

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES ON KEYWORDS: TOURISM, DANUBE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract**

*The aim of this study is to find out what are the research topics and tools used in the literature on tourism and sustainable development in the Danube areas. The Mini Review technique was chosen for this. Based on the keywords Tourism, Danube and Sustainable Development, articles were searched in the literature that meet the following criteria: to be current articles (published between 2017-2021), to be open access and to contain in title the keywords listed above. Several databases were used and 8 articles were identified. The main research tools are quantitative tools, and among the topics addressed were identified rural tourism, wine tourism, tourism resources, but also Covid19.*

**Key words:** *Danube, Mini Review, research tools, sustainable development, tourism.*

**JEL Classification:** *Z30, Z32*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Tourism and sustainable development are long-standing research topics, and their concomitant research is of particular importance in the current period, when any activity and any sector of national economies should be governed by the principles of sustainable development. Like any research, research on the two concepts mentioned above requires the use of clear research topics and research methods and tools. Most of the time, being about tourism, a locality, an area or a research region is also necessary. Thus, this paper aims to present the research directions on tourism and sustainable development in the Danube areas, taking into account research tools and topics. For this thing, this paper has been divided into three main parts. The first part briefly reviews certain general aspects of the Danube River and the relationship between tourism and sustainable development. The second part presents the research methodology or, more precisely, the purpose of the research, the research objectives, the proposed criteria for the selection of specialized articles and the databases from which the articles were taken. The third part consists of results or, rather, of the detailed presentation of the selected articles and the specification of the research tools and research topics found in the analyzed articles. The present paper can be a starting point in the decisions regarding the use of research tools and the analysis of specific topics in the

researches related to tourism and sustainable development in the Danube areas.

### **II. GENERAL KEYWORDS CONSIDERATIONS**

Since ancient times, human settlements have been founded near water sources, because water is an indispensable resource for life. Over time, people have learned to use water to meet other needs, not just to meet physiological needs, such as the need for transportation or the need to produce electricity. In other words, the Danube is a valuable resource for all riparian countries, and can be used in many ways. From a geographical point of view, the Danube has a number of characteristics, including: The Danube has its source in Germany, has a length of 2850 kilometers, being the second longest river in Europe, crosses ten countries and the following four capitals: Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest and Belgrade (Danilovic Hristic et al, 2020, p. 3). The Danube is part of Romania's natural tourist potential, respectively of Romania's tourist offer, known worldwide, pointing as reference elements the Danube Gorge, the Iron Gates and the Danube Delta (Țigu, 2012, p. 170). The need to practice sustainable tourism along the Danube is imposed by the existence of biodiversity and extraordinary landscapes that must be protected in order to bequeath to future generations. In other words, tourism must be practiced in compliance with the principles of sustainable development, especially since "the relationship between tourism and

sustainable development is not limited to economic aspects, but also involves environmental and social aspects" (Popescu, Săseanu et al, 2014, p. 118). In general, the concept of tourism is very well characterized by classical definitions that highlight key elements such as the tourist, time, travel from point A to point B and the reason for travel, but in relation to sustainable development and a certain ethical conduct, tourism can be considered "a social process, a way of life or a form of human behavior" (Țigu and Țuclea, 2008, p. 30). In other words, tourism involves on the one hand the interaction between people, for example the trio of tourists-hosts-residents, and on the other hand the way they choose to market and consume tourist resources. At this point it is very important how tourism relates to the definition of sustainable development, whose content is: "sustainable development is the development through which the needs of the present generation are met and satisfied, but without preventing future generations from meeting and satisfying their own needs (United Nations, 1987, p. 54). In order to properly relate to the definition of sustainable development, tourism must respect the principles of sustainable development, as set out in the Rio de Janeiro Declaration (United Nations, 1992), but especially to respect a fundamental principle, namely, "integration of environmental, social and economic elements in all phases of the decision-making process" (Emas, 2015, p. 3). In view of the above, it can be stated that a great desideratum would be the development of a tourism in the Danube areas that would be in consensus with what sustainable development means.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to find out what topics are addressed in the literature and what research tools are used, given tourism and sustainable development on the Danube River. Thus, the objectives of the study are: to identify scientific articles based on proposed criteria and to present the articles in a tabular form. The Mini Review technique

was used to achieve this goal (Griffiths, 2002; Firdiansyah et al, 2021). Also, for the concrete identification of the articles from the specialized literature, the following criteria were proposed and used:

- Articles to be Open Access;
- The articles should contain in the title the following keywords: Tourism (or a form of tourism), Danube, Sustainable Development (or Development, Sustainability);
- Articles to be published between 2017-2021.

The databases used to identify the articles were: Google Scholar; Science Direct; CEEOL; Scopus; Web of Science; Emerald; Jstor and Proquest. Two types of tables were used to present the articles. The first type contains the title of the article, the name of the author / authors, the year of publication of the article and the database, the country referred to in the article, the purpose of the article, research methods and tools, and the second type contains the title, results and conclusions of the article and the journal or conference in which the article appeared.

### IV. RESULTS

Using the Google search engine, typing the keywords Tourism, Danube, Sustainable Development, 4.48 million results were generated in 0.67 seconds.

Using Tourism, Danube and Sustainable Development as keywords, the Google Scholar database generated 7 results in 0.04 seconds, but only four results were valid. Using the criteria mentioned above, the Science Direct database generated 45 results, but only one result was valid. Using the CEEOL database and taking into account the established criteria, a single result was generated. Using the Scopus database and taking into account the established criteria, two valid results were generated. Using the Web of Science, Emerald, Jstor and Proquest databases and considering the established criteria, zero results were generated. Valid articles are presented through tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1. Identification of articles**

Article title	Author (s)	Year of publications and database	The country	The purpose of the article	Research methods and tools
Condition for sustainable development of rural tourism in the area of lower Danube region in the Republic of Serbia	Vukovic, Predrag; Arisic, Slavica; Kovacevic, Vlado	2021 / Google Scholar	Serbia	Highlighting the tourist resources on the basis of which the rural tourism in the analyzed area can be developed sustainably.	Presentation of tourist resources, according to the Serbian Tourism Organization and the Serbian Rural Tourism Association; Presentation of the VICE model (Visitors, Industry, Local Community, Environment and Culture) - World Tourism Organization.
The Danube - an	Popescu,	2019 / Google	Romania	Defining specific activities for	Bibliographic research,

instrument for sustainable development of rural tourism. Case study: Southern Dobrogea Plateau	Marius; Gruia, Romulus; Ţane, Nicolae	Scholar		rural tourism along the Danube, more precisely between Ostrov and Ghindăreşti, as a solution for sustainable development of the local community.	multicriteria analysis and field research.
Potentials and priorities for integrated and sustainable tourism development of Danube tourism destinations in Serbia	Ristic, Vladica; Maksin, Mary	2019 / Google Scholar	Serbia	Finding criteria and priorities for integrated and sustainable development of tourism on the Danube River.	FAS method (Factors-Attractors-Support Services).
Pandemic as an impulse for the development of sustainable tourism along the Danube river	Vitkova, Lubica; Strbikova, Dominica	2021 / Google Scholar	Slovakia	Analysis of the impact of Covid19 on tourism in the Danube region of Slovakia	Bibliographic research.
Exploring the potential for geotourism development in the Danube region of Serbia	Tomic, Nemanja; Markovic, Slobodan; Antic, Aleksandar; Tesic, Dajana	2020 / Science Direct	Serbia	Inventory of geotourism sites in the Danube region in order to determine the potential of geotourism.	Modified Geosite Assessment Model (M-GAM).
Research on the importance of wine tourism for the sustainable development of regional wine production areas in Bulgaria (Danube and Thracian)	Goranova, Penka; Tsvetanova, Eva	2018 / CEEOL	Bulgaria	Identifying the role of wine tourism in the sustainable development of the Danube and Thrace areas.	In-depth telephone interviews; Electronic survey
Danube river cruises as a strategy for representing historical heritage and developing cultural tourism in Serbia	Danilovic Hristic, Natasa; Stefanovic, Nebojsa; Milijic, Sasa	2020 / Scopus	Serbia	Indication of the steps for the implementation of appropriate strategies regarding the promotion of tourist and cultural offers.	Case study; The integrated method of combining several fields of knowledge.
Principles of sustainability in rural tourism clusters: The cases of Upper and Lower Danube in Serbia	Jovanovic, Radmila; Sanchez, Dario, Cesar; Pavlovic, Sanja; Devedzic, Mirjana	2018 / Scopus	Serbia	Highlighting the problems that appear in the sustainable development of rural tourism.	Field research (direct observation). Statistical analysis of data taken from the statistical yearbook of Serbia (Mc Quitty Method). Benchmarking.

It is observed based on the previous table that the Danube areas analyzed in the articles presented come from the eastern part of the Danube River, which may mean that the authors show a greater interest in these areas of the Danube, which may be generated by some economic, social and environmental aspects that can be solved by

developing and promoting sustainable tourism. In other words, the lack of authors from Western countries crossing the Danube River could indicate not the lack of scientific interest in sustainable tourism in the Danube areas, but the fact that the sustainable use of tourism in the Danube areas is already achieved.

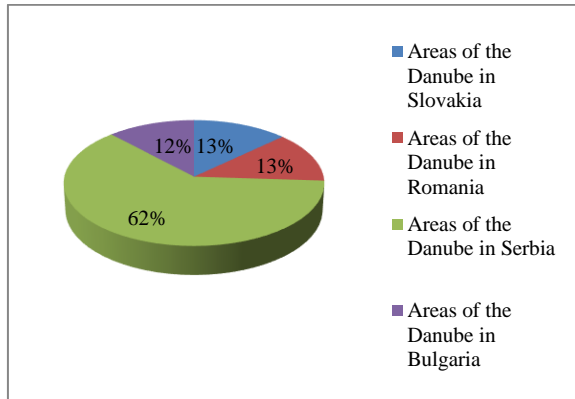
**Table 2. Results and conclusions of the analyzed article**

Article title	Results and conclusions	The journal or conference in which the article appeared
Condition for sustainable development of rural tourism in the area of lower Danube region in the Republic of Serbia	The most important tourist attractions in the Lower Danube area of Serbia are in the category of natural tourist resources. Rural tourism in the Lower Danube area of Serbia (Veliko Gradiste; Golubac; Kucevo; Majdanpek; Kladovo; Negotin) is in the first phase of development, in the sense that development is not based on a well-defined plan, and the interaction between stakeholders, on the sustainable development of rural tourism is not in line with the approach proposed by the World Tourism Organization.	Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development <a href="#">Link available</a>
The Danube - an instrument for sustainable development of rural tourism. Case study: Southern Dobrogea Plateau	Among the tourist activities specific to the area are: fishing, beekeeping, viticulture, gastronomic activities. Considering the Danube localities from the western part of the Dobrogea Plateau, it was found that the potential of rural tourism in the Ostrov territorial administrative unit is over 90%; in the Lipnița territorial administrative unit, the potential of rural tourism is between 80 and 89.99%; in the territorial administrative units Aliman, Ion Corvin, Ghindărești, Oltina, Rasova, Seimeni and Topalu, the potential of rural tourism is between 70 and 79.99%, and in the territorial administrative unit Băneasa, the potential of rural tourism is between 60 and 69.99%.	Scientific Papers, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Banat <a href="#">Link available</a>
Potentials and priorities for integrated and sustainable tourism development of Danube tourism destinations in Serbia	A first priority for the integrated and sustainable development of tourism on the Danube River is the arrangement and development of natural and cultural tourist resources. Another priority would be the tourist capitalization of the protected areas. Another priority would be to create a water route. Another priority would be to strengthen cooperation with neighboring Danube countries.	Tourism in function of development of the Republic of Serbia. Tourism as a Generator of Employment (TISC 2019) <a href="#">Link available</a>
Pandemic as an impulse for the development of sustainable tourism along the Danube river	The impact of Covid19 on tourism was manifested by: the decrease in the number of accommodated tourists; decrease in the number of overnight stays; increasing the number of domestic tourists.	Architecture Papers of the Faculty of Architecture and design Stu <a href="#">Link available</a>
Exploring the potential for geotourism development in the Danube region of Serbia	Based on the M-GAM model, 9 geotourism sites from the Danube region were selected. The biggest tourist potential is the Boljetinska River Canyon, Vratna stone bridge and Cot loess section. In the case of the analyzed geotourism sites, the key elements of attracting tourists are the tourist infrastructure, the promotional activities, the tourist guide and the information offices. The Danube region was divided into geotourism areas.	International Journal of Geoheritage and Parks <a href="#">Link available</a>
Research on the importance of wine tourism for the sustainable development of regional wine production areas in Bulgaria (Danube and Thracian)	The sustainable development of wine tourism depends on agricultural policy, investment policy and the policy of promotion and marketing of wine destinations. Wine tourism increases the income of the local population and absorbs the local labor force.	Scientific Research Almanac <a href="#">Link available</a>
Danube river cruises as a strategy for representing historical heritage and developing cultural tourism in Serbia	There are significant differences between mass tourism and cruises. For a proper planning of cruises, the distance from the cultural products and the technical-material tourist base must be taken into account. A major impediment to cruise planning is the negative effects that privatization has on some ports.	Sustainability <a href="#">Link available</a>
Principles of sustainability in rural tourism clusters: The cases of Upper and Lower Danube in Serbia	The problems that appear in the sustainable development of rural tourism in the Danube area are: non-compliance with the principles of sustainability or their partial observance; lack of necessary investments for rural tourism clusters; lack of specific tourist products; lack of a coherent plan.	Revista de Geografia Norte Grande <a href="#">Link available</a>

It is observed based on the previous table that the analyzed articles capture important aspects, such as: tourism could be a source of job creation, Danube areas have natural and cultural tourist resources,

riparian settlements have the potential to develop rural tourism and wine tourism. At the same time, the gaps that appear regarding the sustainable development through tourism of the Danube areas are due to the lack of concrete development plans.

The percentage distribution of the studied articles, depending on the country to which the analyzed Danube area belongs, is presented in Fig 1.

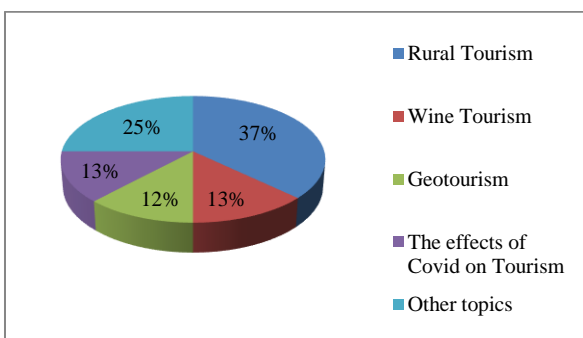


**Figure 1 - Distribution of articles by country**

Most articles deal with areas of the Danube in Serbia. In other words, Serbian authors show a greater interest in treating tourism and sustainable development in the Danube area. The other three articles deal with areas of the Danube in Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Regarding the gender of the authors of the analyzed articles, 50% are women and 50% are men. In other words, the scientific interest in tourism, the Danube and Sustainable Development has the same intensity, regardless of the author's gender. Also, 25% of the analyzed articles appeared in 2018, 25% in 2019, 25% in 2020 and 25% in 2021. Regarding the year of publication of the articles, a constant rhythm is identified, which means that the number of the articles that meet the proposed selection criteria did not register neither increases nor decreases, appearing the same number of articles in the years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The percentage distribution of the studied articles, depending on the topic and the context in which sustainability is referred to, is presented in Fig 2.



**Figure 2 - Distribution of articles according to the research topic**

Most articles refer to the sustainability of a

form of tourism in the Danube area. More precisely, in three articles reference is made to rural tourism (Jovanovic et al, 2018; Popescu, Gruia et al, 2019; Vukovic, Arisic et al, 2020), in one article reference is made to geotourism (Tomic et al, 2020), and in another article reference is made to wine tourism (Goranova and Tsvetanova, 2018). Given the current period of global health crisis, the emergence of scientific articles highlighting the effects of the Covid19 on tourism in general and on the Danube areas in particular (Vitkova and Strbikova, 2021) was inevitable. In other words, most of the authors studied the concept of sustainability in relation to rural tourism. This can be explained by the fact that sustainable development has strong environmental values, and rural tourism is a form of tourism that puts a great deal of emphasis on the environment. In most articles, the research area is delimited. Although the Danube is a single river, the Danube areas may differ, as they are areas from different countries, but especially the Danube creates different relief forms that give specific characteristics to the area, and along the river there are different tourist resources (cultural attractions, natural attractions) that can be capitalized on. Tourist resources are a common point of the studied articles, as in each article are presented tourist resources to a greater or lesser extent.

There is a real diversity of research tools, using both quantitative and qualitative tools. Another important aspect is that the data were not only collected from existing databases or rather from secondary sources, but also proceeded to collect data from primary sources (Juvanovic et al., 2018; Goranova and Tsvetanova, 2018). Research tools included case studies, direct observation, interviews, questionnaires, the VICE Model (Visitors, Industry, Local Community, Environment and Culture), the M-GAM Model (Modified Geosite Assessment Model). Most of the studied articles do not insist on the definition of tourism or forms of tourism, but neither on the definition of sustainable development. Regarding the structure, most of the articles follow the classical structure, consisting of abstract, introduction, review of the literature, research methodology, results, conclusions and bibliographic references.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The tourism-Danube-sustainable development trio is a very flexible research topic, being able to be approached both quantitatively and qualitatively, the authors using both quantitative research tools and research tools qualitative, identifying a slight inclination towards the use of quantitative research tools. Also, the flexible nature of the scientific approach methods is supported by the fact that the authors of the analyzed articles used data from primary sources, but also from secondary sources. It is found that for the collection of primary data are used direct observation, questionnaires and interviews, and

for the collection of secondary data are consulted sites of some Institutes of Statistics.

Regarding the research topics, it is found that there are some well-set directions and targets, ie in most of the articles analyzed, the authors treat sustainable development through some forms of tourism and not through tourism in its general sense. Thus, in research related to tourism and sustainable development in the Danube areas, the authors approach a series of research methods, regardless of their nature and tend to analyze different forms of tourism.

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