

Agrotourism as Economic, Social and Sustainable Development on Farms in Ecuador

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Abstract

The objective of this scientific contribution is to show the impact of agrotourism as an economic, social and sustainable development on farms in Ecuador. To achieve this objective, a deep and critical study of agrotourism in Ecuador is carried out. This research addresses the following points: 1) Critical analysis of the literature and main scientific contributions related to this research topic. 2) Bibliometric analysis of the most cited scientific contributions related to this research topic. 3) Text mining on scientific activities related to this research topic. 4) Agrotourism as economic, social and sustainable development on farms in Ecuador. The main results of this work indicate that agrotourism stimulates the convergence and integration of rural communities in the tourist economy, generating jobs and promoting training in areas such as customer service, accommodation management and the promotion of tourist activities. Inevitably, this action contributes to the strengthening of communities, promoting cultural exchange and improving the quality of life of rural families. Agrotourism in Ecuador not only offers an enriching experience for visitors but is also presented as an effective tool for the comprehensive development of rural communities, improving their economies, strengthening their social fabric and promoting environmental sustainability.

Keywords

Sustainable Economy, Eco Society, Sustainable Development, Agrotourism, Family Business, Ecuador

1. Introduction

Agrotourism is a type of tourism that involves a vacation in the countryside, away from the hustle and bustle of the city (Ariffin & Yen, 2017). Tourists are offered the opportunity to alternate hard work in the countryside with peaceful rest in the

countryside. In addition, agrotourists can enjoy all the necessary amenities (Brščić, Dropulić Ružić, & Ružić, 2012).

Agrotourism is a vacation in the countryside, which involves the opportunity to work in a garden or orchard. Obviously, an agrotourist is not obliged to engage in farm work, if he does not want to (Baharudin, Jaafar, Ismail, Ab Azis, & Afrane, 2023). However, thanks to this activity, he can feel complete unity with nature and escape from worries and urban obsessions (Manta, 2019).

This practice brings various benefits, including isolating oneself in silence in perfect harmony with nature, which is the dream of anyone who is tired of the fast pace of city life. It is possible, at least for a while, to forget about work, daily obligations, public transport, traffic jams, crowds and queues. For most agrotourists, it is an opportunity to get in touch with the life, culture, folklore and traditions of their own country, which are still preserved in the villages (Issarakraisila, Yoovatanana, & Somsri, 2016).

In countries such as Spain and Italy, agrotourists help locals with their wine-growing activities. In Poland, agrotourists look after horses and take part in horse riding tours. In Germany, farmers offer their guests the opportunity to act as shepherds (Fivintari, Samsi, & Imanuddin, 2021).

The reasons for the development of rural tourism are social and economic factors. For the economy, agrotourism is important as an additional income and support for farmers, who with the development of large cities have lost their appeal and, consequently, their income. Farmers now have the opportunity to earn money in this way (Evgrafova, Ismailova, & Kalinichev, 2020).

Tourists who give up the idea of spending their holidays in a hotel by the sea and want an active and unconventional holiday often choose rural tourism. Not every holiday is about beaches, shopping and noisy parties. Many people, tired of city life, long for a simple rest in nature, in silence and calm, to breathe fresh air and eat organic food (Masaleva & Nabiullina, 2024).

In addition to recreation and work, rural tourists are offered fresh and completely natural products. Contrary to the misconception that agrotourists should give up the benefits of civilization and eat what they themselves collect, agrotourists are offered a comfortable stay in very good conditions, Internet, local restaurants, etc. (Vasilieva, 2021).

In European countries, income from this direction significantly replenishes state funds. Therefore, the authorities see the point in its development. Cozy country houses in Spain are ready to receive visitors, and old farms have been converted into rural hotels. Hospitable hosts offer their guests food, accommodation, introduction to original local folklore and historical events, participation in various festivals and popular parties. Villagers are happy to tell legends, fairy tales and beliefs, as well as offer guided tours to places of interest (Hooper, 2022).

The aim of this scientific contribution is to show the impact of agrotourism as an economic, social and sustainable development on farms in Ecuador. To achieve this goal, this scientific contribution develops the following points: 1) Critical

analysis of the literature and main scientific contributions related to this research topic. 2) Bibliometric analysis of the most cited scientific contributions related to this research topic. 3) Text mining on scientific activities related to this research topic. 4) What is agrotourism like in the United States? 5) What is agrotourism like in Asia? 6) What is agrotourism like in Ecuador?

2. Materials and Methods

To develop this contribution, research was carried out on the Scopus database. The VOSviewer computational tool was used for bibliometric analysis, and the EndNote bibliographic management tool was used for bibliographic management. These scientific research tools are described below:

2.1. Scopus

Scopus is a bibliographic reference and citation database from the Elsevier company, of peer-reviewed literature and quality web content, with tools for monitoring, analysis and visualization of research (Bravo Hidalgo & Baez Hernandez, 2019).

The journals indexed and recognized in bibliographic reference databases such as PubMed, Medline, Web of Science and Scopus have quality guidelines that make the content they endorse reliable for the scientific community.

Scopus is a bibliographic database started in 2004, of summaries and citations of articles from scientific journals. It contains, apart from articles, more than 3700 Gold Open Access indexed journals, more than 210,000 books and more than 8 million conference proceedings, more than 8 million documents in open access, it also includes "Articles in Press" of more than 5500 titles and covers 40 languages.

It covers areas of science, technology, medicine and social sciences (including arts and humanities). It covers more than 35,000 titles from all areas. Apart from journals, it has monographic series, conference proceedings, books (extracted at book and chapter level) or patents (more than 39 million, extracted from five official offices: WIPO, EPO, United States, Japan and United Kingdom). Its temporal coverage is from 1996, although sometimes it goes back to 1970. It is updated daily.

In some cases, it gives access to the full text of the documents it includes. It also offers bibliometric tools to evaluate the performance of publications and authors, based on the citations received by each article. These tools are based on metrics developed by different experts, such as the Spanish research group Scimago, or the CWTS (Centre for Science and Technology Studies), of the University of Leiden in the Netherlands (Bravo Hidalgo & Monteagudo Yanes, 2019).

- Search for documents and access the full text if the library has a subscription.
- One of the search options available in Scopus is by funding agency. It also allows you to limit the results of a search to show patents.
- Evaluate the performance of the research using the SJR, CiteScore and SNIP impact indices or the altmetrics offered by PlumX (following the PlumX link, you can retrieve the list of documents that cite the article in question). Apart

from the basic metrics of an author and their publications, Scopus Preview gives us metrics for a specific article.

- See which authors publish the most in an institution.
- Track citations and view the h-index to find out what is current in a research area, providing the most cited articles and authors.
- Identify authors and find information related to the author (such as: citations, a summary of their main metrics, their published works, list of documents that cite the author's works, list of co-authors with the number of works they have done in collaboration, etc.).
- Stay up to date in a research field, an institution, or the production of a researcher and know who cites you, creating search alerts that come to us by email.
- Generate lists of an author from a group of authors and export records that interest us.
- Export the data to bibliographic managers such as RefWorks, Mendeley or EndNote.
- Have an author profile automatically, with the possibility of editing, including bibliometric data such as the h-index.
- Allows users who log in from a Spanish account to download their CV in CVN format from the author details page, using the Export to FECYT CVN button, where they can review the documents in their profile, as well as their affiliation and name. And once reviewed and updated, they can download the CVN (in Spanish or English).
- Evaluate, select, and compare journals. With the CiteScore indicator from Journalmetrics or the other rankings that work with Scopus data: SJR and CWTS Journal Indicators. Sometimes, journals that are in the third quartile in JCR may be in second here, because there are many more journals, the classification of these may be more granular, or because of the different citation range used by CiteScore compared to JIF. Journalmetrics contains more Arts and Humanities journals that do not appear in the JCR, just as the total number of journals in the social sciences or science and technology is greater in Journalmetrics than in JCR.
- It can help you know where to publish an article, thanks to the evaluation that can be made of the journals in a particular subject (by consulting Journalmetrics).
- It gives all the metadata that the editors provide: author(s), affiliation(s), title of the document, year, electrical identification (EID), source title, volume/number/pages, citation count, source, document type and digital object identifier (DOI).

2.2. VOSviewer

VOSviewer is a software tool for building and visualizing bibliometric networks. These networks may include, for example, journals, researchers or individual publications, and can be built on the basis of citation, bibliographic coupling, co-

citation or co-authorship relationships. VOSviewer also offers a text mining functionality that can be used to build and visualize co-occurrence networks of important terms extracted from a body of scientific literature (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2019). The functionality of VOSviewer can be summarized as follows:

- Creating maps based on network data. A map can be created based on a network that is already available, but it is also possible to build one from the network. VOSviewer can be used to build networks of scientific publications, scientific journals, researchers, research organizations, countries, keywords, or conditions. Elements of these networks can be connected by co-authorship, co-occurrence, citation, bibliographic coupling, or co-citation links. To build data from Web of Science, Scopus, Dimensions, PubMed, RIS, or Crossref JSON files can be used.
- View and explore maps. VOSviewer provides three views of a map: the network view, the overlay view, and the density view. The zoom and pan feature allow you to explore a map in full detail, which is essential when working with large maps containing thousands of items.

Although it is primarily intended for analyzing bibliometric networks, it can in fact be used to create, visualize and explore maps based on any type of network data.

VOSviewer has been developed in the Java programming language. Because Java is platform-independent, the tool works on most hardware platforms and operating systems.

2.3. EndNote

EndNote is a reference management software package, used to manage bibliographical listings and citations when writing essays and articles. It is developed by Thomson Reuters. The program groups bibliographical data into “libraries” with a file extension of *.enl and a corresponding folder of *.data. There are several ways to add a reference to a library: manually, by exporting, importing, etc. The program presents the user with a window containing a drop-down menu for selecting the type of reference required (book, newspaper article, film, etc.), and the fields associated with that record, both in general (author, title, year, etc.) and those related to a particular type of reference (ISBN number, for publications, duration, for films, etc.) (Hidalgo, Acosta, & Hinojosa, 2022).

The search criteria used was: “agrotourism”. The title, keywords and abstract of the scientific contributions contained in the Scopus database were searched. The search was limited to the years 1991 to 2023. With this criterion, 321 were detected among scientific articles, review articles, books, book chapters and conference documents.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Critical Analysis of the Literature and Main Scientific Contributions Related to This Research Topic

Below are the scientific contributions most cited by the international scientific

community, related to agrotourism. These investigations are ordered from highest to lowest, based on the number of citations detected in the academic directory Scopus.

Tourism is a promising field of activity that requires state control. The study (Agafonova & Spektor, 2023) examines the legal regulation of agricultural tourism. The subject of the study is the legislation regulating the activities of agrotourism. Nowadays, tourist travel is of great importance. From the legal side, tourist trips realize the rights of citizens to rest, leisure and freedom of movement. The tourism industry is certainly part of the economic sphere and closely interacts with it. Rural tourism can be considered as a source of income for rural residents. Such income can catalyze the development of various areas of the agro-industrial complex. The methods may be different, for example, attracting residents, investors, as well as replacing them with high-quality infrastructure. Rural tourism is based on small-scale enterprises, and as a result does not require large investments. But its development as a separate industry has social significance for stimulating rural areas. Currently, agrotourism in the Russian Federation occupies no more than 2% among all other types of tourism.

This study (Aikaterini, Ioannis, & Thanasis, 2001) examines the impact of agrotourism on farm characteristics (income, farming practices, investment) and rural population characteristics (age, sex, permanent residence). Results show that even if the agrotourism program appears successful as far as income improvement and willingness to stay in agriculture is involved, most of the agro-tourist holdings in Lesvos operate in the margin of mass tourism with the same “customers” and the same product, without connections with agricultural production, local products promotion, or environmental and cultural landscape conservation. Agrotourism in Lesvos is tourism operated by farmers, but it is not agro-tourism as the latter is defined.

This study (Akhmadi & Yekti, 2021) examines the impact of agro tourism development on increasing the value added of agricultural products, and the impact of agro tourism development on farmers income level. The study was conducted using survey interviews with farmers and related parties and field observation. The development of agro tourism encourages the community to process agricultural products, improve on farm and non-farm management. The results showed that processing of agricultural products, farm management and non-farm management activities provides significant increase on farmers household income. It is recommended to optimize the processing of agricultural products, farm management and non-farm management activities.

Industrial prosperity is the focus of rural revitalization (Luo, Tong, & Sima, 2020). As a traditional agricultural province, Hubei Province has a prominent position in the country. Promoting the development of characteristic agriculture and achieving industrial prosperity are the only way for Hubei to implement the rural revitalization strategy. Taking Jingzhou City as an example, through analyzing the status quo of characteristic agriculture such as Sanhuhuangtao and Buhe grape, it

studies its opportunities and existing problems, and puts forward the characteristics and advantages of agricultural industry, paying attention to top-level planning, integration of three industries, and tradition. Measures such as the combination of cultural resources and the cultivation of market entities, rely on “Qingshan Green Water” to vigorously develop the tourism and tourism integration industry and promote the tourism development of Jingzhou.

One of the techniques in vegetable cultivation is the use of plastic mulch (Ambarningrum, Basuki, Darsono, & Haryanto, 2023). The practice of using plastic mulch is thought to impact soil fauna, one of which is Collembola. This study aimed to determine the composition and abundance of the Collembola family in vegetable fields with and without plastic mulch. The research method used is a survey with a purposive sampling technique using pitfall traps installed at five sampling points along a 20-meter line transect on each land. Sampling was carried out every month for four months, from the beginning of the planting period until after harvest. The parameters observed were the composition of Collembola at the family level and its abundance. Other parameters measured include the physical and chemical properties of the soil. The data obtained were analyzed by t-test at 10% and 20% error rates. The results showed that the composition of the soil surface Collembola on mulched land was found to be 6 families, while on land without mulch, there were 7 families. The highest abundance of Collembola on land without mulching for 4 months was 6214 individuals, while 858 individuals were obtained on mulched land.

The article (Askarova, Khafizova, Talipova, Yakubov, & Khayitov, 2023) reveals the factors for the development of agrotourism as a tool for diversifying agricultural territories, overcoming their decline, preserving national traditions, folk crafts, maintaining zones for the production of environmentally friendly food. The authors describe the theoretical foundations of organizational, managerial and economic mechanisms for the development of agrotourism in rural areas. The development of agricultural tourism makes it possible to bring the population of rural areas to a new level, as well as the development of rural production by increasing the production of its services, environmentally friendly products oriented to the domestic and foreign markets of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The purpose of the article is to determine the features of the functioning of agrotourism objects in the area and to develop proposals for the development of agrotourism. The object is the Republic of Uzbekistan and comparison with other foreign countries. The main task is to create a systematic approach, taking into account the characteristics of the area. The analysis of the principles of development of agrotourism, and features in the country's economy. In conclusion, conclusions are drawn, the results of which can be practically useful in developing measures in priority areas of agricultural tourism.

Investing in Malaysian agrotourism real estate can significantly impact achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Agrotourism investments rely on market demand and visitor interest. It is essential to assess the potential market demand

for agrotourism experiences in the specific location and consider the competition from existing agrotourism destinations or other tourism sectors. However, failure to attract a sufficient number of visitors can impact the financial viability of the investment. This paper (Baharudin et al., 2023) explores the potential opportunities of such investments with respect to suitable development, including economic growth, social well-being, and environmental sustainability. Content analysis from the literature review is used as the medium to achieve the stated objectives above. Findings showed that while investing in agrotourism real estate has the potential to have significant positive impacts on local communities and ecosystems, it also requires careful planning and management to ensure these outcomes are achieved in a suitable manner. We conclude by recommending strategies for investors to promote sustainable development goals through their investment choices in Malaysian agrotourism real estate.

Collembola is a group of fauna that generally lives in the soil and has an important role as a bioindicator of soil fertility about its function as a detritivore (Ambarningrum, Minarni, Pratiknyo, & Haryanto, 2023). Habitat changes can cause the Collembola community to be disturbed. This study aims to determine the composition and abundance of Collembola on agrotourism land on the edge of the forest and agrotourism away from the forest in Serang Village, Karangreja District, Purbalingga Regency. The research was conducted by survey method with a purposive sampling technique using a pitfall trap. The enumeration was carried out in the Entomology and Parasitology Laboratory, Faculty of Biology, Jenderal Soedirman University, Purwokerto. The results showed that the composition of Collembola at both locations contained 9 families, namely Isotomidae, Entomobryidae, Hypogastruridae, Cypoderidae, Sminthuridae, Paronellidae, Neanuridae, Onychiuridae, and Neelidae, with abundance on forest edge areas higher (6147 individuals) than land further from the forest (2961 individuals). The family Hypogastruridae was abundant on forest edge land (3014 individuals), while on land far from the forest the family Entomobryidae was the most abundant. There is no difference in the index of diversity, evenness, or dominance between forest edge land and land far from the forest in the agro-tourism area.

Playing an important role in lifting the agricultural sector, agrotourism increases farmers' income (Lestari, Rusdiyana, Setyowati, & Santoso, 2024). Group involvement is required in this activity, particularly in its management such as Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes). This study aims to determine the role of BUMDes in the development of agrotourism in Karanganyar Regency. The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method by describing, explaining and answering in detail the problem to be studied. Ngargoyoso District was chosen deliberately as the research location because this district is an agrotourism center in Karanganyar Regency. Data collection was conducted through FGD, direct interviews as well as documentation and field observations. This study found that BUMDes have not played its role optimally in the development of agrotourism, because most of the agrotourism are privately owned. BUMDes strives to offer

the concept of professional management but is still constrained by community trust. The village government provides support by providing funding assistance in the licensing process. The maintenance of tourist environment is an effort taken by community and tourism managers to maintain the cleanliness and comfort of tourist areas so that the community can carry out economic activities continuously and tourism sustainability can be achieved.

Agrotourism in Vietnam has been identified as one of the strategies used to achieve green growth and countryside modernisation, and it is often included as part of the national and local agenda (Pham, Cao, & Lapointe, 2023). In this paper, we examine agrotourism in a village in the periphery of Hôi An city (an international tourism hub in central Vietnam) to question tourism's interaction with ongoing development processes. More specifically, we aim to understand the impact of fast peri-urbanisation on agrotourism and the impacts of agrotourism on people's daily lives, specifically when it comes to physical changes in their living environment, tensions in their social life and their concerns about the future. Our analysis is supported with data generated from interviews with farmers, local officials, tourism workers and tourists. We find that agrotourism products lacked authenticity and farming was not of great interest for tourists, yet the state's investment in the village tended to favour spaces and infrastructure that could attract more tourists and generate profit, to the detriment of cultural infrastructure. Land speculation and an unequal distribution of income were the main tensions in the village along with farmers' concerns about their rural heritage, income diversification and environmental quality. As such, agrotourism in the village has been driven by rapid urbanisation and mass tourism, creating a competition between a consumption activity and a productive activity. Those are important parameters that future policymakers need to take into consideration in order to sustain the city's food production and tourism.

Assessment of community readiness is an important step in developing actions that can be taken in the future (Wardani, Meidiana, & Prayitno, 2024). This research aims to identify the readiness of the Bangelan Village community for the development of the Bangelan Agro Tourism Village. Condition of community readiness was analyzed qualitatively, and the score assessment of the level of community readiness was analyzed using the 2014 Tri-Ethnic Center Community Readiness Model, which uses five variables, namely community knowledge, leadership, community conditions, community knowledge about problems, and problem-solving resources. The analysis results show that Bangelan Village is on the 6th ladder of "initiation", which means that community members know about local efforts; leadership plays a vital role in planning, developing, and/or implementing new efforts, modifications, or improvements, and attitudes in the community. Based on this readiness, efforts to develop it include carrying out socialization and training, improving facilities and infrastructure, clarifying the institutional framework, and increasing the creativity of leaders.

This investigation delineates the multi-faceted determinants integral to the

evolution of agrotourism within rural domains, concentrating on the province of Jambi as a case study (Zulgani et al., 2023). This scholarly inquiry engaged with four representative villages, utilizing primary data procured through focus group discussions (FGDs) and comprehensive interviews with various stakeholders. These encompass village administration, village-owned enterprises (BUMDes), youth organizations, the regional body for planning and development, the tourism office, community figureheads, village facilitators, commercial operators, and local community delegates. The analytical methodology incorporated the transcription of FGDs and comprehensive interviews, data distillation, analytical interpretation, and triangulation. The NVivo 11 Plus suite facilitated this qualitative data analysis. The investigation discerned six cardinal determinants that substantively influence the trajectory of agrotourism development within rural areas. These include the potential of nature tourism, the accessibility, and caliber of agro-products, the adequacy of infrastructure, the involvement and roles of community and institutional bodies, technological innovation, and the safeguarding of local cultural heritage. This scholarly inquiry underscores the necessity of a collaborative approach in formulating and implementing policies. This approach, which calls for the inclusion of diverse stakeholders, is aimed at bolstering the sustainable development of agrotourism.

Cibodas village is one of the villages in the regency of West Bandung, which shows potential for agrotourism and a creative economy (Santoso et al., 2022). However, the dynamic environmental changes in the post-COVID-19 era have presented challenges to developing these economic potentials. Therefore, creating a model to develop agrotourism and a creative economy in Cibodas village is necessary. This study aims to create a system dynamics model with a causal loop diagram (CLD) based on the village innovation system framework to develop the agrotourism-creative economy in Cibodas village. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used to identify the main variables and to develop and review the CLD. The quantitative approach provides researchers with three main variables that must be involved in the study, namely, the general innovation infrastructure, specific industrial clusters, and intermediation. The three variables are inter-related and form a CLD. The formed CLD was further explored with a qualitative approach in the form of an in-depth interview and focus group discussions (FGDs) with several key informants: the Head of the Agronative Cooperative, the Head of Cibodas Village, and the Regency Tourism and Culture Office (Disparbud) of West Bandung. Based on the results of the scenario for the existing conditions for a 24-month period, it was found that the innovation infrastructure variables had increased by 10.94% and the intermediation variables had increased by 0.22%. The simulations were carried out by increasing the intermediation intervention twice as much as that of the existing conditions. Hence, the innovation infrastructure variables increased by 18.01% and the intermediation variables increased by 0.05%. Cibodas village would take advantage of these R & D products to help its creative economy actors produce more products having a high-selling

value. Moreover, by employing this strategy, they could also help their creative economy actors increase the absorption of an innovation to have such a high competitiveness.

The analysis of the various scientific contributions shows that: The main lines of research on agrotourism focus on several key aspects related to its implementation, impact and development. These lines address both the opportunities and challenges that agrotourism presents in various regions, as well as its economic, social, cultural and environmental implications. Some of the main lines of research are:

- **Economic Impact of Agrotourism:** 1) Analysis of the economic benefits for rural communities. 2) Diversification of income on farms and reduction of dependence on traditional crops. 3) Study of the profitability of agrotourism activities and their contribution to sustainable rural development. 4) Evaluation of public policies that promote agrotourism as a development strategy.
- **Sustainability and Environmental Practices:** 1) Research on how agrotourism can promote sustainable agricultural practices (organic agriculture, permaculture, agroforestry, etc.). 2) Impact of rural tourism on the conservation of biodiversity and local natural resources. 3) Analysis of environmental management techniques in tourist farms and their relationship with long-term sustainability. 4) Assessment of the impact of tourism on local ecosystems and mitigation strategies.
- **Rural Culture and Heritage:** 1) Study of the preservation and promotion of rural culture and traditions through agrotourism. 2) Research on how tourist experiences based on local culture strengthen community identity and cohesion. 3) Impact of tourism on the valorisation of agricultural heritage and traditional gastronomy.
- **Social and Community Development:** 1) Analysis of agrotourism as a tool for the empowerment and participation of women and youth in rural areas. 2) Study of how the integration of local communities in agrotourism affects their quality of life and well-being. 3) Research on cooperation and networks between farmers and tourism stakeholders to strengthen the agrotourism offer.
- **Tourist Behavior and Perception:** 1) Study of the motivations, expectations and behaviors of tourists seeking agrotourism experiences. 2) Analysis of the perception of authenticity in the experiences offered and its influence on visitor satisfaction and loyalty. 3) Research on the profile of agrotourism tourists and their influence on the design of tourism products and services.
- **Development and Management of Agrotourism Destinations:** 1) Evaluation of strategies for the development of agrotourism destinations and their integration into national and international markets. 2) Analysis of territorial planning and the infrastructure necessary to support the development of agrotourism in rural areas. 3) Studies of successful cases in the development of tourist farms and replicable models for other regions.
- **Public Policies and Regulatory Framework:** 1) Research on government policies

that promote or limit the growth of agrotourism. 2) Analysis of regulatory frameworks and regulations that affect the implementation of agrotourism. 3) Study of fiscal and financial incentives to promote investments in agrotourism. These lines of research seek to understand and optimize the multiple dimensions of agrotourism, ensuring that this sector contributes effectively to sustainable rural development and the well-being of rural communities.

3.2. Bibliometric Analysis of the Most Cited Scientific Contributions Related to this Research Topic

Agritourism is a growing sector that has attracted the attention of many countries, especially those with developed or developing agricultural economies, as well as interest in diversifying rural tourism. Some countries that are conducting significant research on agritourism include:

- Indonesia is researching agritourism, focusing on how this activity can improve rural communities' incomes and preserve traditional farming culture and practices.
- Greece has developed an approach to agritourism in its islands and rural areas, researching how to integrate culture, agriculture and sustainable tourism to revitalize rural communities.
- In the Russian Federation, agritourism is a growing activity, especially in southern regions of the country. Research focuses on the resilience of rural communities and the development of sustainable business models for farmers.
- Agritourism in Poland is important in the southeastern regions of the nation. Studies look at how rural and wine experiences can attract international tourists and strengthen the local economy.
- Agritourism in Romania is concentrated in central and southern states of the country. Studies often examine farm diversification, marketing strategies and the impact of agritourism on the economic sustainability of farms.
- In Spain, in regions such as Catalonia, Andalusia and Galicia, agritourism is important. Research in Spain addresses issues such as economic profitability, sustainability and the socioeconomic impact of agrotourism in rural communities.

These countries are researching agrotourism from various perspectives: economic, social, cultural and environmental, in order to maximize its benefits for rural communities and sustainable tourism. Below is **Figure 1** showing the number of scientific contributions, by nation, detected in the Scopus database, in the last 10 years.

The international scientific community has shown a growing interest in research related to agrotourism. Evidence of this is shown in **Figure 2**. This figure shows a notable increase in the number of scientific contributions published in the Scopus database and research academic director, starting in 2012.

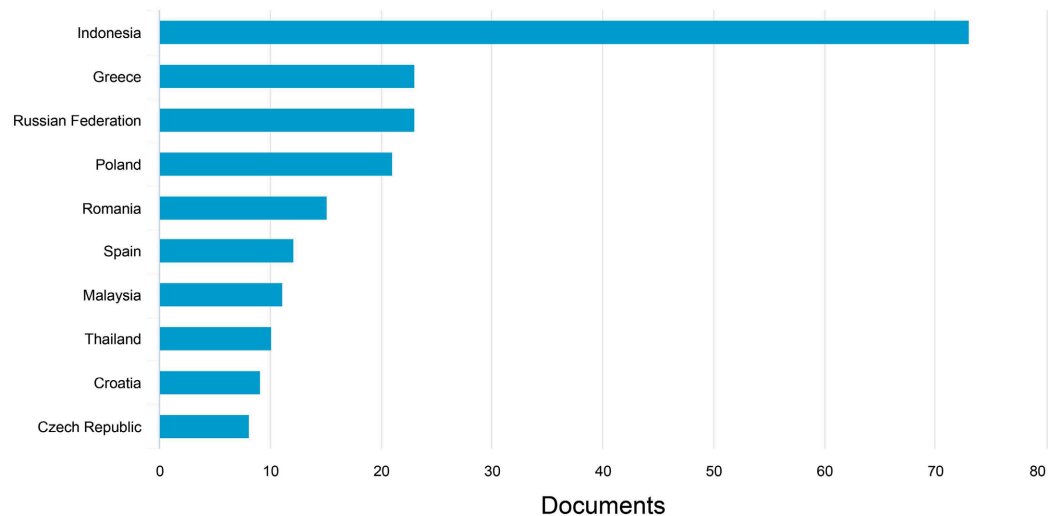
The increase in the number of publications, in this specific research topic, is due to several factors that reflect the growing interest, relevance and support for this field. Some of the main factors are: 1) Social and Economic Relevance. 2)

Support and Funding for Research. And 3) Growth of Interdisciplinarity.

Documents by country or territory

Scopus

Compare the document counts for up to 15 countries/territories.

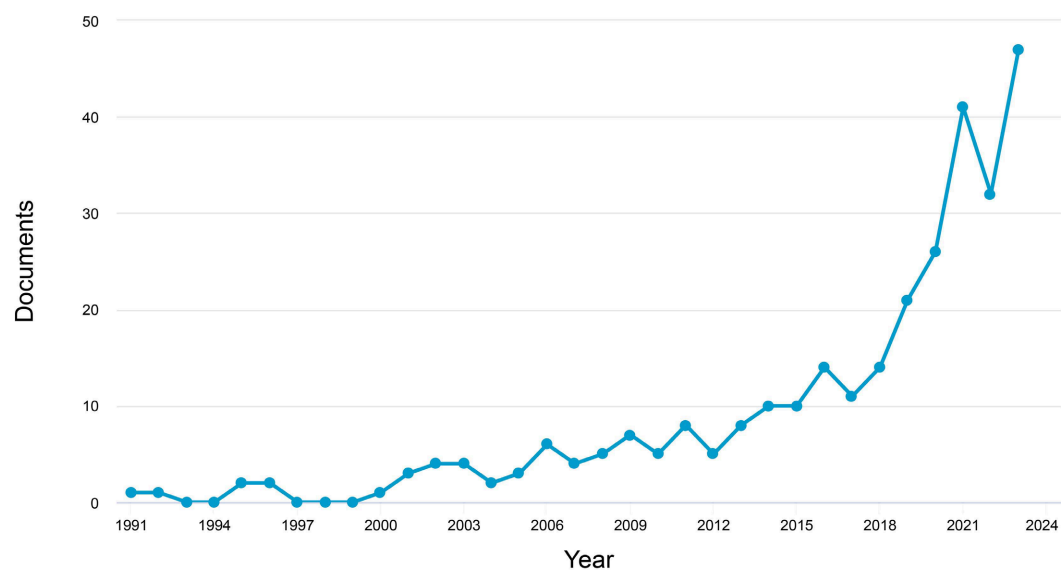


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Figure 1. Documents published in Scopus, by nation; in the last 10 years.

Documents by year

Scopus



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Figure 2. Documents published in Scopus, by nation; in the last 10 years.

The research areas most represented in this line of research are: Environmental Sciences with 19.3%, Social Sciences with 19.1%, Earth and Planetary Sciences with 12.8%, Business and Management with 12.1%, and Agriculture with 9.2%. **Figure 3** shows the percentage distribution of the scientific contributions detected. This figure shows the interest of the scientific community in research

related to agrotourism.

Documents by subject area

Scopus

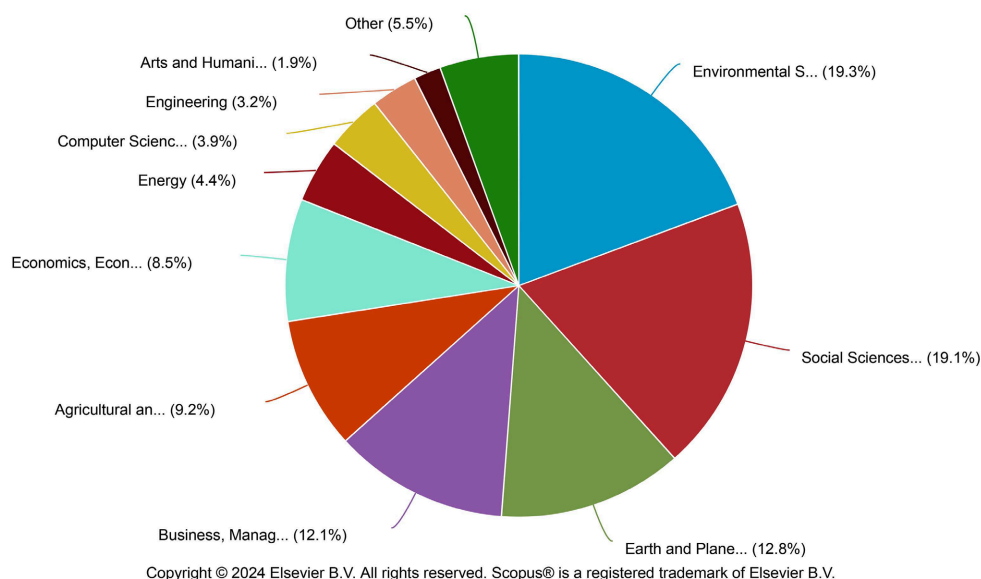


Figure 3. Scientific contributions detected, distributed by research areas, expressed in percentage values.

The largest number of scientific contributions are represented by scientific articles, followed by conference papers. This is a very dynamic and changing area of research, which justifies the fact that the largest number of contributions are of the scientific article type. Scientific contributions by type are shown in **Figure 4**.

The tendency to publish more scientific articles than books in certain lines of research responds to several practical and academic reasons.

The speed of publication is an advantage, since articles usually go through the review and publication process more quickly than books, which allows researchers to share their most recent and relevant results without long delays. In areas where knowledge evolves rapidly, such as computer science, biomedicine or applied social sciences, this is essential.

On the other hand, constant updating. Being shorter and easier to produce, articles can reflect recent and continuous advances, something fundamental in fields with rapid developments. Books, having a longer editorial process, can become obsolete more easily.

Academic recognition must also be considered. In many institutions, the publication of articles in scientific journals is valued more than books, especially in areas such as natural sciences, engineering and mathematics, where the number of publications in indexed journals is an important criterion for measuring the productivity and impact of the researcher.

Accessibility and visibility are a plus for scientific contributions such as scientific articles. Scientific journals are widely indexed and accessible through academic

databases, which increases the visibility and impact of articles. In addition, articles are more accessible to other researchers, facilitating the accumulation of citations, something that drives the recognition of research.

Funding and pressure to publish scientific articles is a reality. Many research projects have a limited duration, and results are expected to be published before funding ends. This encourages the publication of articles rather than books, as they allow sponsors to meet deadlines and show tangible progress.

In conclusion, articles are the preferred option in research lines that advance rapidly and where it is necessary to share knowledge in an agile and focused manner.

Documents by type

Scopus

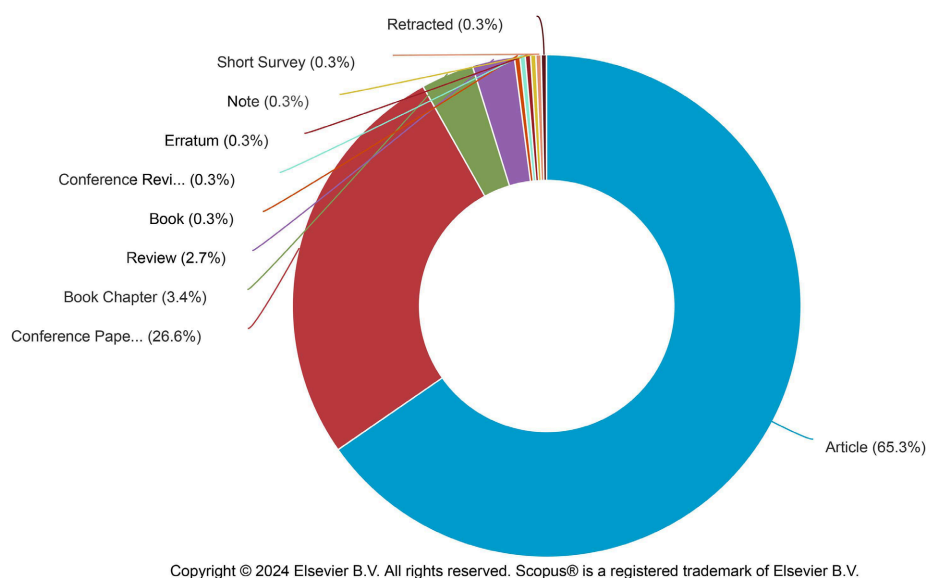


Figure 4. Scientific contributions by type.

The main scientific journals that socialize this research topic are: E3s Web Of Conferences, Journal Of Environmental Management And Tourism, Springer Proceedings In Business And Economics, Acta Horticulturae, Iop Conference Series Earth And Environmental Science. See **Figure 5**.

3.3. Text Mining on Scientific Activities Related to this Research Topic

Text mining was performed on the indexing keywords of the research detected in the academic research database Scopus. For this purpose, the computational tool VOSviewer was used. This is a software to analyze and visualize scientific literature developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman of the Center for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS), Leiden University. It is not open source, but it is free to use. It is permitted, free of charge, to use and/or distribute this software, provided that the above copyright notice is preserved.

Documents per year by source

Scopus

Compare the document counts for up to 10 sources. Compare sources and view CiteScore, SJR, and SNIP data

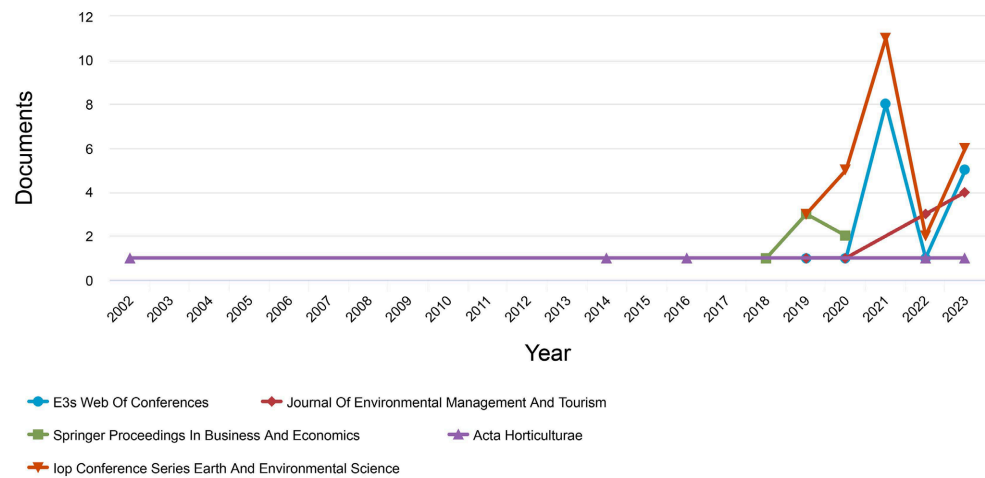


Figure 5. Documents shared per year, by the main scientific journals.

The text mining study was carried out on the indexing keywords of the 321 documents detected, under the search criteria, highlighted in the Materials and Methods section of this document.

In the text mining map carried out, it can be observed in **Figure 6** that from the years 2012 to 2023, the terms that define the scientific contributions have been changing. In **Figure 6**, the degradation of the colors represents the variation of the timeline. The size of the spheres indicates a greater or lesser co-occurrence of the detected term. And the lines determine the correlation of the detected terms.

Figure 6 shows a clear evolution of the lines of study, within the theme of research related to agrotourism, in the last decade. This figure is very pertinent to define the evolution of the theme analyzed by this scientific contribution.

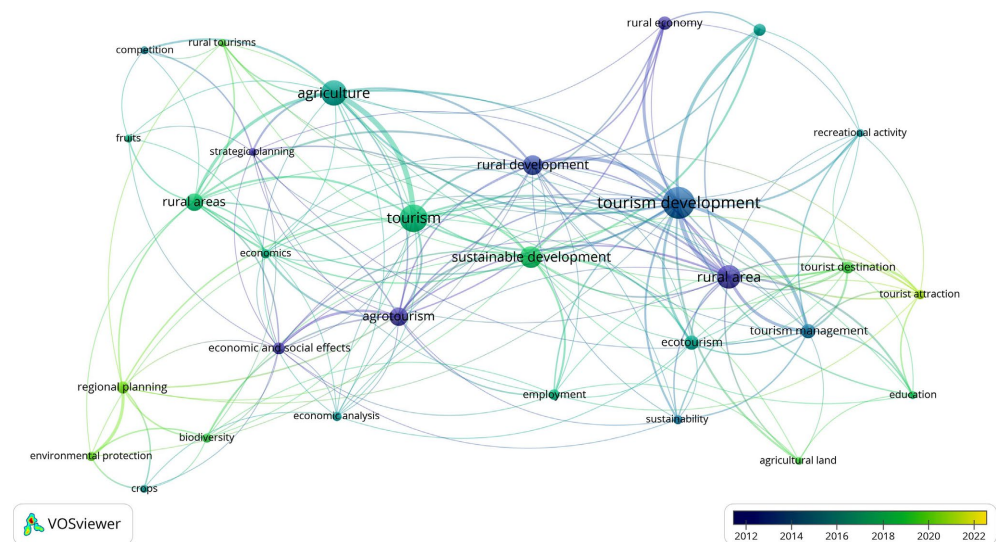


Figure 6. Term correlation map.

3.4. What Is Agritourism Like in the United States of America?

Agritourism in the United States is an activity that combines the experience of visiting a farm or ranch with the opportunity to participate in agricultural activities and enjoy nature (Akhmadi & Yekti, 2021). It is a form of rural tourism that has grown in popularity in recent decades, especially in areas with picturesque landscapes and agricultural tradition. Here are some key aspects:

Variety of Experiences: Agritourism in the United States offers a wide range of activities, which vary by region and type of farm. Some of the most common experiences include:

Fruit and Vegetable Picking: In places like California, Oregon, New York, and Michigan, it is common for farms to offer the opportunity to pick fruits such as apples, strawberries, grapes, or pumpkins during harvest seasons.

Vineyard Tours and Wine Tastings: Especially in wine regions like Napa Valley in California and the Willamette Valley in Oregon, tourists can visit vineyards, learn about the wine production process, and participate in tastings (Andreica & Partal, 2012).

Ranch Stays: In states like Texas, Montana and Wyoming, many ranches open their doors for visitors to experience the life of a cowboy, take part in horseback rides and learn about cattle ranching.

Educational Farms: Some farms focus on education, offering workshops on organic farming, beekeeping, cheese making, or sustainable practices.

Rural Lodging: In many cases, agritourism in the United States includes lodging options on farms or ranches. These can range from rustic cabins and cottages to glamping experiences (luxury camping) or stays in bed & breakfast-style accommodations. Visitors can enjoy a natural setting while learning about farm life.

Focus on Sustainability and Organic Farming: Agritourism in the United States is also linked to the sustainability movement and organic farming. Many farms promote environmentally friendly farming practices and offer tourists the opportunity to learn about permaculture, agroforestry, and other sustainable methods (Fadjarajani, Zid, Shaari, & Meylani, 2023).

Agricultural Markets and Fairs: In several regions, agricultural markets and fairs are held where tourists can interact directly with farmers, purchase fresh produce, and participate in events such as harvest festivals, cooking contests, and rural skills demonstrations.

Season and Regions: Agritourism is especially popular during the spring and fall seasons, when many crops are at their peak and outdoor activities are most enjoyable. The most popular regions for agritourism in the United States include:

- California: Farms and vineyards in Napa Valley, Sonoma, and Central Valley.
- Northeast: Apple, blueberry and pumpkin farms in New England and New York.
- South: Ranches in Texas and fruit farms in Georgia.
- Midwest: Corn and sunflower farms in states like Iowa and Kansas.

Agritourism in the United States is a way to enjoy the countryside and agricultural

activities while supporting rural communities and encouraging a sustainable approach to food production (Eshun & Tettey, 2014).

3.5. What Is Agrotourism Like in Asia?

Agritourism in Asia is a diverse and rich experience that allows visitors to immerse themselves in the agricultural and rural traditions of the región (Azhar, Khanafi, Hassan, & Sibly, 2020). Asia, with its varied climates, landscapes and cultures, offers a wide range of activities that vary by country and season. In general, agritourism in Asia focuses on direct interaction with rural life, local agricultural production and traditional customs. Here is an idea of how it is presented in different parts of Asia:

Variety of Agricultural Experiences: Agritourism activities in Asia cover a wide range of crops and agricultural practices, which are adapted to the particularities of each region:

Tea and Coffee Plantations: In countries such as India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, it is common for tea and coffee plantations to offer guided tours where tourists can learn about the cultivation, harvesting and processing of these plants. Visitors can tour the fields, participate in the picking of tea leaves and taste the different varieties (Andreica & Partal, 2012).

Rice Paddies and Traditional Farming: In places like Bali (Indonesia), the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, rice farming is a staple activity. Tourists can visit rice terraces and take part in planting or harvesting, while learning about traditional techniques used by local communities.

Tropical Fruit Orchards: In countries like Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines, many farms offer the opportunity to pick tropical fruits like mangoes, papayas, pineapples, and peaches, allowing visitors to sample fresh, exotic produce.

Spice and Herb Farms: In India, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia, there are many farms dedicated to growing spices like pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, and vanilla. These places offer educational tours and demonstrations on how these spices are grown and used in cooking and medicinal products.

Farm Stays and Rural Accommodation: Agritourism in Asia also includes stays in farms or rural villages where tourists can experience the daily life of local communities. These accommodations can range from traditional bamboo houses in the mountains of Vietnam to bungalows on spice plantations in Kerala, India. During these stays, visitors often take part in farming activities, cook with farm-fresh produce, and learn about local customs.

Focus on Local Culture and Traditions: A key part of agritourism in Asia is cultural immersion. Many experiences include participation in agricultural festivals and traditional rituals, as well as the chance to learn local craft techniques, such as making pottery, textiles, and handicrafts from natural products (Brychta & Podhrázská, 2020).

Agricultural Festivals: In countries such as Japan (rice harvest festivals) and China (moon festival), tourists can participate in events that celebrate the harvests

and learn about the importance of these crops in local culture.

Craft Activities: In places such as Laos and Cambodia, visitors can learn to weave with bamboo fibers or participate in pottery workshops, using techniques that have been passed down through generations.

Sustainable and Organic Agritourism: The focus on sustainability and organic farming is also increasingly popular in Asian agritourism. In countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Thailand, there are organic farms that focus on sustainable and organic farming techniques. These farms offer educational experiences where tourists can learn about permaculture, composting, water resource management, and other environmentally friendly practices.

Popular Agritourism Regions and Destinations: Some of the most popular regions and destinations for agritourism in Asia include:

- Bali, Indonesia: Famous for its rice terraces, like those in Ubud, and tropical fruit picking experiences.
- Kerala, India: Known for its spice and tea plantations, where you can explore organic farming and local culture.
- Chiang Mai, Thailand: Popular region for visits to organic farms, fruit farms and artisan workshops.
- Rural Regions of Japan: Such as Hokkaido and the mountainous areas of Nagano, where tourists can learn about local rice, vegetable and fruit production.
- Vietnam: With its rice paddies in Sapa and coffee plantations in the central highlands.

Agritourism in Asia offers a rich combination of agricultural, cultural and educational experiences that allow tourists to connect with rural traditions and sustainable production in different parts of the continent (Chitrao, Bhoyar, & Divekar, 2024).

3.6. Agrotourism as Economic, Social and Sustainable Development on Farms in Ecuador

Agrotourism on Ecuadorian farms is a strategic opportunity with the power to generate the much desired economic, social and sustainable development, taking advantage of the country's agricultural and cultural diversity. It is a tourist activity that combines the experience of rural life with agricultural and livestock production, allowing visitors to participate in the daily activities of the farms and learn about the production processes and local culture of the various regions of this beautiful Amazonian Ecuador (Ojeda, 2020).

From the economic impact: Agrotourism is presented as an additional source of income for farmers, diversifying their options for generating value and reducing the exclusive dependence on agricultural production. By receiving national and international tourists, farms have the opportunity to market fresh and artisanal products directly to visitors, allowing them to obtain better prices and position their products in broader markets.

From the social impact: Agrotourism stimulates the convergence and integration of rural communities in the tourism economy, creating jobs and promoting

training in areas such as customer service, accommodation management and the promotion of tourism activities. Inevitably, this action contributes to the strengthening of communities, promoting cultural exchange and improving the quality of life of rural families.

From the environmental impact: Farms that participate in agrotourism often implement sustainable and responsible agricultural practices, such as organic farming and rational use of water. This has a positive impact on the conservation of biodiversity. By educating visitors about these practices, environmental awareness is fostered, and responsible tourism is promoted that respects and cares for local ecosystems (Ojeda, 2020).

Agrotourism in Ecuador not only offers an enriching experience for visitors, but is also presented as an effective tool for the comprehensive development of rural communities, improving their economies, strengthening their social fabric and promoting environmental sustainability (Ojeda, 2020).

4. Conclusion

Agrotourism in Ecuador is a growing activity that allows tourists to experience rural life, interact with nature, and learn about local agricultural practices. This form of tourism focuses on offering experiences on farms and rural communities, where visitors participate in agricultural activities, such as harvesting coffee, cocoa, fruits, and other typical products of each region. It also includes observing traditional processes such as the production of artisanal products and participating in local rituals or festivities.

Agrotourism is mainly developed in rural areas of the Sierra, the Amazon, and the Ecuadorian Coast, taking advantage of the country's biodiversity and cultural wealth. This activity not only encourages the economic development of rural communities, but also promotes environmental and cultural sustainability, by allowing residents to share their knowledge and traditions.

In addition, agrotourism in Ecuador has proven to be an effective tool to diversify the rural economy and provide farmers with an additional source of income, helping to reduce migration and improve the quality of life in local communities.

Indonesia, Greece, the Russian Federation, Poland, Romania, Spain, Malaysia, Thailand, Croatia and the Czech Republic are the countries with the most scientific contributions related to agrotourism research in the Scopus database.

Since 2012, the number of scientific contributions related to the research topic of this work has increased. This fact shows the interest of the international scientific community in this research topic.

The most productive lines of research on the topic of agrotourism are environmental sciences, social sciences, and planetary and earth sciences.

When a research topic has a significant impact on society or the economy, it tends to attract the attention of researchers. For example, climate change, agricultural sustainability and agrotourism have gained importance due to their implications for economic development and environmental conservation.

As disciplines become more interconnected, a topic can be studied from multiple perspectives. For example, agrotourism is not only studied from the perspective of tourism, but also from economics, sociology, agriculture and sustainability. This broadens the field of research and increases the number of publications.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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