Tourism Destination Research from 2000 to 2020: A Systematic Narrative Review in Conjunction with Bibliographic Mapping Analysis

Abstract: Literature reviews serve as cornerstones for advancing the corpus of existing knowledge. This article offers an overview of the evolution of destination studies from 2000 to 2020. The current study first overviews 20 destination review articles and then applies bibliometric algorithms to determine authorships, popular topics, thematic clusters, and structural variations in 1,393 destination studies. The bibliometric analysis identifies the seven largest specialties of destination research as destination loyalty, destination image, destination digitalization, destination marketing, destination experience and recommendation, destination governance, and destination resources. A framework was developed to illustrate the major topics of interest at the macro, meso, and micro levels. The article discusses similarities and contrasts between the findings of the two review methodologies and concludes with a research agenda for destination management scholarship.

Keywords: Tourism destination; Systematic narrative review; Bibliometrics; CiteSpace

1 Introduction

Destinations serve as the primary environment for tourism activities, which differentiates tourist studies from other disciplines (Pike & Page, 2014). After nearly five decades of investigation, destination research has accumulated a wealth of research findings and formed a range of unique research themes and reasonings. In particular, destination research has expanded from tourism research into neighboring disciplines, such as economics, management, geography, sociology, and psychology (Benckendorff & Zehrer, 2013; Kim et al., 2018; Tribe, 2004). This interdisciplinary convergence has given rise to a range of new research topics, such as destination image (Lam et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2021), destination governance (Fernandez-Tabales et al., 2017; Volgger & Pechlaner, 2014), destination marketing (Hays et al., 2013; Pike & Page, 2014), destination loyalty (Kuo et al., 2016; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), destination competitiveness (Abreu-Novais et al., 2016; Crouch, 2011), and destination branding (Chekalina et al., 2018; Qu et al., 2011).

Prior destination research reviews suffer from two fundamental limitations: fragmentation of research contents and a singularity of research methods (i.e., an emphasis on a singular qualitative or quantitative literature review technique, which may cause biases). The unprecedented growth of the tourism industry before the COVID-19 pandemic has fostered many sub-fields of destination scholarship, as mentioned above. Yet, despite the importance of these niche areas, they are rather fragmented without providing a coherent picture of the overall knowledge discerned from destination studies (McKercher & Tung, 2015). In other words, prior literature on destinations builds up the existing scholarship with a piecemeal approach, creating in-depth, profound, and complex destination knowledge from different perspectives

not connected on a higher level of understanding destinations. This issue is partially attributable to the complexity of destination stakeholders that build a destination (e.g., accommodation sector, airlines, DMOs) and the large number of disciplines involved in researching this topic.

A systematic literature review can better grasp the entirety of destination research and comprehensively understand the diverse research field. A literature review is a summary of existing knowledge and an outlook on future research directions (Hart, 1998; Webster & Watson, 2002). It is also an essential tool for managing the diversity of knowledge and discerning research areas (Tranfield et al., 2003). Moreover, it is an excellent resource for scholars new to the area and those from other fields. Hence, periodic literature reviews are critical (Denyer & Tranfield, 2006) to clarify how destination research topics are related to one other and how the current research findings induce the evolution of destination inquiries.

Most destination research reviews employ traditional qualitative analysis methods focusing on a limited time frame and studies (Fyall et al., 2012; Mair et al., 2016). Often, these qualitative literature reviews also include incompatible genres. For example, books or dissertations are not suitable for direct comparison with journal articles because of length and content coverage differences. Quantitative bibliometric analysis, including performance analysis (descriptive in nature to present total publications, average citations, or h-index, etc.) and science mapping (pertaining to intellectual interactions and structural connections studies focusing on techniques such as co-citation, co-word, and co-authorship analysis) necessitate a high level of accuracy (Donthu et al., 2021). In contrast, another advanced quantitative technique, meta-analysis, is confined to a small number of study subjects (Zhang et al., 2014). Although these periodic reviews play an important transitional role in the outlook of destination

literature, a more objective overview of existing research results can be achieved by combining quantitative analysis as a scientific knowledge mapping technique with traditional qualitative review analysis methods.

The knowledge of existing research themes in past research and key researchers in this field serve as important indications for the development of future studies (Crawford-Welch & McCleary, 1992; Ma & Law, 2009). Thus, this research attempts to answer the question: What are the major accomplishments and future directions of destination studies? It seeks to integrate a large body of destination research from both micro and macro levels to develop a comprehensive framework that unites destination studies, which were published piecemeal or in fragments. It further takes a leap forward by casting a research agenda for scholars and practitioners to navigate and surmount. We achieve these objectives first by offering an overview of the evolution of destination studies from 2000 to 2020. This was accomplished in three steps: 1) to reevaluate the existing reviews on destination research; 2) to perform a thorough examination of the destination studies to identify the core research topics, influential authors, thematical clusters, and structural changes; and 3) to compare the differences between existing reviews and the systematic bibliometric analysis of destination studies. Building upon our curated collection of literature, we then offer guidance for a future research agenda for destination inquiry by addressing circumstances that arise from five impending crises: ecological degradation, economic turmoil, social unrest, political dispute, and technology disruption.

2 A critique review of three principal literature review methods

Literature reviews have three basic types, namely, qualitative narrative, meta-analytic, and

84 systematic quantitative reviews (Donthu et al., 2021; Pickering & Byrne, 2014). Past reviews
85 of destination research have largely relied on qualitative analysis techniques, which can provide
86 more in-depth insight into a research topic and contextual background, particularly in emerging
87 or complex topics. However, a limitation of this methodology is that such reviews are time-
88 consuming, cover a narrower range of studies, and may lead to researcher bias casting doubt
89 on their findings due to lack of transparency (Zupic & Čater, 2015). The exponential growth of
90 literature and the complicated intertwining of research themes recognize the inadequacy of
91 qualitative assessments in studying destinations. Meta-analysis-based literature reviews are
92 highly influential, but they employ rigorous sample selection criteria (Bown & Sutton, 2010;
93 Esteves et al., 2017; Pool, 2017). Hammersley (2001) argued that meta-analytic techniques are
94 difficult to adapt to the social sciences, given that social sciences indulge in a wide variety of
95 research subjects.

96 As a popular quantitative bibliometric approach, science mapping examining the
97 relationships between intellectual connections and interactions could easily be applied in the
98 social sciences (Cobo et al., 2011; Donthu et al., 2021). In particular, science mapping is a
99 bibliometric method of literary analysis that can identify thematical topics, clusters, and trends
100 over time by visualizing influential authors, articles, and topics in scientific networks (Brandes
101 et al., 1999; Chen, 2017; van Raan, 2005). This technique assesses the development of
102 knowledge domains and displays them comprehensively and transparently (Speel et al., 1999).
103 To date, a few studies have been published in leading journals on topics such as the crisis
104 management (Jiang et al., 2017), climate change (Fang et al., 2018), and hospitality service (Li
105 et al., 2017). However, this approach has not been fully utilized in tourism research (Avila-

Robinson & Wakabayashi, 2018; Scott et al., 2008).

Each methodological approach for a systematic literature analysis has its strengths and weaknesses (Donthu et al., 2021). Therefore, Kim et al. (2018) suggested a mixed-method approach combining the advantages of qualitative and quantitative methods. However, this approach is seldom applied to literature reviews in tourism studies. Hence, to ensure that the literature review process is rigorous, a mixed methodology with pertinent qualitative narrative and quantitative bibliometric analyses is necessary to establish a robust and reasonable evolution process for destination studies.

3. Review-on-review analysis: Twenty destination reviews

Realizing the importance of reviews, the present study systematically retrieves and debriefs destinations reviews to understand the current progress of such reviews better. This study uses "destination" and "review," "literature review," "narrative review," "meta-analysis," "bibliometric analysis," and "qualitative review" as the indexed keywords to identify reviews titled with these indexes across 2000 to 2020 from the Web of Science™ Core Collection. Twenty destination reviews are collected and reviewed from social science citation index (SSCI) journals in the hospitality, leisure, sport, and tourism category (see Table 1).

The review-on-review approach reveals that qualitative narrative reviews dominate the research methods in destination research reviews. Meta-analysis reviews also exhibit enormous influence despite their restricted scope. The analysis further shows that in recent years, bibliometric analyses have gained popularity as a valuable method for navigating through the corpus of literature. All the review studies generate in-depth reflections on topics

128 such as destination image, destination marketing, destination governance, sustainable

129 development, destination crisis management, and others (see Table 1).

130 Table 1. A brief summary of destination review studies

No.	Authors	Year	Topics	Methods	Time frame	No. of papers	Times cited
1	Pike, S.	2002	destination image	Qualitative narrative reviews	1973-2000	142	568
2	Fyall, A.; Garrod, B.; Wang, Y.C.	2012	destination collaboration	Qualitative narrative reviews	1997-2012	not specified	134
3	Pike, S.; Page, S. J.	2014	destination marketing organizations and destination marketing	Qualitative narrative reviews	1973-2013	not specified	
4	Young, A. P.; Ulrike, G.	2007	destination marketing web sites	Qualitative meta-analysis	1997-2006	153	189
5	Zhang, H. M.; Fu, X. X.; Cai, L. P. A.; Lu, L.	2014	destination image and tourist loyalty	Meta-analysis	1998-2012	66	456
6	Le-Klahn, D. T.; Hall, C. M.	2015	transport at destinations	Qualitative narrative reviews	2000-2014	not specified	59
7	Mair, J.; Ritchie, B. W.; Walters, G.	2016	recovery strategies for tourist destinations	Qualitative narrative reviews	2000-2012	64	157
8	Yuzhanin, S.; Fisher, D.	2016	theory of planned behavior for predicting intentions to choose a travel destination	Qualitative narrative reviews	2004-2015	15	37
9	Parra-Lopez, E.; Martinez-Gonzalez, J. A.	2018	island destinations	Bibliometric and content analysis	1980-2016	949	16
10	Avila-Robinson, A.; Wakabayashi, N.	2018	destination management and marketing	Bibliometric analysis	2005-2016	2378	16
11	Shafiee, S.; Ghatari, A. R.; Hasanzadeh, A.; Jahanyan, S.	2019	sustainable smart tourism destinations	Systematic review	2000-2017	40	40
12	Picazo, P.; Moreno-Gil, S.	2019	projected image of tourism destinations on photographs	Qualitative narrative reviews	1996-2015	35	34
13	Wondirad, A.	2019	sustainable destination development	Meta-analysis	1993-2018	470	12

14	Perkins, R.; Khoo-Lattimore, C.; Arcodia, C.	2020	stakeholder collaboration towards regional destination branding	systematic narrative literature review	not specified	53	9
15	Yilmaz, Y.; Yilmaz, Y.	2020	destination image	Qualitative narrative reviews & descriptive statistical analysis	1999-2019	47	4
16	Afshardoost, M.; Eshaghi, M. S.	2020	destination image and tourist behavioral intention	Meta-analysis	2010-2019	87	38
17	Cronje, D.F.; du Plessis, E.	2020	destination competitiveness	Content-thematic analysis	1997-2018	121	13
18	Werner, K.; Griese, K. M.; Bosse, C.	2021	slow events for sustainable destination development	Qualitative narrative reviews	1998-2019	101	3
19	Duan, J. H.; Xie, C. W.; Morrison, A. M.	2021	tourism crises and impacts on destinations	Bibliometric and content analysis	1991-2020	302	1
20	Bastidas-Manzano, A. B.; Sanchez-Fernandez, J.; Casado-Aranda, L. A.	2021	smart tourism destinations	Bibliometric analysis	2013-2019	258	8

Destination Image

Destination image serves as a vital link between numerous subjects in destination reviews. Pike (2002) presented the first comprehensive overview of destination image. According to his study, the impact of destination image and visitation, segmentation, and image differences in regions topped the popular research themes prior to 2000. Additionally, his analysis sheds light on the substantial skewing of research viewpoints, with most research (80%) focusing on visitors or consumers and only 2% on stakeholders in destination marketing, organization staff, and local residents. Another influential review on destination image is from Zhang et al. (2014), who explored the relationship between destination images and loyalty following a meta-

141 analysis approach. Afshardoost and Eshaghi (2020) further investigated the impact of
142 destination images on other tourist behaviors (visit, recommendation, and revisit intentions)
143 with the same approach. Both studies agreed that overall destination images have the most
144 decisive influence on tourist behavior or behavioral intentions.

145 Picazo and Moreno-Gil (2019) shifted their research focus from traditional tourist self-
146 reporting destination images to objective images presented in photographs and summarize a
147 systematic methodological framework for evaluating projected images. Yilmaz and Yilmaz
148 (2020) further summarized factors that may affect the formation of a destination image from
149 two stakeholder perspectives (tourist and destination) at critical moments (before and after the
150 trip). Their investigations indicated that while tourism information is crucial for tourists
151 forming an image of a destination prior to a journey, experiences have a greater impact on
152 destination image construction following their trips. The impact of social media on a
153 destination image is observed at every stage of the travel experience.

154

155 **Destination Marketing**

156 With the advent of destination marketing, Park and Gretzel (2007) reviewed 153 papers
157 and provided an overview of factors that contribute to the effectiveness of destination
158 marketing websites. Their work challenged the prevalent belief that marketing websites should
159 focus on information dissemination, and it also called for increased attention to the overlooked
160 persuasive power of information on potential visitors. They also urged future research to place
161 a higher premium on consumer social engagement. Then, Pike and Page (2014) argued that
162 destination marketing organizations sustain competitiveness by bridging adequate resources

management with marketing strategies, such as brand identity development, positioning, performance measurement, and tracking. Avila-Robinson and Wakabayashi (2018) further summarized 11 key clusters of destination marketing research, including "destination perception, tourist behavior and decision-making, destination competitiveness, destination organization, destination identity, destination branding, destination development, destination experience and innovation, ICT/social media-enabled marketing and management, and sustainable tourism and economics" (Avila-Robinson & Wakabayashi, 2018, pp. 105-106). Their work proposed that future destination research trends will be based on data-driven management, a better understanding of visitors, supply-side, mitigation and resilience, cross-domain integration, and aggregative ideas as an umbrella concept to integrate interactive concepts into a new one.

Destination Governance

According to Pike's (2002) review, half of the destination governance articles have only studied one destination. To answer the call for multi-destination studies, Fyall et al. (2012) summarized strategies for collaboration among destinations from five theoretical viewpoints: resource, relationship, politics, process, and chaos theories. To optimize their collaborative strengths in extremely dynamic and chaotic situations, destinations need to make progress in all three dimensions of organic, mediated intra-destination, and mediated intra- and inter-destination collaboration. Perkins et al. (2020) remarked that when collaborating with different stakeholders and destinations, the miscommunication, power imbalance, and legitimacy of stakeholders may handicap successful destination collaboration. They

concluded that how collaborative branding can be realized is a question yet to be answered. In a literature review of destination competitiveness studies, Cronjé and du Plessis (2020) identified the 10 most often referenced competitiveness elements, including climate, information, shopping, environmental image, development, infrastructure, safety, quality of service, events, and activities. They proposed that the future trends in studying destination competitiveness are technology-enabled destination marketing management, aggregative ideas, domain interdependence, mitigation, and resilience.

Sustainable Destination

Together with competitiveness and collaboration management in destinations, studies of destination governance have also inspired new research trends in destination crisis management and sustainable development across countries. In Wondirad's (2019) review on sustainable tourism, most eco-tourism research is initiated in underdeveloped countries by a majority of scholars from affluent nations. Wondirad (2019) worried that these Western eco-tourism initiatives, which prioritize conservation above economic growth, could lead to a neocolonial ploy that, rather than promoting sustainable development, may exacerbate reliance. As a result, local engagement and indigenous knowledge must be encouraged to ensure balanced economic growth and resource protection without jeopardizing local culture. In particular, islands as a unique tourism resource are more vulnerable than other destinations to the negative impacts of tourism from economic, sociocultural, and environmental sustainability (Parra-López & Martínez-González, 2018).

In opposition to globalization, consumerism, and marketization, the Slow Movement

subverts the fast-paced consumption of products and services in favor of a more responsible and sustainable way of living (Dickinson et al., 2011). Werner et al. (2021) argued that destinations promoting slow cities and events derived from the Slow Movement may help maintain local traditions, strengthen social relationships, and gain information on sustainability. They believe a slow-induced sustainable environment can avoid unfamiliarity, confusion, and discomfort, thus eliminating stress and improving the well-being of the host society. In contrast to the observations made by Wondirad (2019), they bridged the gap between social and natural sustainability in their literature review. Shafiee et al. (2019) documented the intersection of smart tourism and sustainable development by examining its economic, environmental, social, and technical impacts on resident and visitor well-being, natural resource management, and the tourist experience. Hence, their approach includes all three pillars of sustainability: economy, environment, and society. Additionally, they explain the triggers, contexts, and intervening factors that result in the creation of this combination. Their review closes with a call for further research on the development of sustainable smart destinations.

Destination Crisis Management

Over the past two decades, tourism development has faced severe crises and challenges. Mair et al. (2016) dissected the reasons for the slow tourism recovery after disasters. They found that a lack of communication, media sensationalism, the ineffectiveness of marketing strategies, reactive disaster management strategies, severely damaged destination images, and long-term impacts of disasters on tourist behavior impact the recovery process in affected destinations. Duan et al. (2021) further observed that the majority of current research on

destination crisis management is event driven with an imprecise classification of crises. They examined the effect of the crisis on three scales, namely, micro, meso, and macro, and compiled a list of positive, negative, and interaction factors affecting destination crisis management. Both Mair et al. (2016) and Duan et al. (2021) agreed that crises might provide opportunities for future constructive destination development.

Other Topics

Destination review articles have also discussed destination resources, destination facility systems (Le-Klaehn & Hall, 2015), tourists' decision-making (Yuzhanin & Fisher, 2016), and smart tourism (Bastidas-Manzano et al., 2021). Transportation further plays a central role in facilitating tourism mobility (Le-Klaehn & Hall, 2015). However, transportation often pollutes the destination environment, and low-carbon tourism becomes essential. Le-Klahn and Hall (2015) examined public transport in urban and rural destinations and claimed that informing consumer decision-making and public transportation promotion are critical factors in developing public transportation.

Destination choice is also an integral ingredient of destination research. Yuzhanin and Fisher (2016) reexamined the predictive power of the theory of planned behavior on visitors, taking into account the contradicting findings of previous investigations. They presume a delay between intentions and actual behavior, which is the cause of the inconsistent outcomes (McKercher & Tse, 2012). They also argued that the link between intention and action is not linear in that a slew of other factors are also worth investigating. Another emerging topic is smart tourism destinations. With technology-based studies dominating this topic, Bastidas-

Manzano et al. (2021) argued that smart tourism destinations can shape tourist behavior through technology, thus culminating in sustainable destination development and the formation of smart cities. As it is still in its infancy, the debate over the concept of a smart destination continues (Bastidas-Manzano et al., 2021).

Reviews critically reflect that destination literature could be advanced and become more resilient (Mair et al., 2016), fair (Wondirad, 2019), sustainable (Khanra et al., 2021), aggregated (Avila-Robinson & Wakabayashi, 2018), and smart (Bastidas-Manzano et al., 2021). They also focus on some neglected vulnerable destinations and disadvantaged groups (Le-Klaehn & Hall, 2015; Parra-López & Martínez-González, 2018; Wondirad, 2019). While the topics covered in these review studies are critical components of destination research, the development and evolution of interconnections between them have received less attention. Hence, the present study conducted a more systematic examination of existing destination studies by comparing the content of previous reviews using bibliometric methodologies in the next section.

4. Bibliometric analysis: 1,393 destination studies

4.1 Data collection

A title reflects the originality of a research article, and audiences assume that the authors have been prudent in selecting the title and keywords for each paper (Whittaker, 1989). Hence, to focus on the originality of destination research, this study chose the title rather than keywords as the paper screening condition. The term *destination* also expresses different meanings in different spheres such as international trade, medicine, and logistics. To better focus on the

findings of destination research in tourism, this study used “destination” as the indexed keyword to identify relevant articles from 56 SSCI journals in the tourism category from 2000 to 2020 in the Web of Science TM Core Collection, thus excluding the interferences from other fields.

A total of 35 social science citation index (SSCI) journals have published papers with a title with destination from the hospitality, leisure, sport, and tourism category (see Table 2). According to the idea of the scientific revolution, Kuhn (2012) believed that the development of scholarship is a process in the new research findings that continuously challenge existing ones in a revolutionary way, thus leading to a rise and fall of scientific knowledge. To capture the evolution of destination literature, 21 years of continued growth in destination studies have been traced. Following the lead of Pike’s (2002) research, the retrieval time span of the relevant literature for the present work was from 2000 to 2020 (i.e., an update of the previous reviews from 1973 to 2000). Following the bibliometric analysis procedure proposed by Donthu et al. (2021), the present study first cleaned up the data corpus by deleting duplicate articles and articles with incomplete information. Then, synonymous keywords (e.g., destination image vs. destination images) were merged. Finally, 1,393 articles with 49,459 references were retrieved, and the data were imported into CiteSpace 5.8. R1 for further analysis. In addition, we also manually checked the titles of these 1393 manuscripts to ensure their representativeness and avoid misleading headlines, as mentioned in the third limitation.

In Figure 1, the publications on destination research before 2005 were sporadic. Since then, a substantial increase in publication was recorded in 2016 and reached a peak in 2019 with 199 papers. The orange line shows the number of other studies that cited publications for

destination studies, ranging from zero to almost 12,000 times, thus acknowledging the importance of destination studies.

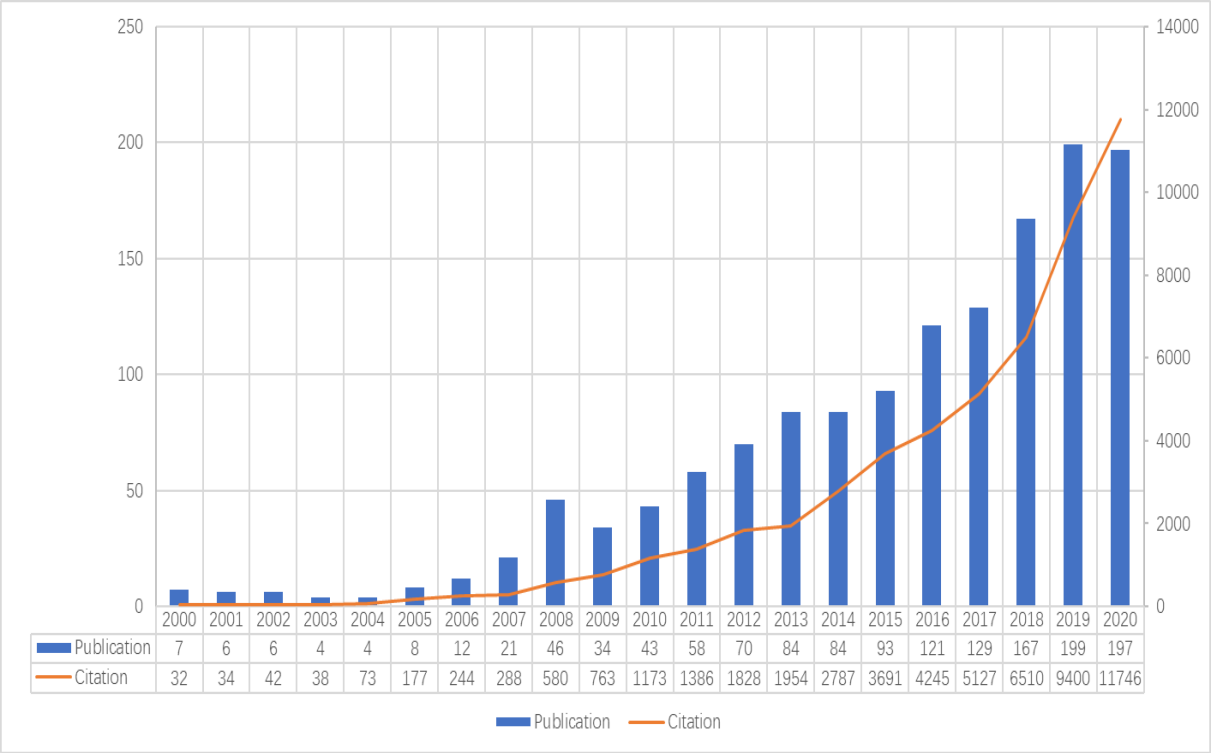

Figure 1. Trends in the annual volume of articles and citation counts on Destination in SSCI-listed journals from 2000 to 2020 (Total number of publications=1,393; Total number of citations =52,118)

Table 2. Publications on destination published in the category of "Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism" in WOS database (2000-2020)

No.	Journal name	Total citations	2020 JIF	JIF quartile	Number of publications on destination
1	Tourism Management	37,117	10.967	Q1	215
2	Journal of Travel Research	14,155	10.982	Q1	124
3	International Journal of Hospitality Management	17,219	9.237	Q1	7
4	Annals of Tourism Research	19,981	9.011	Q1	62
5	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	9,404	7.968	Q1	51
6	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	6,308	7.564	Q1	122
7	Current Issues in Tourism	7,633	7.430	Q1	103
8	Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management	2,826	7.022	Q1	9
9	Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	2,955	6.952	Q1	182

10	Tourism Geographies	3,605	6.640	Q1	28
11	Tourism Management Perspectives	3,902	6.586	Q1	59
12	Sport Management Review	3,265	6.577	Q2	2
13	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	10,376	6.514	Q2	22
14	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	2,467	5.959	Q2	22
15	Tourism Review	2,072	5.947	Q2	25
16	Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	3,452	5.161	Q2	36
17	Tourism Economics	3,682	4.438	Q2	51
18	Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	1,653	4.392	Q2	17
19	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology	970	4.260	Q2	7
20	International Journal of Tourism Research	4,600	3.791	Q2	80
21	Journal of Sport Management	3,610	3.691	Q2	3
22	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	2,843	3.677	Q3	83
23	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	2,360	3.646	Q3	2
24	Journal of Vacation Marketing	2,244	3.525	Q3	41
25	Leisure Studies	2,682	2.949	Q3	2
26	International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship	947	2.938	Q3	3
27	Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism-Research Planning and Management	818	2.803	Q3	4
28	Leisure Sciences	3,402	2.750	Q3	1
29	Sport Marketing Quarterly	1,146	2.722	Q3	2
30	Journal of Leisure Research	3,083	2.561	Q3	1
31	Information Technology & Tourism	527	2.449	Q4	4
32	Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	702	2.041	Q4	11
33	Tourist Studies	1,041	1.904	Q4	9
34	Journal of Hospitality Leisure Sport & Tourism Education	661	1.762	Q4	2
35	Sport in Society	2,331	1.725	Q4	1
	Total publication on destination				1393

4.2 Data analysis methods

CiteSpace is one of the most widely used tools for science mapping research (Chen, 2006; Chen et al., 2010). After comparing nine different bibliometric analysis software, Cobo et al. (2011) concluded that CiteSpace is the optimum analytical tool, as it offers the most inclusive

set of tools for comprehensive research approaches to generate bibliometric networks. Bibliometric analysis in CiteSpace allows time to be visualized through color (Chen, 2014, 2017), which compensates for the absence of direct human awareness of time. In other words, CiteSpace leverages time-slicing methods to create a time series of changing network models and then merges these distinct networks to generate a general view of destination genealogies that help researchers observe the evolution of destination literature.

The primary analysis methods used in CiteSpace include co-word analysis, co-author analysis, and co-citation analysis (Chen, 2014, 2017; Cobo et al., 2011). In recent years, this tool is also used to understand the intellectual impact of an article/author in a specific research area. Coauthorship analysis examines "the interactions among scholars in a research field" (Donthu et al., 2021, p. 290) and identifies distributions of highly cited authors in a specific area of study. This technique also allows for the mapping of collaborations through time, providing aspiring scholars with vital information for reaching out to and cooperating with established and emerging researchers in a research area. The co-word analysis presupposes that frequently occurring words that are often obtained from keywords have thematic links (Donthu et al., 2021). Co-word analysis may assist researchers in delving further into the substance of each theme cluster (Chang et al., 2015).

Co-citation analysis assumes that references cited together may be thematically analogous (Hjørland, 2013). It has been acknowledged to be a valuable tool for comprehending the existing scientific landscape (Ramos‐Rodríguez & Ruíz‐Navarro, 2004), as co-citation networks are a reflection of scientific knowledge's cumulative nature, continuity, and legacy. Scholars employ co-citation analysis to gain insights into tourism and hospitality research (e.g., Benckendorff & Zehrer, 2013; Li et al., 2017). Thematic clustering analysis extracted core knowledge modules by similar grouping studies from the destination research pool to provide insight into the associations between the different genealogies (Zupic & Čater, 2015). However,

some concepts and studies can be very general (e.g., methodological terms, such as structural equation modeling or studies tackling broad topics). As a result, they are difficult to identify to a particular thematic cluster (Donthu et al., 2021).

Cluster analysis provides a broad image of the major research fields, but the link between clusters remains unexplained. Min et al. (2021) analyzed 116 Nobel Prize-winning manuscripts across all disciplines and discovered that they had a greater number of linked network components, indicating boundary-spanning processes. Sebastian and Chen (2021) further develop a structural variation analysis technique by measuring the structural variations observable in a network of citing papers, based on the premise that connecting otherwise divergent clusters of knowledge is a key mechanism underlying transformative scientific discoveries (Chen et al., 2009). This study is the first study in tourism to introduce and perform a structural variation analysis (SVA) (Chen et al., 2009; Sebastian & Chen, 2021) to complement traditional quantitative statistical indicators (such as citation counts, h-index, etc.) and to identify important studies that have been under cited. SVA explores the changes brought by new co-citations from one or more papers to the existing network (Chen, 2012). It is a powerful tool for detecting the innovative potential of new works. It has also been used to measure the boundary-spanning influence of Nobel Prize-winning articles (Min et al., 2021; Sebastian & Chen, 2021), summarize the innovative works on COVID-19 (Chen, 2020), and identify prospective information from science experts (Hou et al., 2020). To this end, the present study employs CiteSpace as an analytical tool for analyzing coauthorship, co-wording, co-citation, and structural variation analysis in the literature pertaining to destination research.

5. Research findings of bibliometric analysis

359 **5.1 Contributing scholar collaborations in destination studies**

360 Collaborations among academics have grown prevalent as methodological and
361 theoretical complexity in research has increased (Acedo et al., 2006). As such, scholars who
362 work collaboratively create an "invisible college" network (Crane, 1977). Collaborations
363 among academics may contribute to increased clarity, diverse research methodologies, and
364 deeper and more innovative insights (Tahamtan et al., 2016).

365 Results revealed that the coauthorship network for destination studies is largely
366 fragmented. However, some robust coauthorship communities could be extracted (see Figure
367 2). The results showed that Steven Pike (16 studies) from the Queensland University of
368 Technology ranked at the top of the list, followed by Youcheng Wang (15 studies) from the
369 University of Central Florida and Svetlana Stepchenkova (15 studies) from the University of
370 Florida. More details on the contributing scholar collaborations are outlined in Figure 2. In
371 addition, Table 3 presents coauthors who published five or more articles on the topic
372 "destination." Scholars with high centrality are leading critical collaboration networks (Li et
373 al., 2017). The capacity of a node to transmit information across disconnected groupings of
374 nodes is referred to as betweenness centrality (Donthu et al., 2021). Eight authors ranked first
375 by sorting the betweenness centrality (0.04): Youcheng Wang, Svetlana Stepchenkova, Xiang
376 (Robert) Li, Rob Law, Alastair Morrison, Dimitrios Buhalis, Seongseop (Sam) Kim, and Bing
377 Pan.

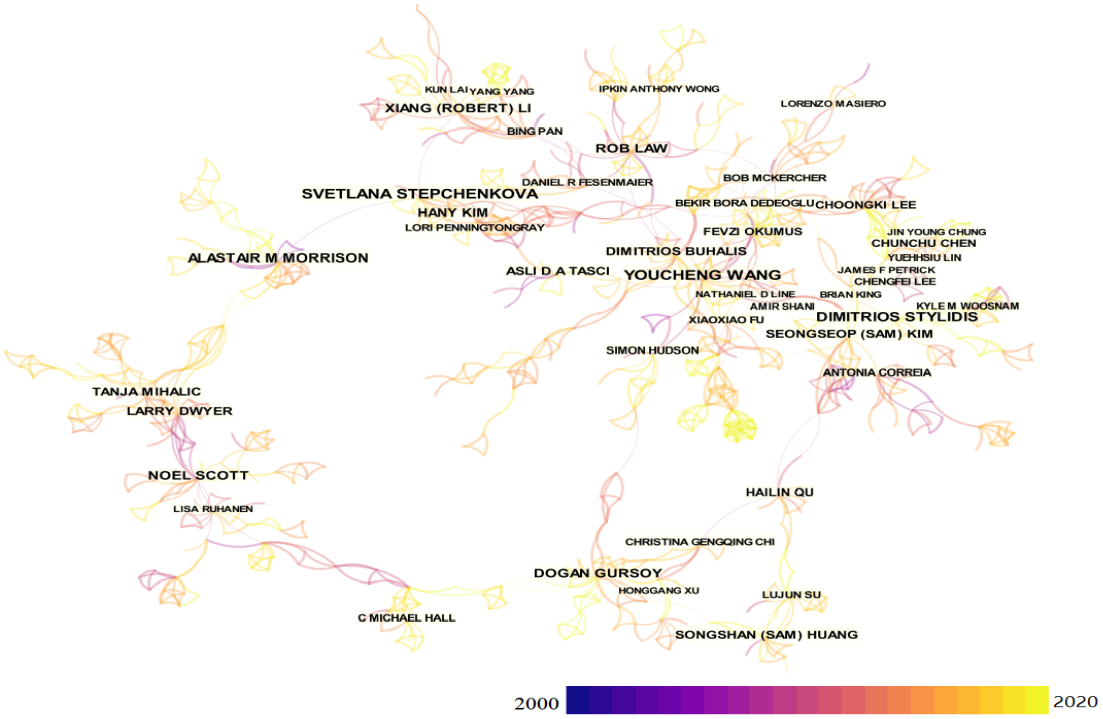

Figure 2. Contributing co-author collaborations from 2000 to 2020 (number of co-authors is five or more)

Table 3. Contributing co-authors (Top 50 in SSCI journals from 2000 to 2020)

No.	Author	Affiliation	Year	Publications
1	Steven Pike	Queensland University of Technology	2010	16
2	Youcheng Wang [a]	University of Central Florida	2007	15
3	Svetlana Stepchenkova [a]	University of Florida	2006	15
4	Dimitrios Stylidis	Middlesex University London	2015	13
5	Xiang (Robert) Li [a]	Temple University	2011	12
6	Noel Scott	University of the Sunshine Coast	2008	11
7	Rob Law [a]	University of Macau	2008	10
8	Alastair M. Morrison [a]	University of Greenwich	2006	10
9	Dogan Gursoy	Washington State University	2014	10
10	Heesup Han	Sejong University	2017	10
11	Pietro Beritelli	Universität St. Gallen	2011	10
12	Dimitrios Buhalis [a]	Bournemouth University	2008	9
13	Larry Dwyer	University of Technology Sydney	2009	9
14	Chris Ryan	University of Waikato	2010	9
15	Seongseop (Sam) Kim [a]	Hong Kong Polytechnic University	2015	8
16	Hany Kim	Pusan National University	2015	8
17	Songshan (Sam) Huang	Edith Cowan University	2010	8
18	Tanja Mihalic	University of Ljubljana	2008	8
19	Asli D. A. Tasci	University of Central Florida	2007	8
20	Hailin Qu	Oklahoma State University	2008	7
21	Choongki Lee	Kyung Hee University	2012	7
22	Fevzi Okumus	University of Central Florida	2007	7

23	Chunchu Chen	Washington State University	2012	7
24	Bing Pan [a]	Penn State University	2007	6
25	Daniel R. Fesenmaier	Modul University Vienna	2007	6
26	Lujun Su	Central South University	2017	6
27	Xiaoxiao Fu	University of Central Florida	2014	6
28	Lori Penningtongray	University of South Carolina	2010	6
29	Simon Hudson	University of South Carolina	2009	6
30	Christina Gengqing Chi	Washington State University	2008	6
31	Antonia Correia	University of Algarve	2008	6
32	Bob Mckercher	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	2007	6
33	Filareti Kotsi	Zayed University	2016	6
34	C. Michael Hall	University of Canterbury	2015	6
35	Bekir Bora Dedeoglu	Nevsehir Hacı Bektas Veli University	2015	6
36	Susanne Becken	Griffith University	2013	6
37	Chengfei Lee	Shih Chien University	2009	6
38	Brian King	Hong Kong Polytechnic University	2016	5
39	James F. Petrick	Texas A&M University	2013	5
40	Honggang Xu	Sun Yat-sen University	2013	5
41	Lisa Ruhanen	The University of Queensland	2012	5
42	Amir Shani	Ben-Gurion University of the Negev	2010	5
43	Vikas Kumar	Indian Institute of Management, Sirmaur	2016	5
44	Hugues Seraphin	The University of Winchester	2016	5
45	Nathaniel D. Line	Florida State University	2014	5
46	Yang	Temple University	2013	5
47	Jin Young Chung	Incheon National University	2013	5
48	Ipkin Anthony Wong	Sun Yat-sen University	2013	5
49	Christian Laesser	University of St. Gallen	2013	5
50	Yuehhsiu Lin	National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism	2012	5
51	Soocheong (Shawn) Jang	Purdue University	2012	5
52	Lorenzo Masiero	Hong Kong Polytechnic University	2012	5
53	Kun Lai	Sun Yat-sen University	2012	5
54	Sergio Morenogil	Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria	2011	5
55	Raija Komppula	University of Eastern Finland	2011	5
56	Guy Assaker	Lebanese American University	2011	5
57	Kyle M. Woosnam	University of Georgia	2010	5
58	Peter Nijkamp	Vrije University Amsterdam	2008	5
59	Hector San Martin	Universidad de Cantabria	2008	5
60	Chunghsien Lin	National Formosa University	2008	5

[a] Authors with high centrality

5.2 Popular research topics in destination studies

To capture influential research topics in destination studies, a co-word analysis based on the keywords listed in each article was performed. Results were presented in Figure 3, in which

different colors in the legend correspond to different time periods (Jiang et al., 2017). The brighter the yellow color of a term, the more active it was. The circles in Figure 3 represented keywords with a high degree of betweenness centrality. A thicker circle meant that the centrality in between was higher. Nodes with large betweenness centrality scores had a higher likelihood of identifying boundary-crossing potentials, thus leading to the discovery of revolutionary breakthroughs (Chen et al., 2009). The study results extracted a total of 560 keywords (g-index=25 per year), 21 of which had a betweenness centrality over 0.10 (see Table 4).

This result supported structural hole theory (Burt, 1992). Burt argued that if different nodes in a network are not connected, structural holes are generated, and gaps between nodes can identify these holes. In other words, structural holes suggest that researchers have the opportunity to fill gaps between information structures by publishing papers that link two nodes (Haythornthwaite, 1996). Papers that link unrelated concepts can be seen as bridges between the literature that play an essential strategic role in linking two different fields, which in turn may be co-cited by scholars from other areas of study (Jiang et al., 2017).

The results showed that the development of keywords mainly expanded the boundary by introducing key concepts from other disciplines, such as psychology, management, geography, sociology, and information science (Benckendorff & Zehrer, 2013; Kim et al., 2018; Tribe, 2004). For instance, new concepts were created and widely used in the past two decades by connecting different fields, such as from customer choices to destination choice, marketing to destination marketing, branding to destination branding, and sustainability to sustainable tourism. In the future, the penetration of different disciplines into destination studies might generate more interdisciplinary concepts and ideas.

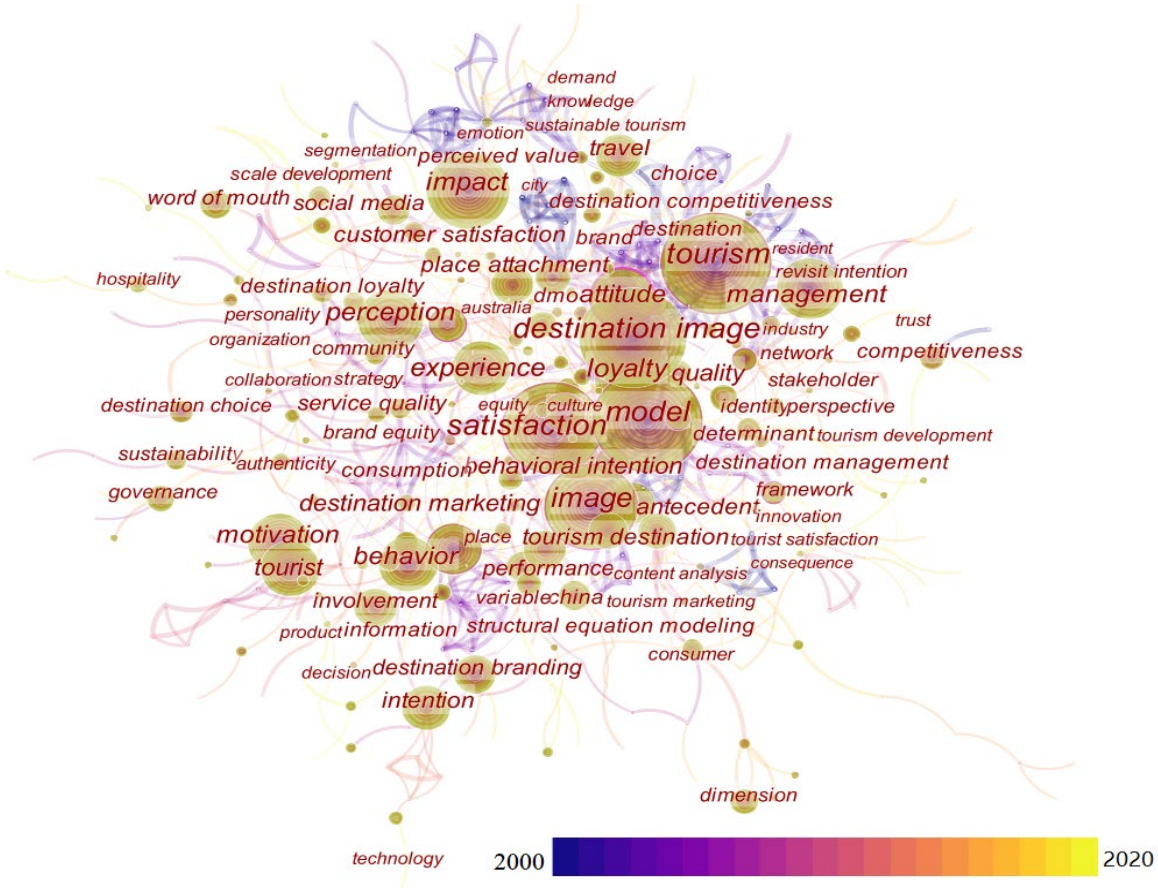

Figure 3. Popular research topics from 2000 to 2020 (frequencies of co-wording are more than 20 times)

Table 4. Major research topics by centrality (centrality > 0.10)

No	Keywords	Year	Citation frequencies	Centrality
1	attitude	2002	108	0.30
2	determinant	2004	54	0.21
3	destination marketing	2005	91	0.17
4	image	2001	219	0.16
5	destination	2000	53	0.15
6	network	2003	35	0.15
7	tourism	2000	308	0.13
8	behavioral intention	2005	100	0.12
9	destination management	2001	45	0.12
10	service quality	2007	60	0.12
11	choice	2003	40	0.11
12	content analysis	2006	26	0.11
13	customer satisfaction	2006	65	0.11
14	ecotourism	2000	8	0.11
15	model	2000	308	0.11
16	satisfaction	2005	273	0.11
17	authenticity	2003	30	0.10
18	consumption	2005	42	0.10
19	destination image	2002	262	0.10
20	framework	2005	38	0.10
21	impact	2001	165	0.10

5.3 Major thematic co-citation clusters

Journal articles serve as the frontiers of the knowledge revolution, and references listed in journal articles provide the knowledge base (Li et al., 2017). Figure 4a was drawn from papers published between 2000 and 2020, while Figure 4b reflected the largest seven clusters extracted from the landscape by performing and referring to the log-likelihood ratio (LLR) algorithm. LLR was first introduced by Dunning (1993) and has now become a popular measurement for lexical association strength (Chen, 2014). The clustering metrics showed a modularity Q value (an indicator to evaluate the modularity effect of the network, and values greater than 0.3 were considered significant) of 0.75, with each cluster having a silhouette value (an indicator to measure the effect of clustering) greater than 0.82, which exceeded the threshold range of 0.70 (Chen, 2014, 2017). Thus, these values indicated adequate clustering results. The sigma scores, a composite indicator to calculate betweenness centrality and burstiness, were larger than 1.0, referring to boundary-spanning potential and abrupt changes of an article in the network structure. The higher the sigma score was, the more likely that the paper would be cited in the future (Jiang et al., 2017). Details of the clusters are shown in Table 5.

Given the space constraints, a detailed investigation of all the clusters were not attainable. Instead, this study mainly focused on the largest seven clusters. Rather than selecting and reading publications based on one's preferences or accessibility to literature, the present study elaborated on the top five publications high in sigma scores from each cluster that were listed in Table 5. The whole approach was designed to avoid bias in the findings from the publication section.

The largest seven clusters were destination loyalty, destination image, destination digitalization, destination marketing, destination experience and recommendation, destination governance, and destination resources. These clusters represented 68% of all articles in this investigation. Notably, the overlaps in Figures 4a and 4b were caused by figures depicted from

a three-dimensional landscape in two dimensions.

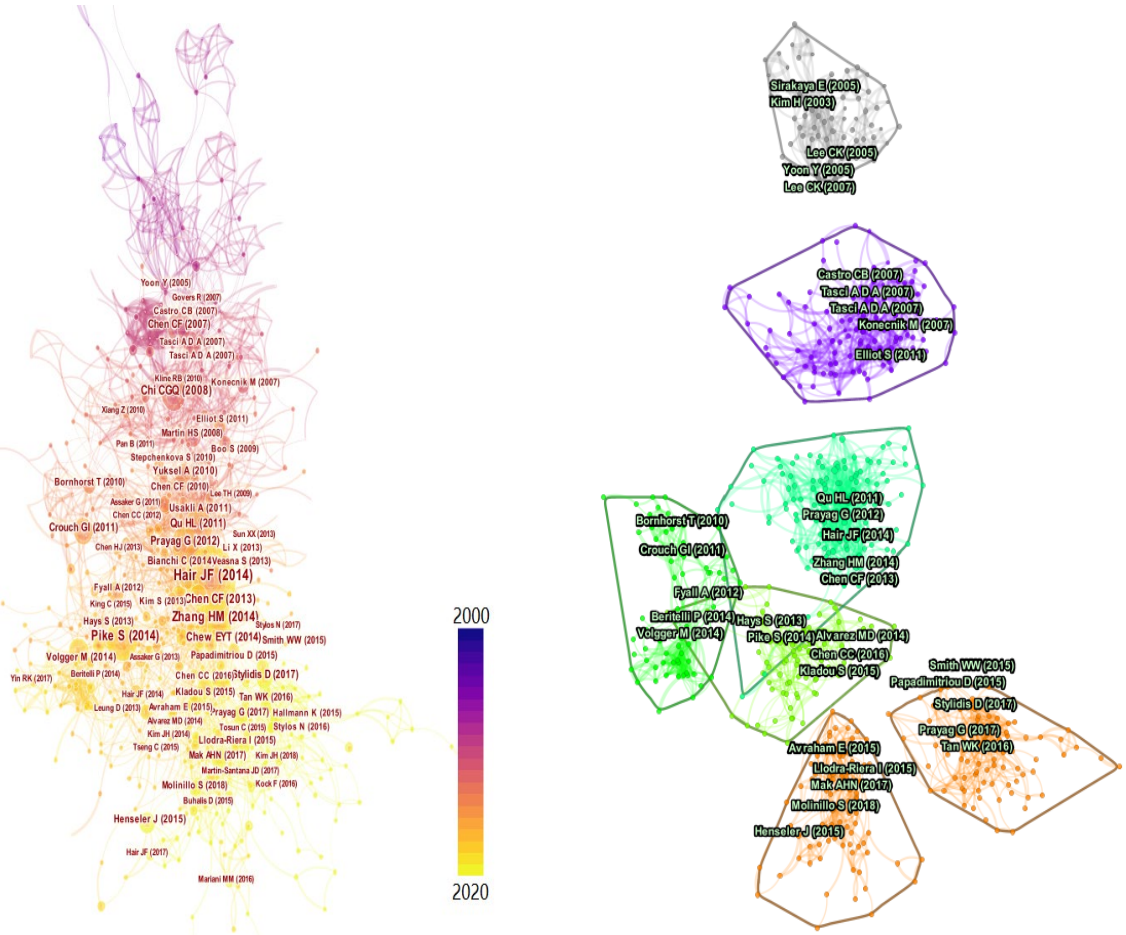

Figure 4a (left). Mapping of the co-cited references from 2000 to 2020 (co-citation >10)

Figure 4b (right). The largest seven co-citation clusters

448
449 Table 5. Summary of indications on the seven largest clusters in the destination research

No.	Cluster label	Leading Author	Year	Methods	Google Scholar citation	Co-citation Frequencies	Centrality	Sigma	Theory
0	Destination loyalty	Hair, J. F.	2014	SEM	861	89	0.13	3.97	/
		Zhang, H. M.	2014	Meta-analysis	959	60	0.05	2.12	/
		Chen, C. F.	2013	SEM	667	35	0.05	1.84	brand relationship theory, attitude theory
		Prayag, G.	2012	SEM	1132	33	0.07	2.07	/
		Qu, H. L.	2011	SEM	1422	33	0.09	3.53	/
1	Destination image	Tasci, A. D. A.	2007	Qualitative literature review	1208	14	0.03	1.23	social judgment theory, information processing theory, theory of hierarchy of needs
		Castro, C. B.	2007	SEM	739	13	0.02	1.17	/
		Konecnik, M.	2007	SEM	1224	13	0	1.03	branding theory
		Elliot, S.	2011	SEM	342	13	0.01	1.05	place image theory
		Tasci, A. D. A.	2007	Qualitative literature review	692	13	0.02	1.14	the heuristic–systematic processing theory, the piecemeal and category-based theory, the consumer involvement theory, and the theory of self-image/destination image congruity
2	Destination digitalization	Henseler, J.	2015	SEM	9344	21	0.01	1	/
		Mak, A. H. N.	2017	Content analysis	184	17	0.01	1	/
		Molinillo, S.	2018	Experiment +PLS-SEM	188	15	0.03	1	destination image theory, the theory of reasoned action, and generational theory
		Llodra-Riera, I.	2015	EFA, CFA	237	15	0.01	1	/

		Avraham, E.	2015	Qualitative content analysis	270	14	0.03	1	the theory of image restoration
3	Destination Marketing (promotion and disincentives)	Pike, S.	2014	Narrative analysis	818	50	0.02	1.38	the resource-based theory of competitive advantage, stakeholder theory, branding theory
		Kladou, S.	2015	Content analysis	246	16	0.02	1.09	/
		Hays, S.	2013	Content analysis and semi-structured interviews	1037	16	0	1.01	/
		Chen, C. C.	2016	SEM	126	13	0.02	1	attitude theory
		Alvarez, M. D.	2014	SEM	272	11	0.03	1	/
4	Destination experience and recommendation	Stylidis, D.	2017	SEM	291	23	0.04	1.37	stakeholder theory, image formation theory
		Prayag, G.	2017	SEM	526	18	0.03	1	/
		Smith, W. W.	2015	Auto regressive modeling in time-varying process and content analysis	119	16	0.01	1.07	/
		Tan, W. K.	2016	SEM-PLS	176	16	0.01	1	Prentice's familiarity taxonomy
		Papadimitriou, D.	2015	SEM	241	16	0.02	1.13	/
5	Destination coopetition and success/ governance	Crouch, G. I.	2011	The analytic hierarchy process (AHP)	899	25	0	1.02	destination competitiveness theory
		Volgger, M.	2014	SEM	305	21	0.02	1.13	/

		Bornhorst, T.	2010	Interviews	959	16	0.06	1.48	stakeholder theory, social exchange theory, attitude theory
		Fyall, A.	2012	Qualitative literature review	313	13	0.02	1.13	resource dependency, transactions cost, and social exchange theory
		Beritelli, P.	2014	Case studies	158	12	0.04	1.14	/
6	Destination resources	Yoon, Y.	2005	SEM	4480	14	0.23	5.55	tourism destination loyalty theory, equity theory, norm theory
		Sirakaya, E.	2005	Qualitative literature review	1175	8	0.05	1.23	the expected utility theory, prospect theory, regret theory, satisfying theory, the theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behavior, information-processing theory, choice-set models
		Lee, C. K.	2005	SEM	904	8	0.03	1.13	/
		Lee, C. K.	2007	SEM	874	7	0.02	1.08	/
		Kim, H.	2003	Experiment	1449	7	0.14	1.8	/

Cluster #0: Destination loyalty (silhouette value = 0.86) was the largest cluster containing 147 studies actively from 2007 to 2016. Loyal tourists were essential for destination development. This cluster discussed potential antecedents of tourist perception and loyalty, such as revisiting intention toward a destination. In particular, Prayag and Ryan (2012) reported that destination image, personal involvement, and place attachment were three major antecedents of tourists' loyalty, with satisfaction as the mediator. From the tourist-destination connection perspective, Chen and Phou (2013) acknowledged that destination loyalty is positively influenced by destination image and personality. Then, Qu et al. (2011) examined the mediating effect of the overall image on the path between different destination image associations and visitors' revisit and referral behavior. Zhang et al. (2014) further examined the relationship between destination images and loyalty by performing a meta-analysis on 66 papers. Their results found that the overall image of the destination had the strongest effect on destination loyalty.

Cluster #1: Destination image (silhouette value = 0.86) was the second-largest cluster that contained 126 articles from 2004 to 2013. This cluster was dubbed destination image, with articles that studied its definitions, impacts, and derivative concepts. Tasci et al. (2007) criticized the academic community back then for being overly concerned with cognitive images, neglecting other elements of image composition, such as affective and conative. They proposed a systematic and interactive definition of the destination image. In the same year, Tasci and Gartner (2007) placed a broader emphasis on the impact of destination image and proposed a multi-layered model that connected destination capital, destination components, destination types, and consumer behavior. Then, Castro et al. (2007) assessed the impact of destination image on visitors' loyalty intentions among heterogeneous markets. Elliot et al. (2011) further surveyed consumers in three countries to compare differences between cognitive and affective images on product and destination receptivity. Their results showed that affective images had

a stronger influence on destination receptivity, while cognitive images cast a profound impact on product receptivity. Konecnik and Gartner (2007) validated that destination image was a vital element that constitutes destination equity and further proposed a measurement scale of consumer-based brand equity for a destination.

Cluster #2: destination digitalization (silhouette value = 0.88) incorporated 93 studies from 2012 to 2019. This cluster covered variables that contributed to the construction and reinvention of online destination perceptions. In contrast to conventional offline information sources in building a destination image, Llodrà-Riera et al. (2015) rested upon supply and demand perspectives and developed a scale including four online information source as induced, autonomous, opinion leaders, and UGC web. Molinillo et al. (2018) also mentioned the important role of online platforms in shaping and promoting a destination image. Their findings indicated that image formation differs according to the platform via which tourists obtained information. Avraham (2015) discussed how to rehabilitate a destination's image after being tarnished by an event like the Arab Spring and proposed three strategies: source, message, and audience. Mak (2017) further examined the similarities and discrepancies between tourist and national tourism organization-generated content. Tourist-generated content contained detailed information, and photos visually appealing were attractive to potential customers.

Cluster #3: Destination marketing (promotion and disincentives) (silhouette value = 0.82) included 87 studies from 2011 to 2017. This cluster focused on destination marketing promotion and disincentives. Social media enabled destination organizations to reach a global audience on a lower budget. Hays et al. (2013) examined how DMOs in the 10 most visited countries by foreign visitors used social media and summarized three major strategies for marketing: post frequency, interactivity, and nature of the content. Pike and Page (2014) reviewed the literature on destination marketing across 40 years and proposed that destination marketing organizations sustain competitiveness by bridging effective resources management

with marketing strategies, such as brand identity development, positioning, performance measurement, and tracking. Kladou and Mavragani (2015) elaborated on online reviews of Istanbul on TripAdvisor to investigate how tourists construct their cognitive, affective, and conative images on social media. Disruptive events, especially political disputes, hurt destination promotion. In particular, Alvarez and Campo (2014) reflected on the conflicts between Israel and Turkey and found that political events engendered animosity among nations through affective rather than cognitive images. Chen et al. (2016) further argued that between two hostile places, the image perception of each other was negative. This negative image perception persisted even if diplomatic relations were eased over time.

Cluster #4: Destination experience and recommendation (silhouette value = 0.93) included 82 articles across 2013 and 2020. This cluster focused on the impact of destination experiences on tourist perception and recommendation behavior. Papadimitriou et al. (2015) claimed that destination personality was critical in comprehending destination image and destination recommendation. Tan and Wu (2016) tested the explanatory power of familiarity on destination image and travel intention. Their findings showed that experience familiarity was a critical sign for classifying tourists. Stylidis et al. (2017) parsed destination images from a whole perspective into components, as well as their effect on recommended intention. Their results acknowledged that affective images cast a greater influence on intention to recommend than cognitive ones. Prayag et al. (2017) also investigated the association among destination image, satisfaction, and recommended intention. Smith et al. (2015) deployed electronic gadgets to track experience changes in tourists over the course of a 14-day trip to Peru by 17 tourists. This research established the dynamic nature of destination images and determined that the two critical moments influencing visitors' impressions were at the beginning and end of a trip.

Cluster #5: Destination governance (silhouette value = 0.95) contained 71 articles from

2008 to 2017. This cluster focused on the competitive and cooperative relationships among destinations. Crouch (2011, p. 7) argued the most critical indicators were core resources and attractors from five primary determinants of destination competitiveness: "supporting factors and resources, core resources and attractors, destination management, destination policy, planning and development." Furthermore, Bornhorst et al. (2010) proposed that product and service offerings, tourist experience, location and accessibility, and community support were major contributors to the success of DMOs. Factors such as strong supplier partnerships, good administration of the organization, strategic planning, and the requirement for enough budget and staffing also contributed to their success. Meanwhile, Volgger and Pechlaner (2014) remarked that a strong correlation existed between the performance of destinations and the success of DMOs. Moreover, the capacity of a DMO to connect with other organizations boosted its power and acceptability, which further led to greater success. In the contrary, Fyall et al. (2012) argued that the cooperation between destinations could be divided into three types: organic, mediated intra-destinations, and mediated intra- and inter-destination. Five groups of theories focusing on resource, relationship, politics, process, and chaos were used to design collaboration facilitation strategies for each type of destination cooperation model. Beritelli et al. (2014) demystified destination management challenges, including shifting markets, transient supply networks, fickle actors, and inapproachable competitiveness and sustainability. By studying DMOs in Switzerland, their study also suggested four future directions in destination management, including more diversified strategies, synergetic combination capabilities, relationship management, and negotiated accountability.

Cluster #6: Destination resources (silhouette value = 0.89) contained 70 articles from 2002 to 2008. This cluster mainly assessed how influential events and tourism offerings attracted tourists. Through a qualitative examination of the tourist decision-making literature, Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) reflected and provided building-block ideas for developing

meaningful theories of tourist decision-making as information-processing theory, grand models of consumer decision-making, foundational travel decision models, and behavioral and choice-set approaches to decision making in tourism. Yoon and Uysal (2005) established a model demonstrating that push motivation had a favorable influence on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Kim and Richardson (2003) illustrated that showing motion pictures of a place to visitors improved their image perception, empathy, and willingness to travel to that destination. Using the World Cup as an example, Lee et al. (2005) explored the impact of destination image (including attractiveness, comfort, value for money, and exoticism) on experiences (service quality and affect), which subsequently influenced satisfaction, destination recommendation and revisit intentions. Lee et al. (2005) clarified the functional, emotional, and total value of demilitarized zone tourism. According to their research, the perceived value of demilitarized zone tourism had a favorable impact on destination satisfaction and willingness to recommend.

Following the recommendation of the literature (Chen, 2017), this research performed a timeline analysis by mapping the two most influential publications each year onto the timeline better to depict the evolutionary history of these seven clusters. The results are shown in Figure 5. The connecting lines indicated knowledge spillover between different clusters. For example, the trend of studies on destination resources (cluster 6) and destination (cluster 1) was decaying. However, they were critical in fostering the growth of destination image studies (cluster 1). By contrast, studies on destination digitalization (Clusters 2) or destination experience and recommendation (Clusters 4) were booming.

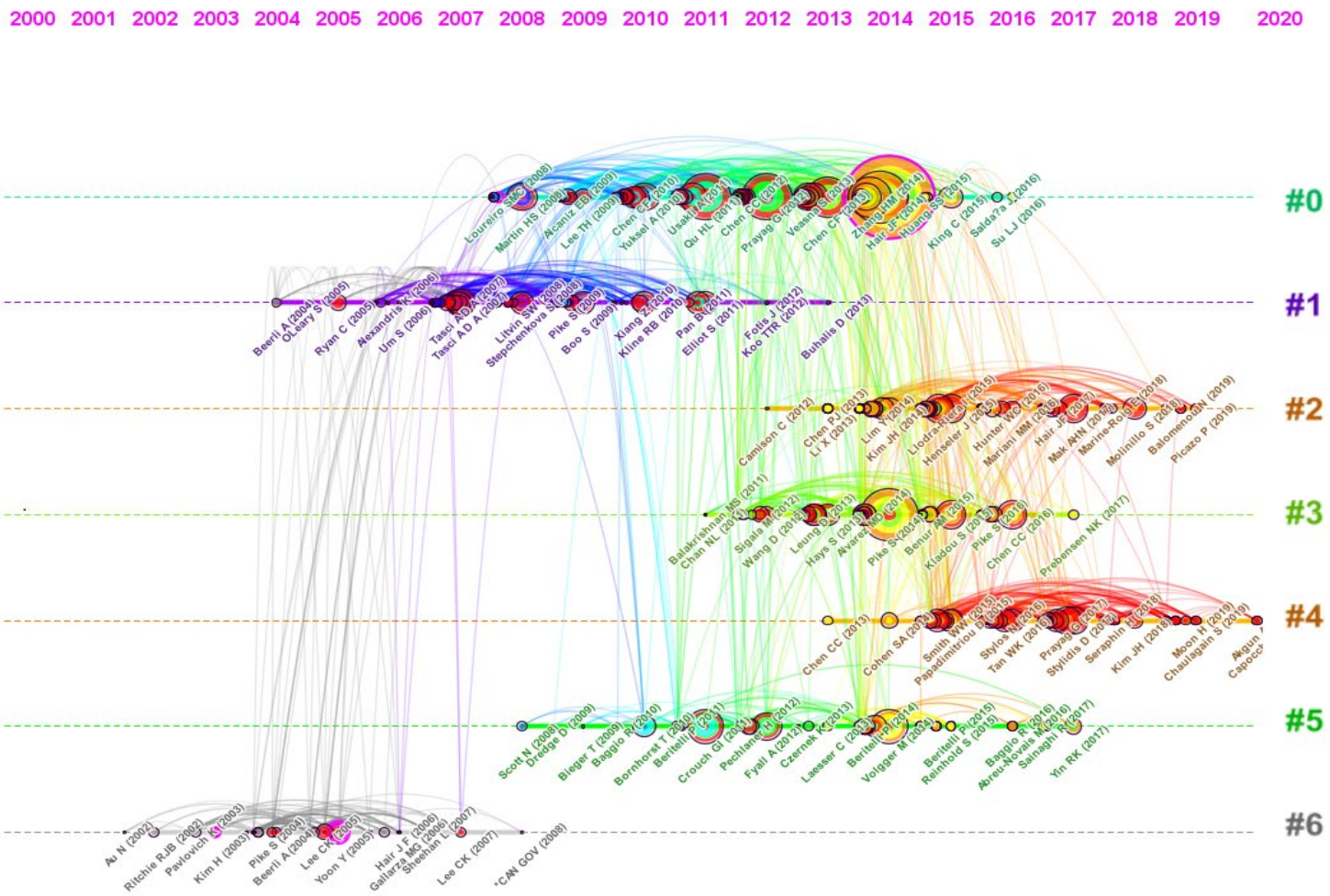

Figure 5. Timeline analysis results of the largest seven co-citation clusters

576

577 **5.4 Structural variation analysis**

578 The SVA indicators track transformational and incremental changes generated by one or
579 more publications; with no changes, the value of indicators would remain zero. The SVA
580 indicators revealed that in the co-cited knowledge structure, 113 articles had induced a
581 substantial change. Table 6 presents the top three articles with the greatest changes to the whole
582 modularity, clusters, and centrality. Among them, Prayag and Ryan (2011) topped most SVA
583 indicators, thus suggesting that their publication had the most substantial spillover influence
584 on destination research.

585 The H metric was a composite expression of three established SVA metrics (i.e., ΔM, CL,
586 and C_{KL}). The ΔM = 92.38 calibrated the relative changes of new information that Prayag and
587 Ryan's (2011) article brought to the baseline network. The Centrality Divergence (C_{KL}) = 0.32
588 assessed the structural changes caused by Prayag and Ryan's (2011) article on the betweenness
589 centrality distribution of existing nodes from the baseline model. The Cluster Linkage (CL)
590 metric = −0.74 captured the changes in the overall structure by bridging different clusters.
591 Within clusters (α) = 1 and the between clusters (β) = 0.89 were additional indicators that
592 captured new links brought by Prayag and Ryan's (2011) study to within- and between-cluster
593 baseline. Entropy = 1.33 was a measure of whether the cited articles were from various clusters
594 or whether the main stem was from one cluster. If E = 0, an article cited literature from the
595 same cluster. According to the SVA metrics, Lam et al. (2020) and Afshardoost and Eshaghi
596 (2020) also produced substantial changes to the existing knowledge structure in destination
597 studies despite their co-citations frequencies being relatively low.

598 SVA focuses on how to develop future research avenues by bridging existing gaps, as
599 contrasted to co-citation analysis, which emphasizes prior research contributions. Prayag and
600 Ryan (2011) examine what factors, including the effect of nationality, play a part in attracting

tourists to Mauritius by using qualitative research methods, and their findings connect the link between guest country background (cluster 5) and revisit intentions (cluster 1). Studies from Lam et al. (2020) and Afshardoost and Eshaghi (2020) try to examine visitor experience and behavior intentions from a digital viewpoint and then connect the dots between destination digitalization (Cluster 2) and destination experiences and recommendations (Cluster 4).

Table 6. The SVA scores of the top three structural variation papers

No.	Leading author	Year	Harmonic	Δ Modularity	Δ Cluster linkage	Δ Centrality divergence	α	β	Entropy	Frequencies
1	Prayag, G.	2011	1.64	92.38	-0.74	0.32	1.00	0.89	1.33	153
2	Lam, J. M. S.	2020	0.15	92.41	-3.16	0.05	0.50	1.00	1.01	4
3	Afshardoost, M.	2020	0.10	95.45	0.06	0.07	0.50	1.00	1.22	22

5.5 Evolution of Destination Research

The evolution of the intellectual structure of destination research consists of two parts, as Figure 5 shows. The first is the convergence of a thematic cluster from articles over time, and the second is a co-evolutionary pattern supported between clusters. Internal and external forces mainly influence the evolution of research topics. Kuhn (1962) first proposed the idea of *the Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to analyze the evolution of the knowledge structure from internal forces. In particular, he assumes new research is building on and challenging the existing knowledge, thus forming a revolution process, with a continuous cyclical process creating the rise and fall of scientific insights. As for external forces, Fuchs (1993) further argues from a sociological perspective that the evolution of scientific knowledge is driven by the social environment, including the interdependence of scientists/research institutions and the uncertainty of research directions. Chen (2006) highlights that major external social events also influence fluctuations in the literature.

Changes in destination scholarship are reflected in the evaluation of different topics over

time. In particular, the destination resource cluster (#6) gained prominence in the early days (i.e., 2002–2008) and is reflected in a rapid stage of destination development beyond natural resources through the improvisation of special events and other tourism products that cater synthetically to an increase of tourist demand. Pull appeals available from a place thus help to promote destination image, favorable touristic perceptions, and decision making (Kim & Morrsion, 2005). Destination image (#1) (i.e., 2004–2013), thus follows suit to focus specifically on destination image creation, projection, and perception, primarily from the tourist cognition to an affective lens with particular emphasis on defining its scope, definition, and impact on tourists' behavioral intention (Pike, 2002; Zhang et al., 2014). Destination loyalty (#0) (i.e., 2007–2016) has gained the most academic attention as an indicator for evaluating a destination's offering and tourists' further responses (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). To attract more tourists, destination governance (#5) (e.g., 2008–2017) has shifted from focusing on individual competitiveness to exploring multiple collaborations facing global challenges (Fyall et al., 2012).

Technology and social media advancements continue shaping and reshaping perceptions and communication; and this is reflected in the emergence of three research themes in destination studies: destination marketing, destination digitalization, and destination experience & recommendation. Destination marketing (#3) (e.g., 2011–2017) can be an effective approach to attracting tourists, but it later also can be employed to propagate aversion through social media (Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Luo & Zhai, 2017). How destination resources, destination images, and tourist behavior are presented and transmitted online has also inspired new research avenues such as destination digitalization (#2) (e.g., 2012–2019) and destination experience and recommendation (#4) (e.g., 2013–2020). Academics also have explored how to rehabilitate images tainted by societal unrest (Avraham, 2015). In sum, the evolution of research topics has been built on academic reflection, advancement, and adaptation to external

changes.

The present study further extracted and summarized variables from the selected studies into a framework to make the co-citation analysis results more recognizable (see Figure 6). The growth of the destination research corpus has advanced from the support of pan-disciplinary and socio-technical environment changes. Existing literature has focused on the micro-tourist, meso-organizational, and macro-destination management levels. Currently, the most studied research topics concern tourist engagement, perception, experience, satisfaction, decision-making, and response behaviors. The theoretical lens has transitioned from rational (e.g., theory of planned behavior, theory of reasoned action, information processing theory, the hierarchy of needs theory, the expected utility theory) to irrational (e.g., prospect theory, regret theory, satisfaction theory, familiarity taxonomy, choice set models, involvement theory). Other systematic and integrated approaches such as attitude theory, self-image/destination image congruence theory, the heuristic-systematic processing theory, generational theory, and the piecemeal and category-based theory were observed. The theoretical underpinnings of destination research also touch upon brand (e.g., branding theory, equity theory), social factors (e.g., stakeholder theory, social judgment theory, social exchange theory, norm theory), and place (e.g., resource dependency, image theory, destination competitiveness theory).

On one hand, tourism is a pan-disciplinary field of study (Weaver, 2022). On the other hand, tourism is supported by a wide range of academic views and impacted by changes from geopolitical, environmental, and socio-technological settings. These two strands of forces jointly influence macro (i.e., destination), meso (i.e., organization), and micro (i.e., tourist) level inquiries. Macro-management can sway micro-level tourists' behaviors. At the same time, tourists' voices and decisions could ultimately be served as messages for DMOs and operators to reframe their strategies and tourism products (as shown by the two curved arrows in the framework). For instance, mismanaged destinations could cause social unrest (e.g., crime, riots,

672 and deterioration of service and infrastructure) (Avraham, 2015; Luo & Zhai, 2017; Yu et al.,
673 2020), hence alienating tourists from visiting the place, which in turn exacerbates further social
674 chaos.

675 At the meso-organizational level, practitioners of macro policies and management may
676 exert a more direct impact on micro-level decisions and experiences (Chiappa, 2013). Tourism
677 organizations create fashionable trends through improvisations that could lure tourists in the
678 millions. They form competitive forces (Fong et al., 2021) that could on one hand fulfill DMOs'
679 mission in supplying resources and fulfill their marketing role in conjuring favorable
680 destination images for tourists. On the other hand, these forces collectively improve tourists'
681 experience, while offering reasons for them to patronize the place again (i.e., loyalty). The
682 advent of smart technology and prevalence of social media further facilitate the role of tourism
683 organizations in connecting destinations and tourists. For instance, online travel agencies (e.g.,
684 Expedia, C-trip, and Trip Advisor) serve as travel ambassadors, as they not only galvanize
685 tourist interest, but they also deliver endless opportunities for knowledge sharing among
686 destinations, operators, and tourists (Edwards et al., 2017). The framework thus offers a means
687 to integrate destination research streams and individual inquires that have been isolated for
688 years to create a more coherent picture of destination management.

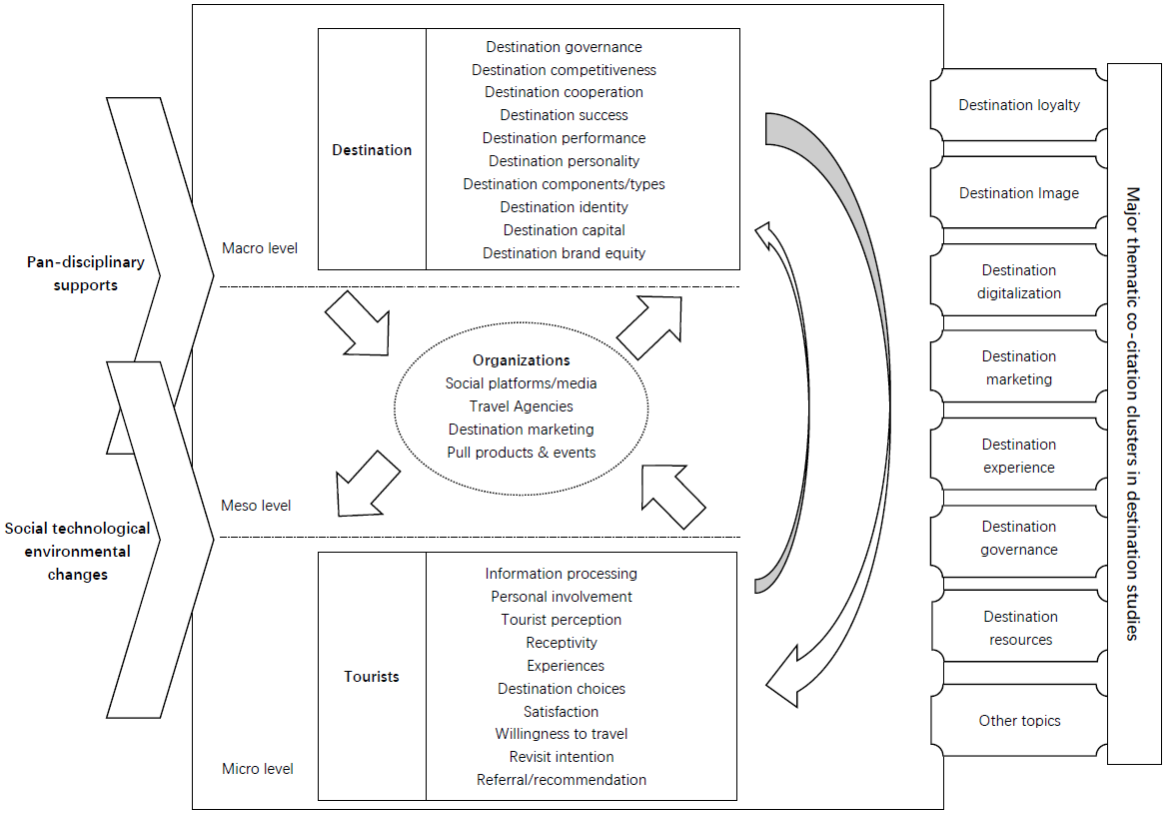

Figure 6. Research Framework

6 Conclusion

This study concludes that destination research is a critical branch of tourism research because it considers multiple stakeholder groups, discusses macro-level governance issues, meso-organizational, and micro-level tourist perception and behavior, and analyzes destination resources and marketing to ensure a sustainable and smart future. Literature reviews serve as cornerstones for advancing the corpus of existing knowledge. The present work first reevaluates destination reviews to provide an overview of the progress of destination studies and then employs bibliometric analysis to visualize the results of co-authorships, popular topics, thematic clusters, and structural variances in destination studies to glean in-depth knowledge of the evolutionary process of the body of literature.

6.1 Discussion on findings of review-on-reviews and bibliometric analysis

Koseoglu et al. (2022) likewise propose that mixed approaches can provide rich and

exhaustive coverage of the relevant topic. In particular, CiteSpace provides a more cutting-edge and broader view of research topics. Qualitative reviews offer a more profound reflection on the issues that existed at a particular time period. Accordingly, the integration of both methods offers greater breadth and depth of the review. Congruent evidence is observed in the findings of the qualitative review-on-reviews and the quantitative bibliometric analysis. In particular, some of the largest specialties summarized by the bibliometric analysis have been examined by existing reviews, such as destination loyalty (Zhang et al., 2014), destination image (Pike, 2002; Zhang et al., 2014), destination marketing (Pike & Page, 2014), destination experience and recommendation (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020), and destination governance and crisis management (Cronjé & du Plessis, 2020; Fyall et al., 2012; Mair et al., 2016).

In addition, findings from both methods indicate that destination studies merit more theoretical support. Theories at the destination level are primarily concerned with resources, branding, and stakeholders. Few studies, however, have addressed the distinctions between destinations and brands, and hence, it would be a challenge for practitioners to manage destinations from the brand management point of view without considering the difference between the two. Moreover, recent studies have revealed that, like regular customers, tourists frequently exhibit irrationality (Jung & Kim, 2016). In other words, presuming individuals are rational and forecasting their behaviors may be utopian and can result in inaccurate conclusions. Most studies of tourist behavior focus on the economic rewards of tourist choices, overlooking the destructive potential of sabotage behavior on the environment and the non-economic benefits of tourist behavior. In particular, Goh et al. (2017) indicate that the planned behavior hypothesis has failed to explain tourists' ecologically destructive behavior adequately. Further, tourists as civic ambassadors are becoming victims and losing their rights to travel in regional or national disrupts/sanctions (Seyfi et al., 2022).

The distinction lies in that review articles seldom explore the interconnections and

730 evolutionary processes between knowledge clusters. Findings of the bibliometric analysis
731 present an iterative process of rising in destination digitalization, destination experience, and
732 recommendation studies, and falling in destination resources and destination image studies. In
733 particular, the present study is the first to introduce SVA techniques to visualize details in how
734 studies bridge thematical clusters and advance existing literature networks.

735 Differences also reside in the fact that some topics in review studies are understudied in
736 general. In other words, valuable topics, such as sustainable or smart destinations, deserve more
737 attention in the future. Although destination digitalization and smart destination may seem alike,
738 they are indeed different concepts. According to the bibliometric results, destination
739 digitalization studies are more akin to digital projections of destinations. In contrast, "the core
740 idea of the smart destination concept is the use of ICTs that provide relevant and personalized
741 information to all stakeholders" (Cimbaljević et al., 2019, p. 2472). Considering the sensitivity
742 and adaptative nature of smart destination management via ICTs (Kontogianni & Alepis, 2020),
743 they can move beyond the crisis event-driven management style (Duan et al., 2021) and
744 improve risk management at the destination level. Smart tourism destinations could also
745 contribute to sustainable development (Shafiee et al., 2019).

746

747 **6.2 Research agenda**

748 Looking beyond existing research topics, destination scholars still face profound
749 challenges that are worth investigating. Uysal et al. (2016, p. 244) summarized several threats
750 encountered in tourism development, including "economic instability, recession and stagnation,
751 social unrest, war/terrorism, information technology, and social media, environmental and
752 sustainability issues, distribution of tourism benefits, and non-economic value of tourism."
753 These nuances are embodied within destination studies. Based upon the findings of the review-
754 on-review and bibliometric analyses, the present study adopts the five external environmental

755 factors – political, ecological or environmental, economic, social, and technological – that are
756 commonly outlined as tools used for situational analysis for future strategic purpose (Gadekar
757 et al., 2022). We believe that these five macro aspects pose major challenges to destination
758 management and hence, create opportunities for new destination scholarship that can
759 accommodate adversities from global threats.

760 ***Ecological degradation***

761 Tourism destinations have been developed at the expense of the environment (Liu et al.,
762 2022). The frequency and severity of natural catastrophes have increased at an alarming rate
763 due to climate change (Tan et al., 2021). At the time of writing, we have witnessed a record
764 high temperature and drought in Europe and many parts of the world, while other destinations
765 are facing unprecedented tornadoes and thunderstorms in December. These extenuating
766 circumstances, on one hand, challenge the seasonality of tourism, making it difficult for
767 destinations and tourists to plan and engage in normal travel activities. On the other hand, it
768 induces environmental plights and hassles that prevent tourists from taking pleasure trips in
769 certain areas during specific time periods.

770 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism was responsible for 8% of the world's
771 anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (Lenzen et al., 2018). As a major contributor to
772 environmental deterioration, the tourism industry must take a greater initiative to go beyond
773 taken-for-granted sustainable measures to embark on new avenues that can reduce its carbon
774 footprint and emissions as well as to place the 4R (i.e., refuse, reduce, reuse, and recycle)
775 principles at center stage. These issues necessitate new challenges that require destinations to
776 take initiatives beyond the normal course of actions in governance, resource planning and
777 allocation, and to prioritize environmental protection to save the planet and hence, the tourism
778 industry. They could also hint at new approaches for destinations to seek greater collaboration
779 not only among industries and stakeholders within a specific jurisdiction, but also among

780 regional and global partners to design and reinforce more ambitious sustainable development
781 goals. Yet, there are many questions that remain largely unanswered: How could we nurture
782 ecological collaborations among destinations? How could we better leverage technology and
783 innovation to reduce carbon footprints and promote the 4Rs? How could we save destinations
784 that are in danger of vanishing due to rises in sea level and extreme weather? Should we demote
785 tourism for the sake of environmental longevity? What happens if this is just the incubation of
786 a bigger ecological catastrophe, and what are some plausible remedies and plans that could
787 sustain tourism and the planet? What is the socio-emotional cost for depletion of natural
788 resources?

789 ***Economic turmoil***

790 The tourism industry experienced an acute loss of up to US$4.5 trillion in 2020 due to
791 the COVID-19 outbreak (WTTC, 2021). These economic issues coupled with record high oil
792 and gas prices, inflation, and depreciation of currency have created global economic turmoil at
793 the time of writing. Deterioration of economic conditions render as signs for escalating tension
794 over recession and hence, decline in tourism activity with a direct impact on destinations
795 worldwide.

796 While economic shrinkage is a temporary phenomenon for most nations and territories,
797 developing and underdeveloped regions may face permanent hardship, as some of them are
798 highly dependent on tourism. In fact, jurisdictions where tourism is the primary source of
799 foreign exchange earnings, such as Sri Lanka, have been affected particularly hard. The country
800 has called for national bankruptcy as the global tourism plight has inflicted damage on the
801 nation's financial bottom line (Athas et al., 2022). Accordingly, there are many questions that
802 have yet to be answered. How to mitigate the effects of declining tourism income on local
803 economies in tourism dependent destinations? What happens when destinations go bankrupt
804 and how can these places be saved? Would tourists still visit bankrupted cities given that these

805 places may be reluctant to host tourists in comfort (due to deterioration of tourism
806 infrastructure)? Are there any alternative transportation and travel modes that could reduce
807 travel cost? How could destinations prepare to be less vulnerable to threats from economic
808 downturn?

809 ***Social unrest***

810 As we are moving into the third year of the COVID pandemic, we have witnessed a
811 large discrepancy between developed and underdeveloped countries in terms of vaccine
812 distribution and medical coverage (Singh & Chattu, 2021). The huge disparity between these
813 two markets creates unprecedented polarity in the travel industry; while tourism in the
814 developed economies is recovering with acute demand (Huang et al., 2021), tourism in most
815 undeveloped regions is still experiencing the worst downturn ever without any sign of
816 rejuvenation. These destinations could be considered as at-risk markets that are overly reliant
817 on one or a few source markets (McKercher & Mak, 2020) as well as heavily dependent on
818 tourism as the main source of income. Sooner or later, these markets will follow suit and may
819 go bankrupt, similar to the case of Sri Lanka. At the meantime, destinations are facing a
820 dilemma whether to freely open their national borders; with the risk that new variants of
821 COVID and other pathogenic viruses (e.g., Monkeypox) could escalate to a new health crisis,
822 or that mobility could be restricted by the imposition of visa, vaccine, nucleic acid test, and
823 quarantine measures, at the price of alienating tourists at large.

824 On the other hand, humanitarian crises in African nations not only have cast devastating
825 impacts to each of their own countries, but they have brought chaos to neighboring and
826 European nations. On the other hand, the living-cost crisis in Europe due to double-digit
827 inflation, for example, has led to massive strikes in major tourism cities, leading to blockage
828 of mobility and travel facilities. Notwithstanding the preliminary exploration of previous
829 studies on destination image rehabilitation (Avraham, 2015; Mair et al., 2016), questions of

how and how long it will take a destination to rebuild their destination image remain largely unanswered. Other questions include: What are the long-term impacts to a destination that experiences a social crisis? What are the roles of different stakeholders (e.g., government, residents, tourists, and industry operators) in the crisis and image recovery process? How could tourism (re)build the social fabric and facilitate solidarity among different interest groups? What is the optimal solution to resolve the mobility versus pathogenic risk dilemma? Should we revise Butler's tourist area lifecycle to reflect the COVID variant lifecycle?

Political disputes

Discrepancies in political ideologies have sparked major confrontations within and among nations. People are reluctant to travel to a hostile environment when tourists' lives are in jeopardy. Accordingly, civil wars have torn apart countries such as Myanmar, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Ethiopia, and Nigeria, impeding tourism development in these areas. Yet, international conflicts have also escalated in developed and developing economies, such as the war in the Ukraine (Ero & Atwood, 2022).

Seyfi et al. (2022) have recently reviewed the dichotomy between pro- and anti-political sanctions and argued, from the perspective of SDG development initiatives, that political confrontation should not affect the fundamental rights of civil exchange, including the right to free mobility. However, as tension among global powers escalates over time, tourism can often be utilized as a means for sanction and other political agendas (Cheng et al., 2016). For example, some European Union members are calling to ban Russian tourists. However, destination research still lacks knowledge answering questions pertinent to such new geopolitical developments and policy. Future research may seek to address questions such as: How do destinations respond to political disputes? How do diplomatic frictions affect tourist destination image, choice, and loyalty? How should tourists, operators, and destinations deal with sanctions and other political constraints? Would visiting countries that have conflicting

855 political views bring dire consequences to tourists?

856 **Technological disruption**

857 Innovations are often meant to be disruptive to existing taken-for-granted business
858 models. The advent of share accommodation has disrupted the hotel industry and has redefined
859 the relationship between host and guest (Cheng, 2016). Artificial intelligence and robotic
860 service have changed the course of customer service and human interaction (Xiong et al., 2021).
861 Virtual tourism provides an alternative travel experience via cyberspace. For example,
862 Airbnb's Online Experience takes it a step forward by injecting endless hedonic and restorative
863 potential through a high density of social interactivity similar to benefits reaped from the
864 corporeal travel counterpart (Wong et al., 2022). Web 5.0 allows tourists to reclaim their own
865 data (e.g., user-generated contents) and to seek greater control on their identities. It further
866 affords emotional-sensing applications and hence, creates an emotive sensory Web in the
867 virtual space (Lv et al., 2020). Metaverse travel takes imagination to a different level to embody
868 a wide range of virtual-reality experiences in a fantasy world (Park & Kim, 2022). It creates
869 unprecedented and unlimited new destinations, attractions, events, theme parks, and more.

870 However, technologies are not always an antidote to problems of the tourism business,
871 as they could be both an experience facilitator and inhibitor (Yu et al., 2018). Likewise,
872 technologies can bring exceptional solutions to operators, but they could also deter business
873 value and expose destinations to new threats such as cyber-attacks, data theft, technical
874 disruptions and more (Gadekar et al., 2022). Accordingly, advancement of technology opens
875 new research avenues with new questions for destination studies to be answered: Does using
876 more technology make a destination and its tourists smarter? How could technology improve
877 destination sustainability? How should DMOs and operators capitalize on the metaverse to
878 promote destination/tourism products and market appeals? How can tourism products and
879 tourist experiences be transferred into non-fungible tokens that can be traded in cyberspace?

What are the potential perils of smart tourism and destinations? Would hyperreality and alter reality be a replacement for genuine authenticity in a destination?

We believe that the aforementioned questions open a new forum of discussion on destination research. Answering these queries may lead to development of new knowledge pertinent to a more sustainable tourism ecosystem along with betterment of destination management. Accordingly, this inquiry sets forth a future research agenda to seek greater endeavors in addressing the research void pertinent to different environmental forces. On one hand, these external factors pose opportunities for DMOs and operators to better manage attractions and resorts. On the other hand, they impose threats that could weaken the status quo of the tourism ecosystem. The COVID pandemic has proved that most destinations are not prepared for mega disruption. Acute environmental changes impose adversity to DMOs, suppliers, and decision makers; and they should actively seek solutions with new knowledge that could effectively prepare for, respond to, and overcome challenges that lie ahead. Integrating different streams of destination inquiries thus emerges at the forefront of nascent tourism scholarship, with practical implication for stakeholders.

Future research could focus on the challenges and conflicts facing destination development and build advanced and resilient systems. Additionally, Shneider (2009) contended that expanding and improving the corpus of scientific knowledge requires investigating novel phenomena, methodologies, technical instruments, and the spillover effects on the growth of other disciplines. Destinations undergo rapid and complicated changes. However, current research methods still suffer from many limitations. Basic statistical analysis alone may not be adequate to solve complex problems in destination management. Additionally, cross-sectional data analysis methods are time sensitive and may fail to deal with the dynamic changing nature of destination management, thus casting doubt on their practical implications. This study proposes that future research should incorporate more mixed approaches to be

commensurate the evolving nature of destinations.

6.3 Research limitations

The research limitations of this study are threefold. First, the bibliometric analysis relies on a well-established database, such as the Web of Science core collection, where data for this study has been extracted. As a leading citation database, Web of Science provides information on all citing and cited references of an article for advanced analysis, such as co-citation and structural variation analysis, using the program CiteSpace. Timeframe selection also has a nonnegligible effect on the construction of the literature base. If a different time span has been used (for instance, 10 or 50 years), this boundary-spanning effect of the broker studies with high SVA scores should also be altered. These questions should be addressed by subsequent research. Future research could broaden the filtering criteria to include non-SSCI journals and disciplines other than tourism. Another limitation of this study is that articles published in languages other than English are not collected and analyzed. Future studies might gather and evaluate destination studies published in various languages and publications for analysis to improve the construction of the body of knowledge. Third, a title reflects the originality of a research article (Whittaker, 1989). Thus, this study assumes that authors were circumspect in naming their papers. However, the limited number of words in a title does not always convey the entire essence of an article. Thus, the results of subsequent bibliometric analysis may be compromised because of imprecise wording or misleading headlines (Donthu et al., 2021). For example, this study does not include research that examines destinations but uses a different term in their titles. Future research should focus on developing more advanced and rigorous algorithms to deal with such problems.

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