

## Research Article

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# Research trajectory on tourism policy: a bibliometric overview

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**Abstract:** Many scholars from various countries have been enthused by the term ‘tourism policy’ since it first appeared in the Scopus database in 1976. However, comprehensive scientific information on tourism policy is still limited. This article aims to explore the bibliography of tourism policy studies. This article uses a bibliometric analysis approach, and applies VOSviewer to visualise bibliographic data. This article indicates that tourism policy studies are increasing yearly, in line with how countries are implementing many tourism policies as an alternative to national economic development. Furthermore, research on tourism policy has involved many authors from various institutions and countries. From 159 articles reviewed, six dominant clusters were obtained. This clustering can help other scholars to see the position of their studies alongside previous studies. The results of this article show that economic development, competitiveness, policy, and management strategy are of interest to academics on the tourism policy topic. Moreover, the sustainability issues (ecotourism) and international tourism have become two of the major subjects that could greatly influence the course of future tourism policy research.

**Keywords:** Research trajectory; tourism policy; tourism management; bibliometric analysis; VOSviewer

## 1 Introduction

Currently, tourism policy studies are a point of interest for scholars. Many countries make tourism a national strategy (Bassani et al., 2022; Baum, 1994; Pastras & Bramwell, 2013; Santa, 2015), and the effect of this is shown in the growth of world tourism, which has increased in the last two decades. According to Almeida-García (2018) tourism policy is more often interpreted as a national policy than as an economic development process. In theory, tourism policy has the meaning that tourism ‘should’ lead to how policies should be built socially and enforced together (Dredge & Jenkins, 2012). Moreover, Volic (2022) argues that tourism policy is about economic growth, competitiveness, and development. In fact, its development from 2000 to 2019 (see Figure 1) shows an ever-increasing trend: in 2000 it reached more than 600 million visits, over five years increased to 810 million visits, in 2011 increased to 1.003 billion visits, and at half of 2019 was able to reach 1.460 billion visits (World Tourism Organization, 2020).

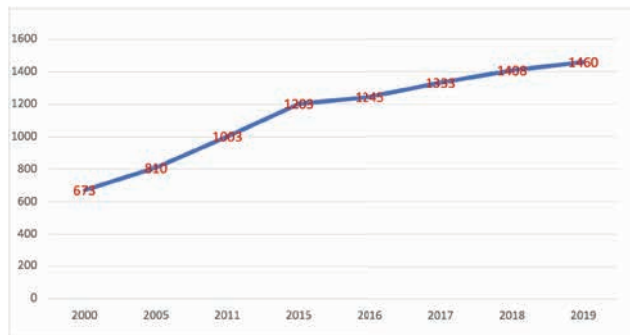
The data depicting the increasing mobility of tourists for almost two decades has resulted in a large number of countries competing to become tourist-friendly destinations, whether they are small or large, developed or developing, or socialist or democratic; even socialist countries wish to generate revenue from the tourism sector.

The state’s goal is to provide adequate treatment to stakeholders in building networks and to provide input on tourism development through policies in various countries, especially role model countries, in developing the tourism sector: nations such as Germany or Turkey (in five years of growth in 1999). Between 2014 and 2018, the Turkish government focused on developing a skilled workforce, facilities, and a high quality of tourism services to build a solid foundation on which to build the branding of Turkey as we know it today (Akça, 2017). The Chinese government implements sustainable tourism (Xu & Sofield, 2016), through the economic and social development plan in the framework Sustainable Development Goals, to resolve four main issues, particularly social problems, economic opportunities, heritage,

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**Figure 1.** International Tourist Arrivals (in millions)

**Source:** World Tourism Organization, 2020

and land sustainability (Giorgi et al., 2020). In countries such as Malta and England, the government optimises the tourism sector, as it has excellent potential and can allow the country to build power and overcome previous shortcomings of the country's tourism industry (Penrose, 2011)). The UK government is also taking intensive action to recover the tourism sector, specifically by creating two cross-border working groups under the State Secretary for Digital, Media, Culture, and Sport supported by the Ministry of Tourism (Department of Digital Culture Media and Sport, 2021) alongside the development of a political economy, where there is state intervention for influencing sustainable tourism (Guo et al., 2019).

Developed countries and developing countries also prove that the tourism sector triggers swift and precise development, such as in Indonesia. It demonstrates that the tourism sector has become one of the primary sources of state foreign currency income in recent years. The government estimates the number of foreign tourists to reach 20 million per year (Ollivaud & Haxton, 2019). Further, the Philippine government divided tourism into three phases through a policy learning approach (Santa, 2015). The Spanish government emphasizes the aspects of sustainable tourism included in the tourism policy framework (López-Sánchez & Pulido-Fernández, 2014). At the completed point presented by Estol and Font (2016), tourism policy in Europe is presented as a tool for sustainable growth and competitiveness. Another more radical mechanism is Myanmar, a country that is government-controlled by the military junta. Internal and external forces strongly influence the tourism sector from political entities in Myanmar, and in this example the complex relationship between tourism and politics is strongly visible (Henderson, 2010), making this an exciting object to explore further.

The empirical facts regarding the interest of many countries in developing the tourism sector academically, especially in research and publication of tourism policy

studies, indicates that tourism development is accompanied by the development of science. Several studies on tourism policy include a study from Koufodontis and Gaki (2020), which describes the importance of locality tourism policy. Furthermore, tourism policy has also been researched as a driving force to a sustainable environment (Guo et al., 2019; López-Sánchez & Pulido-Fernández, 2014; Muangasame & McKercher, 2015; Oura, 2018). Tourism policy can also be used as a policy response to create tourist markets in certain regions (Estol & Font, 2016). Although empirical and academic scholars are interested in tourism policy studies, the intellectual structure regarding tourism policy is still limited. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to explore scientific information about tourism policy in a certain period. Researchers used bibliographic data based on the Scopus database.

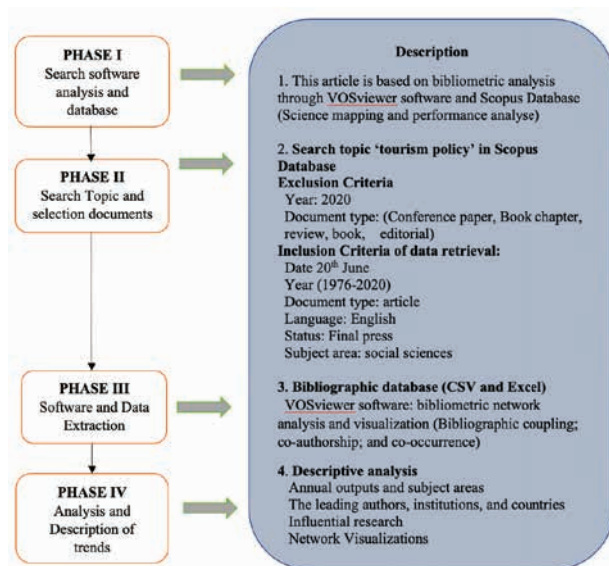
## 2 Research Methods

This article employed a bibliometric analysis to examine the scientific information regarding tourism policy in the Scopus database. Bibliometrics analysis is a branch of knowledge and library science that statistically analyses bibliographic data produced from scientific publications (Robertson et al., 2020; Sánchez et al., 2017). According to Yin et al. (2020), bibliometric analysis is based on the most up-to-date statistical methods and data mining techniques in infometrics. It provides a different viewpoint on a particular topic, allowing for the discovery of previously unknown information. Generally, bibliometrics has two categories of technique, namely, performance analysis and science mapping (Batmunkh et al., 2022; Donthu et al., 2021). Bibliometrics analysis aims to evaluate the nature of development research surrounding the topic *latest developments* (Roziqin et al., 2022), and even attempts to evaluate bibliometric analysis in one journal within a certain period.

Bibliometric analysis on specific topics has been carried out in various fields. Examples include a study by Miraj et al. (2020) on dry port studies, a study on retirement village development for the elderly (Osei-Kyei et al., 2020), microplastics in marine ecosystems (Pauna et al., 2019), task recommendations in crowdsourcing systems (Yin et al., 2020), entrepreneurial ecosystems and the public sector (Robertson et al., 2020), stem cells in ischemic stroke (Yang et al., 2020), and microplastics in terrestrial ecosystems (He et al., 2020). Bibliometric analysis can also be applied to one journal in a certain period, such as in articles titled 'Technological Forecasting and

Social Change From 1970-2018' (Shiwangi Singh et al., 2020), the *Journal of Heritage Tourism* (Kumar et al., 2020), the *Journal of Network and Computer Applications* between 1997 and 2019, the *Policy Studies Journal* between 2015-2020 (Azizatul et al., 2021), and many more. Meanwhile, bibliometric analysis on the topic of tourism includes heritage tourism (Bhowmik, 2021), ecotourism (Khanra et al., 2021; S. Liu & Li, 2020), and e-tourism (Shalini Singh & Bashar, 2021). Meanwhile, a bibliometric analysis of tourism policy is still limited, and this provides an interesting basis for researchers to conduct this study.

Bibliometric analysis is a scientific subject that depicts a comprehensive map of knowledge structure, appraisal, and measurement (Herrera-Franco et al., 2020). It focuses on scientific publications that are retrieved from a database. This article was conducted using the Scopus database. Scopus is considered one of the largest international databases covering various documents such as articles, reviews, proceedings, editorials, books, and book chapters across multiple disciplines. Further, the researcher used VOSviewer software (van Eck & Waltman, 2010) to visualize the map. VOSviewer has more exclusive features and can produce futuristic visualisations compared to other bibliometric analysis software. Through the use of two defined weights, such as the quantity and overall strength of the links, the VOSviewer graphically displays the nodal network (Suban et al., 2021). In this research, researchers import CSV (Comma Separated Values) data on tourism policies from the Scopus database to VOSviewer and apply co-occurrence features to visualize a bibliometric network. For more detail, this article adopted four phases, as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Research Phases and Description  
**Source:** Author analysis

## 3 Results and discussion

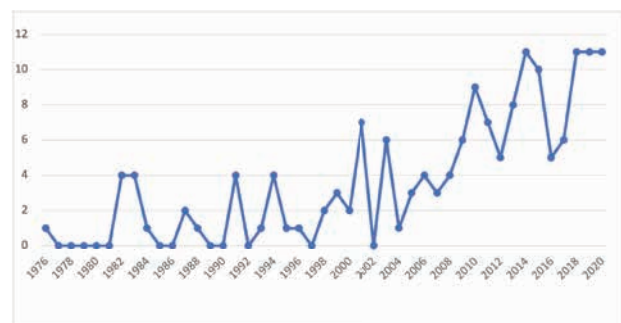
### 3.1 Annual outputs and subject areas

Based on Figure 3, discussions and journals related to tourism policy continue to develop over time; from 1982 to 1984, eight journals were published by several different authors. The debate is increasingly diverse; one journal cannot separate the link between tourism growth and economic development. The advantages gained since the development of the tourism sector are not proportional to the losses obtained (Krippendorf, 1982). The tourism policy issued should consider the sustainability of the next life; this policymaking is also a form of political transformation in the tourism sector.

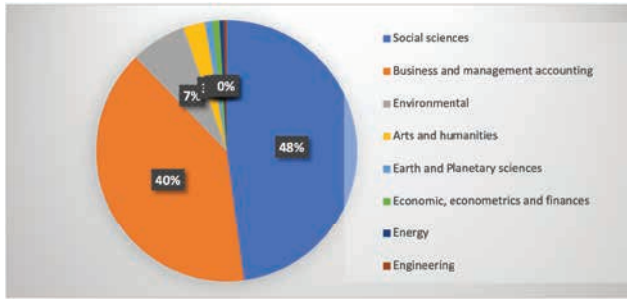
The first article on tourism policy appeared in 1976; the discussion focused on the definition and reasons why a tourism policy was needed to see the impact on society of policies issued from the government (Sessa, 1976). In a quotation from the article, the author also provides an ending in his writing, which explains how tourism policy can be beneficial and become a clear link for the application of economic theory in practice. So, this article acts as momentum for the emergence of a study on tourism policy with a more diverse study area (Figure 4).

At that time, the development of tourism policies was urgently needed to support future sustainability in tourism and recreation (van Doorn, 1982). During this time, it was deemed necessary to study tourism policy further to address future needs (Edgell, 1983). Tourism policy also changed China, which used tourism for political benefits and tourism development (Richter, 1983).

Figure 4 explains that tourism policy not only concerns and focuses on the scope of tourism, but also relates to other areas outside of tourism. Tourism policy figures indicate that 48% of policies relate to social science, 40% relate to business and accounting management,



**Figure 3.** Annual output of Tourism Policy Research (1976 – 2020)  
**Source:** Scopus database



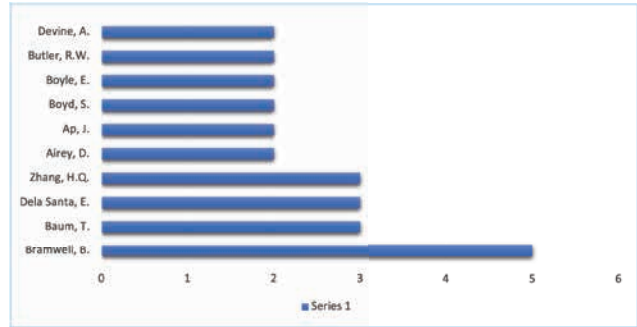
**Figure 4.** Subject Area  
**Source:** Scopus database

and 7% relate to the environmental field. A smaller few percent indicate that tourism policy is linked to the arts and humanities, earth and planetary sciences, economics, econometrics and finance, energy, and engineering. This shows that the study of tourism policy attracts social science researchers, especially in relation to politics and policy (Helmy, 2014; Richter, 1983). Tourism policy is a determinant towards the improvement or detriment of a country; suitable and appropriate tourism policies can lead to benefits including a good environment and air quality for a country (Hamaguchi, 2020). The elevated level of domestic tourism has also become a business field generated by good tourism policies to support domestic tourism development (Warisman & Muda, 2019).

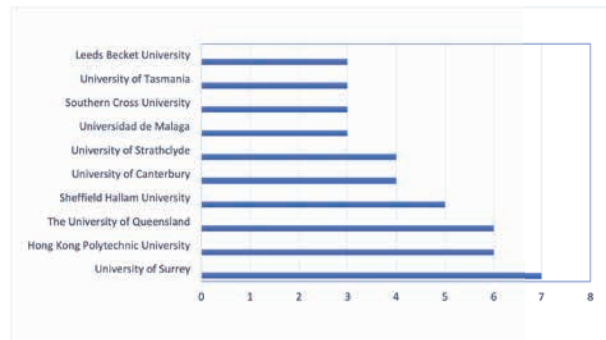
### 3.2 Leading authors, institutions, and countries

For 44 years, tourism policy studies have involved many authors from various institutions and countries; Figure 5 shows the top ten authors who have published the most articles on tourism policy. B. Bramwell has written the most articles, followed by T. Baum, E. Dela Santa, and H.Q. Zhang, with the same number of publications. One of the articles by B. Bramwell discusses the relational approach to understanding policymaking, the actors involved, and discussions that align with it in the realm of tourism policy (Bramwell & Meyer, 2007). The top authors have published at least two to three articles discussing tourism policy within a reasonable timeframe.

Figure 6 shows the number of universities that have successfully affiliated with some of the top authors in their publications. The first order was occupied by the *University of Surrey* located in the United Kingdom, followed by *Hong Kong Polytechnic University* located in Hong Kong, *The University of Queensland* located in Australia, *Sheffield Hallam University* located in the United Kingdom, and other universities below. The four universities are the top universities with the highest number of affiliations



**Figure 5.** Top 10 Authors on Tourism Policy Research  
**Source:** Scopus database



**Figure 6.** Documents by Affiliation  
**Source:** Scopus database

and publications on tourism policy. Research published by the *University of Surrey* detail one of the approaches taken regarding tourism policy in Australia, where policymaking is limited by the country’s neoliberalism policy (Airey & Ruhanen, 2014).

One of the studies affiliated with *Hong Kong Polytechnic* is highly influential and examines the role of the Chinese government in China’s economic development after the country implemented the *Open-door Economic Reform Policy* in the tourism sector through their adjusted tourism policies (Zhang et al., 1999). It can be concluded that the affiliation is dominated by universities located in the United Kingdom, such as the *University of Surrey* (1), *Sheffield Hallam University* (4), *University of Strathclyde* (6), and *Leeds Beckett University* (10). This is followed by universities from the Australian continent, specifically *The University of Queensland* (3), *Southern Cross University* (8), and *University of Tasmania* (9).

Figure 7 shows data on the authors of tourism policy articles, dominated mainly by authors from developed countries such as the United Kingdom, followed by the United States, as well as Australia, Spain, New Zealand, Canada, and China. Greece, Italy, and Japan are countries that have provided the least articles. The cooperation of tourism interest groups with the government to shape existing policies (Tyler & Dinan, 2001) has become one of





**Table 1.** The most cited research

No	Title	Authors	Sources (Volume, issue and pages)	Cited numbers
1	A typology of governance and its implications for tourism policy analysis	Michael Hall, C.	Journal of Sustainable Tourism 19(4-5), pp. 437-457	228
2	Improving tourism policy implementation - The use of hybrid MCDM models	Liu, C.-H., Tzeng, G.-H., Lee, M.-H.	Tourism Management 33(2), pp. 413-426	143
3	An analysis of tourism policy development in modern China	Zhang, H.Q., Chong, K., Ap, J.	Tourism Management 20(4), pp. 471-485	139
4	Tourism policy in the making: An Australian network study	Pfarr, C.	Annals of Tourism Research 33(1), pp. 87-108	134
5	The sustainable performance index for tourism policy development	Castellani, V., Sala, S.	Tourism Management 31(6), pp. 871-880	133
6	The impact of globalization on small and medium enterprises: New challenges for tourism policies in European countries	Smeral, E. .	Tourism Management 19(4), pp. 371-380	127
7	Power and tourism policy relations in transition	Bramwell, B., Meyer, D.	Annals of Tourism Research 34(3), pp. 766-788	126
8	Destination, place, identity, and regional tourism policy [Identité de lieu de destinations et prises de decision en tourisme au niyeau regional]	Dredge, D., Jenkins, J.	Tourism Geographies 5(4), pp. 383-407	111
9	Tourism policy making: The policymakers' perspective	Stevenson, N., Airey, D., Miller, G.	Annals of Tourism Research 35(3), pp. 732-750	107
10	Towards new tourism policies: The importance of environmental and sociocultural factors	Krippendorf, J.	Tourism Management 3(3), pp. 135-148	9

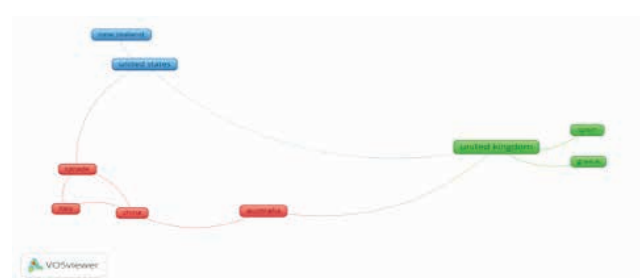
Source: Scopus database based on 20 March 2021

tation cannot be seen only in one aspect of tourism when attempting to optimise tourism policies in each country (Suno et al., 2021). By increasing the multi-actor and multi-dimensional creations created by the government, the approach to achieving tourist destinations must be multi-faceted and innovate together.

Cluster 4, which will lead to the improvement of tourism management with a holistic approach, can evaluate national tourism policies with the dynamics in policy implementation. In tourism, management is a public policy, and it can be a balance between stakeholders both in building and preserving heritage and tourism attractions (C.-H. Liu et al., 2012).

Cluster 5 is included in the concentration of ecotourism, and how the impact of tourist movement activities, if not appropriately managed, will gradually cause problems in the long term (Hamaguchi, 2019). Tourism will become an essential for the global community for recreational purposes in many various regions until people leave the area. National boundaries become essential when sustainable tourism is considered through ecotour-

ism, which requires support from all parties to formulate policies implemented in various countries. Tourism has a vital role in climate change, and as it does not receive intensive attention from various parties directly related to tourism, the government must use an integrated approach between networks such as China, Fiji, and New Zealand (Becken & Clapcott, 2011; Xu & Sofield, 2015). In cluster 6, with the downstreaming and stabilisation of national tourism, many countries start to compete to get an enormous foreign exchange income from this sector, and the



**Figure 9.** Bibliographic Coupling Based on Countries  
Source: VOSviewer visualization

**Table 2.** Clusterization by VOSviewer

No	Clusters	Items of concept	Colour	Number item
01	Cluster 1	Development, economic policy, government, marketing, planning, policy, policy approach, policy development, strategic approach, tourism, tourism policy.	Red	11
02	Cluster 2	Competitiveness, economic growth, economic impact, governance, human resource, recreational policy, regulatory framework, rural development, rural tourism, tourism economics	Green	10
03	Cluster 3	Complexity, decision making, developing world, governance approach, innovation, policy implementation, policy strategy, tourism market, tourist destination	Blue	9
04	Cluster 4	Comparative study, heritage tourism, implementation, policy analysis, public policy, sustainable development, sustainable tourism, tourism management, tourism attraction	Yellow	9
05	Cluster 5	Ecotourism, integrated approach, policymaking, stakeholder, sustainability	Purple	5
06	Cluster 6	International tourism, tourism development, tourism policy	Tosca	3

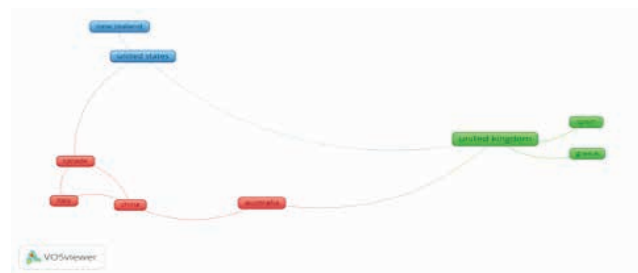
Source: Author analysis

development of international tourism is the opening road for development.

Figure 9 describes the relationship clusters from various countries. The cluster (red) shows the relationship between Italy, Canada, China, and Australia, divided into three interrelated clusters. A published article from the cluster discusses tourism policymaking using the Territory Tourism Development Masterplan (TDMP) method in the northern region of Australia as a new area for tourism development targets in Australia (Pforr, 2001). The second cluster (green) is filled by United Kingdom, Spain, and Greece. Articles published from Spain raised the issue of climate change, which is a strong concern in Spain's tourism sector; it is known that Spain became the third most visited country by tourists in 2014, and adjustments to tourism policies were made by the Spanish government to reduce global warming effects (Cantos & Rebollo, 2016).

Furthermore, the last cluster (blue) consists of the United States and New Zealand. Articles that appear from the United States have similarities with articles from Spain, namely climate change. Climate change is a problem for Barbados, with many areas dominated by the sea and coast. Policy actors and tourism owners have begun to work together to deal with this issue because Barbados made tourism the main driver of their economy (Belle & Bramwell, 2005).

Figure 10 shows the journals that often publish articles on tourism policy. Meanwhile, the journals are divided into three interrelated clusters. Articles published in the first cluster (red), one of which is published in the



**Figure 10.** Bibliographic coupling by Source  
Source: VOSviewer visualization

journal *Tourism Management*, explaining tourism policy in Sarawak, and how the government and the community attempt economic diversification in the tourism sector to increase their economy (Haigh, 2020). Another article published in the second cluster (green) *Journal of Planning and Development*, specifically discusses the role of domestic tourism organization and destination marketing organizations (DMOs) in developing countries for branding tourist destinations in the media (through brochures) aimed at increasing domestic tourist visits (Kokkranikal et al., 2011). In the third cluster (blue), one article published in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* raised long-term global transport proposals for tourists to attempt to reduce the effects of climate change in the world. It also aims to change the behaviour system to be more environmentally friendly to create sustainable tourism (Peeters, 2013).

## 4 Conclusion

The study of tourism policy has become an appealing topic in practice and the development of science. This study aims to explore the study of tourism policy bibliographically. In this article, it was found that the article that first discussed tourism policy appeared in 1976, written by A. Sessa, which was published in the journal *Annals of Tourism Research*. Furthermore, articles on tourism policy continue to increase in various countries, and the discussion is multidisciplinary. This writing eventually gave rise to authors in various countries and who collaborated to publish articles on tourism policy. The author with the most significant number of publications was B. Bramwell, represented by the article 'Power and tourism policy relations in transition,' 2007. Tourism policy is a focal point of study in more developed countries, rather than developing countries, as evidenced in Figure 7; for example, the United Kingdom has the highest number of article publications. One of the universities from the United Kingdom affiliated with many tourism authors is the University of Surrey. Tourism policy is also the result of government policies, and how the government can pass profitable policies to improve the country's economy. The article titled 'A typology of governance and its implications for tourism policy analysis' by Michael Hall in 2011 became the article with the most citations, showing how much government has influenced tourism policy.

This review study maps out six clusters of 159 articles obtained from the Scopus database related to 'Tourism Policy.' The mapping of these clusters was accomplished using Vosviewer. The six clusters include the following: Cluster 1: development, economic policy, government, marketing, planning, policy, policy approach, policy development, strategic approach, tourism, tourism policy. Cluster 2: Competitiveness, economic growth, economic impact, governance, human resources, recreational policy, regulatory framework, rural development, rural tourism, tourism economics. Cluster 3: Complexity, decision making, developing world, governance approach, innovation, policy implementation, policy strategy, tourism market, tourist destination. Cluster 4: Comparative study, heritage tourism, implementation, policy analysis, public policy, sustainable development, sustainable tourism, tourism management, tourism attraction. Cluster 5: Ecotourism, integrated approach, policymaking, stakeholder, sustainability. Cluster 6: International tourism, tourism development, tourism policy.

The cluster results above contribute to the mapping of studies on tourism policy developing in the international world, making it easier for scholars to conduct

subsequent research. The discussion of tourism policy is multidisciplinary following current developments. This research has both theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretically, it makes a significant contribution to a conceptual framework for tourism policy by trend and mapping research. Practically, our research conveys accumulated and synthesized domain knowledge for policymakers and key stakeholders to help them design, initiate, implement, manage, and evaluate the topic of tourism policy.

A bibliometric analysis of the research subjects used in this study adds to the body of knowledge on tourism policy. However, it has limitations that should be addressed for future research. The sustainability issues (ecotourism) and international tourism have become two of the major subjects that could greatly influence the course of future tourism policy research. This article provides scientific information on a particular topic using only the Scopus database. Therefore, it is suggested that the other researchers can use another international indexation database, one of which is Clarivate Analytics/Web of Sciences (WoS), or even compare the databases of the two indexations. Furthermore, this research considers keywords based on the findings from previous literature in the one scope. Additional keywords from outside the scope of this research are proposed to be included in future studies, as the generalization and objective of this study may have omitted or neglected other keywords. We also recommend that the subsequent study include other methodological approaches that could improve the validity and reliability of its findings.

### Bionotes

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