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Mapping Innovation and Sustainability in Rural Tourism: A Bibliometric Approach

Maria Lúcia Pato¹, Ana Sofia Duque²

¹ Maria Lúcia Pato, CERNAS-IPV Research Centre, Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Portugal

² Ana Sofia Duque (ascdunque@estgv.ipv.pt), CEGOT, Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Portugal

Abstract: Innovation and sustainability have become dynamic tools to foster success in tourism. However, the effects of the two concepts in rural tourism have been largely overlooked. It seems hence timely to present a quantitative survey of the literature in these topics. Based on 94 articles published in the Scopus database, we found that innovation and sustainability in rural tourism is mostly a European concern, the bulk of articles published in the last ten years. China, Italy, and Spain are the main countries under analysis and the *Sustainability Journal* is the major outlet for dissemination of knowledge. This study can serve as a strategic guide for researchers, policymakers and entrepreneurs in the sector, supporting evidence-based decision-making. It has sought to understand the evolution of the existing literature on sustainable and innovative rural tourism; it has identified the most influential researchers and research centers that can promote future collaborations; and it has identified approaches and trends that are shaping the future of sustainable rural tourism. However, given the potential for innovation and sustainability towards rural tourism success, particularly in less developed and undeveloped countries, more research that ties all these three topics is an imperative

Keywords: Innovation; Sustainability; Rural Tourism; Bibliometric Approach; Rural Development

1. Introduction

According to the United Nations' World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) definition, rural tourism is 'a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide variety of products and services, often related to nature based activities (such as agriculture and forest), rural lifestyle and culture, rural heritage and sightseeing [1, 2].

Innovation and sustainability are critical to the growth and success of rural tourism, as they help create resilient, thriving communities by impulse economic and social benefits, while preserving the natural and cultural resources that attract tourists. These concepts are not only important in the present, but even in the future, they are undoubtedly considered as new triggers as well as drivers for tourism to position itself competitively in the market [3].

Innovation and sustainability are even more important in the context of scarce human and financial resources, typical of rural areas [4, 5]. Indeed, by introducing new technologies, creative activities, and unique and traditional experiences, innovation improves the attractiveness of rural destinations [6] and enhances visitor experience [7]. This can include digital marketing, virtual tours, or eco-friendly and traditional lodging options, helping to attract a wider range of visitors. that want an immersive and different experience in the rural space. Additionally, innovative approaches help small rural businesses,

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46 such as agricultural farms, to grow by creating niche markets, improving product offer-
47 ings, and allowing them to diversify their agricultural activity [8, 9]. In turn, sustainability
48 in the rural reinforces the conduct of managing rural tourism activities in ways that pro-
49 tect the environment, preserve local culture, and contribute to the economic and social
50 well-being of local communities. By focusing on long-term benefits rather than short-term
51 gains, sustainable rural practices can provide positive impacts for both tourists and rural
52 communities.

53 Although the importance of these concepts, the relationship between innovation and
54 sustainability in rural tourism has been understudied and many studies focus only a per-
55 spective to succeed – innovation or sustainability. Moreover, to the best of our knowledge,
56 a quantitative bibliometrically based survey has not been conducted on this matter. The
57 present study therefore fills a critical gap in the need for an extensive and systematic bib-
58 liometric study covering the role and impact of innovation and sustainability in rural tour-
59 ism. It aims to provide guidelines for future studies by identifying new and current per-
60 spectives and challenges for strengthening innovative and sustainable approaches in rural
61 tourism. With this objective in mind, the following specific objectives are identified: to
62 develop a bibliometric analysis that includes the articles published in Scopus on the topic
63 under analysis; to identify the main authors working on these themes, the geographical
64 distribution of the studies, the connections between authors, the most works cited, the
65 main media used for publication, the main topics, the main methodologies used and the
66 main countries under analysis.

67 The paper consists of five parts. Following the Introduction, an overview of the ideas
68 of innovation and sustainability in rural tourism is given in Section 2. The methodological
69 approach is explained in Section 3, while Section 4 shows and discusses the results of the
70 bibliometric exercise. The study's primary contributions are outlined, its shortcomings are
71 noted, and potential directions for further research are proposed in the conclusion (Section
72 5).

73 2. Literature Review

74 2.1. The meaning of Rural Tourism

75 Rural tourism (RT) is not a new phenomenon in the tourism sector or in scientific
76 research [10]. Its visibility increased at the end of the eighties because of the negative im-
77 pacts, mainly environmental and social, triggered by what is known as 'mass tourism' [4].
78 As an alternative form of tourism, it is more consistent with the natural and social values
79 of the countryside, allowing rural hosts and tourists to enjoy fruitful interaction and a more
80 authentic experience [4, 11, 12].

81 A universal definition of RT lacks consensus [10, 13-16]. This is because it includes
82 different activities, such as agro-tourism, green tourism or village tourism [17, 18] and var-
83 ies between regions and countries [14, 19, 20]. As Rosalina et al. [10] claim, all this com-
84 plexity has implications for the planning, management and performance of the activity
85 and the territory in which it takes place. Lane [14] suggests that, in its purest form, rural
86 tourism should have the following five characteristics:

- 87 1. Located in a rural space.
- 88 2. Functionally rural – built upon the rural world's special features of small-
89 scale businesses, open space, contact with nature and the natural world, her-
90 itage, 'traditional' societies and 'traditional' culture.
- 91 3. Rural in scale—both in terms of buildings and settlements – and, therefore,
92 often small-scale.
- 93 4. Traditional character, growing slowly and organically, and connected with
94 local and rural families.
- 95 5. Of many different kinds, representing the complex pattern of rural environ-
96 ment, economy, history and location.
- 97

98 Based on this features, it could be argued that rural tourism aims to revitalize rural
99 resources for local socio-economic benefits and environmental sustainability through ac-
100 tive local community integration and empowerment [10]. If rural tourism is considered a
101 development tool for rural areas [4, 21-24], its real impact, both for rural tourism accom-
102 modations and for the territories/communities in which they are integrated, depends on
103 the management approach of the accommodations, specifically their ability to develop
104 profitable and sustainable access to the rural tourism market through an appropriate in-
105 novation process [4]

107 2.2. Innovation in Rural Tourism

108 Joseph Schumpeter (1934) was one of the first authors to conceptualize the term “in-
109 novation” [25]. In his seminal work, *The Theory of Economic Development*, originally pub-
110 lished in 1934, the author defined innovation as changes in the existing production system
111 aimed at increasing earnings and reducing costs [26]. According to Schumpeter, when
112 innovations (whether economic, social, political, or technical) occur in the economic
113 sphere, the process of development begins [26]. These forms of innovation can be ob-
114 served as: i) the discovery of new sources of raw materials; ii) the production of a new
115 product; iii) the employment of a new method of production; iv) the exploration of new
116 markets; and v) the creation of new types of organizational structures [25, 27].

117 Despite the introduction of new conceptualizations of innovation by different entities
118 and researchers, Schumpeter’s notion forms the foundation of the term and continues to
119 influence many modern conceptualizations. For instance, the *Oslo Manual*, developed
120 jointly by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Eu-
121 rostat, suggested at the beginning of the new millennium four different types of innova-
122 tion: product innovation (the introduction of a new good or service); process innovation
123 (the implementation of a new or significantly improved production or delivery method);
124 marketing innovation (the implementation of a new marketing method); and organiza-
125 tional innovation (the implementation of a new organizational method in business prac-
126 tices) [28].

127 In 2018, the entities (OECD and Eurostat) presented a new conceptualization of in-
128 novation: innovation activities, which include all developmental, financial, and commer-
129 cial activities carried out by a firm that are intended to result in innovation for itself; and
130 business innovation, defined as a new or improved product or business process—or a
131 combination thereof—that has been introduced to the market or brought into use by the
132 firm [29].

133 This conceptual framework is also utilized by different researchers and entities to
134 analyse innovation in rural areas. Particularly in rural tourism, an overview of the inno-
135 vation literature reveals a growing recognition of the importance of looking to the past as
136 a source of innovation [e.g. 30, 31-33]. This perspective can lead to the rediscovery of val-
137 ues and behaviours linked to specific local traditions, which can be protected and har-
138 nessed to add value to unique and distinctive products and services [34]. Thus, new prod-
139 ucts and services can emerge from the process of recombining the endogenous and cul-
140 tural traditions of the area [31]. This approach, called “innovation through tradition”
141 (ITT), is especially significant in rural tourism [35]. Wang et al. [32] based on an in-depth
142 analysis of nine cases of small rural B&Bs in a heritage village in China, developed an ITT
143 process framework as an analytical and practical tool to help heritage B&B entrepreneurs
144 successfully implement ITT and inform relevant authorities active in the heritage ecosys-
145 tem. Pato [33] in a study carried out in Portugal, found that olive oil tourism mainly em-
146 phasizes ITT. Also, in this regard, Bezerra and Correia [36], argue that olive oil tourism, a
147 product with strong traditions, deeply rooted in the culture of several countries, allows
148 visitors to have meaningful experiences, learn more about local skills and traditions and
149 engage with local people and local culture.

150 An advancement in understanding innovation in rural tourism is proposed by Mada-
151 naguli and Kaur [37], who describe a rural tourism innovation ecosystem as an intercon-
152 nected system of stakeholders and their specific actions within an institutional and cul-
153 tural rural context. This system facilitates the effective integration of knowledge and re-
154 sources to create and deliver new value, benefiting all stakeholders involved [37]. Sum-
155 ming up, innovation in rural tourism is an area of growing interest and research for vari-
156 ous authors, applied in different geographies [37-40].

157 158 159 **2.2. Sustainability in Rural Tourism**

160 Rural tourism intersects with specialized rural services and products, such as small-
161 scale accommodation, rural events, traditional gastronomy, rural outdoor recreation and
162 rural festivities. It also attracts tourists looking for nature-based vacations and immersion
163 in rural culture. Therefore, a particularly significant aspect of rural tourism is its founda-
164 tion in the rural world's character, essence, and culture. Because of this, particular atten-
165 tion should be given to preserving these resources across the three dimensions of sustain-
166 ability: environmental, social, and economic [41].

167 According to Utami et al. [42], approximately 44% of the world's population lives in
168 rural areas, so the growing interest in the sustainable development of these regions is nat-
169 ural. Several authors defend that tourism development in rural areas must be regarded as
170 sustainable development to protect or maintain the region's unique characteristics [18, 43,
171 44]. As RT continues to gain attention, implementing sustainable tourism projects in rural
172 destinations is essential for achieving desirable economic, social, and environmental sus-
173 tainability [45] and development. Rural tourism is also expected to provide an ideal envi-
174 ronment for integration and offer a way to escape urban stress factors [46]. In addition,
175 tourism is one of the main sectors contributing to the improvement and sustainability of
176 the quality of life in rural areas [42].

177 The number of studies linking rural tourism and sustainability has grown, as several
178 authors recognize the importance of this connection [47, 48]. RT has an immediate impact
179 on sustainable development because it promotes the preservation of the natural and cul-
180 tural capital of these regions and uses it sustainably, thereby creating a balance between
181 the ecological and economic aspects of development [49].

182 We can say that sustainable rural tourism revitalizes rural areas, preserving the nat-
183 ural environment, creating new jobs and higher incomes, maintaining traditional culture
184 and protecting the quality of life of residents [47, 48].

185 186 **3. Materials and Methods**

187 To map innovation and sustainability in rural tourism, a comprehensive bibliometric
188 exercise was undertaken. Bibliometric research provides an analysis of recent trends in
189 each field of research and an objective assessment of seminal contributions and contribu-
190 tors [25]. In addition, they contribute to clarifying the dynamics of types of methodologies
191 (formal versus appreciative and empirical) [50], as well as providing an analysis of the
192 publication trends of authors, journals and research patterns [51]. Compared to other
193 qualitative and quantitative review research methodologies, bibliometrics is a more ob-
194 jective and reliable analysis approach [52]. A bibliometric exercise involves the quantita-
195 tive analysis of publications, often academic articles, to gain insights into various aspects
196 such as research trends, author contributions, countries analyzed, empirical methodolo-
197 gies, and other relevant questions [21]. This specific exercise consisted of collecting rele-
198 vant articles in the first phase, followed by the analysis and classification of abstracts and
199 papers related to the thematic area in a database search.

200 The Scopus database was chosen as the largest curated abstract and citation database,
201 offering wide global and regional coverage of scientific journals and conference proceed-
202 ings, while ensuring that only the highest quality data are indexed through rigorous con-
203 tent selection [53].

204 Based on the work of Santos et al. [3] a list of keywords related to innovation, sus-
205 tainability and rural tourism was used: 'innovation' and 'sustainab*' and 'rural tourism*'.
206 Since rural tourism is a multifaceted concept, it was then added the keywords 'agri-
207 tourism*', 'agritourism*', 'agro-tourism*', 'agro-tourism*' and 'village tourism*'. Between these last
208 words was added the word "or". These words should appear in the title, keywords or
209 abstract. The search was conducted all year up to the moment of the search (October 8th,
210 2024). It was opted to be considered all the time until the moment because it permits us to
211 observe the evolution of studies concerning innovation and sustainability towards rural
212 tourism.

213 This procedure yielded 122 works. To ensure full access to the content, the search
214 was limited to articles or conference papers indexed in Scopus. A total of 95 works were
215 selected: 74 articles and 21 conference papers. After reading all the abstracts, one paper
216 was excluded because it was not related to the thematic area of rural tourism.

217 All these articles were exported to an Excel spreadsheet, where a new database was
218 created with the following relevant fields: authors' names, article titles, year of publica-
219 tion, source, and abstract. During the initial stage of the process, the abstracts and/or full
220 documents were reviewed, and each was classified according to several dimensions: year
221 of publication, authors' contributions, outlets of publication, type of article, empirical
222 methodologies, and countries of analysis.

223 The data analysis was complemented with VOSVIEWER software version 1.6.2. This
224 software is frequently employed in data analysis [3, 54]. One practical advantage of this
225 software is its use of text-mining algorithms, combined with a machine learning model,
226 which are particularly useful for obtaining a better understanding of the thematic struc-
227 ture of the data [55]. Additionally, VOSVIEWER enables the creation of maps based on
228 network data and the extraction of information from these maps [56]. Figure 1 illustrates
229 the methodological steps undertaken in this research.
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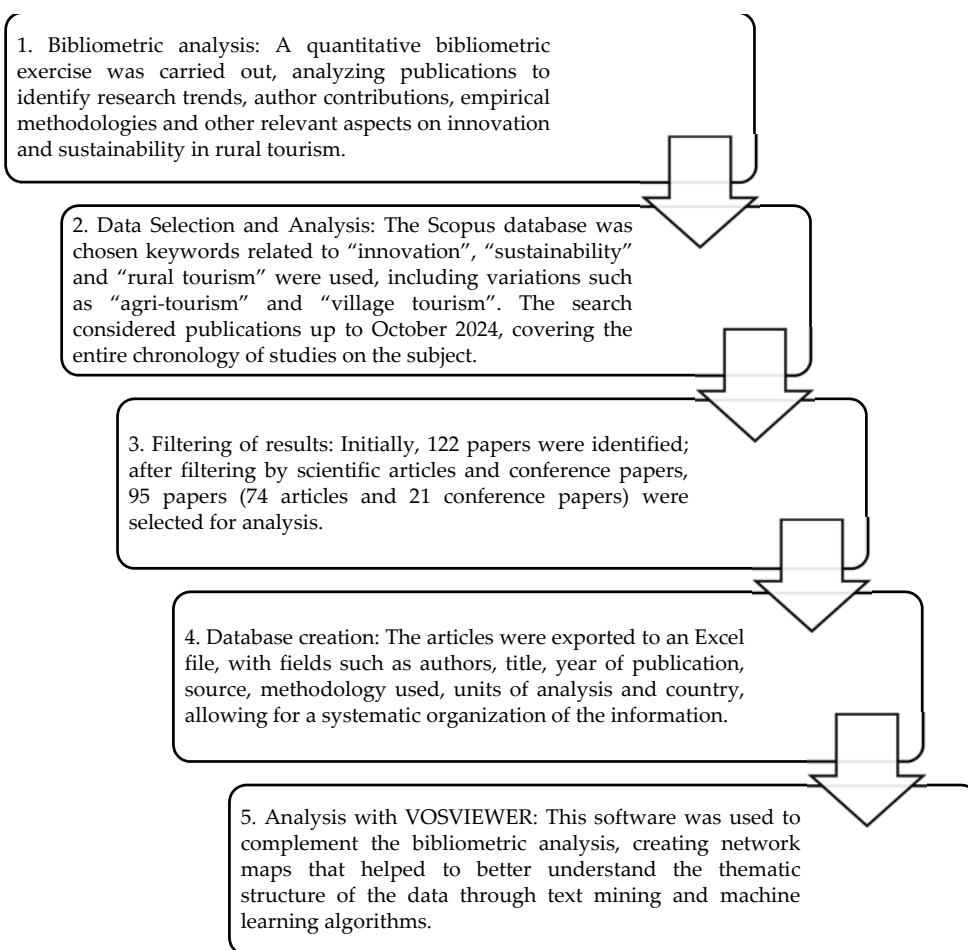


Figure 1: Diagram showing the methodology used

Source: Own elaboration

4. Bibliometric Analysis of Sustainability and Innovation in Rural Tourism

4.1 The evolution of studies

The focus on sustainability and innovation in rural tourism began to gain a more consistent presence in literature (although still limited) after 2010. Between 2010 and 2014, the number of papers remained minimal, with a noticeable increase in publications occurring after this period (Figure 2).

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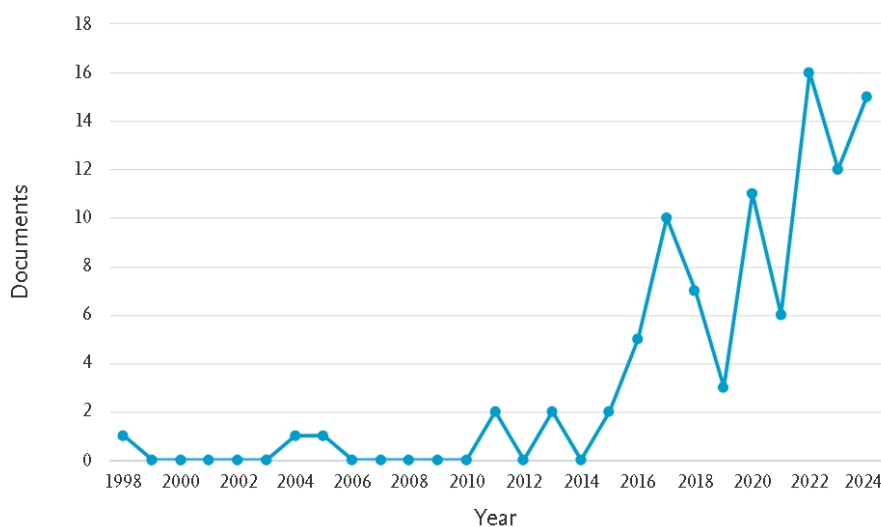


Figure 2: Weight of sustainability and innovation in rural tourism

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Scopus

More than half of the articles (64%) were published in the last five years. Indisputably, this trend reflects growing recognition of the importance of innovation and sustainability in rural tourism, as highlighted by various authors [e.g. 57, 58, 59].

4.2 Documents by authors and affiliations

It is surprising to note that among 310 authors that are involved in publishing concerning innovation and sustainability in rural tourism related topics, only four have two papers and all the others only one paper. See Table 1.

Table 1: Main contributors in innovation and sustainability

Author	Affiliation (country)	Total of publications in Scopus (N° Citations) [h index] *	Most contributed topics
Culasso, Francesca K.	Università degli Studi di Torino, Turin, Italy	41 (462) [13]	Family Business; Case Study; Ownership
Lo, W.S.	Meiho University, Pingtung, Taiwan	16 (167) [7]	Sustainable development, environmental innovation, green management
Quaranta, G.	Università degli Studi della, Potenza, Italy	78 (1171) [17]	Urban Growth; Metropolitan Area; Land Use Change
Salvia, R.	Università degli Studi della, Potenza, Italy	83 (906) [17]	Urban Growth; Metropolitan Area; Land Use Change

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Scopus

Three of these authors are affiliated with universities in Italy, while the other is associated with Meiho University in Taiwan. Given the dispersion of authors in this field, it appears that innovation and sustainability in rural tourism have not yet become a primary focus of research. Regardless of the number of studies on this subject, there remains a notable lack of depth in the research on this subject.

This observation is further reinforced by the fact that, among 160 affiliations, only nine are associated with more than one publication (see Figure 3).

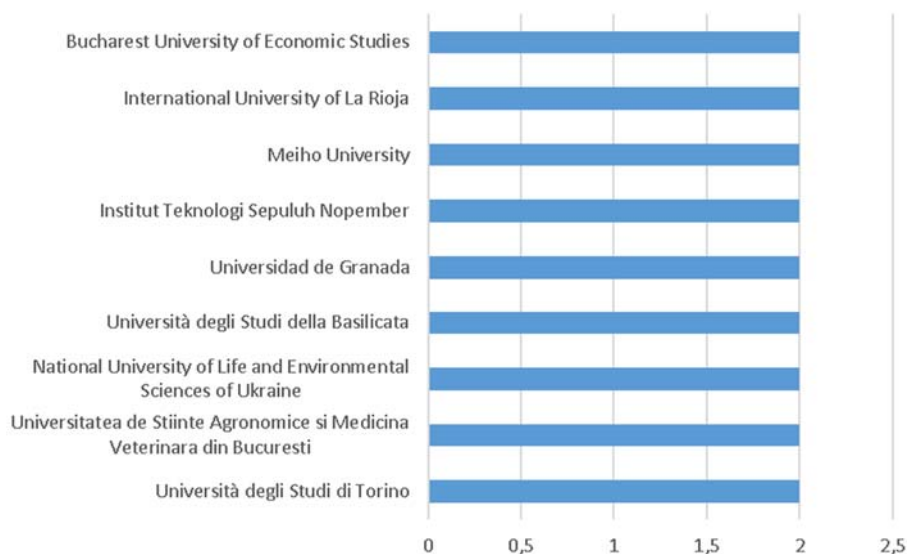


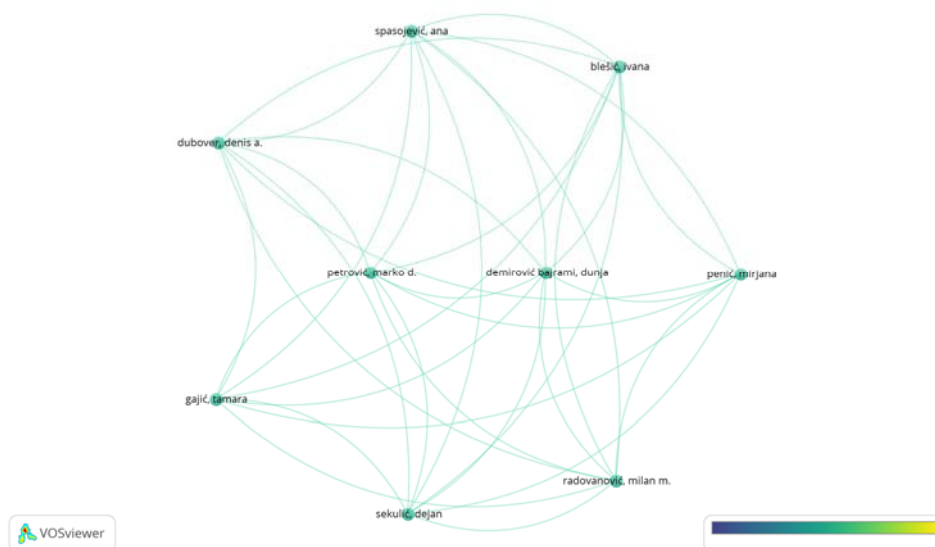
Figure 3: Affiliations of authors

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Scopus

Among these nine affiliations, seven belong to institutions located in Europe. In true, the European Union has been a key supporter of rural tourism innovation through funding programs like the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Initiative “Links between activities for the development of rural economy” (LEADER). These initiatives also provide resources for developing sustainable tourism practices and encourage collaboration between local governments, businesses, and communities. The Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy also emphasize sustainability in tourism by promoting greener practices in agriculture, energy use, and waste management within rural tourism ventures [60].

4.3 Relationship between authors

In terms of relationships between authors out of the total of authors (310) in the sample, only nine have relationships between each other. They are Blešić, Ivana; Demirović Bajrami, Dunja; Dubover, Denis A.; Gajić, Tamara; Penić, Mirjana; petrović, marko D.; Radovanović, Milan M.; Sekulić, Dejan; and Spasojević, Ana (see Figure 4).



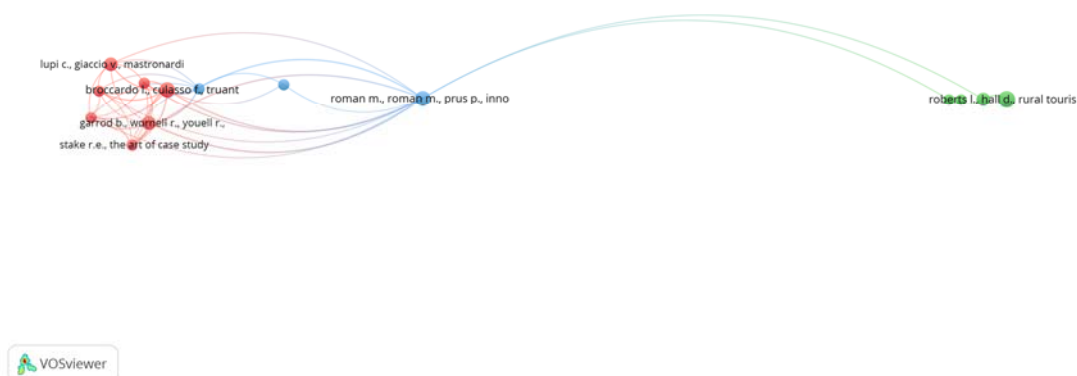
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Figure 4: Relationship between authors
Source: Own elaboration based on data from Scopus

Except for one author (Dubover, D.A.) all these others are from Universities or Higher Institutions from Serbia. Since each of them have only a paper, although this connection, the fact also reveals the dispersion of the research concerning innovation and sustainability.

4.4 Co-citations network

Out of 4658 references in total of the 94 articles, only 3 references are cited five times. They are the works of Broccardo et al. [61]; Roman et al. [62] and Roberts and Hall [63]. Cited 4 times we have 6 references and 3 times we have 14 references (see Figure 5).



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Figure 5: Visualized co-citation network
Source: Own elaboration based on data from Scopus

This finding corroborate previous data, revealing the dispersion of the research concerning innovation and sustainability in rural tourism.

4.5 Major keywords used by research and outlets of publication

Of 351 keywords used in these 94 articles, 13 appeared at least three times in the list of keywords. The word most used was indeed “rural tourism” that has 31 occurrences in those articles. This is followed by the words of agritourism (15 occurrences), innovation (15 occurrences) and sustainability (9 occurrences). The weight of these words can be observed in Figure 6. The map shown in the mentioned figure is associated with three clusters. These clusters correspond to a specific theme or subtopic within the dataset.

Cluster 1: “Entrepreneurship in rural tourism” includes keywords such as entrepreneurship, innovation, rural tourism, agro-tourism, development, and rural development. As referred by several authors [e.g. 58, 64, 65] to foster rural development, entrepreneurship in rural tourism related products is essential. Moreover, the development of the rural tourism area needs substantial commitment on part of the often family ventures and the tourism entrepreneur [64]. Innovation is a central aspect of entrepreneurship [25, 26]. In essence, innovation in rural tourism can transform underdeveloped regions into attractive tourist destinations, while fostering economic growth, sustainability, and cultural preservation. This is even more important in the presence of scarce human and financial resources, typical of rural areas [4], as mentioned before. In the case of rural tourism, it can be associated with the development and implementation of new ideas, practices, services, or products that enhance tourism experience.

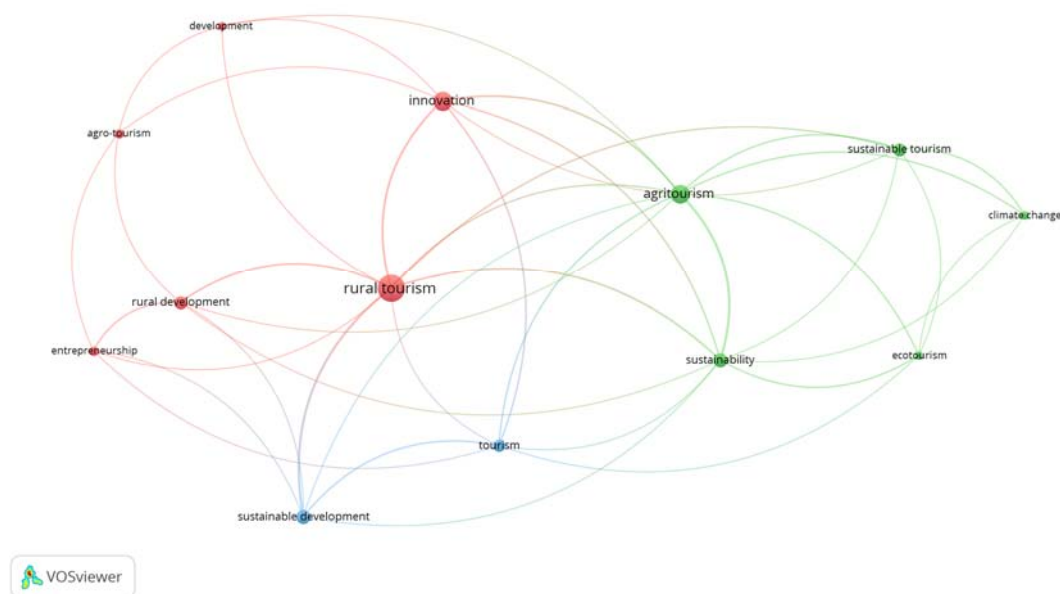


Figure 6: VOSviewer keywords map

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Scopus

Cluster 2: “Sustainable rural tourism” is composed by the keywords of agritourism, ecotourism, climate change, sustainability and sustainable tourism. As also referred before, the number of studies linking rural tourism and sustainability have grown, as several authors recognize the importance of this connection [45, 47, 48]. Indeed, agritourism activities, as a particular type of rural tourism, are immediately associated with more sustainable tourism activities, and at the same time, they also contribute to the sustainability of tourism. The search for more sustainable experiences in rural areas reflects growing interest in eco-friendly tourism, regenerative agriculture, and community-based initiatives that preserve nature while benefiting local economies. There are several ways this

trend manifests, each providing opportunities to experience rural life with a focus on sustainability. Apart of the economic and socio-cultural dimensions of sustainability, rural tourism in a broader sense, and agritourism in particular, as referred by Santos et al. [3] reflects however a tourism sector closely linked to environmental aspects.

Finally, Cluster 3: “Sustainable development of tourism” is made up of the keywords “sustainable development” and “tourism”. It reflects the attention paid to new sustainable forms of tourism development, such as agrotourism and rural tourism. The link between sustainability and rural/agrotourism is mentioned by Lane [14].

The publications with the highest number of articles published on innovation and sustainability in rural tourism are the Sustainability Journal (with 16 articles), the Journal of Sustainable Tourism (with 3 articles) and the Tourism and Hospitality Journal (with 2 articles). All the other papers are published at conferences or in different journals. This certainly reflects the diversity of journals publishing in this field.

4.6 Main countries under analysis

Most studies on innovation and sustainability in rural tourism focus on countries with very high human development or countries with high human development. In fact, out of a list of 22 countries (see Figure 7) where at least two articles' research focuses on them, 68% focus on very high human development countries and 27% on high human development countries. At the top of the ranking are China (with 14 articles), Indonesia (with 12 articles), Italy (with 12 articles) and Spain (with 9 articles). These last two countries are ranked top in the list of greenest countries of the world, according to the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) [66].

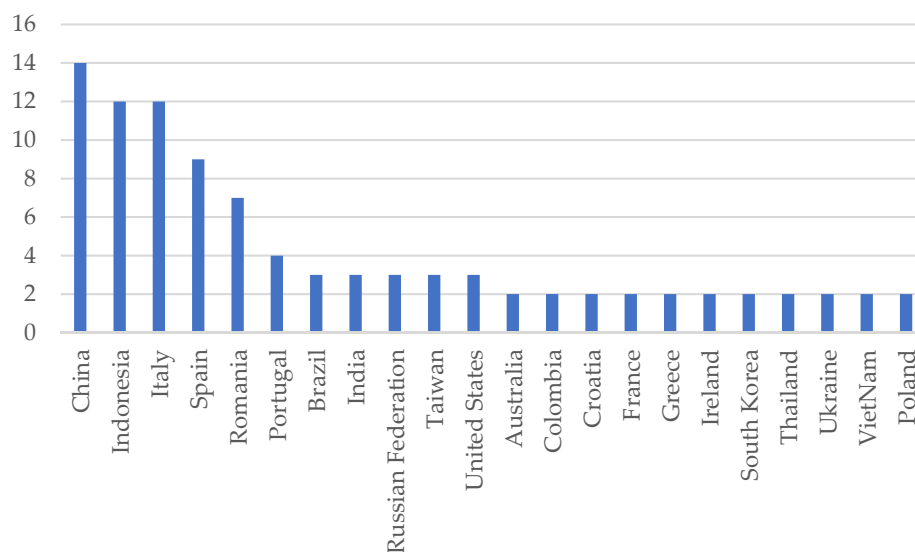


Figure 7: Countries under research

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Scopus

Since rural tourism is important in the tourism context of these countries [1], it is to be expected that they will increasingly adopt specific measures to improve innovation and sustainability in their economy and, by extension, in tourism and rural tourism. Countries that invest heavily in innovation and sustainability are usually those with advanced economies and strong commitments to environmental protection, green energy and technological research.

4.7 Main empirical methodologies used

In terms of empirical methodologies used, the bulk of articles are empirical (78%). Regarding the empirical methodologies used in innovation and sustainability-related papers, it is apparent that qualitative methods have been favoured over the time, accounting for 59% of the total published works (see Figure 8).

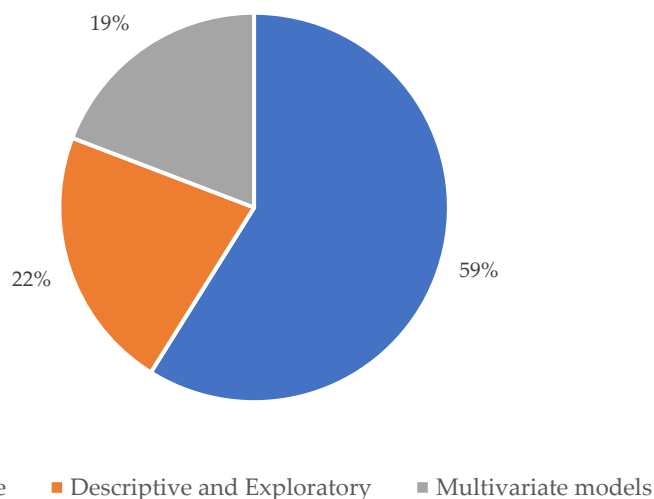


Figure 8: Empirical methodologies used

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Scopus

As a field of research that are often associated with the rural and where the advances in technology are missing (due to the natural conditions of many of these spaces) qualitative analyses tend to be the 'natural' way of producing science which may then lead to 'generalised theorization' [25].

5. Conclusion

The literature review highlights the importance of innovation and sustainability in rural tourism, emphasizing that both are essential for the sustainable development of these areas [67]. Although the presumption that innovation breeds sustainability, innovations also should create positive economic, social, and environmental outcomes, by integrating innovation into rural tourism, destinations can achieve a balance between economic benefits and environmental responsibility, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Innovation is analyzed from Schumpeter's perspective and expanded with modern concepts, including organizational, product and marketing innovations. While sustainability is explored in terms of environmental preservation, cultural valorization and socio-economic benefits for local communities. This theoretical basis is used to justify the relevance of a detailed bibliometric study, combining the two interrelated concepts.

The results of the study, obtained through a bibliometric analysis of 94 articles from 310 authors in the Scopus database considering all the time until the moment of the search (October 8th, 2024), can serve as a strategic guide for researchers, policymakers and entrepreneurs in the sector, supporting evidence-based decision-making. It has sought to understand the evolution of the existing literature on sustainable and innovative rural tourism; it has identified the most influential research centers that can promote future collaborations; and, it has identified approaches and trends that are shaping the future of sustainable rural tourism.

Some of the conclusions drawn from this study are: 1) despite the growing relevance of the themes of innovation and sustainability, there is still thematic dispersion and a lack

of depth in relation to the integration of these dimensions in rural tourism; 2) the geographical issue is also relevant since research is predominantly focused on countries with high human development (China, Italy and Spain), leaving a gap in less developed regions, where innovation and sustainability could be more impactful; 3) the concentration of publications occurred in the last 10 years, with a prominence of the Sustainability Journal; 4) it is possible to identify some methodological gaps, since there is a predominance of qualitative methods, but little emphasis on quantitative methods of analysis, particularly multivariate methods; finally, 5) the concept addressed in the literature review of “innovation through tradition” (ITT) is especially relevant to rural tourism, suggesting that innovative practices should respect and value the cultural and historical aspects of rural areas.

As suggested by Santos et al. [3] related to tourism in general, we agree that the indicators of innovation and sustainability still need to be better understood in terms of their association with the rural tourism context. It is essential to rethink a more integrated approach to innovative and sustainable rural tourism, which would lead to a powerful mechanism of rural development.

This work has some limitations, particularly in the methodology used. The bibliometric exercise carried out was based only on articles and conference papers published in journals indexed in Scopus, thus excluding (valid) scientific production published in other types of publications, namely books and book chapters. Moreover, the analysis focuses primarily on (very) high human development countries, limiting the applicability of findings to diverse rural contexts globally.

Therefore, in terms of future research, we suggest extending the investigation of innovation and sustainability in rural tourism to other regions and/or countries, particularly in countries with Medium Human Development and Low Human Development; to explore the categories and/or dimensions of innovation and sustainability in rural tourism; investigate the role of emerging technologies (AI, IoT, blockchain) as tools to help sustainable management of rural tourism and innovation in the sector; and, finally, we believe it would be also pertinent to develop a study on how rural tourism can contribute to mitigating climate change, for example by assessing the resilience of rural destinations in the face of extreme weather events.

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