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A systematic scoping review of sustainable tourism indicators in relation to the sustainable development goals

S. Mostafa Rasoolimanesh*, Sundari Ramakrishna*, C. Michael Hallb, Kourosh Esfandiairc and Siamak Seyfidx

*School of Hospitality, Tourism and Events, Taylor’s University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia; bDepartment of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand;
cSchool of Business and Law, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup, Australia; dDepartment of Geography, University of Pantheon-Sorbonne, Paris, France

ABSTRACT
Sustainable tourism indicators (STIs) are an integral element of tourism planning and management. This study systematically reviews the research contributions on the development of STIs based on four criteria including: i) the relevance of the STIs to the sustainable development goals (SDGs); ii) governance; iii) stakeholders involved; and iv) the distinction between subjective and objective indicators. A search of Scopus indexed journals published up to April 2018, yielded 97 papers for examination. The findings demonstrate the lack of direct attention to the SDGs in those papers published after their launch in 2016. However, the majority of the SDGs and their targets have indirectly been covered in the reviewed papers. The results revealed that, among the sustainability themes of economic growth, social inclusion, environmental protection, and governance, the STIs studies tended to overlook the dimension of governance. The findings showed that residents are the most engaged stakeholder group, and tourists the least engaged as compared with government and businesses. The results also indicated that more attention is afforded to objective compared to subjective indicators. The findings also demonstrated that much of the focus is on European countries rather than the Global South which is the major focus of the SDGs.

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Sustainable tourism indicators (STIs); sustainable development goals (SDGs); governance; stakeholders; objective and subjective indicators

Introduction
The number of international tourist arrivals has grown steadily to reach 1.5 billion tourist arrivals in 2019 (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2020). This figure is expected to continue to increase with a forecast of 1.8 billion international tourists by 2030 (UNWTO & United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2017) although this figure may be revisited following the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (Gössling et al., 2020). Nevertheless, while international tourism might receive the greatest share of attention, the bulk of all tourism is actually domestic, accounting for almost 85% of global travel. The number of tourist trips undertaken each year prior to the advent of COVID-19 exceeded the world’s population (Hall, 2015). Absolute expenditure on tourism has also risen substantially, and the World Travel and Tourism

CONTACT S. Mostafa Rasoolimanesh  mostafa.rasoolimanesh@taylors.edu.my  School of Hospitality, Tourism and Events, Taylor’s University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia.

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