

# A Text Analysis of Ecuadorian Tourism Policy from the Perspective of Policy Instruments

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## Abstract

The significance of a sustainable tourism model in Ecuador has become more apparent, and the transition of a conventional tourist model into a sustainable model has become a critical job for the country's tourism growth. The study object for this work is Ecuador's national-level sustainable tourism-related policy documents from 2007 to 2020, as seen through the perspective of policy instruments. The study finds that the adoption of sustainable tourism-related policy texts in Ecuador peaked in 2008; the Ecuadorian government has been providing human resource for sustainable tourism while promoting the industry's steady development with relevant funds, investment, and other policies; Ecuador's sustainable tourism policy instrument system is not reasonable, and the structure needs to be improved. Finally, based on the findings, policy recommendations are provided.

## Keywords

Ecuador; Sustainable Tourism; Policy Instruments.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Sustainable tourism under the impact of the COVID-19

The global tourism industry has been severely impacted by the widespread spread of the COVID-19. The sector's specificity has resulted in a near-complete shutdown of world tourism, with losses to international tourism and its related sectors totaling over US\$2.4 trillion in 2020 alone [1] and a 73 percent drop in international passengers in 2020 compared to 2019 [2].

Ecuador, after Turkey, will be the most vulnerable country on a national level. Ecuador's GDP will be \$9.3 billion smaller in 2020 than it was last year, with a -7.75 percent growth rate [World Bank, 2021]. Prior to the outbreak, the Ecuadorian government actively supported a tourist development model that is intended to become the country's second largest non-oil source of revenue and one of the country's pillar sectors.

This study will analyze policies related to sustainable tourism in Ecuador from the perspective of policy instruments, and will utilize GooSeeker text analysis software to investigate problems in the selection of policy tools for "sustainable development" of tourism in Ecuador, along with efforts to address them, in order to serve as a model for the formulation of policies for sustainable tourism development in Latin American countries and the government's guidance to the sector.

## 2. Literature Review

In the tourism business, policy tool theory is commonly used with the analytical purpose of generating a favorable policy environment for tourism development. Silvia Ayuso (2007), for example, examines the most regularly used voluntary policy tools in the hotel industry and concludes that "eco-labels" and "environmental management systems" are the two most

commonly used tools that are most likely to provide a sustainable business model [3]; Jose Pizarro's paper on policy efficacy, stakeholder acceptance, and economic and technical feasibility studies was published in 2010. The analysis found that not all policy instruments in Crikvenica's tourism policy met the following requirements [4]; Since the implementation of NAFTA, Mexico has had to develop tourism products that are distinct from those of the other two countries, as well as improve service quality through the use of new technologies, improved staff quality, and other policy tools, according to Rodriguez M and Portales J [5]. It can be observed that the majority of researchers employ policy tools to investigate target locations that are tourist powerhouses, whereas there is a lack of research on tourism policies in Hispanic nations in the Latin American region.

And since 1980, the global tourism sector has been quickly developing, resulting in predatory exploitation of tourism resources and a decline in the quality of the environment on which tourism depends due to concerns such as poor planning and lack of cooperation among government agencies. It is reasonable and vital to bring the concept of sustainable development to the tourism industry at this time.

There are two further authoritative definitions of sustainable tourism models:

1. Sustainable tourism was defined by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 1993 "aims to protect cultural integrity and the natural environment while serving economic, social, and aesthetic needs. It ensures the livelihoods of today's hosts and guests while also safeguarding and promoting the interests of future generations and offering opportunity for them to do so."
2. According to the 1995 Charter for Sustainable Tourist Development, "the core of sustainable tourism development needs tourism to become an essential element of nature, culture, and human living environment."

In essence, sustainable tourism is the actual manifestation of sustainable development theory in the tourist industry, therefore it is essentially the same as sustainable development theory: meeting economic needs, balancing environmental affordability, and ensuring that development possibilities are equitable [6].

For Ecuador, sustainable tourism development is a chance to decrease poverty and grow its economy. To guarantee the growth of a sustainable tourism business, the government has released policies such as PIMTE 2010-2014, Programa Nacional de Capacitación Turística, and Plandetur 2020. (Table 1)

**Table 1.** Content of policies related to sustainable tourism

<b>Related Policies</b>	<b>Specific content</b>
"Plandetur2020"	Insert sustainable tourism into state policy and national planning to promote integral development and rationalization of public and private investment. <i>Sp.</i> Insertar al turismo sostenible en la política de Estado y en la planificación nacional para potenciar el desarrollo integral y la racionalización de la inversión pública y privada.
"PIMTE"	Position Ecuador as a destination committed to sustainable tourism. <i>Sp.</i> Posicionar a Ecuador como destino comprometido con el turismo sostenible.
"Programa Nacional de Capacitación turística"	HR capacity building for sustainable tourism. <i>Sp.</i> Desarrollo de capacidades de RH para el turismo sostenible.

Tables from the relevant policy documents to organize the content

Based on the application of sustainable tourism paradigm in Ecuador, different scholars have studied and analyzed it from various perspectives. (Table 2)

**Table 2.** Sustainable tourism studies in Ecuador based on different research angles

Research Perspectives	Representative person	Main points
Economic perspective	1. Azócar de Buglass, L. (1995) [7]	Technical and financial assistance will aid in the transformation of the existing industrial model into one that is more sustainable.
	2. Cruz Albornoz, J. (1993) [8]	Current and future generations will benefit from effective long-term land planning and management in terms of ecosystems, productive profitability, and sociocultural development.
	3. Freddy Alejandro Barros Pinto (2021) [9]	The Oyacachi region's traditional production practices have not moved to a more sustainable model, but the region's sustainable combination of tourism and animal husbandry has proven to be successful.
Jurisdictional perspective	Ninive Victoria Plua-Parrales (2020) [10]	While tourism does bring in a lot of revenue to the country, legal regulation can stimulate its development for the better.
Policy development perspective	María Johanna Herrera Camacho (2020) [11]	There is no coherence between the implementation of tourism public policies and the publication of desired tourism objectives by the State.

It was discovered that the majority of research on sustainable tourism in Ecuador is conducted from an economic perspective, and that there is a significant void in the literature on sustainable tourism in the nation from a policy perspective. Only a few researchers have emphasized the importance of policy in the development of sustainable tourism, stating that successful development of sustainable tourism cannot be achieved without strong policy leadership. As a result, the goal of this study is to perform a comprehensive analysis of sustainable tourism-related policies adopted between 2007 and 2020 utilizing policy tools and a quantitative textual analysis.

### 3. Research Methodology

To analyze the texts of Ecuador's sustainable tourism policies, this work primarily utilizes two analytical methods: 1. Method of literature analysis: collect and arrange relevant research literature on tourist policies to have a better understanding of the state of tourism policy research in various countries, including Ecuador. 2. statistics and metrological methods: code the policy articles that meet the theme and choose the high frequency words in the texts using GooSeeker word frequency analysis software. Using the policy instrument models to categorize phrases and gain a full grasp of Ecuador's present sustainable tourism development policies.

Policy instruments, sometimes called as "government tools" or "government governance tools," have a hazy definition in practice, but the intricacies of the titles reflect different researchers' disciplinary preferences. Given the complexity of policy tools, experts have concentrated their efforts on defining ideas and categorizing instruments [12].

In the area of classification of policy instruments, Evert Vending points out that there are two primary approaches: "choice versus resources" and "maximization vs minimization." The "maximization" perspective entails collecting as many types of policy instruments as possible without categorizing them; the "minimization" perspective entails categorizing policy instruments into many groups using defined criteria [13]. And out of various views and emphases, different classification models with multiple factors have been established, see Table 3.

**Table 3.** Types of policy instruments based on different perspectives

Classifiers	Perspectives	Types of Policy Instruments
Schneider & Ingram	Based on government-led approach	Authoritative tools
		Trigger-based tools
		Building Competency-based Tools
		Symbolic or persuasive tools
		Learning Tools
Hewlett & M. Ramesh	Based on the degree of direct government rights involvement	Forced type tools
		Voluntary tools
		Hybrid tools
Rothwell & Zegveld	Based on the behavior of both supply and demand	Demand-based tools
		Supply-based tools
		Environment-based tools
Hood	Based on the function of the policy instrument's own activities	Probing tools
		Influencing tools

The above table is based on the collation of references [13] [14]

This study considers that regulating the behavior of both supply and demand on the basis of rational allocation of tourist resources is the key to establishing sustainable tourism in Ecuador, thus it will use the Rothwell and Zegveld model to analyze the policy terms.

**Table 4.** Classification of policy instruments and their definitions

Category	Policy Tools	Definition
Supply-based	Public Business	Measures implemented by the government to promote sustainable tourism development in relation to the establishment and operation and management of public enterprises.
	Information Technology Support	The government provides technical assistance for the development of a sustainable tourist business.
	Human resource development	Support from government policy for long-term talent development in the tourist sector.
	Financial Support	Government funds support for the development of sustainable tourism industry.
	Information Services	The government promotes the interchange of technology and market information linked to sustainable tourism, either directly or indirectly.
Environmental	Financial Support	Governments encourage long-term tourism development by establishing funding conditions and opening up the financial system.
	Target Planning	Long-term planning and objectives for sustainable tourist development.
	Strategic Measures	Government to establish strategic measures, such as marketing strategies, for lengthy tourism development.
	Regulatory Control	Relevant technical standards and other regulatory instruments developed by the government to promote sustainable tourism development.
	Tax incentives	Government tax breaks for tourism businesses, organizations, and individuals who have a sustainable concept.
Demand-based	Promotion	Propaganda from the government in support of protracted tourism development
	Government Procurement	The government creates procurement catalogs and uses financial funds to acquire sustainable tourism public service products.
	Trade Controls	Import and export controls are imposed by the government on sustainable tourism products.
	Service Outsourcing	Market players are entrusted with providing sustainable tourism-related services by the government.

Combining the Rothwell & Zegveld Model of Sustainable Tourism

Rothwell and Zegveld divided policy tools into three categories when studying public policies: demand-based, supply-based, and environment-based. The following 14 sub-policy instruments are identified in this article in the context of Ecuador's existing sustainable tourism scenario and these three types of policy tools, see Table 4.

According to the table above, supply-based policy instruments that are direct drivers of sustainable tourist growth include public business, IT support, human resource development, financial support, and information services. Environment-based policy instruments refer to the government's indirect guiding of the sustainable tourism industry, which includes financial assistance, target planning, strategic measures, regulatory controls, tax incentives, and other factors that have an impact on the industry's development. Demand-based policy tools are four sub-policy instruments that the government uses to encourage sustainable tourist development: promotion, government procurement, trade control, and service outsourcing. And the technical path of this work is as follows. (Figure 1)

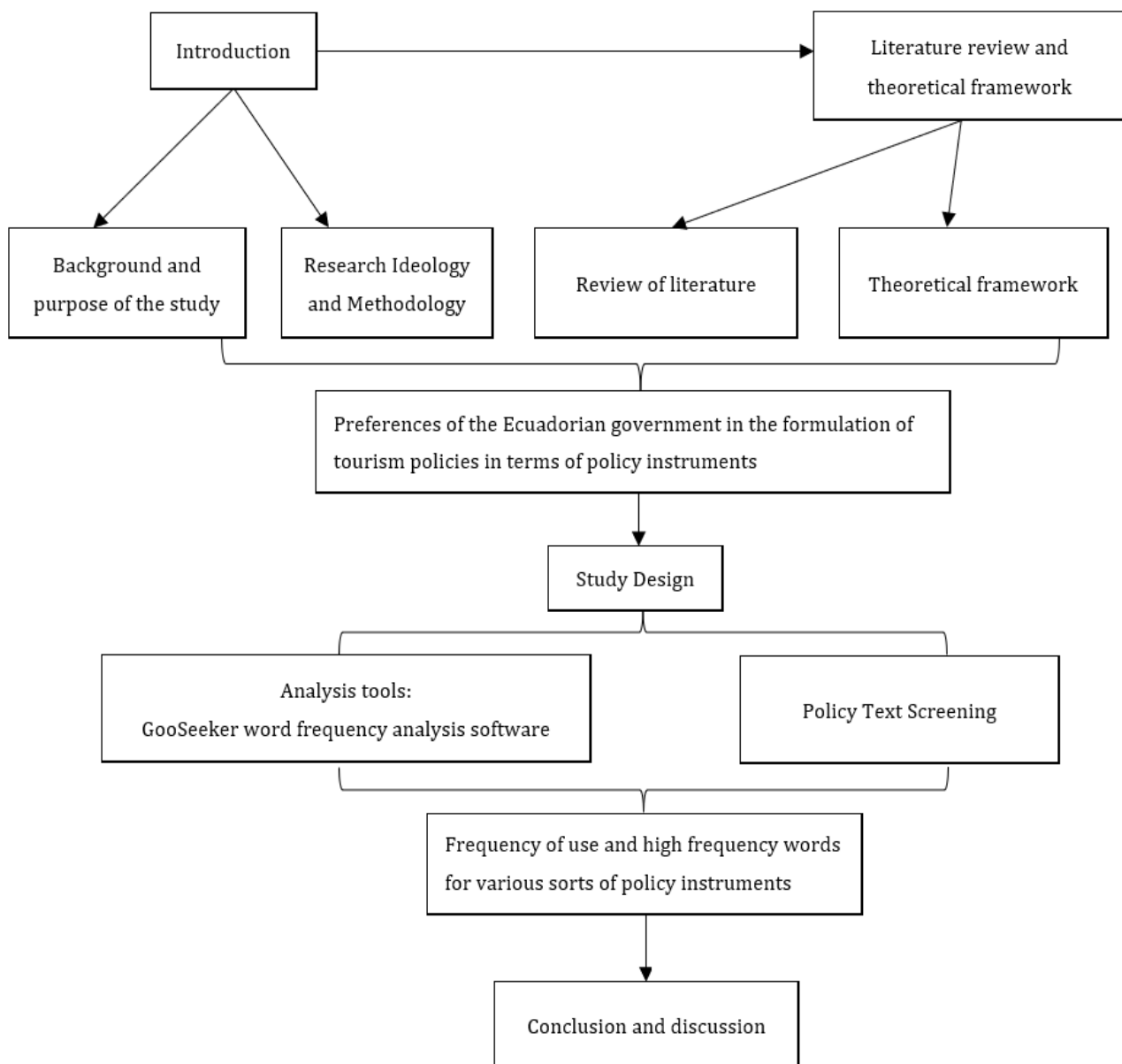


Figure 1. Technical path

## 4. Data and Analysis

### 4.1. Frequency Statistics of Policy Tools

Ecuador's Minister of Tourism, Mara Isabel Salvador, has proposed that "in order to increase public awareness of Ecuador's history, culture, and environment and to reactivate the economy, Ecuador requires sustainable tourism and other development," and in 2007, the country issued the "Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in Ecuador 2020" as a guideline for sustainable tourism, followed by relevant programs to promote the industry's development.

To ensure the richness and timeliness of tourism policy texts, they were sourced from two primary sources: 1. through Google Scholar, Academia, and other websites to filter policy texts from the literature analyzing current policies that fit the topic of this research paper; 2. through search engines such as Google to check for gaps and eliminate duplicate policy documents. To assure the representativeness of policy texts, this study sets the following text filtering rules: 1. The study will investigate only national-level policy texts. 2. Approvals, government work reports, leadership speeches, and other policy texts will be filtered out, leaving only official forms of laws and regulations, plans, opinions, rules, and notices [15]. 3. The title or content of the text must contain sustainable tourism.

The total number of documents that meet the requirements is 30, and they are numbered according to the chronological order and timeliness of the policy texts Table 5 and Table 6, with the long-term policy texts' target dates all pointing to 2020 under the guidance of Ecuador's Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development 2020.

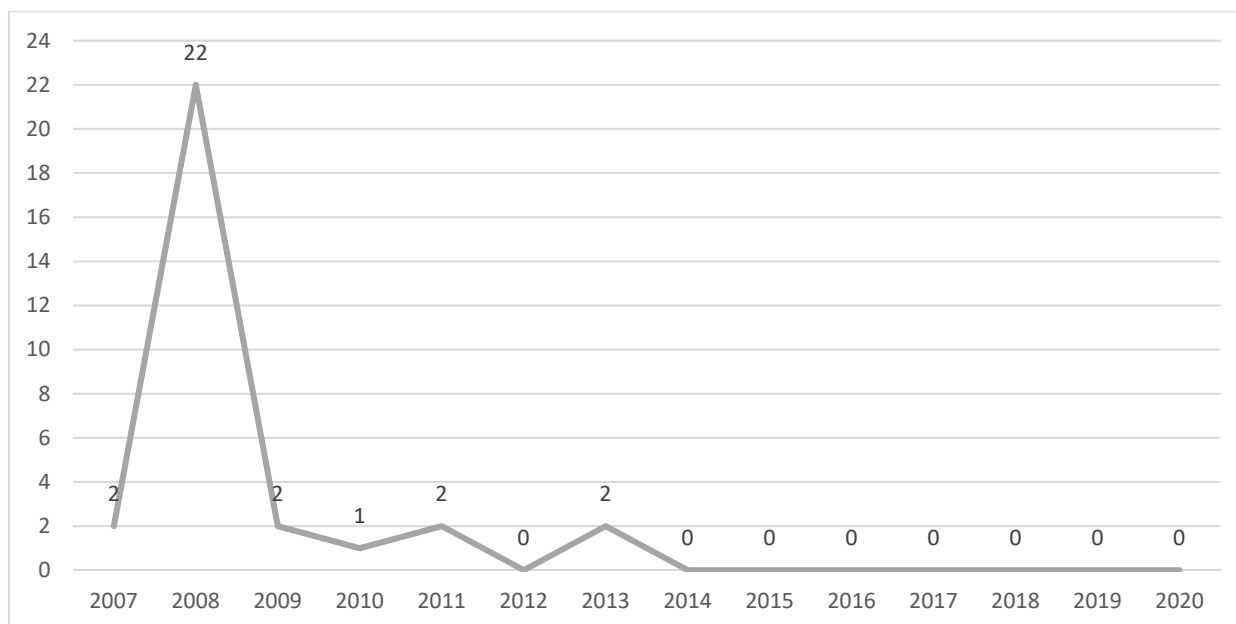
**Table 5.** Texts of policy with specific timeliness

Serial number	Policy	Time	Target time
1	"Pilot Implementation Plan of the Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance – GSTA" <i>Sp.</i> "Plan Piloto de Aplicación de la Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance – GSTA"	2007	2012-6
2	"Institutional restructuring of MINTUR" <i>Sp.</i> "Reestructuración institucional del MINTUR"	2008	2013
3	"Urban Network of Tourist Assistance Centers and Facilitation Centers" <i>Sp.</i> "Red Urbana de Centros Asistencia al Turista y Centros de Facilitación"	2008	2012
4	"Citizen Awareness on Sustainable Tourism" <i>Sp.</i> "Sensibilización Ciudadana en Turismo Sostenible"	2008	2013
5	"Development of Technical Training Plans for Tourism Service Providers" <i>Sp.</i> "Desarrollo de Planes de Capacitación Técnica para Prestadores de Servicios Turísticos"	2008	2012
6	"Regulations by Product Line" <i>Sp.</i> "Normativa por Línea de Producto"	2009	2013
7	"Ecuador Tourism Marketing Plan 2010- 2014" <i>Sp.</i> "Plan de Marketing Turístico del Ecuador 2010- 2014"	2010	2014
8	"Quality of Higher Education in Tourism" <i>Sp.</i> "Calidad de la Educación Superior en Turismo"	2013	Every four years

**Table 6.** Long-term policy documents

Serial number	Policy	Time
1	"Strategic sustainable tourism development plan for Ecuador 2020" <i>Sp.</i> "Plan estratégico de desarrollo de turismo sostenible para Ecuador 2020"	2007
2	"Organization and Institutional Strengthening of the Tourism Sector in Ecuador" <i>Sp.</i> "Organización y Fortalecimiento Institucional del Sector turístico en Ecuador"	2008
3	"Coordinación Interinstitucional para el Turismo Sostenible" <i>Sp.</i> "Coordinación Interinstitucional para el Turismo Sostenible"	2008
4	"Development and Consolidation of the Sustainable Tourism Regulation" <i>Sp.</i> "Desarrollo y Consolidación de la Normativa de Turismo Sostenible"	2008
5	"Strategic Information System for Tourism in Ecuador" <i>Sp.</i> "Sistema de Información Estratégica para el Turismo del Ecuador (SIETE)"	2008
6	"Consolidation of Integral Security in Tourism" <i>Sp.</i> "Consolidación de la Seguridad integral en Turismo"	2008
7	"Management for Sustainable Tourism". <i>Sp.</i> "Ordenamiento para el Turismo Sostenible"	2008
8	"Tourism Facilitation" <i>Sp.</i> "Facilitación Turística"	2008
9	"Development of tourist destinations" <i>Sp.</i> "Desarrollo de destinos turísticos"	2008
10	"Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas" <i>Sp.</i> "Turismo Sostenible en Áreas Protegidas"	2008
11	"Development of a comprehensive program of Nature and Community Tourism in Ecuador's tourist destinations" <i>Sp.</i> "Desarrollo de Programa integrales de Turismo de Naturaleza y Comunitario por Destino turísticos del Ecuador"	2008
12	"Tourism Product Innovation" <i>Sp.</i> "Innovación de Productos Turísticos"	2008
13	"Education and Training in Sustainable Tourism" <i>Sp.</i> "Educación y Formación en Turismo Sostenible"	2008
14	"Capacity Development of Human Resources for Sustainable Tourism" <i>Sp.</i> "Desarrollo de Capacidades de los Recursos Humanos para el Turismo Sostenible"	2008
15	"Sustainable Tourism Development Fund" <i>Sp.</i> "Fondo de Desarrollo Turístico Sostenible"	2008
16	"Corporate Social Responsibility in Sustainable Tourism" <i>Sp.</i> "Responsabilidad Social Corporativa en el Turismo sostenible"	2008
17	"Recovery, Revaluation and Development of the Pluri-Cultural, Historical and Intangible Heritage through Sustainable Tourism" <i>Sp.</i> "Recuperación, Revalorización y Desarrollo del Patrimonio Pluri - Cultural, Histórico e Intangible desde el Turismo Sostenible"	2008
18	"Transversal Measures of Tourism in Environmental Management for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Natural Heritage" <i>Sp.</i> "Medidas Transversales del Turismo en la Gestión Ambiental para la Conservación y el Manejo Sostenible del Patrimonio Natural"	2008
19	"Creation of a System of Tourism Observatories by Destinations" <i>Sp.</i> "Creación de un Sistema de Observatorios Turísticos por Destinos"	2008
20	"National Tourism Training Program" <i>Sp.</i> "Programa Nacional de Capacitación turística"	2009
21	"Fund Management for Sustainable Tourism Public Initiatives" <i>Sp.</i> "Gestión de Fondos para iniciativas Públicas de Turismo Sostenible"	2011
22	"Fund Management for Private Sustainable Tourism Initiatives" <i>Sp.</i> "Gestión de Fondos para Iniciativas Privadas de Turismo Sostenible"	2011

For a better visual perception, this study creates a line graph with the years as the horizontal axis to depict the implementation of sustainable tourism policies in Ecuador from 2007 to 2020. (Figure 2)



**Figure 2.** Number of sustainable tourism policies 2007-2020

This study will utilize the Rothwell and Zegveld classification model to code the policy contents that satisfy the requirements in the policy texts as "policy number - specific section - article number" as the fundamental units of analysis after identifying the target policy texts. After reading and classifying each of the 30 policy texts, we came up with 67 units of analysis, as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Table of content analysis unit codes for sustainable tourism policy texts (partial)

<b>Policy Number</b>	1
<b>Policy</b>	“Strategic sustainable tourism development plan for Ecuador 2020” <i>Sp.</i> “Plan estratégico de desarrollo de turismo sostenible para Ecuador 2020”
<b>Specific Content Analysis Module</b>	“To create the conditions for sustainable tourism to be a dynamic axis of the Ecuadorian economy that seeks to improve the quality of life of its population and the satisfaction of the current tourism demand, taking advantage of its comparative advantages and elements of uniqueness of the country.”  <i>Sp.</i> “Crear las condiciones para que el turismo sostenible sea un eje dinamizador de la economía ecuatoriana que busca mejorar la calidad de vida de su población y la satisfacción de la demanda turística actual, aprovechando sus ventajas comparativas y elementos de unicidad del país.”
<b>Code</b>	1-1-1-2
<b>Types of Policy Instruments</b>	Environmental - Target Planning

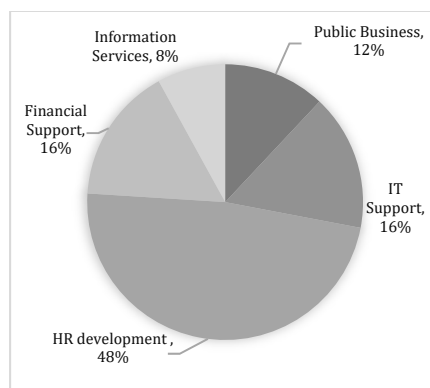
We can see the results of the statistical analysis in the following table after classifying them according to the theory of policy instruments. (Table 8)



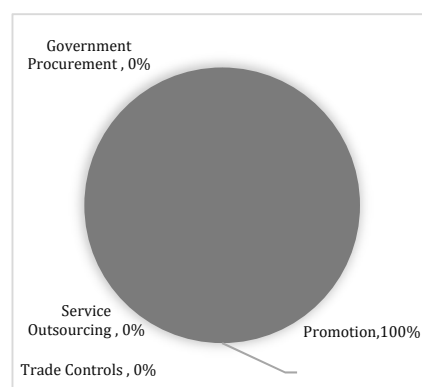
**Table 8.** Frequency statistics of policy instruments

Types of Policy Instruments	Tool name	Frequency	Individual Percentage	Overall percentage
Supply-based	Public Business	3	12%	37.31%
	Information Technology Support	4	16%	
	Human Resource development	12	48%	
	Financial Support	4	16%	
	Information Services	2	8%	
Subtotal by category		25	100%	
Demand-based	Government Procurement	0	0%	2.99%
	Promotion	2	100%	
	Trade Controls	0	0%	
	Service Outsourcing	0	0%	
Subtotal by category		2	100%	
Environmental	Financial Support	5	12.5%	59.7%
	Target Planning	12	30%	
	Strategic Measures	17	42.5%	
	Regulatory Control	6	15%	
	Tax incentives	0	0%	
Subtotal by category		40	100%	
Total		67		100%

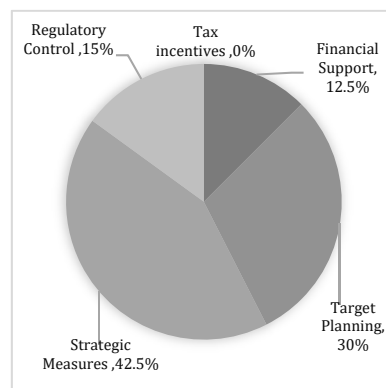
In the image below, we can observe the frequency of use of each policy instrument in a more intuitive way. (Figure 3, Figure 4 and Figure 5)



**Figure 3.** Supply-based policy instruments



**Figure 4.** Demand-based policy instruments



**Figure 5.** Environmental policy instruments

## 4.2. High Frequency Word Filter

A word cloud is a graphic representation of text that summarizes it. The frequency of a word in the text is commonly used to map the size of a word in a word cloud, which visually reflects the value of the word. [16]

In this study, we use the Gooseeker software to import filtered content analysis units for text processing and construct high-frequency word clouds after removing dummy words, as shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6.** Wordle of high frequency words

## 5. Findings

### 5.1. Analysis of the Number of Policy Texts Issued

In terms of the number of publications, 2008 was the peak year for the promulgation of sustainable tourism policy texts in Ecuador, while almost no new tourism policies were issued after 2013, largely due to the fact that most of the long-term policies issued during this period have a target time of 2020, so the number of subsequent relevant policies issued during the implementation period was minimal, see Figure 1.

### 5.2. Frequency Analysis of Policy Instruments

In the process of using policy tools, Ecuador covers all three types, according to the statistical table of frequency of policy instruments (Table 8). Environmental policy instruments are

utilized the most commonly (59.7%), followed by supply-based policy instruments (37.31%), and demand-based policy instruments (2.99%).

This indicates that the Ecuadorian government has preferences when it comes to the use of policy tools in the development of sustainable tourism strategies. The government typically employs environmental policy instruments to establish a favorable development environment to encourage the development of a sustainable tourist business in an indirect manner, but it does not utilize direct policy tools.

A cursory look at the category of policy instruments reveals that "human resource development" is the most commonly used policy instrument on the supply side, accounting for 48%, while "information services" is the least frequently used policy tool, accounting for only 8%. This implies that the Ecuadorian government prioritizes quality training of tourism service personnel in its efforts to promote sustainable tourism growth, and actively encourages colleges to offer relevant courses in order to produce highly trained human resources for sustainable tourism. However, the application of the remaining supply-side policy measures is still insufficient.

Ecuador's government has solely utilized "promotion" as a demand-based policy instrument. The government has aggressively begun the inclusion of Ecuador in specialized international web pages, thematic web pages to increase worldwide awareness, and has worked to capture potential or emerging target markets to promote the industry, according to the specific analytical unit. At the same time, there is a significant gap in the implementation of demand-based policy mechanisms, such as "government procurement," "trade controls," and "service outsourcing."

"Strategic measures" are the most commonly used policy tool in the environmental sector, accounting for 42.5%, while "financial support" is the least commonly used policy tool, with no "tax incentives". The Ecuadorian government usually adopts policies of encouraging nature in the process of promoting the development of sustainable tourism, such as encouraging the transformation of traditional tourism to a sustainable way and encouraging the establishment of destination use, in order to provide a policy environment that ensures the development of the target industry. The remaining policy measures, such as "financial support" and "regulatory control" are still in use, but not nearly sufficient.

### 5.3. Analysis of High-frequency Words

We can observe from the word cloud (Figure 6) that the most frequently mentioned words in the text are "tourism" and "sustainable," followed by "development" and "This shows that the Ecuadorian government recognizes the need of creating a sustainable tourism business for the country. The next most common words are "resources" and "projects," indicating that the Ecuadorian government uses the country's natural resources to its advantage, aggressively investigates human resources, and implements sustainable tourism-related programs, according to the content analysis unit. In general, the Ecuadorian government focuses on developing talent for sustainable tourism, complemented by appropriate financing, investment, and other regulations to promote the industry's stable development.

## 6. Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the foregoing findings, this article makes the following recommendations in order to aid in the beneficial growth of Ecuador's sustainable tourism business:

1. A timely evaluation of the effects of current policy. The government should actively analyze current policies in the implementation process and make timely adjustments to support the industry's high-quality development.

2. The structure of policy tools should be optimized. The policy instruments used should be considered in the context of Ecuador's current tourism scenario. In the future, the government should place a greater emphasis on demand-based policy tools, which can be used in conjunction with environmental and supply-based policies to encourage the development of a sustainable tourism industry.

3. Improving the operationalization of policy documents. At a broad level, the Ecuadorian government has established certain requirements for long-term tourist development, but it has made little mention of how to put these aspirations into effect. As a result, the government should adopt more operational policies in the future to implement the growth of a sustainable tourism industry.

This article examines Ecuador's sustainable tourism policy texts solely from the perspective of policy instruments, which is a limited perspective that excludes elements like issuing departments and policy efficacy. There is no horizontal comparison with other countries' sustainable tourism policies; in terms of vertical comparison, this article does not evaluate the relevant policy documents from the viewpoint of time lapse, so future research might be undertaken from the perspective of policy changes, etc.

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