

# COMPETITIVENESS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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## ABSTRACT

The tourism sector particularly stands out for its sheer capacity to expand as displayed worldwide to a greater or lesser extent and commonly performing a relevant role both as a tool for competitiveness and a driver of regional development. This theme has correspondingly attracted a great deal of interest from many scientists, and there has been exponential growth in research on the area. Hence, the objectives of this present study include the mapping of the intellectual structure of research on “Tourism & Competitiveness” as conveyed by the academic literature, identifying the fundamental contributions of research on the field, determining those lines of research that constitute its intellectual structure and identifying those scientific journals with the greatest impact. To this end, we carried out bibliometric analysis of the “Tourism & Competitiveness” concept in order to ascertain the research undertaken and, among other results, highlighting the identification of three clusters of distinctive core themes to this field of knowledge.

Keywords: Tourism, Competitiveness, Bibliometric Analysis, Clusters.

JEL Classification: L83, Z39

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism represents one of the most important of all economic sectors with the literature displaying a broad consensus as regards the central role tourism plays in the development and competitiveness of many regions (Lazzeretti et al., 2008; Alberti & Giusti, 2012; Beladi et al., 2015; Banki & Ismail, 2015; Zhang, 2016). According to Crouch (2007), managing to establish, nurture, protect and strengthen tourism destinations, and their positioning in increasingly competitive and global markets, presents a major challenge to the tourism sector (Crouch, 2007). The entities that manage destinations correspondingly play a critical role, alongside local companies, in terms of constructing and sustaining competitive advantages through the choices made over positioning (Sainaghi, 2006).

The level to which a country might benefit from tourism largely derives from the competitive positioning of its sector in the international tourism market (Gomezelj & Mihalic, 2008). We thus consider that the “Tourism & Competitiveness” research field remains relatively fragmented and we did not find any article that used the bibliometric method in the analysis and study of this concept. Our main contributions are: (a) mapping the intellectual structure of research on Tourism & Competitiveness as reflected in the

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academic literature, (b) identifying the fundamental contribution to research on the field of Tourism & Competitiveness, (c) determining the lines of research making up this intellectual structure and (d) identifying the scientific journals with the greatest impact on the field.

This study applies a combination of bibliometric techniques, such as citations, co-citations and social network analysis to survey the “Tourism & Competitiveness” scientific field. We thus seek to provide the scientific community with a map of publications interrelated with this theme, demonstrate their respective evolution as well as identifying the lead researchers on themes around “Tourism & Competitiveness” with graphic representation in terms of the journals, authors and themes so as to better understand the publications approaching this subject area. We begin by setting out the theoretical framework of the research carried out on “Tourism & Competitiveness”; before describing the methodology applied, the data analysed before finally presenting our results and the conclusions resulting.

## **2. TOURISM & COMPETITIVENESS**

Furthermore, throughout many years, governments and populations in general overlooked the economic and social importance of tourism (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999) even while, in fact, this sector has proven not only an authentic source of creation of both value and employment (Botti et al., 2008) but also one of the activities with the greatest potential around the world. This growth potential comes in conjunction with a product that may only be consumed on the spot in a characteristic that has become an integral facet of local development strategies (Ferreira & Estevão, 2009). Jackson & Murphy (2002) back up this idea in affirming how governments themselves identify tourism as a feasible means of leveraging economic development given the lack of employment in the traditional sectors of the economy. Geographic proximity is also considered a relevant factor in perceptions around the performance of tourism organisations that helps ensure the continuity of tourism companies and contributing to the competitiveness of the tourism sector (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Botti et al., 2008).

Crouch & Ritchie (1999) and Kim & Dwyer (2003) unanimously affirm that the development of the tourism potential of any country or region depends substantially on maintaining a competitive advantage in the supply of goods and services to visitors and that the competitiveness of a tourism destination stems from the ability that this displays in providing its tourist visitors with goods and services better than the competition. However, boosting the competitiveness of tourism destinations also requires new methods of evaluating them and encapsulating their current situation in order to provide clear indications as to the strategic actions necessary to fostering their competitive factors (Parra-López & Oreja-Rodríguez, 2014). Furthermore, according to Cucculelli & Goffi (2016), the role of sustainability becomes a determining factor for the competitiveness of a tourism destination.

The rising interest in the competitiveness of tourism destinations has reflected in the expanding literature on this field (Vila et al., 2015). Many of these research projects assumed the objective of setting out diagnoses of the competitiveness of specific destinations (Crouch, 2007), including the United States of America (Ahmed & Krohn 1990; D’Hautserre, 2000; Scott et al., 2004), Las Vegas (Chon & Mayer, 1995), European Cities (Mazanec, 1995; Buhalis, 1998; Go & Govers, 2000), (Pearce, 1997), Sun/Lost City in South Africa (Botha et al., 1999), Austrália (Faulkner et al., 1999; Dwyer et al., 2000; Divisekera, 2003), Toronto (Carmichael, 2002), Mediterranean Resorts (Papatheodorou, 2002; Alegre & Pou, 2006), South Korea and Australia (Kim & Dwyer, 2003), Spain and Turkey (Kozak, 2001; 2003), Canada (Milhalic, 2000; Murphy et al., 2000; Ritchie & Ritchie, 2002; Hudson

et al., 2004), Hong Kong (Enright & Newton, 2004), Asia-Pacific (Enright & Newton, 2005) Zimbabwe (Vengesayi, 2005), Cyprus (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), Slovenia (Omerzel, 2006), Korea and Australia (Gomezelj & Mihalic, 2008), the Caribbean (Croes, 2006; ECLAC, 2009), Slovenia (Gomezelj & Mihalic, 2008), Barcelona and Vienna (d'Angella & Go, 2009), Brazil (Ritchie & Crouch, 2010), Portugal (Estevão & Ferreira, 2015; Estevão et al., 2015) and Italy (Cucculelli & Goffi, 2016). Other studies have centred on particular aspect of destination competitiveness, including its positioning (Chacko, 1998), destination management systems (Baker et al., 1996; Mihalic, 2000; Enright & Newton, 2004), destination commercialisation (Buhalis, 2000), price competitiveness (Stevens, 1992; Dwyer et al., 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001, 2002), quality management (Go & Govers, 2000; Murphy et al., 2000), the environment (Hassan, 2000; Mihalic, 2000), nature-based tourism (Huybers & Bennett, 2003; Claver-Cortes et al., 2007), strategic management (Jamal & Getz, 1996; Soteriou & Roberts, 1998), organised circuits (Taylor, 1995), governance (Costa et al., 2013). Furthermore, there were also studies concentrating on measuring the competitiveness of the tourism destination (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Cores, 2011; Croes & Kubickova, 2013; Crouch, 2007) and as well as research based on the development of general models and theories for destination competitiveness (Porter, 1990; Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Kim & Dwyer, 2003; Heath, 2003; Vengesayi, 2005; Gomezelj & Mihalic, 2008; Ferreira & Estevão, 2009; Malakauskaite & Navickas, 2010; Estevão & Ferreira, 2015; Estevão et al., 2015).

As regards the sheer scale and scope of this body of research, we may indeed question just what are the core themes to this field as correspondingly proposed by academics and published in journals as well as evaluating their respective impacts? Just which clusters might thus get identified?

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied to produce the evaluation of the research performance encapsulates quantitative and statistical methods for analysing scientific articles and their respective citations in the ISI *Web of Science* databases in articles published in journals belonging to the categories of management, business and economics. The collection of scientific works on a specific field enables the portrayal of research activities and impacts, especially in terms of the researchers, journals, countries and universities (Hawkins, 1977; Osareh, 1996; Thomsom Reuters, 2008).

Bibliometric analysis currently represents a methodology applied to analyse already published research (Mutschke et al., 2011). This deploys quantitative and statistical analysis specifically to articles and their respective citations (Thomsom Reuters, 2008) with the analysis returning a vast perspective on the activities and impacts of different research projects, in particular, their researchers, the journals, countries and universities (Hawkins, 1977; Osareh, 1996).

We gathered our data from the following indices: Web-of-Science Core collection (1900-2016), as compiled by the online Thomson/Reuters-ISI database, which contains thousands of academic publications coupled with bibliographic details about their authors, affiliations and citations. The search took place in February 2017 in the Web of Science™ Core Collection database through the application of the search term “Tourism & Competitiveness” to the title, abstract or keywords of articles and with a chronological filter ending in 2016. This search returned a total of 496 articles with dates of publication ranging between 1992 (1 article) and 2016 (91 articles).

As regards the statistical and analytical methods applied to the database, a first phase saw the descriptive analysis of the articles returned by the search, primarily making recourse to graphical methods, frequency tables and descriptive measures (means and standard deviation) with the same methods serving for analysis of the relevance of the respective journals and the incidence of citations.

Analysis of co-citations became the standard in the 1970s and has since then held a preponderant position in the bibliometric analysis even while there has recently been a resurgence in recourse to bibliographic coupling undermining the historical preference for co-citation analysis (Boyack & Klavans, 2010). Hence, and also due to the only limited number of publications getting identified by the search, this study applies the methodology based upon bibliographic coupling. Therefore, in order to evaluate potential patterns among the publications, we analysed which joint references they established and had then set out a matrix displaying the number of references shared between the publications identified by the search. To graphically map the network of article co-citations based on shared references, we applied network theory and also determining the clusters based upon the hierarchal method of Ward, which generates homogenous groups of articles.

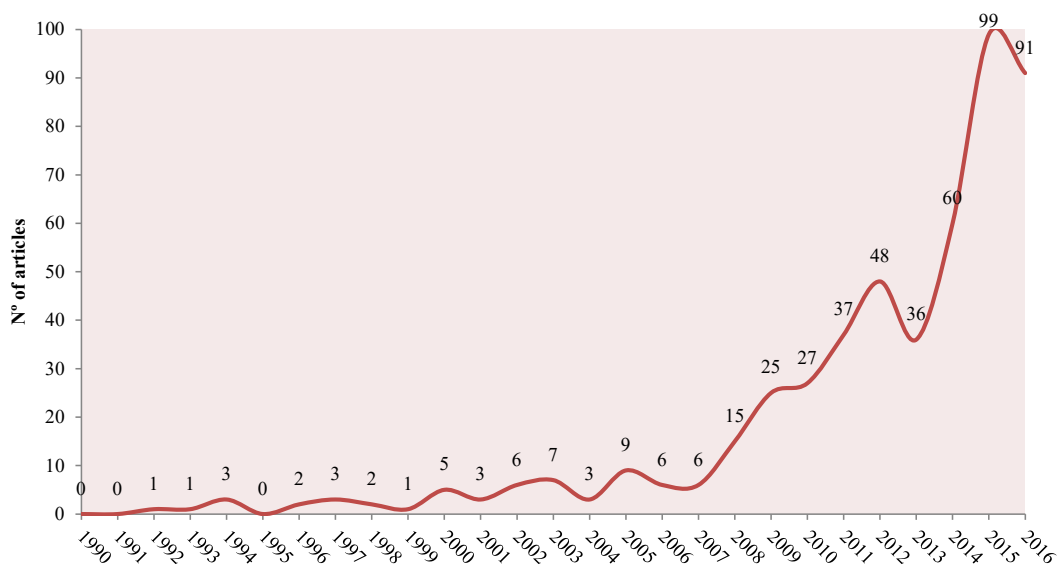
All of these procedures made recourse to Microsoft Excel 2010 (Microsoft Corporation, Washington, USA), UCINET version 6.554 (Borgatti et al., 2002) and NetDraw version 2.148 (Borgatti, 2002) software.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Article Characteristics

Figure 1 presents the annual evolution in the number of articles published. The average year of publication is 2012 and correspondingly reflecting a field of research still in its growth phase. Through to 2000, the number of articles on this topic remained at a very low level with 2008 seeing exponential growth before peaking in 2015 with the largest number of articles published on “Tourism & Competitiveness” (99 articles).

Figure 1. Number of References by Year of Publication



Source: Own Elaboration

Regarding the citations, there is a mean of 10.3 with  $\pm 32.0$  citations within the scope of which 180 (36.6%) of the articles do not contain any citation, and 112 (22.6%) were cited at least ten times.

The three articles that contain the largest number of citations are:

1. Yoon & Uysal (2005). An examination of the effects of motivation and satisfaction on destination loyalty: a structural model. *Tourism Management*, 26(1), 45-56 (471 citations, an average of 39.3 citations per year).
2. Crouch & Ritchie (1999). Tourism, Competitiveness and Societal Prosperity. *Journal of Business Research*, 44(3), 137-152 (269 citations, an average of 14.9 citations per year).
3. Buhalis (1998). Strategic Use of Information Technologies in the Tourism Industry. *Tourism Management*, 19(5), 409-421 (184 citations, an average of 9.7 citations per year).

Table 1 sets out the 10 articles with the largest number of citations and their annual citation frequency.

**Table 1. Publications most Cited in the Field of “Tourism & Competitiveness” (average number of citations per year in parenthesis)**

Rank	Article	Total citations
1	Yoon & Uysal (2005)	269 (39.3)
2	Crouch & Ritchie (1999)	184 (14.9)
3	Buhalis (1998)	183 (9.7)
4	Enright & Newton (2004)	180 (14.1)
5	Murphy et al. (2000)	177 (10.6)
6	Kozak (2001)	129 (11.1)
7	Mihalic (2000)	106 (7.6)
8	Dwyer et al. (2000)	84 (6.2)
9	Leung et al. (2013)	78 (21)
10	Gomezelj & Mihalic (2008)	75 (8.7)

Source: Own Elaboration

As regards the sources, the 496 articles identified by the search received their publication in a total of 172 journals of which 105 (61.0%) published but one article on this theme. Figure 2 presents the journals publishing the largest number of articles with *Tourism Management* (61 articles) leading the way and followed by *Tourism Economics* (31 articles), *Journal of Travel Research* (21 articles), *Current Issues in Tourism* and *International Journal of Tourism Research* (19 articles apiece).

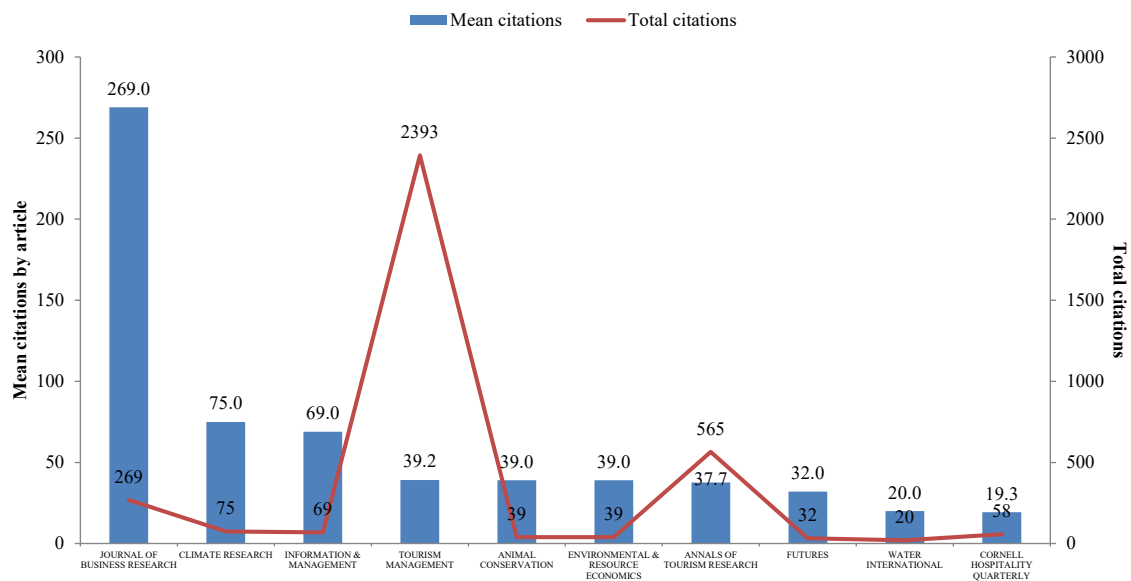
Figure 2. Journals with the Largest Number of Articles Published on “Tourism & Competitiveness”



Source: Own Elaboration

In the case of the total number of citations of published articles (Figure 3), this highlights Tourism Management (2393 citations), Annals of Tourism Research (565 citations) and Journal of Business Research (269 citations). In terms of the average number of citations per article, the leading publications were Journal of Business Research (269 citations per article), Climate Research (75 citations per article) and Information and Management (16 citations per article) even while these journals only contain one article dealing with this theme.

Figure 3. Journals publishing the articles on “Tourism & Competitiveness” with the greatest number of citations



Source: Own Elaboration

## 4.2 Analysis of Co-citations

We reduced the initial sample of 496 articles to those articles containing at least fifty citations resulting in a total of 21 articles (Table 2). The average year of publication for these 21 is 2004, and  $\pm 4.4$ , with this group on average, cited 120.7,  $\pm 100.6$  times.

We then established a frequency matrix by cross-referencing the citations through coupling each article with every other article in which the cells then depict the number of times each pair of articles contains the same joint citation. A cell returning a score of zero conveys how one of the articles was not jointly cited with the other article and a line of zeros in the co-citations matrix indicates that a particular article did not get referenced by the other articles.

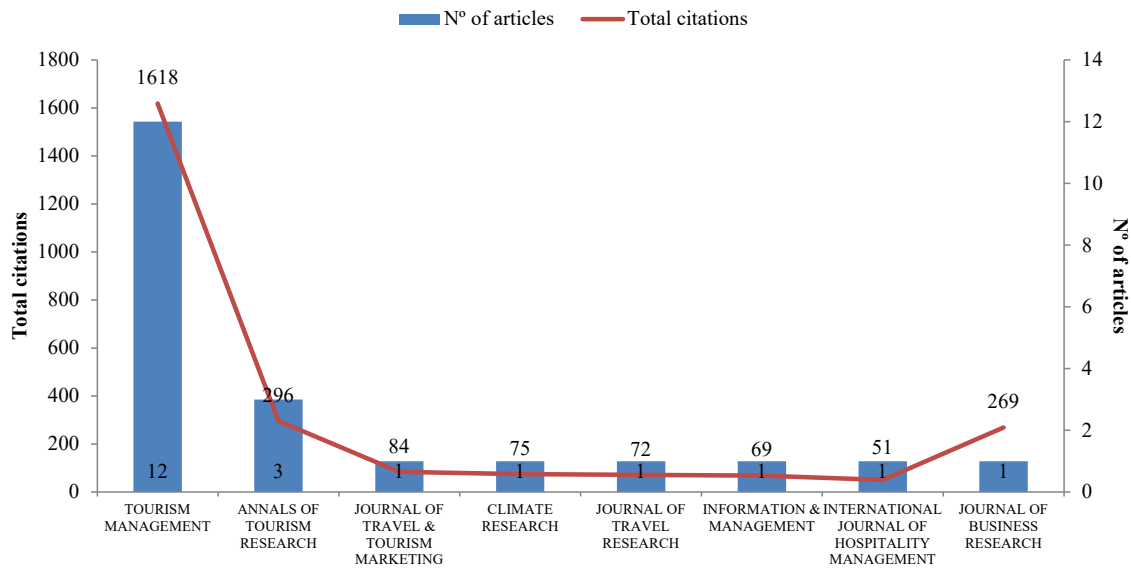
**Table 2. Articles Applied in the Co-citations Analysis**

Article	Total co-citations	Mean citations by year
Yoon & Uysal (2005)	471	39.3
Crouch & Ritchie (1999)	269	14.9
Buhalis (1998)	184	9.7
Enright & Newton (2004)	183	14.1
Murphy et al. (2000)	180	10.6
Kozak (2001)	177	11.1
Mihalic (2000)	129	7.6
Dwyer et al. (2000)	106	6.2
Leung et al. (2013)	84	21.0
Gomezelj & Mihalic (2008)	78	8.7
Scott et al. (2004)	75	5.8
Crouch (2011)	72	12.0
Buhalis (2004)	69	5.3
Divisekera (2003)	65	4.6
Croes (2006)	61	5.5
Alegre & Pou (2006)	60	5.5
Go & Govers (2000)	60	3.5
Claver-Cortes et al. (2007)	54	5.4
d'Angella & Go (2009)\nparticularly the relationship between the Destination Management\nOrganization (DMO)	53	6.6
Ritchie & Ritchie (2002)	53	3.5
Garay & Font (2012)	51	10.2

Source: Own Elaboration

As regards the journals publishing the 21 articles incorporated into this analysis of co-citations, we find that *Tourism Management* (12 articles and 1618 citations) and the *Annals of Tourism Research* (3 articles and 296 citations) are the journals with the greatest impact in the 21 most cited articles (Figure 4).

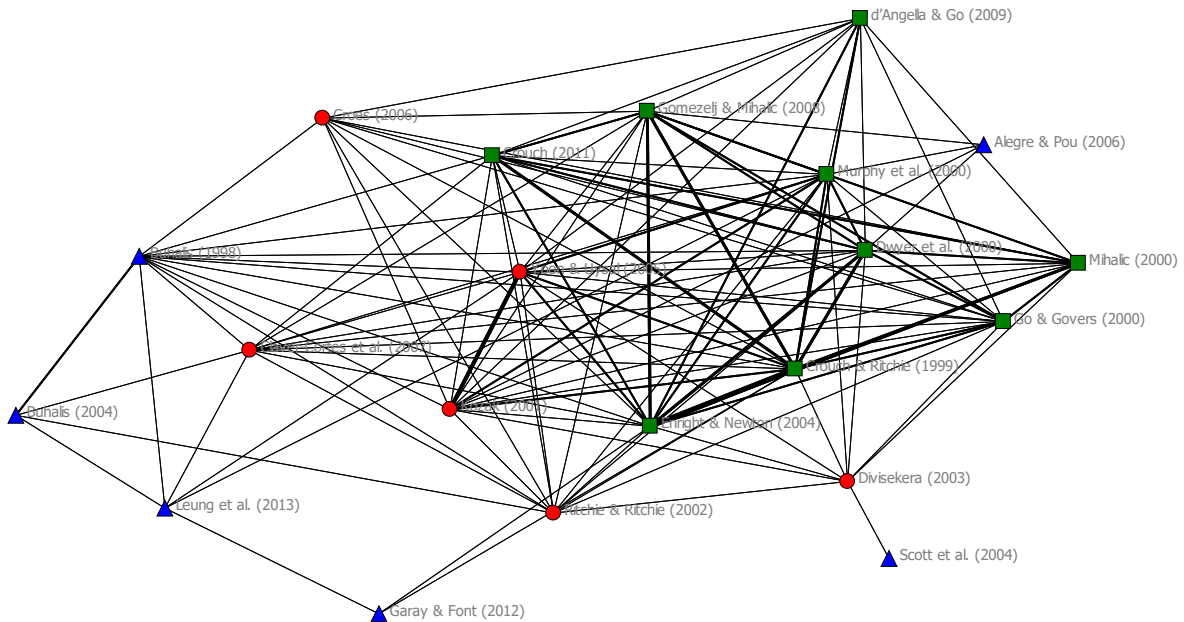
Figure 4. Number of Articles and Citations in the Field of “Tourism & Competitiveness” by Journal (21 article sample applied for co-citation analysis)



Source: Own Elaboration

Based on the matrix of co-citations, we produced a network of co-citations (Figure 5) and correspondingly calculating the centrality measurement in order to identify the core articles on “Tourism & Competitiveness”. Thus, the authors responsible for the most central articles in terms of this research field were Murphy et al. (2000), Crouch & Ritchie (1999), Enright & Newton (2004) and Dwyer et al. (2000).

Figure 5. Network of Co-citations and Clusters



Source: Own Elaboration

We overlaid the clusters on the social network above to ensure better visualisation and a spatial framework before discriminating them in Table 3.



**Table 3. Group Resulting from Cluster Analysis of the Co-citations Matrix**

<b>Cluster 1 – Strategic and Operational Marketing</b>	<b>Cluster 2 – Quality and Environment Management, Regional Development and Competitive and Comparative Advantages</b>	<b>Cluster 3 – Information and Communication Technologies, Happenstance, Social Responsibility and Segmentation</b>
Kozak (2001)	Crouch & Ritchie (1999)	Buhalis (1998)
Ritchie & Ritchie (2002)	Murphy et al. (2000)	Scott et al. (2004)
Divisekera (2003)	Go & Govers (2000)	Buhalis (2004)
Yoon & Uysal (2005)	Mihalic (2000)	Alegre & Pou (2006)
Croes (2006)	Dwyer et al. (2000)	Garay & Font (2012)
Claver-Cortes et al. (2007)	Enright & Newton (2004)	Leung et al. (2013)
	Gomezelj & Mihalic (2008)	
	d'Angella & Go (2009)	
	Crouch (2011)	

Source: Own Elaboration

## 5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### 5.1 Cluster 1 – Strategic and Operational Marketing

Kozak (2001) proposes a model of multiple relationships between tourist satisfaction, prior visits and the behavioural intention to revisit a tourist destination (Spain and Turkey). Within this scope, the analysis identifies differences between mature destinations and their lesser developed counterparts. This author verifies how despite the impact of general satisfaction proving consistent, some factors differ between these two destination types with the general level of satisfaction and the number of prior visits considerably influencing the intentions of repeat visits. This relationship proves stronger in the case of mature destinations than their peers.

In turn, Ritchie & Ritchie (2002) hand down instructions for establishing an information system for complete regional destination marketing. More specifically, they describe the process by which the tourism industry in Alberta (Canada) developed a framework for the acquisition of timely and intelligent research in order to maintain and raise its competitiveness as a travel destination.

Divisekera (2003) puts forward a model of demand for international tourism based on consumer choice theory. This author then applies the model to demand in the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and New Zealand for tourism in Australia and selected alternative destinations. The elasticities arising stem from the substantial effects of crossed demand, reflecting the diversity in preferences of tourists. This study generated new and important information on the effects and the sensitivity of international tourism to economic parameters. The results advocate the formulation of wide-reaching national policy measures designed to maintain and improve on the relative competitiveness experienced by individual destinations and alongside the development of strategic policies to maximise the gains from tourism.

The study by Yoon & Uysal (2005) provides an integrated approach to grasping tourist motivations and thereby attempting to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence about the causal relations between the pull and push motivations, satisfaction and loyalty to the destination. Consequently, destination management teams need to establish higher levels of tourist satisfaction in order to foster positive, post-purchase behaviours in order to build and sustain destination competitiveness. In the research by Croes (2006), the results convey how small islands that specialise as tourism destinations have turned in good performances despite their limitations in size and the disadvantages experienced in economic terms.

Claver-Cortes et al. (2007) set out thorough analysis of a specialist second generation sun and sea mass destination, Benidorm, Spain. The authors contradict the opinion of many researchers in arguing that such destinations do not inevitably need to decline and are able to remain competitive.

## **5.2 Cluster 2 – Quality and Environment Management, Regional Development and Competitive and Comparative Advantages**

Crouch & Ritchie (1999) recognise the weighting tourism has attained in cities, states and nations as a sector constituting an important factor in economic development. In this study, the authors also examine the relationship between social prosperity and tourism in accordance with a framework for competitiveness and the public perceptions of tourism as one of the leading sectors of the economy, placing this sector at the centre of their attentions and seeking to demonstrate not only its economic efficiency and environmental management but also its social relevance. One way of examining this relevance is evaluating up to what point tourism contributes towards the general wellbeing of a society, which in turn gets perceived as a composite of economic prosperity, environmental and quality of life management and where the capacity of a destination to provide a high standard of living to its residents contributes towards its competitiveness as a tourist destination.

According to Murphy et al. (2000), the rising interest in destination competitiveness has served to focus attention on the definition and description of a destination and just how tourists perceive the complex amalgam of features and experiences. This research identifies two subcomponents in the literature on destinations as products and carries out analysis on how meaning gets perceived by tourists in terms of their perceptions of quality, value and intention of visitors to return.

Mihalic (2000) follows a model that divides destination management into two sections: (1) management and (2) marketing. This research studies the environmental competitiveness of the destination and whether this is susceptible to raising through management efforts targeting the environmental impact and the management of environmental quality (EQ). Subsequently, destination competitiveness might get reinforced by certain environment marketing activities. Furthermore, this categorises environment management into groups: management by codes of conduct, by self-developed environmental practices, by certified best practices or awards and by accreditation schemes.

According to the position of Go & Govers (2000), maintaining and improving the demand for high quality in Europe represents a fundamental dimension to holding a position of leadership as a world tourism destination and correspondingly dealing with the challenges of competitors and boosting market share. The research presents the results of eight case studies of best practices in effect at different destinations in the four participating European countries in this study published by the European Commission (DG XXIII). The study objectives involve determining whether specific European destinations apply quality management as a means of boosting their competitiveness in accordance with the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) model. The results convey how

the integrated management of destination quality remains fairly underdeveloped. In general terms, the destinations tend to display strength in one area of the EFQM model, such as policy and strategy or human resource management but to the contrary of adopting a balanced and integrated approach to quality management.

Dwyer et al. (2000) present conclusions from their analysis of the price competitiveness of 19 tourism destinations. Taking Australia as their reference country, this study then compares the prices for a package of tourism goods and services at a series of competitor destination through setting out an international competitive pricing index. They distinguish between two main pricing categories – those relating to travel to and from a destination (travel costs) and those relating to the prices in effect at the tourism destination (sole costs).

More recently, a huge number of researchers have indicated that the competitiveness of tourism destinations reaches beyond the attributes of conventional destinations and should include the more generic factors of business competitiveness. Given this shortcoming, Enright & Newton (2004) carried out research that applied factors related to the competitiveness of destination attractions and the broader tourism industry. This correspondingly evaluates the factors of importance and relative competitiveness through a performance importance analysis methodology. The study concludes that its methodological approach represents a promising means of undertaking theoretically justified quantitative empirical analysis able to establish the grounds for management and political decision making on the tourism sector.

According to Gomezelj & Mihalic (2008), tourism managers need to identify and explore their competitive advantages and analyse the competitive position of the destination. The findings identify Slovenia as the most competitive destination in keeping with its natural, cultural and created resources but less competitive in terms of its tourism management and, in accordance with the integrated model, there are conditions in which both these facets remain non-competitive and limiting the capacity of Slovenian tourism to aggregate value. Their final discussion highlights weaknesses in the development of models of tourism competitiveness before appealing for both greater unity with competitive factor theory and greater care in choosing the main factors and models of competitiveness.

The Crouch (2011) study objective revolves around proposing a vision on the importance and the impact of the attributes shaping tourism destination competitiveness. Deploying a general conceptual model of destination competitiveness, this evaluates 36 attributes for competitiveness through an online survey of destination managers and academic tourism specialists within the scope of estimating their respective importance and producing measures for determining these attributes. These measures were then statistically tested in order to identify just which attributes were deemed to wield the greatest determining impact on destination competitiveness.

D'Angella & Go (2009), in turn, focus on collaborative tourism marketing practices, especially the relationship between the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) and tourism companies. This applies stakeholder theory as a structure for evaluating the performance and the capacity of a DMO to gain support in decision making, which contributes to optimising the rewards of interested parties while minimising the risks.

### **5.3 Cluster 3 – Information and Communication Technologies, Happenstance, Social Responsibility and Segmentation**

Buhalis (1998, 2004) maintains that information technologies (ITs) prevail throughout every function of strategic and operational management. As information constitutes the vital strength of tourism, ITs generate opportunities and challenges to the industry. Despite the uncertainties experienced around ITs developed for tourism, the “only constant will be change”. Increasingly, organisations and destinations that have to compete will have

to engage in computing. Only creative and innovative suppliers will be able to compete in the new millennium. This research also puts forward a structure for applying technology to tourism, adopting a strategic perspective with this author furthermore proposing a continuous re-engineering of the business processes so as to guarantee they meet a broad range of pre-requisites, such as vision, rational organisation, commitment and training, that enable destinations and their managers to capitalise on the unprecedented opportunities emerging from ITs.

Scott et al. (2004) conclude that tourism amounts to an important sector of the global economy and strongly influenced by the prevailing climate and, at some travel destinations, this represents a natural resource for which the tourism industry becomes an attribute. Global climate changes contain the potential to alter the distribution of tourism with implications for the seasonal nature of tourism, demand and travel patterns.

Buhalis (2004) highlights both how information and communication technologies (ICTs) have revolutionised the entire world of business and the pioneering role played by airline companies in ITCs in keeping with their long history of technological innovation in comparison with many other travel and tourism companies. This research study demonstrates how the airline sector adopted the Internet to improve its distribution strategy and cut costs while turning to intranets and internal systems for developing tactical and strategic management. Furthermore, extranets have gradually entered into usage as a means of communicating with partners and supporting ongoing relationships with companies (B2B). The results convey how ICTs are crucial to the strategies and operational efficiency of airline companies and shall directly shape their respective future levels of competitiveness.

The study by Alegre & Pou (2006) analyses the microeconomic determinants of the time spent in one of the main sun and sea destinations in the Mediterranean. Calculating a functional model of conditional demand reveals the explanatory power of the socio-demographic profile of tourists and the characteristics of their holiday periods as well as the sensitivity of the time spent in resorts to changes in pricing.

Meanwhile, Garay & Font (2012) identify how corporate social responsibility practices almost always get analysed within the context of large manufacturing companies with little attention paid to the service sector and still less to small and medium-sized accommodation companies. This study strove to counter this lack through analysing how such companies deal with this responsibility. Their findings detail how the main motivation for acting responsibly stems from altruism even while competitiveness related reasons also receive considerable importance. Aspects of a “resource-based vision” emerge through the positive impact of reducing environmental costs on financial performances but also because other practices (not always interrelated with economic reason) influence their competitiveness. The authors conclude that the greater implementation of these practices is necessary to achieve the full potential of the competitive advantages held.

Leung et al. (2013) analyse all of the research articles existing on Social Media published between 2007 and 2011, especially in the fields of tourism and hospitality. Based on content analysis of these articles, both from the consumer and the supplier perspectives, this research proposes that consumer-focused studies generally concentrate on the usage and impact of Social Media in the research phase of the process of planning travel and holidays. Suppliers, in turn, concentrate on the functions of promotion, management and research but only a few discuss product distribution. The research results fully and completely demonstrate the strategic importance of Social Media to tourism competitiveness.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study methodologically sets out the main contributions arising from the literature on “Tourism and Competitiveness”. Through this bibliometric analysis, we may conclude that through to 2000 the number of articles published remained residual and only after 2008 was there exponential growth in the number of publications that peaked in 2015, the year of publication of the largest number of articles.

We would highlight how the three articles returning the largest number of citations came out in 1998, 1999 and 2005 and the journals publishing the greatest number of articles were naturally those specialising on the field of tourism.

We also identified three large clusters within the research on this field of knowledge: (1) Strategic and Operational Marketing; (2) Quality and Environmental Management, Regional Development and Competitive and Comparative Advantages and (3) Information and Communication Technologies, Happenstance, Social Responsibility and Segmentation.

The first cluster – Strategic and Operational Marketing aggregates a set of studies that, in the majority, testify to the existence of a relationship between the fundamentals of marketing related to satisfaction, motivation and tourist behaviour with IT marketing systems and positioning as determining factors to the competitiveness of tourism destinations.

The second cluster centres around studies considering the importance of management in terms of the level of quality and the environment of tourism destinations in order to render them more efficient and sustainable and consequently also more competitive, alongside the capacity of competitive tourism destinations to boost regional development and the importance of comparative advantages not only at the level of attributes and the resources of tourism destinations but also in terms of the level of management effectiveness in running the respective destinations.

The studies concentrated into cluster 3 essentially approach the utilisation of information and communication technologies as tools for the creation of tourism sector competitiveness, the influence of happenstance (events beyond the control of companies) might have on the competitiveness of a tourism destination and the importance of issues related to corporate social responsibility to tourism firms as competitive factors within the framework of encountering new forms of economic and social growth. This also stresses the importance of segmenting as a determining factor to better knowledge about tourists and ways of efficiently and effectively shaping their actions.

As the main limitation of this study, we would set out how we only made recourse to the cited articles, which does not mean that there are not others of equal importance for analysis and would, therefore, propose a future line of research correspondingly analyses all of the articles. Furthermore, future research might also approach the nationalities of the most cited authors and the interrelationship with the tourism agendas of their respective countries.

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