

The why, how, and what of public policy implications of tourism and hospitality research

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ABSTRACT

We synthesized policy implications of tourism and hospitality research by reviewing 12,269 articles published in 10 leading journals from 2011 to 2021. The most common rationale for policies (i.e., the *why*) is market failure, while the most typical role of policies (i.e., the *how*) is to create incentives. In addition, policies are typically hybrid and include suggestions for formal and informal institutional setups (i.e., the *what*). Because our review revealed that only 114 articles (i.e., 0.93%) included the *why*, *how*, and *what* of actual policies, we offer a theory-based research agenda on policy-making focused on making tourism and hospitality more inclusive and focusing on evolutionary dynamics, providing an understanding of the impact of crises and contemporary solutions, focusing on resilience and institutional complexity, and addressing the actors and time dimension. Our results, combined with those of our suggested research directions, will benefit organizations and society and simultaneously enhance the perceived societal value-added, contributions, and stature of tourism and hospitality research.

1. Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry creates an inflow of both local and foreign income and employment opportunities, prompting infrastructure development and positive economic growth (Comerio & Strozzi, 2019). In terms of social development, the industry also alleviates socio-economic challenges such as unemployment, inequality, and poverty by providing opportunities and social value locally. Additionally, it is considered to be a vital driver for the United Nations 2030 Agenda's global goals, which call for policy implementations that promote sustainable tourism (Boley et al., 2017; Grilli et al., 2021; Sheppard & Fennell, 2019). In short, the tourism and hospitality industry is a critical economic sector and provides countries and regions with economic growth and economic and social development (De Bruyn et al., 2018). Although the positive impact of tourism generally outweighs the negative, some tourism practices may lead to negative outcomes. Accordingly, policy formulation, particularly within the tourism and hospitality industry, is a highly relevant and meaningful issue.

A focus on policies is particularly relevant because the tourism and

hospitality industry is complex, with numerous interlinked networks. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified the critical role of policy (Kuščer et al., 2022). Considering how policies regarding closures and restrictions had detrimental consequences (Sigala, 2020; Sharma et al., 2022), it is now clear that many governments offered limited assistance to tourism stakeholders (Khalid et al., 2021). Accordingly, effective public policy formulation and implementation are needed to restore trust among tourism and hospitality stakeholders and revitalize the sector (OECD, 2020). For example, South Africa's Department of Tourism (2020, p. 5) initiated the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan through public policy formulation, which affirms that: "Tourism in South Africa ... has been thrown into crisis by the COVID-19 pandemic, putting thousands of businesses and jobs at risk. The priority for the industry is to resume operations as early as it is safe to do ... The situation requires an urgent response, but also a recognition of the constraints that hamper South Africa's tourism development."

Despite the social and economic relevance of policies, there is an insufficient understanding of public policies' commitment to the tourism and hospitality industry (Shao et al., 2021) and the role of policy

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in shaping the sector (Okuyama, 2018). Accordingly, we endeavored to unveil public policy implications of tourism and hospitality research. We do so by examining evidence-based policy implications for the governmental/public sector from the perspective of producers of research (i.e., tourism and hospitality researchers). Our research inquiry is broad in terms of research domains and policies but, at the same time, it is based on clearly defined criteria and boundaries (Armstrong et al., 2011), which makes our review open and transparent (Aguinis et al., 2018).

Our study advances theory in tourism and hospitality by introducing the *why*, *how*, and *what* dimensions of policy implications and organizing policies in a coherent conceptual framework, thereby promoting a better understanding of existing policies and also guiding future research. The components that constitute *why*, *how*, and *what* build on previous research (Lasswell, 1936) and consider contextual, institutional, economic and socio-political characteristics of policies. Specifically, the three dimensions are captured by the following: 1) rationale for policies (i.e., the *why*); 2) role of policy (i.e., the *how*); and 3) type and institutional setup for policies (i.e., the *what*).

Results of our critical literature review revealed that most published articles consider economic reasons (i.e., market failure) as the primary cause for the *why* of public policies and treat policy as a corrective measure for market forces. In understanding *how* processes and systems are used to design and implement policies, our review revealed that research focuses on conventional policy-making (e.g., incentivizing) as the primary role. Moreover, existing research considers that public policy should coordinate different stakeholders' involvement in decision-making rather than implement top-down actions. Concerning our improved understanding of public policy uses as instruments, extant research suggests hybrid means (e.g., strategies and plans), reflecting the complexity of the tourism and hospitality industry. Also, the institutional setup indicates that tourism and hospitality policies need to be expressed through formal written declarations and informal institutions (e.g., trust-building). Importantly, our review uncovered that although published research claims to provide policy implications, few articles actually do, and those that do only focus on some aspects of policy. Additionally, the results of our review provide a springboard for future research to combine theory and public policy. We identified knowledge gaps, thereby offering specific future directions with clear implications for policy-making.

In summary, our study addresses knowledge gaps regarding public sector policy-making, specifically in tourism and hospitality, by providing a conceptual framework to organize policies, offering a critical literature review to assess the state of research of tourism and hospitality policy implications, identifying existing policies and their types, and proposing an agenda for future theory-based tourism and hospitality research and its connection with policy-making.

2. Clarifying the concept of public policies in tourism and hospitality

Public policies come in different forms, such as regulations, plans, strategies, blueprints, guidelines, programs, and reforms. According to institutional theory, policies are one type of institution or rule of the game (Urbano et al., 2018). As such, they aim to constrain stakeholders' behavior in specific settings (North, 1991). In tourism and hospitality, policies are connected to labor market dynamics (Baum et al., 1997; Hall & Jenkins, 1995), which depend on cultural and traditional perceptions of groups in a particular context (Baum, 1993). Context affects policy formulation as well as policy implementation. For example, many of the policies formulated by the United Nations failed to be implemented (i.e., the so-called policy-action gap) because they were not sufficiently specific and sensitive to local contexts (Gaillard & Mercer, 2013). This policy-action gap has been labeled "scale discordance" and refers to the fact that the policy is not implemented because it is not appropriate given local characteristics and context (Lipschutz, 1997).

Clearly, policy-making is also related to politics and power (Hall,

1999). Hence, the transition from policy formulation and agenda setting to policy implementation (Smallbone & Welter, 2020; Poček et al., 2022) depends on who gets what, where, how, and why (Lasswell, 1936). These issues are described in detail in the political science literature (Barrett, 2004; Brinkerhoff, 1996; Schofield, 2001). In addition, the tourism and hospitality literature on policy acknowledges that the way policies are processed depends on the wider societal environment: the parties' bargaining power and dynamics related to the local, regional, and national contexts, including the informal rules, such as the leadership culture in governance (Krutwyscho & Bramwell, 2010; Wang & Ap, 2013). Furthermore, dialogue and capacity for consensus-building among the parties affected by the policy agenda and the public sector prior to policy formulation improve the chances of policy success (Ritchie, 1988). Various approaches have been noted in this literature to help understand the most effective way to deliver and translate policies into practice: bottom-up, top-down, and the combination of the two: how street-level, local communities, engage with public policy bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1983; Goggin et al., 1990; Sabatier, 1986; Dredge & Jenkins, 2007; Xiao, 2006; Jackson, 2006). In the context of tourism research, public policy is indeed linked to politics and power (Hall, 1994; Hall & Jenkins, 1995, 2004) as well as planning (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007). As such, policy has been conceptualized as a political outcome that is interlinked with planning and consultation with stakeholders outside the public sector (Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Hall & Jenkins, 2004). This is perhaps one of the reasons why Hall and Jenkins (1995) noted that the terms policy, politics, and public administration are often used interchangeably.

Other types of barriers can also affect policy implementation. For example, these include different roles of state authorities, power struggles at various levels of the state apparatus that may also include businesses and communities, lack of knowledge and capacity for policy implementation, questions of local versus national power relations and legitimacy, and lack of political will (Ampaire et al., 2017; Dodds, 2007; Krutwyscho & Bramwell, 2010; Lai et al., 2006).

Issues related to context-dependence mentioned above complicate the process of defining public policy as a unitary construct that is equally applicable across contexts. Colebatch et al. (2011, p. 12) defined policy as something that "conveys a sense of clarity and stability, but its exact meaning (and its implications for policy work) is not always clear." Recently, Aguinis et al. (2022, p. 4) reviewed the literature and offered the following definition: "Governance principles that guide courses of action and behavior in organizations and societies." Markman and Wood (2022, p. 22) revised this definition as "governance principles that guide the choices, behaviors, and courses of action of individuals, organizations, communities, and societies." Considering these definitions and applying them to tourism and hospitality specifically, we offer the following integrative conceptualization:

Public policy in tourism and hospitality are governance principles based on formal and informal institutions set out to guide the courses of action and constrain behavior of actors within the tourism and hospitality industry.

3. Public policy in tourism and hospitality research: the why, how, and what

As Davis et al. (1993, p. 19) noted, greater clarity is needed to understand "the contours of public policy in tourism." Enhanced understanding implies learning about the underlying economic and socio-political *rationale* or *causes* (i.e., the *why*) of public policies (Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Laranja et al., 2008). But, improving conceptual clarity about public policy in tourism and hospitality also implies looking beyond government activities (Hall, 1999). Specifically, their *role* (i.e., the *how* of policies) is presently noticeable through direct involvement and indirect or relational "soft" strategies involving diverse stakeholders (Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Laranja et al., 2008; Stevenson

et al., 2009). In addition, different types of *policy tools or instruments* (i.e., the *what* of policies) are characterized by the desire to achieve outcomes through relational or direct policy actions (Dredge, 2006; Hodge & Greve, 2010). Also concerning the *what* of policies, public policy actions are embedded in *institutional characteristics* and prevailing political ideologies of the context (e.g., types of institutions that affect public policy in tourism and hospitality) (North, 1991; Scott, 1987).

Adopting this *why*, *how*, and *what* conceptual framework, we used different streams of literature that provided the conceptualization of public policy in tourism and hospitality, governance, and institutional theory (Dredge, 2006; Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Hall & Jenkins, 1995; Hodge & Greve, 2010; Laranja et al., 2008; Lasswell, 1936; North, 1991; Scott, 1987; Steurer, 2010). This so-called *multiple-lens perspective* (Okhuysen & Bonardi, 2011) provides insights that capture the complexities of the policy construct. The justification for our approach relies on the compatibility of the proposed theoretical perspectives with each other within the specific domain of tourism and hospitality. Indeed, each of these theoretical lenses addresses similar phenomena (Okhuysen & Bonardi, 2011) (i.e., policies and public policies in tourism and hospitality). The underlying assumptions of the combined conceptual perspectives are similarly compatible: these build on the understanding of policy and public policy interventions and dynamics (i.e., public policy and governance, institutional theory) in tourism and hospitality (e.g., public policy in tourism and hospitality), including contextual embeddedness (e.g., institutional theory). Next, we describe the dimensions of *why*, *how*, and *what* of public policies in tourism and hospitality.

3.1. The why: Rationale for policies

Our first policy dimension, *rationale for policies* (i.e., the *why*), focuses on the motivation for policy action, considering the need to investigate the causes related to the economic (e.g., market failure) and socio-political (e.g., lack of diversity, system failure, learning failure) aspects of the context. The economic environment is captured by the neoclassical “market failure” rationale (Lipsey & Carlaw, 1998; Metcalfe, 1995; Moreau, 2004), predicated on neo-classical welfare economics dominance in explaining policy motives (Laranja et al., 2008). To counterbalance, we considered causes involving socio-political aspects of the context associated with heterogeneity of stakeholders, evolutionary learning, and economic dynamics (Ma & Hassink, 2013; Metcalfe, 1995; Nelson & Winter, 1982). The rationale for policies concerning the socio-political environment is captured by a lack of diversity, system, market, and learning failure, aligned with the evolutionary and systemic institutional approach (Ma & Hassink, 2013; Smith, 2000; Nelson & Winter, 1982).

3.2. The how: Role of policy

The role of public policy (i.e., the *how*) in tourism and hospitality is dynamic, complex, and relational, impacted by the socio-economic context and public policy formal structures (Hall & Jenkins, 1995; 2004). Indeed, public policy is not only about what “governments” choose to do (Dredge & Jamal, 2015). How the policy works is also about relationships and social-network building, encouraging the fertile ground for economic activity rather than only acting as a referee through direct action (Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Stevenson et al., 2009). Thus, we propose that the role of policy is enacted through the following components, capturing solitary (i.e., direct) action as well as relational actions: (a) providing incentives and compensation (i.e., solitary involvement); (b) promoting education (i.e., relational); (c) creating networks and community (i.e., relational); and (d) generating coordination (i.e., relational) (Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Laranja et al., 2008).

3.3. The what: Types of public policy instruments and their institutional setup

The types of public policies (i.e., the *what*) concern the tools public policy uses to govern tourism and hospitality processes (Bichler, 2021). These can capture formal and informal institutional frameworks and can be framed as solitary or relational policy actions. Researchers agree that the type of institutional framework is important for understanding the context and the socio-economic rules of tourism and hospitality (Earl & Hall, 2021; Soares et al., 2020). Public policies are often conceptualized as formal institutions or rules, implying the formality of procedures in which they are formulated, the existence of prescribed sanctions for violations, and the trackability of their origins (North, 1991). While these elements are context-dependent, the success of policy implementation depends on so-called informal rules (e.g., culture, norms, and values). Indeed, when policies are drafted considering the informal rules of a particular environment, they act as a catalyst for policy implementation (North, 1991; Scott, 1987). To offer a more comprehensive typology of public policy instruments, we consider the following components: economic, legal, informational, partnering, hybrid, formal, informal, and formal/informal (Dredge, 2006; Hodge & Greve, 2010; North, 1991; Scott, 1987; Steurer, 2010).

3.4. Conceptual framework summary

To summarize the conceptual discussion thus far, while we acknowledge that there may be other elements of public policy, Table 1 includes the three policy dimensions (i.e., the *why*, *how*, and *what*) and their components that build on previous research and integrate compatible theoretical frameworks. We used this overarching framework in our critical literature review to organize and synthesize existing research-based tourism and hospitality policies and identify knowledge gaps to be addressed by future research. Next, we describe the methodological procedures we implemented in our critical literature review.

4. Methodology

4.1. Review scope and journal and article selection criteria

In the interest of transparency and replicability, Fig. 1 includes a detailed description of steps and procedures implemented in our review. First, given our research aim and objectives (Step 1), we identified the database and journals used in our search process (Step 2). Due to its coverage, we selected Web of Science (WoS) as the primary database (cf. Li et al., 2018; Kraus et al., 2022). To ensure the most influential articles in the field were included, we selected tourism and hospitality journals from the WoS with a 2020 5-year impact factor of five or above. The search yielded results in the following journals: *Tourism Management*; *Annals of Tourism Research*; *Journal of Travel Research*; *International Journal of Hospitality Management*; *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality*; *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*; *Current Issues in Tourism*; *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*; *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*; *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*. These 10 journals included in our review published 12,269 articles over the 10-year period (January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2021).

4.2. Identification of articles addressing public policy

We used the search string “policy” or “policies” to isolate articles using one of these keywords in the abstract: title or keywords (Step 3). Our search was further refined to publications in English, resulting in 1,191 articles. Step 4 involved excluding publications other than academic articles, reducing the number to 1,121. Two research team members examined these articles to identify various elements (e.g., was the study empirical, an actual policy was discussed rather than using the term “policy” in general). In Step 5, only articles using an empirical

Table 1

Conceptual framework for investigating tourism and hospitality public policies: Dimensions and components.

Policy dimension	Dimension components	Component definitions and examples
The why: Rationale for policies <i>Motivation for the proposed policy</i>	<i>Market failure</i>	Policies directed at compensating for less-than-optimal allocation of private resources (Neoclassical approach, economic) (Laranja et al., 2008; Lipsey & Carlaw, 1998; Metcalfe, 1995; Moreau, 2004).
	<i>System failure</i>	Connections and linkages of the system or among the system's actors are poor or not sufficiently conducive to knowledge generation. Policy actors need to promote institutional configurations that stimulate interactions and associations between actors (systemic institutional approaches, socio-political) (Laranja et al., 2008; Smith, 2000; Nelson & Winter, 1982).
	<i>Learning failure</i>	Cognitive gaps—attention is focused on the learning and cognitive capacities of different public and private actors (evolutionary approach, socio-political) (Laranja et al., 2008).
	<i>Lack of diversity</i>	The practice of involving people/communities from different backgrounds or in terms of products and technology: improving the variety of available resources (evolutionary approach, socio-political) (Laranja et al., 2008).
	<i>Incentives</i>	Encouraging certain processes or practices (direct action) (Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Laranja et al., 2008).
The how: Role of policies <i>Processes and systems through which policies are designed and implemented</i>	<i>Compensation</i>	Counterbalancing for economic loss as pertaining to organizations (direct action) (Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Laranja et al., 2008).
	<i>Education</i>	Filling the cognitive gap (Laranja et al., 2008) that can exist in the private and public sectors (capturing dynamics and adapting to the needs).
	<i>Creation of networks (community)</i>	Promoting network-based cooperation and competition (relational involvement and socio-economic activity building) (Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Laranja et al., 2008).
	<i>Coordination</i>	Coordinating the system (relational involvement and socio-economic activity building) (Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Laranja et al., 2008).
The what: Types of public policy instruments and their institutional setup proposed <i>Tools proposed to achieve the desired objectives of policy implications</i>	<i>Economic</i>	These are based on the actions of taxing authorities and money. Examples are taxes, tax abatements, subsidies, and awards (Dredge, 2006; Hodge & Greve, 2010; North, 1991; Scott, 1987; Steurer, 2010) (formal and solitary).
	<i>Legal</i>	Examples are laws, directives, and regulations (Dredge, 2006; Hodge & Greve, 2010; North,

Table 1 (continued)

Policy dimension	Dimension components	Component definitions and examples
	<i>Informational</i>	1991; Scott, 1987; Steurer, 2010). These are based on resources of knowledge. Examples are campaigns, training, and websites (Dredge, 2006; Hodge & Greve, 2010; North, 1991; Scott, 1987; Steurer, 2010).
	<i>Partnering</i>	Examples are forums, negotiated agreements, and public-private partnerships (Dredge, 2006; Hodge & Greve, 2010; North, 1991; Scott, 1987; Steurer, 2010).
	<i>Hybrid</i>	Examples are strategies and action plans, typically combining two or more instruments (Dredge, 2006; Hodge & Greve, 2010; North, 1991; Scott, 1987; Steurer, 2010).
	<i>Formal</i>	Laws, regulations, and technical standards (North, 1991; Scott, 1987).
	<i>Informal</i>	Culture, norms, and values (North, 1991; Scott, 1987).

research design were considered. The remaining articles went through two iterative rounds; 555 articles remained after Round 1 and 531 after Round 2. Those that included the original keyword search but did not address actual policy (e.g., mentioned the word “policy” somewhere in the article) were excluded during this round. Step 6, the final step in the refinement process, involved distinguishing articles addressing public policy versus those that did not, regional or county level, and identifying various policy domains from each. The final inclusion criteria were threefold. First, we retained articles that focused only on public policy to develop a public policy understanding concerning the *why*, *how*, and *what*. Policies addressing internal aspects, such as booking cancellations and staff-related policies, were excluded; yet, articles addressing public policy were included. Articles focusing on a country-level analysis were also included, thereby removing all articles focusing on regional or panel data where countries were not explicitly listed. This left 284 articles, which were further reviewed as to whether they addressed the policy dimensions summarized in Table 1. This step included coding the 284 articles using the three dimensions and their components (as defined in Table 1). This was done through an iterative process. Two research team members coded the articles independently, after which these sets were compared, and the few discrepancies were discussed until consensus was reached. The final coding was checked and confirmed by a third team member. This resulted in a final sample of 114 articles listed in Appendix 1. The final step included analyzing and synthesizing these articles.

As shown in Table 2 (Step 5), the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* published the highest number of articles (9.98%) addressing policy implications. The next highest was the *Current Issues in Tourism* (6.24%). Because we focused only on articles addressing public policy (including all dimensions), the search was further refined (Step 6).

Again, the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (4.12%) published the highest number of articles addressing actual public policy implications, followed by *Tourism Management* (3.52%). Considering only articles that included all three policy dimensions (i.e., *why*, *how*, and *what*), *Current Issues in Tourism* ranked first (2.01%), followed by *Tourism Management* (1.74%).

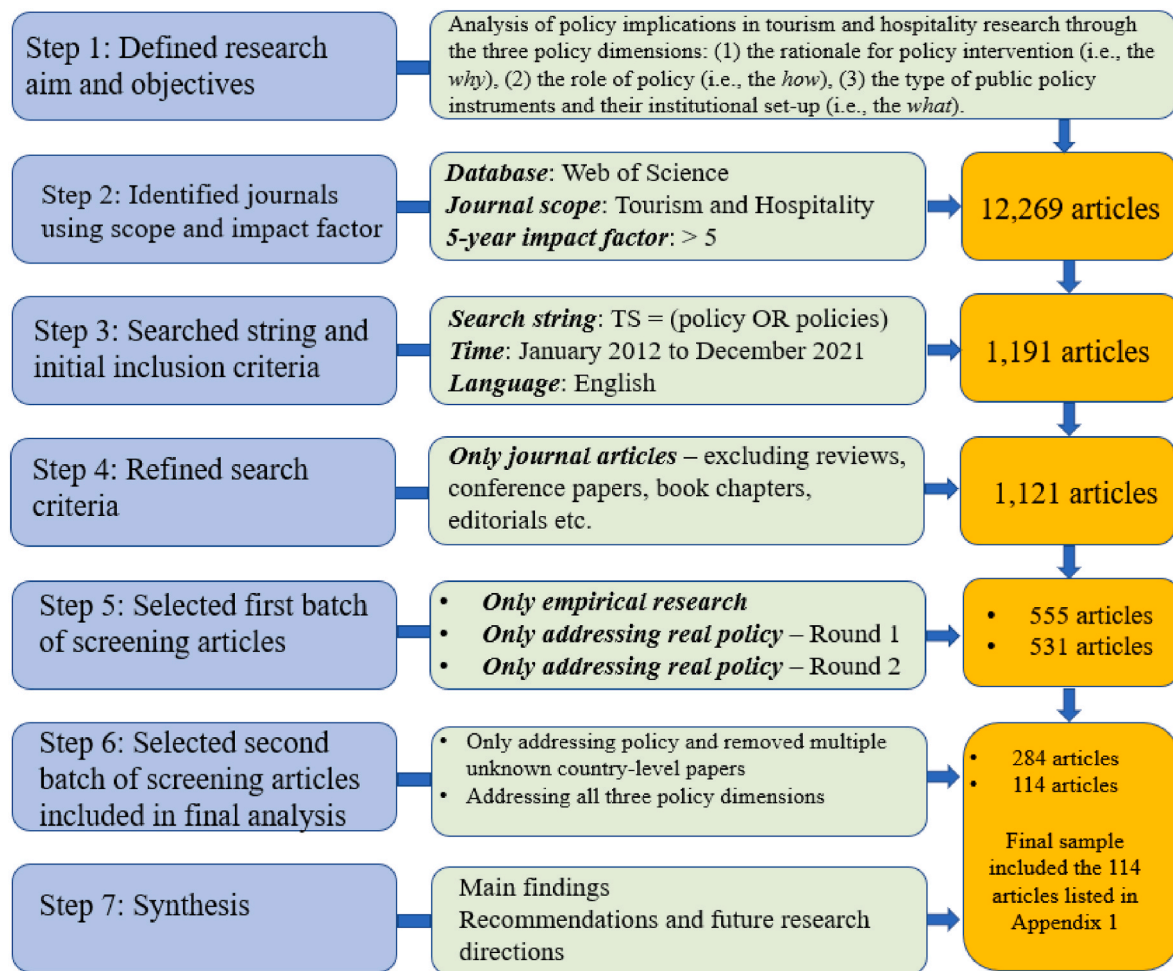


Fig. 1. Summary of journal and article selection and review process.

5. Results

Table 3 summarizes results based on classifying the articles using the dimensions and their components in Table 1.

5.1. The why: Rationale for policies

The *why* for policies concerns the motivation for the proposed policy. As mentioned earlier, we investigated the rationale according to four components (Laranja et al., 2008): *market failure*, *system failure*, *learning failure*, and *lack of diversity*, each justifying why public policies should be used and aiming to capture economic and socio-political causes (Dredge & Jamal, 2015).

Economic rationales for public policies, embodied in *market failure*, are the most frequent and were mentioned in 63 articles. Within the scope of market failure, researchers focus on policy actions that address sustainability issues and assist the tourism and hospitality industry in meeting climate goals (Buijtendijk et al., 2018; Dixon et al., 2012). For example, Dixon et al. (2012) explained why coastal tourist destinations should adopt policies to counteract the negative effects of climate change. Buijtendijk et al. (2018) identified policy measures to incentivize businesses to tackle sustainability issues. Studies also prompt policy-makers to regulate *competition and inequality* for better resource distribution (Kim & Jang, 2019; Peypoch et al., 2012; Zhang & Zhang, 2018). Thus, the Madagascar government was advised to help airlines decrease the price of flight tickets to attract more tourists (Peypoch et al., 2012). Zhang and Zhang (2018) suggested policy implications that tackle the tourism-inequality nexus, specifically income inequality due

to tourism development in developed and developing economies.

The second rationale for policies, *system failure*, was present in 23 articles. This type of failure relates to the lack of interconnectedness among actors or organizations (Laranja et al., 2008). The studies we reviewed suggest that for policies to be successful, the system's ability to allow for collaboration among stakeholders in tourism and hospitality is relevant (Fletcher et al., 2016; Jin et al., 2019; Karst, 2017; Rodríguez et al., 2014). Fletcher et al. (2016) argued that policy-makers should act because indigenous tourism development does not involve indigenous stakeholders within the governance system. Karst (2017) and Rodríguez et al. (2014) found inadequate cooperation between policy-makers and local communities in a given reference system. Furthermore, Everett and Slocum (2013) provided policy implications for the food tourism sector, which originate from the need for cooperation between industries and policy environments through joint marketing schemes, localized distribution channels, and collaborative policy engagement. Strong linkages among tourism and hospitality sector actors, including policy-makers, promote tourism and hospitality development; if these are weak, the suggestion is that policy-makers should act (Everett & Slocum, 2013; Fletcher et al., 2016; Jin et al., 2019; Karst, 2017; Rodríguez et al., 2014).

Learning failure is the rationale for policies aiming to capture socio-political aspects of the context. This type of failure was mentioned in 24 articles. Learning failure could occur within the public (policy) sector (Rogerson, 2012), private sector organizations (Castillo-Manzano et al., 2020), or with tourists (Mishra et al., 2020); each being cited as a reason for policy. Moreover, Rogerson (2012) stated that many community-related private initiatives in rural South Africa's

Table 2

Number of articles addressing public policy implications in tourism and hospitality by journal (2012–2021).

STEP 1: Journal	STEP 2: Total number of articles (2012–2021)	STEP 3: Articles including search term 'policy or policies'	STEP 4: Refining search to only research articles	STEP 5: Only those articles including actual policy implications	STEP 6.1: Only those articles including public policy implications on country level	STEP 6.2: Only those articles addressing all three policy dimensions
1. <i>Tourism Management</i>	2,129	233	226 (10.62%)	96 (4.51%) <u>42.48%</u>	75 (3.52%) <u>33.19%</u>	37 (1.74%) <u>16.37%</u>
2. <i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	1,432	108	96 (6.7%)	39 (2.72%) <u>40.63%</u>	17 (1.19%) <u>17.71%</u>	4 (0.28%) <u>4.17%</u>
3. <i>Journal of Travel Research</i>	887	101	98 (11.05%)	44 (4.96%) <u>44.90%</u>	19 (2.14%) <u>19.39%</u>	12 (1.35%) <u>12.24%</u>
4. <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	1,899	91	87 (4.58%)	52 (2.74%) <u>59.77%</u>	32 (1.69%) <u>36.78%</u>	7 (0.37%) <u>8.05%</u>
5. <i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	1,444	87	78 (5.40%)	37 (2.56%) <u>47.44%</u>	24 (1.66%) <u>30.77%</u>	1 (0.07%) <u>1.28%</u>
6. <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>	1,213	268	256 (21.10%)	121 (9.98%) <u>47.27%</u>	50 (4.12%) <u>19.53%</u>	21 (1.73%) <u>8.20%</u>
7. <i>Current Issues in Tourism</i>	1,491	209	190 (12.74%)	93 (6.24%) <u>48.95%</u>	48 (3.22%) <u>25.26%</u>	30 (2.01%) <u>15.79%</u>
8. <i>Journal of Destination Marketing & Management</i>	596	64	62 (10.40%)	35 (5.87%) <u>56.45%</u>	12 (2.01%) <u>19.35%</u>	0 (0.00%) <u>0.00%</u>
9. <i>Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing</i>	714	18	16 (2.24%)	11 (1.54%) <u>68.75%</u>	7 (0.98%) <u>43.75%</u>	2 (0.28%) <u>12.50%</u>
10. <i>Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management</i>	464	12	12 (2.59%)	3 (0.65%) <u>25.00%</u>	0 (0.00%) <u>0.00%</u>	0 (0.00%) <u>0.00%</u>
TOTAL	12,269	1,191	1,121 (9.14%)	531 (4.33%) <u>47.37%</u>	284 (2.31%) <u>25.33%</u>	114 (0.93%) <u>10.17%</u>

Numbers in parentheses represent the percentage of total articles per journal (Total articles - Step 2). The underlined numbers represent the percentage of articles, including the search string "policy" or "policies" per journal (Total articles - Step 4).

tourism-agriculture fail due to limited knowledge and existing tourism and hospitality organizations. [Castillo-Manzano et al. \(2020\)](#) discussed how the lack of educational strategies creates challenges for Spanish tourist destinations being reached by air. As noted by the authors, potential educational and corrective strategies should be implemented that take into account the fact that, in the twenty-first century, the real gateways through which international tourism passes are not physical borders but airports. As a final illustration, [Mishra et al. \(2020\)](#) discussed tourists' lack of knowledge involving their limited support and respect for sustainability and developmental goals.

The last rationale is *lack of diversity*. Only four articles highlighted lack of diversity as an underlying reason for policies. All four of these studies investigated lack of diversity specifically and exclusively related to gender ([Chen et al., 2021](#); [Ferreira Freire Guimarães & Silva, 2016](#); [Gebbsels et al., 2020](#); [Moswete & Lacey, 2015](#)). Accordingly, [Moswete and Lacey \(2015\)](#) discussed empowering women through cultural tourism in Botswana and found that women, compared to men, must be more involved in culture-based tourism development programs.

5.2. The how: Role of policy

The role of policy refers to how processes and systems are put into place for designing and implementing policies. We analyzed this dimension using the following five components based on [Laranja et al.'s \(2008\)](#) work: *Incentives*, *compensation*, *education*, *creation of networks*, and *coordination*. These aim to capture policy's role as a solitary or relational action ([Dredge & Jamal, 2015](#); [Laranja et al., 2008](#)).

Providing *incentives* calls for policy-makers to encourage certain processes or practices in the tourism and hospitality industry ([Laranja et al., 2008](#)). This role type was present in 74 studies. Hence, to reduce the climate impact of tourism transport, [Kamb et al. \(2021\)](#) suggested policies to *incentivize* the behavior of tourism organizations in support of sustainability. Studies also encourage policies to incentivize tourists to reduce their carbon footprint in particular settings ([Cadarsó et al., 2015](#)).

Another role of public policy, concerning direct action, is

compensation for economic loss ([Laranja et al., 2008](#)). Only four studies provided policy implications requiring compensation. One is [Aiello et al. \(2022\)](#), who listed evidence from the Italian tourism sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. They suggested that public finance should compensate firms for introducing measures that ensured social distancing, helping sustain firms' lowering demand.

The third component of the role of policy is *education*, which was present in 25 articles. Education is suggested as a policy that closes the knowledge gap in the private ([Dahles et al., 2020](#)) and public sectors ([Paramati et al., 2018](#)). [Dahles et al. \(2020\)](#) suggested that the Cambodian government should assume a teaching role and educate local communities to aim for higher engagement in sustainable tourism. Also, [Paramati and Roca \(2019\)](#) invited policy-makers to educate themselves to better implement tourism sustainability practices and that developing economies should learn from policy-makers in developed economies concerning environment-friendly tourism policies.

The *creation of networks* is another component within the role dimension, which was included in 20 studies. Hence, the creation of networks as a role of policy was suggested by [Mariani and Guizzardi \(2020\)](#). They determined that the government should strengthen networks between destination marketers and cultural policy-makers in promoting UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Finally, the role that policy should assume is that of *coordination* (relational and socio-economic activity building), which was addressed in 35 studies. Accordingly, [Buijendijk et al. \(2018\)](#) proposed a policy to "mobilize the businesses" to take responsibility for sustainability. As a policy role, coordination relates to coordinating stakeholders from the private sector, academia, citizens, or the public sector ([Zhai & Shi, 2022](#)) and the distribution of services in the tourism economy.

5.3. The what: Types of public policy instruments and their institutional setup

The next dimension concerns public policy instruments, or tools policy-makers use, and their institutional setup to achieve desired objectives ([Scott, 1987](#); [Steurer, 2010](#)).

Table 3
Policy dimensions and components.

Dimension	Components	Number of articles including the policy implication	Illustration (using <i>italics</i> to highlight each component)
The why: Rationale for policies <i>Total number of occurrences for this specific dimension: 114</i>	Market failure	63	“Therefore, the policy-makers should recognize the double-edged sword of tourism for rural development and actively guide tourism’s positive role in rural <i>income distribution</i> . This requires the governments to regulate tourism economic development and promote a more equitable income distribution within the industry.” (Zhang, 2021, p. 167)
	System failure	23	“In constructing a policy agenda, China should <i>embed local governments at lower levels</i> ; introduce multiple subjects, such as market and society; <i>expand the channels of citizen participation</i> and establish an efficient and <i>cooperative</i> policy innovation mechanism.” (Zhai & Shi, 2022, p. 1181)
	Learning failure	24	“Therefore, each government has to closely observe and evaluate (<i>and learn</i>) its own structure and decide, which policies have direct impact on tourism and the economy.” (Kubickova, 2019, p. 637)
	Lack of diversity	4	“It appears that Botswana’s emphasis on village-based cultural tourism is opening doors for women but there are still barriers that need to be addressed (<i>so as to include more women in the sector</i>).” (Moswete & Lacey, 2015, p. 614)
The how: Role of policy <i>Total number of occurrences for this specific dimension: 158</i>	Incentives	74	“Other policy measures, such as speed reductions for planes or giving <i>incentives</i> to tourists who use other means of transportation with lower emissions, could also contribute to reducing emissions.” (Cadarsu et al., 2015, p. 940)
	Compensation	4	“Firstly, firms might <i>claim for financial support</i> to ensure social

Table 3 (continued)

Dimension	Components	Number of articles including the policy implication	Illustration (using <i>italics</i> to highlight each component)
The what: Type of public policy instruments and institutional setup <i>Total number of occurrences for this specific dimension: 260</i>			distancing and, thus, security that ultimately will attract tourists. Secondly, public finance could be used to <i>sustain the demand</i> which is lowering because of coronavirus.” (Aiello et al., 2022, p. 44)
	Education	25	“Women need to be given greater <i>educational opportunities</i> and financial assistance so that they might engage in successful entrepreneurial activities and thereby experience greater levels of freedom and agency.” (Moswete & Lacey, 2015, p. 614)
	Creation of networks	20	“We would therefore recommend that destination marketers should <i>work more closely</i> with HMAs and cultural policy-makers <i>and build networks</i> of UNESCO sites, promoting them through umbrella branding strategies of local destinations.” (Mariani & Guizzardi, 2020, p. 33)
	Coordination	35	“In this context, there is a role to be played by government and industry policy-making bodies. That role is to develop appropriate policies and strategies to <i>facilitate networking and coordination and collaboration</i> among tourism firms.” (Divisekera & Nguyen, 2018, p. 164)
	Economic	33	“Implementing a carbon tax policy can significantly promote the reduction of China’s tourism-related CO2 emissions.” (Zhang & Zhang, 2018, p. 28)
	Legal	13	“It is suggested that policy-makers should consider introducing legislation that guarantees systematic and gradual increases of minimum wage rate.” (Kim & Jang, 2019, p. 386)
	Informational	20	“For policy intervention, the greatest significance is the failure of many local community

(continued on next page)

Table 3 (continued)

Dimension	Components	Number of articles including the policy implication	Illustration (using <i>italics</i> to highlight each component)
	Partnering	21	initiatives, and <i>the need for training, capacity building</i> and support for local producers to enter the food supply chains." (Rogerson, 2012, p. 477)
	Hybrid	61	"Our research calls for the deployment of <i>collaborative interagency policies</i> which promote wind farming as part of the government's overall sustainable energy platform while also supporting energy tourism as a means of personal enrichment and a form of economic development." (Liu et al., 2016, p. 1569)
	Formal	53	"The finding suggests that it is appropriate for the Taiwanese government to implement the long-term tourism <i>strategic plans</i> to promote Taiwan's ITM since ITM growth can help to sustain the hospitality industry." (Chen, 2015, p. 326)
	Informal	26	"We also urge Chinese authorities to formulate and implement <i>effective legislation and policies</i> to further foster gender diversity." (Chen et al., 2021, p. 10)
	Formal/ Informal	33	"The key need, however, is to <i>overcome poor communication and deep mistrust</i> between food supply decision-makers and local producers." (Rogerson, 2012, p. 477)
			"The festival planners and managers must seek more government policy support by <i>strengthening the public-private partnership</i> (...) in addition, government policy-makers should actively work to (ensure) <i>controlling or banning</i> unlicensed music activities and <i>preventing</i> dangerous goods or drugs from entering concert venues." (Lee, 2016, p. 194)

Note. The classification and codes assigned to each of the 114 articles listed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and summarized in this table are not mutually

exclusive because all of them included all three dimensions and most of them addressed more than one component across dimensions.

Economic instruments are based on the actions of taxing authorities (Steurer, 2010). These instruments are formal and solitary since they involve public sector action. Economic instruments were suggested in 33 articles relating to taxes, subsidies, or awards/grants (Churchill et al., 2022; Denstadli & Veisten, 2020; Zhang & Zhang, 2018). Moreover, Pratt (2015) investigated the economic impact of tourism on Small Island Developing States and suggested adopting economic instruments that encourage import substitution, creating a performance-based reward structure for tourism operations.

Legal instruments are also formal and solitary in nature and were present in 13 studies. These refer to laws, formal policies, or directives (Steurer, 2010). Instruments suggested in policy implications are illustrated by a quote from Paramati and Roca (2019, p. 394): "policy-makers and tourism service providers need to initiate effective policies regarding the regulation of real estate properties and accommodation facilities for tourists."

Informational, as a public policy instrument, is based on knowledge resources; examples are campaigns, training, and websites (Steurer, 2010). These instruments are formal and relational, depending on the situation. Our sample had 20 studies that referenced these instruments. Moreover, policies in the form of training, capacity building, and support were proposed by Kim and Filimonau (2017). Araña and León (2016) suggested that policy-makers provide positive emotional messages and information to provoke behavioral changes supporting sustainability.

Partnering as a component of public policy instruments calls for policy to engage in joint efforts and collaborations, namely, forums, negotiated agreements, and public and private partnerships (Steurer, 2010). These instruments can be formal or informal and relational, depending on the format in which they take shape. These instruments, included in 21 articles, can be depicted by Wijesinghe's (2022) study, which analyzed the requisites for Malaysian tourism transformation. The policy implications stressed a need for a "partnership between stakeholders (i.e., academia and governments)" that would improve conditions for transformation.

Hybrid types of public policy instruments that combined one or more instruments were included in policy recommendations; examples are strategies and action plans (Steurer, 2010). These instruments are formal and relational and were present in most of the analyzed studies. A total of 61 studies mentioned some form of hybrid public policy. For example, Chen (2015) proposed that the Taiwanese government prepare long-term strategic plans to promote inbound tourism market development, which would also help sustain the hospitality industry. Balsalobre-Lorente et al. (2020) suggested that the Spanish government develop strategies to support a paradigm shift in energy consumption from the tourism sector.

We also examined formal and/or informal rules (Scott, 1987). *Formal rules* were suggested in policy implications in 53 studies. These management policies aim to regulate systems, organizations, or relationships within the tourism and hospitality industry. Most studies providing formal rules call for introducing new policies, while one study suggested a policy implication involving the already existing formal rules. *Informal rules* reference policy implications concerning culture, norms, values, or other rules that a formal body/organization did not adopt in a previously established procedure. Policy implications in the informal institutional setup were proposed in 26 studies. These studies suggested that policy-makers can intervene and change the behavior of tourism and hospitality actors (Araña & León, 2016; Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014).

Finally, 33 studies proposed both *informal* and *formal* types of institutional setup as a policy implication of their findings. These implications combine unwritten strategic solutions (e.g., informal rules) with written ones (e.g., formal rules)—or propose them together. Kamb et al. (2021) suggested that policy-makers undertake a practice that would

allow them to *understand* tourists' readiness to support sustainability while developing "suitable policy measures such as distance-based taxes and compulsory climate labelling." The proposed action involving understanding tourist behavior represents an informal institutional setup, while the formal pertains to adopting taxes and compulsory climate labeling.

6. Discussion

6.1. Policy implications: State of research

Our critical literature review of 12,269 articles published in 10 influential tourism and hospitality journals over the past decade (2012 to 2021) revealed that 1,121 articles (9.1%) referred to policies broadly, but only 114 (0.93%) addressed actual policy implications regarding the *why*, *how*, and *what*. Although policies are tools through which research should deliver its impact, our review revealed that evidence-based implications are absent from the vast majority of tourism and hospitality research. As noted by Melissen and Koens (2015), while researchers should not be obligated to provide policy directions, they do have the power to bridge the science-policy gap. Doing so would impact society positively and enhance the societal stature and perceived value of tourism and hospitality research by showing relevance and usefulness (Aguinis et al., 2021). On the other hand, there are reasons why researchers leave out policy implications from their studies and conclusions (Melissen & Koens, 2015). However, there is plenty of evidence that societal progress and development can be positively affected by how scientific knowledge is applied in practice (Cairney, 2016; Caplan, 1979; Shonkoff, 2000). Accordingly, we believe that, as tourism and hospitality researchers, we could—and *should*—do better.

Results showed that market failure is the most common rationale, demonstrating that researchers perceive economic cause as a primary reason for public policy. However, public policy in tourism and hospitality is also viewed as a corrective measure to the market forces. This finding is aligned with recommendations by Chou (1991), who ascertained that governments aiming to support tourism and hospitality should develop plans to overcome existing challenges and future problems due to market failures.

We also uncovered that the way in which researchers refer to public policy responsibility aligns with conventional discussions related to policy-making (e.g., Fennell, 2007). Indeed, researchers mostly consider incentivizing as a role of public policy, meaning that they perceive how policy-makers play an important role in stimulating the tourism and hospitality environment. Yet, there seem to be few compensatory public policy role suggestions, which are regarded as more contemporary policies with respect to the role of providing incentives (Blake & Sinclair, 2003; Calder, 2021). Lack of diversity is another rationale for policies, but it is rarely considered. Addressing lack of diversity means involving people and communities from diverse backgrounds in the tourism and hospitality industry and improving the human capital of the environment with new knowledge (Laranja et al., 2008). Low-frequency discussions around this topic indicate limited attention to public policy's role in fostering the evolutionary progress in tourism and hospitality (Laranja et al., 2008) through inclusion.

Public policy in tourism and hospitality not only concerns governments, but also involves understanding the relational involvement of other actors in the system. Our results suggest that challenges in tourism and hospitality should be managed through induced collaboration among system actors (Marasco et al., 2018). This includes coordinating the processes of stakeholders' involvement in decision-making and change processes as effective modes of governance in the tourism and hospitality industry (Gössling et al., 2012). System collaboration should also aim at overcoming the lack of knowledge of one or all system actors: the public sector, private sector, and tourists, to correct learning failures and encourage behavioral changes inside public policy structures and in tourism and hospitality (Axelrod, 1986).

Regarding the type of public policy instruments, we discovered that most researchers suggest hybrid instruments, namely, strategies and action plans requiring diverse economic, legal, partnering, and informational instruments. These results reinforce the complex nature of the tourism and hospitality industry, which could be considered a system of interconnected industries and markets in cross-cutting contexts (Richards, 1999). Accordingly, existing research perceives that public policy should respond to challenges in tourism and hospitality with hybrid public instruments, which often include strategic plans to address system failures (e.g., connecting different actors and industries or knowledge domains).

Finally, the type of institutional setup suggests the need for tourism and hospitality policies to be expressed through formal declarations, such as laws and written and agreed-binding rules (Stevenson et al., 2009), but also informal rules (e.g., the building of trust and awareness-raising). Several studies proposed implementing formal and informal institutional setups, indicating the need for substantial support of the informal variety (North, 1991) in achieving a meaningful implementation of the formal rule or law (Sanderson, 2000; Stevenson et al., 2009).

7. Implications for a theory-based policy-making agenda in tourism and hospitality research

Our results are based on a clear and transparent methodology, helping us minimize possible bias in proposing implications for theory and practice. Moreover, some of the members of our research team remained close to the coded data, while others maintained the theoretical perspective and helped link the results to the theory with the aim of preserving objectivity. The results obtained in this manner enabled us to link policy and theory in the form of a combined dual theory and policy agenda (Aguinis et al., 2022), and Table 4 includes a preview and summary of the material that follows.

First, our results uncovered a knowledge gap and the need to address policy implications concerning a lack of diversity as a rationale for policy. Finding and promoting adequate diversity levels is useful in avoiding lock-in situations (Laranja et al., 2008). This implies appointing agents to introduce new knowledge and techniques for developing the tourism and hospitality industry. Hence, theoretical advancement on this topic is required with accompanying implications for policy.

Second, our review uncovered that policy implications in tourism and hospitality research consider public policy to a low degree in times of crisis or as a response to crises, resulting in limited implications in this direction and understanding of the role of policy. Moreover, only three studies included implications for policy due to COVID-19. Because our review covered the period through December 2021, this result may change should articles published since then be examined. Nevertheless, none of these studies went beyond traditional policy-making to suggest a more contemporary transformative or mission-oriented policy implication (Fagerberg, 2018) that could help the resilience of the tourism and hospitality industry. Thus, future research could generate theoretical insights and policy advice on strengthening the tourism and hospitality industries' resilience and introduce transformative mission-oriented policies in these environments. With regard to providing evidence-based practical insights, a useful contemporary theoretical framework is the "ecosystems" framework. First, it is a concept suited for analyzing complex contextual dynamics, such as those that emerged during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and dramatically impacted tourism and hospitality environments (Breier et al., 2021). Indeed, scholars have debated how the traditional narrative about the conceptualization of tourism and hospitality success (e.g., growth in tourism numbers) is outdated in the face of financial, post-pandemic, climate, and environmental crises (Hall, 2009; Gössling et al., 2020). Second, analyzing the tourism and hospitality industry through the lenses of "ecosystems" could clarify the actions for creating robust tourism and hospitality environments. This is because the "ecosystems" perspective

Table 4
Linking tourism and hospitality theory and policy: Research agenda.

Question	Recommendations	Specific guidelines
<i>Why</i> - the rationale	Make tourism and hospitality more inclusive and focus on evolutionary dynamics in tourism and hospitality.	Derive policy and theoretical implications from studies that help understand the lack of diversity within the tourism and hospitality industry context and discuss this as a motive for public policy intermediation.
<i>How</i> - the role	Provide an understanding of the impact of crises and contemporary solutions utilized in the tourism and hospitality industry. Focus on designing studies discussing the framework for resilience of tourism and hospitality industries.	Use multiple sources of evidence to understand contemporary policies and how it supported or failed to support processes in the tourism and hospitality industry during the COVID-19 pandemic and provide implications. Derive policy and theoretical implications from innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem theories to help conceptualize tourism and hospitality through these lenses. This should enable new theoretical and policy contributions about the role of policy coordination and public sector vision for tourism and hospitality resilience.
<i>What</i> - the tools	Focus on designing empirical studies on institutional complexity concerning tourism and hospitality.	Derive theoretical and policy implications by understanding what types of policies, that is, formal rules (e.g., laws), can complement supplements for different informal rules or incentivize informal rules specific to tourism and hospitality in various contexts (e.g., trust, risk-taking, cooptation).
<i>Who</i> - actors and <i>when</i> -time	Contextualize our understanding of tourism and hospitality by addressing the actors and time dimension of evidence-based policies.	Conduct primary-level research to understand the narratives and state of the art concerning tourism policy's specific actors and time in different research contexts.

allows us to create spaces adaptable to disruptions and more resilient to shocks (Roundy et al., 2017). While contributing to theory, future studies could benefit policy-makers with appropriate evidence-based advice.

Several studies suggested both formal and informal institutional rules as tools for public policy-making in tourism and hospitality. However, we did not find studies that considered the embeddedness of formal rules in informal institutions and tackled the institutional complexity of the instruments proposed. Previous studies investigated the role of complexity theories in tourism conceptually (Earl & Hall, 2021; Stevenson et al., 2009). However, these have not been tested empirically. Considering the importance of understanding the impact that different types of institutional setups (i.e., formal and informal) and their interplay (i.e., the core of complexity theory) may pose on the creation and effectiveness of policies (Poczek, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2009), there is a strong need for this type of work. Researchers who pursue this research avenue may help answer which policies in the form of formal rules (e.g., laws) act as complements of supplements for diverse types of informal rules (e.g., trust) (Poczek, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2009), particularly those related to risk-taking, trust and social trust, competition and cooptation, which are specific to the tourism and hospitality industry.

Finally, questions of *who* (i.e., actors) and *when* (i.e., timing) are present in our conceptual frameworks, albeit not explicitly. For example,

why, *what*, and *how* concern various actors involved in system failure, learning failure, lack of diversity, creation of networks, coordination of system or as part of partnering instruments. However, we readily acknowledge that the actors and the time dimensions are only indirectly discussed in our paper. Hence, future studies can address specific questions such as winners and losers of public policy in the form of the *who* as well as the policy timing in the form of *when*. This type of research would require using methodological approaches that complement ours based on analyzing information in published articles related to the implications for policy, which do not provide information on, for example, power dynamics among actors. Answering these questions could also shed light on the commitment to public policy in tourism and hospitality (e.g., Is policy displaying a commitment to tourism and hospitality? Who and which types of political figures are being committed to the policy in tourism and hospitality?).

8. Limitations and additional research directions

First, as in all literature reviews, our results depend on the inclusion criteria we used regarding keywords and journals. Our choices are described in detail in the Methodology section and serve as boundaries for our conclusions and their generalizability. Having specific (albeit somewhat narrower) criteria has the advantage of increased transparency and replicability. However, there may be additional policy-relevant research, although authors may not have made a connection with policies and hence not used the terms “policy” or “policies”. Accordingly, future research could examine policy implications in other sources, such as journals published in languages other than English and without limitations related to the “policy” or “policies” terminology by using terms such as regulations, plans, strategies, blueprints, guidelines, programs, and reforms, among others.

Second, our review adopted a deductive approach which started with a conceptual framework including the *why*, *when* and *how* of public policies in tourism and hospitality. Although we believe the three dimensions and their 17 components are quite inclusive and comprehensive (see Table 1), future research could adopt an inductive approach (Woiceshyn & Daellenbach, 2018).

Third, while our review captured top-down approaches (e.g., advice on how governments should address a particular issue), we did not examine bottom-up approaches. Thus, another possible area for future research is examining the role of top-down versus street-level policies (Hall, 2011) by, for example, providing insights into the contextual institutional factors that impact policy-related processes.

Fourth, although our review dimensions and components are listed individually, they are not unrelated or exclusive of each other but, rather, interrelated empirically and conceptually (Aguinis et al., 2022). We did not investigate causal effects or even covariance among dimensions; therefore, this is another fruitful area for future research.

Fifth, we only considered pre-emptive and not post-emptive policy implications. Accordingly, future studies can include the timing of policy implications. However, we assume that policy implication and formulation aim to prevent future failures; hence we can argue that they act as pre-emptive.

Finally, public policy does not refer only to governmental actions, as Hall (1999) recommended. In fact, public policies are also about inaction, such as stepping aside from the market forces or allowing societal self-regulation (Hall, 2011), as well as reactions, such as correcting market failures. Although we investigated policy implications, we did not explicitly address when the action should or will take place regarding policy timing (e.g., as a preventive or reactive measure or who, in terms of actors, is in charge of policy).

9. Conclusions

Based on 12,269 articles published in 10 leading tourism and hospitality journals from January 2012 to December 2021, we critically

reviewed 1,121 that included the terms “policy” or “policies”. But, only 114 (i.e., 0.93%) discussed the *why*, *how*, and *what* of policy implications of tourism and hospitality research. Our findings regarding the *rationale for policies* (i.e., the *why*) revealed that most research builds on the neoclassical economic approach of market failure related to the insufficient or inefficient distribution of resources in the market. Regarding the *role of policy* (i.e., the *how*), most extant research discusses incentivizing. Concerning *types of policy instruments* and their *institutional setup* (i.e., the *what*), our results uncovered that the most common policy is a hybrid one, which includes combinations of economic, legal, informative, and partnering instruments. So, although our review uncovered a paucity of research-based policy implications, results did uncover specific policies and also serve as the conduit for fruitful avenues for future research based on combining theory and policy-making. We are confident that the results of implementing such a research agenda will result in important additional benefits for organizations and society as well as an improved perceived societal value-added and stature of tourism and hospitality research.

Impact statement

Policy-makers are named as one of the main audiences of tourism and hospitality research. However, our review based on 12,269 articles published in 10 highly visible journals from 2011 to 2021 uncovered that only 114 articles (i.e., 0.93%) included actual policies on the *why*, *how*, and *what*. By analyzing those articles that do provide implications for policy, we further found that the most common rationale for policies (the *why*) is fixing or preventing market failures, while the most typical role of policies (the *how*) is to create incentives. Additionally, research-based policies are mostly hybrid and include suggestions for formal and informal institutional setups (the *what*). Finally, to advance evidence-based policy in tourism and hospitality, we offer a research agenda for the future. We believe that the results of such an agenda will benefit organizations, systems and society and simultaneously enhance the perceived societal value-added, contributions, and stature of tourism and hospitality research.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Herman Aguinis: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – review & editing. **Sascha Kraus:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Project administration, Supervision, Writing – review & editing. **Jasna Poček:** Formal analysis, Data curation, Visualization, Conceptualization, Writing – original draft. **Natanya Meyer:** Formal analysis, Data curation, Visualization, Methodology. **Søren H. Jensen:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

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