

What do sustainable tourism researchers value?

An analysis of citations from the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (1999-2008)

Pierre Benckendorff

James Cook University, Australia, Pierre.Benckendorff@jcu.edu.au

Abstract

Sustainable Tourism has emerged as a major field of specialisation within tourism and has been so pervasive that some have suggested that the field represents a fifth platform of tourism research, while others have argued that the field has moved beyond a niche area of research to inform tourism research more generally. While there have been some qualitative attempts at mapping the growth and evolution of the field, no quantitative research has been conducted to identify the most valued authors, works and journals. This paper adopts a relational bibliometric approach to provide insights into the intellectual structure of sustainable tourism research. The study presents citation and co-citation analyses of papers authored by researchers in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* between 1999 and 2008. A general picture of the field is drawn by examining the most-cited authors and works as well as co-citation patterns. The analysis is extended by the use of network analysis to explore the links between title words and influential works in the field. Results indicate that sustainable tourism research has been strongly influenced by geography and ecology. The study also identifies three major clusters or research focus: sustainable tourism development, ecotourism and the management of tourism impacts.