

KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURE OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM: A BIBLIOMETRIC AND NETWORK ANALYSIS

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Abstract (English): This study maps the knowledge structure of Sustainable Community Based Tourism (SCBT) through a bibliometric and network analysis using data extracted from the Scopus database on 14 October 2025. The search string “Sustainability” AND “Community Based Tourism” was applied to identify relevant publications. Biblioshiny (R-Studio) was employed to examine publication trends, collaborative networks, and thematic structures within the field. The findings reveal a steady expansion of SCBT research, particularly after 2015, with strong contributions from Asia and increasing interdisciplinary integration. Co authorship and institutional network analyses indicate growing collaboration, though geographical imbalances remain evident. Keyword cluster mapping highlights dominant themes such as community participation, environmental conservation, governance, and digital transformation. The analysis also exposes persistent gaps, including limited cross regional perspectives and insufficient integration of sustainability, technology, and community empowerment into unified frameworks. This study offers a structured overview of the intellectual landscape of SCBT and provides recommendations to guide future research directions.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism; Community Based Tourism; Bibliometric Analysis; Network Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable community based tourism (CBT) has increasingly been recognized as a critical strategy for advancing tourism models that are environmentally responsible, socially equitable, and economically inclusive. In the context of growing global concern over climate change Bergquist & Warshaw, (2019), cultural commodification MBAIWA, (2011), and ecological degradation Raftopoulos, (2020), scholars and policymakers have emphasized the importance of placing local communities at the forefront of tourism development. CBT embodies this paradigm shift by promoting community ownership, participatory governance, and equitable benefit sharing. Beyond its contribution to local economic development, CBT supports the preservation of cultural heritage, strengthens social cohesion, and safeguards natural resources, thereby aligning closely with broader sustainability and development agendas ((Isabelle Aquino, 2025) (Suryani, Peranginangin, et al 2020)).

As the relevance of CBT continues to expand, academic interest in its sustainability dimensions has grown rapidly. A broad range of studies has examined CBT through multiple lenses, including governance mechanisms Dangi & Petrick, (2021), community empowerment Nguyen, D'Hauteserre, & Serrao-Neumann, (2022), ecological stewardship, destination resilience Suriyankietkaew, Kittayaruangroj, Thinthan, & Lumlongrut, (2025), market integration, and socio economic transformation (Ganaie & Ganaie, 2025). However, despite this increasing volume of research, the

scientific discourse on sustainable CBT remains fragmented across disciplines, regions, and methodological approaches (Peranginangin, 2025). This fragmentation presents challenges in understanding how the field has evolved, what theoretical foundations structure current debates, and where persistent knowledge gaps remain. The proliferation of diverse research themes further underscores the need for a structured, evidence based synthesis of the field's intellectual landscape.

Bibliometric analysis offers a systematic and rigorous means of mapping this expanding body of knowledge by examining publication patterns, citation structures, and thematic clusters (Mansyur, 2024). Recent bibliometric studies have provided valuable insights into certain aspects of CBT and sustainable tourism (Álvarez-García et al., 2018). Nevertheless, these investigations often treat CBT and sustainability as separate domains or focus on narrow thematic areas, leaving limited understanding of how sustainability is conceptually embedded within CBT as an integrated knowledge structure. Moreover, the increasing incorporation of cross disciplinary perspectives—ranging from digital transformation and social innovation to environmental science and community resilience—has not been comprehensively captured within existing reviews. The lack of a unified, network based overview of sustainable CBT indicates a critical gap in the literature.

In response to these limitations, the present study employs a bibliometric and network analysis to examine the

knowledge structure of sustainable community based tourism. By analyzing publication growth, geographical distribution, collaboration networks, and thematic evolutions, this study aims to provide a systematic mapping of how sustainable CBT has developed as a scholarly domain. In doing so, it identifies core intellectual foundations, emerging research frontiers, and structural gaps that require further academic attention. Therefore, it will help to understand the existing body of knowledge but also establishes a conceptual platform to guide future research agendas and inform policymaking in sustainable tourism development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on sustainability and community-based tourism (CBT) has developed into a substantial scholarly domain that highlights the interdependence between community empowerment, environmental stewardship, and socio economic resilience. Early conceptualizations of CBT emphasized the centrality of local participation and the need for tourism development models that transfer authority, knowledge, and benefits directly to host communities.

Studies have consistently shown that when communities exercise meaningful decision-making power, tourism becomes more responsive to local needs and better aligned with cultural values, heritage preservation, and ecological protection (Bahçelerli & Sucuoğlu, 2025; Revila & Moure, 2020). The promotion of community agency is further linked to equitable benefit-sharing, higher levels of social

cohesion, and the strengthening of local capacities for long-term development (Peranginangin, 2019) (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018; Pascoli, 2021). At the same time, CBT is portrayed as a mechanism for enhancing household income Bahçelerli & Sucuoğlu, (2025), reducing vulnerability T. Van Tuyen et al., (2023), and generating alternative livelihoods Juma & Khademi-Vidra, (2019), particularly in rural and marginalized regions where tourism can act as a catalyst for poverty alleviation and sustainable economic diversification (Diaconescu et al., 2016; Shikida et al., 2010).

Alongside its socio-economic advantages, sustainability principles are deeply embedded in CBT scholarship through discussions on environmental conservation and ecological resilience. Many studies demonstrate that CBT initiatives often coincide with biodiversity protection, ecosystem rehabilitation, and the promotion of environmentally responsible practices, especially in regions facing ecological degradation or climate-related pressures (Diaconescu et al., 2016; Tang, 2016; T. Van Tuyen et al., 2023). Cultural preservation is another recurring theme, with research showing how CBT encourages the revitalization of traditional practices, crafts, and narratives, fostering cultural pride while creating authentic experiences that benefit both visitors and residents (Islam et al., 2024; Sarabia-Molina et al., 2022). Despite these benefits, the literature also highlights persistent challenges. Weak inter-organizational coordination, inconsistent government support, conflicts of

interest among stakeholders, and unequal power relations are recurrent obstacles that can compromise sustainability outcomes and undermine trust within communities (Manaf et al., 2018; Sosa Tinoco et al., 2021). These tensions illustrate the fragility of CBT initiatives when governance frameworks fail to secure community rights, distribute benefits fairly, or establish long-term institutional support.

Several studies have been adopting the bibliometric analysis to map its intellectual evolution and identify research gaps. Studies employing bibliometric methods reveal steady growth in publications on sustainable CBT, especially after 2015, with notable surges in interest across Asia, Latin America, and Africa (Cordova-Buiza et al., 2025; Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023; Q. D. Tuyen et al., 2025). Using tools such as VOSviewer, Biblioshiny, and RStudio, these analyses document the clustering of research around themes such as community participation (Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023), sustainability frameworks, social entrepreneurship, and stakeholder governance (de Carvalho et al., 2024; Pardosi et al., 2024; Q. D. Tuyen et al., 2025). They also show strong geographical concentration in East Asia—particularly China—while highlighting underrepresentation in regions like Eastern Europe and Indigenous North America (Q. D. Tuyen et al., 2025). Beyond thematic mapping, bibliometric studies reveal a paradigm shift toward interdisciplinary approaches that integrate sustainability science, digital transformation, social innovation,

and community resilience (Forero et al., 2025; Hernández Valdés et al., 2025; Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023). Emerging discussions around marketing, digital platforms, and technology uptake reflect a broader transition toward data-driven and market-responsive CBT models, with implications for competitiveness, rural development, and green innovation (Forero et al., 2025; Yuliawan et al., 2025).

Despite the expanding literature, bibliometric work also exposes several unresolved gaps that justify the novelty of the present study. Existing analyses tend to focus narrowly on community-based tourism or sustainable tourism as separate domains, leaving limited understanding of how the two converge as a unified knowledge structure. Only a few studies examine sustainability within CBT through comprehensive network analyses, and even fewer assess the structural evolution of concepts, author networks, or thematic clusters over time.

Therefore, this study trying to uncover the following objectives:

1. How has the volume and geographical distribution of publications on Sustainable Community-Based Tourism evolved over time?
2. What collaborative patterns exist among authors, institutions, and countries in the development of Sustainable Community-Based Tourism knowledge?
3. What are the dominant

themes, topics, and keyword clusters that shape the intellectual structure of Sustainable Community-Based Tourism research?

4. What recommendation and opportunities for future studies on Sustainable Community-Based Tourism?

METODE PENELITIAN

This study adopts a bibliometric and network-analysis approach to map the knowledge structure of research on Sustainable Community-Based Tourism (SCBT). Bibliometrics is selected because it enables a systematic and quantitative assessment of scholarly output, allowing researchers to trace publication dynamics, intellectual patterns, and thematic evolutions within a specific field (Donthu et al., 2022). Scopus is used as the primary data source due to its broad disciplinary coverage, rigorous indexing standards, and suitability for citation-based analysis, which makes it an authoritative database for examining global research developments (Mansyur, 2024).

Data extraction was conducted on 14 October 2025 using a targeted search string designed to identify publications explicitly addressing the intersection of sustainability and community-based tourism. The search query applied was: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Sustainability" AND "Community Based Tourism"). This formulation ensures that only documents containing both core concepts in their titles, abstracts,

or keywords are included. Restrictions on document type only for Article to make sure only peer reviewed article to analysed. Meanwhile no restriction for year of publication, or subject area were imposed in order to capture the full evolution of academic discourse surrounding SCBT.

Following data retrieval, the dataset was exported in BibTeX and CSV formats for processing in R-Studio, using the Biblioshiny interface from the bibliometrix package. Biblioshiny is employed due to its capacity to perform comprehensive bibliometric procedures while offering an interactive environment for analysis and visualization (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Several analytical stages were undertaken. First, descriptive bibliometrics were applied to examine publication growth, influential sources, prolific authors, and geographic distribution. This step provides an overview of how SCBT research has developed over time and identifies leading contributors within the field.

Thematic analysis and network analysis were conducted to uncover the conceptual landscape of SCBT scholarship. Keyword co-occurrence analysis was used to identify dominant research themes, emerging topics, and the structure of conceptual linkages across studies. Co-authorship and institutional collaboration networks were also mapped to reveal patterns of scholarly cooperation and the formation of research clusters within the global academic community (Rachman et al., 2023). These network visualizations help illustrate the intellectual connectivity and collaborative tendencies that

shape knowledge production in SCBT (van Eck & Waltman, 2014).

All bibliometric indicators and network maps were interpreted to construct a comprehensive understanding of the field's developmental trajectory, thematic hotspots, and potential directions for future research. Through this methodological design, the study provides a systematic and replicable approach for investigating the evolution, structure, and collaborative patterns of research on Sustainable Community-Based Tourism.

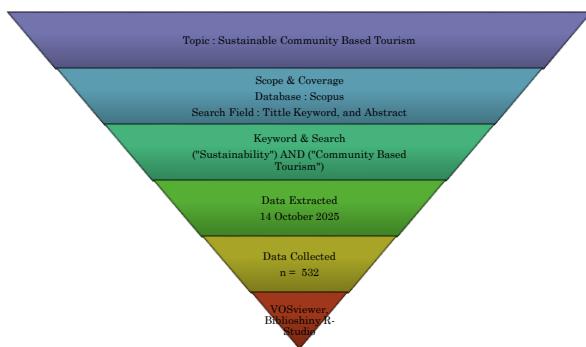


Figure 1. Search Strategy

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Main Information of Data

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	2006:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	241
Documents	532
Annual Growth Rate %	14.89
Document Average Age	5.73
Average citations per doc	28.33
References	4004
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	798
Author's Keywords (DE)	1501
AUTHORS	
Authors	1336
Authors of single-authored docs	74

AUTHORS COLLABORATION

Single-authored docs	79
Co-Authors per Doc	2.89
International co-authorships %	29.51
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	532

(Source: Scopus Database)

Table above presents the general characteristics of the documents analysed in this study. The search covering the period 2006–2024 identified a total of 532 publications related to sustainability and community-based tourism (CBT) in the Scopus database. All documents retrieved were classified as articles, indicating that scholarly discussions in this field are predominantly disseminated through peer-reviewed journal outlets rather than conference papers, reviews, or book chapters.

Overall, the research landscape demonstrates a consistent expansion over time, reflected in an annual growth rate of 14.89%. This upward trend suggests that sustainability-oriented CBT has become a progressively important topic in academic discourse, particularly as communities and policymakers increasingly emphasise environmentally and socially responsible tourism models. The relatively young average document age (5.73 years) further indicates that this topic is emerging and continues to attract attention from a wide range of scholars.

In terms of academic impact, the dataset recorded an average of 28.33 citations per document, with 4,004 total references cited across the corpus. This suggests that research in sustainable CBT not only grows in volume but also

gains substantial recognition within the broader sustainability and tourism literature.

Conceptually, the field shows considerable thematic diversity. The dataset contains 798 Keywords Plus and 1,501 authors' keywords, signalling a broad and evolving knowledge structure. These keywords highlight recurring themes such as sustainable tourism development, community empowerment, ecotourism, local participation, and socio-environmental resilience.

From the authorship perspective, the field is supported by contributions from 1,336 authors, with 79 single-authored documents and 74 authors producing single-author works. The average of 2.89 co-authors per document illustrates that collaboration is a dominant pattern in this domain. Moreover, 29.51% of publications involve international co-authorship, reflecting strong global interest and cross-country collaboration in advancing sustainability-oriented community tourism research.

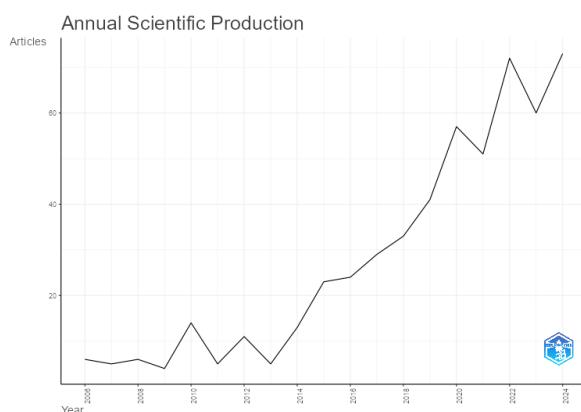


Figure 2. Annual Scientific Production

(Source: Biblioshiny R-Studio)

Figure 2 illustrates the annual scientific production of research on sustainability and community-based tourism from 2006 to 2024.

The publication trend shows a clear and consistent upward trajectory, although growth occurred at varying intensities over the years.

In the early period (2006–2010), the field was still developing, with publication numbers fluctuating between 4 and 14 articles per year. A notable increase occurred in 2010, which recorded 14 articles, indicating the initial expansion of scholarly interest in linking community-based tourism with sustainability considerations.

Between 2011 and 2014, publication activity remained relatively stable, ranging from 5 to 13 articles per year, reflecting a slow but steady maturation of the field. A significant shift emerged starting in 2015, where the number of articles doubled to 23, followed by continuous growth in subsequent years. The period 2015–2020 marked a rapid acceleration, with publications rising from 23 to 57 articles, making it the most substantial growth phase. This surge aligns with global movements toward sustainable development goals (SDGs) and increasing scholarly attention to community resilience and participatory tourism models.

In 2021, the number slightly declined to 51 articles, possibly influenced by disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the field quickly recovered in 2022, reaching 72 articles, the highest volume recorded up to that point. Although the number of publications dipped to 60 articles in 2023, production climbed again in 2024, achieving 73 articles, the peak of the entire 19-year dataset.

Country Scientific Production

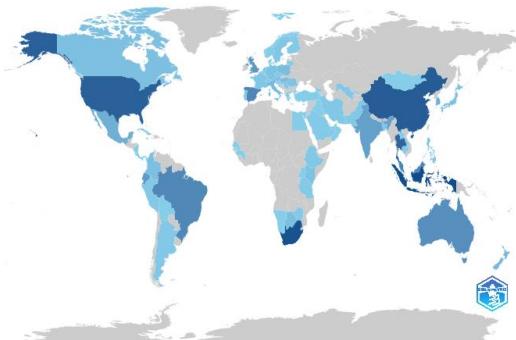


Figure 3. Publication Distribution by Country
(Source: Biblioshiny R-Studio)

The analysis shows that Indonesia is the leading contributor with 101 publications, indicating its strong academic focus and rich practical context in sustainable community-based tourism. Close behind are South Africa (97) and China (88), reflecting their growing engagement with sustainability and community-oriented tourism development.

Several other countries also make significant contributions, including the USA (85), Thailand (81), Malaysia (55), Spain (54), and Brazil (53). These countries represent diverse tourism settings but share common interests in sustainable destination management and community participation.

High-income countries such as Australia (47) and the UK (42) remain influential, often contributing through theoretical development and international collaborations.

Meanwhile, a long list of countries with lower output (fewer than 10 publications) shows expanding global participation, although with limited intensity. This indicates that sustainable community-based tourism is a widely relevant topic, even if

research concentration remains strongest in Asia, Africa, and selected Western nations.

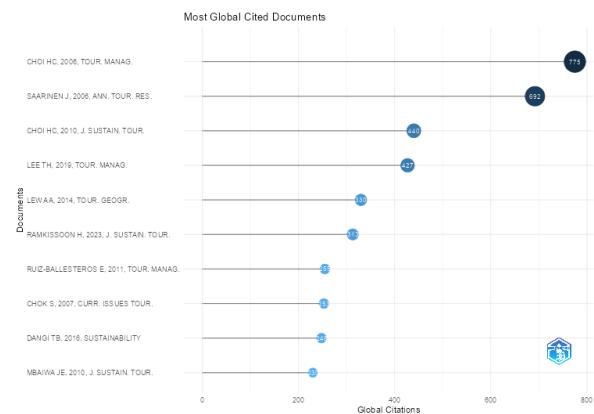


Figure 4. Top 10 Most Cited Documents
(Source: Scopus Database)

The top 10 most cited articles reveal several foundational works that shape the knowledge structure of sustainability and community-based tourism. The most influential paper is Choi & Sirakaya (2006) with 775 citations, establishing early conceptual frameworks for sustainable tourism indicators. Saarinen (2006) follows closely with 692 citations, contributing critical perspectives on sustainability discourses and community involvement.

Several papers demonstrate both high total citations and strong annual citation impact. Notably, Lee (2019) stands out with 427 citations and the highest citation rate (61 citations/year), indicating its rapid and significant influence on contemporary sustainable tourism research. Similarly, Ramkisson (2023) shows exceptionally strong traction despite its recent publication, with 104 citations/year, suggesting it is shaping current debates on community well-being and sustainability.

Other influential contributions include Lew (2014) and Choi (2010), both providing widely used theoretical and methodological insights. Papers by Ruiz-Ballesteros (2011), Chok (2007), Dangi & Jamal (2016), and Mbaiwa (2010) also hold substantial influence by advancing discussions on community empowerment, critical tourism perspectives, and sustainable development practices.

Most Productive Author and Collaborative Networks in Community Based Tourism

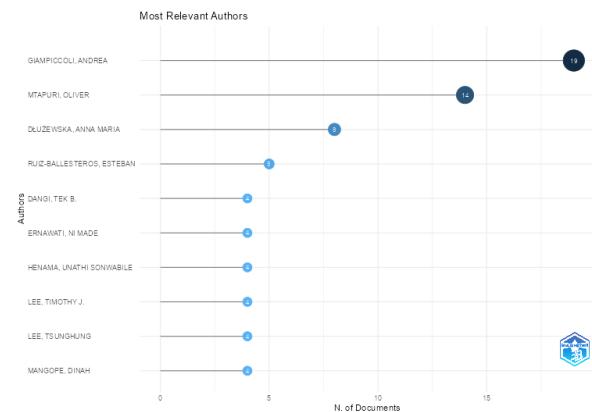


Figure 5. Most Productive Author
(Source: Biblioshiny R-Studio)

The analysis of the most relevant authors shows a clear concentration of scholarly influence within the field of sustainability and community-based tourism. Andrea Giampiccoli emerges as the most prolific contributor, with 19 publications and a fractionalized score of 8.08, indicating not only high productivity but also a substantial level of direct authorship contribution across collaborative works. His dominance aligns with his longstanding research focus on community-based tourism (CBT),

empowerment, and pro-poor tourism, making him a central intellectual anchor in this research domain.

Following closely is Oliver Mtapuri, who has produced 14 articles with a fractionalized contribution of 6.08. Mtapuri's strong presence reflects his frequent collaboration with Giampiccoli, together forming a highly influential author dyad whose works often shape contemporary debates on community empowerment and sustainable development within tourism contexts.

The next tier consists of authors who demonstrate substantial thematic engagement though with comparatively fewer outputs. Anna Maria Dlużewska, for example, has published 8 articles, with a fractionalized score of 2.58, suggesting frequent co-authorship and collaborative research structures. Meanwhile, Esteban Ruiz-Ballesteros, with 5 publications and a notably high fractionalized contribution of 4, appears to take on more primary authorship roles within his collaborations, signaling strong intellectual ownership and possibly distinctive theoretical contributions, particularly on community dynamics and socio-ecological systems.

Other authors such as Tek B. Dangi, Ni Made Ernawati, Unathi Sonwabile Henama, Timothy J. Lee, Tsung-Hung Lee, and Dinah Mangope each contribute four publications, though their fractionalized scores vary significantly. This variation highlights differences in collaboration patterns—some authors consistently assume leading roles in their papers, while

others work predominantly in large co-authorship groups.

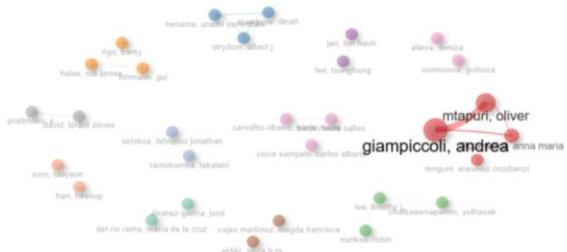


Figure 6. Collaboration Network
(Source: Biblioshiny R-Studio)

The collaboration network reveals a highly fragmented structure, characterized by multiple small clusters with limited interconnectivity. Most nodes have zero betweenness centrality, indicating that the majority of authors do not function as bridges between subgroups, and that the field is dominated by parallel, localized research teams rather than a cohesive global network.

A notable exception is Timothy J. Lee, who displays the only non-zero betweenness value (1.0). This positions him as a rare structural broker who links otherwise disconnected clusters. His elevated PageRank (0.0486 the highest in the network) further highlights his influence and visibility within the collaborative structure. This combination suggests that Lee occupies a strategically central role, enabling knowledge flow across otherwise siloed researchers.

Cluster 1, consisting of leading authors such as Giampiccoli, Mtapuri, and Dłużewska, shows high closeness values (0.3333) but zero betweenness. This indicates that although this cluster forms a dense and internally cohesive group likely the intellectual "core" it remains peripherally connected to the rest of the

network. Their structural constraint may limit broader cross-cluster dissemination despite their high research productivity.

Clusters 4 through 12 consist of pairs or small groups with perfect closeness (1.0), suggesting tight dyadic or triadic collaborations that operate in isolation. These micro clusters signal emerging but geographically or thematically bounded research communities, possibly representing national or institution-based groups that have not yet integrated into the mainstream collaboration network.

Key Research Topics and Themes in Sustainability and Community Based Tourism



Figure 7. Wordcloud Visualization
(Source: Biblioshiny R-Studio)

The word cloud reveals several dominant themes that shape the research landscape of sustainability and community-based tourism. The most frequent terms—"community-based tourism" (213), "sustainability" (129), "ecotourism" (111), "tourism development" (103), "sustainable development" (96), and "sustainable tourism" (96)—indicate that scholarly attention consistently centers on the intersection between community participation and sustainability objectives. These keywords reflect a strong theoretical grounding in sustainable development.

paradigms and their practical applications within tourism contexts.

Beyond the core sustainability terms, several clusters emerge. The frequent appearance of concepts such as "community development," "local participation," "empowerment," "community participation," "leadership," and "social capital" highlights the centrality of community engagement and capacity-building. These terms suggest that research in this domain is not only concerned with environmental sustainability but also deeply rooted in social sustainability and local governance.

A second cluster relates to rural and nature-based tourism, represented by keywords such as "rural tourism," "rural area," "conservation," "biodiversity," "protected areas," and "indigenous population." This pattern reinforces the tendency for sustainable CBT initiatives to be concentrated in rural and ecologically sensitive regions, where community involvement is tied closely to conservation goals and livelihood diversification.

Another notable theme involves economic and social outcomes, captured by terms such as "livelihood," "poverty alleviation," "quality of life," and "economic development." These keywords indicate that many studies evaluate CBT through its potential to enhance community welfare, reduce poverty, and improve socio-economic resilience.

Spatially, country names such as Indonesia, China, Ecuador, and Thailand appear with relatively high frequency, confirming that much of the empirical research is

situated in developing-country contexts where community-based tourism plays an important role in sustainable development strategies.

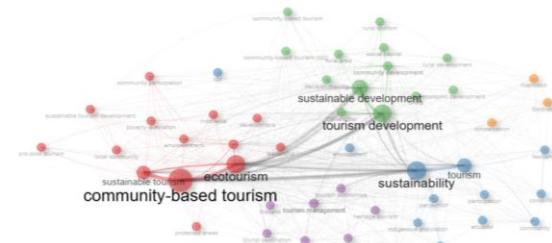


Figure 8. Network Visualization
(Source: VOSviewer)

The keyword cluster network reveals a structured intellectual landscape in the field of sustainability and community based tourism, where several densely interconnected thematic clusters shape the evolution of the research domain. At the core of the network lies the dominant cluster centered on "community based tourism," which functions as the conceptual anchor linking discussions on sustainability, empowerment, and local development. This centrality indicates that much of the scholarly discourse positions CBT as both a strategy and a framework for achieving sustainable outcomes, especially within rural and community dependent destinations.

Closely surrounding the main cluster is a strong sustainability oriented network where terms such as "sustainable tourism," "sustainable development," "ecotourism," and "conservation" frequently co-occur. Their proximity to CBT-related concepts suggests that sustainability is not treated merely as an external condition but as an inherent principle embedded within the

design, governance, and long-term viability of CBT initiatives. The frequent linkage with “environment,” “biodiversity,” and “protected areas” shows that the ecological dimension is an integral component of how researchers conceptualize community-driven tourism models.

Another prominent thematic cluster revolves around participation, empowerment, and governance. Keywords such as “local participation,” “community participation,” “empowerment,” “decision making,” and “leadership” form a dense sub-network, highlighting the social processes that underpin successful CBT implementation. This cluster indicates that scholars consistently view community engagement as the mechanism that transforms tourism from an extractive economic activity into a vehicle for community resilience, social capital building, and poverty alleviation. The strong presence of terms like “livelihood,” “quality of life,” and “economic development” further illustrates how tourism is framed as part of broader community welfare strategies.

Geographical clusters also emerge distinctly in the network. High-frequency country nodes such as “Indonesia,” “China,” “Thailand,” and “Ecuador” suggest that CBT research is heavily concentrated in regions where tourism intersects with rural development, indigenous communities, and conservation-oriented economies. These regional concentrations often connect with keywords such as “rural tourism,” “rural development,” and “indigenous population,” indicating that CBT research frequently explores

tourism as a tool for transforming peripheral or marginalized communities.

A particularly unique insight from the cluster network is the emergence of contemporary themes such as “COVID-19” and “resilience,” which signals a shift toward crisis oriented research. The co-occurrence of these terms with sustainability and community development clusters suggests that scholars are increasingly examining how community-based tourism responds to shocks and uncertainties, positioning resilience as a new conceptual bridge between traditional CBT frameworks and future oriented sustainable development agendas.

Taken together, the keyword cluster network shows that the field is characterized by strong thematic coherence, with community-based tourism consistently positioned at the intersection of sustainability, participation, and local development. The structure of the network highlights both the maturity of CBT as a research area and its evolving diversification into themes of resilience, crisis adaptation, and socio-environmental integration.

Emerging and Declining Trends in Sustainability and Community-Based Tourism

The evolving discussion landscape of sustainability and community-based tourism (CBT) reveals a field undergoing conceptual and practical development.

A central emerging trend concerns the increasing integration of eco-friendly supply

chains and green technological solutions. Scholars show that sustainable tourism initiatives are now more deeply embedded within circular economy principles, waste systems management, and low-carbon technological infrastructures (Akbari et al., 2025). Technologies such as blockchain and digital traceability tools are being deployed to enhance transparency, optimize resource use, and strengthen accountability among tourism stakeholders (Akbari et al., 2025). This shift marks a transition from traditional community-centered initiatives toward more technologically augmented models of environmental stewardship.

Parallel to these technological advancements is a resurgence of interest in community empowerment and participatory governance. A growing body of work positions CBT as a mechanism for strengthening collective agency, particularly in marginalized or rural communities where tourism can act as a catalyst for development and capacity-building (Akbari et al., 2025; Arias et al., 2024). Empirical contributions further underscore the role of CBT in fostering inclusive economic participation, promoting gender empowerment, and preserving cultural heritage (Mohanam & John, 2025; Ngo & Creutz, 2022). This emphasis aligns with regional studies indicating that CBT is gaining prominence in developing-country contexts, where tourism-led growth and heritage conservation are increasingly intertwined (Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023).

Another notable trend is the post-pandemic reconsideration of CBT's function in enhancing socio-ecological resilience. The

COVID-19 crisis prompted a re-evaluation of community vulnerability, diversifying income sources, and strengthening adaptive capacities leading to calls for more resilient, shock-proof CBT models that support global sustainability objectives (Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023). Similarly, nature-based and ecotourism initiatives are experiencing renewed scholarly attention, driven by their perceived ability to bridge conservation goals with community development, as evidenced in the growing literature on ecological tourism in regions such as Northeast India (Kumar, 2024).

Across these developments, the importance of multistakeholder collaboration emerges as a recurrent theme. Research comparing cross-national cases emphasizes that strong coordination among communities, government institutions, NGOs, and private actors is indispensable for successful CBT implementation (Sosa Tinoco et al., 2021). Such collaboration is increasingly seen not as a complementary feature but as a structural requirement for sustainable tourism governance.

In contrast to the previous emerging trends, several declining trends and constraints caution against overly optimistic interpretations of CBT's future. Studies indicate that many community-based programs continue to exhibit excessive dependency on governmental authorities, which can undermine local initiative, stall innovation, and reduce community ownership (Aminudin et al., 2014). This dependency is often exacerbated by declining interest among younger generations, raising

concerns about the intergenerational sustainability of CBT practices (Aminudin et al., 2014).

A further point of contention relates to the negative socio-spatial and environmental impacts associated with poorly managed CBT initiatives. Despite being framed as inherently sustainable, CBT has in some cases contributed to problems such as increased urbanization, land-use conflict, and environmentally harmful settlement patterns that contradict its foundational objectives (Bahçelerli & Sucuoğlu, 2025). Such contradictions highlight the gap between CBT theory and practice. Likewise, evidence from biodiversity conservation initiatives shows mixed outcomes, with some community-based natural resource management programs failing to deliver expected ecological or economic benefits (Mbaiwa & Kolawole, 2013). These shortcomings cast doubt on the assumption that community participation naturally yields positive environmental results.

Concerns persist about the long-term sustainability of CBT initiatives, particularly in relation to maintaining consistent community engagement, ensuring equitable benefit distribution, and mitigating environmental pressures as tourism grows (Mbaiwa & Kolawole, 2013; Sosa Tinoco et al., 2021). These concerns suggest that while CBT remains conceptually aligned with sustainability, its practical durability is far from guaranteed.

In Conclusion, the emerging and declining trends indicate that sustainability and CBT research is moving toward more technologically integrated,

participatory, and resilience-oriented frameworks. At the same time, persistent structural, generational, and ecological challenges signal the need for rethinking how CBT can be implemented and sustained. Future work may benefit from re-examining the assumptions that underlie community participation, integrating adaptive governance models, and developing clearer metrics for evaluating long-term ecological and socio-economic outcomes.

Recommendation for Future Studies in Sustainability and Community-Based Tourism

Future research on Sustainability and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is encouraged to move beyond descriptive analyses and engage more deeply with the structural, technological, and socio-ecological dimensions that shape long-term sustainability outcomes.

A key area requiring further exploration is the post-pandemic resilience of CBT systems. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerabilities of community-dependent tourism economies, and several study encourage to investigate how CBT can rebuild and adapt in ways that strengthen economic stability, promote diversification, and integrate crisis-management principles into local governance structures (Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023). Relatedly, a promising avenue lies in examining how CBT initiatives can strategically align with and meaningfully contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly regarding poverty

alleviation, employment creation, and inclusive economic growth (Jackson, 2025; Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023). While existing studies acknowledge CBT's potential, systematic empirical assessments of its SDG contributions remain limited and warrant more attention.

Another important direction concerns the role of local stakeholder participation and governance mechanisms. Prior work has recognized the centrality of participatory planning to sustainable tourism, yet gaps persist in understanding how power relations, socio-cultural norms, and institutional constraints shape the effectiveness and inclusivity of these governance processes (Bramwell, 2010; Ezzatian, 2025). Future research should critically interrogate the quality not merely the presence of participation, including the influence of public relations strategies, communication practices, and trust-building mechanisms in fostering stronger community agency (Sawir et al., 2024).

Given the rapid evolution of the tourism industry, there is growing urgency to explore how digital transformation and technological integration can support CBT's sustainability goals. Several scholars highlight research opportunities related to digital platforms for destination marketing, blockchain for supply-chain transparency, artificial intelligence for experience personalization, and data-driven systems for environmental monitoring (Lelawatty et al., 2025; Mukherjee et al., 2025; Pardosi et al., 2024). These technologies pose both opportunities and risks, and future studies should assess

their socio-economic implications for rural and marginalized communities that may lack digital access or literacy.

Concerns about the long-term sustainability and resilience of CBT models also point to substantial research gaps. Studies note that CBT projects often struggle over time due to fluctuating community participation, limited managerial capacity, and inconsistent economic benefits (Acharya et al., 2025). More research is needed to develop comprehensive frameworks and longitudinal models that assess how economic resilience, social cohesion, and environmental stewardship evolve within CBT contexts (Jackson, 2025; Lee & Jan, 2019). This includes evaluating how different CBT business models such as rural homestays, agro-tourism networks, or social tourism cooperatives can be optimized to support sustainable livelihoods.

The literature further calls for deeper inquiry into CBT's role in cultural and environmental conservation. While environmental protection and cultural preservation are frequently cited as core objectives, empirical studies show varied outcomes depending on local governance, tourist behavior, and ecological sensitivities (Jackson, 2025; Rumangkit et al., 2025). Future research should analyze the conditions under which CBT meaningfully contributes to biodiversity conservation, and how it can mitigate issues related to seasonality, resident perceptions, and heritage site pressures (Jeon et al., 2016; PAZARI et al., 2025).

There is also growing interest in innovative and context-responsive frameworks for

sustainable tourism governance. Models such as the STESY approach offer potential, yet require further testing, refinement, and cross-cultural validation to assess their applicability in diverse social and environmental contexts (Gruosso et al., 2026). Expanding this line of research could support the development of adaptive planning tools that effectively integrate local traditions, modern technologies, and sustainability principles.

Lastly, cross border and experiential tourism presents another emerging frontier. Opportunities and challenges related to community involvement, infrastructure disparities, and political coordination remain underexplored in regions where cultural heritage transcends national boundaries (PAZARI et al., 2025). More comparative and multi-sited research could generate valuable insights into how cross-border CBT strategies may foster shared identity, sustainable development, and regional cooperation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that research on sustainability and community based tourism has expanded significantly in both volume and thematic diversity, reflecting the growing urgency to align tourism development with social, economic, and environmental priorities. The bibliometric results demonstrate a steady rise in publication output, increasing

author collaboration, and the dominance of keywords related to sustainability, participation, and ecotourism indicating that the academic conversation is increasingly centered on how communities can become active agents in shaping tourism futures. The discussion further shows that emerging trends revolve around technological innovation, green supply chains, community empowerment, and the repositioning of CBT within global sustainability agendas. At the same time, several structural weaknesses such as dependency on authorities, uneven conservation outcomes, and declining youth engagement signal persistent challenges that may hinder long-term progress if not addressed.

Sugestion

Recommendations for future research emphasize the need for deeper inquiry into resilience, digital transformation, participatory governance, climate adaptation, and long term sustainability planning. Scholars call for more context sensitive, interdisciplinary, and forward-looking approaches to better understand how CBT can function as a transformative mechanism for local development, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship. Collectively, the results and discussions underscore a critical inflection point: sustainability and community-based tourism are no longer niche concerns but central pillars of contemporary tourism scholarship, demanding continued innovation, critical reflection, and collaborative knowledge building to ensure that tourism genuinely benefits the communities at its core.

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