



THE NEXUS OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW

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Abstract: In an era of rapid technological advancement and growing sustainability concerns, understanding the intersection of international marketing and tourism is crucial. This study conducts a bibliometric analysis of 398 peer-reviewed articles to map the field's intellectual structure, identify thematic clusters, and highlight emerging research frontiers. The review synthesises how digital tools, including immersive technologies and social media, strategically promote sustainable tourism and enhance visitor experiences, whilst addressing challenges such as overtourism and cultural preservation. Results indicate a strong rise in publications since 2012, reflecting growing multidisciplinary engagement. Four clusters emerged: Digital Marketing Strategies for Sustainable Tourism; Immersive Technologies and Visitor Experience Enhancement; Sustainable Tourism Development and Management; and Museums as Hubs for Cultural Sustainability and Engagement. The analysis reveals the field's interdisciplinary nature, the central role of value co-creation, and increasing emphasis on resilience and digital transformation. Overall, the study provides a structured, data-driven foundation for future research and practical insights to guide strategic decision-making in the global tourism industry.

Keywords: *Marketing Management, Sustainable Tourism, Digital Marketing, Immersive Technologies, Bibliometric Analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry currently navigates a pivotal period, fundamentally characterised by exponential growth, rapidly evolving consumer behaviours, and an increasingly urgent, non-negotiable imperative for sustainability (Bianchi & Milano, 2024; Gozzoli et al., 2024). This unprecedented expansion, while economically beneficial, has concurrently amplified environmental degradation, strained local resources, and, in some instances, eroded the socio-cultural fabric of host communities, thereby intensifying the imperative for responsible practices (Chong, 2020; Utama et al., 2024; Yamamoto et al., 2021).

Within this dynamic environment, effective international marketing management strategies have become essential for destinations and tourism enterprises, serving not only to attract diverse visitors but also to build brand loyalty and ensure long-term viability (Devi & Yasa, 2021). The competitive global tourism landscape demands innovative approaches to

differentiation and value creation, extending beyond promotion to encompass holistic destination branding and visitor engagement.

Concurrently, the foundational principles of sustainable tourism, encompassing environmental protection, socio-cultural preservation, and economic viability, have moved from peripheral considerations to the centre of contemporary industry discourse and practice (Aswita et al., 2023; Sujawoto et al., 2023; Utama et al., 2024). This reflects rising global awareness of the finite nature of natural and cultural assets, alongside increasing demand for ethical and environmentally conscious travel (Adnyana, 2020; Amrita, Suryawan, et al., 2024; Scheyvens et al., 2021). Integration of sustainability is no longer a corporate social responsibility initiative but a strategic imperative for competitiveness and societal well-being, often supported by traditional ecological knowledge in sustainable development and biodiversity conservation (Sumarwati et al., 2020).

This transformation has been accelerated by the rapid advancement and adoption of digital technologies, which create both opportunities and challenges for achieving sustainability and competitiveness simultaneously (Koob, 2023; Suryawan, 2025; Ziyadin et al., 2019). The digital revolution has fundamentally altered how tourism products are conceived, marketed, consumed, and managed, generating a complex interplay between technological innovation, market dynamics, and sustainability objectives. Traditional marketing paradigms are increasingly being supplemented, or even replaced, by digital strategies leveraging data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and immersive experiences (Wen & Ma, 2024). The spread of social media, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and AI-driven personalisation has enabled destinations to reach global audiences with highly targeted messages that shape travel decisions (Cooper et al., 2021; Dilys et al., 2022; Suryawan, Sumerta, et al., 2024; Talwar et al., 2022).

In sustainable tourism specifically, digital tools play a critical role in promoting responsible behaviours, managing visitor flows, and enhancing appreciation of cultural and natural heritage (James-Williamson et al., 2024; Siegel et al., 2023; Sujawoto et al., 2023). They also facilitate eco-friendly bookings, disseminate sustainability information, and even gamify responsible conduct (Amrita, Mandiyasa, et al., 2024; Bilynets & Knezevic Cvelbar, 2022). Yet despite strong academic and industry interest, a comprehensive and integrated understanding of the interplay between international marketing management, sustainable tourism, and digital transformation remains fragmented in the literature (Arsawan et al., 2024; Hallinger, 2021). Existing literatures often examine these elements separately, overlooking their synergistic relationships and emerging themes.

This bibliometric analysis is therefore designed to systematically map scholarly research at this intersection by identifying research themes, conceptual clusters, and temporal developments, while also highlighting

the most influential publications shaping the field. Ultimately, the study proposes a forward-looking research agenda that addresses existing gaps, advances theory and practice, and provides a structured overview to consolidate fragmented knowledge. By doing so, it aims to guide future interdisciplinary inquiry and inform strategic decision-making for fostering a more sustainable, resilient, and digitally integrated global tourism industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

International Marketing Management in the Tourism Sector

International marketing management has become increasingly strategic within tourism contexts, particularly as global competition intensifies and consumer behaviour evolves in response to digitalisation and sustainability concerns. Recent scholarship underscores the transition from transactional marketing models to experience-based, value-driven approaches (Baba, 2025; Danziger, 2020). These approaches prioritise destination branding, emotional engagement, and long-term loyalty over short-term promotional tactics (Suryawan, Abdullah, et al., 2025; Suryawan, Meryawan, et al., 2024).

Key constructs such as brand image, perceived quality, and revisit intention continue to dominate the literature, especially within cultural tourism and museum experiences. Moreover, destination marketing strategies increasingly rely on culturally adapted content and digital engagement mechanisms (Sukand, 2024), reflecting a broader shift towards glocalised promotion and value co-creation, where tourists are positioned as active contributors to experience formation rather than passive consumers (Casais et al., 2020).

The Evolving Concept of Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism has evolved from a niche discourse to a mainstream concern, driven by global sustainability agendas and increasing awareness of tourism's ecological and socio-cultural impacts. Early work framed sustainability primarily in terms of environmental conservation, but contemporary studies highlight the integration of economic resilience, community empowerment, and cultural continuity (Aswita et al., 2023; Scheyvens et al., 2021; Suryawan, Darma, et al., 2025; Suryawan, Putri, et al., 2024).

Community-based and regenerative tourism models have gained traction as they offer more inclusive and locally beneficial alternatives to traditional growth-oriented paradigms (Garau-Vadell et al., 2023; Pung et al., 2024; Yamamoto et al., 2021). Nevertheless, challenges remain around operationalising sustainability principles at scale, particularly in contexts of overtourism and global crises (Chong, 2020; Yamamoto et al., 2021). This

highlights the need for adaptive governance models that balance top-down policies with bottom-up participation.

Digital Transformation and Tourism Innovation

Digitalisation has become a critical driver of transformation in tourism marketing, operations, and experience delivery. Social media platforms, AI-driven tools, and immersive technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) have redefined how destinations engage with tourists and how tourists interact with cultural heritage (Pratisto et al., 2022; Wen & Ma, 2024).

Digital marketing now plays a central role in loyalty-building and sustainable communication (Suryawan, Purwati, et al., 2024). Studies have highlighted the effectiveness of content marketing and digital storytelling in promoting pro-environmental behaviours and responsible travel choices (Amrita, Mandiyasa, et al., 2024; Mondal & Chatterjee, 2024; Sujawoto et al., 2023). AI and algorithmic personalisation are also emerging as influential tools for targeting sustainability-conscious consumers, though concerns regarding privacy and ethical use persist (Ceccarelli et al., 2024; Lai, 2023).

In heritage and museum tourism, digital applications are enhancing visitor engagement and interpretation through multisensory, interactive, and inclusive formats (Guzmán et al., 2024; Kaplun et al., 2024). These innovations are particularly significant in the post-COVID-19 period, when institutions have reimagined their public value through hybrid physical-digital models (Choi & Kim, 2021).

Integration of Marketing, Sustainability, and Digitalisation

Recent studies recognise the growing convergence of international marketing, sustainable tourism, and digital technology. Rather than operating in isolation, these domains increasingly interact to form complex, adaptive systems that support resilience, innovation, and stakeholder value (Hallinger, 2021; Suryawan, Darma, et al., 2025). This is particularly evident in the proliferation of smart tourism ecosystems and digitally mediated co-creation processes (Yang et al., 2023).

Value co-creation has become a central construct, connecting marketing and sustainability through participatory mechanisms. Tourists are reframed as collaborators in experience production, local communities as co-stewards of cultural and natural heritage, and digital tools as enablers of sustainable interaction (Najda-Janoszka & Sawczuk, 2023). This alignment suggests a move away from extractive tourism models towards more equitable and resilient systems.

Despite growing interest, several gaps remain. Existing research tends to examine digitalisation or sustainability in siloed frameworks, with limited exploration of their synergistic dynamics (Karki & Thapa, 2021). In addition, much of the literature remains concentrated in Global North

contexts, with underrepresentation of data and perspectives from the Global South, particularly regions experiencing rapid tourism growth and digital uptake, such as Southeast Asia.

These thematic intersections also reflect important theoretical perspectives. Value co-creation aligns with service-dominant logic (Hughes & Vafeas, 2021), discussions of behavioural intention and revisit motivation often draw on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Abbasi et al., 2021), and emphasis on collaboration resonates with Stakeholder Theory (Ring, 2022). While not serving as the main analytical lenses here, these theories provide conceptual foundations for the evolving discourse across tourism marketing, sustainability, and digitalisation.

METHODS

This bibliometric analysis was rigorously conducted following a meticulously structured methodology, which drew upon established protocols designed for comprehensive and reproducible research. The specific approach adopted for this study was carefully adapted from the exemplary framework provided by Arsawan et al. (2024), thereby ensuring a robust, transparent, and academically sound process throughout.

Data Collection and Search Strategy

The dataset for this bibliometric analysis was compiled from multiple reputable bibliographic databases, including Scopus, complemented by additional records retrieved through cross-checking with Web of Science and Google Scholar to ensure broader thematic coverage and reduce potential omissions. The search strategy was carefully designed to capture scholarly contributions at the intersection of international marketing management, sustainable tourism, and digital technologies. A targeted combination of keywords and Boolean operators was employed to maximise thematic precision: ("international marketing" OR "global marketing" OR "tourism marketing") AND ("sustainable tourism" OR "green tourism" OR "responsible tourism" OR "eco-tourism" OR "regenerative tourism") AND ("digitalisation" OR "digital marketing" OR "social media" OR "virtual reality" OR "augmented reality" OR "immersive technology" OR "AI" OR "artificial intelligence" OR "metaverse"). The search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2012 and 2024; a period selected to capture the most recent developments and reflect the rapid convergence of sustainability concerns and digital transformation in the tourism sector.

Screening and Exclusion Criteria

Following the initial search, a rigorous multi-stage screening process was conducted to ensure the relevance and quality of included articles. Eligible studies were limited to English-language, peer-reviewed journal articles that addressed at least two of the three core themes: international marketing management, sustainable tourism, and digital technologies. The dataset included theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and systematic reviews. Exclusion criteria removed conference papers, book chapters, dissertations, editorials (unless seminal), as well as articles lacking clear relevance to tourism or marketing, or focusing solely on technical aspects of digital technologies. Duplicates were also eliminated. After title and abstract screening, and the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria, a final dataset of 398 articles was obtained for full-text review and bibliometric analysis.

Analytical Approach

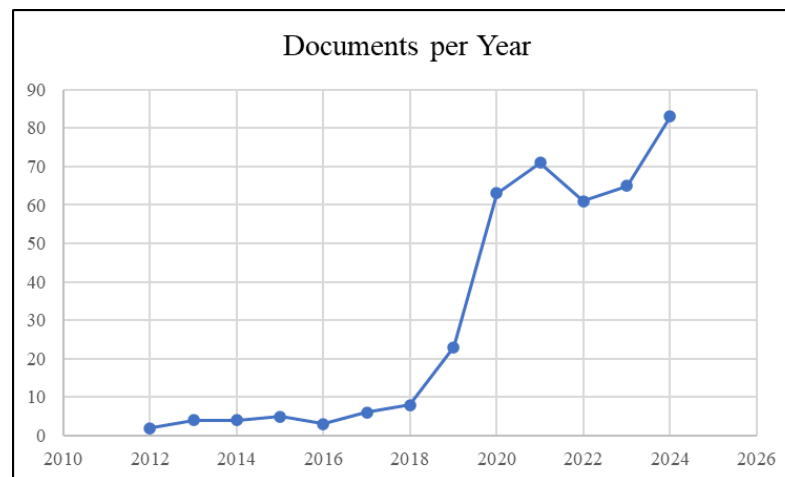
The final dataset was imported into VOSviewer to conduct a series of bibliometric analyses. These included keyword co-occurrence mapping to identify dominant themes and their interrelationships, as well as temporal keyword analysis to trace the evolution of research topics over time. The resulting visualisations revealed the field's intellectual structure and thematic progression. To enrich these findings, content analysis was conducted to offer deeper insight into the conceptual nuances within the most prominent clusters. This integrated approach enabled both a macro-level overview and a more detailed thematic interpretation of the research landscape.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Publication Trends and Growth

The bibliometric analysis unequivocally reveals a significant and accelerating trajectory of growth in scholarly publications positioned at the intricate intersection of international marketing management, sustainable tourism, and digital technologies over the past decade. This trend distinctly mirrors the broader pattern of increasing research output observed within the wider field of sustainability research (see Figure 1), with the number of published articles demonstrating an exponential increase, particularly from 2012 onwards.



Source: Authors' compilation based on bibliometric data (2025)

Figure 1.
The Annual Trends

This discernible surge in scholarly interest profoundly underscores the escalating academic and industry recognition of the critical importance in understanding how digital innovations can be strategically and effectively leveraged to achieve multifaceted sustainable tourism objectives within an increasingly globalised marketplace.

Table 1.
Top 10 Journals Associated to the Topic

Ranks	Journals (Publisher)	Documents
1	Museum Management and Curatorship	33
2	Sustainability	18
3	Journal of Destination Marketing and Management	14
4	Annals of Tourism Research	12
5	Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market and Complexity	7
6	Heritage Science	5
7	Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights	5
8	Heliyon	4
9	Procedia Computer Science	4
10	International Journal of Cultural Policy	4

Source: Author's bibliometric mapping (2025)

Furthermore, the distribution of these publications across a diverse array of academic journals clearly indicates a robust multidisciplinary engagement, with prominent and highly regarded journals spanning the fields of tourism, marketing, technology, and sustainability featuring heavily in the dataset (see Table 1).

Subject Areas of Articles

The analyzed articles span a diverse range of academic disciplines, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of research at the nexus of international marketing management, sustainable tourism, and digital technologies. Based on an assessment of their primary focus as inferred from titles, abstracts, and thematic content, the articles are distributed across the following key subject areas.

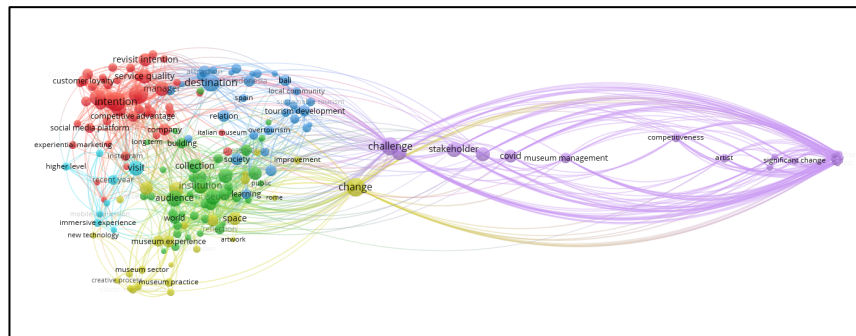
Table 2.
Distribution of Articles by Subject Area

Subject Area	Number of Articles	Description
Social Sciences (Tourism, Hospitality, Leisure, Cultural Studies)	178	Focuses on sustainable tourism, destination management, visitor behaviour, heritage preservation, and community engagement. Key themes include tourism's socio-cultural and economic impacts, visitor motivations, and overtourism management.
Computer Science	122	Covers the digital transformation of tourism through AI, VR, AR, and IT solutions, examining how these technologies enhance marketing, visitor experience, and operational efficiency.
Arts and Humanities (Museum Studies, Heritage Studies)	52	Focuses on museums' roles in the digital era, including management, exhibition design, digital curation, and cultural sustainability through technology-mediated heritage engagement.
Business, Management and Marketing	30	Explores marketing strategies, business model innovation, digital content, and organisational responses to changing tourism dynamics and crises.
Environmental Science	16	Examines tourism's ecological impacts, environmental protection strategies, and the use of digital tools to foster eco-friendly behaviours and manage environmental footprints.

Source: Authors' classification based on bibliometric dataset (2025)

Visual Mapping of Research Themes

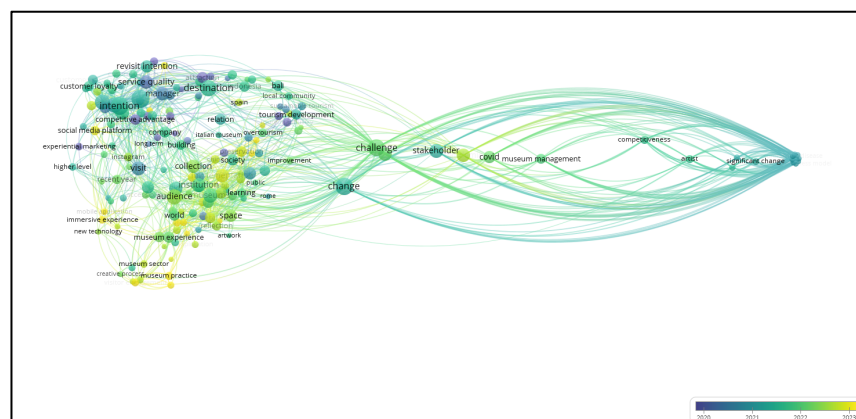
To provide a deeper visual understanding of the research structure and dynamics, three distinct types of visualizations generated from VOSviewer are presented below. These visualizations effectively complement the preceding textual analysis, offering graphical representations of keyword relationships, temporal trends, and thematic density.



Source: Authors' visualisation using VOSviewer (2025)

Figure 2.
Network Visualization of Keywords

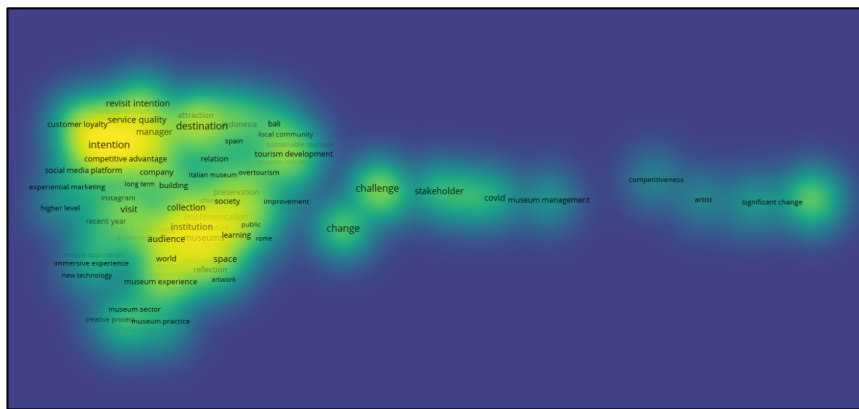
This network visualisation (see Figure 2) illustrates the relationships among the most frequently co-occurring keywords in the dataset, revealing the intellectual structure of the field. Each node represents a keyword, sized by frequency, while the connecting edges indicate co-occurrence strength. VOSviewer's clustering algorithm automatically identified distinct thematic clusters, each colour-coded. The red cluster is anchored in marketing-related concepts such as "revisit intention," "service quality," and "destination," reflecting a focus on consumer behaviour and destination management. The blue cluster centres on "sustainable development," "environmental protection," and "local community," highlighting socio-environmental concerns. The green cluster includes "museum experience" and "new technology," pointing to the convergence of heritage and digital innovation. The purple cluster involves terms like "challenge," "stakeholder," "COVID," and "museum management," suggesting systemic concerns and resilience.



Source: Authors' visualisation using VOSviewer (2025)

Figure 3.
Overlay Visualization of Keywords by Publication Year

The overlay visualisation adds a temporal dimension to the keyword network, using a colour gradient to reflect the average publication year associated with each term. Darker blue tones indicate earlier prominence (around 2020), while yellow hues represent more recent and emerging topics (around 2023). This mapping reveals the evolution of research focus over time. For instance, newer areas such as “museum experience,” “immersive experience,” and “new technology” generally appear in warmer colours, reflecting growing scholarly attention in recent years. In contrast, foundational themes like “revisit intention” and “service quality” remain prevalent but are associated with cooler tones, indicating consistent focus since earlier phases of the study period. Overall, the visualisation offers key insights into shifting research trajectories and the field’s conceptual maturation.



Source: Authors' visualisation using VOSviewer (2025)

Figure 4.
Density Visualization of Keywords

This density visualisation highlights intellectual hotspots within the research landscape by depicting the concentration of co-occurring keywords. Areas in lighter shades (yellow and bright green) indicate higher keyword density, representing intensively studied and thematically integrated clusters. In contrast, darker regions (blue to purple) reflect less explored areas. Notable high-density zones include the intersection of “destination,” “service quality,” and “revisit intention,” underscoring their centrality in tourism marketing. Another key cluster forms around “museum experience” and “immersive experience,” reflecting increasing scholarly attention to digital heritage and experiential technologies. Overall, this visualisation offers a concise yet powerful representation of the field’s most active thematic domains.

Key Thematic Clusters

The comprehensive co-occurrence analysis of keywords meticulously identified several distinct, yet intricately interconnected, thematic clusters. These clusters collectively represent the primary and most active research areas within the expansive field under investigation.

Cluster 1: Digital Marketing Strategies for Sustainable Tourism

This research cluster centres on the application of digital marketing tools to promote sustainable tourism. Frequently cited keywords include “social media,” “content marketing,” “digital marketing,” “destination marketing,” and “promotion.” Studies examine how platforms like Instagram support destination promotion (Arias, 2025; O’Hagan, 2021; Rhee et al., 2022), how green marketing influences tourist behaviour (Sujawoto et al., 2023), and how digital content shapes consumer perceptions and intentions (Dilys et al., 2022; Koob, 2023; Suryawan & Santikasari, 2024). Several works also explore the role of digital platforms in fostering pro-environmental behaviour (Bilynets & Knezevic Cvelbar, 2022; Siegel et al., 2023). Additionally, the relationship between service quality, promotional strategies, and revisit intention is widely discussed, often linked to visitor satisfaction and behavioural outcomes (Yunanza & Isa, 2025).

Cluster 2: Immersive Technologies and Visitor Experience Enhancement

This thematic cluster underscores the increasing academic and practical interest in deploying advanced technologies, particularly virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI), to enrich and personalise visitor experiences, especially within museums and cultural heritage contexts. Studies investigate the impact of immersive technologies on museum engagement (Kaplun et al., 2024; Pratisto et al., 2022; Robaina-Calderín et al., 2023), the design of interactive exhibitions (Cesário et al., 2023; Popoli & Derda, 2021), and the use of AI and multimedia to enhance artifact interpretation (Ceccarelli et al., 2024; Furferi et al., 2024; Wen & Ma, 2024). Emerging interest in multisensory museum experiences (Luo et al., 2024; Spence, 2020) and the use of AR for civic education further illustrates the transformative potential of these technologies (Guzmán et al., 2024).

Cluster 3: Sustainable Tourism Development and Management

This cluster explores both theoretical and practical dimensions of sustainable tourism, addressing its principles, challenges, and strategic management approaches. Central keywords include “sustainable development,” “environmental protection,” “local communities,” “cultural heritage,” and “visitor management.” Key studies examine the integration of traditional ecological knowledge into modern sustainability practices

(Sumarwati et al., 2020), the complex impacts of mass tourism (Chong, 2020; Utama et al., 2024; Yamamoto et al., 2021), and the critical role of community involvement in sustainable development (Aswita et al., 2023; Garau-Vadell et al., 2023). Emerging themes include regenerative tourism, which promotes leaving destinations better than found (Pung et al., 2024), and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage (Behera, 2018; James-Williamson et al., 2024).

Cluster 4: Museums as Hubs for Cultural Sustainability and Engagement

This cluster explores the evolving role of museums in promoting cultural sustainability and audience engagement. Studies examine how museums are transforming their business models post-pandemic (Botti & Baldi, 2024; Choi & Kim, 2021), contributing to civic education and societal development (Hansson & Öhman, 2022; Lacoë et al., 2020), and fostering value co-creation with visitors (Najda-Janoszka & Sawczuk, 2023; Vespestad & Smørvik, 2019; Yang et al., 2023). Digitalisation and virtual museums enhance accessibility and global reach (Corona, 2024; Tian et al., 2024; Wang & Meng, 2023), while additional research addresses service quality (Cellini et al., 2024), visitor flow (Centorrino et al., 2021), private museums (Clements, 2024), and inclusive exhibitions (Olivares & Piatak, 2022). The transformation of collections and curatorial practices is also widely discussed (Anguix-Vilches et al., 2023; Aroles & Morrell, 2024; Buchczyk, 2022; Elnaggar et al., 2024; Koukoulis et al., 2022; Pickering, 2024; Richards, 2024; Varutti, 2024). Social media studies further illuminate offline visitor perceptions and engagement (Arias, 2025; Gao & Yu, 2024; O'Hagan, 2021; Rhee et al., 2022).

Discussion

Integrative Intersections Across Tourism Marketing, Sustainability, and Digitalisation

This bibliometric review reveals a significant and growing convergence between international marketing management, sustainable tourism, and digital technologies. Rather than evolving in isolation, these domains now coalesce into a multifaceted and adaptive research ecosystem. The identified thematic clusters demonstrate an intricate intellectual synergy: digital marketing strategies (Cluster 1), for instance, are frequently mobilised to support sustainable development agendas (Cluster 3), while immersive technologies (Cluster 2) increasingly facilitate cultural storytelling and value enhancement in museums (Cluster 4). These overlaps highlight the conceptual integration and methodological diversification that characterise the field's current trajectory.

This interconnection signifies a broader epistemological transition from linear, siloed models to systemic and transdisciplinary paradigms. The strategic interplay of these domains embodies a reconceptualization of

tourism as not merely a market-driven economic sector but as a collaborative, digitally-mediated, and sustainability-oriented socio-cultural system. Accordingly, tourism research is positioned as increasingly relevant not only to academia but also to policy and practice, especially in a post-pandemic context where resilience, equity, and innovation are imperative.

Value Co-Creation and Stakeholder-Centric Paradigms

One of the most salient cross-cutting themes emerging from the clusters is the widespread application of value co-creation as a foundational concept (Vespestad & Smørvik, 2019). This reflects a departure from transactional models toward more collaborative and participatory frameworks where value is not delivered unilaterally by providers, but rather co-produced through dynamic interactions among tourists, local communities, cultural institutions, and digital platforms.

This conceptual shift aligns with service-dominant logic and stakeholder theory (Ring, 2022; Vargo & Lusch, 2008), underscoring the importance of relational capital, trust, and mutual benefit. Within the context of cultural heritage and museums, for example, immersive digital interfaces invite visitors to engage, reinterpret, and contribute to meaning-making processes (Kaplun et al., 2024; Robaina-Calderín et al., 2023). Similarly, in sustainable tourism development, value co-creation becomes a tool for empowering local stakeholders, encouraging responsible consumption, and fostering long-term destination resilience (Aswita et al., 2023; Najda-Janoszka & Sawczuk, 2023; Yang et al., 2023).

These insights underscore a conceptual maturation: research now interrogates the socio-ethical frameworks and power dynamics shaping how value is constructed and sustained, rather than merely documenting tactics or adoption patterns.

The Strategic Imperative of Digitalisation and Innovation

Digital transformation emerges not as a peripheral trend but as a strategic imperative across all clusters. The application of immersive technologies, such as AR, VR, AI, and the metaverse, extends beyond novelty or entertainment to support cultural preservation, accessibility, and environmental management. In particular, museums and heritage institutions are reimagined as hybrid cultural ecosystems integrating physical and virtual experiences, providing more inclusive and engaging interactions (Furferi et al., 2024; Luo et al., 2024; Pratisto et al., 2022).

Beyond enhancing visitor experience, digitalisation supports more efficient destination governance. Data-driven insights enable adaptive marketing, resource allocation, and crowd management, key to mitigating overtourism and environmental degradation. The literature reflects growing interest in how technological affordances can be harnessed to align

commercial objectives with environmental and social outcomes, indicating a discourse increasingly focused on digitally enabled sustainability.

However, despite this progress, the review reveals a lack of critical engagement with emerging risks, such as data privacy, digital inequality, or the ethical governance of AI systems in tourism settings. These gaps warrant closer theoretical scrutiny and empirical exploration in future studies.

Post-COVID Transformation and Sectoral Resilience

The global shock of the COVID-19 pandemic catalysed a paradigmatic re-evaluation of tourism systems, significantly shaping the research trajectories captured in this review. As physical mobility was curtailed, digital innovation emerged as a lifeline for institutions and destinations to maintain continuity, visibility, and audience connection (Bianchi & Milano, 2024; Gozzoli et al., 2024).

Consequently, resilience is no longer conceptualised merely as recovery capacity but is now viewed as a proactive, digitally mediated reconfiguration of systems to withstand future volatility. The literature signals an intensified focus on adaptive capacity, hybrid service delivery models, and alternative value networks, reasserting the centrality of innovation, inclusion, and sustainability in building future-ready ecosystems.

The pandemic also accelerated scholarly output, with a sharp increase in publications post-2020, particularly in domains related to digital transformation and remote engagement. This surge reflects both academic responsiveness and recognition of tourism's evolving role in addressing global disruption.

Implications

The findings of this review yield several theoretical and practical implications. First, there is a clear need for greater theoretical integration across disciplines. While value co-creation, stakeholder theory, and service-dominant logic appear frequently, they are often applied without deeper cross-framework dialogue. Future studies could contribute by bridging these perspectives through comparative analyses or integrative models that reflect the complexity of tourism in the digital age.

Second, the methodological landscape remains dominated by conceptual reviews and exploratory empirical studies. There is scope for more longitudinal, experimental, and mixed-method approaches, particularly in assessing behavioural impacts of digital interventions and sustainability outcomes.

Third, while this study does not directly analyse geographical patterns, existing literature indicates that Global North contexts continue to dominate academic discourse. Future research must amplify voices from

underrepresented regions, especially in Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America, which are simultaneously experiencing rapid tourism growth and digital adoption.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review has offered a concise yet comprehensive bibliometric synthesis of the interplay between international marketing management, sustainable tourism, and digital technologies. The conclusion highlights the study's principal contributions by emphasising the ways in which digital marketing tools can be strategically leveraged for sustainable promotion, immersive technologies enhance visitor experiences and cultural storytelling, and value co-creation strengthens stakeholder participation and long-term destination resilience.

In addition, the review emphasises the accelerating pace of scholarly output and growing international collaboration, both of which reflect the contemporary relevance of these domains. The study also identifies paradigm shifts, particularly towards co-created, digitally mediated, and sustainability-oriented tourism systems, that provide fertile ground for future inquiry. By foregrounding these contributions, the review not only consolidates existing knowledge but also delineates clear directions for advancing theory and practice in global tourism research.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the identified thematic clusters and emerging trends, several critical avenues for future research are proposed. First, the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) and the metaverse on tourist behaviour remains underexplored, particularly regarding AI-driven personalisation for promoting responsible choices and balancing the benefits and ecological costs of metaverse tourist. Second, there is a need for more robust empirical studies assessing the effectiveness of digital sustainability marketing. Future research should develop standardised metrics and conduct longitudinal analyses to evaluate how such strategies influence pro-environmental behaviour and sustainable consumption.

Third, as museums increasingly adopt immersive technologies, ethical concerns around authenticity, data privacy, and digital divides must be critically examined. Research should explore how these tools can enhance cultural understanding without commodification or misrepresentation. Fourth, stakeholder collaboration in digital sustainable tourism requires further investigation. Studies should identify effective multi-stakeholder models and governance frameworks that support inclusive digital strategy development, while also addressing power dynamics in implementation.

Fifth, in response to global disruptions such as pandemics and climate change, research should explore how digital technologies can strengthen

tourism resilience, particularly in developing regions, through early warning systems, agile marketing, and crisis communication. Lastly, the digital transformation of museums calls for deeper inquiry into the evolving role of curators. Future studies could investigate how curatorial expertise is translated into digital formats, the effects on visitor interpretation, and the challenges of managing digital collections. Addressing these priorities will advance both theoretical insights and practical solutions at the nexus of international marketing, sustainability, and digital innovation.

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