


Chapter 10

Evolution of the Literature on Social Responsibility in the Tourism Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes the evolution of research on social responsibility in the tourism sector until November 2017. The authors have compiled a database of 66 articles focused on the field published in academic journals. Bibliometric methods and techniques were used to describe the evolution of scientific activity, countries and active institutions, most productive authors, applied methodologies, and the main topics researched to determine the state and describe the evolution of literature in this field. Based on these analyses, possible ways are proposed for future research to advance this consolidation as a scientific discipline.

INTRODUCTION

At present, society does not perceive companies only from a financial perspective. Changes brought about by the environment, increased globalization of markets, greater social repercussions, increased contribution of companies to community development through wealth creation, as well as other factors, such as the necessity to incorporate good governance practices or carry out socially responsible investments, have motivated organizations to adopt changes in their management employing the implementation of socially responsible practices (Moneva and Hernández, 2009).

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One of the most important economic sectors with significant growth rates today is tourism. Specifically, according to the Synthetic Index of PIB Spanish Turístico (ISTE)¹, the tourist GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in Spain has grown to a rate of 4.2% during the third trimester of 2017. This data shows that the behaviour of the companies that form this sector significantly influences the development of a better, more equitable and more sustainable society, thus contributing to its overall well-being (Golja and Krstinić, 2010; Peña et al., 2016). By its magnitude, tourism is a sector capable of generating social change since it can alleviate problems, such as unemployment and unequal opportunity, and impel the creation of social value (Sigala, 2016). In this context, according to Medrado and Jackson (2015), generally, hospitality companies tend to invest more in environmental initiatives concerning other economic sectors and worry less about environmental issues, such as the carbon footprint.

There is a growing number of studies in the academic literature that address issues related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the tourism sector. However, no studies found in the literature make a systematic review of the literature regarding the number of scientific articles produced in this area. In this sense, in an ample attempt to expand on the literature and show a more realistic state of affairs, the objective of the present work is to conduct a thorough review of the scientific production of articles on CSR and tourism sector, using a bibliometric analysis, a methodology that has proliferated in the last decades² (López and Tortosa, 2002; Agudelo et al., 2003). Essentially, we tried to provide answers to the following questions:

- How has the literature evolved?
- In which journals are these articles published?
- What countries show a more significant concern for this type of research?
- Who are the most productive authors?
- What methodologies were used?
- What has been published in the field of CSR?

Based on the above, this work is developed in the following form: on the one hand, we describe the methodology used to conduct the bibliometric study and, on the other hand, we analyze the main results obtained from the review of the literature.

METHOD

To carry out a qualitative analysis of the scientific production of a particular research topic, an analysis of the number of articles published in different scientific journals has to be conducted (Férrandez, 1998). The bibliometric studies aim to examine works published in scientific journals, capturing information about science through the bibliography analysis (Moravsick, 1989). In this way, a realistic measurement of the scientific production can be obtained through the simple publication count, independent of the length and the nature of the article (Ferreiro, 1993).

In effect, identifying the scientist productivity of any academic discipline requires the study of the different works published on the matter, using the bibliometric methodology. According to Carrizo-Sainero (2000), bibliometrics is now known as bibliometrics from the term Statistical Bibliography applied by Hulme in 1923. It was based on the necessity to conduct a count of the existing publications that began to be prohibitive to researchers due to increased volume. However, it is true that quantity is not the main problem in the subject that concerns us, its dispersion in means of publication.

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