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Cathy Rubinos
Universidad del Pacifico - Peru

Isabel Guerrero
Oregon State University

Naara Cancino
Universidad del Pacifico - Peru

Bruno Chereque
Universidad del Pacifico - Peru

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CAPTURING LESSONS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLANNING AND RESEARCH: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Cathy Rubiños^{a,b}, Isabel Guerrero Ochoa^{a,c}, Bruno Chereque^a, Naara Cancino^{a,d}

^aUniversidad Del Pacífico, Lima, Peru

^b Center for Behavior, Institutions, and the Environment, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, USA

^c Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR, USA

^d Pontificia Universidad Católica Del Perú, Lima, Peru

Abstract

We refer to sustainable tourism (ST) as the management scheme that intends to maximize economic benefits and, in turn, minimize social and environmental costs. Although ST represents a positive approach for community development, its practical implementation is challenging, especially in those tourism destinations with weak institutional environments, as is commonly found in developing countries. Given that there is no one institutional recipe that fits all cases, it is necessary to cumulate knowledge from lessons learned from isolated cases where a combination of institutional arrangements and context-specific characteristics showed to be - or not - successful for ST managements. We address this need by performing a systematic literature review, guided by the Couple Infrastructure Systems Framework, a multidisciplinary approach with an institutional theoretical basis, and applied in the study of different socio-ecological systems but not yet for tourism. Fifty papers that contained 92 case studies were selected, coded, and analyzed. We found that the type of tourism, asymmetries in the community, residents' degree of involvement, tourism development stage, seasonality, and the presence of external influences, combined with other specific institutional strategies, may affect economic, social and environmental outcomes of tourism development in different ways.

This study contains theoretical contributions in illustrating the adaptation of the CISF to the tourism sector, identifying knowledge gaps in the sustainable tourism management literature, and proposing a research agenda to address these gaps. Moreover, generated knowledge can assist communities and other stakeholders in the challenge of managing tourism sustainably.