

MIND THE GAP: a systematic review of the knowledge contribution claims in adventure tourism research

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ABSTRACT

In this paper a post-positivist informed epistemology is used to examine the language of scholarly contribution claims in journal articles. How knowledge contribution claims are framed is important for communicating the value of research to a wide audience. Yet, guidance on this is lacking in tourism research. Using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol we present a systematic review of 253 adventure tourism research papers based on the contribution claims in their introductory sections. Papers were coded to five contribution strategies – incremental, differentiated-context, revelatory, replicatory and consolidatory - while highlighting the language used by authors. Our findings are of interest to researchers and editors in integrating dispersed understanding of the strategies of contribution claims into a framework for learning and action.

KEYWORDS: Adventure tourism, knowledge contributions, systematic review, language, theoretical contributions, post-positivism

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we make a rare contribution to the tourism literature by examining the language used by authors to make claims of academic originality and contribution in the field of adventure tourism. Editors' decisions to send a manuscript out for review rather than desk reject it depends on how well a manuscript articulates its original contribution. Given the increasing amount of journal submissions, it is imperative for authors to clearly outline the value and significance of their research in the first pages of a manuscript. Authors must be intentional in this process, yet clear guidance as to what constitutes original contribution is often missing from the literature in any comprehensive form. In this paper we encourage authors to communicate the value of their manuscript to editors and reviewers by adopting specific contribution strategies involving deliberate rhetorical acts in their writing. By using a range of strategies, authors can highlight the multiple levels on which their research contributions are made. In turn, this will advance the language used to frame tourism scholarly contribution and the development of a 'linguistics toolkit' (Belhassen & Caton, 2009, p.343), which can be used by the academic community.

There is limited knowledge in the tourism literature on conceptualising approaches to knowledge contribution (e.g., Bramwell, 2015; Sigala, 2021; Xin, Tribe & Chambers, 2013). In their study, Xin et al. (2013) found that between 1981 and 2010, conceptual research was overlooked and that this accounted for only 1.49% (756/50,598) of tourism research output. Bramwell (2015) noted that the neglect of conceptualisation work in tourism is partly due to the inward-looking nature of the subject area. Thus, there is a call for conceptual tourism research that engages in debates in the wider social sciences by exploring ideas, concepts, and frameworks across disciplines. More recently, Sigala (2021) offered insights into the review process and criteria used by the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management when processing manuscript

submissions and deciding on their publication. We therefore draw on the wider management field to synthesise knowledge on contributions. Building on the work of Nicholson, LaPlaca, Al-Abdin, Breese and Khan (2018) we identify five contribution strategies within the literature: 1) incremental contributions based on filling research gaps; 2) differentiated-context contributions where concepts are applied in a different context; 3) revelatory contributions based on novel and surprising findings; 4) replicatory contributions in which an original study is cloned and repeated, and 5) consolidatory contributions in the form of literature review papers.

Our paper presents the findings from a rigorous systematic review of extant adventure tourism literature, using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman & Prisma Group, 2009) bibliometric protocol, to identify the contribution strategies claimed by authors. We engage a post-positivist epistemology as it offers a practical approach to collecting data using more than one method (Henderson, 2011). We use qualitative data to examine the language utilised to frame a scholarly contribution, but we do not abandon tenets of conventional positivism, and quantitative data is also used to record the frequency of contribution strategies. As a methodology, bibliometric analysis assesses research progress in a discipline, resulting in publications which guide scholars to the most influential studies without bias (Zupic & Cater, 2015). Bibliometric studies are increasingly used in tourism to map and highlight research development over time, examine its conceptual, intellectual, and social structures, and encourage innovation (Koc & Boz, 2014; Koseoglu, Rahimi, Okumus & Liu, 2016). Bibliometric analysis studies in adventure tourism are scant, and evaluate the content and structure (e.g., Cheng, Edwards, Darcy & Redfern, 2018), and scope (e.g., Rantala, Rokenes & Valkonen, 2018) of this field. There has been more emphasis on appraising its conceptual development through traditional literature reviews (e.g., Doran, 2016; Varley, 2006).

This paper makes a three-fold original contribution to academic scholarship, to tourism studies generally and specifically to adventure tourism research. Firstly, the revelatory contribution of our paper is to reveal the language and rhetorical moves deployed by authors in articulating knowledge contribution in tourism research. We provide exemplars of such language as a guide for future research in tourism studies. Secondly, a revelatory contribution lies in extending into tourism studies a generalisable framework for examining authors intentional contribution strategies. We therefore contribute to the subject of originality and contribution that is useful for editors, reviewers and, specifically scholars and research students aiming to get their manuscripts published. Thirdly, we provide a systematic review of adventure tourism research literature using the PRISMA protocol which offers a robust and replicable research strategy that ensures validity and offers a consolidatory contribution in this field.

2.0 Articulating contribution strategies in tourism research

What constitutes a theoretical contribution has been the focus of numerous articles published in business and management journals, including by editors who wish to provide guidance for authors preparing manuscripts (e.g., Åjerfalk, 2014; Crane, Henriques, Husted & Matten, 2016). By comparison, little guidance is available in the tourism literature. A wide and fragmented range of contribution strategies have been proposed. Nicholson et al., (2018) synthesised these through a systematic review and developed a model that can be used in any discipline for

examining the intentional contribution strategies of authors (see Figure 1). We use this framework to structure the following discussion on the contribution strategies that scholars can adopt. Five broad types of contribution were identified in the literature which form the basis of the framework: incremental, differentiated context, revelatory, consolidatory and replicatory.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework: Dimensions of contribution



Source: Adapted from Nicholson et al., (2018)

2.1 Incremental and differentiated context contributions

Incremental contributions are based on filling small gaps in literature, and they predominate in tourism (Xin et al., 2013), including sustainable tourism (Bramwell, 2015), and the broader business and management literature (Corley & Gioia, 2011; Crane et al., 2016; Nicholson et al., 2018). Gap-spotting includes confusion spotting, where a collection of work fails to reach

agreement on the subject; neglect spotting, where an area is deemed under-researched or neglected; or identifying a new context for an existing theory, for example in a new geographic, industrial, discipline, or cultural context (Nicholson et al., 2018; Sigala, 2021; Xin et al., 2013).

While new context spotting is commonly regarded as an incremental contribution strategy in the wider literature, Nicholson et al., (2018) present this as a discrete contribution type (Type 5). This is because, in their study, the semantics used by authors did not clearly articulate if a theory was being replicated in a new context, thus making a replicatory contribution, or if it was used to extend a study into a new context, offering an incremental contribution. Although, they believe it is likely to be the latter due to the word 'replication' barely appearing in their sample. Furthermore, they failed to code a single case of replication and incremental was the most utilised strategy, therefore, they cautiously offer the discrete differentiated context type as an interim measure and call on scholars to pursue this strategy. We answer this call by applying all five types in this study.

Incremental improvements, including differentiated context contributions, are a necessary aspect of research, as they help in the contextualisation of theory (Corley & Gioia, 2011). This is especially true in tourism research, with its spatial and temporal dimensions, which provide scholars with analytical foci to generate new theoretical insights (Bramwell, 2015). However, editors of tourism journals warn that the tendency to replicate and reproduce research in a new tourism context can be to the detriment of latest ideas and more theoretical contributions (Rodriguez Sanchez, Makkonen, & Williams, 2019). Accordingly, advancing incrementally is associated with the notion of marginal improvements where small advances in our thinking about a phenomenon are made (Corley & Gioia, 2011). This contribution strategy is deemed as not being significant enough for top tourism (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019; Sigala, 2021) and business management (Corley & Gioia, 2011; Crane et al., 2016) journals. Therefore, manuscripts that adopt this approach need to critically engage with theory (e.g., testing theory and adding refinements); identify a lack of consistency in the literature (e.g., conflicting evidence, contradictory views), and explain how their research provides new findings that can resolve this debate/conflict; and show how this enables us to better understand and explain the phenomenon compared with how we could before (Corley & Gioia, 2011; Crane et al., 2016; Sigala, 2021). One way to do this is by applying a theory from other disciplines, thereby employing a revelatory contribution in addition to an incremental one.

2.2 Revelatory contributions

Scholarship that pursues a revelatory contribution offers something novel, unexpected, interesting, and surprising (Corley & Gioia, 2011). Recently, tourism editors echoed these sentiments by encouraging authors to take risks, push boundaries and be courageous in their work. Yet, they also recognised that "getting truly courageous work published in an inherently conservative reviewing environment is quite challenging" (Dolnicar & McCabe, 2020:102894). It is also common that the empirical results of a study are expected and/or support earlier work and are, therefore, unsurprising. However, an element of surprise, courage and revelation can

still be achieved. Two strategies are offered in the literature (Corley & Gioia, 2011; Ladik & Stewart, 2008; Nicholson et al., 2018; Sigala, 2021).

First, assumption challenging, whereby the underlying assumptions or the consensus in a body of work is challenged. This might involve uncovering nuances that have previously been undetected (Ladik & Stewart, 2008). For example, pursuing new ways or novel twists on a tourism phenomenon already known, or introducing new questions not asked before within a topic (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019). Relatedly, reframing an issue or a concept (Bramwell, 2015) or deconstructing it (Xin et al., 2013) so that it is looked at differently and, therefore, new questions can be asked about it, are alternative approaches used within tourism research. This could involve embedding current issues into the theory or concept and using an alternative epistemological or theoretical perspective (Bramwell, 2015). Second, using multiple lenses by combining theory and concepts from multiple disciplines, for example into a model or framework, that constitutes a unique way of understanding a phenomenon and offers a theoretical contribution.

Borrowing theoretical ideas, concepts and frameworks have been noted as strategies employed by sustainable tourism (Bramwell, 2015) and hospitality (Khan & Hefny, 2019) scholars. Theories from psychology, economics, sociology, management, and marketing disciplines are most often used. The application of an established theory from another discipline and testing its broader robustness in the tourism context is considered to offer more originality and a stronger contribution than (re)testing a known tourism theory for the first time in a different tourism context (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019), i.e., a differentiated context/incremental contribution strategy. However, the application of a borrowed theory is deemed less original if it remains unmodified without considering the distinctive features of tourism and therefore makes no significant contribution to the original discipline from which the theory came from. Despite the contribution potential of this strategy, there are few tourism studies which have engaged in theoretical critique, developed constructs, or engaged in wider social science debates, and therefore they do not contribute to the subject's theoretical advancement (Bramwell, 2015). Furthermore, there is a practice amongst tourism scholars in applying dated theories rather than more contemporary ones from other disciplines. Consequently, "sometimes tourism research is a little bit behind" (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019: 6).

2.3 Replicatory contributions

Replicatory studies might involve cloning the original study or be based on similar parameters or a longitudinal study, for example time variations. However, replication of an original study is hard to achieve due to the evolution of time and contexts that surround research (Svensson, 2013). Therefore, it becomes more about approximating as many parameters as possible. Replications of findings are important as they provide a cumulative process that produces a body of knowledge and insights that a theory can be built on (Khan, 2019; Svensson, 2013). Yet these are seldom seen in tourism (Sigala, 2021), hospitality (Khan, 2019) or business and management publications (Ladik & Stewart, 2008; Svensson, 2013) as they are considered to provide little new information. Studies that replicate and validate previous research provide

some substantiation, but such contribution is marginal (Ladik & Stewart, 2008; Svensson, 2013). Studies that replicate but also extend knowledge, for example, explain how the replication has enabled us to see things differently or see new things previously missed (e.g., update of a model with a new variable) (Sigala, 2021) are more common but are unlikely to be published in high-ranking journals as they simply expand, refine, or limit the context of the research (Ladik & Stewart, 2008).

Svensson (2013) argues that the absence of replicatory contribution in favour of focusing on originality results in fragmentation of theory rather than encouraging consolidation. Consequently, scholars jump from one topic to the next in search of originality. Research contributions that focus on cumulative substantiations are then disregarded. This results in theories which are static, regarded as absolute truths and used indiscriminately, rather than being scrutinised and updated or replaced by new ones that build on previous work (Svensson, 2013).

2.4 Consolidatory contributions

Consolidatory contributions are dedicated literature review papers of scholarly work which advance knowledge in some way, as well as address research gaps that can inform future research (Nicholson et al., 2018). For example, by conceptualising new connections between previously separate issues or processes, by highlighting the importance of processes or relationships, or by refining or developing new categories, typologies, frameworks, models, and theory (Bramwell, 2015; Sigala, 2021; Xin et al., 2013). These types of manuscripts “offer other authors substantial time savings when writing literature reviews in their own articles” (Dolnicar & McCabe, 2020:102894). Directions on how to test and verify these new ideas enhances this contribution strategy (Sigala, 2021). Nicholson et al., (2018) propose three sub-types: a traditional review, also known as a narrative review, which involves conceptually presenting literature and is subjective in nature; a systematic review where results can be qualitative (coding of themes), quantitative or mixed methods and they can be generalised and replicated, thus they are objective in nature; or a meta-analysis, which focuses on testing hypotheses and aggregating and comparing the empirical findings from different studies. The statistical testing and objectivity of this research makes the findings more generalisable.

Despite the contribution potential of critical reviews of past literature, tourism and hospitality journals do not have a long or strong tradition for publishing review papers (Furunes, 2019). For example, it was previously reported that just 4% of all published tourism work was conceptual, although this was becoming more popular (Xin et al., 2013), corresponding with the conceptual preference of sustainable tourism scholars found in Bramwell’s (2015) study. Similarly, compared to other disciplines, such as business and marketing, there remains a lack of meta-analysis review studies in tourism and hospitality fields (Kim, Bai, Kim & Chong, 2018). This is due to the lack of guidance on how to perform different reviews and, therefore, published review papers are of varying quality (Furunes, 2019). For example, traditional narrative reviews frequently claim that their review is systematic when it is not (Hodgkinson & Ford, 2014; Pahlevan-Sharif, Mura & Wijesinghe, 2019).

2.5 Assessing the quality of theoretical work: originality and utility

It has been argued by Corley and Gioia (2011:15) that “the idea of contribution rests largely on the ability to provide *original* insight into a phenomenon by advancing knowledge in a way that is deemed to have *utility* or usefulness for some purpose.” These two dimensions divide into two further sub-categories. Originality can be categorised as advancing understanding *incrementally* or progressing understanding in a way that provides some form of *revelation*. Consequently, originality is not simply the development of a new theory, as this is the most ambitious contribution strategy a scholar could take (Crane et al., 2016) and is rare in tourism research (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019). Rather, it can be the pre-theoretical that is, the conceptual and empirical research that reports findings and accumulates knowledge which theory is built on (Ågerfalk, 2014; Khan, 2019; Svensson, 2013). Equally, an original contribution can be made in the method used, for example, if it is a new research method, a combination of methods, a re-developed method from other areas but adding something new (variables, relationships etc), and applications of existing methods which can be innovative only for the discipline of tourism (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019).

Criticisms of the peer review process in assessing originality have been noted. For example, reviewers may not recognise originality in a new area which is different from their own area of expertise (Buckley, 2020; Deale, Lee & Bae, 2020). This is particularly pertinent to tourism due to its multi-disciplinary nature, although tourism editors have reported observing good practice among reviewers to communicate to the editor their limitations to assessing originality in some parts of a paper or even decline to review it if it falls outside of their expertise (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019). What is more, a resistance to new findings when they conflict with prior beliefs, especially if it challenges the reviewers’ work, has been reported to impede reviewers’ assessment of originality (Deale et al., 2020)

In addition to originality, research must be *practically* and/or *scientifically* useful (Corley & Gioia, 2011). However, scholars do not always articulate who will be impacted by the research (Crane et al., 2016; Ladik & Stewart, 2008). In their analysis of the introduction paragraphs of papers where contribution claims are normally made, Nicholson et al., (2018) found that a statement of intent regarding the practical implications of the research was usually missing. Instead, this was often provided at the end of the paper as a token closing paragraph. Tourism editors have also noted how these can be superficial in nature (Sigala, 2021). Corley and Gioia (2011) believe that the absence of practical utility in academic papers is due to the strong bias in editorial thinking towards scientific rather than practical usefulness. This is also likely to remain the norm “as scientifically useful ideas are critical to the larger project of establishing theory that is conceptually rigorous and internally consistent and, thus, the surest path to building and maintaining academic legitimacy” (Corley & Gioia, 2011:19).

However, practical, and scientific utility are not mutually exclusive and theoretical advancements can be made by applying both strategies (Corley & Gioia, 2011). Indeed, governments, funding bodies, university leadership and the wider public are increasingly raising the question of the

practical utility of academic work, therefore, the potential impact outside academia becomes of growing relevance as an evaluation criterion too (Crane et al., 2016). Accordingly, good theory needs to be translatable to relevant audiences, and authors may want to consider creating figures and tables, for example, that help summarise their contribution in a readily digestible way (Crane et al., 2016).

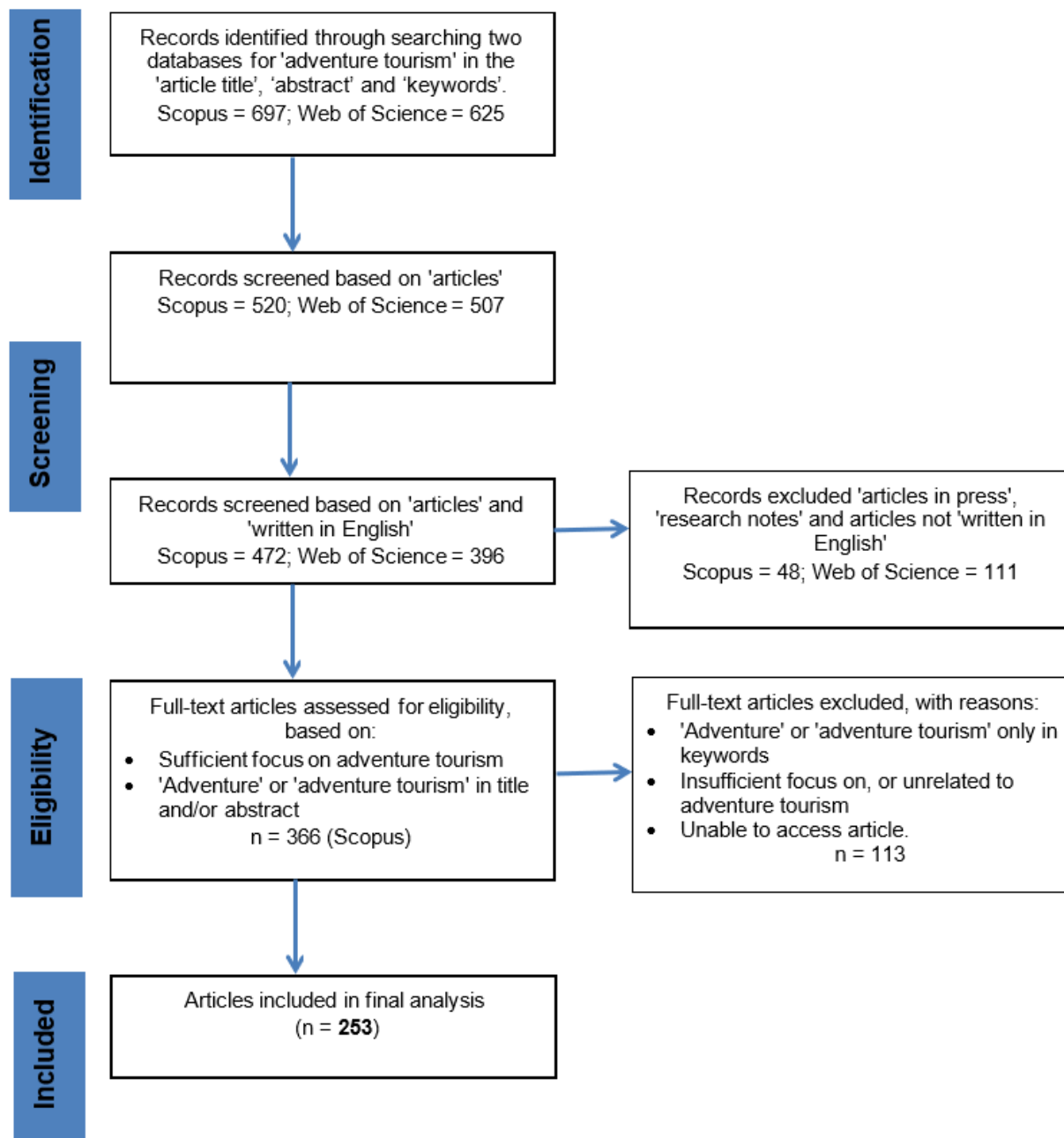
3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adheres to the epistemological and ontological premises of post-positivism. Post-positivism acknowledges that researchers are influenced by their contexts, but still seeks (uncontaminated) knowledge about the true nature of the world and thus aims to control for or remove subjective influences on knowledge production (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Hence, this paradigm offers a practical approach to collecting data using more than one method (Henderson, 2011). In this study, we use qualitative data with a belief in the importance of subjective reality to examine the language used to explain the scholarly contribution in each individual paper. Equally, tenants of conventional positivism were not abandoned (Henderson, 2011) and quantitative data were collected to capture the frequency of contribution strategies. When combined, this “permits model building of the shared consensus of what is actually happening” (Ryan, 2000, p.119). As we focused specifically on the contribution claims made in the adventure tourism literature, we do not claim to have discovered the truth and an analysis of the broader tourism literature might elicit different findings. Instead, we hope that this research brings us closer to the truth by advancing our understandings of what makes a scholarly contribution until “such a time that they are supplanted by new theories/laws which provide a fuller or more comprehensive explanation of the available data” (Veal, 2016: 39).

The data were collected by conducting a systematic review of extant adventure tourism literature. Such reviews “synthesise the knowledge base in a research field on a certain topic or research question” (Furunes, 2019: 227) through analysing a multifarious collection of studies from different disciplines, contexts, and research designs (Moher et al., 2009; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore & Arcodia, 2017). Unlike traditional reviews, they necessitate an open, methodical, well-documented search strategy, such as the PRISMA bibliometric protocol, to improve the traceability process and the quality of reporting (Yang et al., 2017). Although the protocol was originally developed for medical research, scholars across a range of disciplines use it to report systematic literature reviews, often adapting it to their area of study (Fink, 2014). Its detailed guidelines comprise general topics and concepts which are pertinent to any systematic literature review (Moher et al., 2009). Guidance advises that databases such as Scopus and Web of Science should be used to ensure that the review process is systematic, rigorous, transparent, accurate, objective, easily replicated, ultimately enhancing the contribution of the review (Furunes, 2019; Pahlevan-Sharif et al., 2019). Scopus is 10-15% larger than other leading databases (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019) and includes a broad coverage of tourism-related journals (Hall, 2011), albeit limited to leading ones (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015). This database is used in other tourism bibliometric research (e.g., Demiroglu & Hall, 2020) and was considered the most pertinent for this study as it comprises many documents about adventure tourism.

There is differing practice amongst scholars who evaluate the status of tourism knowledge. This is illustrated in Pahlevan-Sharif et al.'s (2019) research, which examined 192 systematic literature review articles in tourism and hospitality, published up until 2017. Only five articles followed systematic guidelines, such as those within the PRISMA protocol. They argued that using the PRISMA checklist would result in a "better understanding of the execution, quality and rigour of systematic reviews" (p.159). Tourism, hospitality and adventure scholars are increasingly using the protocol (Booth, Chaperon, Kennell & Morrison, 2020; Boudreau, Hogue Mackenzie & Hodge, 2020; Britton, Kindermann, Domegan & Carlin, 2018; Demiroglu & Hall, 2020; McEwan, Boudreau, Curran & Rhodes, 2019; Garcês, Pocinho & de Jesus, 2018; Khoo-Lattimore, Mura & Yung, 2017; Yang & Khoo-Lattimore, 2017), convinced by its methodical approach, comprehensive checklist, sequence of stages, and the way it synthesises pertinent information in a flowchart (Figure 2) (Furunes, 2019). Pahlevan-Sharif et al., (2019) adapted the PRISMA protocol, and reduced the 27-item checklist to 18 items to use in tourism and hospitality systematic literature reviews. Consequently, we used this adapted version (see Figure 2) as it is the most relevant protocol to review adventure tourism literature. The flowchart comprises four phases for data collection: identification, screening, eligibility and included.

Figure 2: Flow chart of study selection process



3.1 Systematic search strategy

There are differing conceptualisations of adventure tourism (e.g., Buckley, 2010; Rantala et al., 2018; World Tourism Organisation, 2014) and it comprises many land-, water- and air-based activities (Pomfret, 2006). Scholars (e.g., Rantala et al., 2018; Varley, 2006) have developed continua to illustrate its broad-ranging nature and these reflect varied levels of difficulty, risk, experience, adventure, and commodification. Inevitably, this has resulted in considerable debate about what adventure tourism is. However, for the purpose of this research, we have

adopted the ATTA (2020) definition: 'Adventure tourism contains essential elements that make up the entire experience (nature, activity, culture), which are used by the travel trade to understand if a specific product can be classified as 'adventure travel'. These elements come together to deliver specific types of experiences for travelers who are motivated by goals such as transformation, challenge and wellness'. This is an industry definition, yet it also reflects academic delineations of adventure tourism.

There are several reasons why adventure tourism provides an interesting focus for this study. Its diverse nature and broad-based definitions, activities, and conceptualisations signal that it spans different sub-fields of tourism. Relatedly, it "has an intellectual tradition from multiple disciplines, such as the social psychology of sport and recreation" (Cheng et al, 2018, p.997). Accordingly, there are a wide range of journals within which adventure tourism is represented, facilitated by growing scholarly interest in the subject. There are few systematic reviews (e.g., Boudreau et al., 2020; Demiroglu & Hall, 2020; Rantala et al., 2018) in adventure tourism and extant literature "remains largely underdeveloped" (Cheng et al, 2018, p.998). Therefore, it is timely to review research in this sub-field to highlight its status and consider future research directions.

As this review focuses on contributions within adventure tourism research, the search strategy comprised one set of keywords: 'adventure tourism'. To connect the search words together, and to ensure all search terms were included in the results, we used the Boolean operator 'AND'. Therefore, in the identification phase (Figure 2), we searched the Scopus database for published documents with search terms "adventure" AND "tourism" in the article title, abstract and keywords. The initial search returned 697 documents published between 1988 and 13th February 2019. In the screening phase (Figure 2), we limited the search to 'articles', which returned 520 documents, then to 'articles' 'written in English'. We excluded (48) 'articles in press', 'research notes', and articles not 'written in English', which generated 472 documents.

As a means of comparison, we adopted the same search strategy for the Web of Science database, which returned only 625 documents at the identification phase, then 396 at the screening phase. A comparison of the returned documents from each database revealed many similarities although Scopus generated additional adventure tourism articles, confirming that it was the more comprehensive dataset. Accordingly, we continued to the eligibility phase (Figure 2) and the bibliographic details of the Scopus articles were exported to an Excel spreadsheet for the data cleansing process.

The eligibility phase (Figure 2) comprised four data cleanses to reduce inaccuracies in the dataset, which can arise through relying on keyword and abstract searches (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015). In the first data cleanse, we reviewed the title, keywords and abstract of the 472 articles with the first eligibility criterion that articles needed to have sufficient focus on adventure tourism. Subjective decisions were made based on our research expertise and publications in the adventure tourism field. Furthermore, we were guided by the ATTA (2014) definition of adventure tourism. Initially, each researcher independently reviewed a third of the articles, colour coding those which clearly did not reflect adventure tourism and those which we were

uncertain about. The latter mostly reflected articles within which adventure tourism was included in the study, but it was not a central focus of the research. This was followed by a meeting to discuss our findings, deliberate over the colour-coded articles, and make decisions about their inclusion or exclusion in the included phase. This process resulted in 366 eligible documents.

In the second data cleanse, we followed the same format. We also included the second more objective eligibility criterion that articles needed to include the words 'adventure' or 'adventure tourism' in their title, and/or abstract, in addition to having sufficient focus on adventure tourism. Articles were excluded (113) from further analysis if these words only appeared in the keywords and thereafter were present only in later sections of the article. This involved checking where the keywords appeared in the article using the search function. We excluded articles which had insufficient focus or were unrelated to adventure tourism, or if we were unable to access the article. For the latter, we managed to access seven full-text articles through directly requesting these from the authors. During this process, the team deliberated about articles on peripheral adventure tourism activities, such as geo-caching and space tourism, concluding that they should be in the dataset as they reflect adventure tourism.

In the third data cleanse, we continued to refine the dataset by scrutinising articles which partly focused on adventure tourism to ascertain if there was sufficient focus. For instance, nine articles investigated tourist motives, with adventure tourism motives as one resulting category. Alongside reviewing their title, keywords and abstract, we also checked their introduction. In the fourth and final data cleanse, 29 articles were deleted from the database because they did not sufficiently focus on adventure tourism, or we could not access these. This data cleansing process resulted in 253 remaining articles with direct and sufficient focus on adventure tourism. We then downloaded the full-text articles on to Mendeley Reference Manager so that we could review their abstracts and introductions in the data analysis stage. It must be noted here that since the end of our literature search in February 2019, many adventure tourism studies have been published, including a special issue in the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism* in December 2019.

3.2 Data analysis

In reviewing the 253 articles, we firstly undertook a pilot phase, which involved randomly selecting 20 articles published across the 20-year period, reviewing their abstracts and introductions, and populating the database in accordance with the criteria. This flagged up several discrepancies about contribution type, particularly where articles offered multiple contributions, or where scholars did not clearly articulate these. Similarly, methodology details were sometimes absent from the abstracts and introductions of the articles. In such cases, we inspected these together, reviewing the articles' methodology in addition to the introduction, when necessary, as a way of ensuring intercoder reliability.

After the process of establishing intercoder reliability and satisfied with having a consistent approach from the pilot phase, each author was assigned one-third of the articles to code. The authors met after reviewing 25 articles each to moderate the selected sample. We also

undertook an additional moderation of our samples at the end of the analysis to ensure a consistent approach to coding. For each of the articles, the abstracts and introduction sections were examined, and Excel spreadsheets were used to record the coded findings. We each appraised the language of the articles' contribution(s) and classified the claims made with the ten sub-types of contribution, which are non-mutually exclusive (see Figure 5).

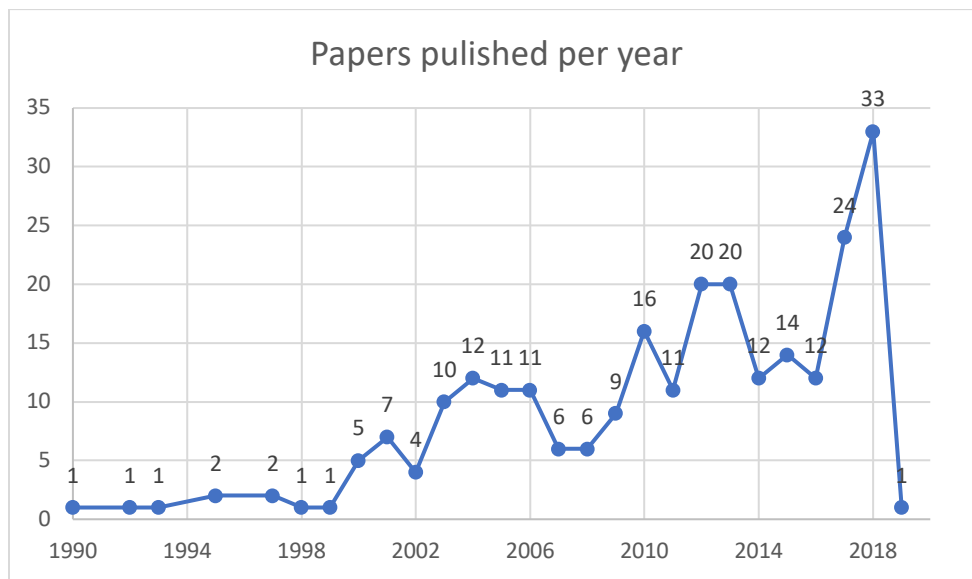
In aggregating the coded frequency of sub-categories to the main strategies, we followed the methodology outlined by Nicholson et al., (2018). Thus, where an article was coded as having assumption challenging (Type 1.1) and multiple lenses strategies (Type 1.2) within it, this was aggregated as one occurrence of revelatory contribution (Type 1) and not two, as both sub-types are within the main strategy. The same process was applied to the remaining contribution types of incremental, replicatory, consolidatory and differentiated context contributions. The review process was straightforward, although we continued to encounter articles which lacked clearly articulated contributions and methodology information in the abstracts and introductions. This was complicated by differing journal conventions, particularly variations in length and style of abstracts and introductions. In a few cases, we read the article's conclusion section as a study's contribution is usually reiterated there.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Overview of published articles

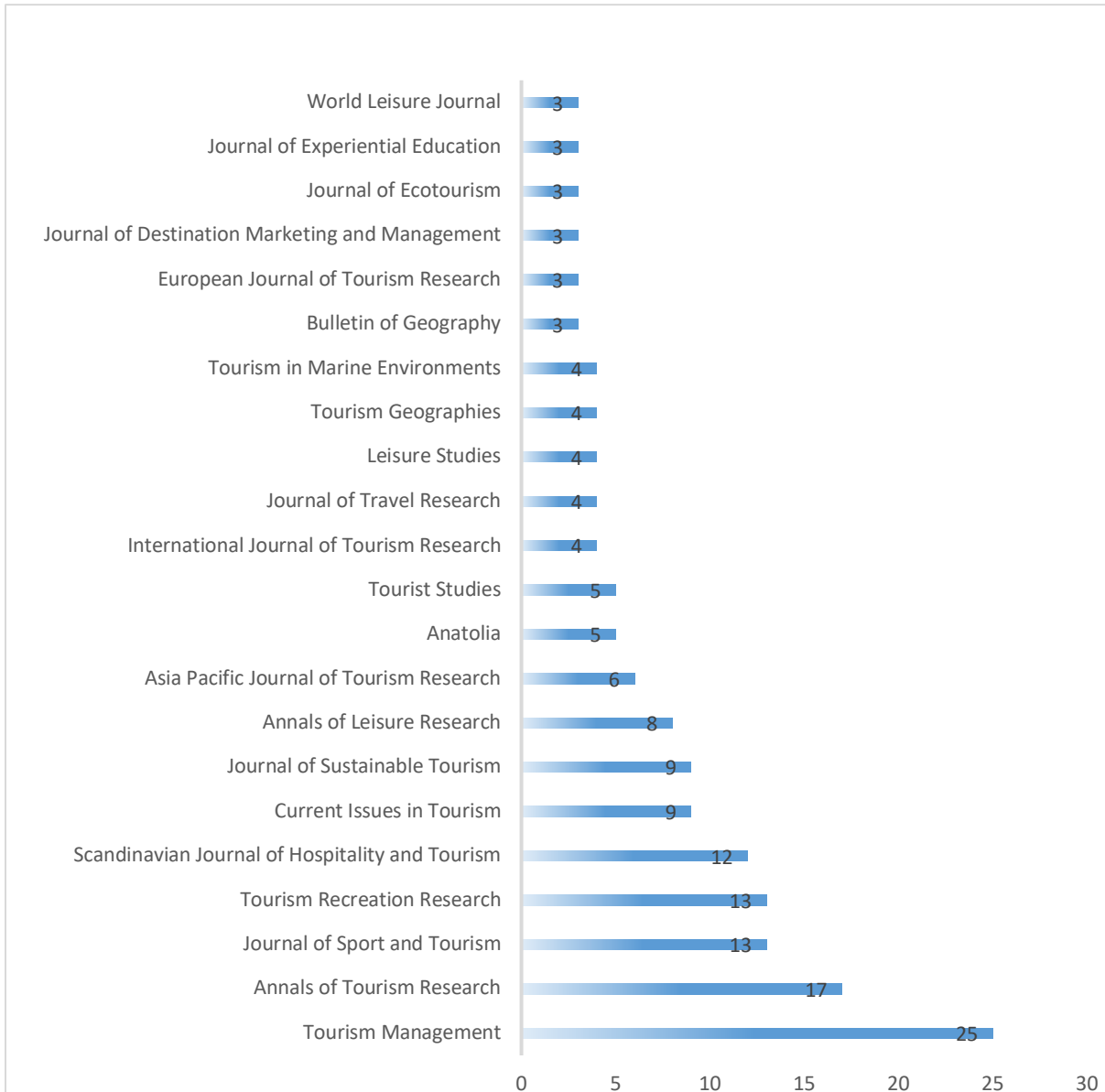
The dataset compiled for this research, shows that within the time span of 29 years, a total of 253 articles related to adventure tourism were published in 99 journals (Figure 3). A total of 399 authors contributed to these articles with the average number of authors per article being 1.57.

Figure 3: Evolution of adventure tourism research over the years



Among all journals, *Tourism Management (TM)* with 25 articles has the most published articles on adventure tourism, followed by *Annals of Tourism Research (ATR)* with 17 articles. The *Journal of Sport and Tourism (JST)* and *Tourism Recreation Research (TRR)* both have 13 articles while the *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism (SJHT)* has 12 articles. Figure 4 gives an overview of the journals which have at least three published articles on adventure tourism.

Figure 4: Adventure tourism articles per journal



Quantitative research methodologies are utilised by 38.3% of the articles followed closely by 34.4% of articles which used qualitative approaches. A sizeable number of articles are what we considered to be conceptual in terms of methodology (19.3%). By conceptual, we mean these

articles are not based on primary data collection but are based on ideas and principles from other disciplines applied to the adventure tourism concept. Mixed methods were the least used form of methodology (7.9%).

Table 1: Methodological approaches in adventure tourism research

Methodology	Frequency	Percentage
Conceptual	49	19.3%
Mixed Methods	20	7.9%
Qualitative	87	34.4%
Quantitative	97	38.3%
TOTAL	253	100%

4.2 Contribution strategies in adventure tourism research

The articles were coded with the aim of demonstrating the occurrence of the five contribution strategies – *revelatory*, *incremental*, *replicatory*, *consolidatory* and *differentiated context*. We were also interested in identifying the occurrences of the ten sub-types across the five strategies. We found that most articles examined used a single strategy approach to contribution claims – i.e., these relied on only one of the ten sub-types. The maximum number of sub-types we found in a single paper was three and this was in six instances only.

Table 2: Overview of contribution type frequencies

Contribution Strategy Types	Single strategy	As part of another strategy	Combined strategy instances	Total Type
Type 1 - Revelatory Contributions				37
1.1 – Assumption challenging: problematizing	3	7	10	
1.2 – Using multiple lenses	1	27	28	
Type 2 – Incremental Contributions				204
2.1 – Neglect spotting	126	76	202	
2.2 – Confusion spotting	2	1	3	
Type 3 – Replicatory Contributions				0
3.1 – Exact replication	0	0	0	
3.2 – Close replication	0	0	0	
Type 4 – Consolidatory Contributions				21
4.1 – Systematic reviews	2	0	2	
4.2 – Traditional reviews	9	9	18	
4.3 – Meta-analysis	1	0	1	
Type 5 – Differentiated context contributions	25	54	79	79
TOTAL	169	174	343	341

In Figure 5 we present the overall counts and percentages for each contribution type and sub-type, as well as the single occurrence of strategies. Overall, our results confirm the dominance of *incremental* contribution strategies utilised as a single strategy and not in combination with others. We found not one single occurrence of *replicatory* contribution strategies and limited single occurrence of *consolidatory* contribution strategies. We now examine each contribution type in detail in the sections that follows.

Figure 5: Results of analysis including counts and percentages for each contributory strategy type



Key:
First number and percentage: Papers containing this strategy.

Second number (*in italics*): Papers containing this strategy as a single strategy
N = 253

4.2.1 Type 2 - Incremental contributions

The most dominant contribution strategy was an incremental contribution to knowledge (81% of sample). Significantly, in 128 papers (51%), authors confidently relied only on an incremental contribution as a single strategy, without recourse to other types of contribution. Neglect spotting (Type 2.1) was the most dominant sub-type used and appears in 50% of our sample. In contrast, the next most predominant single sub-type used is Type 5 (differentiated context), found in 10% of the sample. It is evident that adventure tourism scholars prefer to adopt a neglect spotting strategy than confusion spotting (Type 2.2) strategy which is used in only 1% of the sample. In Table 3 we highlight some of the language of neglect spotting which consistently points to ‘something missing’ in the literature that needs to be found and addressed.

Table 3: Neglect spotting language

deserves further attention	an ignored research area	still an unexplored area
yet to be adequately addressed	remains scarce	an overlooked area
overlooked by academia	confronts the gap	received relatively little attention
fill this gap	lack of literature	little investigation
receives less attention	reduce this lack of knowledge	gap in the research
investigations of X are limited	less research has focused on	very little research
few academic studies	there remains a lack of empirical exploration	remain under-researched
no research exists	substantial knowledge gap	limited number of studies

4.2.2 Type 1 - Revelatory contributions

We coded 37 articles (15%) as containing revelatory contribution strategies. Of these articles, 10 deployed assumption challenging strategies while the remaining 28 articles adopted multiple lenses in conjunction with other contribution sub-types. This shows that the use of multiple lenses in making contribution claims is usually deployed as part of a multiple contribution strategic approach, rather than as a single strategy. This is to say that revelatory contribution strategies are difficult to use on their own and therefore they have to be combined with other strategies such as incremental contribution strategy.

Only four articles (three of Type 1.1 and four of Type 1.2) used revelatory contribution as a single strategy. This suggests that few adventure tourism scholars are relying on revelatory contribution strategies as a single strategy in articulating knowledge contribution. Thus, adventure tourism scholars are more likely to use a revelatory contribution strategy only in combination with an incremental contribution strategy which is more commonly known and recognisable to reviewers. As our analysis shows, only 15% of articles analysed contain revelatory contribution strategies compared with 80% of articles contain incremental contribution strategies. The language used by authors in staking a revelatory contribution strategy tends to

be quite subtle, particularly in terms of Type 1.1 (assumption challenging). We present all three instances of assumption challenging contribution strategies as exemplars of the way authors make use of nuanced language.

Table 4: Assumption challenging language

Authors	Language of the contribution claim
Giddy (2018: 47)	“The increased growth and commercialization of adventure tourism led to a number of changes in the profile of the individuals who now engage in adventure activities. As a result, previous understandings of adventure tourism motivations may no longer be valid. This study seeks to investigate the influence of these changes by analysing the motivations of tourists who have engaged in adventure tourism across a range of commercial adventure activities”
Large and Schilar (2018: 330, 331)	“This allows us to challenge the negative light in which much of the adventure tourism field paints commodified adventure as somewhat lesser and build instead a more inclusive understanding of adventure. With our material, we challenge preconceptions about the ideal/real versus commodified adventure demonstrating that the experience can indeed be similar”
Kontogeorgopoulos (2003:171)	“Many studies have assumed that backpackers and other ‘alternative’ tourists represent a new, more sensitive and responsible form of traveller, but evidence from southern Thailand belies these assumptions and reveals many similarities in the behavioural patterns of tourists”

4.2.3 Type 3 - Replicatory contributions

Replicatory studies are those that seek to confirm previous findings either conceptually, methodologically and/or empirically. We found no instance of any of the two sub-types – exact replication (Type 3.1) or close replication (Type 3.2). This finding is not surprising given that it is well known that such studies in the social sciences are rare and more so within tourism studies (Freese & Peterson, 2017). The absence of any instance of replicatory contribution strategy does present several questions regarding adventure tourism research and tourism social science research in general. We will return to these issues and questions of how to ensure of long-term research theory development, (dis)confirmation and knowledge consolidation later in the discussion section.

4.2.4 Type 4 - Consolidatory contributions

8% of our sample contained consolidatory contributions. However, these represent 5% of all single-use strategies across the sample. Of the 18 papers coded as Type 4.2 based on traditional reviews, nine of them are deployed as a single strategy in making contribution claims. The two papers and one paper based on systematic reviews and meta-analysis respectively, are used as single strategies (see table below for their semantics). Thus, literature review papers within adventure tourism research appear to be accepted as making important knowledge contributions.

Table 5: Consolidatory contribution semantics

Authors	Language of the contribution claim
Cheng et al., (2018: 998)	"The aim of this article is to advance previous reviews on adventure tourism via a more systematic, objective, and integrated review of this literature"
Rantala et al., (2018: 540)	"We set to review systematically the existing wide range of studies on adventure tourism. Even though previous reviews on adventure tourism exist, a systematic review of the scope of the field is missing"
Bentley and Page (2008: 858)	"For this reason, this paper examines the importance of understanding the risk which adventure tourism participants may face when engaging in specific activities within one country from a risk management perspective, through a review and summary risk analysis of findings from studies that have sought to monitor safety and injuries in the adventure sector for over a decade. To date, no holistic assessment and understanding exists of the interconnections between these diverse studies and their contribution to creating a destination risk assessment of adventure activities"

4.2.5 Type 5 - Differentiated context contributions

In our sample, we coded as differentiated context contributions those papers whose strategies are partly based on replicating a study in a new context, culture, country, or environment. Those papers using this strategy did not always focus on directly replicating an original study but aimed to show how a general concept or knowledge has applicability in a new setting. In Table 6 we provide language exemplars of how authors deploy this strategy.

Table 6: Differentiated context language

Authors	Language of the contribution claim	Extension of	In adventure tourism context of
Ferguson and Veer (2015: 61)	"Much of this work presumes an innate sense of the tourist as a performer: we wish to contribute to this conversation by unpacking the nature of the tourist performance utilising a dramaturgical approach in the context of adventure tourism..."	Social performance in tourism based on Goffman's (1959) work	Tourist performance
Dolnicar (2007: 289)	"While the concept of segmentation is not new, each application is unique in its context. The present paper focuses on price premium segments in the adventure tourism segments."	Market segmentation analysis	Price premium segments
Page et al., (2006: 55)	"This paper seeks to develop understanding of how classifications of adventure	Adventure tourism promotion categories	A different country context of Scotland

	tourism promotion as developed by Cloke and Perkins (2002) can be extended in other geographical contexts using similar research methods...”		
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As the language exemplars in Table 6 show, differentiated context contributions involved a strategy of extending known concepts and approaches into adventure tourism, into new geographical areas or into niche aspects of adventure tourism. We coded a total of 79 papers (31%) in our sample as relying on this strategy, of which 25 papers (10%) used it as a single strategy. Differentiated context contributions are the second most used single strategy after incremental contribution strategies. However, most authors used this strategy in combination with other strategies.

4.3 Multiple contributions

We have outlined the findings regarding the five contribution strategies used by authors and highlighted the single strategies in the process. In our analysis, we also captured the use of multiple strategies. Out of the 253 papers in our sample, 169 (67%) contained a single contribution claim and 78 (31%) contained two discernible contribution strategy types. In only six (2%) papers could we identify three contribution strategy types being used. The most utilised multiple contribution strategy were the combination of Type 2.1 (neglect spotting/incremental contribution) and Type 5 (differentiated context contribution). This combination was used in 42 papers (17%). The next most used combination was Type 1.2 (using multiple lens/revelatory contribution) and Type 2.1 (neglect spotting/incremental contribution). In all, the four most utilised multiple contribution strategies involved some combination with Type 2.1 (neglect spotting/incremental contribution). Thus, an incremental contribution is the most dominant contribution claim in adventure tourism research, either as a single strategy or as part of a multiple contribution strategy.

5.0 DISCUSSION

Incremental contribution (81%) is the most utilised strategy by scholars of adventure tourism. They particularly employ neglect spotting as either a single strategy (51%) or in conjunction with other strategies (80%). This is like industrial marketing scholarship, as identified by Nicholson et al., (2018), and implies that neglect spotting, is a common approach regardless of the field of research, despite it offering only small advances in knowledge about a phenomenon (Corley & Gioia, 2011). Reasons for this are unclear, although the ease and familiarity of gap spotting or a lack of understanding of the other contribution strategies is likely. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see that some manuscripts claimed this weaker contribution strategy alongside other strategies, thus theoretically strengthening the article.

Combining strategies is present amongst all contribution types, particularly combining neglect spotting with differentiated context and with multiple lenses, which will be discussed shortly. However, claiming one contribution type is more prevalent, with nearly two thirds of papers in

the sample doing this. By comparison, half of Nicolson et al.'s (2018) sample used a single strategy. It is unclear whether this is a missed opportunity by adventure tourism scholars to critically engage with theory and wider debate by utilising multiple strategies to strengthen their manuscripts, as advocated by Bramwell (2015), or, if they were unaware that they could claim multiple contribution strategies.

As aforementioned, incremental contributions were the most common single strategy (51%). This was followed by differentiated context contributions (10%) and consolidatory contributions (5%). Given that top tourism journals are unlikely to publish manuscripts that only claim a differentiated context contribution, due to the small advances in knowledge they make (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019), it is encouraging to see that few scholars adopted this strategy. However, it is the second most popular strategy when combined with other strategies, particularly when merged with neglect spotting. This is unsurprising as scholars may consider the application of a theory in, for example, a new geographic location, cultural context or discipline, to be a gap in literature (neglect spotting). Yet, the popularity of combining these two strategies is troubling, as both offer minor advances in our thinking. To strengthen the validity of a differentiated context contributing something new to the field, Sigala (2021) implores scholars to justify why it is important and useful to replicate/re-test a theory in a new setting and use the new setting and/or methodology to show this helps us to see things differently and/or see things that have been previously missed (e.g., update of a model with a new variable).

When making differentiated contribution claims, the language used by adventure tourism scholars implies that the aim of the research was to extend it into another area rather than replicating a study in a different context. When taken into consideration with the popularity of neglect spotting (88%), particularly when combined with differentiated context, and our failure to code a single case of replication, like Nicholson et al., (2018), we deduce that a differentiated context strategy is likely to be underpinned by incremental gains. Whilst our findings suggest that differentiated context is a sub-type of incremental (type 2), we agree with Nicholson et al., (2018) that it should remain a discrete type in the framework as a means of encouraging authors to better communicate the nature of their use of this strategy, e.g., for new context spotting (incremental/type 2) or replication (replicatory/type 3) purposes. In doing so, others who replicate this study in their own research area may or may not find instances of differentiated context and warrant its inclusion/exclusion as a discrete type in the framework.

Our findings also confirm that consolidatory contributions are less popular with scholars in and outside of tourism (Nicolson et al., 2018; Xin et al., 2013). Yet, a novel synthesis of literature or systematic reviews that highlights the discrepancy between what we already know and what we should know on a subject, that develops and justifies a future research agenda (including new research ideas, directions, and methods) and leads to new concepts, frameworks or theories (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019; Sigala, 2021) are considered original by editors of tourism journals. Traditional narrative reviews were the most popular approach to developing consolidatory reviews of the literature, whether as a single or part of a multiple strategy, thus corresponding to previous studies in the broader tourism and hospitality literature (Kim et al., 2018) and other business and management disciplines (Hodgkinson & Ford, 2014). Whilst

traditional narrative reviews are useful “for generating new research questions and identifying future research directions, as well as summarising the limitations of past work” (Hodgkinson & Ford, 2014: S3), they have been critiqued for their lack of reliability, validity, and research bias by selecting literature that supports the position (Pahlevan-Sharif et al., 2019). Consequently, scholars are encouraged to adopt a systematic or a meta-analysis approach, which provide a replicable and transparent process to minimise bias and produce a less subjective assessment of the existing body of knowledge (Pahlevan-Sharif et al., 2019). However, tourism editors warn that these must not present descriptive findings of past published research (e.g., how many papers have been published during which year, in which journal etc.), but to critically reflect on the findings and develop a future research agenda (Sigala, 2021).

Contrastingly, replicatory contributions would be hard to achieve due to the changes that may have occurred in the tourism research context over time. This may account for the absence of replicatory manuscripts in the sample and a preference for a differentiated context approach. There are also relatively few revelatory contributions (15%), with only four manuscripts (2%) using this as a single strategy, and multiple lenses as the preferred sub-strategy. This is unsurprising, as Rodriguez Sanchez et al., (2019) found in their examination of the peer review literature and in their research with editors of tourism journals, that reviewers tend to reject papers with controversial findings or new challenging perspectives. By comparison, safe or minimal risk papers that support or extend conventional beliefs are considered less harshly. In contradiction, however, challenging conventional knowledge, assumptions, approaches, and theoretical lenses which inspire and help people to think differently have been noted by Sigala (2021) as a theoretical contribution that tourism editors seek. Given these conflicting reports, it is understandable why adventure tourism scholars might be apprehensive in overtly adopting this strategy or choosing to claim the less controversial revelatory strategy of using multiple lenses, especially when doing so alongside an incremental contribution.

However, we also found that the language used to claim revelatory contributions was subtle and, like others (e.g., Corley & Gioia, 2011; Dolnicar & McCabe, 2020; Sigala, 2021), we encourage scholars to be more obvious and clearly articulate how their research is novel, surprising and interesting. When defining originality, tourism journal editors referred to the emotions that were generated when reading such manuscripts, such as “excitement”, “stimulation” or “astonishment” (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019: 4). A revelatory contribution strategy has the potential to elicit such emotions. For example, the application of existing theories to tourism for the first time, highlighting the uniqueness and different nature of the tourism disciplinary context, expands theory and is considered as original and revelatory by editors of tourism journals (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019). Similarly, studying new phenomena and/or existing phenomena in new ways/approaches is a novel and/or original way of advancing knowledge (Sigala, 2021).

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Theoretical implications

This research has examined the language of scholarly contribution claims in the introductory sections of adventure tourism journal articles and made three key contributions. Firstly, it offers a revelatory contribution through methodically deconstructing and consolidating knowledge contributions in this field (Xin et al., 2013). Secondly, it extends a generalisable framework into tourism studies for examining authors' intentional contribution strategies. Thirdly, it provides a systematic review of adventure tourism literature using the PRISMA bibliometric protocol. The study has found that tourism scholars do not always clearly articulate the knowledge contributions of their research within the introductory sections of articles. Undoubtedly, this can devalue their work, conceal their attempts to engage with theory, and lead to editorial decisions to desk reject submitted manuscripts.

Incremental contribution strategies dominate adventure tourism research, particularly the neglect spotting strategy (88%), as part of a multiple strategy contribution (81%) or as a single strategy (51%). Such findings allude to a dearth of truly original ideas in this field, with scholars instead relying on tourism's multidisciplinary nature and its 'borrowing' of theories from other disciplines.

However, we offer other explanations in terms of a lack of understanding regarding the different contribution strategies that can be adopted, especially as the boundaries between them can be unclear. Scholars may select incremental contribution strategies as the default option as they are the most straightforward type to consider. Alternatively, they may choose to downplay, and therefore miscommunicate, the contribution they are making, fearing their findings may not be sufficiently original for another categorisation, or that their work may be heavily criticised for being overambitious. It may also be due to the pressure scholars face to publish high numbers of research articles rather than focusing on innovative contributions within their work. The introduction of the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), which proposes that research should be evaluated on its own merits rather than being driven by journal-based metrics, may encourage more scholars to switch their focus to quality and originality rather than topic hopping and quantity.

6.2 Practical implications

As highlighted in section 2.5, scholars often omit or give limited consideration to the practical value of their research. Yet, by focusing on how their work makes both academic and practical contributions, they can make stronger theoretical advancements. Accordingly, it is important that researchers communicate the practical value of their research, articulating this early on in their paper, as part of their contribution strategy, rather than only at the end, which is often the norm (Corey & Gioia, 2011; Nicholson et al., 2018). Using protocols such as the PRISMA will help to ensure tourism systematic literature reviews are practically useful for the industry. As they are 'grounded on more transparent and reliable criteria' (Pahlevan-Sharif et al., 2019, p.164), practitioners can use these for policy making, marketing and management practices.

6.3 Limitations

Building on Nicholson et al.'s, (2018) work, we have extended a generalisable framework into tourism studies and applied this to adventure tourism, which scholars can use to appraise their intentional contribution strategies. Some limitations were however identified in this study. We acknowledge that a different search strategy, which includes journal articles in different languages and articles in press, might offer different findings. However, the relative size of the Scopus database (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019) provides an assurance that we have captured most adventure tourism journal articles up until 13th February 2019. Our decision to review the abstract and introduction of each article may be viewed as a further limitation. Yet, the purpose of this approach was to highlight that these sections are the 'home' where the contribution of the research should be clearly articulated. The focus on only adventure tourism as one type is another limitation. This means our findings might not fully reflect the contribution strategies of tourism researchers in general. Conventions on manuscript structure might vary in different tourism subfields and hence we may not have fully captured these differing insights. This limitation does however present avenues of future research which can focus on a different type of tourism such as cultural tourism, slow tourism, or rural tourism for instance.

6.4 Future research

Moving forward, we propose several recommendations regarding knowledge contributions within adventure tourism research. Affirming others' suggestions (Rodriguez Sanchez et al., 2019), scholars should sell the originality of their research, and therefore articulate their contribution strategy, throughout their articles, particularly in the introductory sections, and within the editor's cover letter. This encourages journal editors and reviewers to recognise the value of the research at first glance. Researchers need to respond to calls for greater precision, consistency and clarity in language when making contribution claims (Smith, Xiao, Nunkoo & Tukamushaba, 2013). For example, "the use of words such as 'model,' 'construct,' 'hypothesis' or 'epistemology' would provide clearer and more precise understanding of the authors' meanings" (p.891).

Additionally, we propose brief guidance for the language adventure tourism scholars can use in clearly enunciating their contributions. For incremental strategies, scholars need to qualify the reason(s) for a lack of extant research, and what the 'something missing' is. For revelatory contributions, the language must be overt, and scholars should refer to contradictions and challenges to existing assumptions. Researchers need to present a clear case when claiming consolidatory contributions as the language employed is currently only subtly different from that used in incremental strategies. Accordingly, language should emphasise progress in knowledge, usually through a systematic literature review. For differentiated context contributions, scholars need to explicitly state what the context is and how this differs to previous studies.

Furthermore, they must emphasise the importance of not merely describing the phenomena and dig deeper into the interpretation to explain why this occurred. Theoretical robustness can be achieved by ensuring the phenomena are generalisable to other contexts (Crane et al., 2016), as shown in our study. In line with Bramwell's (2015) proposal for a strong theoretical paper, we

advocate the use of multiple contribution strategies rather than relying on a single strategy. As alluded to earlier, there is much debate concerning different conceptualisations of adventure tourism. Such variances suggest that scholars should carefully consider the revelatory contributions of their research. Thus, the use of challenging assumptions strategies in conceptual articles, may help to progress the field of adventure tourism research.

An important line of future research will be to undertake a whole of tourism studies cross-field analysis of the language framing of scholarly contributions. This can allow comparison between the approaches evident in different types of tourism research. Another area worth pursuing is the analysis of the language framing of papers published in some of the top tourism journals over a selected period. This will provide insights as to the changes and continuities in how scholarly contributions are framed in the abstract and introductions of articles. Relatedly, it would be useful to check the assigned knowledge contributions with the authors of each article to confirm or disagree with these. This process would allow for testing and triangulating the judgements made by the researchers. We recognise that the extension of theoretical frameworks tends to involve adaptation to fit the new context, however our findings did not suggest this was needed. We therefore call for the close replication of this framework in other areas of tourism research to facilitate comparative insights into the intentional contribution strategies used across the tourism discipline.

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