

BIBLIOMETRIC INSIGHTS ON EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF WELLNESS TOURISM: PROMOTING HEALTH AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

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Abstract: *The tourism and wellness sectors are combined in the wellness tourism sector which can satisfy people's dual requirements for travel and health and promote a healthy way of life. (Y. Li & Wen, 2024). Wellness tourism provides physical, quality-of-life, psychological, and environmental health advantages (Liao et al., 2023). In an era of increasing stress, wellness has transformed into a lifestyle of self-discovery and the wellness tourism industry is growing at a pace (K. H. Chen et al., 2013). This research aims to expand knowledge about wellness tourism by exploring its structural dimensions and potential as a multidisciplinary educational tool. By examining its integration into educational frameworks, the study highlights wellness tourism as a valuable resource for teaching sustainable practices, cultural awareness, and holistic health principles. Thus, this study conducted a bibliometric analysis of wellness tourism publications by extracting the data from the Scopus database. 495 documents were considered for final analysis through biblioshiny and Vosviewer. Performance analysis such as most productive authors, journals, papers, annual production patterns, and science mapping such as bibliographic coupling, world collaboration, co-citation analysis, etc was conducted. The findings provide insights for researchers, educators, and industry professionals to advance the field and incorporate wellness tourism into academic curricula and training programs.*

Key words: *wellness tourism; health education; bibliometric analysis; cultural education; mental wellbeing; physical wellbeing; yoga; spirituality; sustainability.*

Introduction

The term "wellness" refers to a comprehensive state of mind. It is a condition of being healthy in every aspect of life. Wellness is a

developing travel market segment that includes individual or group travel to resorts and locations that specialize in enhancing physical and mental health. (Kazakov & Oyner, 2021). A multitude of scholars emphasize the complex nature of personal well-being, which includes environmental, social, and mental dimensions. Engaging in meaningful and healthful activities can bring harmony to one's mental, spiritual, physical, or biological health (Kotur, 2022). Due to intense social pressure, competitiveness, and a fast-paced life that has come with the recent rapid economic development, most individuals feel burned out which has led to an increase in persons with subhealth traits. Body, mind, and interpersonal interactions are the three areas that show signs of burnout. Overlooking this issue has negative consequences for work and personal life, diminishes social production efficiency, and threatens social stability. The importance of health and wellness activities has increased over the past 20 years, particularly in the wake of the pandemic (Liao et al., 2023). Living a healthy lifestyle involves more than just avoiding illness and managing stress. It also involves having a sense of fulfillment and purpose in life (DUNN, 1959). Wellness comprises mental, spiritual, environmental, and physical aspects. It enhances well-being by balancing the body, mind, and spirit through physical exercise, mental relaxation, and intellectual stimulation. (Rodrigues et al., 2010). The tourism business has capitalized on people's desire for well-being by enticing them to travel abroad to enhance their health. Tourism provides opportunities to explore new experiences outside of the workplace and routine life (K. H. Chen et al., 2014). The tourism and wellness sectors are combined in the wellness tourism sector which can satisfy people's dual requirements for travel and health and promote a healthy way of life. (Y. Li & Wen, 2024). Wellness tourism provides physical, quality-of-life, psychological, and environmental health advantages (Liao et al., 2023). Engaging in leisure activities boosts subjective well-being.

Research on wellness tourism and changing demand has shown that travelers' needs for well-being have evolved. According to (Joseph Sirgy, 2019), those who are seeking happiness and a good quality of life are searching for locations that may satisfy their demands for many forms of well-being, including mental, spiritual, and cultural.

Wellness tourism as an educational tool

Historically, tourism has been a tool for cultural learning and experience. Wellness tourism continues this tradition by educating travelers about local cultures, practices, and health traditions, thereby enhancing their overall experience and understanding of the destinations they visit (Topp, 2011).

Wellness tourism serves as an effective educational tool by facilitating

informal learning experiences that enhance health knowledge. The study highlights that wellness tourism can promote health education through the acquisition of knowledge related to physical and mental health, stress management, and nutrition. By engaging in wellness services, travelers can experience behavioral changes and improved health attitudes, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes (Savella & Kórodi, 2020). Wellness tourism can educate consumers about healthy lifestyles, nutritious practices, and safe travel experiences. By integrating wellness principles into tourism and hospitality education, people can develop skills to create innovative wellness products and services, ultimately leading to a more informed and health-conscious clientele. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of wellness trends within the industry (Okumus & Kelly, 2022). Wellness centres within hotels not only offer standard services like hydrotherapy and fitness but also focus on educating visitors about well-being practices and healthy lifestyle. This holistic approach enhances guests' subjective feelings of well-being and aligns with modern trends in the leisure industry. By integrating educational elements, hotels can achieve competitive advantages and contribute to the overall development of wellness tourism (Rančić Demir et al., 2021). The intersection of wellness tourism and education offers unique opportunities for enhancing the cultural competence, health, and personal growth of students. This integration involves combining educational, sports, medical, and biological technologies to promote a healthy lifestyle and social adaptation skills among students. Implementing wellness tourism practices in universities can improve students' physical fitness and health, contributing to their overall educational progress and personal development. By incorporating wellness tourism into curricular and extracurricular activities, educational institutions can significantly improve students' fitness levels and overall well-being, addressing urgent challenges in higher education (Malyshev et al., 2016).

There is a growing exploration of culture and art, yoga, spirituality, wellness, sports, hot springs, spas, and other domains that were not traditionally connected to wellness tourism. Due to this trend, more studies are concentrating on a holistic approach to well-being. (Dillette et al., 2021), Which highlights the expanding significance of wellness tourism in the travel sector (Kazakov & Oyner, 2021). The popularity of wellness tourism is rising on a national and international scale. (Sopha et al., 2019). The global wellness economy has grown at a phenomenal pace of 6.6% each year. It increased from USD 4.3 trillion in 2017 to USD 4.9 trillion in 2019 (Kandan Parakkal et al., 2024) . The rapidly evolving wellness sector caters to healthy people of all ages and emphasizes illness prevention and maintenance of health. (Sopha et al., 2019)

Research on wellness tourism is still lacking despite its growing popularity and various health and educational benefits (Meera & Vinodan, 2019). Additionally, even though it's a growing part of travel, the field is still in its early stages, therefore further research is necessary to provide a strong scientific foundation. (Tuzunkan, 2018). With the use of a bibliometric technique, this study attempts to assess the recent state of the topic by analyzing global research work. It also serves as a guide for new researchers interested in the topic.

This study reviews all of the articles published between 1996 and June 28, 2024, to guide future researchers who may be interested in the topic. It also attempts to evaluate the current status of the field by reviewing literature from around the globe using a bibliometric approach based on science mapping and performance analysis. Accordingly, there were very few research has been done that evaluates wellness literature using bibliometrics. Table 1 presents the bibliometric studies done on wellness tourism. It can be observed from the table that bibliographic coupling, world collaboration network, and thematic analysis have not been performed in any studies except in two studies. One of these studies has used bibliographic coupling, another has analyzed thematic analysis. However, this analysis was conducted on data extracted using only 1-2 keywords that may limit the publication's reach. Most of these studies have used the Web of Science database. Comparatively few studies have used the Scopus database. Additionally, Most of these studies have used Vos Viewer software for data analysis. None of these have used biblioshiny along with Vos Viewer. Thus, this study aims to fill these research gaps.

Title	Author	Time covered	Database, and analytical tool	Science Mapping	Gap
"Bibliometric analysis on wellness tourism – citation and co-citation analysis	(Suban, 2023)	1998-2021	Scopus, Vosviewer	Co-citation of sources, references, author	None of these studies have analyzed the bibliographic coupling, thematic analysis, or country collaboration network. Most of these studies have used either the Web of Science database,
Wellness tourism: a bibliometric analysis during 1998–2021	(Suban, 2022)	1998-2021	Scopus, Vosviewer	Keyword co-occurrence	
Wellness Tourism: A Bibliometric	(Martins et al., 2023)	2013-2023	Web of Science, Vosviewer	Keyword co-occurrence, co-authorship by country	

Analysis Approach					Comparatively few studies have used the Scopus database.
Visual analysis of the international wellness tourism WOS literature from 1992 to 2019	(Wang et al., 2021)	1992-2019	Web of Science,	Keywords occurrence, co-citation knowledge map.	Most of these studies have used Vos
Wellness tourism services innovation: A bibliometric review and future research agenda	(W. Li et al., 2024)	2013-2023	Web of Science, CNKI Citespace software	co-author network map, institutional cooperation network, keyword clustering, evaluation index,	viewer software for data analysis. None of these have used biblioshiny along with Vos Viewer.
Wellness Tourism Management Research A bibliometric analysis	(Gulyas & Molnar, 2023)	2012-2022	Web of Science and Scopus	Co-citation of all, coupling, keyword analysis co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, reference analysis, and keywords analysis.	Performance analysis has not been done in this paper, Only a single search term "Wellness tourism" was used to retrieve the data.
Bibliometric analysis of publications on wellness tourism	(Mohanani & Shekhar, 2022)	2006-2021	Web of Science, biblioshiny	Trending key, thematic map, word cloud	"Wellness" and "tourism" are the only keywords used to extract data."

Table 1: A literature review of bibliometric studies on wellness tourism

Objectives

- To identify the most productive authors, documents, countries, and sources.
- To assess the annual production of articles on wellness tourism over the years and production patterns.
- To evaluate the various themes based on their relevancy and density.
- To find out the most collaborative country
- To categorize the paper into various themes through co-citation analysis and bibliographic coupling.

It is expected that reviewing scientific publications will facilitate the planning of future research. The results of the study are also expected to contribute to the creation of scholarly knowledge by locating and evaluating publications and trends in this industry.

Research Method

Bibliometric analysis is a statistical method to analyze academic papers quantitatively to create indices of research performance and scientific activity. (Zyoud et al., 2015).

(Murgado-Armenteros et al., 2015)state that data from several bibliographic databases are required for bibliometric analysis. Several well-known databases are utilized in bibliometric analysis, including Web-of-Science, Google Scholar, and Scopus. However, when it comes to journal coverage and citation analysis, Scopus outperforms Web of Science and Google Scholar (Falagas et al., 2008; Zyoud et al., 2015). For citation analysis and bibliographic searches, Scopus is a useful substitute for the Web of Science. It can conduct similar search activities (Gaviria-Marin et al., 2019).

Scopus provides a wider selection of journals in comparison to Web-of-Science and PubMed, along with faster and more comprehensive citation analysis. (Falagas et al., 2008). Thus, this study extracts wellness tourism research metadata from Scopus by using the relevant keywords. The search focused on the article abstracts, title, and keywords.

A bibliometric analysis was conducted to compile and assess wellness tourism research studies. The bibliometric analysis was conducted manually using approaches such as bibliometrics. (Yoon & Lee, 2012), and meta-analysis (Kipper et al., 2020), scientometrics (Mingers & Leydesdorff, 2015). Science mapping analysis and performance analysis are two of the primary methodologies that are combined in bibliometric analysis. Science mapping analysis is a spatial depiction of the relationships between various scientific performers. On the other hand, performance analysis examines how research components contribute to a certain field. (Donthu et al., 2021). Both types of techniques are used in this study to give a comprehensive analysis of the WT. Performance analysis includes annual structure, top-cited articles, productive nations, authors, and universities. We use VOSviewer and biblioshiny to analyze the bibliographic coupling, world collaboration, thematic analysis, and co-citations of documents using scientific mapping (network analysis).

Keywords Identification

The search was conducted using the following Boolean string to locate publications with wellness tourism in the title, abstracts, or keyword list: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Wellness tourism" OR "Spa tourism" OR "yoga tourism" OR "wellness traveler" OR "wellness tourist" OR "well-being tourism" OR "spiritual tourism" OR "Wellness" AND "Tourism") in

Scopus database.

Initial search

We conducted a bibliographic search for wellness tourism on June 28, 2024, using the Scopus database. Scopus is a well-organized database often utilized for quantitative investigations. (Donthu et al., 2021). Our study covers the publications published between 1996 and June 2024. The initial search yielded 1219 documents, which were further filtered based on the parameters outlined below.

Inclusion and exclusion

The search was restricted by document type (articles, review), publishing stage (final), source type (Journal), and language (English) when the filter was applied. The database was further reduced by selecting keywords such as Tourism, Wellness Tourism, Wellness, Spiritual Tourism, happiness, nature-based tourism, nature, subjective well-being, well-being tourism, well-being, recreational facility, health impact, life satisfaction, recreational activity, yoga tourism, health resorts, spas, yoga, quality of life, spirituality, health and wellness, wellbeing, health and wellness tourism, spa tourism to find more relevant papers to meet objectives of research. The screening procedure reduced the data set from 1219 documents to 495 articles. The analysis was conducted on 495 articles from the final data collection.

Results and discussion

Performance analysis

Descriptive information

Table 2 displays the scientific article production measured from 1996 to 2024. The 495 wellness tourism papers were published between 1996 and 2024, with an average publication age of 5.39 years. There were 19.4 citations on average per document. There were 495 papers total consisting of 469 articles and 26 review papers. The findings show 1108 authors with 1441 author keywords, comprising 109 single-authored papers.

Time span	1996:2024
Sources	196
Papers	495
Growth Rate Per Annum %	12.18
Average Age of Document	5.39
Average citations per document	19.4
Author's Keywords (DE)	1441
Authors	1108

Single-authored docs	109
Authors of Single-authored docs	102
International co-authorships %	19.8
Co-Authors per Doc	2.67
No of articles	469
No review papers	26

Annual Publication Trends

This article examines research on wellness tourism published between 1996 and June 2024. An examination of the number of publications over time reveals changes in this field's research hotspots and trends for future development. Figure 1 illustrates that between 1996 and 2009, there were very few publications. 2010 was the first peak where number of publications rose from 4 to 20 articles. In 2011 it showed a little downfall with 12 publications. The research on wellness tourism experienced a phase of high expansion between 2011 and 2023 and reached its peak in 2023 with 83 articles. The annual quantity of articles published has remained higher than it was during the preceding period. There are only 25 articles in 2024 because articles published till June only are considered.

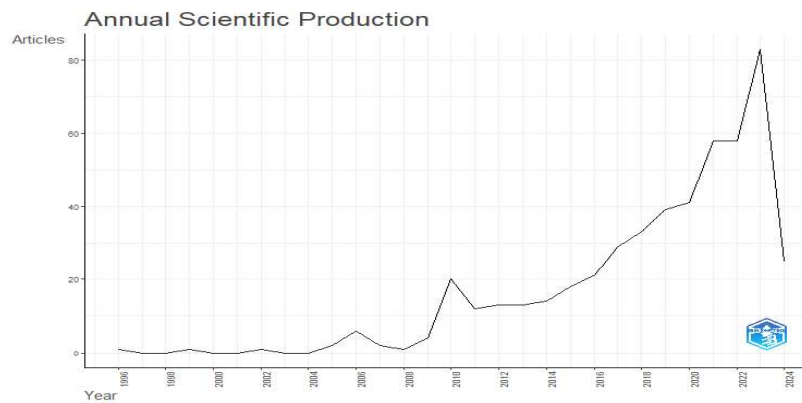


Figure 1. Annual production pattern

Most Prolific Authors

Table 3 displays the scientific productivity of authors, measured by their number of publications, h-index, and g-index. “Leet TJ” emerged as a most was the most prolific author based on the number of papers (NP) (7), h-index (6), and g-index (7) followed by “CHEN K-H” but he received the most citations among all these authors.

AUTHORS	NO OF PAPERS	G-INDEX	H-INDEX	TC
LEE TJ	7	7	6	174
CHEN K-H	6	6	6	293
SZROMEK AR	6	6	6	102
LI Y	6	6	4	149
CHANG F-H	5	5	5	255
HUANG L	5	5	4	201
PHUTHONG T	5	2	2	6
HAN H	4	4	4	97
HUDSON S	4	4	4	137
KOMPPULAR	4	4	4	179

Table 3: Most Productive Author

Analysis of most cited documents

There are 495 documents, out of which the top 10 articles based on citation received were presented in Table 4. The result of the performance analysis shows that “Health and Wellness Benefits of Travel Experiences: A Literature Review” was a highly productive article with 243 citations followed by “Wellness Tourists: in Search of Transformation” with 228 citations. Out of all the documents, 480 articles had fewer than 100 citations, with only 15 publications having more than 100 citations.

Title	Authors	Journal	Year	Total Citations	DOI
“Health and Wellness Benefits of Travel Experiences : A Literature Review	(C. C. Chen & Petrick, 2013)	Journal of Travel Research	2013	243	10.1177/0047287513496477
Wellness tourists: in search of transformation	(Voigt et al., 2011)	Tourism Review	2011	228	10.1108/16605371111127206
Health and medical	(Hall, 2011)	Tourism Review	2011	188	10.1108/16605371111127198

tourism: a kill or cure for global public health?					
Holiday recovery experiences , tourism satisfaction, and life satisfaction - Is there a relationship ?	(C. C. Chen et al., 2016)	Tourism Management	2016	143	10.1016/j.tourman.2015.09.016
Essential customer service factors and the segmentation of older visitors within wellness tourism based on hot springs hotels	(K. H. Chen et al., 2013)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2013	139	10.1016/j.ijhm.2013.05.013
Yoga tourism as a niche within the wellness tourism market	(Lehto et al., 2006)	Tourism Recreation Research	2006	121	10.1080/02508281.2006.11081244
The effect of atmospheric cues and involvement on pleasure and relaxation: The spa hotel context	(Loureiro et al., 2013)	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2013	121	10.1016/j.ijhm.2013.04.011
Towards a picture of tourists' happiness	(Filep & Deery, 2010)	Tourism Analysis	2010	120	10.3727/108354210X12864727453061

Assessing the Perceived Restorative Qualities of Vacation Destinations	(Lehto, 2013)	Journal of Travel Research	2013	116	10.1177/0047287512461567
Testing the role of tourists' emotional experiences in predicting destination image, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions: A case of wellness tourism	(Sharma & Nayak, 2018)	Tourism Management Perspectives	2018	110	10.1016/j.tmp.2018.07.004

Table 4: Most cited documents

Productive Source Journals

There were 495 articles chosen for this review, and 196 journals published them. The first 12 extremely productive journals are listed in Table 5. “Sustainability (Switzerland)” with 32 published articles is the most productive publication among them. The “International Journal of Spa and Wellness”, with 31 publications, and the “International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage” with 20 documents are in close succession. These journals' publications suggest that they are the most influential ones in the field of the wellness tourism sector, providing scholars with a valuable resource for their research in this field.

<i>Sources</i>	<i>Articles</i>
<i>“Sustainability (Switzerland)”</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>International Journal of Spa and Wellness</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Tourism Recreation Research</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i>	<i>12</i>

<i>Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites</i>	11
<i>Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing</i>	11
<i>Tourism Management Perspectives</i>	10
<i>Tourism Review</i>	10
<i>Current Issues in Tourism</i>	9
<i>International Journal of Tourism Research</i>	9
<i>Journal Of Hospitality and Tourism Management”</i>	9

Table 5: Most Productive sources

Most cited countries

Table 6 demonstrates that the USA ranked first among all countries with over 1096 citations in wellness tourism research. China and the United Kingdom produced more than 900 citations. With average article citations of 22.5 and 46.9 respectively. But in terms of average article citations, the United Kingdom was most productive by receiving an average of 46.9 citations per document followed by the USA at 40.6 citations per article.

“Country	TC	Average Article Citations
<i>Usa</i>	1096	40.6
<i>China</i>	1035	22.5
<i>United Kingdom</i>	938	46.9
<i>Australia</i>	658	29.9
<i>India</i>	364	10.1
<i>Portugal</i>	354	27.2
<i>Spain</i>	328	13.7
<i>Finland</i>	277	23.1
<i>Japan</i>	199	22.1
<i>Italy</i>	181	20.1”

Table 6: Most cited countries

Science Mapping

World Collaboration

The collaboration network shows interactions and collaborations among authors of different countries on a particular topic. Table 7 lists the top 10 collaborations among countries on wellness tourism research. China and USA have the most collaboration work (6) following China with Australia (5), Australia with Korea (4), and China with Hong Kong (4). China and the USA collaborate the most with author countries on the list.

Figure 2 shows collaboration among countries globally. The blue colour

depicts the presence of publication in a particular country and the grey colour depicts the absence of publication in a particular nation. The countries that produce the most publications are represented by dark blue color and red lines indicate the collaboration networks of publishing countries. Countries like China, Hong Kong, Australia, the USA India, and Korea collaborated actively with other countries.

“From	To	No of Papers
China	USA	6
China	Australia	5
Australia	Korea	4
China	Hong Kong	4
India	USA	3
USA	Australia	3
USA	Hong Kong	3
USA	Korea	3
China	Korea”	2

Table 7 Collaboration between countries

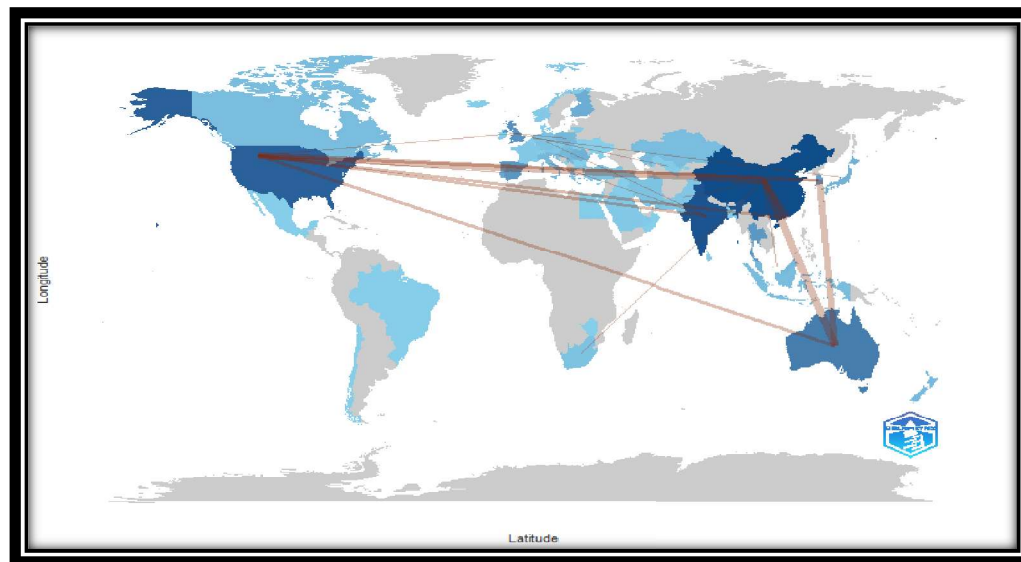


Figure 2 world collaboration network

Thematic analysis

Themes are subtle, abstract phrases, patterns, or procedures that make a phenomenon more understandable (Mishra & Dey, 2022). The thematic map uses a 2-Dimensional plot to show the typological motifs (Cobo et al., 2011). Relevance degree and Development degree are the two dimensions that divide the plot into 4 quadrants. Each theme is represented by a bubble on the plot as seen in Figure 3

The motor theme, which is an essential theme with high density and high centrality, is in the upper right quadrant. These themes highlight the most developed and relevant themes for wellness tourism research. Figure 3 shows four motor themes namely (Sustainable development, Quality of Life, and health impact); (tourism, human, and medical tourism); (health services, economies, and health services); and (male, female, and travel) are at the very core of the domain and most widely discussed topic.

The niche theme which has low relevance and high development, is located in the upper left quadrant. Figure 3 shows three Niche themes namely, (commerce, competition), (Austria, gis) and (genetic algorithm and health tourism) that may not have a substantial impact on the broader landscape.

The lower left quadrant contains themes that are either emerging or declining and have little development and significance. Figure 3 shows three themes in this quadrant namely, (sustainable tourism and planning), (forestry) and (mountain region, assessment method, and geotourism) that have less significance and poorly developed themes.

The basic theme is in the lower right quadrant of the plot showing high relevance and low development degree. Figure 3 shows two Basic themes namely, (decision making, geothermal energy, and spa tourism) and (tourist destination, tourism development, and tourist behavior) these are significant but underdeveloped regions. Scholars are advised to further study Basic themes because they are less developed and have high relevance in the domain.

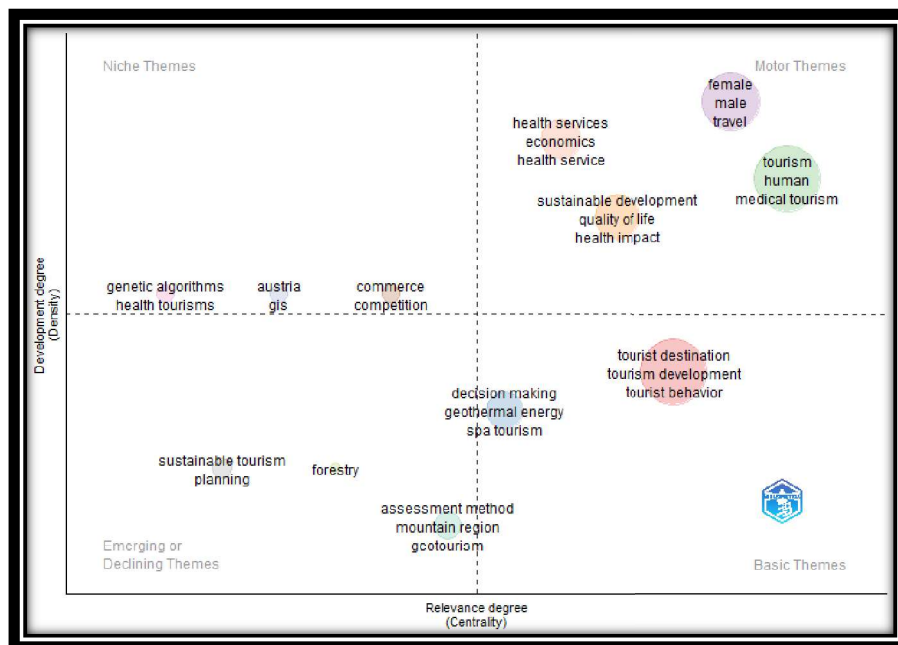


Figure 3 Thematic analysis

Co-citation analysis

Co-citation calculates the quantity of papers that have cited a certain group of articles (Culnan, 1987). “When a researcher cites any work of any given author along with the work of any other author in a new document” (Culnan, 1986). The top 50 papers were utilized as a starting point to determine how often other researchers cited two or more documents together. Figure 4 shows 3 clusters having a red, blue, and green color. Researchers working on the same theme can refer to the work of these authors of clusters for better understanding.

In Cluster 1 (Red color), 10 documents are listed indicating that in most of the research, other authors have cited the group of these 10 documents together. Cluster 1 has a Spiritual tourism theme thus scholars working on spiritual tourism can refer to the work of these authors.

In Cluster 2 (blue color), 31 documents are listed that are cited together by researchers. Well-being tourism and related fields are assessed in cluster 2. Scholars working on wellness tourism and related terms like spa tourism, spatial stigma, heritage tourism, tourist attitude, ethnic tourism, and health tourism can refer to the work of this cluster.

Cluster 3 (green colour) has 9 articles listed that are cited together by researchers. Psychological aspects of wellness tourism are discussed in this cluster. Scholars can refer to the work in their research related to the psychological aspects of wellness tourism.

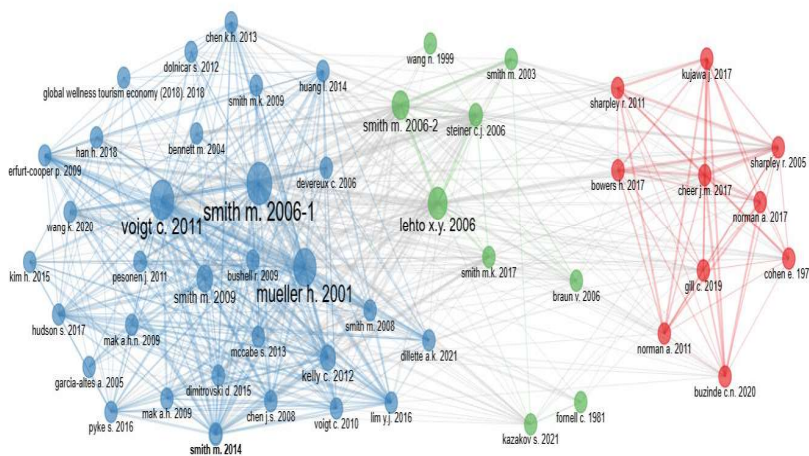


Figure 4: Co-citation analysis

Bibliographic coupling

Bibliographic coupling uses citation analysis to determine the degree of similarity between publications. This occurs when the bibliographies of two works both cite the same third work (Fayaz et al., 2022). The

"coupling strength" becomes stronger when more publications are cited jointly by two documents (Kleminski et al., 2022) Quantitative network analysis techniques enable the mapping of a study field and the identification of subgroups (clusters) of research by compiling the connections between all the publications in the field (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

Cluster 1 (red): Linking well-being and tourism

The first cluster is the largest, having 64 articles. The articles discussed the linkage between well-being and tourism. Health tourism, religious tourism, spa tourism, happiness, yoga tourism, tourist experiences, and social engagement were major themes in the articles. These articles discussed the way to improve wellness via tourism. The cluster provides us with a way to link wellness with tourism such as people travelling for yoga or spas which help in wellness. By travelling, social engagement will be more which is positively connected with emotional wellness.

Cluster 2 (green): Holistic Wellness by Tourism

The second cluster has 41 articles covering the holistic approach to wellness by tourism. The cluster covers various aspects such as psychotherapeutic healing, medical spa, international wellness tourism experience, forest bathing, medical tourism, health spa, stress reduction, eco-tourism, healing effects, quality of life, motivation, and satisfaction factors. These topics cover keywords to understand the ways to holistic wellness through tourism.

Cluster 3 (blue): Experience of wellness tourism

The third cluster has 40 articles highlighting the factors exploring experiences of wellness tourism. The cluster discussed hotels' customer services, spiritual retreats, previous experiences, motivating factors, observational studies of wellness, and religious travelling experiences of various countries such as New Zealand, Croatia, China, Taiwan, Australia, Thailand, Queensland, Bama, Finland, Switzerland, and Turkey. The cluster helps to understand the reasons that can enhance the customer experience of wellness tourism.

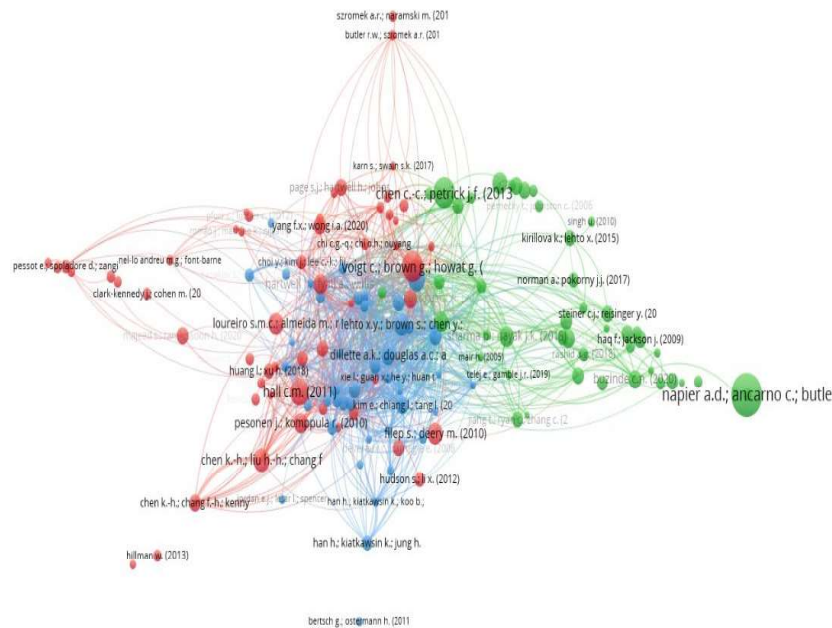


Figure 5 Bibliographic coupling

Conclusion

The current research contributes to a better knowledge of the current status of wellness tourism research. This study spans 28 years (from 1996 to June 28, 2024), providing a thorough overview of the field's publications. There were very few bibliometric analyses on wellness tourism. Data from 1996 to the present has been extracted from the Scopus database. We observed a rising trend in the publication from 2011. In terms of citations, Chen K-H is the most prolific author, whereas Lee TJ is the most prolific based on publishing and index. Most articles (32) on wellness tourism have been published by "Sustainability (Switzerland)". A paper titled "Health and Wellness Benefits of Travel Experiences: A Literature Review" published in "The Journal of Travel Research" in 2013 by (C. C. Chen & Petrick, 2013) has received the highest number of citations (243). The USA ranked first by getting 1096 citations. Furthermore, China is the nation that collaborates the most. It has collaborated with many countries and published the highest number of articles with USA (6), followed by Australia (5), Hongkong (4) with Korea (2). The thematic analysis highlighted the niche themes, motor themes, and basic and emerging themes. Furthermore, Co-citation analysis has formed 3 clusters focused on spiritual tourism, well-being tourism and related fields, and psychological aspects of wellness tourism. Similarly, the bibliographic coupling has three clusters. The

first cluster tries to link well-being with tourism, 2nd cluster discusses holistic wellness by tourism and 3rd cluster highlights the factors exploring experiences of wellness tourism.

Theoretical implications

This bibliometric analysis educates academicians on research trends, key themes, gaps collaborations, and thematic developments in wellness tourism, providing a foundation for future research. This study can help them to detect and comprehend new trends in the discipline, including terminology, and field reference studies related to this sector. This sheds light on the importance of the topic and may influence travel products in the future. The research introduces new theoretical pathways by proposing the incorporation of wellness tourism into academic curricula. It highlights its potential as a tool for teaching sustainable practices, cultural awareness, and health principles, enriching education theory with practical applications from the tourism sector. It broadens the theoretical understanding of how tourism serves not only as leisure but also as an informal educational medium. Tourism academics and professionals can use these findings to guide future studies on wellness tourism.

Managerial implications

Globalization has enabled and continues to expand health and wellness tourism.

The participating nations receive billions of dollars in revenue from this industry annually. To increase the wellness tourism business in the ASEAN area, member nations must collaborate and communicate more effectively. The rapid growth of the global wellness economy presents opportunities for businesses to tap into this lucrative market. The findings are significant for scientists, academics, policymakers, research center staff, and government officials.

Tourism companies should focus on visitors who are concerned about their health and well-being. To attract visitors from around the world, managers should carefully consider how to educate people about health consciousness and market their products by providing chances for them to experience new things, de-stress both physically and emotionally, and promote social development. Accreditation for healing therapies and practitioners ought to be given according to their qualifications and expertise. The value proposition of wellness destinations is composed of a package that should be customized based on the resources that are available in each area, the wellness demands, and market trends. It is also advised that travel agencies and tour operators offer integrated tourism packages that are comprehensive and wellness oriented. Furthermore, as the importance of wellness gains popularity, businesses should broaden their product offers to include those from lower

socioeconomic backgrounds.

Tourism managers can develop wellness packages that emphasize educational components, such as workshops on cultural wellness practices, stress management, nutrition, or mindfulness. This dual purpose of leisure and learning can help differentiate their offerings in a competitive market. Managers can use wellness tourism as a platform to advocate sustainable and local cultural practices. Initiatives like eco-friendly resorts, locally sourced wellness products, and cultural education can align their business objectives with global sustainability goals.

Educational institutions can design specialized programs or courses that integrate wellness tourism principles. These programs can focus on sustainable practices, cultural competence, and holistic health, providing students with unique skills and knowledge aligned with industry trends. The findings highlight the need for collaboration between wellness centers, educational institutions, and tourism operators. Developing partnerships to create integrated programs can lead to a more cohesive approach to promoting wellness tourism.

The study also suggests policymakers to support wellness tourism through initiatives such as infrastructure development, tax benefits for eco-friendly resorts, and funding for wellness-related educational programs. These efforts can foster regional development and promote a healthy lifestyle among the populace.

Limitations and Future Directions

The paper has some limitations, including relying on a single database instead of multiple sources for retrieval of data. While Scopus offers a huge number of research papers that reflect the subject, we believe that using multiple databases will provide more comprehensive coverage.

The wellness tourism literature excluded doctoral theses, conference proceedings, textbooks, books and unpublished papers. We evaluated only English-published publications, potentially undervaluing research undertaken in other languages. This study was only analyzed using the VOSviewer and biblioshiny. Other tools such as Bibexcel, Gephi, , Bibexcel, Tableau and CiteSpace II can be used together with VOSviewer and biblioshiny for future research. Future investigations may cover more wellness and health-related words. Sustainable wellness tourism is another area of research that can be explored further in future studies (Wolf et al., 2017). Future research directions should be investigated from the supply side to examine the distinctive characteristics of wellness sites and from the demand side to assess customer demands for additional wellness tourism products (Dini & Pencarelli, 2022). I.e. Future academics may find the results useful in identifying research topics in wellness research that could gain

popularity in the coming years. As a result, this study can be used as a beginning point by academics and professionals interested in introducing wellness tourism.

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