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Mapping the Intellectual Structure of Tourism Event Research: A Bibliometric Study Based on Web of Science Data

Bibliometrické mapovanie výskumu organizovaných podujatí v cestovnom ruchu v databáze Web of Science

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Abstract: This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of scholarly literature on organized events in tourism, covering the period from 2010 to 2025. Drawing on data from the Web of Science and employing VOSviewer software, the research identifies key thematic clusters, tracks the evolution of research topics over time, and highlights the most influential publications and citation networks within the field. A total of 4,000 academic records were analysed. The findings reveal five major thematic clusters: (1) risk and resilience in event management, (2) mega-events and societal legacy, (3) visitor experience and motivation, (4) conceptual frameworks and event planning and (5) cultural tourism and emotional geographies. Temporal analysis shows a shift from macro-level planning and risk management toward micro-level concerns such as visitor satisfaction, authenticity, and personalization. Citation analysis identifies seminal works that have shaped the intellectual structure of event tourism, with Donald Getz emerging as the most influential author. This study contributes to the systematization of knowledge in event tourism research and offers a valuable foundation for future academic inquiry and strategic planning in tourism destinations.

Key words: *Bibliometric Analysis. Event tourism. Organized Events. Tourism.*

JEL Classification: Z31.

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Introduction

Organized events in tourism encompass a wide range of occurrences - festivals, cultural celebrations, conferences, and sports competitions - designed to attract visitors and generate social, cultural, and economic benefits for destinations. Events like the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro or the Edinburgh Festival Fringe serve as showcases of local heritage while drawing international tourists (Bakas et al., 2019). Similarly, mega-events such as the FIFA World Cup or the Olympics stimulate local economies and increase global visibility (Andersson et al., 2021; Dong, 2023).

As the tourism landscape evolves, interest in event tourism has intensified, both academically and practically. Organized events are increasingly recognized for their potential to enhance destination attractiveness and economic vitality (Chhetri, 2018; Getz, 2022). Destinations compete to host high-profile events that boost visitor numbers and generate long-term development impacts (Dwyer & Wickens, 2011). Recent studies also highlight the complex interactions between event management, host communities, and tourism outcomes (Kim et al., 2013; Thompson et al., 2022).

Despite this growing body of work, a systematic mapping of the event tourism literature remains limited. While many studies explore specific aspects, few have offered a comprehensive bibliometric overview of its development, structure, and trends (T, 2015).

1 Theoretical Background

Event tourism has emerged as a pivotal subfield within tourism studies, emphasizing the role of organized events, ranging from cultural festivals to sports tournaments and business conferences in attracting tourists and enhancing destination competitiveness. Defined broadly, event tourism encompasses all types of events that draw visitors to a location, contributing positively to its image, economy, and cultural richness (Nikolovski, 2020; Getz, 2022). Existing typologies categorize events into various forms, including cultural (e.g., festivals), sports (e.g., tournaments), and business events (e.g., conventions), each serving dual roles as both attractions and catalysts for broader economic development (Niekerk, 2017; Mustapić & Marušić, 2023).

Events have significant implications for destination development, as they not only attract visitors but also serve to enhance local infrastructure, generate employment opportunities, and foster community engagement (Abou-Shouk et al., 2024). For example, (Mariani & Giorgio, 2017) emphasize how meta-events can result in positive economic outcomes and enhance social interactions, illustrating the multifaceted benefits that organized events can provide to host

destinations. Additionally, Abou-Shouk et al. (2024) highlight the diminishing seasonality effects caused by local events, thus presenting opportunities for destinations to develop a more favourable image and sustain tourism throughout the year.

From a social perspective, organized events act as platforms for cultural exchange and community cohesion. Festivals, for instance, celebrate local traditions and attractions, enhancing social ties among residents while providing tourists with authentic experiences (Lee et al., 2012). Economically, events bolster local businesses and lead to substantial financial inflows through visitor spending on accommodations, dining, and entertainment (Dragičević et al., 2012; Mustapić & Marušić, 2023). Culturally, they can shed light on local customs and traditions, promoting cultural tourism while fostering a sense of pride among community members (Çalışkan, 2010; Hidayat et al., 2021). This dynamic interplay underscores the relevance of organized events in the broader tourism landscape.

The academic literature surrounding event tourism has expanded considerably, revealing a growing body of work addressing various research angles, from marketing considerations to the impacts of events on destination development (Strandberg et al., 2016; Leong et al., 2020; Pradhan et al., 2023). Previous attempts at systematic reviews and bibliometric analyses, such as those conducted by Strandberg et al. (2016) and Liu and Li, (2020) reveal salient trends and intellectual structures within the tourism domain, emphasizing the utility of bibliometric methods in revealing insights that enhance understanding of event tourism studies. It is through these systematic approaches that researchers have been able to explore thematic evolutions and co-authorship networks, which provide additional context to the academic contributions in this field.

Applying bibliometric methods to event tourism research is particularly advantageous as it allows for a quantitative exploration of the intellectual landscape surrounding this area of study. By utilizing tools such as citation analysis and network visualization, researchers can illuminate prevailing trends, identify influential works, and elucidate connections among authors within the scholarship of event tourism (Leong et al., 2020; Suban, 2022; Pradhan et al., 2023). These methods are instrumental in dissecting the complex interactions within the literature, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive understanding of research trajectories, citation patterns, and the thematic evolution of event tourism (Adeyinka-Ojo & Khoo-Lattimore, 2013; Strandberg et al., 2016; Phoong et al., 2024).

The theoretical frameworks surrounding event tourism underscore its critical role in destination development and the multifaceted impacts it exerts across social, economic, and cultural dimensions. The increasing interest and literature highlight the necessity for systematic

approaches to analyse the academic discourse, thereby paving the way for future research to further delve into this vibrant facet of tourism studies.

2 Methodology

A bibliometric analysis was employed in this study to explore the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and influential contributions within the domain of organized events in tourism. The data were retrieved from the Web of Science, one of the most recognized and reputable academic databases. A total of 4,000 records relevant to the topic were identified based on a targeted keyword search strategy.

The selection of documents was conducted using a set of predefined keywords, including “*Organized events*,” “*Planned events*,” “*Event management*,” “*Event tourism*,” “*Festival tourism*,” and “*Business events*.” These keywords were chosen to reflect the diversity of terminology commonly associated with the research area of event tourism and to ensure comprehensive coverage of the relevant literature.

The time frame for data collection was limited to publications released between 2010 and 2025, capturing a 15-year period that reflects both historical and contemporary developments in the field. The retrieved data were exported and processed using the bibliometric software VOSviewer, which is widely used for visualizing bibliometric networks.

The methodological procedure involved several sequential steps. In the first phase, relevant publications were collected and filtered based on inclusion criteria. The second phase focused on the analysis of author keywords to identify the most frequently occurring terms and their co-occurrence patterns. To ensure clarity and relevance, only the most prominent keywords were included in the final network visualization.

To assess the temporal evolution of research themes, the identified keywords were segmented into chronological intervals, allowing for the observation of thematic shifts within the academic discourse over time. The results of the keyword co-occurrence analysis were presented in the form of semantic maps generated by VOSviewer, highlighting major research clusters and their interconnections.

In addition, citation analysis was performed to identify the most cited publications in the dataset, thereby highlighting seminal contributions that have shaped the field of organized events in tourism. Furthermore, co-authorship analysis was conducted to examine collaborative patterns among researchers. This allowed for the identification of key scholars and research networks contributing to the advancement of knowledge in this domain.

The combined use of keyword mapping, citation tracking, and co-authorship analysis provided a comprehensive overview of the thematic landscape, influential works, and collaborative structures within the scholarly community addressing organized events in tourism.

3 Findings

To explore thematic structures and knowledge development within the field of organized events in tourism, a keyword co-occurrence analysis was conducted using VOSviewer.

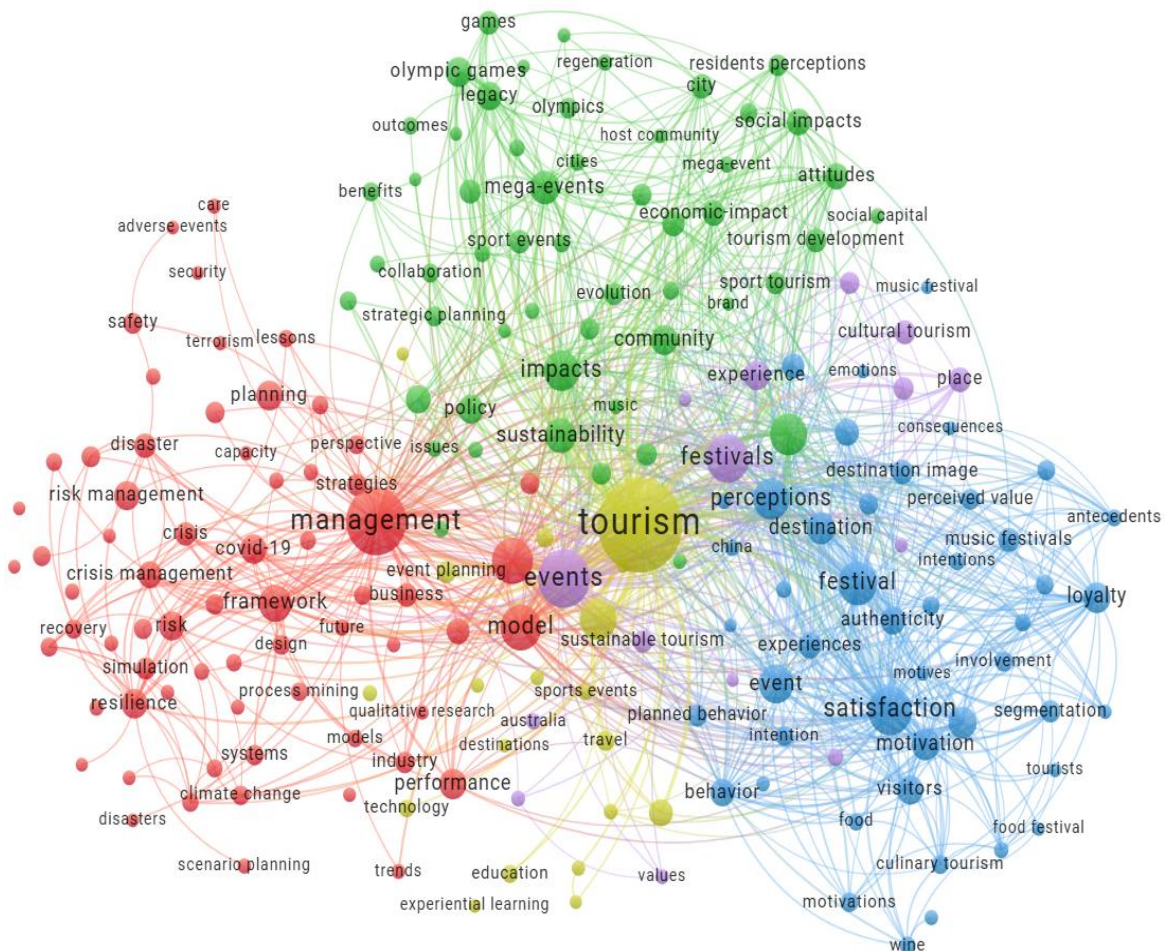


Figure 1. Results of the keyword co-occurrence analysis
Source: Generated using VOSviewer software.

The resulting visualization (Figure 1) reveals clusters of keywords, where each node represents a keyword, whose size indicates its frequency of appearance across the analysed corpus. Connections between nodes illustrate the strength of co-occurrence, indicating conceptual relationships, while color-coded clusters represent thematically cohesive groups identified through a community detection algorithm.

The analysis revealed five major thematic clusters, each corresponding to a distinct research orientation within the field.

The first cluster, labelled *Risk and Resilience in Event Management*, centres on keywords such as crisis management, disaster, climate change, vulnerability, planning, and resilience. Research within this cluster focuses on the increasing relevance of risk mitigation, emergency preparedness, and scenario planning in tourism and event contexts. This body of literature highlights a growing academic response to environmental disruptions, pandemics (such as COVID-19), and systemic vulnerabilities, emphasizing the need for resilient and adaptive strategies in event planning. A notable trend is the shift from traditional management models toward integrated frameworks that consider long-term sustainability and crisis simulation as core components of event preparedness.

The second cluster, referred to as *Mega-Events, Legacy, and Societal Impact*, encompasses terms such as Olympic Games, mega-events, social impacts, policy, sustainability, and host community. This area of research interrogates the broader implications of hosting large-scale events, particularly their potential to drive community development, infrastructure regeneration, and socio-political transformation. The concept of “legacy” emerges as a central concern, reflecting scholarly attention to the enduring outcomes of event hosting beyond immediate economic benefits. Emphasis is also placed on community engagement, inter-organizational collaboration, and the alignment of event strategies with public policy and sustainable development goals.

The third cluster, identified as *Visitor Experience and Motivational Dynamics*, is grounded in keywords like satisfaction, loyalty, motivation, perceived value, destination image, and authenticity. This line of inquiry investigates the psychological and behavioural dimensions of event participation. Studies in this cluster typically apply marketing and consumer behaviour theories to examine the factors influencing visitor engagement, satisfaction, and repeat attendance. Research has increasingly focused on the emotional and experiential aspects of events, including authenticity and personalization, which are particularly significant in niche tourism segments such as food tourism and wine tourism.

The fourth cluster, designated as *Foundational Models and Educational Approaches in Event Tourism*, contains general but frequently occurring keywords such as event planning, event management, sports events, experiential learning, and performance. This cluster represents the conceptual and methodological backbone of event tourism studies. It includes theoretical frameworks and analytical models that attempt to define, structure, and evaluate the field. The presence of experiential learning and other pedagogical terms suggests a growing

emphasis on professional education and training in event management, as well as the integration of academic knowledge into practice.

The fifth cluster, named *Cultural Tourism and Emotional Geographies*, revolves around terms such as cultural tourism, place, emotions, perception, and experience. Research in this area explores the symbolic, affective, and identity-forming dimensions of events. Scholars in this cluster focus on how events contribute to place-making, shape emotional connections with destinations, and influence the perceived authenticity of experiences. The interdisciplinary nature of this work, drawing from sociology, psychology, and cultural studies, reflects a shift toward examining the deeper meanings and impacts of cultural events on both visitors and host communities.

In addition to thematic clustering, a temporal keyword analysis was conducted (Figure 2) to capture shifts in academic discourse over time.

Based on the average year of keyword occurrence, older research was characterized by an emphasis on disaster management, risk, and crisis planning, reflecting global concerns over safety, environmental hazards, and systemic shocks. Later, scholarly focus transitioned toward policy, sustainability, and community involvement, aligning with the maturing discourse on the long-term societal impact and governance of events. In more recent years, a noticeable shift has occurred toward visitor-cantered research, with increasing prominence of terms like satisfaction, loyalty, authenticity, and perceived value. These trends suggest an intensified focus on experiential consumption, personalization, and emotional engagement within event tourism.

Furthermore, the rising relevance of niche tourism forms, such as food tourism, wine tourism, and music festivals, points to a diversification of event-related experiences and a deepening connection between cultural content and tourism behaviour. A transversal theme across all clusters is the emergence of *COVID-19* as a keyword, signalling a new research trajectory focused on event adaptation, digital transformation, and resilience in times of global crises. The field appears to be evolving from macro-level management concerns toward micro-level analysis of individual experience, while maintaining an awareness of systemic, cultural, and sustainability challenges.

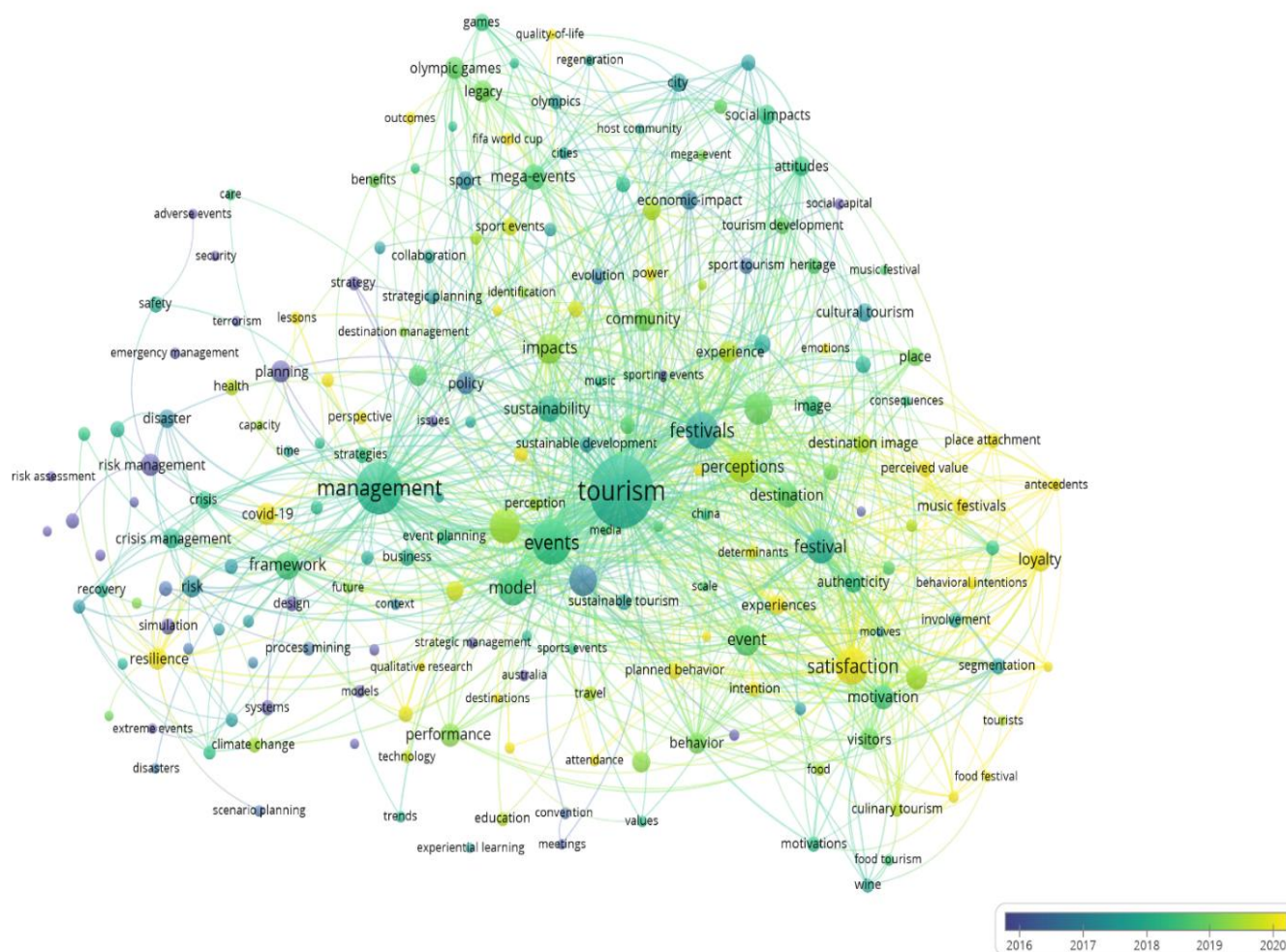


Figure 2. Results of the temporal keyword analysis
Source: Generated using VOSviewer software.

To complement the keyword analysis, a citation analysis was conducted to identify the most influential scholarly contributions. Using citation network mapping in VOSviewer (Figure 3), several prominent clusters were identified, reflecting major intellectual streams.

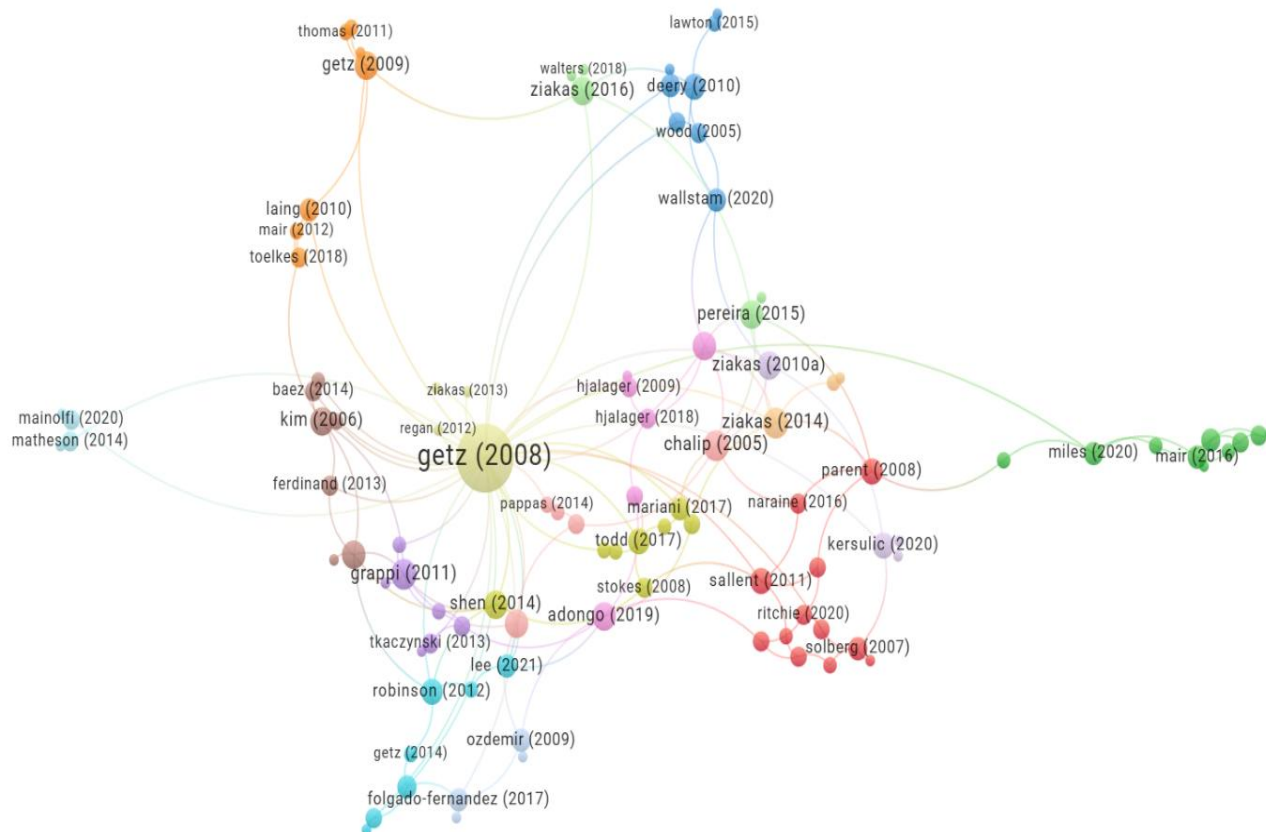


Figure 3. Results of the citation analysis
Source: Generated using VOSviewer software.

The most central and influential publication with 1,478 citations was Getz (2008), which systematically defined event tourism as an independent field and provided a foundational framework for categorizing events, assessing impacts, and linking them to broader tourism systems. Getz's work functions as a unifying reference point across thematic areas and has shaped the conceptual backbone of the field.

The citation network also revealed intellectual clusters aligned with thematic areas: community-focused research (e.g., Mair 2016, Miles 2020), gender and experience-based studies (e.g., Deery 2010, Wallstam 2020), risk and management theory (e.g., Weick 1995, Eisenhardt 1989), and sustainability in event policy (e.g., Getz 2009, Laing 2010). These clusters reflect the interdisciplinary nature of event tourism research and underscore its integration of theory, practice, and critical perspectives.

4 Discussion

The present study contributes to the growing body of literature on event tourism by offering a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of academic publications related to organized events in tourism between 2010 and 2025. Unlike previous narrative or systematic reviews, this study applies quantitative bibliometric methods, such as keyword co-occurrence mapping, temporal analysis, and citation network visualization, to uncover the intellectual structure, thematic development, and influential contributions in this field. The originality of this research lies in its integrative approach that combines thematic clustering, chronological trend analysis, and citation-based influence mapping, thus providing a multi-dimensional overview of scholarly evolution in event tourism.

The findings confirm the field's growing complexity and interdisciplinarity, with research expanding from macro-level concerns, such as crisis management and event legacy, to micro-level perspectives focused on visitor experience and emotional engagement. This shift reflects broader societal transformations, including digitalization, sustainability imperatives, and evolving visitor expectations, while reinforcing the role of events as catalysts for cultural exchange, community development, and innovation.

Importantly, the emergence of COVID-19 as a transversal topic underscores the field's responsiveness to global crises and its openness to rethinking traditional event formats through hybridization, virtualization, and resilience-building strategies. These developments point to the need for reconceptualizing the future of event tourism at the intersection of environmental, technological, and social innovation.

Beyond the identification of dominant clusters, this study provides an opportunity to conceptualize future research directions by systematically exploring intersections between established themes and emergent trends in the broader tourism literature (Table 1). These include particularly inclusive tourism, digital transformation, and sustainability, which remains underrepresented in current event tourism discourse despite its high relevance.

A particularly promising research frontier lies in applying the circular economy to event planning and operations. As events often involve short-term infrastructure, high material intensity, and significant waste generation, the adoption of circular principles, e.g., modular setups, reusable materials, zero-waste policies, can transform events into demonstrators of regenerative practice. The intersection with digital transformation further enhances this potential, as real-time monitoring, blockchain traceability, and AI-supported logistics can

optimize energy use, reduce waste, and personalize experiences in environmentally conscious ways.

Table 1 Conceptual Intersections Between Core Event Tourism Themes and Emerging Research Trends

Thematic Cluster	Potential Intersections with Emerging Trends	Justification for Relevance
Risk and Resilience in Event Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green transition • Circular economy 	Events generate waste and emissions; circular models foster regenerative, low-carbon planning.
Mega-Events, Legacy, and Societal Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy innovation • Inclusive tourism 	Future research could explore how events foster equity and social integration.
Visitor Experience and Motivational Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI personalization • Digital experience design 	Emotional engagement and personalized experiences are enabled through data-driven design.
Foundational Models and Educational Approaches in Event Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential learning • Virtual platforms 	Professional training adapts to digital tools and remote management.
Cultural Tourism and Emotional Geographies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Emotion AI • Slow tourism 	Place-based experiences merge with deeper emotional and cultural narratives.

Source: own elaboration.

The notion of inclusivity, both social and spatial, also merits deeper attention. While legacy outcomes have been explored, less is known about how different community groups benefit (or are excluded) from events. Topics such as participatory event design, accessibility standards, and equity in employment and procurement offer rich ground for interdisciplinary research connecting event studies with critical tourism, public policy, and urban sociology.

By embedding the findings of bibliometric analysis into broader theoretical and practical discussions, this study not only maps past and present trajectories but also reinforces the role of event tourism as a dynamic field capable of responding to urgent global challenges through innovation, interdisciplinarity, and critical reflection.

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several limitations. First, the analysis was restricted to data retrieved from the Web of Science. While this database is among the most comprehensive and reputable sources of peer-reviewed literature, relevant studies indexed in other databases such as Scopus or Google Scholar may have been excluded. Second, the keyword-based search strategy, although carefully constructed, may have omitted relevant

literature using alternative terminology or interdisciplinary framings. Third, the bibliometric techniques employed prioritize quantitative measures such as frequency and citation count, which do not account for the full depth of conceptual nuance or methodological diversity present in qualitative studies.

Future research could address these limitations by expanding the dataset to include multiple bibliographic databases and by applying mixed method approaches that integrate bibliometric techniques with qualitative content analysis.

Conclusions

This study has provided a comprehensive bibliometric overview of scholarly research on organized events in tourism from 2010 to 2025. Through the application of VOSviewer and bibliometric techniques, five dominant thematic clusters were identified, reflecting a dynamic and evolving research landscape. The analysis highlighted a notable shift from foundational topics in event management and risk planning toward contemporary concerns related to visitor experience, social impact, and sustainability.

By integrating keyword co-occurrence analysis, temporal mapping, and citation network analysis, the study has illuminated the intellectual foundations and trajectories of event tourism research. It has identified key contributions, influential scholars, and conceptual frameworks that continue to shape the field. Importantly, the findings reflect not only academic trends but also broader socio-economic and environmental transformations influencing tourism and events globally.

This bibliometric study contributes a structured understanding of how research on organized events in tourism has developed over time and where it may be headed. The results provide a valuable reference point for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to navigate the complex and interdisciplinary landscape of event tourism.

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