

# Using bibliometric methods to shed light on the concept of sustainable tourism

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The publication of the Brundtland report in 1987 introduced the concept of sustainable development, placing "sustainability" as a unifying idea for all academic disciplines. Consequently, in the tourism sector, sustainable tourism emerged as a new approach to research in the field. Since then, the body of literature on sustainable tourism has only increased, as has the discussion around the conceptual structure of sustainable tourism among academics and professionals. The aim of the study is to complement this theoretical discussion with an inductive approach to the limits of the conceptual structure of sustainable tourism. To do so, we identify the main research topics in the field and their evolution in the past 32 years through bibliometric methods such as evaluative techniques, relational techniques, and visualization of bibliometric data techniques using the VOSviewer program. The results of the study reflect that the sustainable tourism has reached a complexity that is reflected in its current polyhedral content to function as a conceptual umbrella. In addition, it demonstrates that the bibliometric analysis is an adequate and useful methodology for academics and professionals involved in the academic debate around this field of knowledge. © 2019 by the authors.

Bibliometric analysis

Conceptual structure

Sustainable tourism

Tourism research

VOSviewer

conceptual framework

ecotourism

methodology

numerical method

visualization