

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN ASIA: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH TRENDS AND THEMATIC EVOLUTION

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1 INTRODUCTION

Asia is one of the most exciting places in the world for tourism to grow because of its rich cultural legacy and biodiversity [1]. Sustainable tourism has been more popular in recent years as a way to conserve the environment, preserve culture, and promote economic growth at the same time [2, 3]. Many research have looked at sustainable tourism in Asia, but there hasn't been a full quantitative review of the scientific literature in this area yet [4]. This study uses bibliometric analysis to look at how sustainable tourism studies in Asia have changed, what trends have emerged, and how research has been done over the past ten years to fill this gap.

2 MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study used a bibliometric analysis method to look at the academic writing on sustainable tourism in Asia in a systematic way. Bibliometric analysis is a type of quantitative study that looks at how often things are published, how often they are cited, and how research is changing in a particular academic discipline.

The Scopus database, which is one of the biggest and most dependable places to get peer-reviewed academic papers, was used to get the data for this study. The search used the phrases “sustainable tourism” AND “Asia” and looked for them in the title, abstract, and keywords boxes. The search only looked at articles produced in English between January 2014 and May 2025. After going through and getting rid of records that weren't useful, 224 documents were chosen for study.

We exported the data we obtained in CSV format and then used VOSviewer version 1.6.19 and the Bibliometrix R-package in R to process it. Some of the bibliometric indicators looked at were:

- (1) The number of publications each year
- (2) The writers, institutions, and nations that write the most
- (3) Articles and publications that are often cited
- (4) Patterns of keyword co-occurrence
- (5) Analysis of collaboration networks

Thematic mapping and trend topic analysis were also done to find the most important research groups and new subjects in the area. We also used data visualization methods like co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence networks to look at how people work together and how ideas are organized in the field of sustainable tourism research in Asia.

This strategy helped us learn a lot about how sustainable tourism research has grown and changed in the area over the previous ten years.

3 RESULTS

The bibliometric analysis revealed a significant increase in research output on sustainable tourism in Asia over the past decade, with publication numbers rising notably after 2018. The highest volume of publications was recorded in 2024, reflecting growing scholarly and policy interest in sustainable tourism, particularly in response to global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Analysis of country contributions indicated that China, Malaysia, Thailand, and India were the most productive nations in this research domain. The most influential academic journals publishing sustainable tourism studies in Asia included the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Tourism Management*, and the *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*.

Thematic mapping illustrated a research evolution from earlier emphases on ecotourism and heritage conservation toward contemporary issues such as climate change adaptation, digital tourism services, and inclusive tourism models. Collaboration network analysis indicated a notable strengthening of international partnerships, particularly between Asian institutions and European universities, accompanied by a growing number of multi-country research projects in recent years.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This bibliometric study provides a systematic and quantitative overview of the research landscape on sustainable tourism in Asia from 2014 to 2025. The results highlight key trends, active research hubs, and dominant thematic focuses within the field. Notably, there has been a clear expansion of research attention toward community engagement, environmental management, and resilience strategies in the context of post-pandemic recovery and global sustainability priorities.

The findings suggest that future research should further explore cross-cutting themes such as digital transformation in tourism, climate resilience strategies, and socio-economic inclusivity. Moreover, strengthening international academic collaboration and enhancing policy-research linkages will be essential to advancing sustainable tourism practices and governance models across Asia.

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