

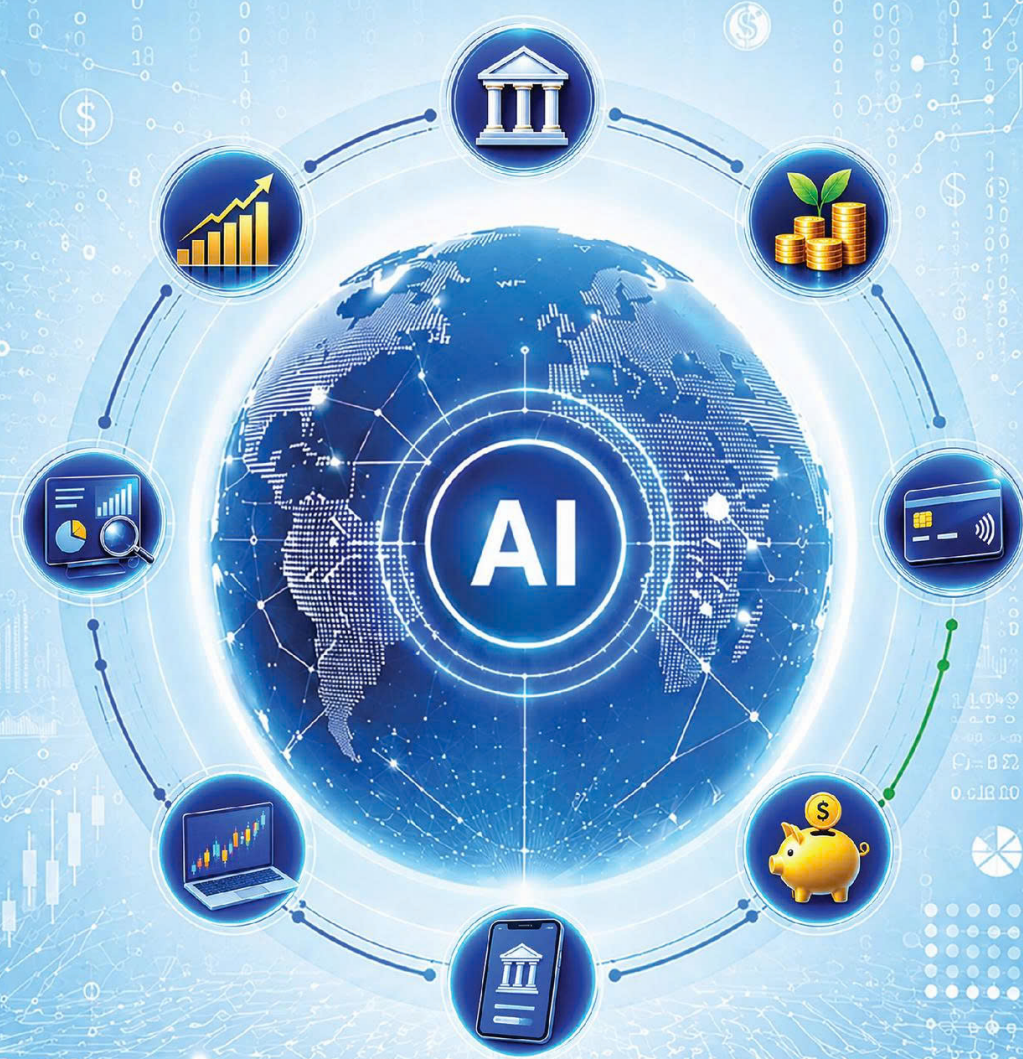


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## DIGITAL FINANCIAL ECOSYSTEMS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



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# GLOBAL TRENDS IN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR VIET NAM

HO THI THANH THANH<sup>1</sup>, HUYNH TAN TOAN<sup>2</sup>, NGUYEN THI NHU QUYNH<sup>3</sup>, DO THI THAO<sup>4</sup>, VO THANH TAN<sup>5</sup>, NGUYEN THUY LINH<sup>6</sup>

## Abstract

*The sustainable development of community-based tourism linked to the conservation of Co Tu cultural heritage remains underexplored in the existing literature. Drawing on a dataset of 33 Scopus-indexed publications, this study followed the PRISMA screening framework and employed VOSviewer to conduct bibliometric mapping and network analysis. The findings identify major research trends and knowledge gaps and offer implications for future research and tourism.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable community tourism, cultural heritage, bibliographic analysis, VOSviewer

## XU HƯỚNG NGHIÊN CỨU TOÀN CẦU VỀ DU LỊCH CỘNG ĐỒNG BỀN VỮNG: PHÂN TÍCH THƯ MỤC VÀ HÀM Ý ĐỐI VỚI VIỆT NAM

Hồ Thị Thanh Thanh, Huỳnh Tấn Toàn, Nguyễn Thị Như Quỳnh, Đỗ Thị Thảo, Võ Thanh Tân, Nguyễn Thùy Linh

## Tóm tắt

*Phát triển du lịch cộng đồng bền vững gắn với bảo tồn di sản văn hóa vẫn là một chủ đề còn hạn chế trong các nghiên cứu hiện nay. Dựa trên bộ dữ liệu gồm 33 công bố được lập chỉ mục trong cơ sở dữ liệu Scopus, nghiên cứu áp dụng quy trình sàng lọc PRISMA và sử dụng phần mềm VOSviewer để thực hiện phân tích thư mục và lập bản đồ mạng lưới tri thức. Kết quả nghiên cứu xác định các xu hướng nghiên cứu chủ đạo, những khoảng trống tri thức và đưa ra các hàm ý cho nghiên cứu tiếp theo cũng như phát triển du lịch bền vững tại Việt Nam.*

**Từ khóa:** Du lịch cộng đồng bền vững, di sản văn hóa, phân tích thư mục, VOSviewer

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## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has become a global priority, with tourism playing an important role in economic growth, poverty reduction, environmental protection, and cultural preservation (UNWTO, 2015; WTTC, 2024). In this context, Sustainable Community-Based Tourism (SCBT) has emerged as an approach that integrates economic, social, environmental, and cultural objectives while enhancing local livelihoods and community resilience (Murphy, 1985; Scheyvens, 1999; Dangi & Jamal, 2016).

Research on SCBT has expanded to include community participation, destination governance, resilience, and cultural heritage conservation. However,

comprehensive bibliometric studies examining these themes remain limited. In Viet Nam, although community-based tourism is recognized as a key strategy for local development and cultural preservation, existing studies mainly focus on individual destinations and lack systematic comparisons with global research trends.

To address this gap, this study conducts a bibliometric analysis of Scopus publications (2010–2025) using the PRISMA framework and VOSviewer. It examines publication trends, collaboration networks, co-citation patterns, and keyword co-occurrence to map the knowledge structure of the field and provide implications for sustainable community-based tourism and cultural heritage conservation in Viet Nam.

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TABLE 1: SCOPUS SEARCH STRATEGY

| Content          | Describe                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Database         | Scopus                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Search field     | TITLE-ABS-KEY                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Document type    | Articles, conference papers, reviews                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Analysis tools   | VOSviewer                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Search statement | TITLE- ABS- KEY(("community-based tourism" OR "community based tourism" OR "community tourism") AND (sustainab*) AND ("cultural heritage" OR "intangible cultural heritage" OR "traditional culture")) |

Source: Author's compilation , 2025

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable tourism development has become a global priority to promote economic growth, create jobs, reduce poverty, and conserve natural resources and cultural values (UNWTO, 2015; WTTC, 2024). In this context, SCBT is considered a suitable development model where local communities play a central role in governance, decision-making, and benefit distribution from tourism activities, thereby contributing to a harmonious balance between economic growth, social equity, environmental protection, and cultural heritage preservation (Murphy, 1985; Scheyvens, 1999; Dangi & Jamal, 2016).

The development of SCBT has attracted increasing academic interest, with numerous studies focusing on community participation, destination governance, sustainable livelihoods, and cultural heritage preservation. However, existing research has predominantly relied on destination-specific case studies or examined isolated dimensions of SCBT, while quantitative review studies are lacking to systematize the knowledge structure, development trends, and research topics of the field. In particular, the relationship between SCBT and cultural heritage preservation has not yet been comprehensively analyzed using bibliographic analysis methods (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

In Viet Nam, community-based tourism is identified as an important direction in local economic development linked to the preservation of cultural identity. Although many studies have assessed the potential and current state of development at specific destinations. However, systematic reviews that situate the Vietnamese literature within broader international research trends remain limited. In particular, studies on the development of community-based tourism linked to the cultural preservation of the Co Tu ethnic group are scarce, revealing a significant gap in both theory and practice.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs bibliometric analysis to map the evolution, intellectual structure, and major thematic areas of research on SCBT and cultural heritage conservation. This approach enables the systematic

mapping of the relationships among publications, authors, countries, cited references, and keywords. The document collection and screening process followed PRISMA guidelines, while data analysis and visualization were performed using VOSviewer software (Figure 1).

Data were retrieved from Scopus because of its broad coverage of peer-reviewed research in the social sciences, economics, management, and tourism, as well as its compatibility with bibliometric software such as VOSviewer. The analysis was restricted to publications issued between 2010 and 2025 in order to capture the recent development of the field (Table 1).

The search strategy is built on three main keyword groups: community tourism, sustainable development, and cultural heritage preservation. Keywords are searched within the title, abstract, and keyword fields of the Scopus database to ensure the comprehensiveness and reliability of the analyzed dataset.

## RESULTS

### Publication trends

The search and screening process yielded 33 publications on community-based tourism, sustainability, and cultural heritage conservation between 2010 and 2025.

As shown in Figure 2, research on sustainable community-based tourism (SCBT) and cultural heritage conservation was very limited before 2015, with only two publications, indicating that the topic had not yet emerged as a distinct research field (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2014). Publication activity increased modestly during 2015–2021, reflecting growing interest following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (UNWTO, 2015).

A marked increase occurred after 2022, with 25 of the 33 publications (75.8%) published between 2022 and 2025. This growth reflects rising interest in sustainable post-pandemic tourism, cultural heritage conservation, and advances in bibliometric research methods (Donthu et al., 2021; Maldonado-Erazo et al., 2022).

Despite this expansion, the literature remains limited and concentrated in Latin America, Africa, Thailand, Indonesia, and South Korea, while Viet Nam has received relatively little attention. This highlights important opportunities for future research, particularly on ethnic minority communities and emerging tourism destinations in Viet Nam.

### Publication output by country

Three key observations emerge from the country distribution (Figure 3). First, research on community-based tourism (CBT) and cultural preservation is concentrated in developing countries, reflecting its role in sustainable development (UNWTO, 2015; Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2014). Second, Southeast Asia, particularly Thailand and Indonesia, is a major



research hub, whereas Viet Nam is underrepresented, with only two publications and limited attention to community governance and cultural preservation. Third, no study in the dataset examines the Co Tu community in Hoa Vang (Da Nang), highlighting an important research gap. Future studies on this community could enrich the literature by exploring SCBT in the context of ethnic minority tourism and rapid urbanization.

#### Author co-citation analysis

The author co-citation network highlights stakeholder theory, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and business ethics as the field's main intellectual foundations. This suggests that SCBT is increasingly viewed through the lens of governance, stakeholder collaboration, and social responsibility rather than tourism development alone. The strong links among these themes emphasize community participation, accountability, and cultural heritage conservation. However, the dominance of governance-oriented perspectives may overlook indigenous values, such as cultural rights and traditional governance, indicating the need to integrate modern governance frameworks with local knowledge systems in future SCBT research (Figure 4).

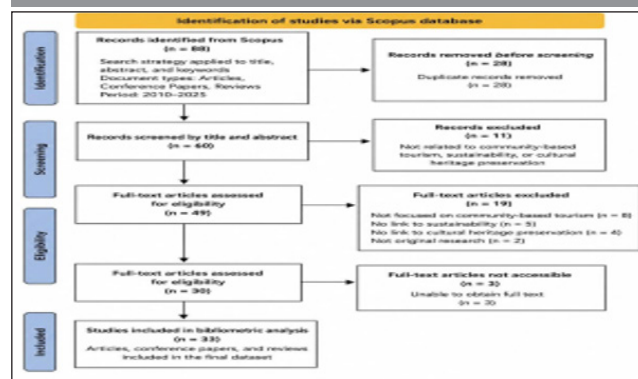
#### Keyword co-occurrence networks

Keyword co-occurrence and overlay analyses reveal an increasingly integrated knowledge structure within the SCBT research field. Six central keywords: community-based tourism, sustainability, tourism development, cultural heritage, ecotourism, and sustainable development form key links, reflecting the intersection of three major themes: sustainable development, heritage preservation, and community livelihoods. In this context, community-based tourism plays a core role, connecting research on the environment, governance, culture, and local development (Figure 5).

The overlay visualization based on average publication year (APY) suggests that the field has evolved through three broad phases. The first stage focused on sustainable development, rural tourism, and quality of life, primarily assessing the socio-economic impact of tourism. The next stage expanded to livelihoods, destination management, SDGs, and community resilience, reflecting a shift from a growth-oriented mindset to sustainable governance. Since 2021, keywords such as community-based tourism, ecotourism, tourist experience, and sustainability have become prominent, indicating that SCBT is approached as a mechanism for realizing sustainable development through community participation and balancing conservation with development.

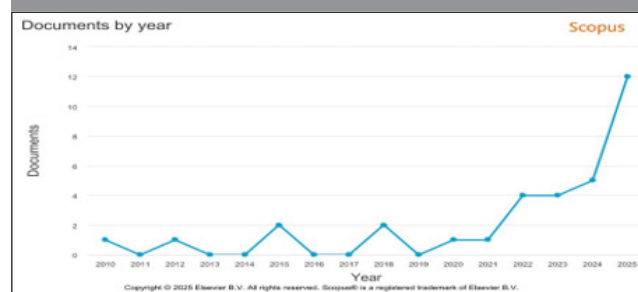
The frequency of appearance, link strength (TLS), and average year of publication (APY) also indicate two dominant research paradigms. The first paradigm focuses on the relationship between community tourism,

FIGURE 1: DOCUMENT SCREENING PROCESS ACCORDING TO PRISMA



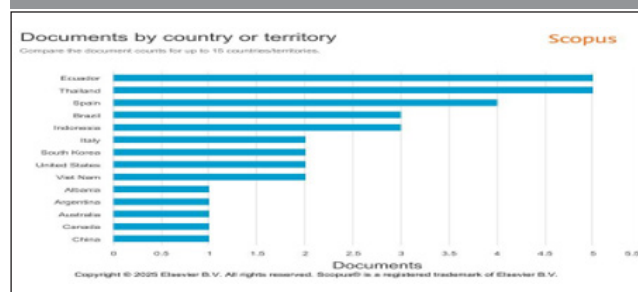
Source: Compiled by the authors from the Scopus database, 2025

FIGURE 2. ANNUAL PUBLICATION OUTPUT, 2010–2025.



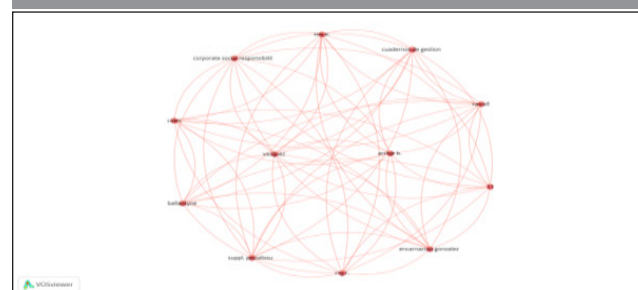
Source: Compiled by the authors from the Scopus database, 2025

FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS BY COUNTRY



Source: Compiled by the authors from the Scopus database, 2025

FIGURE 4: AUTHOR CO-CITATION NETWORK

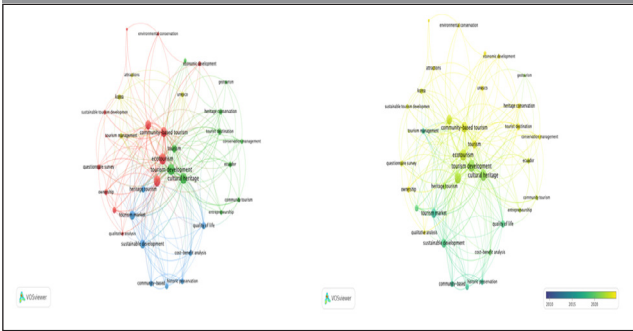


Source: Scopus database and VOSviewer usage, 2025.

ecotourism, and sustainable development, emphasizing environmental governance, livelihoods, and community resilience. The second paradigm emphasizes tourism development linked to cultural heritage conservation, viewing heritage as a core resource for destination



FIGURE 5: KEYWORD NETWORKS AND KEYWORD DEVELOPMENT



Source: Compiled from Scopus database and using VOSviewer, 2025

development. These two paradigms complement each other, affirming that sustainable tourism development can only be achieved through a harmonious combination of preserving cultural values and improving livelihoods for local communities.

However, the keyword map also reflects some notable gaps. While concepts of sustainable development and heritage preservation have become central to the network, topics such as community empowerment, stakeholder participation, community-led governance, and cultural sustainability have not yet gained prominence. This suggests that much current research still approaches SCBT as a development model rather than a governance process involving the negotiation of benefits between the community, government, businesses, and tourists. Therefore, Governance mechanisms, equitable benefit-sharing, and community rights therefore remain underexplored and warrant greater scholarly attention.

Thus, the keyword network analysis shows that SCBT is a rapidly developing field in both breadth and depth, with a trend shifting from impact assessment to sustainable governance research and cultural preservation. At the same time, the results also point out gaps in community governance and cultural sustainability. These gaps provide a basis for positioning future empirical research on community-based tourism and Co Tu cultural heritage in Viet Nam. This will supplement empirical evidence for a context that is still understudied and contribute to expanding the theoretical framework of SCBT.

## CONCLUSION

This study employs a bibliometric approach to map and synthesize global research on SCBT and cultural heritage conservation. Using a dataset of 33 publications indexed in the Scopus database during the period 2010-2025 and applying the PRISMA protocol together with VOSviewer software, the study analyzed publication trends, geographical distribution, author co-citation networks and keyword co-occurrence patterns. The findings provide a focused overview of the intellectual and thematic development of the field.

The results indicate that SCBT has evolved from an emerging research topic into an interdisciplinary field integrating tourism studies, sustainable development, public governance and cultural heritage management. Publication output has increased significantly since 2022, reflecting growing international concern regarding the contribution of community-based tourism to sustainable development. At the same time, the geographical distribution of publications demonstrates that research activities remain concentrated in developing countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa, where community-based tourism has been widely adopted as a strategy for improving local livelihoods and conserving cultural heritage. The author co-citation and keyword co-occurrence analyses further reveal a gradual shift in the intellectual structure of the field from tourism-led development towards governance-oriented sustainability, emphasizing stakeholder collaboration, community empowerment, cultural resilience and long-term destination sustainability.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the existing literature in three respects. *First*, it provides a comprehensive bibliometric synthesis of studies investigating the relationship between sustainable community-based tourism and cultural heritage conservation, thereby consolidating fragmented knowledge into a coherent intellectual framework. *Second*, the study identifies the dominant research themes, theoretical foundations and emerging knowledge clusters that have shaped the development of the field. *Third*, by highlighting geographical concentrations and conceptual gaps in the existing literature, the study establishes a foundation for future investigations into sustainable tourism development, particularly in indigenous and culturally diverse settings that remain underrepresented in the international literature.

Beyond its academic contribution, the study also provides several practical implications for tourism policy and regional economic development. The increasing prominence of governance, stakeholder collaboration and cultural sustainability suggests that community-based tourism should not be viewed solely as a tourism product but rather as a comprehensive development strategy capable of generating inclusive economic growth, improving community livelihoods and strengthening local competitiveness. *For policymakers*, the findings emphasize the importance of integrating tourism planning with cultural heritage conservation, community participation, and interinstitutional collaboration. *For local governments and destination management organizations*, strengthening community capacity, promoting equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms and preserving indigenous cultural assets are essential conditions for achieving sustainable tourism development. These implications are



particularly relevant for Viet Nam, where community-based tourism has become an important instrument for rural development, poverty reduction and the preservation of ethnic cultural identities.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. The analysis was limited to publications indexed in the Scopus database and written in English, which may have excluded relevant studies published in other international databases or local languages. In addition, the relatively small number of publications reflects the emerging nature of the research topic and may influence the complexity of bibliometric networks. Furthermore, bibliometric analysis focuses on the intellectual relationships among publications rather than evaluating the methodological quality or empirical effectiveness of individual studies. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as representing the evolution of scientific knowledge rather than providing direct evidence of tourism development outcomes.

Future research should therefore expand the scope of bibliometric analysis by incorporating multiple databases such as Web of Science and Dimensions, as well as multilingual publications

to improve the comprehensiveness of the dataset. Greater attention should also be devoted to emerging themes including indigenous governance, traditional ecological knowledge, climate resilience, digital transformation and artificial intelligence in community-based tourism management. In particular, empirical studies examining ethnic minority communities in developing countries, including Viet Nam, are needed to validate existing theoretical frameworks and develop context-specific models that better explain the interaction between community participation, cultural heritage conservation and sustainable local economic development.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that sustainable community-based tourism has become an increasingly important research domain with significant implications for both academic scholarship and tourism policy. By identifying the intellectual structure, emerging research trends and future research directions, the study contributes to the advancement of knowledge on sustainable tourism while providing a valuable scientific basis for designing policies and management strategies that promote inclusive economic development and cultural sustainability. 

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