

# Tourism supply chain management: a bibliometric analysis of data from Scopus and Web of Science (2001–2023)

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Despite the growing interest in bibliometric studies within tourism management, there remains a gap in understanding the current research trends within the domain of tourism supply chain management (SCM). Therefore, this study aims to examine the publication trends, identify the most active stakeholders and highlight the most influential publications and major themes in the field of tourism SCM during the period 2001–2023. The main results reveal several themes, including “exploring inclusive growth and poverty reduction through tourism supply chain and value chain analysis,” “sustainable SCM and competition in tourism: a tour operator’s perspective,” “tourism SCM in different facets,” and “sustainability and information technology in tourism SCM.” Additional themes include “competitive strategies and medical tourism SCM,” “culinary tourism and performance measurement in tourism value chains,” and “performance measurement in tourism SCM”.

**Keywords** Tourism, Supply chain, Bibliometric analysis, Supply chain management, Sustainable tourism, Tourism SCM

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

The field of tourism management has garnered considerable scholarly attention from practitioners, academics and stakeholders, across various research contexts (Amani and Chao, 2023; Moon et al., 2022; Smith and Xiao, 2008; Zhang and Ryan, 2022). This heightened interest is closely aligned with the growing significance of tourism in national economies and countries worldwide. With approximately of over 230 million workers (7.2% of the global workforce) employed within this industry across its diverse subsectors (Achkar, 2023), the industry is considered one of the largest employers in the world. This is also supported with the provision of indirect millions of employment opportunities across communities. Given this significance, the surge in research



within this domain has also prompted the emergence of bibliometric studies (Alkier *et al.*, 2023; Roziqin *et al.*, 2023; Szpilko, 2017). These studies aim to assess and evaluate the interrelationships and impacts of publications, authors and countries and other domains within a specific research area (Donthu *et al.*, 2021; Ellegaard and Wallin, 2015).

However, the increasing prevalence of bibliometric studies in tourism management has been widespread, with limited focus on the domain of supply chain management (SCM) (Alkier *et al.*, 2023; Szpilko, 2017). This area is considered crucial due to the intricate interrelations among key stakeholders involved in tourism SC operations. This is the case as SCM is concerned with the overall management of flow of materials and accompanied services from suppliers to end users (Jones and Riley, 1985). The management includes several stakeholders, with much of the focus on final customers (Lummus and Vokurka, 1999; Mentzer *et al.*, 2001). Similar to other industries, SCM is a practice that has rapidly proliferated across various sectors (Changalima and Ismail, 2022; Israel, 2023; Saha and Rathore, 2024). The relevance of bibliometric studies in this domain lies in enhancing current trends and identifying stakeholders crucial to the development of the field. Existing studies have largely indicated that SCM in tourism is in its infancy stage and has seen a recent increase in empirical studies within existing areas (Szpilko, 2017; Zhang *et al.*, 2009). Tourism SCs encompass a diverse array of practitioners directly involved in planning, managing and operating tourism-related activities. Predominantly, tour operators, companies specializing in selling tourism packages, play a central role by linking various services such as transportation, accommodation, activities and other amenities (Busby, 2022; Picazo and Moreno-Gil, 2018).

Accommodation providers also hold significance within the SCM framework, offering various types of lodging options including hotels, resorts and lodges. Moreover, suppliers play a crucial role in tourism SCM, comprising businesses and service providers such as food and beverage suppliers (Bhajan *et al.*, 2022), and other entities contributing to the tourism experience. Additionally, Destination management organizations (DMOs) are pivotal within the tourism SC, tasked with promoting and managing tourism at specific destinations. Collaborating with various stakeholders such as government, local businesses and communities, DMOs develop tourism products, attract visitors and ensure sustainable tourism practices (Amani, 2023; Amani and Chao, 2023). It should be noted that the members involved in tourism SCM are numerous and include not only businesses and organizations but also customers, who are the tourists themselves (Zhang *et al.*, 2009). This aspect underscores the complexity of tourism SCM, as the chain may remain volatile because of seasonal demands, fluctuations in consumer preferences and other relevant factors (Alkier *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, understanding SCM framework in tourism context is relevant for explaining aspects linked to tourism SC performance (Bire *et al.*, 2021).

In this regard, it is imperative for studies on tourism SCM to delve deeper into and explain the complexity of SCM within the tourism context. The current interest in bibliometric analysis within current research is deemed crucial (Koseoglu *et al.*, 2016), especially following the successful establishment of systematic reviews (Zhang *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, while existing studies on bibliometric analysis in tourism SCs have primarily focused on providing information in the field and have been conducted at various points in time (Szpilko, 2017), other studies have explored different angles, such as inbound tourism (Li *et al.*, 2022), digital tourism (Li *et al.*, 2024; Roziqin *et al.*, 2023) and sustainability (Niñerola *et al.*, 2019). Despite the increasing interest in bibliometric studies within tourism management, there exists a gap in understanding the current research trends within the domain of tourism SCM. Thus, this study aims to examine the publication trends, identify the most active stakeholders, highlight the most influential publications and major themes in the field of tourism SCM. In due course, the study addresses the following research questions (RQs):

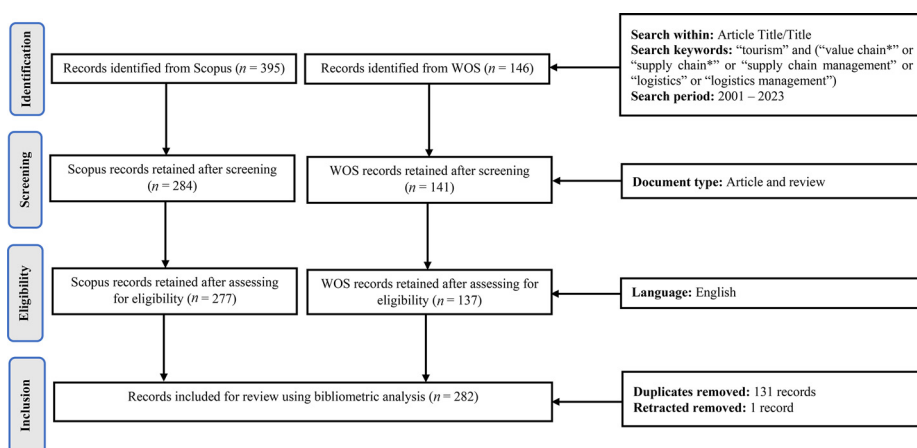
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- RQ1. What are the trends in publications on tourism SCM?
- RQ2. Who are the most active contributors in terms of authors, countries and journals in the field of tourism SCM?
- RQ3. Which publications are the most influential in the field of tourism SCM?
- RQ4. What are the major themes of research in the field of tourism SCM?

By answering these RQs, the study contributes to the field by mapping research trends in tourism SCM, which is relevant for identifying themes, highlighting how the field has developed over time and predicting future research directions. Additionally, by identifying influential publications and authors, the study helps in understanding the relevant articles and leading contributors to the field. The study presents relevant insights into the geographical distribution of research on tourism SCM, which is important for identifying leading regions in research and pinpointing opportunities for further studies. Therefore, the study provides novel insights for academics and practitioners regarding guiding future research efforts and ensuring that studies remain relevant and impactful. Furthermore, the analysis of the geographical distribution of research highlights leading regions in the field, revealing areas with significant research activity and identifying regions where further study might be needed. This can help foster international collaborations and focus research efforts in underrepresented areas. On the other hand, members of tourism SCs, such as hotels, tour operators and government agencies, can use this information to benchmark their practices against leading research and best practices identified in the field. Additionally, understanding how the field has evolved allows stakeholders to make informed decisions about resource allocation, innovation and long-term planning. For instance, hotels and tour operators can use this information to enhance their SC strategies, improve efficiency and stay competitive.

## 2. Methods

The search, conducted on August 7, 2024, accounted for published articles up to 2023 within Scopus and Web of Science. The decision to limit the search up to 2023 was deliberate, as it represents the most recent complete year relative to the search date. This approach ensures the inclusion of all pertinent articles published up to 2023, thereby capturing the most up-to-date literature in the completed year available at the time of the search. The Scopus database was involved as the indexing platform owing to its esteemed position as the largest comprehensive database globally, encompassing abstracts and citations from peer-reviewed journals and books. Its extensive coverage offers profound insights into the breadth of research activities within the field on a global scale (Roziqin *et al.*, 2023). On the other hand, Web of Science was included because of its relevance in the research domain, offering a variety of papers and authors with broad coverage in recent years (Andersen, 2023; Prancuté, 2021). The inclusion of these two databases was crucial, as they enhance the thoroughness and reliability of literature reviews and help identify key papers (Prancuté, 2021; Sharma *et al.*, 2024).

Figure 1 presents the overall search process from the two databases. Initially, a total of 395 documents were retrieved from the Scopus database and 146 from Web of Science following the application of the search strategy “tourism” and (“value chain\*” or “supply chain\*” or “supply chain management” or “logistics” or “logistics management”) within the “article title” field for Scopus and “title” for Web of Science exclusively. This targeted approach was employed to ensure the retrieval of documents specifically relevant to the domain of tourism SCM. Subsequently, the search scope was further refined to include only



**Source:** Figure by authors as adapted from Sharma *et al.* (2024)

**Figure 1.** The search process

documents classified as articles and reviews. This deliberate restriction was implemented to exclusively obtain documents that have undergone extensive peer review. This refinement resulted in a total of 284 documents from Scopus and 141 from Web of Science. These were subsequently narrowed down to 277 documents from Scopus and 137 from Web of Science by limiting the search criteria to documents published in English.

Therefore, a data set comprising a total of 414 documents was subjected to data cleaning, resulting in the removal of 131 duplicate documents and 1 retracted article. From this step, a total of 282 documents from Scopus and Web of Science were finally subjected to bibliometric analysis. The corpus analyzed in this study spans from 2001 to 2023. To ensure that there is a robust analysis and interpretation of the results from bibliometric analysis, the study used a VOSviewer (van Eck and Waltman, 2010) and Microsoft Excel as relevant software for analysis. The study conducts bibliometric analysis to scrutinize patterns and trends within academic literature related to tourism and SCs. This quantitative technique for reviewing publications is widely embraced across numerous research domains to serve multifaceted purposes such as evaluating research impact, pinpointing emerging thematic trends and measuring author productivity (Lim and Kumar, 2024; Roziqin *et al.*, 2023; Sharma *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, to satisfy the RQs, the study examines the bibliographic data of retrieved documents to furnish valuable insights essential for comprehending the dissemination of knowledge within tourism SCM.

### 3. Results and discussion

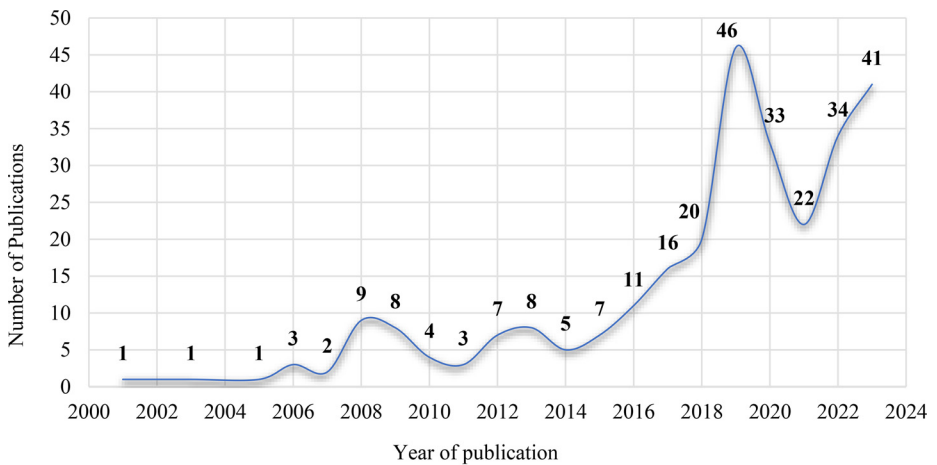
#### 3.1 The publication trends

The study's analysis encompassed 282 documents published between 2001 and 2023, as detailed in the methods section. A total of 275 (97.5%) were articles and 7 (2.5%) were reviews. The majority of retrieved publications from Scopus emanated from the subject area of "business, management, and accounting," "social sciences," "decision sciences" and "computer science." While, publications from Web of Science were categorized into subject areas such as "business," "management," "hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism," "green and

sustainable science and technology,” “environmental sciences” and “environmental studies.” These subject areas collectively offer a broad spectrum of publications pertinent to the field of tourism SCM. Regarding *RQ1*, the publication trend on tourism SCM is presented in Figure 2 which portrays different periods of publications in the realm of tourism SCM. The number of publications, as depicted in Figure 2, exhibits varying rates of fluctuations corresponding to the years in which specific publications were produced.

The publication trend shows a relatively low volume, with a total of 8 publications conducted between 2001 and 2007. The first publication appeared in 2001 (Wynne *et al.*, 2001), followed by a dormant period in 2002, one publication in 2003 (Georgantzis, 2003) and another in 2005. The number increased to 3 in 2006 but decreased to 2 publications in 2007. Generally, this period suggests that the topic had limited research activity. Despite the existing variations in productivity, the trend experienced a relatively stable number of publications from 2008 to 2015, with 9 in 2008 and 7 in 2015. This period (2008–2015) saw a total of 51 publications and represents the beginning of growth and interest in research on tourism SCM, with consistently active years. Specifically, the period also experienced a significant decline in publications which occurred in 2010, where the publications dropped from 8 in 2009 to 4 publications in 2010. The decline in publications may be attributed to inadequate funding, which could have affected both research funding and priorities. This is the case as limited funding may have influenced the number of publications in this specific field (Wang and Shapira, 2015).

Furthermore, the period between 2016 and 2023 saw significant growth in the domain of tourism SCM. A substantial increase was observed in 2019, with the number of publications rising to 46 from 20 in 2018, marking a notable growth phase. However, there was a decrease in the number of publications from 2019 to 2021, with a drop to 33 publications in 2020 and 22 publications in 2021. Subsequently, the publication trend slightly rebounded, increasing again in 2022 and 2023, with 34 and 41 publications, respectively. In general, the publication trend on tourism SCM appears to have experienced fluctuations, with periods of stability followed by significant increases. The findings suggest that there have been periods of



Source: Figure by authors

Figure 2. The publication trends on tourism SCM

growth, especially in recent years, which have been triggered by the increasing importance of SCM aspects in enhancing growth in the tourism industry. The rise in publications can be attributed to several interconnected factors, such as growing interest in the domains of tourism SCM, driven by emerging trends and industry challenges. Additionally, advancements in technology and data analytics have streamlined research processes. These factors have been crucial in contributing to this growth, fostering more comprehensive studies and resulting in increasing publications.

### 3.2 Active contributors in terms of authors, countries and journals

The RQ2 focuses on identifying the most active contributors in terms of authors, countries and journals in the field of tourism SCM. Thus, the assessment of research productivity to determine the most active contributors in terms of authors, countries and journals with the greatest number of publications was done and the findings are presented in Table 1. The findings presented in Table 1 show that only 8 authors were involved in publishing at least 4 documents in the field of tourism SCM between 2001 and 2023 based on the Scopus and Web of Science data. The study aimed at identifying the most active authors which is crucial for academics in recognizing authors with most publications in the field of tourism SCM. Table 1 shows that Song, H. is the most active author with 9 publications followed closely by Huang, G.Q and Zhang, X. with 7 publications each. The analysis ranks these first three authors as the most active in the field of tourism SCM. Subsequently, findings indicate that Mandal, S. with 5 publications is in the fourth position followed by other four authors He, Y., Kerdpitak, C., Liang, L. and Liu, Y. with 4 publications each with 4 publications.

Also, Table 1 presents only 8 countries with more than 10 publications in the field of tourism SCM. These countries are the most active countries in this research landscape. The list is predominantly dominated by countries from Asia. China is the leading with 58 documents followed by Thailand and Indonesia with 34 and 31 documents, respectively. It should be noted that countries such as the UK, representing Europe with 15 documents, and the USA, representing North America with 11 documents, are also considered active in

**Table 1.** The most active authors, countries and journals

Author	Publications	Country	Publications	Journals	Publications
Song, H.	9	China	58	<i>International Journal of Supply Chain Management</i>	28
Huang, G.Q.	7	Thailand	34	<i>Uncertain Supply Chain Management</i>	16
Zhang, X.	7	Indonesia	31	<i>Sustainability (Switzerland)</i>	10
Mandal, S.	5	UK	15	<i>African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure</i>	7
He, Y.	4	India	13	<i>Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes</i>	7
Kerdpitak, C.	4	Malaysia	13	<i>International Journal of Tourism Research</i>	6
Liang, L.	4	Spain	12	<i>Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism</i>	6
Liu, Y.	4	USA	11	<i>Tourism Management</i>	6
				<i>Journal of Travel Research</i>	5

**Source:** Table by authors

research publications on tourism SCM. Nevertheless, countries from Africa and South America are noticeably underrepresented in the list of countries with more than 10 publications, as presented in [Table 1](#). This prominence of Asian countries is attributed to their rapidly growing tourism industries, substantial investments and strong research infrastructure ([Chon, 2015](#); [Tolkach et al., 2016](#)). On the other hand, researchers from Africa and South America may face significant barriers, including limited funding and insufficient research infrastructure. These constraints hinder their ability to contribute extensively to the field, highlighting the need for targeted support and enhanced international collaboration to elevate research from these regions.

On the other hand, there are several journals that were actively involved in the publications of documents related to tourism SCM for the given period as retrieved from Scopus and Web of Science. The *International Journal of Supply Chain Management* is the most active journal with 28 publications in the field of tourism SCM. This journal is followed by *Uncertain Supply Chain Management* and *Sustainability (Switzerland)* with 16 and 10 publications, respectively. Therefore, the findings reveal that only 3 journals were involved in producing at least 10 publications. The list also includes other tourism-specialized journals with 5 and 7 publications as presented in [Table 1](#). Based on the closer examination of findings in [Table 1](#), most of the involved journals with exception of *Sustainability (Switzerland)* are specialized journals in the facet of SCM and tourism management. Based on closer examination, most of the journals involved, with the exception of *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, are specialized in facets of either SCM or tourism management. This suggests that the research landscape in tourism SCM is predominantly focused on these specific areas, reflecting a depth of expertise in SCM and tourism management. The presence of *Sustainability* as an exception indicates a broader scope that may integrate interdisciplinary perspectives, potentially offering a more holistic view that includes environmental, social and economic dimensions alongside traditional SCM and tourism management topics.

### 3.3 Most influential publications

The RQ3 aims to identify the most influential publications in the field of tourism SCM. In this regard, the citation analysis was conducted with the assumption that the most influential article is the one with the highest number of total citations (TC) as presented in [Table 2](#). Initially, the analysis unveils that 5,048 citations were involved in 282 documents included in the analysis. [Table 2](#) shows the most cited publications with at least 100 citations. Out of 282 documents, only 8 (2.8%) contributed to 1,315 (26%) citations. In this regard, the articles presented in [Table 2](#) are the most influential publications in the research landscape. The leading article has 374 citations ([Zhang et al., 2009](#)), followed by [Smith and Xiao \(2008\)](#) with 203 citations and [Sigala \(2008\)](#) with 162 citations. These are the most three influential articles. The other remaining publications as presented in [Table 2](#) are [Font et al. \(2008\)](#) with 141, [Guo et al. \(2013\)](#) with 119 citations, [Lee and Fernando \(2015\)](#) with 108 citations. The list ends with [Yilmaz and Bititci \(2006\)](#) and [Song et al. \(2013\)](#) with 105 and 103 citations, respectively. Generally, these publications span several domains within tourism SCM, which is crucial for influencing the research landscape in the field.

Based on the citation analysis, it is unsurprising to observe that the publication by [Zhang et al. \(2009\)](#) leads the way with the most citations, given its focus on reviewing research in the SCM context in the tourism context. This article is the most influential because of its provision of relevant and significant information regarding the relevance of the tourism SCM framework for potential research in the field. On the other hand, [Smith and Xiao \(2008\)](#) present information regarding the relevance of the SC in the context of culinary tourism. Given that “food and drinks” tourism has been growing as a prominent form of tourism

**Table 2.** The most influential publications

S/N	Reference	Title	TC	TC/Y	Age
1	<a href="#">Zhang et al. (2009)</a>	Tourism supply chain management: a new research agenda	374	24.93	15
2	<a href="#">Smith and Xiao (2008)</a>	Culinary tourism supply chains: a preliminary examination	203	12.69	16
3	<a href="#">Sigala (2008)</a>	A supply chain management approach for investigating the role of tour operators on sustainable tourism: the case of TUI	162	10.13	16
4	<a href="#">Font et al. (2008)</a>	Sustainable supply chain management in tourism	141	8.81	16
5	<a href="#">Guo et al. (2013)</a>	Cooperation contract in tourism supply chains: the optimal pricing strategy of hotels for cooperative third party strategic websites	119	10.82	11
6	<a href="#">Lee and Fernando (2015)</a>	The antecedents and outcomes of the medical tourism supply chain	108	12	9
7	<a href="#">Yilmaz and Bititci (2006)</a>	Performance measurement in tourism: a value chain model	105	5.83	18
8	<a href="#">Song et al. (2013)</a>	Tourism value chain governance: Review and prospects	103	9.36	11

**Source:** Table by authors

globally, the study presents pertinent insights into SC aspects derived from information sourced from SC members in restaurants, farmers' markets and festivals. Other insights from the most influential articles include aspects of sustainable practices in the tourism industry ([Font et al., 2008](#); [Sigala, 2008](#)), medical tourism ([Lee and Fernando, 2015](#)), performance measurement ([Yilmaz and Bititci, 2006](#)) and value chain governance in tourism ([Song et al., 2013](#)), which are relevant in contributing to the body of knowledge.

### 3.4 Major themes

To obtain the major themes relevant in the field of tourism SCM, the study used bibliographic coupling (in VOSviewer) on the retrieved documents with a minimum of 30 citations per document. This process yielded 34 articles that were connected to each other. The articles were grouped into 7 clusters that present the major themes in the field of tourism SCM. The study used bibliographic coupling, as it is useful in identifying current research trends by grouping at least two documents that share common references ([Donthu et al., 2021](#); [Jarneving, 2007](#); [Lwesya and Mwakalobo, 2023](#)). Thus, by considering the similarity or relatedness between documents based on their shared references, it is easier to identify clusters of related works.

The first cluster (red) as presented in [Table 3](#) has 7 publications and is centering on "exploring inclusive growth and poverty reduction through tourism SC and value chain analysis." This theme presents crucial information regarding the way value chain analysis is explained in the context of tourism. The studies within this cluster explore the role of tourism in fostering local development in developing countries, with a particular emphasis on value chain analysis. [Adiyia et al. \(2015\)](#) found that in Uganda, cultural tourism could be relevant

**Table 3.** The major themes on tourism SCM

S/N	Cluster and themes	Reference	TC	TLS
1	<i>Red:</i> Exploring inclusive growth and poverty reduction through tourism SC and value chain analysis	Adiyia <i>et al.</i> (2015)	48	8
		Anderson (2018)	97	16
		Hampton <i>et al.</i> (2018)	62	6
		Jeyacheya and Hampton (2020)	53	6
		Mitchell (2012)	80	2
		Rylance and Spenceley (2017)	31	5
		Thomas (2014)	47	2
		Adriana (2009)	97	16
		Font <i>et al.</i> (2008)	141	6
		Huang <i>et al.</i> (2012)	35	11
2	<i>Green:</i> Sustainable SCM and competition in tourism: a tour operator's perspective	Sigala (2008)	162	5
		Sigala (2014)	99	8
		Yang <i>et al.</i> (2009)	49	4
		Fong <i>et al.</i> (2021)	30	28
		Georgantzias (2003)	57	3
		Guo <i>et al.</i> (2013)	119	7
		Rusko <i>et al.</i> (2009)	33	2
3	<i>Blue:</i> Tourism SCM in different facets	Song <i>et al.</i> (2013)	103	21
		Zhang <i>et al.</i> (2009)	374	41
		Babu <i>et al.</i> (2018)	55	18
		Jermstittiparsert <i>et al.</i> (2019)	34	18
		Ma <i>et al.</i> (2021)	66	9
		Mandal (2018)	53	38
		Mandal and Saravanan (2019)	71	26
4	<i>Yellow:</i> Sustainability and information technology in tourism SCM	González-Torres <i>et al.</i> (2021)	99	10
		Huang <i>et al.</i> (2010)	32	29
		Lee and Fernando (2015)	108	9
		Rahman and Zailani (2017)	37	8
		Slusarczyk <i>et al.</i> (2016)	33	6
5	<i>Purple:</i> Competition strategies and medical tourism SCM	Smith and Xiao (2008)	203	3
		Yilmaz and Bititci (2006)	71	13
		Yilmaz and Bititci (2006)	105	13
		Huang (2018)	60	30
6	<i>Grey:</i> Culinary tourism and performance measurement in tourism value chains	Çiğdem and Cälärețu (2013)	33	1
		Huang (2018)	60	30
		Çiğdem and Cälärețu (2013)	33	1
7	<i>Pink:</i> Performance measurement in tourism SCM	Huang (2018)	60	30
		Çiğdem and Cälärețu (2013)	33	1

**Source:** Table by authors

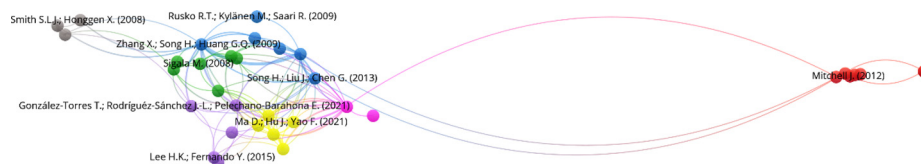
for reshaping social boundaries while emphasizing the need for a national scale to empower local stakeholders and garner support. Anderson (2018) provides relevant insights into the way local farmers could be involved in tourism food SCs in Tanzania. These studies examine how tourism value chains operate and their impact on local economies and communities. Furthermore, the promotion of inclusive growth is emphasized in this theme, where the studies address economic leakages (Rylance and Spenceley, 2017), investigating how value chain strategies can be used to retain more economic benefits within the local economy (Jeyacheya and Hampton, 2020; Mitchell, 2012; Thomas, 2014).

The second theme in cluster green is “sustainable SCM and competition in tourism.” The cluster includes five crucial studies on the domain of sustainable SCM in tourism context and competitions in different dimensions in tourism context. The study conducted by Adriana (2009) focuses on environmental SCM in the tourism domain from the context of tour operators. This study provides evidence on enhancing sustainable tourism through leveraging environmental SCM. Font *et al.* (2008) investigated sustainable SCM in tourism through the lens of tour operators and provided good practices for enhancing sustainability. Through the same lens, Sigala (2008) focuses on how tour operators can leverage sustainable

tourism through a SCM approach. This paper provides evidence on the integration of sustainability on SCM in the context of tourism which is relevant for enhancing sustainable tourism. Sigala (2014) proposes a significant framework for customer involvement in enhancing sustainable SCM in the context of tourism industry. Conversely, the cluster includes two studies that are centering on competition in tourism SCM. For instance, Yang et al. (2009) investigated the competition dynamics in tourism SCs. The study recommends that decision-makers use appropriate product differentiation strategies for enhancing performance by positioning effectively the holiday packages. Additionally, Huang et al. (2012) present two game models by considering tour operators (with and without them) in analyzing quantity competition in tourism SCs. The study focused on tour operators, who play a crucial role in negotiating with upstream SC members, such as hotels, regarding the number of rooms available. This is essential for facilitating accommodations for downstream SC members.

The third cluster (blue) as presented in Figure 3 is on “tourism SCM in different facets” which comprises 6 publications that focus on different angles of tourism SCM. Zhang et al. (2009) is regarded as the most influential article in this cluster, with the majority of citations. This study reviews different aspects of tourism SCM which is relevant in pointing out new research agenda. The study establishes crucial information for decision-makers in the tourism and hospitality fields from the reviews of studies on tourism SCM. Furthermore, the cluster includes a study conducted by Fong et al. (2021) which centers on understanding aspects of both horizontal, vertical and diagonal suppliers (triadic relationships) in the context of tourism SC. The study presents relevant information regarding changes in tourism SC structure based on the levels of competition between suppliers in tourism SCs. The cluster includes three publications (Georgantzias, 2003; Guo et al., 2013; Song et al., 2013), which delve into various aspects of tourism value chains and their implications for profitability and strategic management. These studies emphasize the importance of strategic management and governance in enhancing the effectiveness and profitability of tourism value chains. Furthermore, the SCM framework has been relevant to tourism destinations, as the study by Rusko et al. (2009) applied the SCM framework to one of the tourist destinations (the Levi Fell resort) located in northern Finland. Their study provides relevant information regarding the development of the SCM framework in the tourism context.

The cluster (yellow) presents a theme of “sustainability and information technology in tourism SCM.” This cluster includes 5 publications that establish the crucial role of sustainability and information technology in the domain of tourism SCM. Studies by Babu et al. (2018) and Jermstittarsert et al. (2019) emphasize sustainability practices within tourism SC. Ma et al. (2021) investigate the impact of big data on low-carbon smart tourism, focusing on how consumer behaviors and corporate altruistic preferences influence low-carbon tourism SCs. Mandal (2018) explored the role management capabilities of big data



Source: Figure by authors

Figure 3. Major clusters from bibliographic coupling

analytics on sustainable tourism SC performance with technology orientation as a moderator. This publication found that sustainable tourism SC performance could be enhanced through proper planning, coordination and control of big data analytics, especially when strengthened by technology orientation. This study is relevant to tourism managers, as they are emphasized to enhance collaborative practices with other key tourism SC members in relation to the latest information technology (IT) infrastructure. On the other hand, [Mandal and Saravanan \(2019\)](#) explored the role of strategic orientations on tourism SC agility and resilience. This paper establishes that technology orientation is considered a significant dimension of strategic orientations in tourism, as it serves as a significant enabler of tourism SC agility. However, the study finds that the link between technology orientation and resilience in the tourism SC was insignificant. It should be noted that despite the insignificance of the link, the path between technology orientation and tourism SC resilience remains positive. Therefore, the study recommended tourism managers still find relevance in leveraging technology orientation as an essential enabler for SC resilience in tourism ([Mandal and Saravanan, 2019](#)). Generally, the cluster highlights the growing emphasis on sustainability and technologies in enhancing the effectiveness and environmental impact of tourism SCs.

The fifth cluster (purple) is on the theme of “competition strategies and medical tourism SCM.” This cluster is relevant in tourism SCM as it includes 5 publications that focus on different angles in competition and medical tourism SC. There are studies that address quantity and price competitive strategies in tourism SC networks ([Huang et al., 2010](#)), and relationship management in tourism SCs so as to overcome outbreaks such as COVID-19 ([González-Torres et al., 2021](#)). On the other hand, [Slusarczyk et al. \(2016\)](#) provide information regarding the traditional and modern approaches to tourism SC in which the two approaches illustrate differences in the way an SC is in a tourism product. Finally, the cluster includes two studies that are relevant in medical tourism SC. These studies include publications done by [Lee and Fernando \(2015\)](#) and [Rahman and Zailani \(2017\)](#). The former provides information on antecedents and outcomes of medical tourism SCs and the latter presents the effectiveness and outcomes of medical-friendly tourism SCs. In general, this knowledge theme is relevant in tourism SCM as competition strategies are considered intense in SCs and medical tourism SCs are relevant in different contexts including Muslim and non-Muslim countries.

The sixth cluster (grey) with 3 publications is on “culinary tourism and performance measurement in tourism value chains.” The study by [Smith and Xiao \(2008\)](#) delves into SC theory within the context of culinary tourism. This study examines culinary tourism SCs and provides insights into various facets, including the learning, appreciation and consumption of locally branded culinary products. This is relevant as the way the food sector is integrated into tourism affects overall SC dynamics. The other remaining articles examine various dimensions of performance measurement and value chain dynamics within the tourism sector. [Yilmaz and Bititci \(2006\)](#) compare performance measurement in manufacturing versus tourism value chains, highlighting different approaches and challenges associated with each sector. In another study, [Yilmaz and Bititci \(2006\)](#) delves into a value chain model specifically for performance measurement in tourism, aiming to improve understanding in tourism SC performance.

The last cluster (pink) is the smallest with just two publications that center on the theme of “performance measurement in tourism SCM.” Generally, performance measurement in SCs is crucial to identify areas within the chains that require further improvements in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, the current study holds relevance in enhancing performance measurements in tourism SCs. This theme is largely supported by [Huang](#)

(2018) who assessed the performance of tourism SCs by using the hybrid network data envelopment analysis model. This paper holds relevance in tourism SCM literature, especially in the context of performance measurements, as it presents an integrated efficiency index which is crucial in measuring the overall tourism SC efficiency. Also, the study provides the measurement that unveils sources of inefficiencies within tourism SC. Another study by Țigu and Călărețu (2013) investigates on SCM performance in tourism. The study relies on aspects of demand management in tourism SCM by relying on the hotel case in Romania. This work presents relevant information on aspects of customer satisfaction as one among dimension of measuring tourism SC performance.

#### 4. Conclusion and implications

This study analyzed 282 documents retrieved from Scopus and Web of Science to provide a comprehensive understanding of the latest research on tourism SCM. These documents were between 2001 and 2023. The study examined the publication trends and active contributors in terms of authors, countries and journals. Finally, the study analyzed the major themes of research relevant for determining the intellectual structure of the field of tourism SCM. Based on the main findings, the study concludes that publications in the field of tourism SCM have garnered wide attention from numerous scholars, despite periods of fluctuations in previous years. This is supported with an increasing research trend in recent years, with dominance observed from 2016 to 2023. The publications are widely distributed across several subject areas, demonstrating that research on tourism SCM is relevant to numerous disciplines worldwide, with a predominant focus on SCM and tourism management.

Furthermore, Song, H., Huang, G.Q. and Zhang, X. are the most prominent contributors in terms of research productivity. On the other hand, most of the publications come from China, Thailand and Indonesia, while *the International Journal of Supply Chain Management* has emerged as the most active journal in the field. Zhang *et al.* (2009) is the most influential article with 374 citations. This publication reviews research in the domain of SCM and tourism. Based on the knowledge themes, the study establishes seven critical clusters that present themes on several angles of tourism SCM. The themes include “exploring inclusive growth and poverty reduction through tourism SC and value chain analysis”, “sustainable SCM and competition in tourism: a tour operator’s perspective”, “tourism SCM in different facets”, “sustainability and information technology in tourism SCM”, “competition strategies and medical tourism SCM”, “culinary tourism and performance measurement in tourism value chains” and “performance measurement in tourism SCM”. These insights provide the basis for practitioners, policymakers and academics in the field of tourism SCM.

The study offers pertinent insights for practitioners in the field of tourism SCM by enhancing the coordination of operations among members involved in tourism SCM. This is significant as the current study provides existing insights into operational aspects of SCM in tourism, such as competition strategies that are relevant across various facets of tourism SC, sustainable practices and application of information technologies in enhancing operations in tourism SC. Therefore, it is imperative for relevant practitioners in tourism sectors, including tour operators, accommodation providers, hotels, travel agencies and DMOs, to shoulder the responsibility of enhancing these aspects. This is crucial for augmenting operational efficiency within the tourism SCs. The application of information technology at a lower level can be effectively implemented through the use of smartphones, which are particularly relevant for e-tourism, especially in facilitating information sharing (Moon *et al.*, 2022).

On the other hand, the study presents relevant implications for policymakers, particularly concerning the path forward in enhancing sustainability within tourism practices. Two

critical knowledge themes established by this study revolve around sustainable SCM in tourism operations. This holds significance as sustainable practices should be integrated into policies that encompass strategies aimed at mitigating environmental impacts, fostering local economic development and promoting social responsibility initiatives (Choy *et al.*, 2021; Ismail *et al.*, 2023). This can be achieved through initiatives and campaigns aimed at safeguarding natural habitats and biodiversity in support of tourism development. Furthermore, another significant aspect highlighted in the study is the application of information technology, which complements various relevant clusters. The advent of technology has profoundly influenced tourism SC (Ma *et al.*, 2021; Mandal, 2018). Therefore, policies emphasizing the utilization of technology in tourism operations should be incorporated, such as the automation of operational processes to drive technological innovations within the sector.

Based on the main themes established in this study, several areas for future research are proposed. The study offers relevant insights based on the seven themes related to tourism SCM. First, the study proposes on future research into how customer evaluations of tourism SCs differ across cultures and regions, aiming to identify unique customer needs and preferences. Second, the study highlights future research opportunities in examining how sustainable practices in SCM can serve as a competitive advantage for tour operators and other members of tourism SCs. It also suggests investigating how tour operators can cooperate with suppliers and other stakeholders to enhance sustainability in tourism SCs, especially in less developed countries. Research into ‘patient-centric supply chain models’ could be a relevant area in medical tourism, and examining the effectiveness of dynamic pricing models across various segments of the tourism SC, such as airlines, hotels and tour packages, could also be crucial. Additionally, the role of technologies, including blockchain, data analytics and predictive modeling in tourism SCM, represents another intriguing area for future research. Finally, the study suggests conducting comparative studies to benchmark best practices in tourism SC performance across different regions, which could provide valuable insights in the research domain.

Finally, recognizing the significance of bibliometric studies in informing future empirical research within a specific research context, this study holds relevance for academics in the field of tourism SCM. By delineating existing imbalances in the literature concerning the nexus between SCM and tourism management, the study sheds light on the predominance of research in Asian countries such as China, Thailand and Indonesia. With limited representation from African countries and other regions across the globe, this study serves as a relevant call for empirical research in tourism SCM from diverse contexts, with particular emphasis on African countries. The imperative of reporting empirical studies within the African context cannot be overstated, particularly in more international databases. This endeavor holds the potential to amplify the visibility of empirical studies on tourism SCM from under-researched areas. Similarly, to other SCs, tourism SCs are vulnerable to risks that can impact business profitability and other desired social outcomes within the tourism sector. Consequently, further studies examining risk management practices in tourism SCs, particularly within the context of developing economies, would contribute significantly to the field.

## 5. Limitations and future research

Similar to previous research using bibliometric analysis, this study presents some limitations. Primarily, the study relied on the sample obtained from Scopus and Web of Science. Even though recognized as reputable international sources of scholarly works, may omit pertinent publications accessible through other databases. Hence, future investigations in this domain

may benefit from broader database inclusion, incorporating publications in non-English languages, and utilizing wider search criteria, as the current study was limited to searching only within the 'title' section. Second, while the study primarily centers on bibliometric analysis, which may have less immediate social implications, it serves as a foundational framework for future empirical studies that could directly influence societies and communities, particularly within the realms of tourism SCM. This observation holds significant relevance, particularly within the context of empirical evidence from under-researched contexts such as African countries, where research on this dimension appears to be scarce and comparatively less explored. The equilibrium in studies concerning tourism SCM could be effectively achieved through empirical investigations. By bolstering research endeavors in these regions, a more comprehensive understanding of tourism dynamics and SCM intricacies can be attained, thereby enriching the scholarly discourse and contributing to informed policy-making and industry practices. Additionally, the study relies on bibliographic coupling as a science mapping technique because of its effectiveness in identifying contemporary research trends and connections between recent publications on tourism SCM. Thus, future research could incorporate other techniques such as co-citation mapping to provide a comprehensive analysis of the knowledge in tourism SCM.

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