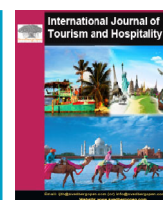




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Review and Analysis of Literature on Dark Tourism: A Bibliometric Approach

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Abstract

The classic sun, beach, and picturesque landscapes are no longer the primary reasons why people travel. Dark tourism is starting to grab the attention of travellers everywhere. Researchers over the years have been examining theory of knowledge, knowledge area, and conceptual framework of disciplines to know the way they have evolved. A plethora of information regarding dark tourism has been produced in the tourism industry. It is well recognized that researchers' contributions throughout time are what lead to the expansion of knowledge in every scientific field. Therefore, an assessment of this body of growing knowledge is essential to establish the present situation of the field. Consequently, the current study's objective is to discover the many research trends that are present in the literature on dark tourism and to see the growth, development and contribution of authors, sources, and countries toward dark tourism. The data was gathered from publications found in the Scopus database between 2006 and 2021. At the end of the refinement process, only 249 articles were obtained to review using VOSviewer software. The findings of our bibliometric research on dark tourism showed 2018 as the most prolific year in terms of publications. The United Kingdom leads the way in terms of contributions made by nations, with 67 articles. The 2008 research by Stone and Sharpley, which was accepted for publication in journal "Annals of Tourism Research" has received 479 citations as of 2021, is the most citations by any study. Research suggests that the body of work on dark tourism is expanding.

Keywords: Dark tourism, Analysis, Bibliometric, Article, Journal, Author, Citations

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1. Introduction

Researchers over the years have been examining theory of knowledge, knowledge area, and conceptual framework of disciplines to know the way they have evolved. Given that, numerous areas of knowledge have developed up till a point (Koseoglu, 2016), with the use of sophisticated software systems, evaluating and monitoring the growth of disciplines based on certain themes has attracted a lot of interest (Koseoglu *et al.*, 2015; Zupic and Cater, 2015). Due to the complexity of the phenomena of tourism, which involves a wide spectrum of individuals, who are increasingly searching for novel and distinctive experiences to satiate the widest range of motivations over the past few decades, there have been changes to the global tourist sector (Seabra *et al.*, 2014). The classic sun, beach, and picturesque landscapes are

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no longer the primary reasons why people travel. The concept of “pleasant entertainment in pleasant settings”, the concept of “pleasant amusement in pleasant surroundings” is spreading and changing, taking on new forms, more sophisticated and even special market requirements (Wight, 2006). Travel to places known for death, misery, and tragedies has increased, creating a specialised tourism industry and a new scholarly debate known as “dark tourism” (Light, 2017). Since 1996, Dark Tourism also known as Thana Tourism has established itself as a specialised field of study in the tourism industry. For centuries, there has been a connection between tourism, death, and misery. Nonetheless, Lennon and Foley were the ones who initially identified the connection of these in 1996 and classified it as such. This resulted in the release of the primary defining and crucial source material, “Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster” (Lennon and Foley, 2000).

Dark tourism is starting to grab the attention of travellers everywhere. Many attractions are currently on the rise all throughout the world to address “darker side of movement” for individuals who like to travel and view those locations connected to conflict and tragedy (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). Places of misery and murder, such as the assassination of John F Kennedy located in Dallas, Texas, as well as the 9/11 Memorial in New York continue to captivate travellers even now (Foley and Lennon, 1996; Strange and Kempa, 2003). Visits to deserted prisons and other places of torture and captivity are popular with dark tourists like Pentridge located in Australian city, Melbourne (Foley and Lennon, 1996). However, it wasn’t until 1996 that the term “dark tourism” was made popular among researchers, sparking a flurry of further research on the subject (Light, 2017). Researchers have looked at dark tourist destinations (Miles, 2014), variables influencing dark tourist visitations (Podoshen, 2013), dark tourism benefits (Kang *et al.*, 2012), dark tourism’s effects (Wang and Luo, 2018), as well as the dark tourism expertise (Iliev, 2021). Naturally, a plethora of information regarding dark tourism has been produced in the tourism industry.

As a result of the findings of so many investigations, it has become necessary to reassess studies on dark tourism. It is well recognised that researchers’ contributions throughout time are what lead to the expansion of knowledge in every field. Therefore, an assessment of this body of growing knowledge is essential to establish the present situation of the field (Li *et al.*, 2017; Rodriguez *et al.*, 2020).

In this framework, the current study uses a bibliometric approach to review the literature on dark tourism. By categorizing data, such as keywords, citations, affiliations, subjects covered, and methodologies used for scientific publications utilizing statistical methods, bibliometrics is a way of assessing and tracking the advancement of a certain discipline (McBurney and Novak, 2002). Data from databases like WoS, Scopus, and Google Scholar can be easily collected for the bibliometric study (Bartol and Mackiewicz, 2015). In the tourism industry, the bibliometric approach is crucial (Hall, 2011). The bibliometric method is now preferred by many tourist researchers. As a result, a significant number of tourism-related bibliometric studies has appeared on the concept of dark tourism (Sharpley, 2009; Stone, 2013; Light, 2017). In contrast to other studies, the VOSviewer software was used in this one to produce bibliometric maps of dark tourism.

2. Bibliometric Analysis and Methods

Primary objective of bibliometric research is to identify any potential research gaps and to emphasise the boundaries of knowledge by evaluating the body of empirical literature already in existence (Fahimnia *et al.*, 2015). The bibliometric analysis classifies data using quantitative techniques, generates representative summaries, and is acknowledged as a valuable way of examining the effectiveness of journals, organizations, authors, and the features of research themes (Li *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, the proposed study’s objective is to identify the numerous research trends that are present in the literature on dark tourism and to see the growth, development and contribution of authors, sources, and countries toward dark tourism. The data was gathered from publications found in the Scopus database between 2006 and 2021. Errors in getting data for bibliometric analysis are possible, making it critical to minimise repeated erroneous data. Scopus was the only source utilized for data retrieval to prevent data duplication. The search was done using the document search option and the entry phrases “Dark Tourism” OR “Thana Tourism”. We utilised the Scopus database and the search was done in the “topic, title, abstract, keywords” field, because scopus is one of the databases that is most commonly utilized in the academic world, assembling a large body of data and making bibliometric indicator-based statistics. During the initial search in the scopus database, there were 575 documents overall, including editorial content, reviews, and articles. Of the 575 documents, the search was refined to the keywords used as “Dark tourism” OR “Thana Tourism” OR “Dark Tourism Operations” OR “Disaster Tourism” OR “Battlefield Tourism” OR “Holocaust Tourism” OR “Thanatology” thus reducing the total number of documents to 321. Further refinement of documents, like, completed final publication stage, language limited to English was employed and documents other than articles were eliminated. After the process of refining, VOSviewer software was used to evaluate just 249 documents.

The retrieved data were examined concerning the following four parameters:

- I. Annual growth of the publications.
- II. Most contributing countries.
- III. Most cited articles.
- IV. Top contributing Journals.

The study also concentrated on using data visualization to map the data using science mapping analysis. The study concentrated on the use of bibliometric maps to depict the structure and relationship of Authors, Journals, and Countries. The study examined the co-occurrence of author keywords (keywords appearing below the extract); co-citation analysis (the practice of citing the same article in two different publications) and bibliographic coupling (when two publications quote the identical third article). These analyses were considered because they are the ones most frequently employed in bibliometric investigations.

3. Data Analysis and Results

3.1. Descriptive Analysis

3.1.1. Annual number of publications

Since 2006, there have been a small number of articles published regarding “Dark Tourism,” but till 2010. However, Figure 1 illustrates the findings that after 2010, the number of publications increased gradually, and the year 2018 saw the largest amount of studies published.

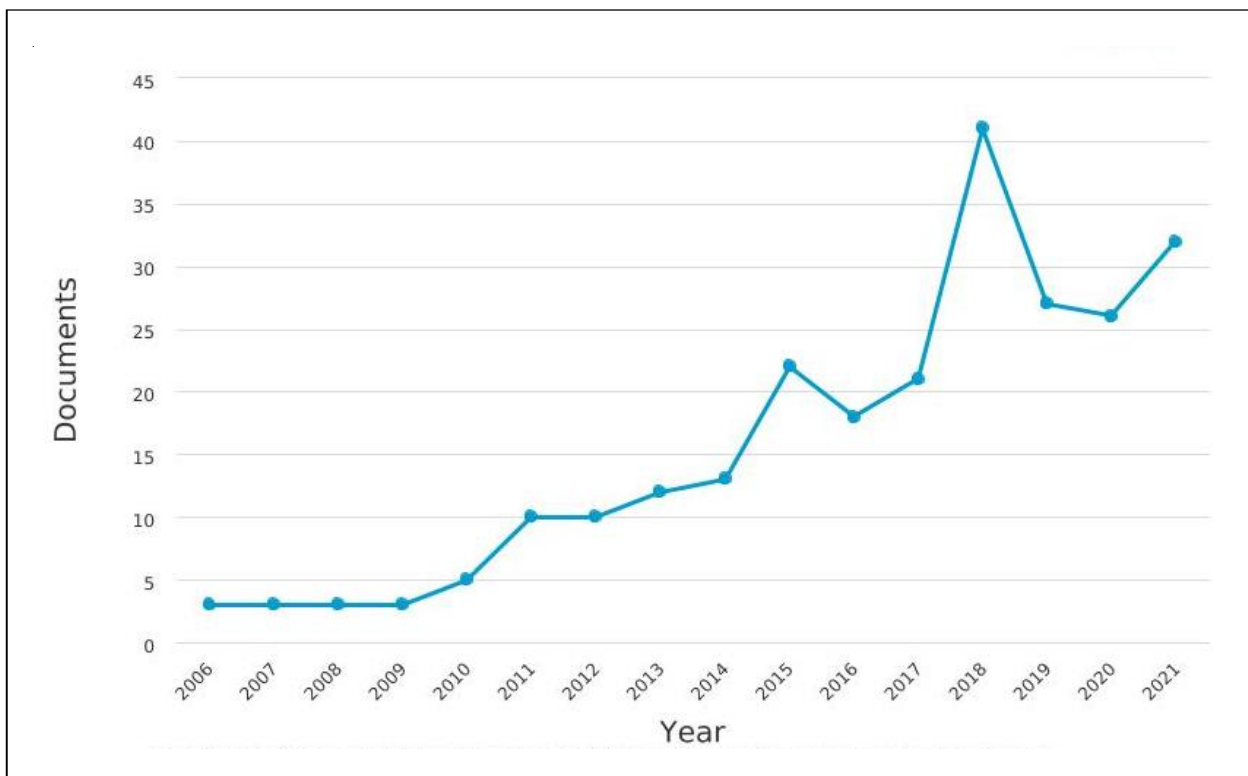


Figure 1: The Annual Number of Publications

Source: Scopus Database

3.1.2. Most Contributing Countries (Top 10)

The nations having at least five articles are displayed in Figure 2. The United Kingdom leads the way in terms of contributions made by nations, with 67 articles, followed by the US (48), Australia (29), China (21), Israel (10), and Canada (10). It is not unexpected that the United Kingdom leads in the number of publications because dark tourism is not a recent phenomenon there.

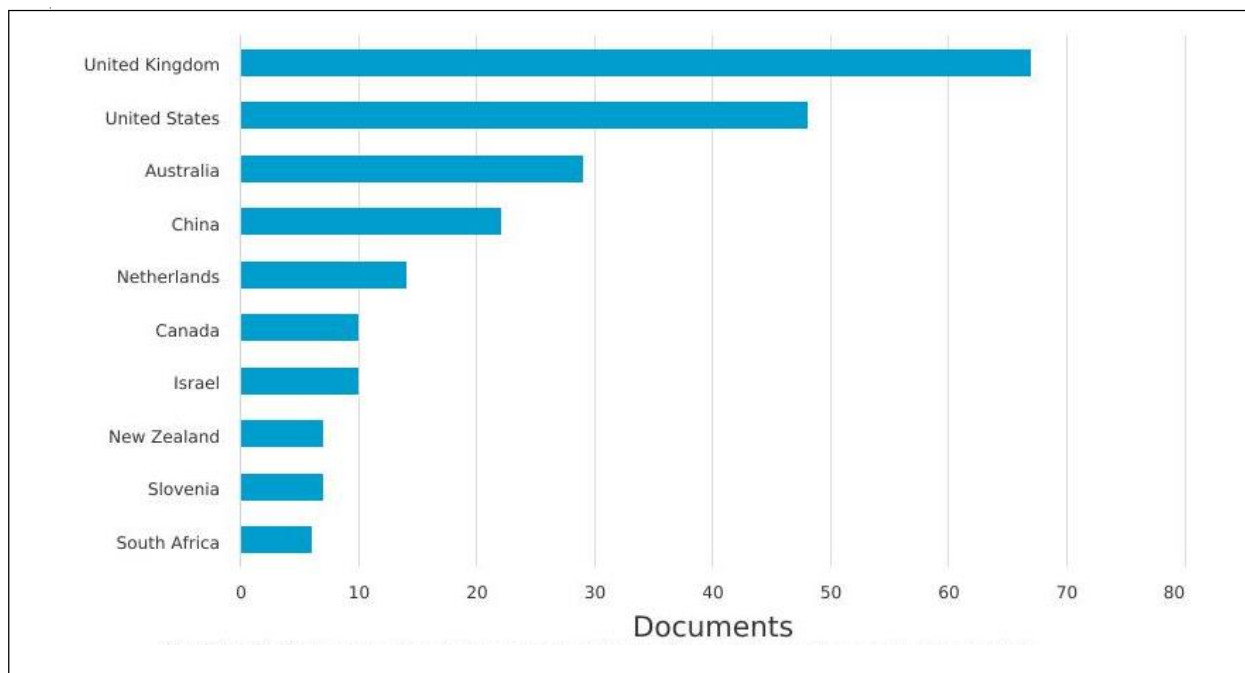


Figure 2: Most Productive Countries

Source: Scopus Database

3.1.3. Top 5 Cited Articles

The papers with the highest number of citations through 2021 are listed in Table 1. The data indicate that the journal, “Annals of Tourism Research”, is home to four of the top five most cited articles. Stone and Sharpley (2008) published the most cited paper, with 479 citations, titled “Consuming dark tourism: A thanatological perspective” by the “Annals of Tourism Research”. In this article, the relationship between socio-cultural perceptions on mortality was addressed. The second-most cited article, Biran *et al.* (2011), with 259 citations argued that the experiential approach should be used to rethink dark tourism. Instead of hosting only dark tourism, dark places host a variety of activities. Stone (2012), the author of third most cited article, proposed that dark tourism is a contemporary facilitating organization, not only provides a physical space to link the present with the deceased but further permits an intellectual room for the self to build modern metaphysical interpretations of mortality, up to 2021 study had 198 citations. The fourth most cited article

Year	Author(s)	Citations	Journals	Title
2008	Stone; Sharpley	479	<i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	Consuming dark tourism: A Thanatological Perspective
2011	Biran; Poria; Oren	259	<i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	Sought experiences at (dark) heritage sites
2012	Stone, Philip R.	198	<i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	Dark tourism and significant other death: Towards a Model of Mortality Mediation
2011	Dunkle; Morgan; Westwood	163	<i>Tourism Management</i>	Visiting the trenches: Exploring meanings and motivations in battlefield tourism
2011	Cohen	159	<i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	Educational Dark Tourism at an in populo site: The Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem

was published in the journal “Tourism Management” by Dunkley *et al.* (2011), and it offers qualitative insights into the reasons behind and impressions visitors have when they visit places connected to violence and war. The research’s analysis demonstrates how a major factor in the study subjects’ experiences on the battlefield throughout their tour was their past interest in fighting. “Educational dark tourism at an in populo site: The Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem”, the fifth most-cited article by Cohen (2011), discovered that dark tourism sites embody and disseminate a victimised community’s story.

3.1.4. Top 5 contributing Journals

Figure 3 shows the top 5 journals that published articles on dark tourism between 2006 and 2021. “*Journal of Heritage Tourism*” has published 26 articles, followed by “*Current Issues in Tourism*” with 15, “*Annals of Tourism Research*” with 14, “*Tourism Management*” with 13, and “*Tourist Studies*” with 11.

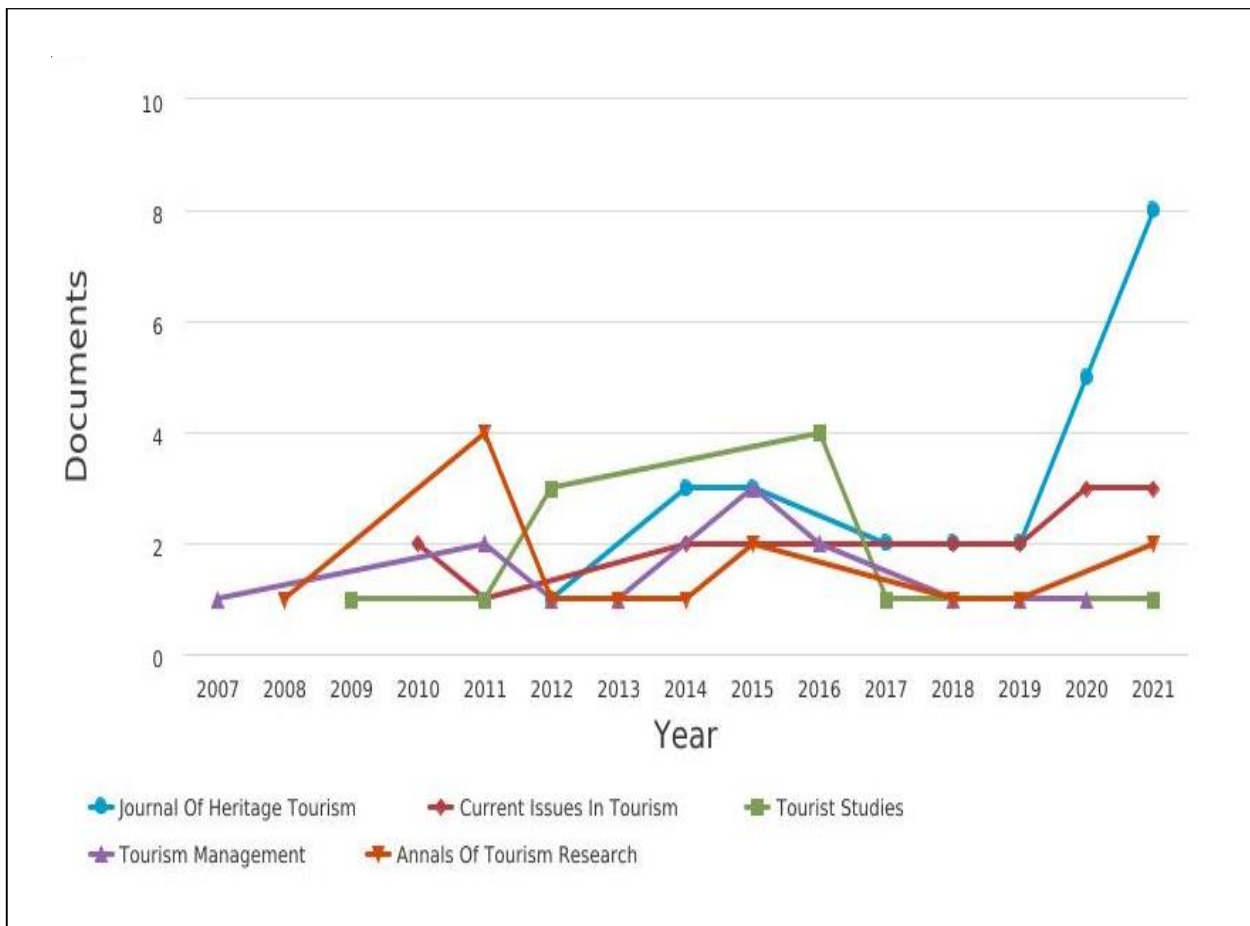


Figure 3: Most Contributing Journals

Source: Scopus Database

3.2. Dark Tourism’s Science Mapping Analysis

3.2.1. Most Often Used Keywords In Articles

Each keyword with a 3-occurrence minimum requirement author keywords was analysed using VOSviewer’s Co-occurrence feature.

The academic publications included in the research had a total of 821 author keywords; however, as shown in Figure 4, only 59 of those keywords were repeated at least three times. According to the figure, the most frequently utilized keywords were “Dark Tourism” (244), “Thana Tourism” (17), “Death” (15), ‘Heritage’ (11), ‘Tourism’ (11), ‘Holocaust’ (10), Motivation (9), Interpretation (8), Emotions (8), Heritage Tourism (7), Dissonant (6), Battlefield Tourism (5), Disaster (4) and rest of the Keywords were used 3 times. The distribution of these keywords over time is also depicted in Figure 4.

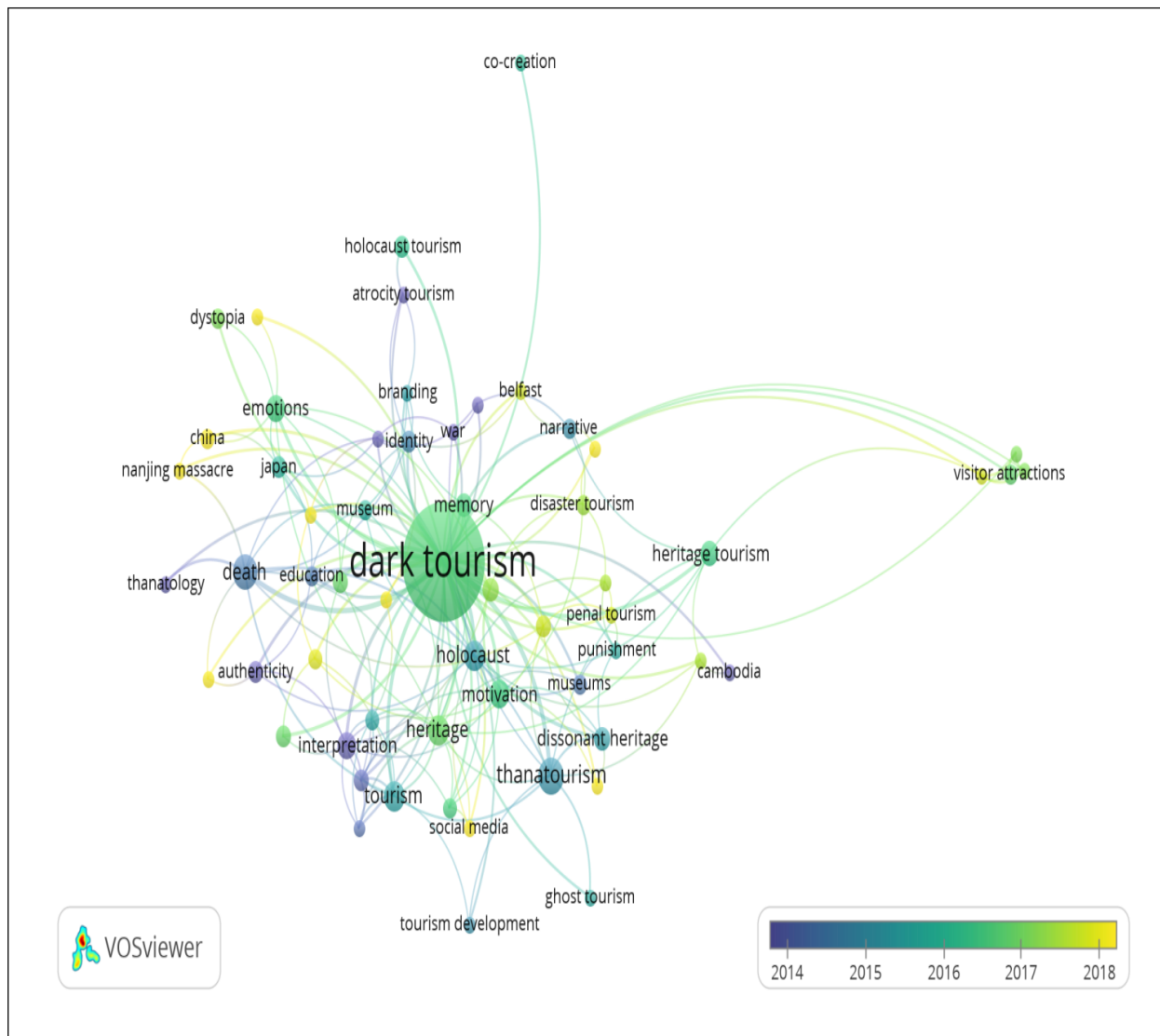


Figure 4: Author Keyword Co-Occurrence Map Density

3.2.2. Co-citation Analysis

Finding the journals and researchers who have had the most influence on the growth of the pertinent topic is made easier by using the co-citation analysis. Figure 5 illustrates the outcomes of the co-citation analysis for the authors who have received at least 20 citations. Despite there being 9498 authors, only 122 authors have at least 20 citations, which is the minimum requirement. This analysis produced 5 clusters, which are represented by the colors blue, purple, red, green, and yellow. The most well-known authors were found to be Sharpley carrying 401 total citations represented in blue cluster, Foley with 320 citations in purple cluster, Stone 297 total citations in the red cluster, Biran 201 citations in the green cluster and Cohen with a total of 67 citations represented in yellow cluster.

The journal co-citation map, based on 6166 sources, is displayed in Figure 6, from the perspective of sources co-citation only 24 sources match the threshold of having at least 50 citations. The outcome of this analysis was 5 clusters. Eight journals make up the red cluster, and “*Annals of Tourism Research*” contains 1358 citations and a 26385 link strength. The “*Tourism Management*” journal was one of the five journals in the green cluster, receiving 644 citations and having total link strength of 17047. There were 5 journals in the blue cluster, including “*Current Issues in Tourism*,” which had 224 citations and a link strength of 7123. The “*Journal of Tourism and Culture*” had three journals in the yellow cluster with 79 citations and a link strength of 2376, and there were three journals in the purple cluster as well. In light of these findings, it can be concluded that the journals “*Annals of Tourism Research*” and “*Tourism Management*” have had a greater impact on the literature related to Dark Tourism.

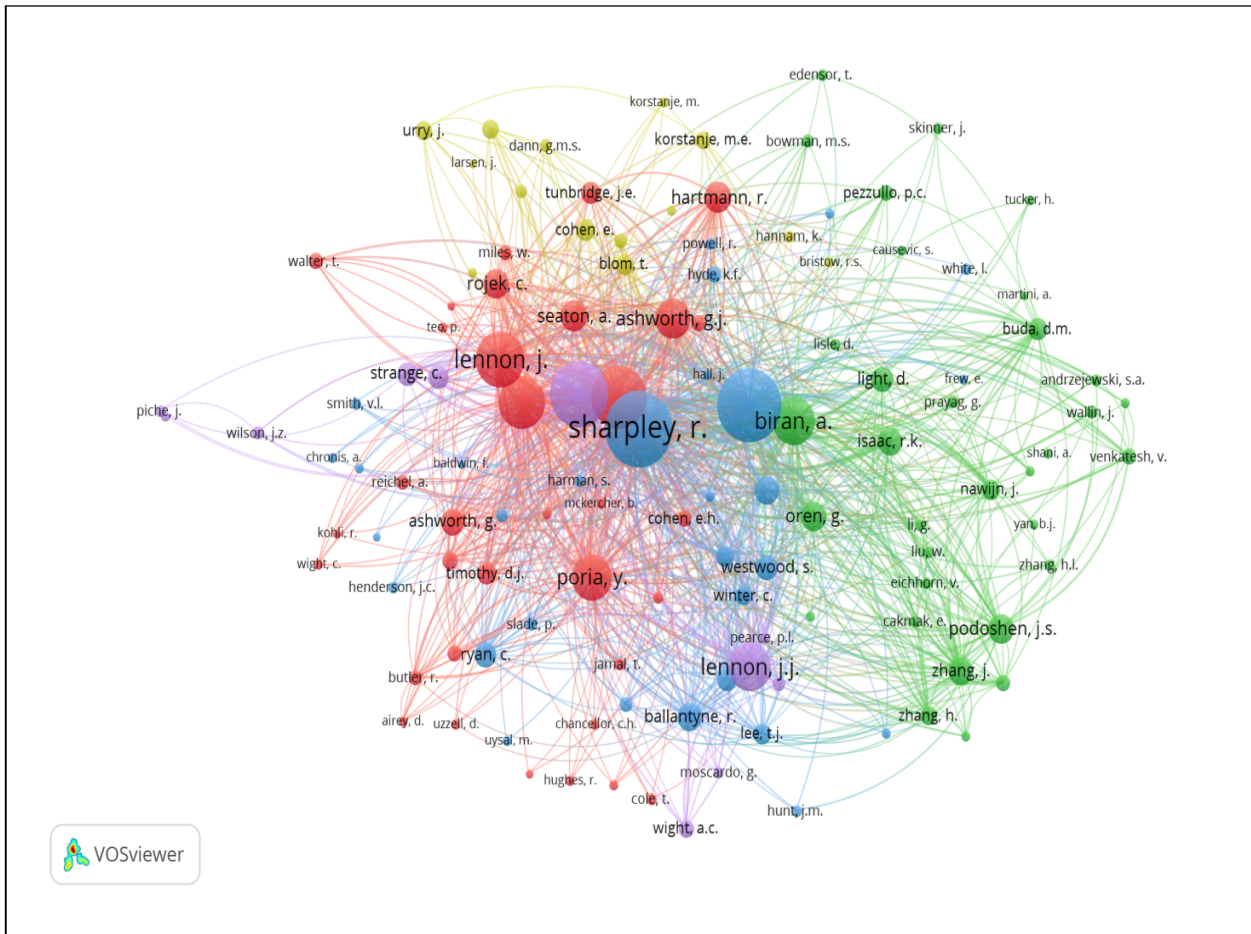


Figure 5: Co-citation Analysis for Authors

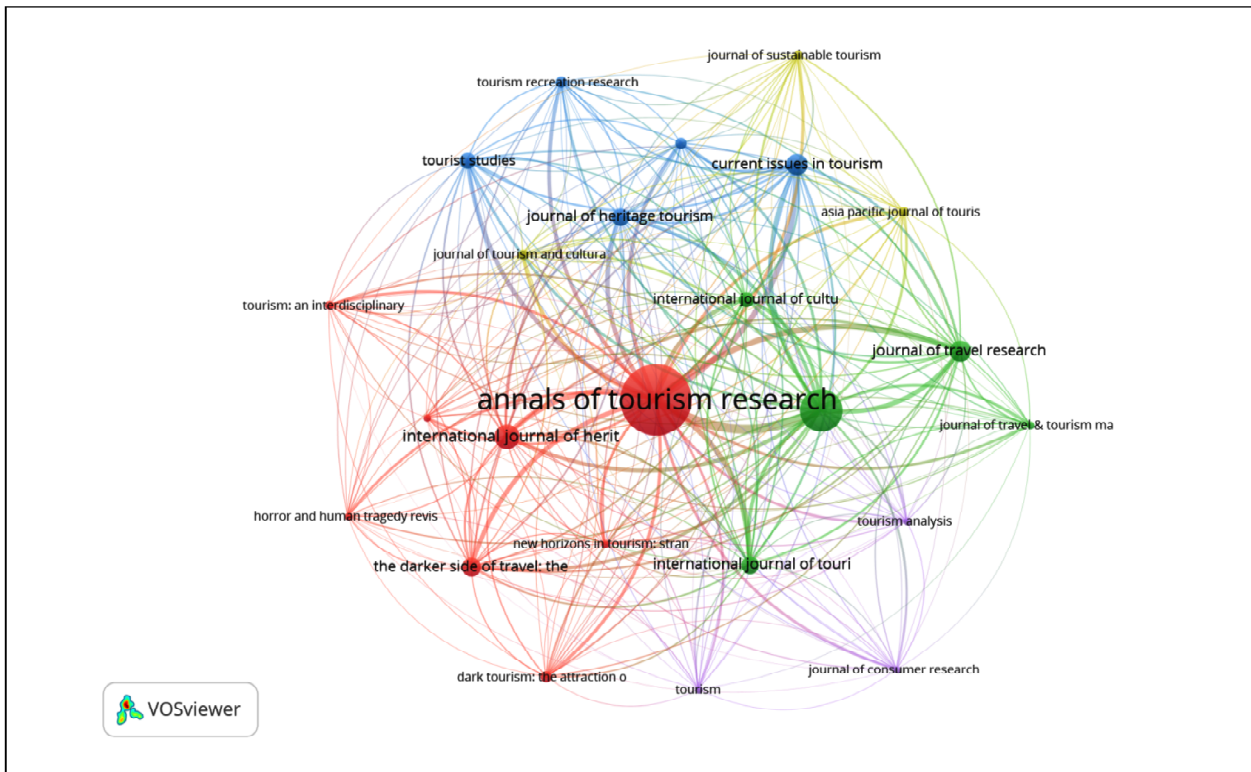


Figure 6: Source Co-citation Analysis

3.2.3 Bibliographic Coupling

To supplement the co-citation analysis, the bibliographic coupling is used. It gives a distinct impression of a subject or the relationship between authors. Figure 7 illustrates the author-bibliographic coupling for dark tourism, which was limited to authors having at least three articles and at least 50 citations. Only 16 authors out of 415 met the requirement, and Zhang J leads the list with 7 documents boasting link strengths of 3849 and 233 citations.

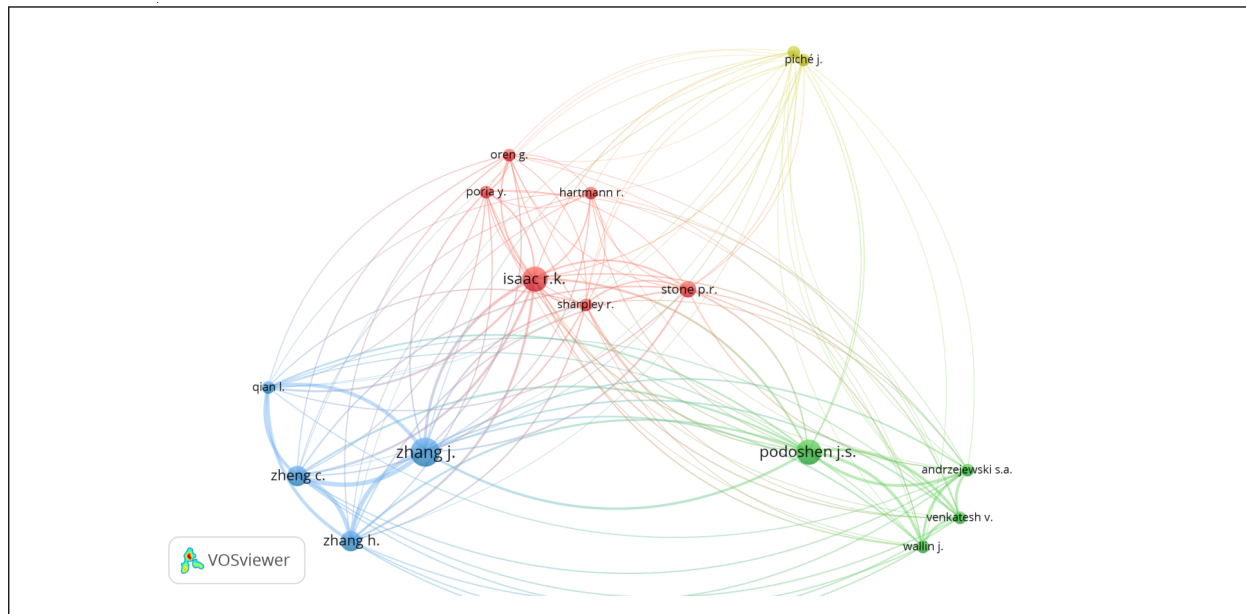


Figure 7: Authors' Bibliographic Coupling

With a criterion of 5 publications and a minimum of 50 citations, Figure 8 demonstrates the bibliographic coupling of the nations that have contributed to the literature on dark tourism. Only 12 of the 53 countries could fulfil the criteria. The United Kingdom possesses the largest network shown on the map, with 67 articles and a link strength of 29029. According to the literature on dark tourism, It is the most effective nation. In the literature on dark tourism, the USA (48 articles) and Australia (29 articles) also have a major place. Thus, the outcomes likewise agree with those shown in Figure 2.

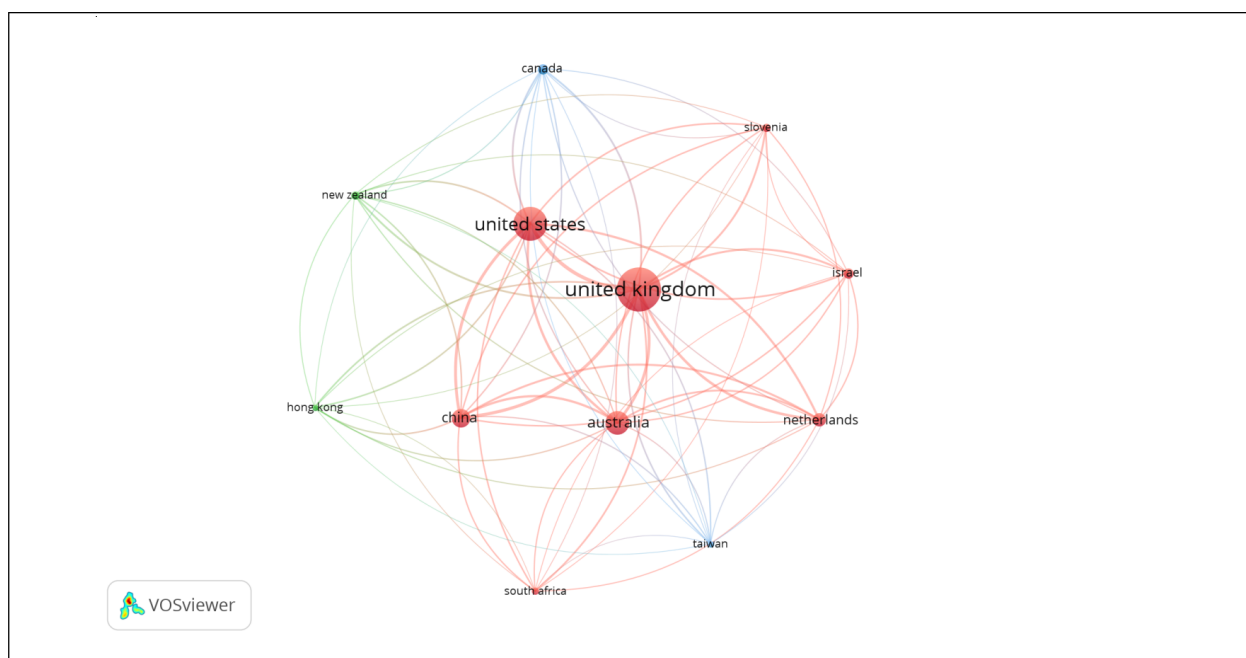


Figure 8: Countries' Bibliographic Coupling

4. Conclusion

This study used bibliometric evaluation to provide a structured overview and assessment of the research papers on Dark Tourism that have been published in the Scopus database between 2006 and 2021. By using VOSviewer software, this research looked at and evaluated 249 publications. The findings of our bibliometric research on dark tourism showed that there has been an increase in interest in the field since about 2010 and that 2018 was the most prolific year in terms of publications. From the perspective of geographical distribution, the United Kingdom comes in first with 67 publications and the United States and Australia are in second and third place, with 48 and 29 publications, respectively.

With 479 citations up till 2021, the Stone and Sharpley (2008) published a research in the journal “*Annals of Tourism Research*” received the most citations. The findings also showed that a sizable percentage of research with the greatest amount of citations was also published in the same publication. As a starting point for more conceptual and empirical studies on dark tourism, in their study, Stone and Sharpley (2008) presented a model of dark tourism consumption within a thanatological framework. Several additional highly referenced publications concentrated on redefining dark tourism, laying the theoretical groundwork for investigating the experiences of dark tourism, and giving qualitative insights into the intentions and encounters of tourists to venues for dark tourism.

The purpose of the keyword analysis is to determine which terms are used the most frequently in the study description. The terms that appear in studies the most frequently offer us a hint that while dark tourism is undoubtedly linked to mortality, it is also tied to the destination’s heritage because all of the events that result in fatalities have occurred in the past. The keywords that were used the most frequently were “Dark Tourism” (244), “Thana Tourism” (17), “Death” (15), ‘Heritage’ (11), ‘Tourism’ (11), ‘Holocaust’ (10), Motivation (9), Interpretation (8), Emotions (8), Heritage Tourism (7), Dissonant (6), Battlefield Tourism (5) and Disaster (4).

The mapping was valuable in highlighting the authors and journals having the biggest effect on dark tourism during the co-citation analysis of the documents and sources. The findings of the co-citation analysis showed a substantial correlation between the “most cited articles” and “top contributing journals,” two of the study’s key parameters.

The bibliographic coupling of authors and countries was also explored in the article. Bibliographic coupling is helpful since it enables researchers to locate previous studies that are connected to their own. Seven documents with a link strength of 3849 and 233 citations, Zhang is the author with the most prominence. The United Kingdom had the most extensive network on the map, with link strength of 29029, followed by the United States and Australia, with link strengths of 23547 and 18489, respectively, according to the results of the bibliographic coupling of the nations.

Finally, the outcomes also offer potential directions for further study. In advanced economies, research on the growth of dark tourism is expanding and developing. We discovered that academics from developing nations contribute the least to the spread of dark tourism, despite the reality that these countries have a large number of locations to draw tourists too. However, it appears that our findings from this study need to be expanded further. You might increase the number of keywords, there might be more parameters, such as contributions by organizations, and science mapping might also be further used for the co-authorship analysis of nations, organizations, and researchers.

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