THE STATUS OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CERTIFICATION IN TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY IMPLEMENTATION LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The present article aims to explain why *community-based natural resource management* and *tourism certification* are the main concerns in academic literature on tourism sustainability implementation. The method of choice is a systematic review of literature based on the Prisma Statement for Systematic Reviews. Sources of interest were identified within the Web of Science Core Collection and other repositories. From a total of 430 records screened, 106 stable documents were selected and submitted to content analysis to create a matrix coding of mentions of *sustainable tourism implementation* in highly cited publications. A content analysis revealed that *sustainable tourism implementation* encompasses eight sub-categories of interest in current research outputs. Those sub-categories are: (1) *Adaptive resource management (ARM), (2) Carbon mitigation approach; (3) Community-based Conservation Areas (CCAs) and Community -based ecotourism; (4) Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM); (5) Multi-objective Optimization model (6) Social reinvestment strategy; (7) Tourism Sustainability Certification and (8) Transition Management.* The analysis revealed that implementation strategies such as *Community-based natural resource management* and the *Tourism Certification Approach*, covered 60 percent of all mentions of methods of sustainability implementation in the literature selected and should be treated as leading accelerators of tourism sustainability, yet much work needs to be done explain how and why a certain destination or tourism business meet set standards over time and across national contexts.

Keywords: Sustainability, Tourism, Implementation, Policymaking, Management.

JEL Classification: L83, Q01, Q54, Z32

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism partially overlaps with the terms: responsible tourism, alternative tourism, ecotourism, environmentally friendly and minimum impact tourism and thus it is well intertwined with issues such as physical environment, stakeholders, management, marketing, public sector, industry, taxes, other forms of tourism, education, and infrastructure. International Organisations such as the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, the United Nations Environment Programme and tourism experts have proposed many possible ways to fulfil the call for a more sustainable tourism.

Although climate change exposes the tourism sector to serious risks, the implementation of tourism sustainability can rely on effective management systems. Moreover, as this article seeks to demonstrate, previous academic studies on the research implementation of sustainable tourism supports the view that the accelerators of sustainable tourism implementation (positive tourism management, good destination management and good

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resource management) overcome the major barriers working against *tourism sustainability implementation* (TSI).

According to "The Making Tourism More Sustainable: a Guide for Policy Makers" which builds on UNEP and WTO (2005: 23) "Governments have a crucial role to play in the development and management of tourism and in making it more sustainable …in the developed world, issues of rejuvenation and visitor management are more prominent". The implementation of tourism policies and plans demand several approaches and techniques, but any planning recommendations must be feasible, and the methods of consolidation reviewed along the way. Both governments and the private sector are those responsible for such implementation and therefore this article will focus on empirical research on sustainable tourism implementation strategies which focuses on academic research, but it is directed to governments and the private sector involved in sustainable tourism development.

The role of the public sector in developing the tourism sector materialises via tourism policies, planning and research. Through those elements the public sector provides a basic infrastructure for tourism in terms of the development of touristic attractions, the setting of standards, patterns and rules for the administration of touristic services and facilities. The public sector establishes and manages the regulations underpinning the tourism sector and may offer incentives to attract private sector investments. The public sector will also take the responsibility, in joint (public/private) projects to further develop the tourism sector.

From the perspective of the tourism industry, its organizational infrastructure and wellbeing, three main issues are likely to obstruct the implementation of sustainable policies: (i) the number of actors involved, (ii) the presence of conflicting goals and (iii) the needs of resource rationalization (Arbolino, Boffardi, De Simone & Lopollo, 2021: 9). Aware that sustainability is an attribute of quality and tourism standards, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) launched the initiative Towards a Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (MST) to develop an international statistical framework for measuring tourism's role in sustainable development, including economic, environmental, and social dimensions (UNWTO/MST, 2016).

Given the wide scope of sustainability implementation, it will never be enough to analyse sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices that are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. But a good start can be the UNWTO and Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) assertions on what tourism sustainability should do:

> "Sustainable tourism should: 1. Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity. 2. Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. 3. Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation". (UNWTO/MST, 2016: 3)

Dorin (2011) argued that although the international community is trying to implement sustainable tourism in different regions of the world, some questions can be raised regarding the results of those projects and the industry's ability to replicate them elsewhere. Another noticeable gap refers to the absence of compulsory regulations to encourage the actual

execution of sustainability projects -"redundant proposals and advice that are offered by international institutions, with largely the same concepts, but lack of the tools of coercion to compel the implementation of these proposals" (p.135). With a broad remit, the intergovernmental world tourism organization – UNWTO has been questioned (Schyvens, 2007) as it seeks to supervise the promotion of responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism, pitched towards the achievement of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

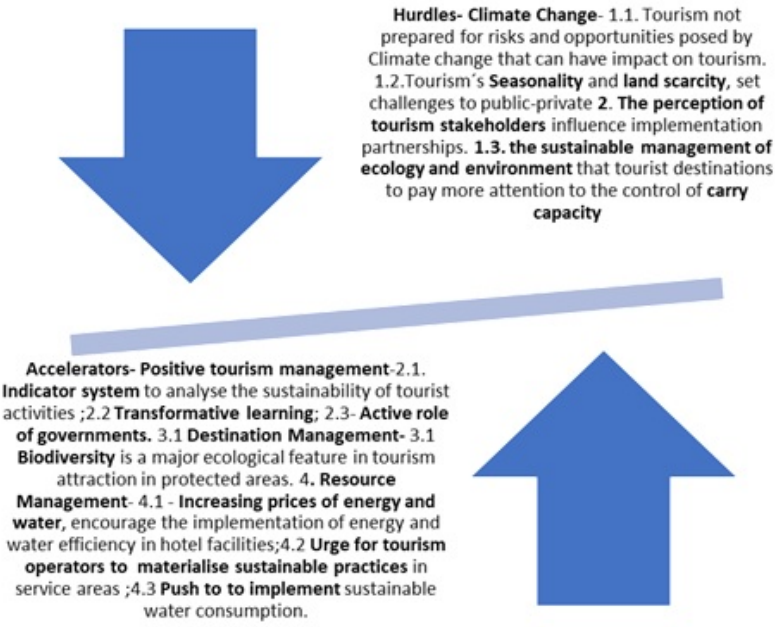
1.1 Academic Production on Tourism Sustainability

The above-mentioned guides and resolutions which shape international sustainability policy making can be analysed in a new light when confronted by academic production on tourism sustainability and destination image. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) suggested that tourists' destination images are formed out of three factors: quality of *experience*, attractions, and value/*environment* as perceptual/cognitive items. Considering that tourism uses finite resources that are greatly sensitive to deterioration, such as nature and human heritage, tourist interest and motivation will disappear without those resources. This aspect is vital for sustainability implementation studies because the main attraction of a tourist destination is the environment´s excellence, natural or urban.

2. STATE OF THE ART: FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY IMPLEMENTATION

This section seeks to explain the implementation of sustainable tourism and identify facilitators of increased environmental, social, and economic sustainability in the tourism industry. It considers previous reviews carried by Buckley (2012), Huang, Chang, Chung, Yin, and Yen (2019), who charted the development trajectory of sustainable tourism using articles retrieved from five online databases. It is vital to recall that previous reviews identified a few hurdles and accelerators to the implementation of tourism sustainability programs, as summarised below, in Figure 1 and detailed in Table 1, further below.

Figure 1. Hurdles and Accelerators in Tourism Sustainability Implementation, 2021



Source: Own Elaboration

It is often argued that sustainable tourism was created by academics, but their work has not suggested ways to overcome difficulties in making the implementation of sustainability a reality (Lane, 2017). There is also a belief that "dominating paradigms are self-enforcing and will not change unless…high level frameworks (e.g., a global agenda with implementation powers) will force them to do so" (Becken, 2019: 4).

Up to 2021, the literature on the implementation of sustainable tourism reported on comprehensive policy programmes, which included reference to a success strategy adopted in 1997 by the Netherlands Antilles government on the Curaçao Island, for the period 1998-2005 (Dinica, 2006). On Curaçao Island, environmental NGOs stirred voluntary implementation initiatives, together with the federal environmental agency. However, their success in stimulating environmentally responsible operations by tourism companies was limited. Alonso and Ogles (2010) also detected a lack of agreement in identifying the effects of tourism and hospitality operations on the environment. This uncertainty could be aggravated by the idea that environmental management in the tourism industry "constitutes the reuse and recycling of resources and not a reduction in consumption" (p. 819).

Studying a community-based collaboration for conservation and economic development in Bolivia (Chalalan Ecolodge), researchers identified "an evolving partnership between local and international stakeholders toward local control" (Jamal & Stronza, 2009: 169). The authors questioned "how does the tourism system fit with the protected area system? Who represents "Nature" in negotiations over conservation and use? How can plans and programmes be effectively enacted at the local level for long term success?" (Jamal & Stronza, 2009: 169). With focus on the environmental or social and economic effects of certification on tourism, Blackman and Rivera (2011) claimed that hotel certification in Costa Rica generates significant price premiums and therefore presumably has an economic benefit. Certification can be relatively effective, but because producers already meeting certification standards disproportionately choose to participate, certification typically does not change behaviour (Blackman & Rivera, 2011: 1182).

Implementation studies are also concerned with poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability. Those studies have been valuable to address global development challenges singled out by the United Nations and its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), proposed in 2000. Researchers like Mbaiwa (2011) applied the concept of social capital to analyse the effects of tourism as carried out with the help of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) to promote the sustainable utilisation of natural resources in the Okavango Delta. Results indicated that CBNRM stimulated increased social capital between the CBNRM stakeholders.

Gössling, Hall, Ekström, Brudvik and Engeset (2012) explored the *transition management* literature to build a theoretical framework for stakeholder involvement and policy implementation processes in sustainable tourism. A typology of transitions can be interpreted in terms of a set of the following ideal possibilities:

1. Reorientation of strategies- resulting from a shock outside or inside the regime followed by a response from regime actors using internal resources, with no consensus at end point or means;
2. Endogenous renewal, where regime actors make conscious, planned efforts in response to perceived pressures using regime internal resources;
3. Emergent transformation from uncoordinated response to pressures outside the existing regime, often driven by small, new regime actors (firms, agencies and NGOs);
4. Purposive transition composed of intended and coordinated change processes that emerge from outside the existing regime. (Gössling et al., 2012: 901).

The above categories underpinned a study of a national tourism sustainability initiative by the Norwegian government initiated in 2010. Innovation Norway invited representatives of six stakeholder groups to participate in the process of developing "Sustainable Tourism 2015". Results suggested that transition management provides a valuable theoretical framework to understand change processes.

Larson and Poudyal (2012: 933) suggested that an *adaptive resource management* (ARM) approach could "help planners and managers guide Machu Picchu's growth". The ARM amounted to individually monitoring specific indicators of quality across various spatial and temporal scales. Managers could potentially address multiple management considerations that affect residents, foreign tourists, private tour operators and regional governments. Some of the suggested indicators for specified objectives in adaptive management framework at Machu Picchu were: "Protect biological diversity; Maximize amount of protected habitat… Minimize erosion and landslide potential; Minimize and properly dispose of waste; Preserve cultural heritage…Increase economic benefits and ensure stakeholder satisfaction" (p. 930-931).

Buckley (2012) reviewed social and environmental impacts, responses, and indicators for the mainstream tourism sector worldwide, in five categories: population, peace, prosperity, pollution and protection. Of 5000 relevant publications, very few attempted to evaluate the entire global tourism sector in terms of a global research in sustainable development. One priority was "the ability of tourism to bring about large-scale change in land use….in line with the internationally agreed Aichi targets, as a buffer against climate change" (p. 537).

As an increased stakeholder pressure requires companies to be transparent about their *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) practices, Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, McCombes, and Häusler (2012: 1544) proposed that it is essential to know how reliable corporate disclosure mechanisms are, by testing the gap between corporate social responsibility claims and actual practice. Their study benchmarked corporate social responsibility policies and practices of ten international hotel groups of particular importance to the European leisure market. The authors found that corporate systems are not necessarily reflective of actual operations. Environmental performance tends to be eco-savings driven and centred on labour policies aimed to comply with local legislation. Thus, socioeconomic policies can be said to be inward looking with little acceptance of impacts on the destination, with limited customer engagement.

From yet a different angle, the key challenge for planning sustainable tourism development can be the limitation of the human perception of time (Jovicic, 2013). In this view, future conceptualisation of sustainable tourism issues should involve local communities as much as the issues of environment and economy. This could be achieved only through the active participation of all stakeholders.

A cluster approach has also been an object of study for the implementation of sustainability programs in Australia. Based on data from an international tourism and environmental management and advisory group – EC3 Global, Mclennan, Becken and Watt (2016) researched sustainability solutions for enterprises, destinations, and communities as designed by EC3 Global, founded by Australia's Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre in 1987. EC3 administered six voluntary sustainability clusters in Australia between 2007 and 2012 and "As part of a regular monitoring program, the organisation collected data on the six tourism sustainability clusters involving 307 businesses in Australia in 2008 - 2010." (Mclennan et al., 2016: 348).

In 2017, D'Amato, Droste, Allen, Kettunen, Lähtinen, Korhonen, Leskinen, Matthies, and Toppinen advocated for reciprocal integration by comparing the different sustainability strategies promoted by *Green Economy*, *Circular Economy* and *Bioeconomy.* The authors understood that Green Economy acts as an 'umbrella' concept, incorporating aspects from

Circular Economy and Bioeconomy concepts, as well as supplementary ideas, such as. nature-based solutions. Regarding the social dimension, Green Economy can be seen as "more inclusive of some aspects at local level (e.g., eco-tourism, education)" (D'Amato et al., 2017: 716).

Carbon mitigation strategies are judged as "an urgent and overdue tourism industry imperative" (Sun, Lin & Highan, 2020: 1). In the case of Taiwan, great potential exists to reduce emissions and sustain economic yields. Sun et al. (2020) thus put forward a novel carbon mitigation approach, which seeks to pro-actively determine, foster, and develop a long-term tourist market portfolio. Sun et al. (2020) thus proposed an analytical framework that quantitatively inform optimization of the desired market mix by combining the "de-growth" and "optimization" strategies.

Responses to the UN 2030 Agenda and its six Goals (UNWTO, 2011; UNDP, 2015) were materialised in projects supporting best practices in the tourism sector. Examples of these are as follows: "Kasbah du Toubkal, a small lodge in the midst of a Berber community in Morocco…Juist Island project (Germany), Greenest hotels in Thailand (Tongsai Bay), Gili Lankanfushi and the Coral Line Project (Maldives)" (Arbolino et al., 2021: 2). However, the authors also detected a gap in the process – there was no implementation framework for supporting investment decisions in sustainable tourism initiatives. Arbolino et al. (2021) thus proposed a methodology to assess and select tourism-related projects, to increase the efficiency in resource allocation through a comparison between the proposed *optimization model* and the traditional *multicriteria methods*.

To conclude, it is well-known that sustainable development, endorsed by the Brundtland report, is an all-embracing discourse for green growth and prudence. But within tourism, sustainable development refers to tourism that satisfies the needs of tourists and host regions while protecting and improving opportunities for the future (Vaughan, 2000). Sustainability has social and environmental dimensions. Some of those aspects are tourism and recreation, classified as social aspects of sustainability that touch upon Education and training, social justice, participation and democracy, health, quality of life and well-being, social capital, community network, safety, employment, income, social order, cohesion, and cultural traditions. On the other hand, environmental sustainability aspects include concerns such as "water, carbon, and nutrient cycles (including emissions and waste); greening cities and logistics; quality of energy source and efficiency in production and use; maintenance of biodiversity, ecosystems and related services". D'Amato, Droste, Allen, Kettunen, Lähtinen, Korhonen, Leskinen, Matthies, and Toppinen (2017: 6-7).

This section recalled literature on facilitators of increased environmental, social, and economic sustainability in the tourism industry from 1997 to 2021, helping to contrast tourism sustainability hurdles and accelerators, as summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Factors Underpinning Tourism Sustainability Implementation, 2004-2021

Factor 1- Climate Change	**Author**	**Hurdles**	**Accelerators**
1.1 Tourism is considered little prepared for the risks and opportunities posed by climate change which can have direct impacts on tourism.	(Scott, 2011)	There are barriers to environment management.	
Tourism seasonality and land scarcity, set challenges to public-private partnerships.	(Arbulú, Lozano, & Rey-Maquieira, 2016)	Public-private partnerships related to the municipal solid waste management (MSWM) system.	
1.2 The perception of tourism stakeholders influence implementation.	(Sánchez-Medina, Díaz-Pichardo, & Cruz-Bautista, 2016)	Stakeholders may oppose the implementation of environmental management practices.	
1.3 The sustainable management of ecology and environment that tourist destinations to pay more attention to the control of carry capacity.	(Christofakis, Mergos, & Papadaskalopoulos, 2009; Ponting & O'Brien, 2014)	It is unlikely that Tourist destinations will control carry capacity.	
Factor 2 - Positive Tourism Management			
2.1 Give tourism managers and policy-makers information to better understand the transition to sustainability at specific destinations and to encourage them to carry out corresponding policy and management responses.	(Blancas et al., 2011)		Demand for an indicator system to analyse the sustainability of tourist activities in a country with a consolidated tourism sector.
2.2 Learning organisations and volunteer tourism organizations must redesign their activities to include filling the remaining steps of transformative learning to improve their product for both the tourists and the sustainability outcomes of the projects.	(Chang & Sun, 2007) (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011)		Appeal for learning organisations and volunteer tourism organisations to invest in transformative learning to improve their product.
2.3 The active role of governments engaging in the implementation of sustainable tourism is needed (Bâc, 2004).	(Bâc, 2004)		Call for Governments to engage in the implementation of Sustainable tourism.
Factor 3 - Destination Management			
3.1 Biodiversity is a major ecological feature in tourism attraction in protected areas.	(Catibog-Sinha, 2008)		Motivation for Tourism Planners and Managers to incorporate the principles of biodiversity conservation.
Factor 4 - Resource Management			
4.1 Increasing prices of energy and water, encourage the implementation of energy and water efficiency in hotel facilities.	(Bohdanowicz, 2006)		Need to implement energy and water efficiency in hotel facilities.
4.2 Business demands or added costs also present challenges in fully materializing an operator's environmentally sustainable practices, particularly concerning water consumption in service areas, such as in toilets, which represents a large proportion of total water usage (Alonso & Ogle, 2010).	(Alonso & Ogle, 2010)		Urge for tourism operators to materialise sustainable practices in service areas (toilets).
4.3 Water resource use is likely to become an increasingly important issue in tourism management.	(Hadjikakou, Chenoweth, & Miller, 2013)		Push to implement sustainable water consumption.

Source: Own Elaboration

The above Table 1 organises evidence that tourism sustainability accelerators are more numerous than the hurdles to overcome in the implementation of future projects.

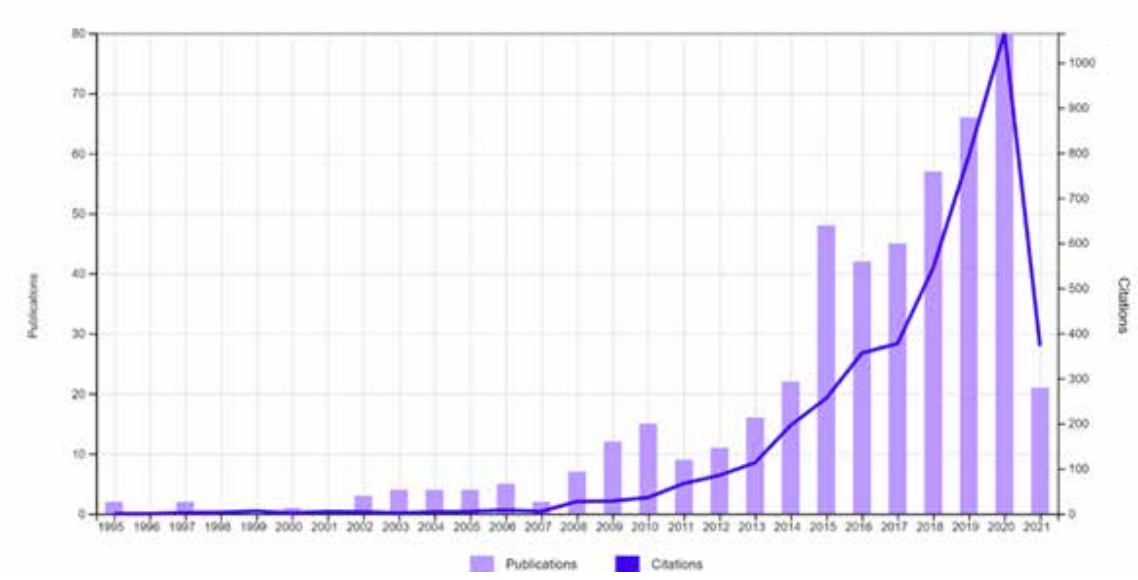
3. METHODOLOGY

This small desk investigation relies on the qualitative methodology known as Content Analysis (CA) to systematically approach and compare bibliographic resources concerning sustainability implementation methods. This observational research method is used to systematically evaluate the content of recorded communications (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991) and commonly supports academic productions in social sciences (Berg, 2009). Favourable claims regarding the CA methodology highlight its reassurance of analytical flexibility (Duriau, Reger, & Pfarrer, 2007), and adequation to diverse research designs of an inductive and deductive nature (Roberts, 1989; Elo & Kyngäs, 2007). Hall and Valentin (2005) pinpointed different uses of CA in the tourism field, such as the examination of the context of texts written by tourists. Caprumbi and Coromina (2016) analysed the trends and issues regarding the use of CA approach in the tourism field in 164 articles from ten relevant tourism academic journals included in the Journal of Citation Report (JCR).

3.1 Bibliography Search Methods

This desk research with focus on published academic research benefited from a primary search in the citation index for scientific and scholarly research known as the Web of Science Core Collection. This is a curated collection of over 21,000 peer-reviewed, high-quality scholarly journals published worldwide in over 250 science, social sciences, and humanities disciplines. Below in Figure 2 is a Web of Science report resulting from a search for TOPICS: (tourism sustainability implementation).

Figure 2. Web of Science Citation Report, 1900-2021



Source: Web of Science Report 4/05/2021

Tourism (Topic) AND Implementation (Topic) AND Sustainability (Topic)	
Time span: 1900-2021.	
Results found	478
Sum of the Times Cited	4360
Average Citations per Item	9.12
h-index	31

Source: Web of Science Report 4/05/2021

Bibliographic search was also carried out via additional databases and repositories. Below is a summary of the bibliometric analysis, comprising search engines, strings, dataset, size, and type of analysis, as reported below, and detailed in the Prisma Routine/Diagram for the Systematic Review of Studies on TSI, as following:

Step 1 - Identification

a) Identified studies via databases Web of Science, Academic Search Complete, and registers such as RCAAP and Research Gate. Records *identified* from Databases (n =519); Registers (n = 4).
b) Records *removed* before screening: Duplicate records removed (n =20) Records marked as ineligible by automation tools (n =68). Records removed for other reasons (n =1).
c) Identified studies via *other methods* Records identified from: Websites (n =30); Organisations (n =6); Citation searching (n =38). Reports sought for retrieval (n =20); Reports identified via other methods that were assessed for eligibility (n =20).

Step 2 - Screening

d) Records from Web of Science, RCAAP, Academic Search Complete and Research Gate-screened (n =430); Records excluded (n =200); Reports assessed for eligibility (n =110)
e) Reports excluded: Reason 1 (n =Publication in other scientific area), Reason 2 (n =Not contributed to tourism sustainability implementation), Reason 3 (n =Conference proceedings).

Step 3 - Inclusion

Studies included in review (n =96) + Reports of included studies (n = 10) = 106.

Table 2. Literature Search Methods on TSI: Web of Science, 1900-2021

Search Engine	Strings Searched	Dataset Size	Analysis
Web of Science (04 May, 2021)	TSI. Time range: 1900-2021	478	Chronological and geographical distribution of publications; most cited publications, salient keywords, and emerging topics in sustainability implementation.
RCAAP (29 April, 2021)	TSI in Title (journal articles. Time range; 2018-2021)	12	Journal articles with focus on Tourism Sustainability and Implementation.
Academic Search Complete (30 April, 2021)	TSI. (Time range: 2020-2021)	8	Journal articles with focus on Tourism Sustainability and Implementation. Emerging topics in sustainability implementation.
Research Gate (29 April, 2021)	TSI	21	Journal articles and other documents with focus on Tourism Sustainability and Implementation.

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 3. List of Highly Cited Papers

List of Highly Cited Papers	Web of Science	Topics
Author	Total Times cited	Implementation issues
Jamal, T and Stronza, A 2009 | *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*	188	Collaboration theory and tourism practice in protected areas: stakeholders, structuring and sustainability.
Font, X; Walmsley, Cogotti; McCombes; Häusler (2012). Dec 2012 | *Tourism Managemen*t	149	Corporate social responsibility: The disclosure-performance gap.
Blackman, A and Rivera, J Dec 2011 | *Conservation Biology*	137	Producer-Level Benefits of Sustainability Certification.
Scheepens, AE; Vogtlander, JG and Brezet, JC Feb 15 2016 | *Journal of Cleaner Productio*n	127	Two life cycle assessment (LCA) based methods to analyse and design complex (regional) circular economy systems. Case: making water tourism more sustainable.
Chan, ESW and Hawkins, R Dec 2010 | *International Journal of Hospitality Managemen*t	105	Attitude towards EMSs in an international hotel: An exploratory case study.
Schianetz, K; Kavanagh, L and Lockington, D Dec 2007 | *Tourism Management*	99	The Learning Tourism Destination: The potential of a learning organisation approach for improving the sustainability of tourism destinations.
Miller, D; Merrilees, B and Coghlan, A Jan 2015 | *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*	98	Sustainable urban tourism: understanding and developing visitor pro-environmental behaviours.

Source: Own Elaboration

3.2 Implementation Strategies in Highly Cited Papers

Publications such as *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Tourism Management, Conservation Biology, Journal of Cleaner Production, International Journal of Hospitality Management* published some of the most cited articles on how to implement sustainable tourism. Jamal and Stronza (2009), for example, considered the challenges of implementation and long-term structuring for sustainability and success, as well as other crucial aspects of sustainability such as: "complexity (nested systems of biophysical environments, tourism and park management structures, community– resident systems, local–global systems and use–conservation gap; as well as scale, structure and scope of collaborations (including community involvement and control)". Their main reference was a community-based collaboration for conservation and economic development in Bolivia. Amid the sustainability strategies mentioned, is the strategy for "Social Reinvestment" (p.181).

As increased stakeholder pressure requires companies to be transparent about their Corporate Social Responsibility practices, the literature also points out that "it is essential to know how reliable corporate disclosure mechanisms are, testing the gap between corporate social responsibility claims and actual practice" (Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, McCombes & Häusler, 2012: 1544). This study benchmarked corporate social responsibility policies and practices of ten international hotel groups of particular importance to the European leisure market.

On the topic of certification, Blackman and Rivera (2011) proposed that producers of goods and services tend to adhere to defined environmental and social-welfare production standards and this trend was increasingly popular at the time. The authors identified peer-reviewed, producer-level studies in economic sectors in which certification was particularly prevalent (bananas, coffee, fish products, forest products, and tourism operations) and argued that evidence in favour of certification benefits for the environment and for producers was

still limited. More evidence would need to incorporate rigorous, independent evaluation into the design of certification projects.

There is a prevalent view that researchers need to validate metrics to analyse complex business models in the *circular economy*. To this end, Scheepens, Vogtlander and Brezet (2016) applied two methods: Eco-efficient Value Creation (EVR benchmarking) and the Circular Transition Framework (describing stakeholder activities which supported the transition towards sustainable business models) by means of a three-dimensional approach of costs, eco-costs, and market value. The practical case of analysis was the design and implementation of a business model for sustainable water recreation in Friesland (a province in the Netherlands).

Adopting a diverse perspective, research into environmental management systems (EMSs) looks at the driving forces, costs and benefits and nature of such systems. Chan and Hawkins (2010), for example, studied the impact of an EMS on hotel employees whose working attitude directly affects the services provided to guests by a predominantly workforce. An international hotel in Hong Kong with an ISO 14001 EMS was selected for the actual study. The research showed that emphasis of safer, better, and "healthier working environment that results from EMS implementation and the achievement of ISO 14001 accreditation could make hotel employees more committed to their jobs" (p. 649).

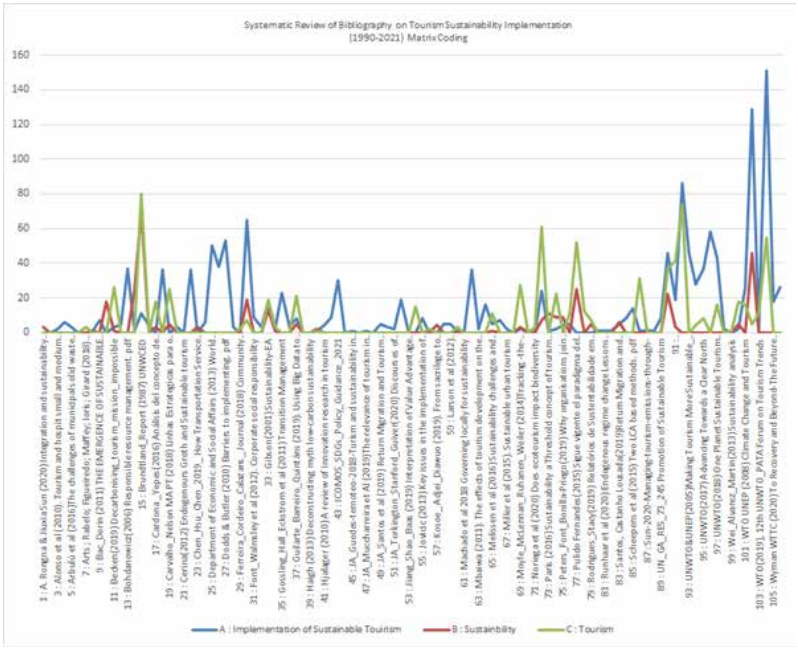
A framework for a Learning Tourism Destination (LTD) based on the concept of the Learning Organisation (LO) has also been investigated (Schianetz, Kavanagh & Lockington, 2007). This framework uses systems thinking and system dynamics modelling (SDM) approaches to implement and foster collective learning processes. SDM, a computer-based methodology can "…quantify the effects of the interconnections and time delays… to test certain policies" (Schianetz et al., 2007: 1468). The authors discussed the concept of the Learning Tourism Destinations (LTD) with reference to six case studies around the globe. The results revealed that SDM can promote communication between stakeholders and stimulating organisational learning.

The debate on sustainable tourism destinations also gained a new relevance for policy makers with an interest in the implementation of sustainable tourism in urban tourism destinations. Work published by Miller, Merrilees, Coghlan (2015) envisaged a concept of tourist social responsibility. Based on a quantitative online survey of visitors to Melbourne, Australia, the authors collected data on tourists' pro environmental behaviours in categories such as recycling; green transport use; sustainable energy/material use (lighting/water usage), and green food consumption.

3.3 Content Analysis NVIVO12 Outputs

Contents relating to what is to be done to support "sustainable" tourism are fragmented across social and economic dimensions. The matrix coding in Figure 3 demonstrates the frequency of contents in the 106 stable documents analysed. The WTO_UNEP (2019) Baseline Report on Integration of Sustainable Consumption greatly emphasised (151) the implementation of sustainable tourism, followed by WTO (2004) Indicators-of-Sustainable-Development-for-Tourism-Destinations-A-Guide-Book-by-UNWTO that also greatly emphasizes the topic (129), followed several mentions (86) in the UNWTO (2013) Sustainable Tourism for Development.

Figure 3. Matrix Coding – Systematic Review of 106 Documents, 1990-2021

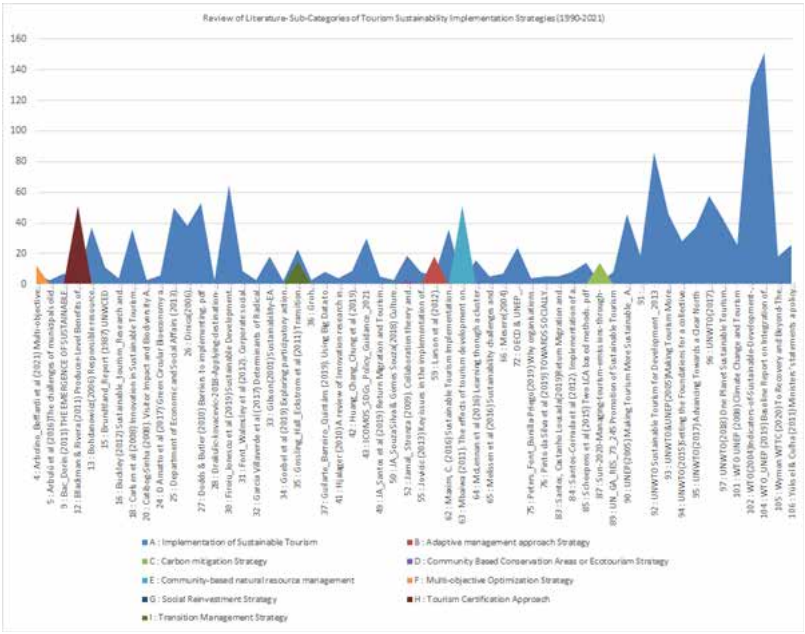


Source: Own Elaboration with NVIVO12

Academic works by Firoiu Ionescu et al. (2019) (65 mentions), Dodds & Butler (2010) (53), Dinica (2006) (38), Bohdanowicz (2006) (37), and Maxim, C. (2016) stressed the STI category (36). Other relevant publications were Carlsen et al. (2008) (36), and Chan and Hawkins, R. (2010). Attitude towards EMSs in an international hotel (36). It is therefore advisable to display a content analysis of subcategories of TSI.

The figure and table below expose the importance of two sub-categories of TSI in the academic articles analysed. Those key subcategories are: (a) *Community-based natural resource management* (51) and *Tourism Certification Approach (51*), responsible for 60% of all mentions to methods of sustainability implementation.

Figure 4. Sub-Categories of Tourism Sustainability Implementation, 1990-2021



Source: Own Elaboration with NVIVO 12

Table 4. Sub-Categories of Tourism Sustainability Implementation, 1990-2021

Sub-Node	References
Social Reinvestment Strategy	1
Community Based Ecotourism Strategy	3
Multi-objective Optimization Strategy	12
Carbon mitigation Strategy	14
Transition Management Strategy	15
Adaptive management approach Strategy	18
Tourism Certification Approach	51
Community-based natural resource management	51
Total	**165**

Source: Own Elaboration with NVIVO 12

With basis on this review, the main implementation instruments discussed in the UN´s reports and academic literature researched can be summarised as:

a) The *Implementation of Sustainable Tourism,* as a general category encompassing all mentions of related subcategories was strongly stressed 165 times in the selected academic articles.

b) Adaptive management approach or adaptive resource management (ARM), based on the UN World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) sustainable tourism framework, was mentioned as a framework that applies knowledge from related disciplines to address contemporary tourism issues. "There are variations of the ARM approach to informed decision-making. Early iterations still in use today include the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), the Visitor Impact Management Model, both of which aim to set limits and minimize negative impacts from recreation and tourism on public lands. Newer strategies include the Tourism Optimization Management Model (TOMM) and the Integrated Monitoring and Adaptive Management System (iMAMS)" (Larson & Poudual, 2012: 926);

c) The Carbon mitigation approach supports the management of tourism emissions through optimizing a tourism demand mix: concept and analysis. This involves engineering discrete visitor segments so that overall anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from tourism at a destination are reduced while, at the same time, seeking to maximize the collective benefits of tourism to the local/national economy, environment, and society (Gossling et al., 2016). Optimization seeks to develop and encourage lower emission markets (and/or demarketing high emission segments), while carefully considering the collective economic and social impacts at the destination after market intervention and re-configuration The proposed analytical framework is an iterative process (Sun, Lin & Higham, 2020);

d) Community-based Conservation Areas (CCAs) and Community-based ecotourism refer to areas owned by the community and where community-based tourism may be operating. There are two important factors in such community-based partnerships: "(1) ensuring long term sustainability of tourism and natural resources and (2) community or local/ indigenous ownership, control and management of tourism enterprises and activities" (Jamal & Stronza, 2009: 176);

e) Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) in Mbaiwa (2011) is an incentive-based conservation philosophy that links conservation of natural resources with rural development. The basic assumption of CBNRM is that for a community

to manage its natural resource base sustainably, it must receive direct benefits arising from its use. These benefits must exceed the perceived costs of managing the resources. CBNRM scholars argue that when community livelihoods are improved, such a community is obliged to observe conservation ideals. The conceptual foundations of CBNRM are: (a) economic value; (b) devolution – emphasising the need to devolve management decisions from government to the community or local land users and (c) collective proprietorship – whereby groups of people are jointly given use rights over resources. CBNRM aims at achieving poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability (Mbaiwa, 2011: 253);

f) *The Multi-objective Optimization model* consists of an approach in tourism sustainability planning to maximise the efficiency of public resource allocation. The model accounts for environmental, social, and economic impacts, to select tourism activities to be done to maximize stakeholder utility. The multi-criteria dimension analysis (MCDA) methods allow practitioners to simultaneously address issues related to tourism policymaking. Decision support systems founded on multi-objective techniques facilitate a feasible, effective, and useful appraisal of the effects of tourism policies and a subsequent improvement of their sustainability (Arbolino, Boffardi, De Simone & Lopollo, 2021: 3);

g) *Social Reinvestment Strategy* – complements *Community-based Conservation Areas (CCAs) and Community-based ecotourism.* In the context of a community-based collaboration for conservation and economic development in Bolivia- This strategy was created to define how the fees can be applied to community development needs in categories that can be identified as education, health, agriculture, recreation, legal representation and other needs (Jamal & Stronza, 2009: 181). Kudratova, Huang and Zhou (2018) approached the issue of optimal project selection considering sustainability under reinvestment strategy. The authors proposed an integrated novel optimization approach in which sustainability cost is quantified and reinvestment strategy is adopted;

h) *Tourism Sustainability Certification approach*, extremely relevant in the literature, refers to initiatives certifying that producers of goods and services adhere to defined environmental and social-welfare production standards. Certification spurs producers to improve their environmental, social, and economic performance. In theory, it does so by enabling the consumer to differentiate among goods and services in relation to their environmental and social attributes and effects. "This ability to differentiate facilitates price premiums and expands market access for certified products. Price premiums and market access, in turn, create financial incentives for producers to meet certification standards" (Blackman & Rivera, 2011: 1177);

i) *Transition Management*, another key strategy for researchers in the field, provides a theoretical framework for stakeholder involvement and policy implementation processes in sustainable tourism. Transition management involves integrative and multi-level governance being used to shape and foster development processes. It also stirs the choice of policy instruments and actions by individuals and private and public organizations, based on common visions. Its main objective is "to empower stakeholders to develop their knowledge base and to implement new practices and technology change. It is best understood as not being a policy instrument, although it perhaps serves this role at a meta-policy level, but is instead a perspective" (Gossling et al., 2012: 900).

4. TRANSITION MANAGEMENT AND CERTIFICATION IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the literature analysed, with special attention to UNWTO supported research, one can identify two transition types in sustainable tourism implementation, which are *strategic reorientation of growth management* around broad sustainability and democratic concerns (Gleeson, Darbas & Lawson, 2004: 345; Gadotti, 2010: 203) and *endogenous renewal* (Cerina, 2012), with both approaches being self-regulatory and voluntary.

Strategic reorientation of growth will involve social, economic, and political dimensions of interest, aligning the interests of businesses, governments, and civil society. As stated in the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, the main instruments used in global supranational initiatives to implement sustainable tourism are multi-stakeholder partnerships for progressing toward the Millennium Development Goals to leverage the impact of interventions. Market-based policies, fiscal incentives, and consumer awareness have also been used to support strategic reorientation of growth (ICAO 1997-2011; WTTC 2011).

The *endogenous transition* method tends to be self-regulatory and voluntary and can also follow recommendations seen as complementary to national and local regulations. The UNWTO, 2020 Global Tourism Plastics Initiative is an example of the integration of transnational implementation initiatives in endogenous transition methods. Initiatives on waste management and recommendations for the tourism sector to continue action on plastic pollution during COVID-19 recovery are examples that those methods of transition tend to blend. The major difference associated with the endogenous type of transition is that it can be community led and managed. As argued in the literature, an economy able to perform *endogenous growth* conforms to a positive and sustained long-run growth rate of the economy Such growth will be allied to the sustainability of the environmental resource, explained as "a non-negative growth rate of the environmental assets" (Cerina, 2012: 16) because it will create employment and enhance the value and utilization of local resources and skills. Whilst developing endogenous tourism commodities *endogenous transition* energize local cultures and traditions. It also develops local skills and capacities for setting up, running, and promoting alternate tourist enterprises. Table 5 displays some of the global supranational initiatives to implement sustainable tourism, with reference to diverse transition types, approaches, and instruments.

Table 5. Global Supranational Initiatives to Implement Sustainable Tourism

Reference	Sustainability Dimensions	Transition Type	Approach	Instruments
WTTC/WTO/Earth Council 1995	Environmental	Reorientation of trajectories	Self-regulation/ voluntary	-
UNWTO 1999	Social, political (environmental issues)	Reorientation of trajectories	Self-regulation/ voluntary	-
2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development	Social, economic and political. Aligning the interests of businesses, governments and civil society	Reorientation of trajectories	Self regulation/ volutary	Multi-stakeholder partnerships New vehicle for progressing toward the Millennium Development Goals leverage the impact of interventions
UNWTO 2004, 2010; UNWTO-UNEP-WMO 2008; UNWTO-SNV 2010	Environmental, economic, social	Endogenous renewal	Self-regulation/ voluntary	Capacity building, dissemination, networking, technical co-operation on project basis
UNEP 2011	Environmental, economic (social)	Endogenous renewal	Self-regulation/ voluntary	Policy recommendations, best practice for businesses, financing projects, consumer awareness
WTTC 2011	Environmental, social, economic	Reorientation of trajectories	Self-regulation/ voluntary, regulation	Market-based policies, fiscal incentives, consumer awareness
ICAO 1997-2011	Economic (social, environmental)	Reorientation of trajectories	Self-regulation/ voluntary	Market-based
SCBD 2004, 2007	Environmental, economic, social	Endogenous renewal	Self-regulation/ voluntary	Capacity building, education, guidelines, market-based policies, networking
UNWTO, 2020 Global Tourism Plastics Initiative	Environmental	Endogenous renewal	Recommendations to be seen as complementary to national and local regulations.	Waste management. 5 Recommendations for the tourism sector to continue taking action on plastic pollution during COVID-19 recovery

Source: Adapted from Gossling, Hall, Ekstrom, Engeset & Aall (2011: 903)

The UNWTO (2017) Practical Guidelines for Integrated Quality Management in Tourism Destinations describes the elements that should be integrated in a sustainable quality plan, including the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) as a reference model. The social, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability of tourism activities become components of quality in tourism that guarantee business survival. But sustainability also means ethical responsibility allied to quality. It is therefore "unsurprising to see the two concepts closely related, particularly in managing destinations." (UNWTO, 2017: 18).

Managing the quality system means measuring its effectiveness at regular intervals with respect to standards which refer to an objective level of quality that the destination aspires to achieve. To control the processes over time and evaluate the effectiveness and timeliness of improvements, practitioners must use measurable indicators representative of the attributes. The process is managed by a Quality Committee, comparable to a DMO, with varying composition in terms of numbers and form.

"Sustainability indicators include: – Investment in awareness activities; – Business climate indices (survey); – Satisfaction indices (residents; survey); – Number of tourism enterprises

with majority local ownership; – Energy consumption (kWh/person [residents and visitors]/ period); – Water consumption (m3 /person [residents and visitors]/period); – Waste (kg/ person [residents and visitors]/day); – Contribution of tourism to the local economy (% of GDP; income per inhabitant); – Concentration of CO2 gases/period; – Surroundings (survey); and – Tax receipts generated by tourism" (UNWTO, 2017: 78).

The World Tourism Organization and United Nations Environment Programme (2019) published other documents with focus on implementation, such as the *Baseline Report on the Integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns into Tourism Policies*, which includes a table with sustainable consumption and production (SCP) policy instruments, listed below in Table 6.

Table 6. Sustainability Policy Instruments

Policy Instruments	**Phases of Life-cycle**				
	Extraction of natural resources	Manufacturing and production processes	Provision of sustainable products, services and works	Use and consumption	End-of-life management
1. Regulatory and legal instruments	Regulation of access and activities in vulnerable areas, cultural and natural heritage sites	Regulations on water and energy efficient technologies, reuse and recycling of water, use of renewable energy	Regulations regarding construction materials and environmental standards of products	Regulations on visitor management and carrying capacity	Regulations on discharge of sewage and solid waste
2. Economic and Fiscal instruments	Fees for national parks and natural reserves, and protected areas for nature conservation as well as for other attractions	Grants, soft loans or tax credits for investments in eco-technologies (water, energy, etc.) and the reduction of emissions	Funding schemes for sustainable business development	Tourism tax earmarked for environmental action (beach cleaning, waste infrastructure awareness raising).	Promotion of carbon emission offset schemes linked to investments in local community projects for tourist/tour operators.
3. Communication and voluntary instruments	Public-private partnerships for sustainable tourism and networks involving communities.	Corporate Social responsibility in the tourism sector.	Certification schemes and guidelines for responsible operations.	Available information on sustainability issues and Codes of Conduct.	Promotion of tourist activities with lower impacts on environment (walking tours, cycling).

Source: Adapted from SWITCH-Med SCP Policy Toolkit, in UNWTO (2019) *Baseline Report on the Integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns into Tourism Policies* (p.22)

The overhead policy instruments, sustainability factors and implementation tools underpinning TSI situate sustainable tourism as a truly practical approach to tourism management. According to pragmatic philosophy of tourism destination management, sustainable tourism partially overlaps responsible tourism, alternative tourism, ecotourism, environmentally friendly and minimum impact tourism. From this angle, tourism sustainability is well connected with physical environment, stakeholders, management, marketing, public sector, industry, taxes, other forms of tourism, education, and infrastructure. Stakeholders

and practitioners have a choice of possible ways to fulfil the call for a more sustainable tourism.

4.1 Tourism Sustainability Standards and Certification

Certification is a way to ensure that a destination or tourism business meet certain standards. In the tourism sustainability jargon, *sustainable destinations* denote infrastructural, economic, social, and environmental aspects of tourism development that are examined simultaneously. *Sustainable enterprises* are those which "adhere to best practices, innovate, and harness the latest technologies will be more likely to prosper" (Carlsen, Jago, Harris & Silva, 2006: 19).

As negative impacts of tourism were felt in many destinations around the world, the triple bottom line of sustainability became an accepted business practice. Initially, business certification was concerned with quality, whereas governments took on the regulation of health, hygiene, and safety aspects of sustainable tourism, leaving any control over the environmental impacts of tourism for green certification programs. Green certifications have multiplied since the International Year of Ecotourism of 2002. Yet the Mohonk Agreement (2000) emerged as an informal effort to harmonise the domain and conceive a common baseline for sustainable tourism and ecotourism certification. Soon after, the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC) feasibility study generated recommendations for the establishment of minimum standards for the certification of sustainable tourism.

4.2 Types and Approaches to Certification

Tourism sustainability certifications can be first, second or third-party certifications. First party means self-evaluation, when a company or a destination declares that its products meet certain standards, with no external verification. Second party certification occurs when purchasers or a tourism industry body assures that the products and services meet the clients´ expectations. And a third-party certification refers to a neutral and independent evaluation as to whether the destination and its products comply with clearly defined standards and so most credible certification programs will demand a third-party assessment.

Approaches to certification of sustainable tourism can be *process-based system* and *performance-based.* The *process-based* certification treats a travel enterprise as a collection of procedures managed to achieve a desired outcome relating to a core value, with the most used process-based systems being the ISO 9000 series for quality management and ISO 14001 for environmental management systems. Process-based certification endorse destinations and enterprises that have created and documented systems for guaranteeing the improvement of quality or environmental performance without stipulating any performance results other than the company´s own, and those compelled by law. In sum, management create systems for monitoring certain environmental aspects, with emphasis on internal costs saving and environmental impact mitigation, with no reference to universal standards. A certification logo is attributed to applicants for setting up the process and not for achieving a specific target. On the other hand, *performance-based* schemes certify businesses, activities, and destinations for complying with external criteria, which allow direct comparisons between businesses and destinations.

5. CONCLUSION

This content analysis revealed lessons on the diverse contributions given by the academic publications to the implementation of sustainable tourism: Studies mentioned in this article demonstrated that:

1. Up until 2016, tourism was considered as ill-equipped for the risks and opportunities posed by climate change. Tourism´s seasonality and scarcity of land-fill sites, posed challenges to public-private partnerships relating to municipal solid waste management (MSWM) system. Stakeholders were prone to oppose the implementation of environmental management practices and Tourist destinations didn't generally control carry capacity. However, there has been growing demand for positive management such as an indicator system to measure the sustainability of tourist activities along with an appeal for learning organisations and volunteer tourism groups to invest in transformative learning to improve their product. There was also a call for Governments to participate in the implementation of sustainable tourism. With respect to destination management, Tourism planners and managers have been motivated to incorporate the principles of biodiversity conservation. The increasing prices of energy and water has also encouraged the implementation of efficiency policies in hotel facilities. With carbon mitigation strategies becoming an overdue tourism industry imperative, contextual factors relating to global climate change and tourism consumption have contributed to an acceleration of sustainable policies in the last ten years.
2. This review found that *Social Reinvestment Strategy* and *Community Based Ecotourism Strategy* are not often the focus of academic studies in TSI. The main sustainability implementation instruments discussed in the UN´s reports and academic literature researched are *Community-based natural resource management* and *Tourism Certification Approach*. Strategic reorientation of growth management focuses on broad sustainability and democratic concerns whereas *endogenous renewal* is self-regulatory and involves capacity building, dissemination, networking, technical co-operation, as well as policy recommendations, and the building of consumer awareness.
3. Regulatory & legal instruments, Economic & Fiscal instruments together with Communication & voluntary instruments are examples of sustainability policy instruments, the latter involving public-private partnerships for sustainable tourism and networks. and alluding to the notion of Corporate Social responsibility in the tourism sector. Certification schemes and guidelines for responsible operations are however complementary to Regulatory & legal instruments and Economic & Fiscal instruments.
4. There is a belief that in contrast to resource management, *certification* methodology will guarantee that a certain destination or tourism business meets set standards. Yet, future research projects need to contextualise and validate those claims at regular intervals. This is because certifications raise concerns. (Bergin-Seers, 2008: 4-5) and may provide only a condensed account of the environmental impacts associated with tourist enterprises due to its subjective nature. Certifications may deprive the potential tourists of an unbiased, comprehensive assessment. Tourism ecolabelling programs may be judged as value-laden technical jargon such as the terms recycled, pollution-free, sustainable. The spread of ecolabelling schemes may boost suspicion and distrust and lead to the tourist becoming indifferent to the environmental claims. (Sasidharan, Sirakaya & Kerstetter, 2002; Goodwin, 2005; Fairweather, Maslin & Simmons, 2005; Darnall & Aragón-Correa, 2014).
5. Eight implementation instruments, listed in the abstract at the beginning of this article, have been tested and evaluated. From the perspective adopted in this article, the implementation of sustainability policies requires the main tourism stakeholders to further understand and accept the implications of climate change for tourism demand patterns. The implementation of new tourism sustainability research on standards comparability over time and across contexts can reshape both offer as well as demand

patterns in a new tourism industry, conforming with the Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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