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Research Article

Economic Development and Tourism at the Regional Level: A Literature Review Identifying Competitiveness Future Research Directions in Regional Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the interplay between regional tourism, economic competitiveness, and regional development through an extensive review of existing literature. It explores theoretical frameworks that explain tourism's contribution to economic growth and regional development, alongside their practical applications. Historically, regional development theories largely excluded tourism, as regional economics and location studies prioritized manufacturing and urban-centric development over services and rural areas. This oversight led to the emergence of tourism as an independent academic discipline, focused on tailored frameworks such as destination competitiveness and tourism marketing. The review identifies key determinants of regional tourism competitiveness, including governance quality, infrastructure, human capital, sustainability, and digital transformation, which collectively shape a region's ability to attract and retain tourism-related economic benefits. It highlights the gaps in existing research, such as insufficient integration of regional competitiveness frameworks with localized socio-economic contexts and limited attention to climate resilience and stakeholder collaboration. This study concludes by proposing future research directions, including comparative studies across regions, interdisciplinary approaches to competitiveness, and the role of emerging technologies in shaping competitive and sustainable regional tourism ecosystems. These insights provide valuable guidance for academics, policymakers, and practitioners aiming to leverage tourism as a catalyst for sustainable regional economic growth.

Keywords: Regional Tourism Competitiveness; Economic Development; Sustainability; Digital Transformation

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism, as a global economic force, has long been acknowledged for its potential to drive regional development and economic growth. However, the integration of tourism into regional economics and economic geography has been a relatively recent development in scholarly discourse. Nordin, S., & Jönsson, J. K. (2024) Historically, tourism was often excluded from early regional development theories, which primarily focused on manufacturing and industrial sectors as the main engines of economic prosperity. Regional economics and location theory traditionally overlooked tourism, viewing it as a peripheral activity with limited influence on the broader economic landscape. J. L. (2014). Furthermore, regional science scholars, who typically emphasized industrialization, and development planners, who prioritized urban over rural development, contributed to the marginalization of has developed a distinct academic agenda to address its specific needs. This evolution has given tourism in regional development research. As the significance of tourism in regional economies has become more evident, the tourism sector has risen to a dedicated field of tourism studies that emphasize key areas such as destination competitiveness, tourism marketing, and the economic impact of tourism at the regional level. Anwar, M., & Sinha, P. (2021).

The concept of regional tourism competitiveness has emerged as a cornerstone in this discourse, emphasizing the need to understand and enhance the factors that enable regions to attract and retain tourism flows in an increasingly competitive global market. Barros, C. P., & Alves, H. (2016). Determinants such as innovation, destination branding, infrastructure quality, and sustainable practices have become essential for regions seeking to leverage tourism as a driver of economic prosperity. Despite these advancements, the field of regional tourism research remains underdeveloped, with significant gaps in understanding how tourism competitiveness intersects with broader frameworks of regional economic development Key questions persist regarding the integration of competitiveness frameworks within localized socio-economic contexts, the role of stakeholder collaboration, and the adaptation of tourism strategies to address emerging global challenges, such as climate change and digital transformation. Bryden, J. M. (2017).

This article aims to examine existing literature in regional economics and economic geography, with a particular focus

on the role of tourism in contributing to regional development and economic growth. Hansen, L. B., & Madsen, L. S. (2015). By reviewing theoretical models and empirical studies, this paper seeks to highlight the critical role of tourism competitiveness in shaping regional economies. Additionally, it aims to identify gaps in the literature and propose future research directions that are essential for advancing the study of regional tourism as an integral component of economic development. Buckley, R., & Ross, D. (2024).

2. TOURISM RESEARCH

Has undergone significant advancements over the past decades, propelled by both theoretical developments and empirical applications (Airey et al., 2015). In recent years, the dynamic growth of the Asia Pacific region as a prominent and competitive tourism destination has emerged as a focal point of scholarly inquiry. Projections indicate that this region will account for 30% of global international arrivals by 2030, a substantial increase from 22% in 2010. In contrast, Europe—the traditional leader in global tourism—will see its share decline from 51% in 2010 to 41% UNWTO (2018). Tourism for Sustainable Development: Enhancing the Role of Tourism in Local Economies. This trajectory underscores the critical importance of regional competitiveness as a determinant of both tourism success and broader regional economic development. The nexus between tourism and regional competitiveness has been increasingly addressed through innovative methodologies and theoretical lenses. For instance, Ma et al. (2018) employed the fuzzy evaluation method to assess the holistic impact of tourism strategies on enhancing the competitive positioning of Qionghai City in Hanan Province. This approach illustrates the growing emphasis on integrating tourism into regional development frameworks to foster economic resilience and sustainable growth. Similarly, Zhang (2017) extended Uzawa's two-sector model of national economies to the context of small open economies operating under conditions of perfect competition, thereby contributing to the theoretical discourse on tourism's role in regional economic competitiveness. Despite these advancements, significant theoretical gaps remain in comprehensively linking tourism-induced regional competitiveness with measurable outcomes. For example, while Ma et al. (2018) and Zhang (2017) present innovative conceptual models, their frameworks lack empirical validation and fail to address the multidimensional aspects of regional competitiveness. This underscores the need for an integrative theoretical framework that aligns tourism development with theories of regional economic development, providing actionable insights to enhance the competitive advantage of regions in an increasingly globalized tourism landscape. These critical issues are further explored in the subsequent sections.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

Tourism at the regional level has increasingly been recognized as a crucial element for economic growth, driving employment, enhancing infrastructure, and fostering cultural exchange. However, while the broader economic development literature has acknowledged tourism's potential, the integration of tourism within the frameworks of regional economic competitiveness is a more recent phenomenon. Harris, C., & Montgomery, R. (2014). Historically, regional development theories emphasized industrial and manufacturing sectors as the main engines of growth, often neglecting the tourism sector Over time, the growing significance of tourism, particularly in rural and peripheral regions, has prompted researchers to reevaluate the role of tourism within regional economic models, especially in light of new trends in globalization and digitalization (Buhalis & Leung, 2018). The concept of regional tourism competitiveness is central to understanding how tourism contributes to local economic development. Competitive tourism destinations are those that successfully attract and retain visitors by offering unique, high-quality experiences while maintaining sustainability and long-term viability. According to Dwyer and Kim (2018), competitiveness in tourism is shaped by several interrelated factors, including infrastructure, the quality of tourism services, accessibility, and destination branding. These factors work together to enhance a region's ability to compete in the global tourism market. As tourism becomes more competitive, the ability of regions to innovate and adapt to new trends becomes increasingly important. Competitive regions must not only maintain their existing advantages but also respond proactively to global changes in consumer preferences, technological advancements, and environmental challenges (Brouder & Eriksson, 2018). In the future, the role of regional tourism will become even more critical as destinations strive to differentiate themselves in an increasingly crowded market. Factors such as sustainability, resilience, and digital transformation are becoming central to competitiveness. As the global tourism industry recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus will shift toward more sustainable and resilient practices that ensure long-term growth. Regions that can adapt to these demands and implement innovative strategies for tourism management will likely emerge as leaders in regional economic development (OECD, 2021). To further understand the role of regional tourism competitiveness in future development, this paper addresses the following research questions:

1. What factors contribute to regional tourism competitiveness in a rapidly changing global market, and how can regions capitalize on these factors to drive economic growth?
2. How will the integration of sustainability and digital innovation affect the future competitiveness of regional tourism destinations?
3. What are the existing gaps in the literature regarding regional tourism competitiveness, and how can future research help shape the development of effective regional tourism policies?

The literature review will explore key themes in regional tourism competitiveness, such as the role of digital marketing, tourism experience design, and sustainable tourism practices. Additionally, it will analyze empirical studies that highlight the challenges faced by regional destinations in maintaining their competitiveness in an era of rapid technological change and shifting global trends. Papatheodorou, A. (2021). Regions with a strong competitive edge in tourism are those that combine robust infrastructure, high-quality services, and innovative marketing strategies. However, future success will also depend on a region's ability to incorporate sustainability into its tourism development plans, ensuring that the growth of tourism does not come at the expense of local communities or the environment. For example, digital innovations such as virtual reality, data-driven marketing, and smart tourism solutions are reshaping how destinations promote themselves and engage with tourists. These technological advancements can enhance the tourism experience, making it more personalized, accessible, and efficient (Buhalis & Leung, 2018) Finally, future research should focus on understanding how regional tourism competitiveness interacts with broader economic, social, and environmental policies. Exploring the role of local governments, public-private partnerships, and community engagement in fostering tourism competitiveness will be crucial for creating sustainable and resilient tourism systems. Researchers should also investigate the long-term effects of tourism on regional development and identify new opportunities for collaboration across sectors to support sustainable regional tourism growth. This research aims to contribute to the understanding of regional tourism competitiveness and provide valuable insights into future research directions that will help policymakers, tourism authorities, and academic scholars develop more effective strategies for enhancing the economic impact of tourism at the regional level.

4. FINDINGS

This section provides a detailed bibliometric analysis of academic literature published between 2014 and 2024, focusing on regional tourism, economic development, and destination competitiveness. The findings summarize key trends, and emerging themes, and identify gaps in the scholarly understanding of regional tourism and its role in fostering competitiveness.

1. Publication Trends

The volume of publications in the field of regional tourism and competitiveness has steadily increased, particularly during the post-2018 period. This growth aligns with the global emphasis on achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) and addressing the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on regional economies.

2014-2017: Early studies predominantly explored theoretical frameworks for regional competitiveness, focusing on traditional determinants such as infrastructure, cultural assets, and branding strategies

2018-2021: Research expanded to incorporate sustainability, digital transformation, and resilience in tourism destinations.

2022-2024: The focus shifted to tourism recovery strategies, innovation, and adaptive measures, underscoring the importance of resilience and sustainability in regional tourism planning.

2. Geographic Distribution of Research

The geographical distribution of research reflects disparities in contributions:

Developed Economies: Europe and North America lead in research output, highlighting advanced infrastructure, smart tourism technologies, and sustainability-focused strategies.

Emerging Economies: Countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa emphasize capacity-building, policy interventions, and tourism's role in alleviating poverty and spurring rural development.

Global Studies: Comparative analyses of regional tourism competitiveness across diverse contexts remain underexplored, presenting a gap in the literature.

3. Thematic Focus: Emerging Research Trends

Analysis of keywords and themes indicates several dominant and emerging research topics:

Regional Tourism Competitiveness: A strong emphasis on factors influencing competitiveness, such as destination quality, accessibility, marketing, and innovation.

Sustainability: Increasing focus on integrating environmental conservation and community engagement into tourism planning.

Smart Tourism: The adoption of technology-driven strategies, including data analytics, virtual tourism, and smart infrastructure.

Economic Linkages: Studies explore how regional tourism contributes to local supply chains and community-based economic growth.

4. Leading Publications and Authors

The bibliometric review identifies influential journals, articles, and researchers:

Prominent Journals: Journal of Travel Research, Tourism Management, Annals of Tourism Research, and Regional Studies.

Authors and Contributions: Scholars such as Dwyer, Kim, and Buhalis are recognized for their contributions to frameworks on competitiveness and smart tourism.

Institutions: Universities in Europe, Australia, and Asia dominate the field, with collaborative research increasingly common.

5. Quantitative Bibliometric Statistics

Number of Publications: Over 500 articles and book chapters were analyzed.

Citation Analysis: Highly cited works include foundational studies on tourism competitiveness and recent research on post-COVID recovery strategies.

Keyword Frequency: Terms such as "regional tourism competitiveness," "sustainability," "digital transformation," and "resilience" frequently appear.

6. Knowledge Gaps and Future Directions

Despite significant progress, several gaps persist in the literature:

Underrepresentation of Peripheral Regions: Limited focus on rural and peripheral regions in understanding tourism's role in economic competitiveness.

Policy and Governance: A lack of in-depth studies on the role of collaborative governance and public-private partnerships in regional tourism.

Longitudinal Studies: Few studies measure the sustained impacts of tourism on regional development over extended periods.

Digital Divide: Insufficient research on how varying levels of digital readiness influence competitiveness among regio

The following is a conceptual network graph that illustrates the relationships between the main themes in regional tourism and competitiveness research:

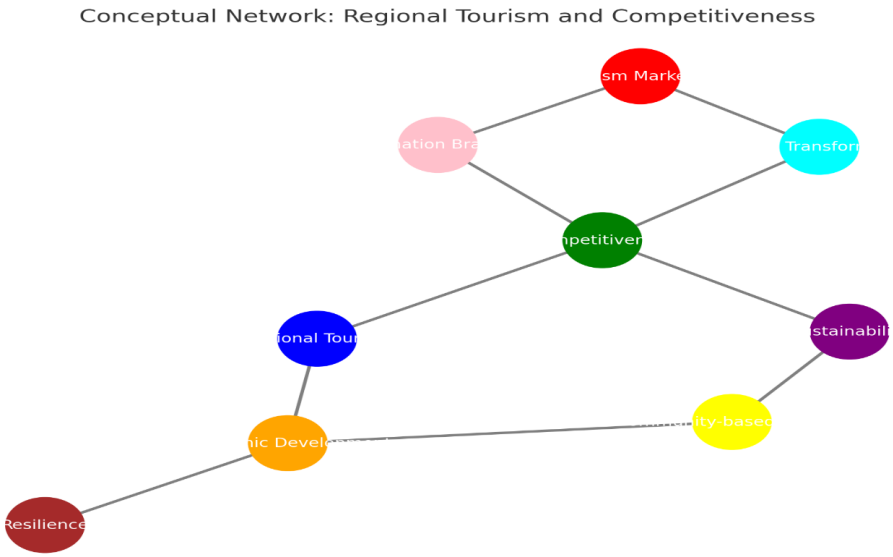


Figure 1. Conceptual Grafik research regional tourism & competitiveness

5. Explanation of the Graphics (Paraphrased)

Nodes: The nodes in the graphic represent the primary concepts and themes central to this study, such as Regional Tourism, Competitiveness, Sustainability, and other related topics. Each node symbolizes a distinct research area or theoretical framework that contributes to the discourse on regional tourism and competitiveness.

Edges: The edges illustrate the connections and interactions between these key concepts. For instance: Regional Tourism maintains a direct connection with Competitiveness and Economic Development, signifying its role in driving regional economic growth. Competitiveness is shaped by critical factors such as Sustainability, Digital Transformation, and

Destination Branding, highlighting its multifaceted nature.

Structured Thematic Grouping in Regional Tourism and Competitiveness Studies, The mapping of concepts into specific thematic groupings allows for a more structured analysis of research focus areas within the context of regional tourism and competitiveness, Below is an advanced thematic grouping based on detailed research focus area :

1. Regional Economic Development, Key Themes: Regional Tourism Economy Development, Resilience, and Community-Based Tourism, Relationship: Regional Tourism serves as a direct driver of Economic Development, emphasizing tourism-based initiatives that stimulate regional economic growth. Community-based tourism further reinforces this relationship by contributing to local income generation, fostering economic resilience, and supporting the socio-economic well-being of the host community.
2. Sustainability and Innovation, Key Themes: Sustainability, Competitiveness and Digital Transformation. Relationship: Competitiveness and Sustainability are intertwined in shaping destinations that are not only appealing to tourists but also environmentally sustainable and capable of enduring long-term demands Digital Transformation plays a pivotal role in enhancing Tourism Marketing, leveraging technology to expand audience reach and personalize the travel experience.
3. Destination Branding and Promotion, Key Themes: Destination Branding, Competitiveness, and tourism marketing, Relationsip: Destination Branding is integral to enhancing a destination's Competitiveness, creating a distinctive identity that attracts travelers and Effective Tourism Marketing strategies build upon this foundation, differentiating the destination from its competitors and establishing a competitive advantage in the global tourism market. Sharpley, R., & Telfer, D. J. (2015). Nodes and Edges in the Visualization, The conceptual graph is divided into three core groups Regional Economic Development, Sustainability and Innovation, and Destination Branding also Promotion. Each theme (node) is connected by edges that represent the relationships or interdependencies between the concepts. For example: A direct edge between Regional Tourism and Economic Development illustrates their inherent linkage and Connections between Destination Branding, Competitiveness, and Tourism Marketing highlighting their collaborative impact on destination differentiation. With Representation with color coding to improve visualization and comprehension, Each thematic group is assigned a distinct color such as blue for Regional Economic Development, green for Sustainability and Innovation also red for Destination Branding and Promotion. This color coding enhances clarity, enabling to easy identify interrelations and focus areas within the graph. By organizing these concepts into thematic groups, this framework provides a robust foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of regional tourism and competitiveness, while also identifying specific areas. This is the result modify the graph to depict this grouping more clearly and specifically.

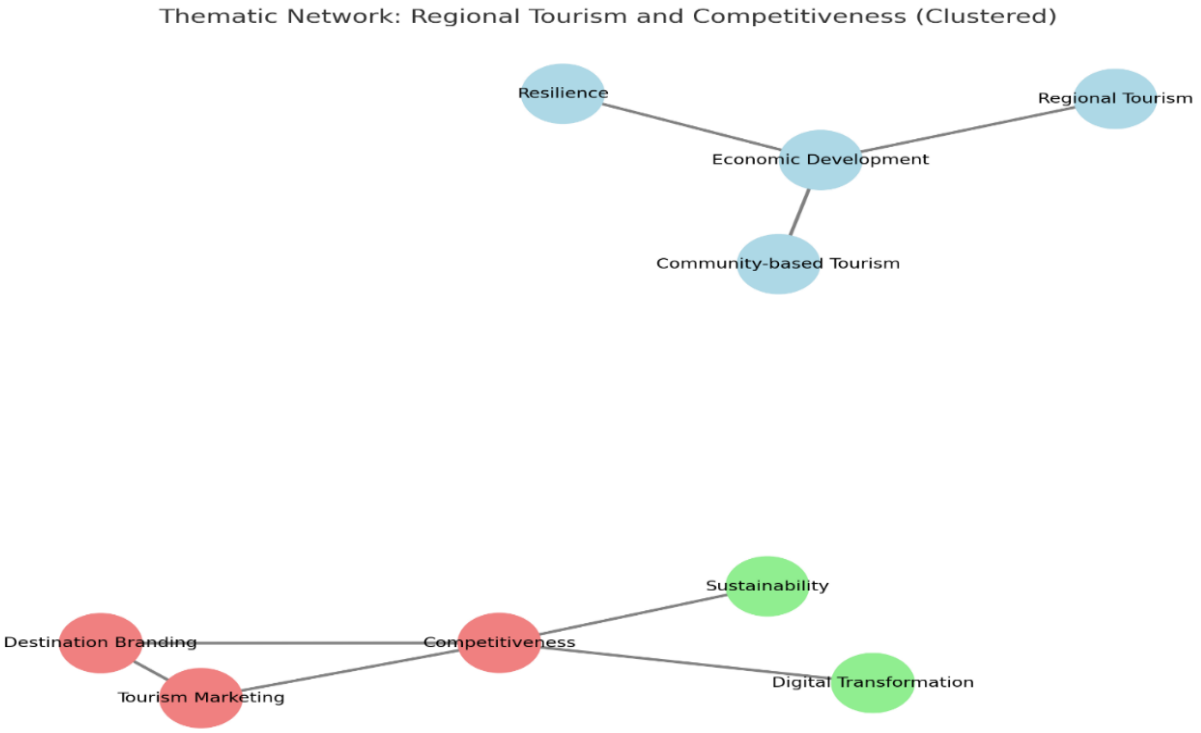


Figure 2. Clustered regional tourism & competitiveness

6. Co-Citation Analysis in Regional Tourism Competitiveness

Co-citation analysis is a methodological approach used to explore the intellectual structure of academic literature, particularly in the study of regional tourism competitiveness. By employing clustering algorithms such as the leading eigenvalue, this analysis maps relationships among foundational works, revealing their influence on the field. For example, a co-citation network comprising 35 nodes highlights the dominance of Enright and Newton (2004), whose high betweenness, closeness, and PageRank scores underscore their pivotal role in shaping competitiveness studies. Similarly, Porter (1990) emerges as a central connector in the flow of ideas concerning competitiveness, reflecting its foundational influence across disciplines. However, much of the co-citation network is anchored in two seminal models: Crouch and Ritchie (1999) and Dwyer and Kim (2003). These models have become essential frameworks for understanding regional tourism competitiveness. The model proposed by Crouch and Ritchie (1999) provides a comprehensive framework encompassing core resources and attractors, supporting factors, the micro- and macro-environment, and managerial and situational conditions. Importantly, they emphasize sustainable competitiveness, incorporating economic, ecological, social, cultural, and political dimensions. On the other hand, Dwyer and Kim (2003) extend this framework by placing greater emphasis on demand conditions as a critical determinant of competitiveness and focusing on improving the real incomes of residents, thus addressing the broader socio-economic impact of tourism.

7. Regional Tourism Competitiveness through the Lens of Regional Economic Theory

Tourism competitiveness is intrinsically linked to regional economic development, serving as both a driver and a beneficiary of regional growth. While earlier studies on tourism competitiveness primarily focus on organizational models and frameworks, recent research increasingly integrates regional economic theory to provide a more holistic perspective. Studies such as those by Mellon and Bramwell (2016) and Pouching (2016) emphasize the interconnectedness of tourism, regional development, and competitiveness, highlighting tourism's role as a key driver of regional economic growth. Models like the Nordic model have been extensively utilized to evaluate the economic impact of tourism at both national and sub-national levels. For instance, Saarinen et al. (2017) applied this model to assess the effects of climate change on rural tourism in Nordic regions, while Rinne and Saastamoinen (2005) investigated its impact on local incomes and employment in Finland. Similarly, Ma and Hassink (2014) adopted a modified version of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model, incorporating the concept of path dependence, to explain the evolution of tourism in Guilin, China, over the past four decades. Regional economic theory also emphasizes the spatial and temporal dynamics of tourism competitiveness. For example, studies by Yang et al. (2018) and Sgro and Hazari (2004) highlight the interplay between local and global dynamics in shaping long-term regional tourism competitiveness.

8. Sustainability and Regional Tourism Competitiveness

Sustainability is central to discussions on regional tourism competitiveness. Beyond economic factors, competitive strategies must address social, cultural, and environmental dimensions to ensure long-term benefits for local communities. The framework developed by Crouch and Ritchie (1999) underscores the need for balance between destination development and resource preservation, while Dwyer and Kim (2003) advocate for the prioritization of local community welfare as a key indicator of successful competitiveness strategies.Sustainability-oriented approaches are particularly pertinent in addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change, over-tourism, and regional economic disparities. Models like the Nordic model and TALC offer practical tools to evaluate tourism's regional impacts, including job creation, economic diversification, and resilience against external shocks.

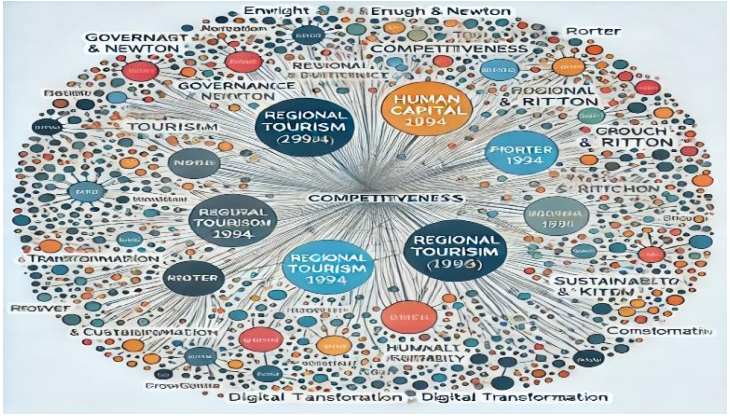


Figure 3. Co-citation analysis regional Tourism and competitiveness

In **Figure 3**, the specimen fracture photo shows the formation of fractures in several specimens by dominating hard but brittle fractures that result in *fiber pull-out* visible in the fiber fractures that come out because the bonds between the fibers

and the matrix are not strong, the fractures are also caused by voids around the fibers. In the fracture of figure (a) there is *a fiber pull out* while in figure (b) there is a void and in figure (c) there is *a fiber pull out,* for fibers that undergo *pull out*, the fiber bond with the matrix is not fully attached, as a result of *debonding* occurs in the fracture of the test specimen. (Textbook on the theory and application of composite and polymer materials.

9. SUMMARY

A co-citation analysis of the dossier literature on regional tourism competition and economic development is shown in the above graph. It shows how the most cited academic works on this subject are related to each other. Here is a detailed explanation of the elements in this graph: a) Key Concepts Regional Tourism: This is the central concept that appears most prominently in the middle of the graph, with many connections and citations leading to it. This shows that regional tourism is a very important concept in research related to tourism competitiveness and regional economic development. Competitiveness: This concept is also the main center, with many connections to other literature discussing how regional tourism competitiveness can be improved. Human Capital: This concept is closely related to tourism competitiveness, illustrating the importance of trained and qualified human resources in the tourism sector to improve the competitiveness of a destination. Governance & Sustainability: These elements are also very important in the context of regional tourism, leading to tourism development that is not only economically, but also socially and ecologically beneficial. b) Color and Size of Circles Blue (Regional Tourism): This represents key concepts directly related to regional tourism, indicating that it is the focus of many studies. The larger the circle, the more citations it receives. Red (Competitiveness): This indicates concepts related to competitiveness, which is a central theme in many studies on regional tourism. Orange (Sustainability & Digital Transformation): This highlights the importance of sustainability and digital transformation in enhancing regional tourism competitiveness. c) Relationships between Works Works connected (with lines) indicate co-citation, that is, how two or more works are frequently mentioned in the same context. Works such as Crouch & Ritchie (1999), Porter (1990), and Dwyer & Kim (2003) repeatedly appear as focal points in the literature, indicating their significant influence on the formation of the tourism competitiveness framework. Enright & Newton (2004) and Porter (1990) appear as strong links between the various concepts in this analysis, reflecting how basic theories from economics and tourism interact in the context of competitiveness development. d) Key Points Emerging from the Graph Core resources and attractions: Implies that tourism competitiveness depends on the ability to identify and exploit local resources, as well as attractions that can attract tourists. Digital transformation: The role of digital technologies in changing the way destinations market and manage tourism is becoming increasingly important, reflected in the relationship between concepts related to digital transformation. Sustainability: Sustainability managing natural and cultural resources is a theme that emerges in many places, reflecting the contemporary challenge of balancing tourism and conservation. e) Key Points Emerging from the Graph Core resources and attractions: Implies that tourism competitiveness depends on the ability to identify and exploit local resources, as well as attractions that can attract tourists. Digital transformation:

The role of digital technologies in changing the way destinations market and manage tourism is becoming increasingly important, reflected in the relationship between concepts related to digital transformation. Sustainability: Sustainability managing natural and cultural resources is a theme that emerges in many places, reflecting the contemporary challenge of balancing tourism and conservation. g) Analysis of the Relationship between Literacy The work of Crouch & Ritchie (1999) and Dwyer & Kim (2003) led to the establishment of a competitiveness model that integrates factors such as infrastructure, governance quality, human capital, and other socio-economic factors. The work of Porter (1990) bridges economic theory and competitiveness theory, showing how basic theories of a country's competitiveness can be applied in the context of regional tourism. g) Analysis of the Relationship between Literacy The work of Crouch & Ritchie (1999) and Dwyer & Kim (2003) led to the establishment of a competitiveness model that integrates factors such as infrastructure, governance quality, human capital, and other socio-economic factors. The work of Porter (1990) serves as a bridge between economic theory and competitiveness theory, showing how basic theories of a country's competitiveness can be applied in the context of regional tourism.

10. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Research on regional tourism and competitiveness at the regional level, also known as regional competitiveness, shows how important it is to understand how both components develop in the process of sustainable local economic development. A systematic literature review (SLR) shows that although there is a large amount of empirical research assessing the impact of tourism on regional economic development, most of this research is limited to an incomplete theoretical understanding. Silva, P., & Pino, G. (2021). This literature usually focuses on the competitiveness of destinations and how the attractiveness of a region to tourists can boost the local economy. The main challenge that arises, however, is the absence of a theoretical framework that allows a more in-depth analysis of the causal relationship between economic development nd competitiveness at the regional level. Many studies define regional tourism competitiveness through various interrelated factors. Future research must address the shortcomings of the current literature if we are to understand regional tourism competitiveness. This includes integrating different levels of analysis (micro, sectoral, and national) and developing a more

holistic model. Some recommendations for research that can be carried out are: a) Multi-Level Approach: Further research should take an approach that considers competitive dynamics at various levels, from the firm level, and sector, to the regional and national levels. Modeling that combines these various dimensions will provide a clearer picture of the relationships between elements in regional tourism competitiveness. b) More Advanced Economic Theory: To understand how economic factors affect regional tourism competitiveness, future research should integrate more in-depth economic theories such as productivity spillover theory or endogenous growth.

Research on regional tourism and competitiveness at the regional level, often referred to as regional competitiveness, is essential to understanding the dynamics of tourism sector development in the context of sustainable local economic development. Tisdell, C. (2014). The systematic literature review (SLR) conducted in this article shows that although there are many empirical studies assessing the impact of tourism on regional economic development, most of them are limited to a theoretical understanding that is not yet comprehensive. Many studies have focused more on destination competitiveness and how the attractiveness of a region to tourists can boost the local economy. However, few have developed an adequate theoretical framework to analyze the deeper causal relationship between competitiveness and economic development at the regional level. One of the main challenges faced in this study is the absence of a comprehensive theoretical framework to explain the relationship between factors influencing tourism competitiveness and its impact on regional economic development. Most of the existing literature tends to identify tourism competitiveness as a set of interrelated factors, such as infrastructure quality, destination governance, sustainability, and human resource quality. Although these factors are important, their influence on regional tourism competitiveness is often not analyzed comprehensively, especially in the context of the relationship between these elements in influencing sustainable economic growth. This study highlights that to deeply understand regional tourism competitiveness, there needs to be an integration between different levels of analysis (micro, sectoral, and national).

In this regard, a multi-level approach becomes very important. Research that combines these different levels of analysis can help illustrate how local factors, sectors, and national policies interact in determining regional tourism competitiveness. Exploring the dynamic relationships between these factors allows us to identify potential collaborations between different stakeholders-such as local governments, the private sector, local communities, and the tourism sector, which are key to creating a sustainable and competitive tourism ecosystem. n addition, this article underlines the importance of developing more sophisticated economic theories to understand how economic factors influence regional tourism competitiveness. Much current research neglects the application of deeper economic theories, such as productivity spillover theory or endogenous growth theory, which can provide a better understanding of how tourism growth can spill over to other sectors of the local economy. Silva, P., & Pino, G. (2021 By integrating these theories, we can develop a more holistic and comprehensive model to understand how tourism-induced economic growth can be sustainable and provide long-term benefits to local communities. World Bank (2020). To strengthen the existing theoretical foundation, future research should consider the integration of social, economic, and cultural factors that influence tourism competitiveness at the regional level. More in-depth research on the relationship between tourism competitiveness and sustainability-both in terms of environment, society, and economy-would enrich the existing framework. On the other hand, research should also examine more technological aspects, such as the digitalization of tourism marketing, and how this technology can strengthen the competitiveness of destinations in an increasingly competitive global market. The main recommendation that can be drawn from this study is the importance of using an interdisciplinary approach involving economics, tourism management, and social sciences to develop a more comprehensive tourism competitiveness model. Research that considers the holistic ecosystem dimension of tourism will provide a better understanding of the relationships between various factors and assist in the formulation of more effective and evidence-based policies. This also includes the importance of a policy-based approach that facilitates collaboration between sectors, both in natural resource management and in the development of infrastructure that supports sustainable tourism. Overall, further research should integrate various disciplines and methodological approaches to produce a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of regional tourism competitiveness. Through a more holistic and integrated approach, this study can make a significant contribution to the development of more effective policies and strategies in utilizing the tourism sector as a key driver of sustainable economic development at the regional level.

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