TOURISM RESEARCH IN SPAIN:
Bibliometric analysis of the proceedings of the Congress of the Spanish Association of
Scientific Experts in Tourism (AECIT, 1994-2012)

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Bibliometric studies of the scientific literature on tourism provide empirical evidence for the
philosophical debates about the nature of this field of research. These debates include the
disciplinary dilemma for tourism research posed by Echtner and Jamal (1997). Some bibliometric
studies focus on an analysis of the production of specific countries. In the case of Spain, several
studies analyze the articles published in scientific journals. However, none appears to have focused
on the analysis of grey literature.

The aim of this study is to describe Spanish tourism research by means of a bibliometric analysis of
the proceedings of the Congress of the Spanish Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism
(AECIT). It aims to explore the origin of the research: who carries out the research (authors,
organizations, regions). Its objective is also to describe the output: where the research takes place
(territories, scales), what is researched (topics), how the research is done (methodologies,
disciplines) and why the research takes place (Jafari’s platforms, 2003).

The methodology consisted of a bibliometric study of the contents of the proceedings of the 17
congresses of AECIT (1994-2012). Compiling the proceedings was in itself a contribution by the
study, because these proceedings were dispersed. Some proceedings were published on paper,
others on CD-ROM and others on floppy disks; some were posted on the Internet; and some were
not published. However, with the help of the AECIT it was possible to compile them all. We
selected the lectures, communications and posters from the proceedings. Other contents, such as
forewords, conference conclusions and reports were discarded. A total of 571 papers formed the
empirical basis of the study.

The proceedings of the AECIT Congress are interesting material for the study of tourism research in
Spain. The proceedings of the Congress are possibly a better reflection of the heterogeneity of the
research (e.g. in terms of scientific disciplines and academic orientation compared to professional
orientation) than other more specialized types of publications such as scientific journals or books.
Moreover, according to the model for the growth of scientific literature (Drott, 1995), developments
based on some papers presented at the Congress had to be published as journal articles. The
contents of the proceedings therefore also cover part of the literature published in other formats.

We analyzed various aspects of tourism research using a descriptive statistical univariate and
bivariate study of the papers. The authors’ affiliations were used to study the foci of research:
authors, centres and regions producing tourism knowledge. By analyzing the content of the papers,
we obtained the territories researched, the subjects covered, the methodologies used and the main
scientific disciplines.

The topics covered were classified according to the 20 topics used by Tian, Lee and Law (2011).
For the methodologies, we constructed an ad hoc classification based on those used by Huang et
al. (2008) and Svensson et al. (2009). We made a distinction between empirical studies -quantitative,
qualitative and triangular - and those of a non-empirical nature - reviews and comments. For
disciplinary orientation, we adopted the 29-discipline classification of Cheng et al. (2011). The
papers were also classified according to Jafari’s four platforms (2003) -advocacy, cautionary,
adaptancy and knowledge-based - and according to the two fields defined by Tribe (1997) – research into the business of tourism and into non-business aspects of tourism.

Each Congress is shown below: the event, the year it was held, the host city and the number of papers. The study is at the preparation stage and no results have yet been produced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Host city</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Papers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Marbella (Malaga)</td>
<td>Spain - a touristically advanced country?</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Alicante</td>
<td>Towards an integrated model of tourism training</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Gijon</td>
<td>Tourism administration in the municipality in Spain: complexity and diversity</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>San Sebastian</td>
<td>Tourism, the city and cultural heritage in southern Europe and Latin America</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Palma de Mallorca</td>
<td>Globalization of markets and sustainability of destinations: Towards a more autonomous marketing and distribution of Spanish tourism products</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Ceuta</td>
<td>New trends in leisure and tourism: their particular problems in unique locations</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Jaen</td>
<td>Inland tourism. Modernization and sustainability</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Pontevedra</td>
<td>New tourist segments and destinations</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Logroño</td>
<td>Tourism’s use of natural spaces</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Malaga</td>
<td>Tourism and territory: conflicts, shared responsibility and management strategies</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Murcia</td>
<td>The public administrations and tourism businesses and the challenge of sustainability</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Vila-seca (Tarragona)</td>
<td>Knowledge, creativity and technology for a sustainable and competitive tourism</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Vitoria-Gasteiz</td>
<td>Technological changes in tourism. Production, marketing and territory</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Gijon</td>
<td>Challenges for Spanish tourism. Paradigm shift</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Tenerife</td>
<td>Dynamics of the transformation of tourism and the twenty-first century</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Mijas (Malaga)</td>
<td>Active policies in tourism. Responses to the unique nature of the labour market</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>O’Carballíño (Ourense)</td>
<td>Creation and development of tourism products: innovation and experiential approach</td>
<td>85</td>
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References


