

Research Paper

Decent Work Research in Tourism Industry: A Bibliometric Mapping

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Abstract: The study of decent work in tourism is critical to ensure the sustainable growth of the industry, workers' rights are respected, and local communities as well as tourists benefit. To this end, we conducted a bibliometric analysis of research on decent work in tourism. The analysis covered 105 studies from the Scopus database. VOSviewer was used to perform a citation, bibliographic linkage, co-citation, and co-occurrence analysis. The increase in the number of research papers and citations on this topic shows that it has progressively attracted the attention of researchers in the last three years. Results show that the United Kingdom is the most productive country in this field of study while the journal with the greatest influence is *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. The study with the strongest link to other publications is "Rethinking decent work: the value of dignity in tourism employment". The most studied topics concern the integration of decent work to achieve Sustainable Development Goals in the context of sustainable tourism and the sustainable adaptation of the hospitality and tourism industry in the time of COVID -19. Future research directions are also outlined.

Keywords: Decent work, tourism industry, bibliometric mapping, VOSviewer

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Introduction

In the face of escalating social and economic inequalities, increasing instability and the growing vulnerability of the global workforce (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2017, 2019, 2021), the concept of “decent work” has attracted considerable attention from academics and stakeholders concerned with labour issues. The Decent Work Agenda, led by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2008 and 2012, stands as a pivotal initiative that has advanced the research discourse on decent work. This agenda has prompted scholars from various disciplines, including economics and sociology, to explore this concept from a macro-level perspective.

The tourism sector plays a vital role in the global economy, contributing significantly to economic growth, job creation, and community development. Consequently, it assumes a critical role in advancing United Nations’ (UN) Sustainable Development Agenda. Through its extensive value chain, tourism fosters connections with various activities, facilitating progress towards achieving 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015). Tourism is explicitly mentioned in SDG 8, which focuses on “decent work and economic growth,” providing an important opportunity to address challenges faced by the tourism workforce and enhance positive socioeconomic impacts, as highlighted by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2017).

Amidst various challenges, the tourism industry struggles with issues of decent work, encompassing low wages, exploitation, and inadequate protection, resulting in financial insecurity for workers (Bianchi & Man, 2021; Draçi & Kraja, 2023; ILO, 2017; Santos, 2023). Additionally, inadequate professional recognition, along with gender-based discrimination and harassment, hinder career advancement opportunities for tourism workers (Robinson et al., 2019; Winchenbach et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2022). Moreover, poor working conditions, including inadequate and improper safety protocols, hygiene and accommodation jeopardise migrant workers’ health and safety (Terry, 2018). The seasonality of this type of work exacerbates these issues, creating work-life imbalances (Terry, 2016). Further, the lack of social protection leaves many workers without access to essential services and benefits (Robinson et al., 2019; Santos, 2023), while mass tourism intensifies workers’ exploitation and environmental degradation in popular destinations (e.g., Cheer et al., 2019).

While literature on decent work covers various areas of study, significant gaps are evident concerning the tourism sector. Existing research tends to focus on specific segments (e.g., Garcia-Rodriguez et al., 2021) and cases or communities (e.g., De Beer et al., 2014), while other aspects are frequently neglected. This fragmented landscape complicates identifying global trends and formulating effective policies for promoting decent work in the tourism industry.

A bibliometric study can significantly address these gaps by analysing a wide range of literature on decent work in tourism, providing insights into causes and trends. It can also map research networks to identify key collaborators and institutions, fostering collaboration among researchers and knowledge dissemination to stakeholders (e.g., Donthu et al., 2021). In addition, bibliometric techniques allow the examination of outcomes from numerous studies within specific fields.

The main aim of this study is to offer a thorough overview of research on decent work in tourism using bibliometric techniques. Specific research objectives include:

1. Analyse key countries and primary sources in the field of decent work in tourism through bibliographic citation analysis to identify connections between works.
2. Identify prominent authors and key references that have significantly contributed to the intellectual framework for decent work in tourism through co-citation analysis.
3. Assess thematic clusters and emerging trends to guide future research in decent work in tourism by analysing the co-occurrence of keywords in the tourism field.

Literature Review

Decent Work: Conceptual Background

Over the years, important milestones have been achieved in the promotion of decent work and social justice; three of which are particularly noteworthy. The term was first introduced in 1999 by ILO to promote opportunities for men and women to obtain decent and productive work based on freedom, equality, security, and human dignity. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015), decent work is included as one of the goals, emphasising the importance of improving employment opportunities and social security. Blustein's (2006) *Psychology of Working Theory* (PWT) introduced a contemporary definition of decent work that examines the role of psychological, contextual, and economic factors in a person's career development, including their access to decent work.

PWT (Duffy et al., 2016) offers an inclusive and social justice-centred perspective on decent work that focuses on the needs and experiences of workers, including those who have limited control over their career choices. In this sense, Duffy et al. (2016) conceptualised decent work as work that provides: safe physical and interpersonal working conditions, hours that allow for adequate free time and rest, value organisations that complement family and social values as well as adequate pay and access to healthcare.

PWT proposes a model that describes the psychological process by which obtaining decent work can positively affect workers' well-being and professional fulfilment. It posits that experiences of marginalisation and economic constraints directly influence the acquisition of decent work. This association is partially

elucidated by two psychological factors: work motivation (the capacity to select work despite constraints) and career adaptability (the capability to employ resources for managing work-related tasks) (Blustein et al., 2016; Blustein et al., 2019; Duffy et al., 2016). The model suggests that ensuring decent work directly enhances job satisfaction and well-being, and indirectly influences these outcomes by meeting work-related needs (Duffy et al., 2016).

PWT has served as the basis for numerous empirical studies on various demographic groups (e.g., Kim et al., 2020; Shaffer et al., 2022). These studies have consistently confirmed the hypotheses proposed in theory (e.g., Autin et al., 2019; Duffy et al., 2019; Duffy et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020; Tokar et al., 2024; Wan & Cao, 2022; Wan & Duffy, 2023).

Whilst there have been studies examining decent work in the tourism sector, none has looked at the application of PWT in this sector. Again, this dispersion of research makes it difficult to identify global trends and formulate effective public policies to promote decent work in this industry.

Tourism and Decent Work: Overview

Tourism creates jobs worldwide, but discussions about its employment growth also question the quality of these jobs and emphasise the need to ensure benefits for both destinations and tourism workers (Draçi & Kraja, 2023). According to ILO's report, *Decent Work in Tourism* (2001), the sector faces specific challenges regarding working conditions, including temporary and precarious work, low pay, and lack of labour rights, characterised by long shifts, intense work pressure and irregular working hours. Tourism is generally considered a highly labour-intensive activity, employing many low-skilled and unskilled workers (ILO, 2019, 2021), often carrying the stereotype that employment in this sector is reserved for the uneducated, unmotivated, untrained, unskilled, and unproductive (Williams & Shaw, 1992). In addition, in certain tourist destinations, the pace of work and demand often vary according to seasonal fluctuations, whether due to climatic factors, cultural events, or specific holidays.

These variations often force employers to reduce staff during low seasons or employ mainly temporary or part-time workers (Getz, 2008), negatively impacting working conditions. For instance, De Beer et al. (2014) found that many South African tour guides work on precarious contracts without adequate labour protection. Santos (2023) discovered employment and wage variations in Portuguese tourism companies compared to the national average. The tourism industry is notably known for employing women (e.g., Costa et al., 2017; Jong & Figueroa-Domecq, 2022) and immigrants (e.g., Baum, 2012; Shariff et al., 2019), often in lower-paying roles. Further, Santos (2023) uncovered a persistent gender wage gap in Portuguese tourism companies, placing women at a disadvantage.

While the tourism industry recognises the value of its workforce, more consistent efforts are needed to improve working conditions and attract workers of different age groups, to promote sustainability, and employment in tourism as a respected lifelong career (Aquino et al., 2017; ILO, 2017, 2019; Winchenbach et al., 2019). This urgency is further reinforced by Rydzik and Kissoon (2022) who cautioned that the benefits of technological advancement, smart automation and digital surveillance can jeopardise established labour rights and divert the sector from the pursuit of equitable employment. Nevertheless, all the aforementioned studies underscore the need to address decent work in tourism. Despite extensive debates on the significance of decent work within the tourism sector, these discussions are fragmented, primarily due to variations in publication objectives and audiences.

Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometrics is an analytical tool that includes specific methods for quantifying databases related to scientific publications. The bibliometric method integrates quantitative rigor with the subjective analysis of literature, allowing an author to describe and evaluate scientific knowledge in a clear and systematic way, improving the quality of evaluation (Zupic & Carter, 2015). Bibliometric analysis is a retrospective analysis of the literature used to assess the content, volume, development patterns and forms of the literature being developed in different fields and research disciplines (e.g., Guleria & Kaur, 2021; Sweileh, 2019). It allows the evaluation of books, journals and other academic publications, the calculation and visualisation of authors, journals, countries, institutions, and even international research collaborations in the field (Sweileh, 2019).

Bibliometrics encompass various techniques such as co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, as well as co-author and co-occurrence analysis (Van Eck & Waltaman, 2010).

Bibliometric Analysis Research on Tourism

Since 2008, bibliometric studies in tourism have grown significantly. Completed works include a variety of topics, such as wellness tourism management research (Gulyas & Molnar, 2023), corporate social responsibility (Jiddi & Ibenrissoul, 2020), length of stay (Atsız et al., 2022), tourism sustainability (de Bruyn et al., 2023), tourism content marketing (Nguyen et al., 2023), smart experiences (Soliman et al., 2021), world heritage (Zhang et al., 2022), sustainable and responsible tourism paradigm (Mihalic et al., 2021) as well as safety and security research (Toker & Emir, 2023). In these bibliometric studies, the most common analysis techniques used to map research topics are bibliographic coupling, co-citation; citation, keywords and abstract co-occurrence, and co-authorship analysis (e.g., Atsız et al., 2022; Mihalic et

al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). To our knowledge, no bibliometric study to date has focused on an analysis of decent work in tourism.

Methodology

This study followed the methodology outlined by Zupic and Cater (2015), encompassing various stages such as research design, data collection, analysis, data visualisation, and interpretation. Figure 1 presents a visual representation of the specific steps involved in this process.

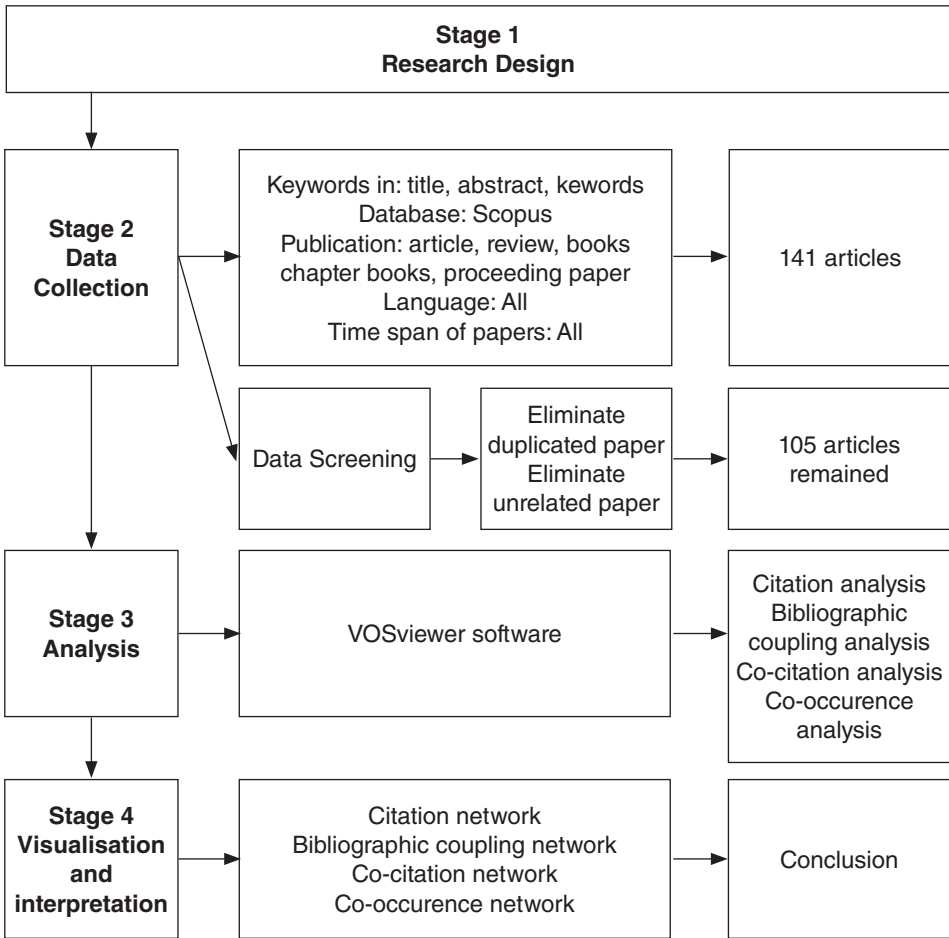


Figure 1. Roadmap for the bibliometric method

Data Collection

On August 30, 2023, data was retrieved from the Scopus database, recognised as one of the world's largest and most extensive repositories of academic and scientific literature. Compared to other databases (e.g., WoS), Scopus has a more comprehensive coverage and shows considerable overlap with other databases (Singh et al., 2021).

Since the aim of the study is to analyse scientific research on decent work in tourism, the search was carried out using the following character string: (“decent work” OR “decent job” OR “decent labor” OR “decent employment” OR “dignity at work” OR “dignified work” OR “decent workplace” OR “dignity of labor” OR “informal job” OR “informal work” OR “informal employment” OR “precarious employment” OR “precarious work” OR “precarious job” OR “employment conditions” OR “work conditions” OR “job conditions”) AND (“tourism” OR “hospitality”), as topics, in Scopus.

To limit the number of documents, we restricted the search parameters in terms of topic, i.e., the words could only be found in the title, abstract or keywords (Fauzi, 2023). The search was conducted on August 31, 2023, without restrictions on publication date. This search resulted in a total of 141 documents. All documents were exported with no modifications, including citation information, bibliographic information, abstract & keywords. Following the approach proposed by Zhang et al. (2022), the titles, abstracts and keywords of the articles were analysed to facilitate comparison of the datasets and to accurately identify duplicate (n=27) and irrelevant (n=9) studies, which were then removed. All the remaining (n=105) documents were considered for the analysis. Data synchronisation was also carried out before data analysis. First, those with the same author name, but with a different encoding, were synchronously corrected. For example, “Robinson r.n.s” and “robinson r.n” were merged into “robinson r.n”. In addition, keywords that described the same concept but were coded differently were also corrected for synchronisation. For example, “sustainable development goals” or “sdgs” were edited to “sustainable development goals”. The exported data was then used for evaluations and visual bibliometric displays.

Data Analysis

For the analysis, the VOSviewer software developed by Van Eck and Waltman (2010) was used to create and visualise bibliometric networks of the documents studied. This software is an invaluable resource for creating visual representations of specific areas of knowledge through techniques such as citation analysis, co-citation analysis, co-authorship analysis, keyword coincidence analysis and bibliographic linkage analysis (Van Eck & Waltman, 2022). Known for its versatility, the VOSviewer helps researchers to understand the academic and scholarly landscape of their respective

fields and identify trends, relationships, and research opportunities. Its visual approach to analysing bibliometric data improves interpretation, accessibility and efficiency of decision-making. The software has been widely adopted in numerous studies in various academic disciplines in recent years (e.g., Agapito, 2020; Wong et al., 2021).

Data analysis consisted of four phases. The initial phase of the analysis comprised a descriptive overview, including publication age and annual publication count. Subsequently, citation and bibliographic coupling techniques were employed, with “countries” and “sources” as units of analysis. Citation link analysis traces citations between studies, illuminating interconnections (Van Eck & Waltman, 2022). Bibliographic coupling identifies studies linked by referencing a common third work, indicating related subject matter. The degree of coupling is assessed by the number of shared sources referenced (Egghe & Rousseau, 1990).

Co-citation analysis was then conducted to map dynamic relationships between core concepts within the academic domain. This technique reveals both the frequency of citations received by two or more articles and connections between articles citing the same document (Zupic & Carter, 2015). Such connections emerge when two documents are cited by the same third document (Van Eck & Waltman, 2022), aiding in understanding scholarly context through a network of co-citations. This analysis was applied to both authors and references.

Lastly, keyword co-occurrence analysis was used to map the research landscape in each area. This technique constructs joint keyword maps, visually representing interconnections between terms, highlighting influential themes and future trends. Our analysis, using “Author keywords,” examined thematic maps, offering visual insights into current research trends in the domain of decent work in tourism (Zhang et al., 2019).

Results

Descriptive Analysis

The temporal evolution of scientific publications, illustrated in Figure 2, indicates the inception of research on decent work within the tourism sector dating back to 1988. Over subsequent decades, this exploration has progressed steadily, with a slight increase noted in recent years (2021–2023). However, the depicted figures suggest that this research domain has yet to receive the attention it merits. The authors maintain the belief that the realm of decent work is currently experiencing robust development in terms of scientific publications. This trend is particularly noteworthy amid global efforts to achieve the SDGs. Consequently, there is a possibility of significant growth in the volume of publications within this field of study.

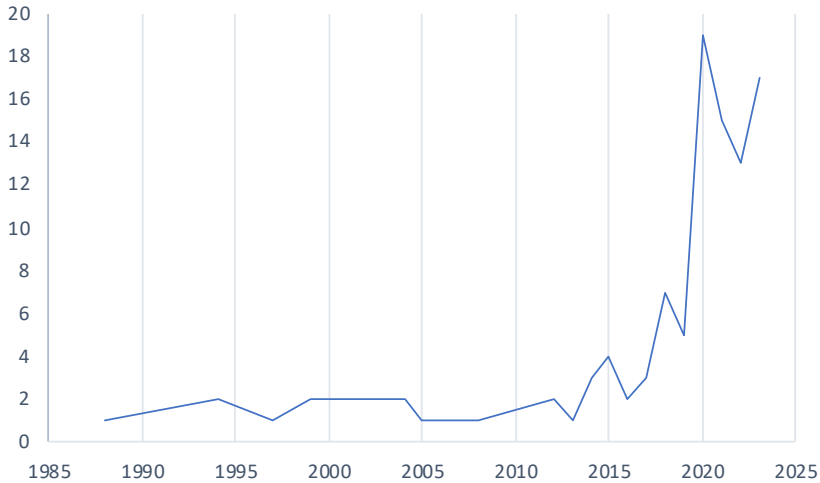


Figure 2. Progression of the number of publications per year in tourism decent work

The language analysis of the 105 documents showed that they were predominantly written in English (95 documents).

Citation and Bibliographic Coupling Analysis

Based on Table 1, we found that the UK is the most productive country on the subject ($n=25$), followed by Spain ($n=14$) and South Africa ($n=10$). Although it occupies the fourth position in terms of number of published studies, Australia's contributions to the research discipline in terms of number of citations ($n= 250$) is high, occupying a higher place in citations received (2nd place).

Table 1. Number of publications by country

| Rank | Country | Documents | Citations | Total link strength |
|------|--------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|
| 1 | UK | 25 | 704 | 880 |
| 2 | Spain | 14 | 229 | 384 |
| 3 | South Africa | 10 | 147 | 296 |
| 4 | Australia | 7 | 250 | 401 |
| 4 | USA | 7 | 137 | 151 |
| 4 | Italy | 7 | 16 | 97 |
| 5 | Switzerland | 6 | 19 | 220 |
| 5 | China | 6 | 63 | 223 |
| 6 | Indonesia | 5 | 4 | 1 |

Figure 3 depicts the top ten countries exhibiting the most significant bibliographic coupling, selected from a pool of 50 countries based on criteria requiring a minimum of five documents and at least one citation. Utilising VOSviewer, the outcomes have generated a bibliographic coupling network encompassing 10 countries, organised into three distinct clusters. The first cluster (in red) comprises Italy, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland, while the second cluster (in green) includes Indonesia, South Africa, and the UK. Lastly, the third cluster (in blue) encompasses Australia, China, and the USA.

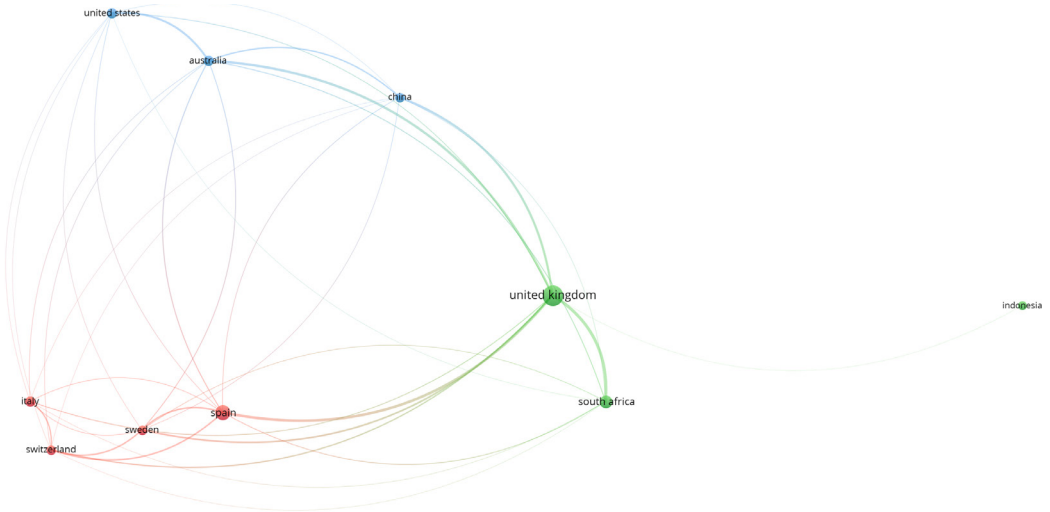


Figure 3. Bibliographic coupling analysis for countries

Table 2 highlights *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* as the standout source within this subject area, evidenced by the total connectivity strength of one of its studies, linked to other studies (Jaafar et al., 2021). With a record of 12 documents and 468 citations, this source emerges as highly influential. Despite ranking third in terms of the number of published studies, *Tourism Review*, with two publications and the lowest contribution in terms of citations, appears to have the least impact on this field.

Table 2. Distribution of publications

| Rank | Journals | Number of publications | Number of citations |
|------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i> | 12 | 468 |
| 2 | <i>Sustainability (Switzerland)</i> | 7 | 36 |
| 3 | <i>Tourism Review</i> | 4 | 2 |
| 3 | <i>Current Issues in Tourism</i> | 4 | 54 |

Figure 4 illustrates the top four sources exhibiting the most significant bibliographic coupling, selected from a pool of 69 sources based on the criteria of a minimum of four documents and at least one citation from a source. The outcomes generated by VOSviewer have organised these four sources into two distinct clusters. The first cluster (in red) comprises *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, and *Tourism Review*. Meanwhile, the second (in green) consists of *Current Issues in Tourism*.



Figure 4. Bibliographic coupling analysis by source

Co-Citation Analysis

To establish appropriate clustering levels for co-citation analysis, it is crucial to determine specific cut-off points (Fauzi, 2023). Although there is no universally standardised set of thresholds in co-citation analysis, Ertz and Leblanc-Proulx (2019) suggested that meaningful clusters tend to emerge when a threshold of 20 is applied. Therefore, a cut-off point of 20 was selected. As a result, with 105 articles retained as input for VOSviewer, the system computed citations within their bibliographies to construct a co-citation network, wherein citations were considered connected if they appeared together at least 20 times.

Table 3. Distribution of authors

| Rank | Authors | Citations | Total link strength |
|------|------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 1 | Baum, T. | 142 | 1268 |
| 2 | Higgins-Desbiolles, F. | 36 | 351 |
| 3 | Solnet, D. | 35 | 508 |
| 3 | Kralj, A. | 35 | 535 |
| 4 | Ladkin, A. | 28 | 384 |
| 4 | Miller, G. | 28 | 302 |
| 5 | Scheyvens, R. | 26 | 186 |
| 6 | Mooney, S. | 24 | 361 |
| 7 | Robinson, R. N | 20 | 275 |

The outcomes produced a co-citation network comprising a total of 7,956 authors, categorised into three distinct clusters (Figure 5 and Table 3). The first cluster (in red), encompasses authors such as Baum, T., Solnet, D., Kralj, A., Ladkin, A., and Mooney, S. The second cluster (in green), includes authors like Higgins-Desbiolles, F., Scheyvens, R., and Miller, G. Lastly, the third cluster (in blue), is composed of Robinson, R. N..

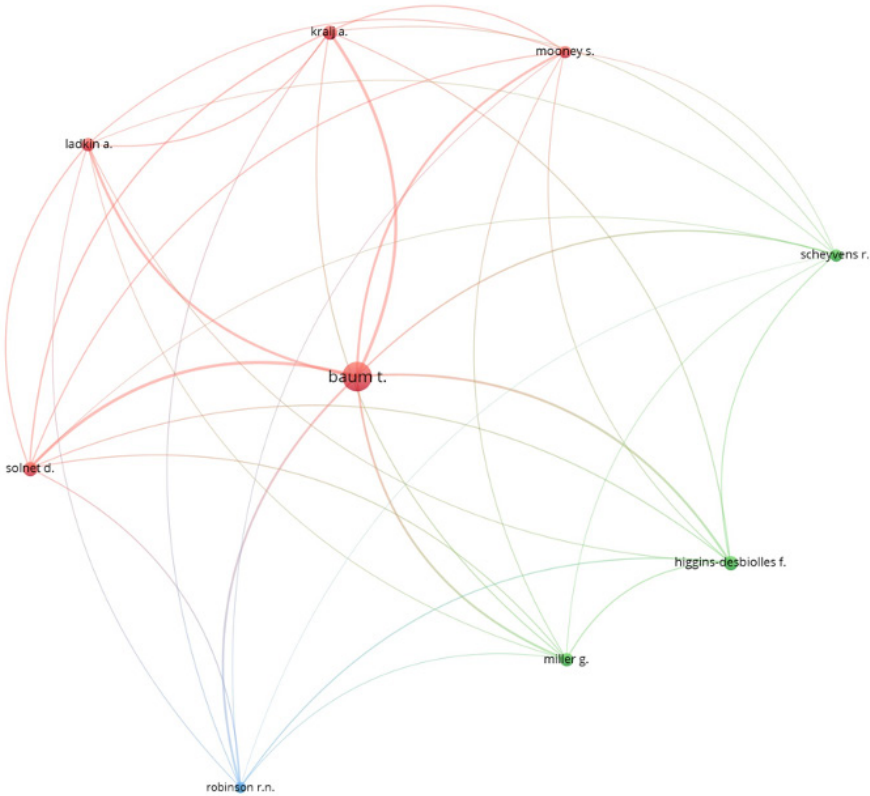


Figure 5. Authors co-citation analysis

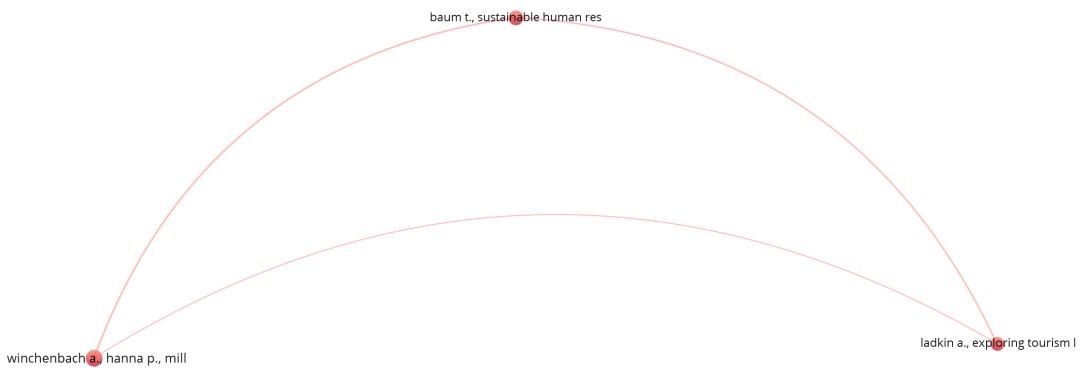
The results of VOSviewer formed a network of co-citations per reference with a total of 6,190 cited references, with a minimum number of citations of a cited reference of eight grouped in a single cluster (Figure 6 and Table 4).

Table 4. Clusters formed through co-citation and representative studies

| Author | Article name | Year | Journal | Citations |
|---|---|------|---|-----------|
| Winchenbach, A., Hanna, P., Miller, G., | Rethinking decent work: the value of dignity in tourism employment. | 2019 | <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i> , 27(7), 1026–1043. | 13 |

Table 4. (cont)

| Author | Article name | Year | Journal | Citations |
|-------------|--|------|---|-----------|
| Baum, T. | Sustainable human resource management as a driver in tourism policy and planning: A serious sin of omission? | 2018 | <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i> , 26(6), 873–889. | 10 |
| Ladkin, A., | Exploring tourism labor. | 2011 | <i>Annals of Tourism Research</i> , 38(3), 1135–1155. | 8 |

**Figure 6.** References co-citation analysis

Co-Occurrence Analysis

To systematically explore thematic progressions, this study set a threshold of five occurrences. Keywords appearing together at least five times were included in the joint keyword network, totalling 388 keywords. The heatmap in Figure 7 shows results indicating that seven keywords, organised into two clusters, met the established cut-off point criteria.

In the green cluster, “Decent Work” (n=20) is closely associated with “Sustainable Development Goals” (n=12) and “Sustainable Tourism” (n=7). The combination of these words seems to be focused on analysing the integration of Decent Work to achieve the SDGs in the context of sustainable tourism. This theme investigates how promoting fair and decent working conditions can aid in achieving the SDGs, particularly in tourism. Sustainable tourism is pivotal for economic and social development, with decent work playing a crucial role. Studies analysed how implementing decent work practices benefits workers and aligns with SDGs like poverty eradication, gender equality, and economic growth. They also explored challenges and opportunities in integrating decent work practices.

The red cluster contains the terms “Hospitality” (n=10), “COVID-19” (n=9), “Tourism” (n=16) and “Sustainability” (n=6). All these words seem to be focused on the analysis of the Sustainable Adaptation of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry during COVID-19. This theme explores how the industry adapted to the challenges posed by the pandemic. It investigated measures to balance business continuity with public health and environmental preservation, while maintaining a customer-centric approach. It also examined how sustainability is crucial in this adaptation, exploring innovative strategies to mitigate the crisis negative impacts and adopt more responsible practices.

The joint network of keywords appears relatively sparse, suggesting that the topic of decent work in the tourism sector has not received significant academic attention. However, a change in research focus has been observed over time.

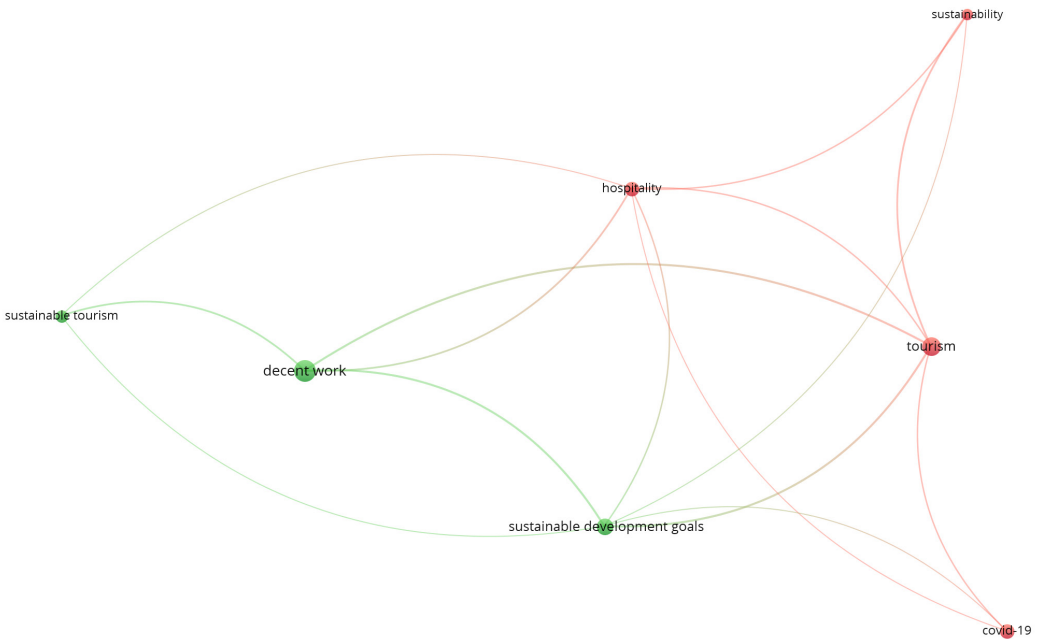


Figure 7. Keywords co-occurrence analysis (authors keywords)

Discussion

This study aimed to comprehensively map the scholarly work of decent work in the tourism sector. Over the last three years, there has been a significant surge in interest in “decent work” within tourism. Previous studies allowed us to compile a comprehensive inventory of scientific production on decent work in tourism from Scopus, spanning 1988 to August 2023. We observed steady growth in this area since 2020, with peaks in production noted in 2022 and citations in 2020.

The rising interest in decent work within the tourism industry mirrors a growing recognition of the necessity to tackle decent work issues in this sector, driven by several interconnected factors. Firstly, this heightened significance can be partially attributed to the key recommendations of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With the tourism sector's significant contribution to the global economy, there is increasing pressure for it to adhere to these goals, potentially prompting more research in this field.

Secondly, the COVID-19 pandemic has been instrumental in stimulating interest and research on decent work within this sector (e.g., Shaffer et al., 2022). The pandemic exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and challenges faced by industry workers, highlighting the pressing need to examine and address decent work issues in tourism. Furthermore, the heightened recognition of social inequalities, economic challenges, and vulnerabilities in the global labour market (Blustein et al., 2016, 2019; Duffy et al., 2016), coupled with increased pressure on civil society, non-governmental organisations, and academics within the tourism sector (Cheer et al., 2019; UNWTO, 2017) to adopt more responsible practices regarding decent work, has spurred academic research on the topic.

The prevalence of English-language papers and the active engagement of the UK in research on decent work reflects the country's longstanding academic tradition as well as substantial resources and funding. UK researchers and institutions frequently collaborate worldwide, aiding in the widespread dissemination of knowledge through English-language publications, recognised as the scientific lingua franca. However, it is essential to note that despite certain countries' and journals' prominence, the study of decent work in tourism inherently encompasses a global perspective.

The involvement of countries from all continents in drafting documents highlights the global importance of addressing decent work issues in various cultural, economic, and geographical contexts within the tourism industry. This diversity indicates the growing and evolving research on decent work in tourism, with more countries and regions recognising its significance. Additionally, international collaboration among researchers and academics is crucial to incorporating diverse perspectives and advocating for ethical and sustainable practices in the global tourism sector.

Several journals, including *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* and *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, have shown a strong commitment to publishing research on decent work in tourism. This is likely due to their editorial focus on sustainability and tourism-related topics, where decent work is a crucial aspect. These journals are known for their rigorous peer-review procedures, ensuring the quality and validity of published scientific contributions. This reputation attracts high-quality submissions and a wide readership, enhancing the visibility and impact of the research they publish. Additionally, these journals often endorse an interdisciplinary and global approach to sustainable tourism research, fostering openness to studies from diverse

perspectives and geographical regions, enriching the diversity and relevance of published research.

In co-citation analysis, we found three author clusters and one reference cluster, forming foundational pillars for theoretical support. These references address the need to reassess human resource management in tourism to promote decent work and protect workers' dignity in this sector (Winchenbach et al., 2019).

Our co-occurrence analysis found two key clusters shaping discourse on decent work in tourism. The first highlights the link between decent work, the SDGs, and sustainable tourism, indicating a growing recognition of integrating decent work into sustainable practices. There is an increasing acknowledgment of the importance of fair working conditions in fostering sustainable communities and destinations, suggesting a potential shift towards policies prioritising the role of workers in the tourism sector.

The second cluster emphasises the pandemic's impact on the hospitality and tourism industry, underlining the need to integrate sustainability into recovery efforts and long-term growth strategies. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected tourism workers, especially those in low-wage positions, who lack access to benefits and job security. This vulnerability left them particularly susceptible to the pandemic's economic repercussions. Consequently, there was a call to protect workers' rights and dignity, resulting in policies aimed at ensuring workplace safety, economic assistance, and healthcare access. The pandemic also prompted the tourism industry to reassess labour practices, sparking renewed interest in research to improve working conditions during the post-pandemic period.

However, the predominant focus of research on decent work in the tourism sector centred on the SDGs and the COVID-19 pandemic may result in a limited understanding of the challenges faced by workers and the potential for improvement and innovation in the industry. Neglecting other pertinent aspects of decent work, such as working conditions, gender equality, and workers' health and well-being, could lead to an incomplete view of the difficulties encountered by workers and a lack of strategic direction to address these issues. Moreover, overlooking the broader social and environmental impacts of decent work in tourism, including environmental sustainability, social justice, human rights, and worker participation in decision-making processes, undermines a holistic and sustainable approach to promoting decent work. Thus, it is essential to adopt a broader and more integrated approach to ensure that all dimensions of decent work are adequately considered and addressed in the tourism sector.

Conclusion

Decent work in the tourism sector has experienced significant growth in recent years. However, its impact within the vast and ever-evolving tourism industry,

which employs millions globally, has not yet reached its full potential. It is crucial to thoroughly examine the concept of decent work within the context of tourism, understanding that it is not just about discovery but also about sustaining and enhancing it to gain a competitive edge. Therefore, access to scientific evidence on decent work in tourism is essential for uncovering profound implications for the industry.

Theoretical Implications

This study highlights the need to integrate decent work principles into the tourism sector to achieve the SDGs, ensuring sustainable economic growth and inclusive employment. It highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment in tourism, identifies vulnerabilities and emphasises the need for resilient practices. It also identifies global and regional perspectives on decent work, outlines new trends such as the impact of technology on employment and highlights theoretical contributions, particularly from the psychology of work theory.

Practical Implications

The practical application of the study extends to formulating sustainable human resource policies aimed at fostering decent working conditions across the tourism value chain. This includes implementing fair remuneration, reasonable working hours, occupational safety measures, and opportunities for professional development (Putra et al., 2021). Leveraging our findings, tailored training programs can be designed for managers and workers in the tourism sector, emphasising the significance of decent work and offering guidance on promoting it within their workplaces. These programs may incorporate activities to raise awareness of labour rights, ethical business practices, and the promotion of diversity and inclusion.

Furthermore, our study presents opportunities for introducing certifications and labels recognising tourism companies that adhere to decent work practices. Such initiatives can incentivise companies to uphold higher standards and enhance consumer confidence in their products and services. Emphasising companies' commitment to decent work in their marketing strategies can lead to competitive differentiation, appealing to consumers who prioritise ethical and responsible business practices.

Limitations and Future Research

The study, though diligently conducted, has limitations stemming from challenges in data collection and analytical methodologies. Firstly, information dispersion restricts a comprehensive understanding of interconnected themes, as some topics may not contribute to a holistic view. Secondly, relying solely on the Scopus database excludes

significant publications not within its scope, such as government reports and NGO documents. Thirdly, using VOSviewer exclusively limits the exploration of thematic concerns, overlooking insights from alternative analysis programs. Lastly, the study is constrained by a relatively low number of initial citations, potentially hindering the identification of innovative work. These limitations extend beyond the study's immediate scope.

Future research directions should explore the impacts of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, automation, and digital platforms on working conditions and the concept of decent work. This entails investigating their effects on employment opportunities, labour relations, and fair employment practices. Additionally, integrating principles of sustainable tourism into decent work practices warrants attention, examining the intersections of environmental sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and fair working conditions.

Further investigation into the challenges and opportunities of the gig economy for decent work is crucial, especially for freelancers or independent contractors. Analysing the effects of sharing platforms and the on-demand economy on job stability, workers' rights, and security is also essential. Gender equality, diversity, and inclusion issues in tourism, particularly regarding decent work, require ongoing examination too. This involves analysing pay gaps, promotion opportunities, workplace discrimination, and initiatives to promote equality and diversity in tourism jobs.

Studies on the well-being of tourism workers concerning decent work are vital. This includes assessing the impacts of occupational stress, working conditions, and work-life balance. There is a research gap in labour legislation and regulation within tourism. Thus, evaluating the effectiveness of current laws and regulations in safeguarding workers' rights is fundamental, pinpointing areas for reform. Comparing labour policies across countries and tourism regions could also be beneficial. In summary, it is fundamental to enhance the understanding of decent work in tourism and inform policies and practices to improve working conditions.

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