from new devices and techniques to guide progress.

The presence of good governance encourages stakeholders to effectively manage sources by ensuring diverse aspects, such as networking (Volgger & Pechlaner, 2014), cooperation and collaboration (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999), public-private partnerships (Del Chiappa & Presenza, 2013) and leadership (Valente *et al.,* 2015). Based on comprehensive literature reviews, Beaumont and Dredge (2010: 10) presented the following parameters as good governance requirements for tourist destinations, namely: positive cultures, effective communication and participation of communities, transparency and accountability, vision and leadership, recognition of diversity, equity and inclusiveness, knowledge creation, the learning and sharing of specialty, clear roles and responsibilities of actors, and finally, clear operational frameworks and progression of the network. According to Kagermeier, Amzil and Elfasskaoui (2019), preconditions of good governance entail a clear definition of actors' roles and responsibilities, and the inclusion of collaborative networks to avoid gaps and duplication of effort, and finally, good governance requires the involvement of all actors and a medium- and a long-term strategy.

2.2 Evolutionary Process of Destination Governance and Stakeholders
The concepts of governance and stakeholders are intertwined, as defined by Freeman whose concept of stakeholders as "those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist" (1984, p. 31). Donaldson and Preston (1995) were the first to develop the stakeholder theory, their work allowing it to move towards the agenda of Social Science literature as a valid and workable theory. According to the authors, the idea of stakeholder theory is based on four basic factors, namely descriptive, instrumental, normative and managerial ones. Both approaches of the respective authors mentioned above can help generate the theoretical grounding of the concept of the stakeholder on which governance is subsequently based on, by receiving prominence from a holistic perspective (Freeman, 2004; Heslinga *et al.,* 2019; Stieb, 2009).

In the 20th century, particularly after the Second World War, the significance of the concept of governance increased, and thus some supranational bodies and international organizations emerged (Laws *et al.,* 2011). Following this postulation, post-sovereign governance has been influential, which resulted in the transferring of power from states to supranational organisations (Hall, 2007). This transformative process is followed by a development of reforms made in the USA and UK, which helped engender the deregulation of government activities by transforming it into the notion of governance as a new contemporary and pluralistic management paradigm, one based predominantly on networks and partnerships involving both public and private representatives (Farmaki, 2015).

Networking among stakeholders has several different advantages in developing tourism for any tourism destination, thus it has been adopted by local tourism actors in tourist destinations (Erkuş-Öztürk & Eraydın, 2010). Six distinct types of governance exist in terms of use, namely as the minimal state, corporate governance, new public management, good governance, socio-cybernetic systems, as well as self-organizing networks (Rhodes, 1996). According to Mann (1997:475), recent developments resulting from globalisation have brought about the occurrence of five socio-spatial realms of networks pertaining to interaction:
1. Local networks, denoting for current objectives the subnational networks of interaction;
2. National networks, organized or more neutrally designed by the nation-state;
3. International networks, including relations among nationally established entities. These encompass relations between networks that are based predominantly on national rather than state-driven constitution, for example, football teams or autonomous corporations operating on an expansive field for varying purposes;
4. Transnational networks, referring to the relations that exceed national frontiers, which are not affected by national boundaries. They may either be large-scale formations, or could instead expand to the scope of a continent, or perhaps even extending to worldwide networks;
5. Global networks are either most likely to be built either by a single universal network, or by a range of networks indicating particular relations.

Each network type mentioned above can help identify the examples of different modes, but at the same level of governance (for example, national parks, tourism promotion, transport) that possesses different facets, and are applied at different levels of government (local, regional, provincial, national) and can also be used for tourist destinations (Hall, 1999). For instance, Category 1 represents governance applied in territories classified as local or rural areas of destinations, whilst the application of such networks structures adopted mostly by countries such as the United States and Switzerland having decentralized, and multi-level governance systems can fall within Category 2, which refers to intra-regions or states within a single country (Kahler & Lake 2004). For the latter categories (3 and 4), an example of the EU can be given as a supranational organization within which cross-border collaborative governance is

highly dependent on networks (Blasco *et al.,* 2014) as well as partnerships, for example, the US-Canada Border, or Alpine regions within Europe (Éber *et al.* 2018; Timothy 1999; Pechlaner, Herntrei, Pichler & Volgger, 2012). Additionally, the last category reflects networks by which governance structure hinges on supranational bodies or compositions like the UN, encompassing a number of states or countries. This development that has subsequently been fostered by globalisation, resulting in the new governance approach which went beyond traditional management (Panyik, 2015). However, tourism governance is constituted from different levels which have been dealt with from various aspects such as regional, destination and corporate governance (Pechlaner & Volgger, 2013).

In the context of tourism, governance is also applied to tourist destinations in which stakeholders represent public, private and non-governmental actors those responsible for determining and forming tourism policy and planning processes (Beritelli *et al.,* 2007). To date, only a few pieces of research have been found to intensively analyse the relationships of tourism stakeholders from the perspective of destination governance within a specific focus (see Baggio, 2017; Hall, 2011a).

The concept of tourism or tourist destination governance has gained considerable prominence, having been adopted in the field of tourism since numerous studies were carried out by a number of scholars in different research fields from the social sciences (Jessop, 1997; Kahler & Lake, 2004; Pierre, 1999; Rhodes, 1996; 1997a; 1997b; 2007; Rosenau, 1992; Provan & Kenis, 2008). This generated the theoretical foundation of tourism governance or tourist destination governance. The following section describes and elaborates on the concept within tourism context in more detail.

2.3 Tourism governance / Tourist destination governance
The terms *tourism governance* (Sofield & Li, 2011), *tourism destination governance* (Zhang & Zu, 2014) or *tourist destination governance* (Laws *et al.,* 2011) are used interchangeably in the present paper, despite their different use by several scholars in previous studies in the existing literature (d'Angella, Carlo & Sainaghi, 2010; Del Chiappa & Presenza, 2013). It has been observed that the considerable increase in the number of written studies associated with tourism and governance were conducted in the field of tourism after 2008 (Amore & Hall, 2016). Given that the spheres of governance from multi-scalar and multi-sectoral tourism perspectives Adiyia *et al.* (2014) propose a framework that includes the multifunctional coordination among a wide variety of actors. In this combinational approach, the governance system is shaped by these proposed four dimensions, known as internal, external, horizontal and vertical (Stoffelen *et al.,* 2017).

As a spatial domain, the concept has been dealt with intensively by a number of authors within global, regional, local, rural and cross-border dimensions (see Table 1). Indeed, only a few studies have only concentrated on the issue of governance from a rural perspective, referring to specific terrains (for example: Panyik, 2015; Sharpley, 2005). This has shown that governance may emerge at varying geographical scales within tourism or destination levels (Bramwell & Lane, 2011).

Table 1. Spatial Domains of Governance

Governance domain	Description & key findings	Region	Author(s)
Global governance	Global governance addresses the global-level regulation to confirm tourism products as 'ethical', concerning larger changes in the international system. Related to this issue, codes of conduct can be given as an example that defines private actors as the regulator states.	Thailand and Botswana	Duffy & Moore (2011)
National governance	From the perspective of sustainable tourism, the industry plays a crucial role and thus is described as 'keystone industry' for the government at macro level. The development of sustainable tourism has positive effects on several dimensions within community that arises by transformational governance structure.	China	Sofield & Li (2011)
	The concept of governance is investigated which is based on a hierarchical approach according to the degree which power is used by both local and government led actors at both macro and micro levels.	Turkey	Yüksel *et al.* (2005)
Local governance	The inclusive governance approach at the local level should involve a diverse range of actors, including local residents, to better obtain the desired goals of tourism stakeholders.	Residents of Termoli, Italy	Presenza *et al.* (2013)
	The authors propose four preconditions in achieving optimal governance at the local level.	Redland City, Australia	Beaumont & Dredge (2010)
Regional / Rural governance	There is a close relation between network governance and regional tourism governance to maintain sustainable tourism.	Cyprus	Farmaki (2015)
		Whistler, British Columbia	Gill & Williams (2014)
Cross-border governance	Cross-border governance, which can be used interchangeably with cross border regionalization, whose governance structure is heavily based on cross-border partnerships, as well as networks, among more than one neighbouring state or province. This kind of governance structure can usually be seen either in supranational international bodies or in a single federal state.	Cerdanya-Valley Catalan – Pyrenees	Blasco *et al.* (2014)
		US-Canada	Timothy (1999)
		Middle Tornio Valley	Prokkola (2007)

Source: Author's elaboration

2.4 Types of Tourism Governance

There are many types or modes of governance to be applied (Amore & Hall, 2016). Based on the relationship between state and stakeholders, Hall (2011a) offers a typology of governance which splits into four categories, namely: exchange, hierarchy, networking and community. In this typology, a hierarchical governance structure reveals the highest degree of state intervention, while market governance exists at the lowest level. Meanwhile, networking and community governance frameworks signal distinct styles of public-private partnerships and participation of the community (Hultman & Hall, 2012). Models of urban governance were developed by Pierre (1999), who proposed variations of governance such as managerial, corporatist, pro-growth and welfare governance. Each model of

governance defines varying characteristics from a comparative perspective which focuses on the role of nation state factors, and which play a significant role in forming urban governance.

There are two types of governance, namely top-down and bottom-up, that affect or are affected by the governance types that a state adopts (Erkuş-Öztürk, 2011), whether the type of governance is determined either by the centralised or decentralised approach (Yüksel *et al.,* 2005). The top-down type of governance embraces a vertical hierarchical managerial style which grants and disperses power deriving from a state's sovereign authority to its public sector representatives, encompassing more centralized and bureaucratic features. It is thereby criticised since it does not to include stakeholders on a vast scale, whilst the bottom-up managerial approach signals a decentralized feature endorsed by inclusiveness of all responsible key actors representing both public and private sectors, including local communities (Göymen, 2000; Islam *et al.,* 2018; Kahler & Lake, 2004; Ruhanen *et al.,* 2010).

Similarly, soft and hard governance modes of governance have been described by Dredge and Jamal (2013). According to authors, based on a non-hierarchical structure the concept of soft governance approach embraces the role of market and production systems which overlook state power and control over other agents to design, manage, and control tourism development by adopting self-regulation. On the other hand, hard governance follows a hierarchical structure in which the government's direct involvement is more conspicuous that is prone to exercise binding practices stemming from the state's power (Dredge & Jamal, 2013).

More recently, the transition from top-down managerial type of governance based on centralised approach to bottom-up managerial style that follows decentralised governance approach has been observed in tourist destinations (Farmaki, 2015). In the relevant extant literature, there is a considerable amount of research regarding governance within the domain of tourist destinations, demonstrating what good tourism management entails, and how there needs to be a delicate balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches in both formation and application of tourism policy (Dredge & Pforr, 2008).

3. Progress of ICT in tourism governance: e-governance and e-government
Progress in information technology has fostered the use of ICT in hospitality and tourism, leading to the notable emergence of new types of communications and interactions among main tourism stakeholders (Boes, Buhalis & Inversini, 2016; Buhalis, 2019; Buhalis & Law, 2008; Gössling, 2021; Ip, Leung & Law, 2010; Law, Leung & Buhalis, 2009; Xiang, Magnini & Fesenmaier, 2015).

Some internet-driven activities playing a crucial role in value creation are smart tourism (Gretzel, Koo, Sigala & Xiang, 2015), smart cities (Hollands, 2008) or smart tourism destinations (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015; Shafiee *et al.,* 2021); technology governance, digital government, smart governance and e-governance (Sigala, 2018). Moreover, the Internet of Things (IoT) and Smart Cities (or Smart Tourism Destinations) are concepts whose recognition and application have increasingly received considerable attention in both academia and the industry in general (Chung *et al.,* 2021; Perera *et al.,* 2014; Soares *et al.,* 2021). Smart governance takes place at the centre of a smart tourism destination as one of six complementary dimensions (Perera *et al.,* 2014), while it is considered a crucial tool for the improvement of smart tourism (Errichiello & Micera, 2021; Gretzel, 2022). The quality of smart governance refers to "participation in decision-making processes, transparency of governance systems, availability of public services and quality of public services and quality of political strategies" (Vanolo, 2014: 887). Using the internet as a supporting tool also better serves to increase interaction between

stakeholders, tourists and residents, while enabling collaboration and exchange information for more effective realising of a common vision (Baggio, Micera & Del Chiappa, 2020).

Table 2. Review of the concept of governance within the context of Tourist Destination Governance

Classification/ Context	Spatial Domain(s)	Author(s)	Key findings
Network	Regional	Luthe & Wyss (2016)	A regional governance scale can play a key role in providing conformation of municipalities in tourism destinations to progressive climate change and should ensure conformity to unexpected alterations at a municipal level.
	Regional	Luthe, Wyss & Schukert (2012)	Economic diversification and network structure are vital elements in providing regional resilience to climate change.
	Regional	Volgger & Pechlaner (2014)	The effect of networking capacity operates with increased DMO capability, enlarged power and adoption of the DMO within the existing destination network structure.
	Local	Farmaki (2015)	Network governance has been found to be an independent element from the context's socio-cultural, economic and environmental elements.
	Local	Beaumont & Dredge (2010)	Investigating a council-led network governance structure, a participant-led community network governance structure, as well as a local tourism organization-led industry network governance structure was supported by four key trade-offs.
	Regional	Scott, Cooper & Baggio (2010)	Network analysis is regarded as a useful component since it adopts a whole destination approach and does not focus on any single element by examining structures and connections; it also underscores weaknesses in destination structures that can be addressed by policy and management approaches.
Policy	Macro	Coles, Dinan & Hutchison (2014)	In case other states interrupt their support for tourism in response to the crisis, it is identified that the significance of developing a further understanding of what happens as public sector support is detached.
	Macro	Scott & Marzano (2015)	By relying on a critical evaluation of governance matters depending on the outlook of national tourist administration organizations, seven crucial fields of good practice are presented.
Participation Types/Approaches (bottom-up/top-down)	Macro	Ruhanen, Scott, Ritchie & Tkaczynski (2010)	Among 40 separate elements of governance, the six mostly accounted dimensions were established as accountability, transparency, involvement, structure, effectiveness and power.
Soft and Hard Governance	Regional	Dredge & Jamal (2013)	By referring to the differences between 'hard' and 'soft' power structures in destination governance, the authors set sustainable tourism foundations, suggesting that governance should be focused on local community dialogue and values. Besides proposing the spatial reestablishment of destinations, the pluralisation of destination management and community re-imagination as three components.

Classification/ Context	Spatial Domain(s)	Author(s)	Key findings
Policy-Orientation (centralized/ decentralized)	Regional	Yüksel, Bramwell & Yüksel (2005)	The findings shed light on the differences and benefits of both centralized and decentralized governances adopted by the state, which can closely determine the mode of governance which subsequently impact policy processes and outcomes.
Public-Private Relationship	Regional	Dredge (2006)	Encouraging an environment from public-private partnerships demands attentive management among state and social authorities, and the relationship between the effective tourism network and the broader, excluded community should be closely managed.
		Nordin & Svensson (2007)	Public–private relationships relying upon trust, collective risk-taking, informal frameworks and strategic consensus have a positive effect on the level of growth at a particular tourist destination.
Power Characteristics (Primary-Secondary Stakeholders)	Regional	Franch, Martini & Buffa (2010)	The analysis of the role of the actors refers to the stakeholder approach that describes the role of the stakeholder, and points out primary and secondary stakeholders by the significance of the actor and of the power within the network structure.
Leadership	Regional	Komppula (2016) Valente, Dredge & Lohmann (2015) Zehrer, Raich, Siller & Tschiderer (2014)	The leadership, which is ascribed to individuals in any particular tourist destination, may be controlled by charismatic entrepreneurs, business managers, municipalities and authoritative politicians who are likely to control the leadership at the destination.
Collaboration	Local	Islam, Ruhanen & Ritchie (2018a)	Social learning, which was applied to investigate its potential impacts on the progression and outcomes of tourism destination governance, led to advanced interactions between a formerly diverse range of groups of protected area tourism destination stakeholders.
Coordination	Local	Bregoli & Del Chiappa (2013)	As one of the most fundamental elements of governance, coordination needs to be implemented by internalizing many components which can be benefited in association to complement each other.
Typology (Exchange, Hierarchy, Networking & Community)	Macro	Hall (2011a)	The typology of governance is separated into four main areas (hierarchies, markets, networks and communities) that identify the distribution of power between public and private tourism stakeholders.
		Amore & Hall, (2016)	From the hierarchical perspective, governance differentiates between the private and public representatives by concentrating on the fundamental roles that government authorities have.

Classification/ Context	Spatial Domain(s)	Author(s)	Key findings
Modes of Governance	Regional	Erkuş-Öztürk (2011)	Both the adoption of governance type and the creation of its form are affected by the type of state.
Mobility	Regional	Dredge & Jamal (2013)	From destination governance and sustainability perspectives, mobilities can have substantial impacts on and contribute to the spatial reestablishment of destinations, the pluralisation of destination management and re-imagination of community.
Sustainability	Regional	Trousdale (1999)	More effective planning depends on a wide systematic assessment and should be articulated with advanced governance to transit from knowledge to implementation.
	Local	Gill & Williams (2014)	The presence of entrepreneurs in tourism destination governance is crucial, while the joint power of different stakeholders in reinforcement of sustainability emerges as an integral part which plays an important role.
	Macro	Sofield & Li (2011)	Sustainable tourism development has been found to have a positive impact on several areas in tourist destinations, such as transport, wildlife and natural heritage conservation and regional development.
	Regional	Farmaki (2015)	Network governance refers to the horizontal relations between regional, national and global networks.
Destination Management Organizations (DMOs)	Regional	Pechlaner, Volgger & Herntrei (2012)	Destination management organizations (DMOs) are termed the interface between destination governance and governance, and has been found to be an integral element in ensuring efficient and effective destination governance.
Innovation	Regional	Pechlaner, Herntrei, Pichler & Volgger (2012)	The results of the study show there is a cooperation of semi-private institutions in a destination under research, reflecting features of existing as an essential part of a developing regional innovation system. Furthermore, destination management organisation emerges as the integral component which takes a crucial and significant part in the regional innovation system.

Source: Author's elaboration

It is clear that those who use public spaces and shared buildings require a fundamental role in designing them. This is key to the approach of a developed and smart city (Walters, 2011). From this perspective, developments in internet and mobile technology in recent years have precipitated fast-paced shifts in tourism IT, which has subsequently altered the tourism industry and subsequently brought some fundamental changes into which e-governance falls. These intereactions are identified as follows (see Yuan *et al.,* 2018):

- Interaction of people and organization (IPO);
- Interaction of people and information (IPI);
- Interaction of people and technology (IPT);
- Interaction of organization and information (IOI);
- Interaction of organization and technology (IOT);
- Technological implementation (TI).

This emerging interaction process raised the digital or namely e-government and e-governance phenomenon that has fundamentally changed the way stakeholders may provide effective services to users. The meanings of government and governance differ significantly from each other. In this sense, the concept of governance includes broader connotations to the management approach, governance adopts governmental activities as well as informal and non-governmental mechanisms that work through institutions, both public and private (Scott & Marzano, 2015: 182). Similarly, there is also a clear difference between e-government and e-governance. Moreover, the concept of e-governance encapsulates a series of activities such as electronic democracy, or e-democracy, and e-government (Saxena, 2005).

The OECD defines digital government as "how governments can best use information and communication technologies (ICT) to embrace good government principles and achieve policy goals" (2018a). It encapsulates different levels of interactions at different stages among main tourism stakeholders in any particular tourist destinations. For instance, being an integral part of eTourism and ICT, e-government can provide several different tourism-related activities, including visa processing with tourists before, during and after their journeys (Adukaite *et al.,* 2014).

The e-government facility can help increase main tourism stakeholder effectiveness. Based on the use of digital technology by stakeholders, such as destination management organizations (DMOs), public authorities as well as travel and tourism firms can better operate their businesses and connect with visitors, citizens and each other, while potentially developing policies to improve larger social, economic and cultural surroundings (Janowski, 2015; Kalbaska *et al.,* 2017). According to Yadav & Singh (2013: 37), e-governance has four fundamental pillars:

- Connectivity -- Accessibility of government services to the public.
- Knowledge -- IT-driven knowledge to be shared among parties consisting of the key stakeholders.
- Data content -- Division of any knowledge or information through the internet via databases.
- Capital -- Public or private partnership that identifies the money with which governments provides services to citizens or stakeholders as a whole.

E-governance is defined as "rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which powers are exercised at different levels, particularly as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence; the 'good governance' paradigm has emerged as an important driver of the transformation necessary" (Paskaleva, 2009: 406). Decent e-governance can provide several useful services to its users (Dindsa *et al.,* 2013). These can be shown as some of e-governance facilities or services for any particular tourist destination (Yadav & Singh, 2013).

Overall, there are four fundamental benefits of e-governance for effective tourism governance that are summarised as improved data, communication and participation, accountability and finally, transparency and crowdsourcing (E-governance, 2019). As a result, the presence of stakeholder efficiency and effectiveness can be provided through smart governance using of ICT that potentially accelerates stakeholder participation and interaction in terms of decision-making processes (Mandić & Kennell, 2021).

4. Method

4.1 Review and scope of selected articles

The present paper comprises a systematic review of the literature on the issue of governance within tourism. A synthesis of the literature is implemented, which is the most reliable research technique since it provides robust and rigorous findings (Jiang, Ritchie & Benckendorf, 2019). While systematic reviews can be employed to make reasonable predictions for future events or situations (Denyer & Tranfield, 2006), they require clear indicators, which comprise the inclusion or exclusion criteria for research during the systematic review need to be set and explicitly produced (Gretzel & Kennedy-Eden, 2012). It is considered one of the review strategies designed with certain strategies to help avoid bias (Ustunel *et al.,* 2021). Alongside this, systematic reviews increase the quality of the review process and result by implementing a procedure which is both transparent and reproducible (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). Due to several advantages that the systematic literature presents to scholars, its use is receiving greater attention in the fields of tourism and hospitality (Antonova *et al.,* 2021).

The systematic review of the literature employed in the present research consists of seven stages (Müller *et al.,* 2020):

1) Developing a research question;
2) Selection of keywords at two levels;
3) Defining the databases that are consistent with research;
4) Determining the limitations of the keyword search;
5) Development of a review strategy;
6) Examining findings and results, obtaining the desired literature;
7) Creating an inventory that includes instruments, as well as their key figures.

By using the key words search method from the period of September to December 2019, data were collected from SCOPUS since it can provide broader indexes database compared to others in Social Sciences and ranks journals, according to their average prestige for each article which can be utilized for journal comparisons in the process of scientific evaluation (Vuignier, 2016). During the course of generating the data set, several inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied (Bichler, 2019; Tranfield *et al.,* 2003). As such, only peer-reviewed Hospitality and Tourism Journals, published exclusively in English, were subjected to thematic analysis, whereas books, book chapters, reviews and conference proceedings were excluded from the review process (Kim *et al.,* 2018; Papamitsiou & Economides, 2014). Key search terms which were defined after a review of the existing literature (see Table 2) included 'destination governance' (n=82), 'tourism governance' (n=206), 'tourist destination governance' (n=24) and 'governance in tourism' (n=107).

4.2 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to examine the data through computer-aided software. After review and screening, the data set duplicates were removed, items were decreased for analysis, finally 85 articles remained (see Table 3). During the course of relevant literature review for the present paper, three special issue papers were most pertinent, namely those whose specific theme related closely with destination governance literature published by recognised journals in the field, specifically that of the Journal of Sustainable Tourism (2011, Vol. 19), Tourism Review (2010, Vol. 4) and Sustainability (2019, Issue 11).

Table 3. List of Journals

Journals	n	(%)
Anatolia	1	1.1%
Annals of Tourism Research	6	7.0%
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	2	2.3%
Current Issues in Tourism	3	3.5%
European Journal of Tourism Research	1	1.1%
International Journal of Tourism Research	2	2.3%
Journal of China Tourism Research	1	1.1%
Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	4	4.7%
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Management	1	1.1%
Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events	1	1.1%
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	25	29%
Journal of Tourism & Cultural Change	1	1.1%
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	1	1.1%
Journal of Travel Research	2	2.3%
Mobilities	1	1.1%
Sustainability	7	8.2%
The Service Industrial Journal	1	1.1%
Tourism Geographies	5	5.8%
Tourism Management	8	9.4%
Tourism Management Perspectives	4	4.7%
Tourism Planning & Development	3	3.5%
Tourism Recreation Research	3	3.5%
Tourism Review	1	1.1%
Worldwide Hospitality & Tourism Themes	1	1.1%
Total	**85**	**100**

5. Results

The review process revealed a gap of the ICT-led framework for governance to be applied at the destination level. The analysis has further shown that a majority of existing studies associated with the concept of destination governance dominantly have employed the qualitative research method by adopting a case study technique as a most appropriate research design (see Blasco *et al.,* 2014; Çakar, 2018; Dredge & Jamal, 2013; Farmaki, 2015; Sharpley & Ussi 2014; Siakwah *et al.*, 2019; Wesley & Pforr 2010; Zahra, 2011) concentrating on exploratory and descriptive research paradigms (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010), and only a few papers have embraced the quantitative approach (e.g., Panyik, 2015; Volgger & Pechlaner, 2014; Yeh & Trejos, 2015) while the use of mixed methods remains very limited (for example, Dinica, 2009; Tejada *et al.,* 2011 -- see Table 4).

The nature of the research papers was examined by using VOSwiever, which revealed the various scientific areas such as risk, geography, tourism planning, stakeholder engagement, local resident and eco-system (see Figure 1). By considering the thematic range of the articles and their contexts, the analysis has identified a wide variety of topics regarding governance within the context of tourism, namely: collaboration, (Zeppel, 2012), sustainability (Cizel *et al.,* 2016), cittaslow (Presenza *et al.,* 2015), cross-border tourism governance (Stoffelen *et al.,* 2017), crisis management (Çakar, 2018), marine wildlife tourism (DeLorenzo & Techera, 2019), local residents (Presenza *et al.,* 2013), typology (Hall, 2011a), mobility (Dredge & Jamal, 2013), event tourism (Dredge & Whitford, 2011), coastal tourism (Zahra, 2011), climate change (Jamal & Watt, 2011), value chains (Song *et al.,* 2013), higher education (Coles, 2009), political economy (Wan & Bramwell, 2015) and finally, heritage protection and tourism development (Wang & Bramwell, 2012 -- see Table 4).

Figure 1. The concept map of the co-occurrence analysis

Figure 2. Distribution of publications by year (n=85)

Table 4. Distribution of publications by journals and methods used

Journals	Number of publications	Qualitative	Quantitative	Conceptual	Mixed	(%)
Anatolia	1	1	-	-	-	1.1%
Annals of Tourism Research	6	5	-	1	-	7.0%
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	2	1	1	-	-	2.3%
Current Issues in Tourism	3	2	1	-	-	3.5%
European Journal of Tourism Research	1	-	-	1	-	1.1%
International Journal of Tourism Research	2	1	1	-	-	2.3%
Journal of China Tourism Research	1	1	-	-	-	1.1%
Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	4	2	1	1	-	4.7%
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Management	1	-	-	1	-	1.1%
Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events	1	1	-	-	-	1.1%
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	25	14	1	7	3	29%
Journal of Tourism & Cultural Change	1	1	-	-	-	1.1%
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	1	1	-	-	-	1.1%
Journal of Travel Research	2	1	1	-	-	2.3%
Mobilities	1	-	-	1	-	1.1%
Sustainability	7	3	1	1	2	8.2%
The Service Industrial Journal	1	-	-	-	1	1.1%
Tourism Geographies	5	4	-	1	-	5.8%
Tourism Management	8	3	4	1	-	9.4%
Tourism Management Perspectives	4	1	1	2	-	4.7%
Tourism Planning & Development	3	1	2	-	-	3.5%
Tourism Recreation Research	3	1	-	2	-	3.5%
Tourism Review	1	1	-	-	-	1.1%
Worldwide Hospitality & Tourism Themes	1	1	-	-	-	1.1%
Total	85	46	14	19	5	100

Upon studying Figure 2 it can be seen that 1994 is the year in which the published article firstly appeared. When considering the distribution of publications by years, results support the observation that over recent decades studies on governance within the context of tourism have been dramatically growing in number, attracting the attention of many tourism researchers and scholars over recent decades. Besides, the number of published articles shows a significant rise since 2016. Moreover, Figure 2 also confirms a slight reduction in the number of articles published on the topic between the periods of 2011 - 2012 and 2015 - 2016. Despite the observation that there appears to be fluctuations in publication numbers between 2010 and 2017, increasing number of published articles between 2016 and 2019, signal that field of study has regained its significance for scholars.

When considering the methods used in reviewing these papers, it can be claimed that qualitative methods are prominently utilized as a research paradigm. This stance can be related to the fact that the field of governance is more prone to be explored through a qualitative paradigm, thus scholars in the field of tourism have employed it to a considerable degree. Moreover, the data also confirm that the Journal of Sustainable Tourism is leading as publishing the highest number of articles with 29% (n=25), while the Tourism Management Journal (n=8) is ranked second with a percentage of 9.4% which is followed by the Sustainability journal that published fewer articles (n=7).

5.1 Dimensions Effective Tourist Destination Governance

Based on thematic analysis approach derived from the literature review, seven key categories were created as the drivers of the good governance model, and are as follows: cohesion, cooperation and collaboration, coordination and network, knowledge sharing and the exchange of information, public-private partnerships and interaction, equal participation and involvement of all stakeholders, and finally, leadership. An ICT-led model (see Figure 3) is proposed to explain the dimensions of effective tourist destination governance.
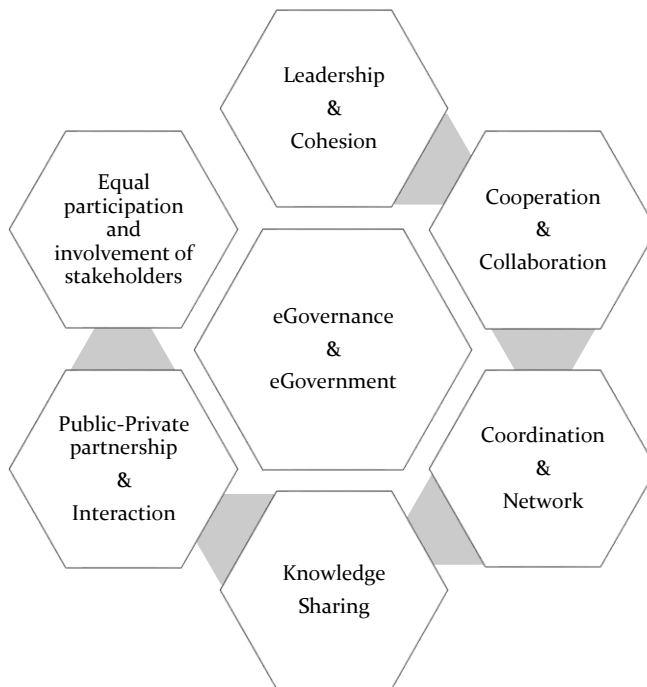

Figure 3. Proposed framework of effective ICT-based tourist destination governance

1. Leadership and Cohesion: The elements of leadership is embedded within a network structure of any particular tourist destination governance, manifesting the difficulties of leading, organizing and communicating with stakeholders in both individual and destination networks as a whole (Pechlaner, Kozak & Volgger, 2014). Since both destination leadership and destination governance include finding strategies and goals, leadership is treated as one of the most crucial constituents of destination governance (Beritelli & Bieger, 2014). Cohesion refers to the degree to which key contributors of tourist destination are engaged in realizing aims and desired objectives. Through its parameters by which

cohesion is measured, such as centrality, density and clustering, the extent to which the group members interact with each other can be measured (Scott, Cooper & Baggio, 2008).

2. Cooperation and Collaboration: concepts that are inextricably linked to each other, cooperation and collaboration have been found as the widest elements of the developed model. Cooperation denotes stakeholders working together, while collaboration refers to joint decision-making (Jamal & Getz, 1995). Collaborative actions for tourism planning contain in-situ exchanges among multiple stakeholders, actors representing public, semi-public, private sectors along with voluntary sectors, such as pressure and others interest groups (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). As a consequence, collaborative governance was improved in response to arguments with regards to whether traditional government-led structures are able to remedy current contemporary societal issues (Keyim, 2018).

3. Networking and Coordination: The organization of any tourist destination can be assumed to be a network comprised of various interdependent stakeholders (Cooper, Scott & Baggio, 2009), encapsulating public and private actors and centralized within a social network (Del Chiappa & Presenza, 2013). The status of actors, their connections with other actors and the quality of these ties, and the structure of groups and conglomerates are all patterns associated with network concepts related to issues of power (Beritelli & Laesser, 2011). In tourism coordination, this is used at different levels (e.g. horizontal and vertical) and different types, such as administration and policy coordination (Hall, 1999). From the perspective of destination governance, coordination is also regarded as a vital element of a destination's governance structure (Bregoli & Del Chiappa, 2013). Therefore, the presence of coordination can have a meaningful effect on the development of a destination (Moscardo, 2011b), while the absence of coordination can lead to ineffective management (Richins, 2011), which is also needed for optimum tourism development ensured by stakeholders (Spyriadis *et al.*, 2011) as shown in the proposed model.

4. Knowledge Sharing and Information exchange: Both of these elements are seen to be fundamental to destination structures as they have a crucial role for the innovation of tourist destinations with the aim of remaining competitive (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Both are regarded as the one of the prerequisites in ensuring collaboration at destination level, increasing efficiency and effectiveness of stakeholder participation, in particular after the emergence of a series of critical events, such as a disaster (Jiang & Ritchie, 2017). Also, the element of knowledge is being given greater attention as it is assumed to be the basic elements of power (Moscardo, 2011a). Therefore, it is commonly believed that the effective transfer and sharing of knowledge between stakeholders are essential for competitiveness (Del Chiappa & Baggio, 2015).

5. Public-private partnership and interaction: Public-private partnerships, which are seen to be an integral part of successful destination management, would only come about by ensuring the key element of networking (Graci, 2013; Hall 2011a; Amore & Hall, 2016). Reflecting official and inofficial relationships among government-led local actors and industry representatives, they have a greater influence on the capability of the destination to exert these public-private partnerships (Dredge, 2006). This depends on a number of components, such as trust, collective risk-taking, unofficial frameworks and strategic consensus, which appear to have a substantial effect on the level of growth and innovation at destinations (Nordin & Svensson, 2007). Chambers of commerce, commissions related to tourism, associations of the tourism industry, convention bureaus, development agencies and tourist boards at local level can be cited as some instances of public-private partnerships (Zapata & Hall, 2012), which were found in articles during the review process.

6. Equal Participation and Involvement of all Stakeholders: The definition of equality can be stated as "the formal criterion according to which all the actors and the subjects involved in a decision-making process [...] put in the same formal condition to participate, and where they are approached with an equal sense of respect" (Hazenberg, 2015: 297). Equal participation means providing tourism stakeholders' full participation and inclusiveness of local communities in decision-making mechanism concerned with inclusion of a wide variety of actors; these have an equal say in tourism planning and policy issues at the destination level (Hansen, 2007; Svensson *et al.*, 2005). The review process of selected articles confirmed that this principle is treated as one of the most significant principles of good governance systems (Spyriadis, Buhalis & Fyall, 2011) as well as generating one of the most compelling dimensions of participative or democratic governance (Sigala & Marinidis, 2012).

7. e-Governance and e-Government: Overall, the scope of the reviewed articles revealed that currently, with the rapid development of technology, relationships among stakeholders can be facilitated through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) not only in states level such as the EU (Torres *et al.,* 2006) but also in government relationships with its different stakeholders, representing both public and private sector (Adukaite *et al.,* 2014). It was also found that the development process of the internet and ICT have had profound effects on the relationships among tourism stakeholders. More recently, the concept of electronic governance (e-governance) has emerged, which enables ease of communication among key actors in order to achieve desired and particular objectives providing collective participation in terms of decision-making processes through the development of Web 2.0, and has opened new research avenues for scholars in the field of tourism (Sigala, Christou & Gretzel, 2012; Sigala & Marinidis, 2012). E-governance is also closely related to the concept of e-government (Presenza *et al.,* 2014).

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The aims of the present review are to elicit the gaps in the existing literature on tourism governance, and to subsequently propose an ICT-driven model of tourist destination governance. As such, an evolutionary process of the concept of governance and e-governance was offered, by offering a theoretical model of tourist destination governance from a holistic perspective. In this vein, the paper aims to contribute novel findings and provide theory in this field. Although the current review presents a wider understanding of theories and approaches developed in existing literature in tourist destination governance, there seems to still be a lack of theoretical contributions to determine if there is an effective model to be commonly embraced by tourism stakeholders in order to obtain effective ICT-based governance at the destination level. Having considered this omission, a review of the current literature in the field appears necessary, and is specifically designed to address the theoretical contributions that may subsequently pave the way as to which methodological approaches will likely be based on previous systematic studies to accomplish the desired governance model.

By aiming to fill these gaps, the present paper wishes to contribute to the development of a framework of tourist destination governance to be empirically corroborated by future research studies, discussing the benefits and applicability of e-governance for tourism stakeholders as a necessity of smart tourism destinations (Jovicic, 2019).

The findings of the study reveal that there are several vital elements through which effective destination governance could be reached. Through a comprehensive review of relevant literature, these were identified as the following: cohesion, cooperation and collaboration, coordination and networking, knowledge-sharing/ information exchange, public-private partnerships and interaction, equal participation and involvement of all stakeholders, and finally, leadership. Further, it has been also

indicated that the use of ICT in determining policy and planning activities enables stakeholder engagement, an interaction that is involved in decision-making processes in effective ways. It has also been shown that effective governance at any tourism destination can be facilitated through establishing the use of ICT, namely e-governance, which has paved the way for multi-layered and manifold interactions which became known among main stakeholders at tourist destinations. By distancing itself from a more bureaucratic approach, and moving towards a pluralistic form, it also facilitates decision-making processes that are more citizen-engaged and stakeholder-involved, through interactions that subsequently enhance an effective governance structure.

Based on the use of ICT, e-governance application can be considered as one of the main drivers of greater participation, transparency, accountability and efficiency of the process that serves to improve e-democracy through Web 2.0 exploitation (E-Governance, 2019), not only by informing citizens but also involving them, while it diminishes discrimination and exclusion (Choi *et al.*, 2021). This enhances collaborative decision-making processes for destination management (Siagala & Marinidis, 2012). This principle also enables stakeholders and facilitates the adoption of bottom-up governance structure rather than a top-down approach, since e-governance can strengthen and consolidate stakeholder participation that subsequently contributes to equal participation of all stakeholders that are involved in decision-making processes at tourist destinations (Thees *et al.*, 2020). Most importantly, it has been shown that the transition process from traditional governance structures to the effective ones would be realised by adopting and activating ICT-led governance framework, referring to namely both e-governance and e-government approaches as the developed framework indicated in the present paper. Particularly, during and after public health crises such as the COVID-19 outbreak and other related issues, local actors can react and be responsive in a timely fashion in order to cope with current problems through using e-governance based on ICT use, all the while monitoring and controlling crisis events in an effective way (Gao & Yu, 2020). Moreover, by benefiting from innovative technologies, this ICT-led governance framework can help governments and local authorities build an effective decision-making mechanism to cope with immediate crisis events (Choi *et al.,* 2021; Shaw *et al.,* 2020).

Overall, the study's results confirm that, from a methodological point of view, the majority of research has employed qualitative methods by employing a case study research design, since it enables researchers to build theory, rather than the testing of the hypotheses (Pechlaner, Volgger & Herntrei, 2012) which are generated by limited stakeholders. It can also be claimed that qualitative case studies could be seen as the most effective methodology in order to understand stakeholder perceptions and roles in the issue of governance at the destination level (Bramwell, 2011; Dredge & Whitford, 2011). There are two basic and supportive reasons behind this position. One is that the governance issue is more inclined to a post-positivist research paradigm rather than a positivist one, and the majority of studies have adopted qualitative inquiry as a research method. The other is related to authority and power, which proves that governance is a manifestation of neoliberal management discourse that gives equal importance to the representation of both public and private actors (Dredge & Jamal, 2013). Therefore, based on the qualitative research method as a most proper inquiry, the majority of studies dealing with the issue of tourism governance have frequently preferred to benefit from either exploratory or interpretivist research paradigms as a way of implementing qualitative research as they mostly comply with the post-positivist approach in gaining deeper insights of key tourism stakeholders about the phenomenon being examined (Farmaki, 2015; Mura & Sharif, 2015).

From theoretical standpoint, the use of the qualitative research method reveals the current gap in the effective model of governance structure which is predominantly based on ICT. Tourism scholars and/or researchers should apply the theoretical model which has been suggested in this review paper to

illustrate how it works in relation to a specific setting and destination to cope with challenges. In this vein, research methods can be concentrated on the use of ICT in the model and its discussion within the data stemming from a particular example.

From a practical outlook, the viability of using e-governance by main tourism stakeholders should be encouraged not only when stakeholders are unable to come together physically, but also in ensuring effective governance during crisis events, such as pandemics. Particularly, in challenging times such as public health crises, the use of ICT led e-governance and e-government becomes necessary to make timely decisions for overcoming the existing problems in monitoring and controlling critical issues within the tourism destinations.

The limitation of the present review paper lies in using SCOPUS indexed journals only by applying inclusion and exclusion criteria by which some articles were not included for analysis. Whether applying a qualitative or quantitative approach, future studies can be carried out if the application of e-governance can increase stakeholder effectiveness between key actors in tourism in times of crisis and disaster events at particular destinations among main tourism stakeholders.

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