

# The conceptual bibliometric analysis applied to the tourism-culture binomial 1995-2020

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**Abstract:** This article aims to find out how the terms tourism and culture have been treated throughout history and when they began to be of interest to the scientific community as a result of the change in the conceptual mentality of the tourism sector in general and the tourist in particular, as well as to understand the evolutionary stage reached. To this end, bibliometric analysis has been carried out, based on a quantitative and systematic review of the literatura, using the Web of Science (WoSCC) database. The software used is Vosviewer and Bibliometrix to generate graphs and maps of relationships and clusters... We can highlight the degree of connection that exists between all the articles published in the period studied (1995 to 2020) due to the number of citations made. This work aims to identify the main trends in research on cultural tourism.

**Keywords:** Sustainability; Cultural tourism; Heritage; Satisfaction; Museum.

## El análisis bibliométrico conceptual aplicado al binomio turismo-cultura 1995-2020

**Resumen:** Este artículo persigue conocer cómo han sido tratados los términos turismo y cultura a lo largo de la historia y cuándo comienza a ser una temática interesante para la comunidad científica a raíz del cambio de mentalidad conceptual del sector turístico en general y del turista en particular, así como comprender el estadio evolutivo en que se encuentra. Para ello, se ha realizado un análisis bibliométrico, basado en una revisión cuantitativa y sistemática de la literatura. Usando la base de datos Web of Science (WoSCC). El software utilizado es Vosviewer y Bibliometrix para generar gráficos y mapas de relaciones, cluster... Podemos resaltar el grado de conexión que existen entre todos los artículos publicados en el periodo de tiempo estudiado (1995 al 2020) debido al número de citas que se habían realizado. Con este trabajo se pretende identificar las principales tendencias de investigación sobre el turismo cultural

**Palabras Clave:** Sostenibilidad; Turismo cultural; Patrimonio; Satisfacción; Museo.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of tourism has changed over the years. Throughout the 20th century, there has been a change of mentality in society, to such an extent that the world of culture goes from denigrating the concept of tourism to begin to consider it as an opportunity to be able to develop and conserve cultural heritage (Piñeiro-Naval, Igartua and Rodríguez de Dios, 2018, p.2).

At the end of the 20th century, the new conceptualization of tourism increasingly relates tourism, heritage and sustainability. Likewise, tourism is presented as a heritage recovery activity and as an economic dynamizer, which serves, in turn, to fix the rural population, mainly, to the territory. Therefore, in the 21st century, the term cultural tourism is closely related to the recovery of heritage, considered as both the tangible and intangible representation of the history of the society that built it and of which it is now part (Carrizo, M.V. 2020).

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In this new conceptualization and relationship, tourism-culture, tourists dedicate a good part of their leisure time to enjoy the tourist experience and to experience new sensations through culture. Tourist activity is not just a simple visit to a monument or attending an event as a mere spectator. Still, they want to know, interact and enjoy the experience of wellbeing offered by the tourist destination. For this reason, there is a growing consensus among the scientific community that well-planned tourism based on experiential parameters improves tourism activity and the sustainability of the destination. (Plumed, Gómez and Martín, 2018). Heritage tourism is currently considered a symbiosis based on economic, cultural and natural parameters of the goal and, therefore, of the culture. On the other hand, this new conception of tourism brings a new mentality in the tourist who is more aware of this new way of understanding tourism (not overcrowded, sustainable, experiential) and who is characterized by respecting the environment and the heritage of the places they visit. In addition, they show great interest in the local culture, feeling involved and identified with the site where they carry out their leisure activities, according to Ruiz (1997). All this is evidenced from 2010 onwards by an increase in scientific publications on this subject.

Bibliometric studies are mainly based on quantitative analyses of publications about a specific phenomenon (Liu et al., 2019). In this case study, we are going to relate these two concepts: tourism and culture. This particular article uses a structured method to address the research questions, Q1: What terminology is most frequently mentioned in the literature when tourism and culture are put in relation, Q2: What sociocultural elements related to sustainable tourism are studied, Q3: What are the main narrative models that currently present the greatest boom about “culture and tourism activity”, to achieve maximum transparency and methodological reliability and, in turn, to accomplish systematically and comprehensively the development of the issues raised.

Therefore, under this approach, the research carried out in this article pursues as a fundamental objective to know how the terms tourism and culture have been treated throughout history and when it begins to be an exciting topic for the scientific community as a result of the change in the conceptual mentality of the tourism sector in general and the tourist in particular. We also want to know at what evolutionary stage this conceptual duality is at present.

For this purpose, we will carry out a bibliometric review on the topic “Tourism and Culture” based on the information collected in the Web of Science (WoSCC) database. This work aims to identify the main research trends on cultural tourism. In addition, with the use of Vosviewer and Bibliometrix software, the connections between the journals and, in particular, the articles of different authors between 1995 and 2020 will be shown graphically through their citations. This article is structured as follows. First, the conceptual change of the term tourism and its relationship with culture is explained. Subsequently, the methodology used to carry out the article is developed. Thirdly, the results of the bibliometric analysis are shown and, to conclude the report; a discussion section is included, synthesizing the main conclusions of the review and reflecting on possible future research.

## 2. Methodology

The study of culture and heritage has evolved in parallel in recent years. They have gone from being antagonistic concepts to being considered today as two complementary concepts. Therefore, this type of study involves multiple disciplines, methodological approaches and topics for analysis. In this bibliometric analysis, a quantitative and systematic literature review is applied. This structured analysis helps identify current research gaps and proposes an agenda for future exploration on the study topics (Jiménez-García, M., 2020; Cheng, M., 2018; Wakefield, 2015; Pickering, C., 2014; Cooper, H., 2009).

This type of analysis using an efficient procedure serves to understand in a brilliant way how a thematic emerges and develops in a research field (van Raan, 2005; Zhang et al., 2016). Thus, it is possible to measure the evolution of a specific research area through its scientific output and its productivity over a particular period. Guzeller and Celiker (2019) suggested that bibliometric analysis can examine the intellectual structure, knowledge areas, geographic areas, research topics and methods, and topic maturity levels of a scientific discipline or journal.

In conducting this systematic review, it has been structured through several steps. First, to examine whether the databases and the method used are appropriate approaches and thus check that they are the best method to explore the existing literature on the areas of study. The database chosen for this research was the Web of Science Core Collection (WoSCC) because this database includes peer-reviewed journals with international scope and coverage. For this, we have spent three months from October to December 2020, searching exhaustively in this database for articles published in scientific journals in the English and Spanish language containing the terms “Sustainable tourism or cultural heritage”,

“tourism or museum”, and “tourism or sociocultural dynamization” “tourism or territory/territorial planning integration” for this we have explored in the subject (from titles, abstracts or keywords) from the year 1995 taking it as a reference as first publication dates until the end of September 2020.

These searches revealed 30,171 publications with 118,338 citations for these topics, of which 54,653 articles were directly related to sustainable tourism and culture in the WoSCC database.

Second, the authors defined several study categories (e.g., country, most cited authors, terminology and journals) to sort and quantify the data. This bibliometric analysis provides a more objective approach to explore research trends and performance, acting as a complementary method to traditional literature reviews (Jiang, Ritchie, & Benckendorff, 2017). The content analysis has been performed with the support of the Vosviewer program, version 1.6.14, developed by Van Eck and Waltman (2020), which is a software tool that allows the graphical visualization of bibliometric networks, as well as the graphs provided by the Web of Science (WoSCC) database itself. In addition, it has been complemented by the use of Bibliometrics.

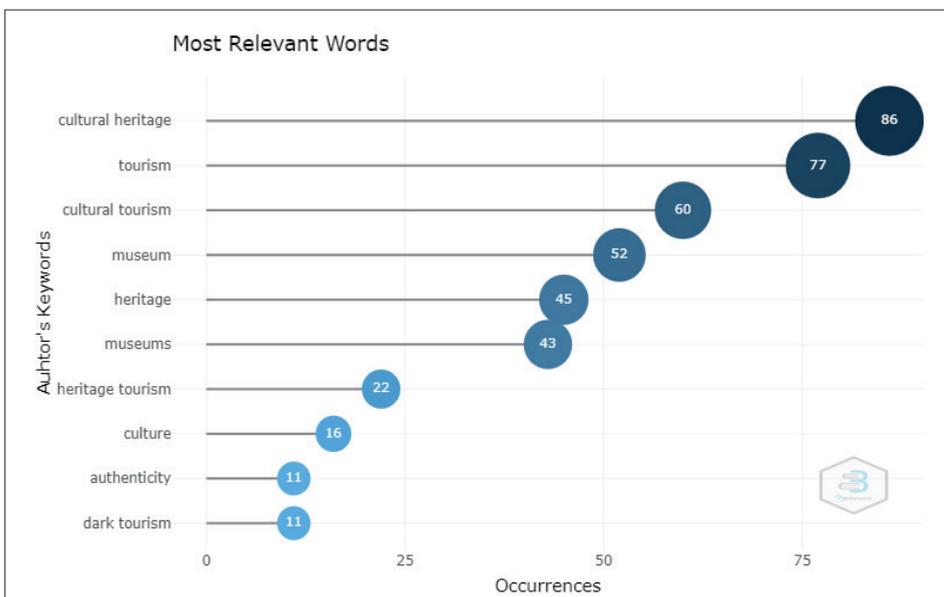
The Vosviewer and Bibliometrix software generate graphs and maps of relationships, clusters, authors, institutions, countries and keywords by compiling a bibliographic database. These software programs have made it possible to identify groups of countries, researchers and subject areas. The present study used this software similar to other recent studies of Niñerola, Sánchez-Rebull and Hernández-Lara, 2019. Finally, a third phase deals with identifying the development of the research, analyzing the results and obtaining the study's conclusions to raise future research trends.

### 3. Result

To realise the present work, different searches were carried out to obtain a result that could be contrasted. First of all, we searched for keywords related to the terms of cultural tourism, such as the following: Cultural heritage, folkloric, monumental, museums or cultural spaces, new museology, territorial planning, among others in a series of databases such as WOS, CCC, DIIDW, KJD, EDLINE, RSCI, SCIELO, ZOOREC. And 30,171 references were found. To all the premises, a time horizon between 2015 and 2020 was added. In this case, the results decrease, reaching 5,626, a fairly significant amount to conclude.

The most frequently used keywords were those shown in Graph 1 below.

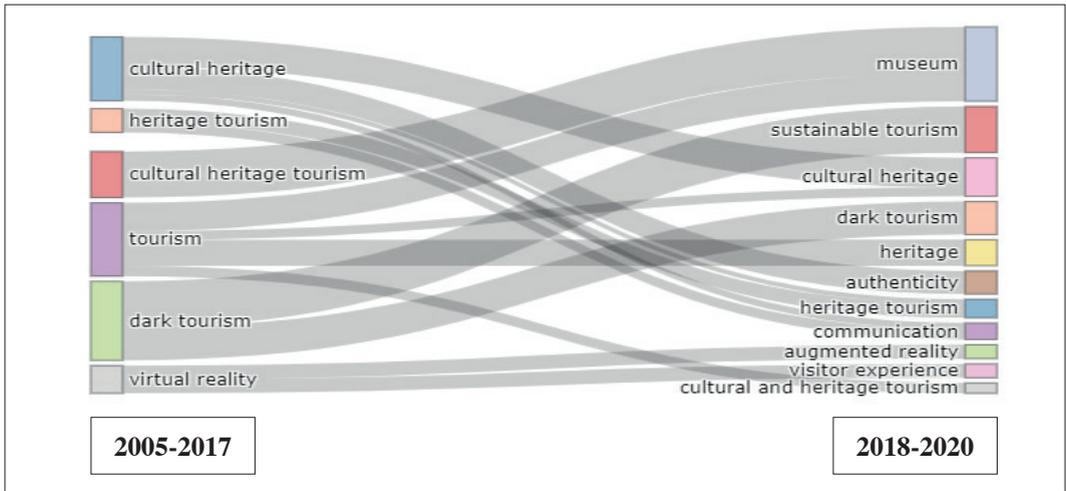
Figure 1: Research keywords



Source: Prepared by the authors based on Bibliometrix.



**Figure 3: Evolution over time of main research topics**

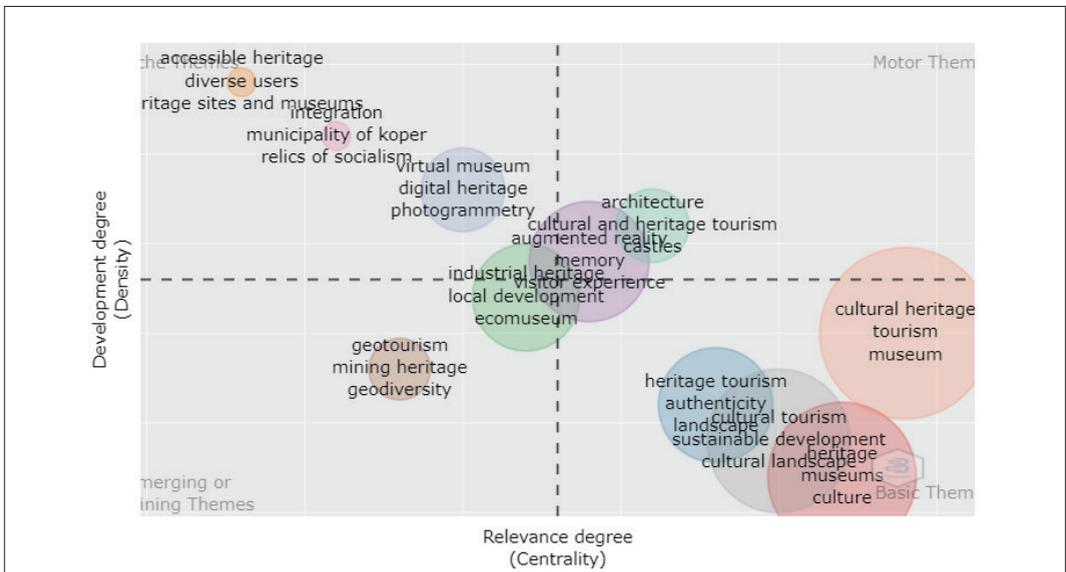


Source: Prepared by the authors based on Bibliometrix

In the previous figure, we can see how there are terms that have remained with their vocabulary over time, such as cultural heritage or dark tourism, although as usual losing relative weight concerning newer terms. While other words have evolved towards different terminology, for example, cultural heritage tourism for cultural heritage or tourism that has been diluted in other more precise terms such as a museum, substitutable tourism or cultural and heritage tourism. To conclude with the inclusion of the most dynamic terms today, which are not part of a previous conceptual evolution, we refer to communication, authenticity, augmented reality or visitor experience.

Another critical type of conceptual analysis for our study is the centrality/density matrix, as we can see in Figure 4. We identify the most active topics of research related to cultural tourism today.

**Figure 4: Conceptual analysis of the centrality/density matrix**

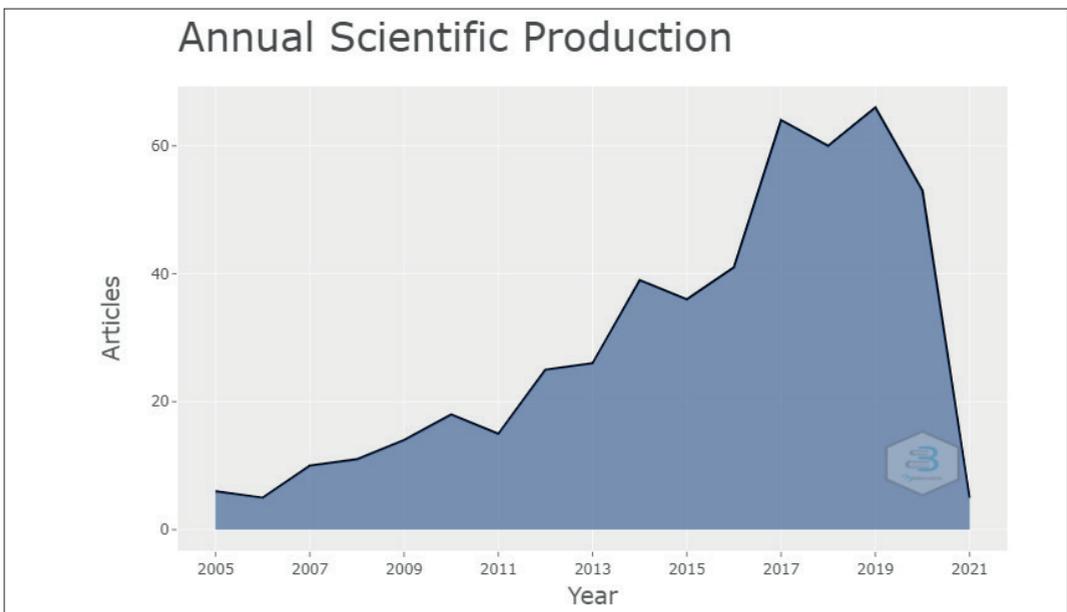


Source: Prepared by the authors based on Bibliometrix.

As we can see in the previous figure, in terms of basic research terms, we find cultural heritage, tourism and museum widely used in related research. On the other hand, emerging terms are geotourism, mining heritage and geodiversity. At the same time, within this same category, other terms are becoming very dynamic niches in current research such as industrial heritage, local development and ecomuseum, together with different more established niches such as a virtual museum, digital heritage and photogrammetry. Finally, in this analysis, we find the terms locomotive of current research: cultural and heritage tourism augmented reality or memory heritage. Although these are terms that occupy a large part of the interest of researchers, they still have a substantial margin of development in their consolidation process as essential topics of related research.

Next, we searched for journals that refer to the terms studied. These journals have had 118,338 citations in 54,653 articles, representing an average of more than 18.2 citations per published article. It is interesting to note how from 2005 onwards, the data starts to rise and reaches the most significant increase in 2019, as can be seen in the following graph.

**Figure 5: Scientific production by year**

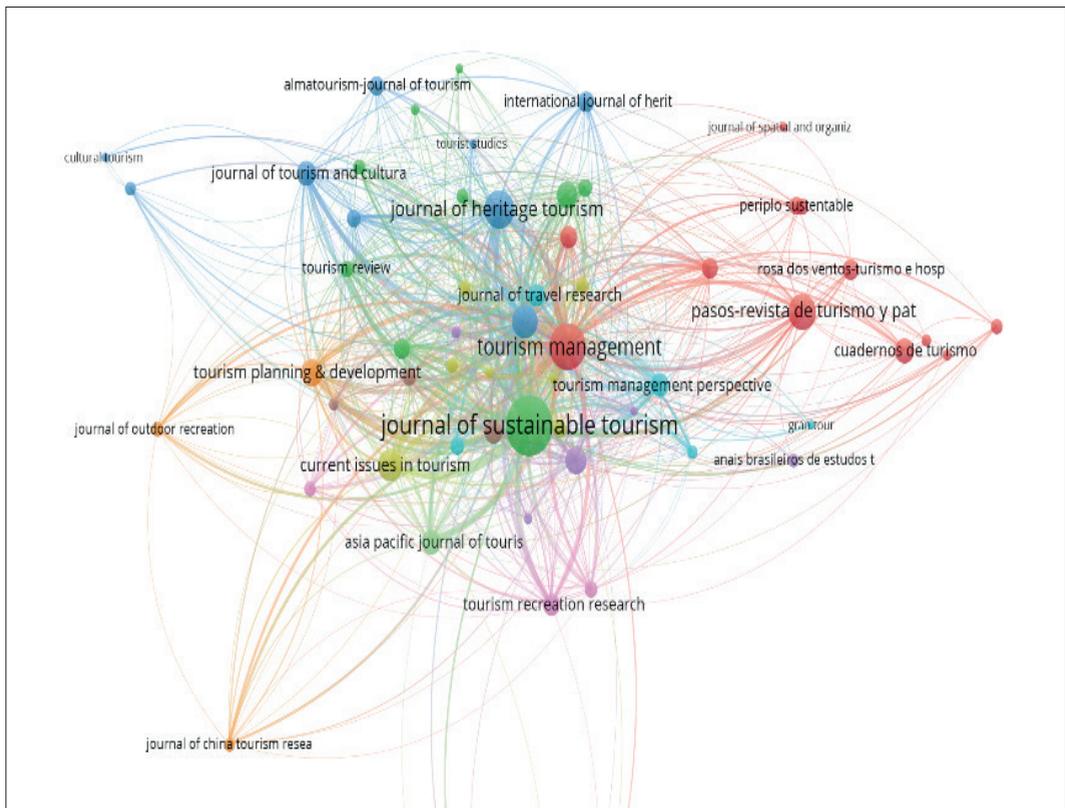


**Source:** Own elaboration based on data obtained from Web of Science.

As shown in the figure above, the increase in scientific production from 2005 onwards is constant and increases progressively as we approach 2020. From 2016 onwards, the scientific production related to the subject is much higher.

Continuing with the research, and to deepen our study, we searched for journals that refer to the terms studied in a time horizon from 2015 to 2020. According to the data obtained, it becomes clear that 58 journals referring to terms related to cultural tourism

were found by applying the search criteria. The Journal of Sustainable Tourism has the highest number of publications, 573, followed by Tourism Management with a total of 336 publications, as can be seen in Figure 6

**Figure 6: Most referenced journals (2015-2020)**

**Source:** Own elaboration using VOSviewer, based on WoS data

The graph above shows the different interrelated journals among themselves since their articles deal with the subject matter of our research. Likewise, we will refer to different groupings that we will identify as clusters to analyse this graph. We consider it a valuable tool to analyse the degree of relationship between the journals analysed. In total, we find 11 different ones.

Thus we can highlight: In yellow colour in Cluster 1, we find seven groups of journals with their publications. Among them, we highlight Current Issues in Tourism with 158 documents and 45 connections, in purple Cluster 2, where five groups appear. We highlight the journal Anais Brasileiros de Estudo. In turquoise colour, Cluster 3 is observed, with five groups. We can mention the journals Tourism Management Perspective 43 connections and 92 documents. Grand Tour, Journal of Travel Research 44 links. In orange Cluster 4, with three groups. It stands out Journal of China Tourism, Journal of Outdoor Recreation. In brown colour Cluster 5, also presents three groups highlighting the journal Tourism Planning and Development. Cluster 6 appears in pink, where the citations of the journal Tourism Recreation Research stand out. In light orange within cluster 7, Zeitschrift fur Tourismuswissenschaft can be highlighted with 21 documents and nine connections. And finally, in light green, cluster 8, where Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research is positioned with 100 papers and 42 references.

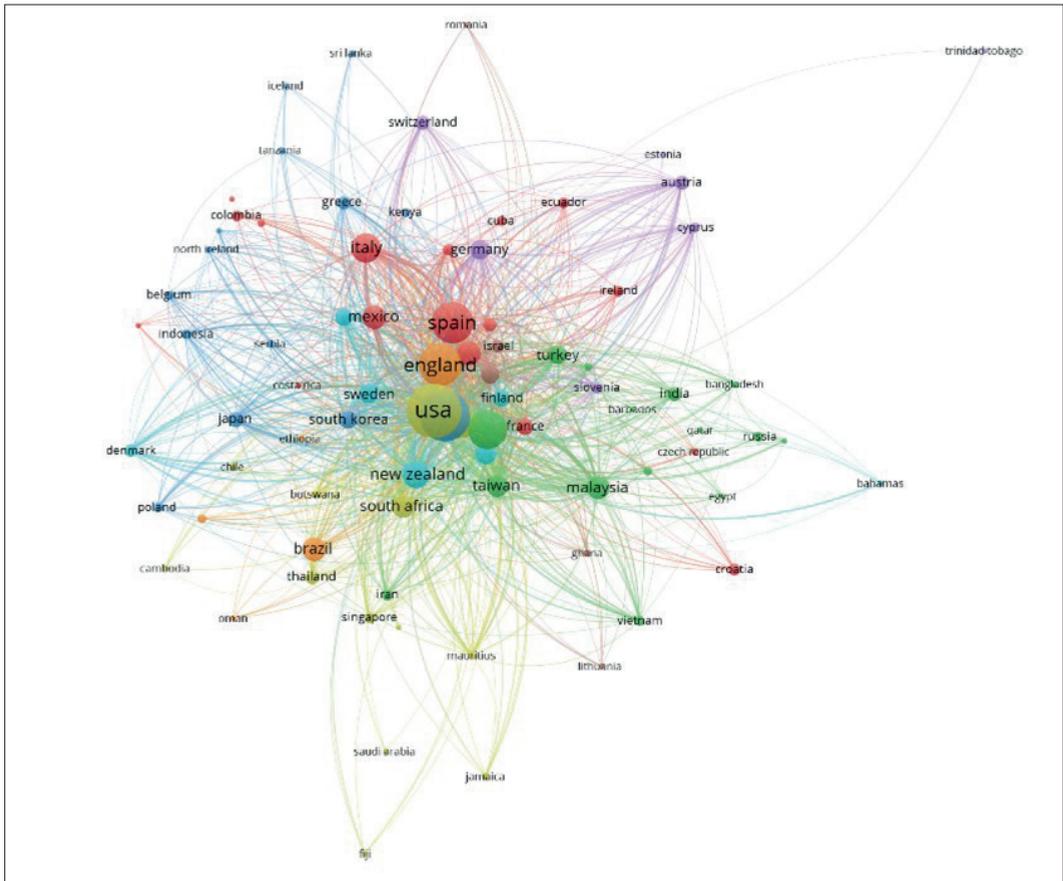
Next, we will analyze in more detail the rest of the most outstanding journals to see their impact on the rest, according to the number of times that articles referring to the line of research have been cited (Cluster 9, 10 and 11). To do so, we will analyze the interrelated journals because their articles deal with tourism and culture.

Figure 7 shows the set of journals with similar characteristics due to their publications and the connections established in them.







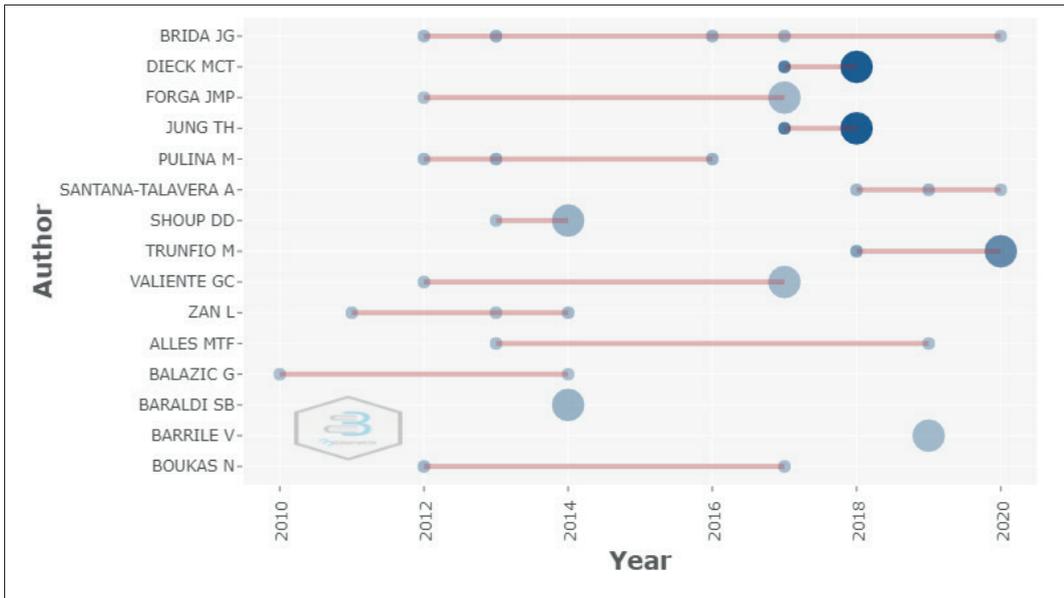
**Figure 10. Countries where most publications on Cultural Tourism are published**

**Source:** Own elaboration using VOSviewer, based on WoS data.

The above graph shows the interconnections established in the same, due to the citations found between the articles published in this subject of our research. If we focus on the different countries to develop the most related groups, we can distinguish 8 clusters as shown in the graph above.

Cluster 1 (shown in red in the graph), where 17 countries stand out, such as Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Ireland, Italy (68 connections), Jordan, Mexico, Portugal (70 connections), Spain (77 connections), Venezuela, Wales. In cluster 2 (green colour). There are 15 countries, such as Bangladesh, Barbados, Egypt, India, Iran, Malaysia (66 connections), Nigeria, Pakistan, People's Republic of China (80 connections), Qatar, Russia, Taiwan, Turkey (60 connections), U. Arb Emirates, Vietnam.

We can see that cluster 3 (blue) includes 14 countries. Australia stands out with 82 connections, followed by Belgium, Greece and Iceland. Cluster 4 (yellow) is concentrated in 13 countries, including Botswana, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Fiji, Jamaica, Mauritius, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand. However, the relationship is accentuated in the USA with 81 connections. Cluster 5 (purple colour) shows seven countries, where Germany has the highest number of connections, 58. Groups 6 (turquoise colour) and 7 (orange colour) have very neutral indicators. New Zealand (74 connections) and England (80 connections) stand out, respectively. Finally, Cluster 8 (brown) shows five countries, Ghana, Israel, Lithuania, Romania and Scotland, with 66 connections. Next we will analyze (Figure 11) the authors who base their publications on sustainable tourism and cultural tourism as the subject of study. We have found 211 authors who publish on this subject.

**Figure 11. Authors that deal with Cultural Tourism**

Source: Prepared by the authors based on Bibliometrix.

The figure shows the different authors between 2010 and 2020. A total of 15 authors appear. In 2014, Shoup DD and Baraldi SB stood out. In 2017 Forga JMP and Jung TH. And in 2020, Trunfio M. The author who maintained his scientific production for a more extended period, from 2012 to 2020, is Brida J.G., with a total of 5 papers.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Discussion of the first phase

In this study, a mapping of “sustainable tourism and cultural tourism” is carried out, applying bibliometric techniques. Some of the main ideas extracted from this field of study are the following:

First, we show that in this field emerged the article “The Cultural Construction of Sustainable Tourism (Hughes, G. 1995)” coinciding with the establishment by the WTO in the Lanzarote charter of the definition of sustainable tourism. The most repeated keywords among the different publications are, among others, the following: Tourism, heritage, authenticity, impact, sustainable tourism, sustainability, sustainable development, perception, attitude, administration, ecotourism and conservation, as can be seen in graph Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4.

This field had evolved rapidly, especially between the years 2014 to 2019, when the most critical data was obtained, and 287 articles with interconnections between them were found. As can be seen in the previous section, there are many articles published in different journals; between the years 1995 and 2020, 58 were found, and of all of them, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* stands out with a total of 573 publications and in second place the journal *Tourism Management* with 336 (graph 6., epigraph 3). The terms sustainable tourism, cultural tourism and sustainable development are the subject of our research and are treated in articles in various journals, as we have shown in this study, among which stands out; *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, (graph 9, section 3) as can be seen in graphs 6, 7, 8, 9, section 3.

### 4.2. Discussion 2nd Phase

Given that the relations of association between tourism and culture are confirmed, if we analyze the following graphs, we see how the scientific activity related to the terminology addressed in this article is when they acquire, in recent years, a more significant development parallel to the treatment

of the conceptualization of cultural tourism and its relationship with sustainability. Among the authors, we have found more than 200 who publish on the subject and have made significant contributions to this evolution; we highlight JG Brida, MTF Alles, among others (Figure 11, section 3). In the part corresponding to the citations made by the different authors, there are 118,338 between all the articles. It is from 2005 onwards that a more significant number of pieces is shown. Concerning the countries (Figure 10) where most publications on the subject have been obtained, we highlight the United States, Australia, England, Spain, and China's People's Republic.

Therefore, at this point, we can affirm that the intersection between tourism and culture has been widely analyzed and discussed in this work from different perspectives. The natural evolution of both fields has led to their current interconnection, creating a symbiosis between concepts that act as a fundamental lever to promote the recent transformation of the tourism sector based on a more diversified model. Aware of this, we have identified trends in scientific publications on the treatment of both topics together, detecting the main lines of research, their evolution and importance in terms of volume and quality of scientific production proposed in our objectives. Finally, we can say that this is a field of study with great potential for continued growth. There is a progressive increase in research topics throughout the stages (initial, between 1995 and 2009; development from 2010 to 2014; and, expansive, from 2015 to 2020). As a result of comparing these three stages, slow development of some problems (such as poor destination planning) can be seen, and new problems arise (such as accessibility).

## 5. Conclusions

Due to the research process developed, having approached the relationship between tourism and culture, both from a bibliometric and a conceptual analysis perspective, we now discuss the proposed topics and present the main conclusions of our work, answering the research questions posed introduction.

Regarding the first question about which terminology is most frequently mentioned in the literature when tourism and culture are related, it is closely associated with the primary objective of this work, which is to know how the terms tourism and culture have been treated throughout history. In this study, the words considered key to cultural tourism was from 2015-2020. The most used were: cultural heritage, tourism, cultural tourism, museum, heritage and they are collected in graph 1. Subsequently, it is specified between the years 2014 to 2017 for being where they were most repeated, and 287 articles have been found, and they have been regrouped in 5 different clusters due to their interconnection. Figure 2 shows all the interrelationships established between the keywords.

If we analyze the volume of scientific production from 2005 onwards, we observe that it progressively increases in the years studied. The years 2017 and 2019 are when the scientific production related to this subject is higher (graph 5).

When we ask ourselves in the second question, what sociocultural elements related to sustainable tourism are studied, we observe that throughout the 20th century, there has been a change of mentality in society, to such an extent that the world of culture goes from denigrating the concept of tourism to begin to consider it, as an opportunity to be able to develop and conserve cultural heritage (Piñeiro-Naval, Igartua and Rodríguez de Dios, 2018, p.2). We can add that well-planned tourism based on sustainability parameters does not have to produce adverse effects on the territory, as is becoming increasingly evident and more substantiated by the scientific literature. (Fernandez, 2015).

At the end of the 20th century, the new conceptualization of tourism increasingly relates tourism and sustainability. Likewise, tourism is presented as a heritage recovery activity and as an economic dynamizer, which serves, in turn, to fix the rural population, mainly, to the territory. Therefore, in the 21st century, the term cultural tourism is closely related to the recovery of heritage, considered as both the tangible and intangible representation of the history of the society that built it and of which it is now part (Carrizo, M.V. 2020). To this, we must add that for tourists to respect the heritage of a given place, the best way to achieve this is to involve them with a singularized tourist experience in the destination to feel identified with the site.

This article highlights the scientific interest of this topic. To do so, we have analyzed journals, articles and authors who have studied these terms. The evolution of tourism and culture has led to their interconnection, addressing sustainability as a cross-cutting theme. Figure 9 in section 3 shows the journals with similar characteristics due to their publications and the connections established between sustainable tourism and sustainable development. We can highlight the Journal of Heritage Tourism with 231 documents and 1,664 citations through 46 relationships with other journals. Due to

these publications, the interest in this topic is evidenced by the number of authors who deal with this subject and the countries where it is published.

Future research should include sustainability as a fundamental term of analysis

Finally, we ask ourselves which main models currently present the greatest boom in the relationship between “culture and tourism activity”. This third research question is linked to the objective of knowing the current evolutionary stage of the duality between tourism and culture, since, throughout history, there have been terms that have remained with their vocabulary over time, such as cultural heritage or dark tourism, although as usual losing relative weight concerning newer terms. While other words have evolved into different terminology, we speak, for example of cultural heritage tourism for cultural heritage or tourism that has been diluted in other more precise terms such as a museum, sustainable tourism or cultural and heritage tourism, as can be seen in Figure 3 of section 3.

Finally, the analysis carried out in this review allows us to identify some lines of future research. This exploratory study on cultural tourism and sustainability can be developed from more specific analyses. Future research should continue to explore the relationship between cultural tourism activity and heritage development, the planning and participation of the community where this activity takes place, and the perceptions and satisfaction obtained by the tourist who carries out this tourist activity. This opens a new line of research in analysing rural communities where tourism based on cultural resources is developed, arising from popular tradition and cultural heritage. In addition, it would be of great academic interest to quantify the different impacts (social, economic, environmental) of cultural tourism policies, which are practically non-existent. We also believe that the scientific community can contribute its knowledge to achieve the SDGs by developing sustainable models in cultural tourism.

Despite the contributions of this work, several limitations should be mentioned. On the one hand, only publications indexed in WoS were considered. For future research, these results are recommended to be compared with those of other databases such as Scopus or Google Scholar (Montero-Díaz, J. et al.). It is also recommended to broaden the search terms with the dimensions of sustainability: social, economic and environmental (Lozano, R.), as well as to add concepts related to sustainable tourism, such as rural tourism, agrotourism, blue tourism, etc. (Niñerola, Sánchez-Rebull, & Hernández-Lara, 2019).

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