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TRENDS AND IMPACTS OF ECONOMIC BENEFITS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM VILLAGES

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Abstract

Tourism villages have increasingly been promoted as strategic instruments for local economic development and regional revitalization. However, their long-term sustainability depends on the extent to which economic benefits are effectively generated and perceived by local communities. Despite the expanding literature on tourism villages, systematic mapping of research trends and integration of economic benefit concepts within tourism village development remain limited. This study aims to analyze research trends, thematic evolution, and scholarly influence related to economic benefits in tourism village development during the 2020–2025 period. A bibliometric research design was applied using Scopus-indexed publications as the primary data source. Data were collected through a structured keyword search, producing 113 eligible documents for analysis. Quantitative descriptive techniques were employed using VOSviewer and Biblioshiny R to examine publication growth, collaboration networks, and thematic structures. The findings indicate a substantial increase in research output, accompanied by a thematic shift from normative perspectives, such as poverty alleviation, toward performance-oriented approaches, including economic impact assessment, cost–benefit analysis, and income optimization. Research contributions are dominated by developing countries, particularly Indonesia and China. However, linkages between economic benefits and environmental protection remain insufficiently explored. This study provides theoretical clarification and practical guidance for developing evidence-based tourism village policies.

Keywords: Tourism Village Development, Economic Benefits, Bibliometric, Research Trends, Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Tourism villages now play a strategic role in global economic development. The revitalization of rural areas has been shown not only to drive the growth of the tourism sector but also to strengthen local economies and create more employment opportunities (Yang et al., 2021). According to Wijijayanti et al. (2020), village-based tourism can empower communities and sustainably advance local economies. Social, economic, and cultural factors also shape the direction of destination development. Thus, the concept of tourism villages serves as an important strategy to reduce regional inequality by strengthening local economies, developing villagers' capacity, and reducing migration flows to urban areas, thereby enabling more optimal rural economic and social revitalization (Chen & Li, 2023).

Nevertheless, the development of tourist villages still faces various fundamental challenges. The main elements that underpin rural tourism, such as location, sustainability, community engagement, and quality of the tourism experience, often cannot run optimally due to limited internal resources (Rosalina et al., 2021). This has created management gaps, with many tourism

village projects regressing after the inauguration stage (Rahmawati & Kusuma, 2025). One source of the problem lies in the lack of direct community involvement (Xu et al., 2019), as residents will only participate when they perceive concrete benefits from the program (Zhu et al., 2017), an active community role being an important condition for destination sustainability (Chan et al., 2021).

In this context, economic benefits such as increased income, job creation, and entrepreneurial opportunities play a major role in encouraging community participation. Rural tourism can make a significant contribution to community development, especially when economic benefits are the most visible outcome (Liu et al., 2023). Without a clear and equitable perception of these benefits, tourism village development will find it difficult to survive and compete in the future (Mateke & Kazaara, 2024).

Research trend mapping through bibliometrics remains relatively limited in this domain. Several studies have applied bibliometric analysis to broader tourism topics such as sustainable tourism (Bruyn et al., 2023; Pilelienė et al., 2024; Soh et al., 2023) and Community-Based Tourism (Forero et al., 2025; Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023). However, bibliometric studies specifically examining the integration of economic benefits within tourism village development remain rare, leaving key indicators such as publication growth, citation patterns, and thematic evolution inadequately explored.

Therefore, this study aims to present a bibliometric analysis of research trends and the influence of economic benefits on tourism village development, focusing on Scopus-indexed publications from 2020 to 2025. Theoretically, this study enriches the bibliometric literature by mapping the thematic evolution of economic benefit research in the tourism village context. Practically, the findings offer evidence-based guidance for policymakers and village managers in designing more effective and sustainable development strategies.

The findings reveal significant publication growth and a thematic shift from normative approaches, such as poverty alleviation, toward performance-oriented frameworks including economic impact assessment and cost–benefit analysis, implying the need for integrative policies that balance economic growth with environmental sustainability.

The novelty of this research lies in three aspects: examining trends and impacts of economic benefits in tourism village development, simultaneously applying two bibliometric tools (VOSviewer and Biblioshiny in RStudio), and employing thematic evolution analysis. To guide the analysis, this study addresses three research questions: (1) What is the general overview of research trends on economic benefits in tourism village development based on publication and citation patterns? (2) How have research themes related to economic benefits evolved thematically over time? (3) Who are the most influential journals, researchers, institutions, and countries in this research landscape? These results are expected to serve as an initial reference for future studies highlighting the role of economic factors in improving tourism village sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

Tourism Villages as Dynamic Socio-Economic Ecosystems

A tourist village is a rural area developed into a tourist destination by leveraging local assets, including natural beauty, cultural richness, crafts, typical cuisine, and daily community activities. Beyond functioning as a recreational space, tourism villages serve as a means of strengthening local economies and empowering communities as the main actors in tourism management (Yusrizal et al., 2025). This concept has been widely adopted in national development policies as a poverty reduction strategy (Haulle et al., 2024). Recent literature reflects a more multidimensional definition: Hidayat et al. (2024) describe tourism villages as community-based ecosystems centered on local interaction, while Soeswoyo et al. (2025) emphasize their role in preserving intangible cultural heritage. Suswanta & Yuliantini (2024) further introduced the concept

of a resilient village sustained through social capital. Collectively, these perspectives confirm that tourism villages have evolved from mere vacation spots into complex socioeconomic spaces aligned with sustainable development principles (Wijijayanti et al., 2020).

Components of Tourism Village Development

Iqbal & Ernawati (2025) identify four core components of tourism village development: attractions, accessibility, amenities, and institutions. Beyond this framework, community participation has been established as an equally critical element (Gutierrez, 2023). Strategic planning, technological adoption, and consistent community involvement are key determinants of long-term sustainability (Lestari et al., 2025). Wolor et al. (2023) further demonstrate that communities' willingness to adapt to digital transformation is essential for maintaining economic resilience.

Review of Studies on Tourism Villages

Empirical studies reflect the dynamic development of tourism village research. Cáceres-Feria et al. (2021) found that community-based tourism effectively addresses rural depopulation by strengthening social resilience and community welfare. Utami et al. (2023) identified ten success factors for sustainable tourism villages, spanning income management, innovation, and environmental awareness. Rodrigues et al. (2023) demonstrated that tourism villages integrating digital marketing technology consistently outperform those that have not adopted it economically, a finding reinforced by Wolor et al. (2023), who showed that e-commerce and social media adoption were instrumental in sustaining economic resilience during the tourism downturn.

Concept of Economic Benefits in Tourism

Economic benefits represent one of the most significant drivers of community participation in rural tourism. Olasoji (2024) confirms that community-based tourism revives local economies by increasing income, independence, and sustainable development. These benefits extend beyond cash income to include employment creation and local investment growth (Muslim, 2016). Purnomo et al. (2020) demonstrate that sustainable tourism outcomes depend on strong leadership, innovation capacity, and effective governance. Similarly, Yanan et al. (2024) emphasize that community values and active participation are preconditions for rural tourism to support sustainable village development. More recently, Purnomo & Purwandari (2025) found that MSME empowerment significantly strengthens the rural tourism sector, while Manalu et al. (2025) highlight persistent challenges that necessitate stronger conceptual frameworks integrating economic potential with sustainability principles.

Integration of Economic Benefits in Tourism Village Development

The integration of economic benefits into tourism village development has emerged as a central concern in contemporary tourism studies (Liu et al., 2023). Despite growing interest, critical analysis of how economic benefits sustain tourism villages across diverse social contexts remains limited. Keywords such as *economic development* and *economic impact* have gained prominence in the literature, while *income generation* remains an emerging concept. Furthermore, the relationship between economic benefits and environmental protection continues to be insufficiently theorized, underscoring the need for an integrative framework that aligns economic incentives with ecological sustainability and community resilience.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study applies a bibliometric research design to trace the evolution of research on economic benefits in tourism village development. Bibliometric analysis uses mathematical and statistical techniques to map knowledge patterns, identify research trends, and examine the

structural dynamics of a research field. While this approach operates at the macro level and does not assess the qualitative content of individual studies, it is well-suited for systematically mapping large bodies of literature and revealing thematic trajectories over time.

The population of this study consists of all scholarly publications indexed in the Scopus database related to economic benefits in tourism village development. Scopus was selected due to its comprehensive coverage of reputable international journals in the social sciences and tourism management. Data were collected using a structured Boolean search string covering three conceptual clusters: ("tourism village" OR "rural tourism" OR "community-based tourism") AND ("economic benefit" OR "economic impact" OR "income generation" OR "financial benefit") AND ("development" OR "sustainability"). The initial search yielded 240 documents. The sample was then refined by limiting the publication period to 2020–2025 to reflect post-pandemic research dynamics, reducing the dataset to 148 documents. Further screening retained only peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers published in English, while reviews and books were excluded. The final sample consisted of 113 documents, as illustrated in the selection flow in Figure 1.

Data analysis was conducted using two bibliometric tools applied simultaneously. First, VOSviewer was used to construct and visualize bibliometric networks, including keyword co-occurrence mapping and author collaboration networks, enabling identification of dominant research clusters and inter-author relationships. Second, Biblioshiny in RStudio (bibliometrix package) was employed to perform thematic map analysis, thematic evolution analysis, and local impact analysis of publication sources and authors. The combination of these two tools allows for both visual network exploration and quantitative thematic assessment, strengthening the comprehensiveness and reliability of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Before addressing each research question, an overview of the final dataset is presented. Figure 1 illustrates the article selection process, which began with 240 documents retrieved from Scopus, narrowed to 148 after applying the 2020–2025 time filter, and finalized at 113 documents following peer review and language screening.

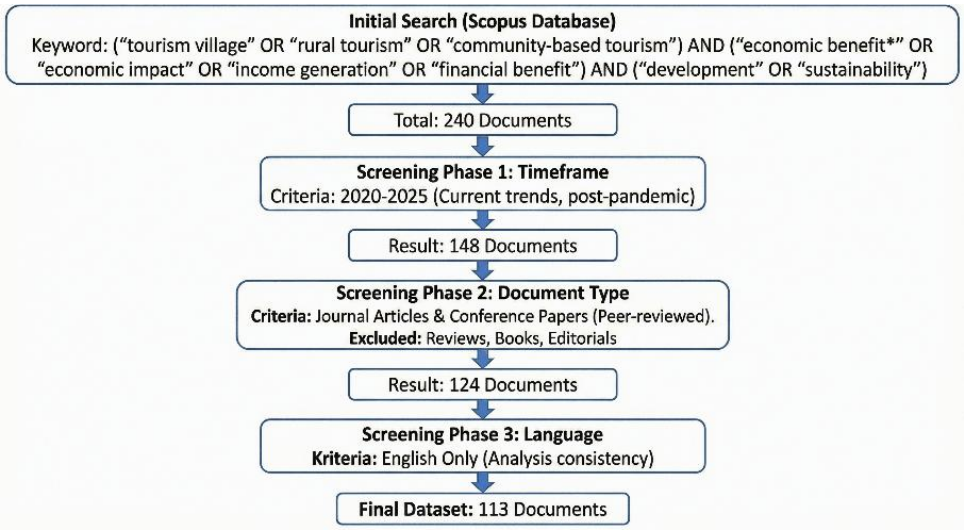


Figure 1 Article Selection Process Flow Diagram

To provide a structured overview of the bibliometric characteristics of the final corpus, Table 1 summarizes the key descriptive statistics encompassing document types, authorship patterns, and collaboration indicators.

Tabel 1. Key Data Information (2020-2025)

Description	Results
Main Information About Data	
Timespan	2020:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	74
Documents	113
Annual Growth Rate %	31,21
Document Average Age	1,73
Average citations per doc	6,566
References	1043
Document Contents	
Keywords Plus (ID)	381
Author's Keywords (DE)	385
Authors	
Authors	376
Authors of single-authored docs	15
Authors Collaboration	
Single-authored docs	15
Co-Authors by Doc	3,46
International co-authorships %	21,24
Document Types	
Article	94
Conference paper	19

The data in Table 1 confirm the high intensity and relevance of research in this field. The Annual Growth Rate of 31.21% indicates that economic benefits in tourism village development constitute a rapidly emerging research front. The Average Document Age of 1.73 years ensures the currency of the reviewed literature. The dominance of journal articles (94 papers) over conference papers (19 papers) reflects the topic's growing maturity in reputable academic outlets. The involvement of 376 authors across 74 sources, with international collaborations at 21.24%, further confirms the global and interdisciplinary character of this field.

RQ 1: What is the general overview of research trends on economic benefits in tourism village development based on publication and citation patterns?

To answer RQ1, an analysis of annual publication patterns and average citations per article was conducted for the 2020–2025 period.

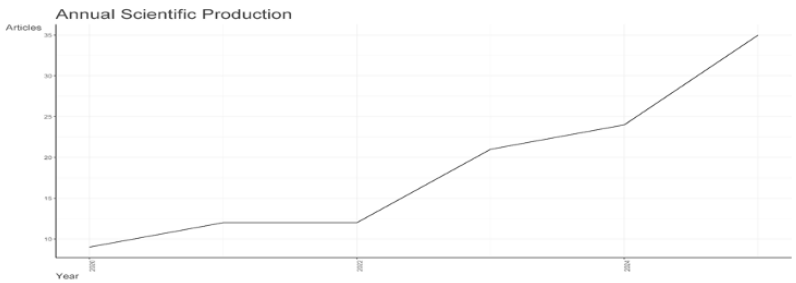


Figure 2. Annual Trends of Scientific Publications and Average Citations per Article (2020-2025)

To quantify the temporal dynamics observed in Figure 2, Table 2 presents the year-by-year distribution of publications alongside their corresponding average citation metrics, enabling a more precise assessment of both productivity and scholarly impact over the study period.

Table 2. Annual Distribution of Publications and Average Citations

Year	Number of Articles (N)	Average Citations per Article (Mean TC/Art)	Average Citations per Year
2020	9	21.89	3.65
2021	12	9.75	1.95
2022	12	6.25	1.56
2023	21	8.19	2.73
2024	24	5.96	2.98
2025	35	1.09	1.09
Total	**113**	**8.85 (Average)**	-

As shown in Figure 2 and Table 2, publications grew steadily from 9 documents in 2020 to 35 in 2025, representing an overall increase of nearly fourfold. A notable spike occurred in 2023 (21 articles), suggesting heightened scholarly attention in the post-pandemic recovery period. This growth pattern is consistent with broader trends in rural tourism research, where post-COVID-19 conditions have accelerated interest in community economic resilience (Wolor et al., 2023).

Citation analysis reveals a characteristic bibliometric pattern: earlier publications accumulate higher average citations due to longer exposure time. The 2020 cohort recorded the highest average of 21.89 citations per article, reflecting their foundational role in establishing the field. Notably, 2023 publications outperformed 2022 in average citations (8.19 vs. 6.25), suggesting above-average relevance or methodological novelty in that year's output. The lower citation averages of 2024 and 2025 reflect the natural recency effect rather than reduced quality. Overall, these results confirm that research on economic benefits in tourism village development is in a phase of rapid and sustained growth.

RQ 2: How have research themes related to economic benefits evolved thematically over time?

To examine thematic structure and intellectual evolution, this study employs co-word analysis mapped onto a two-dimensional strategic diagram. Callon centrality (x-axis) measures a cluster's interaction with other themes, reflecting its strategic relevance in the broader research network. Callon density (y-axis) measures internal cohesion among keywords within a cluster, indicating thematic maturity. Figure 3 presents the full thematic map for the 2020–2025 period.

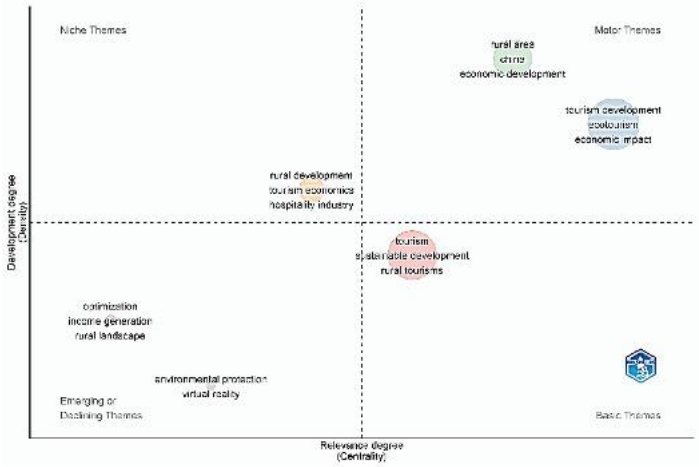


Figure 3. Thematic Map Conceptual Structure by Keywords

The map organizes themes into four quadrants: motor themes (upper right), basic themes (lower right), niche themes (upper left), and emerging or declining themes (lower left). Figure 4 complements this with a frequency-based visualization of keyword co-occurrence networks.

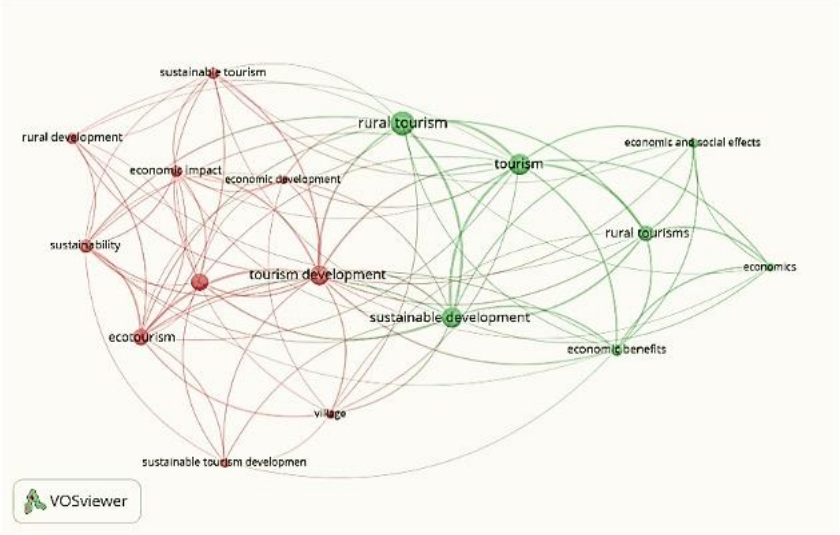


Figure 4. Network Visualization of Keyword Co-Occurrence

To provide a more granular understanding of the position and weight of each thematic cluster identified in the strategic diagram, Table 3 presents the quantitative indicators underpinning the classification of each theme.

Table 3. Cluster Characteristics

Label Cluster	Callon Centrality	Callon Density	Frequency	Quadrant Position
Tourism Development	4.535	90.107	120	Motor Theme
Rural Area	3.700	172.672	48	Motor Theme
Tourism	2.901	73.281	99	Basic Theme
Rural Development	2.250	77.679	19	Basic Theme
Optimization	0.833	55.556	7	Niche Theme
Environmental Protection	1.104	43.750	6	Emerging Theme

The motor themes quadrant is dominated by "Tourism Development" (frequency = 120) and "Rural Area" (density = 172.672), confirming their position as the intellectual core of this field. The exceptionally high density of the "Rural Area" cluster indicates strong internal cohesion, reflecting the maturity of rural context studies (Rosalina et al., 2021). The basic themes quadrant contains "Tourism" and "Rural Development," which serve as broad conceptual anchors but lack thematic specificity, consistent with early-stage research characterized by general framing rather than targeted analysis.

The most critical finding lies in the emerging or declining themes quadrant, where "Environmental Protection" appears with low centrality (1.104), low density (43.750), and minimal frequency (6 documents). This signals a significant gap: despite global sustainability discourse, the direct linkage between economic benefits and environmental protection in tourism village research remains underdeveloped, echoing concerns raised by Manalu et al. (2025) regarding insufficient integration of ecological considerations in rural tourism frameworks. The "Optimization" cluster occupies the niche quadrant with very low centrality (0.833), suggesting that technical and operational efficiency modeling in tourism villages remains a specialized and isolated line of inquiry.

To further examine the internal composition of each thematic cluster, tables 4 through 7 detail the specific keywords comprising the basic, emerging, motor, and niche theme clusters, respectively. This keyword-level analysis reveals the precise conceptual terrain covered within each quadrant.

Table 4 Basic Themes of Research

Occurrences	Words	Cluster Label
2	future prospect	tourism
2	industrial economics	tourism
2	living standards	tourism
2	performance	tourism
2	poverty alleviation	tourism
2	power	tourism
2	tourism industry	tourism
20	tourism	tourism
15	sustainable development	tourism
14	rural tourisms	tourism
10	rural areas	tourism
6	economic and social effects	tourism
6	economic benefits	tourism
5	economics	tourism
4	leisure industry	tourism
3	decision making	tourism
2	development trends	tourism
4	rural development	rural development
4	tourism economics	rural development
3	hospitality industry	rural development
2	economic growth	rural development
2	marketing	rural development
2	profitability	rural development
2	quality of life	rural development

Table 4 illustrates that basic themes are anchored in broad normative concepts such as "sustainable development," "poverty alleviation," and "living standards," reflecting the foundational framing of early research that treated tourism as an inherently welfare-generating activity. In contrast to these generalized constructs, the following table documents the thematic cluster positioned at the periphery of the research landscape.

Table 5. Emerging or Declining Themes

Occurrences	Words	Cluster Label
4	environmental protection	environmental protection
2	virtual reality	environmental protection

Table 5 reveals that the emerging theme cluster consists of only two keywords, "environmental protection" and "virtual reality," both with limited occurrence, underscoring the marginal integration of ecological and technology-based considerations within the economic benefits literature. This is a notable gap given the biodiversity sensitivities of many tourism village settings and the growing role of digital innovation in rural tourism promotion. Moving to the dominant core of the research field, Table 6 presents the motor theme clusters, which represent the most well-developed and strategically central areas of inquiry.

Table 6. Motor Themes of Research

Occurrences	Words	Cluster Label
21	tourism development	tourism development
16	ecotourism	tourism development
8	economic impact	tourism development
7	sustainability	tourism development
6	heritage tourism	tourism development
6	village	tourism development
5	Indonesia	tourism development
4	local participation	tourism development
4	perception	tourism development
4	rural economy	tourism development
3	cost-benefit analysis	tourism development
3	empowerment	tourism development
3	national park	tourism development
2	sunda isles	tourism development
2	sustainable development goal	tourism development
2	united states	tourism development
8	rural area	rural area
6	china	rural area
3	economic development	rural area
2	rural population	rural area
2	agriculture	rural area
3	covid-19	rural area
3	human	rural area
3	humans	rural area
2	article	rural area
2	energy conservation	rural area
2	environmental economics	rural area
2	epidemic	rural area
2	epidemiology	rural area
2	green economy	rural area
2	pandemic	rural area
2	pandemics	rural area
2	participatory approach	rural area

The motor themes in Table 6 reveal a research field increasingly oriented toward measurable outcomes, evidenced by the prominence of "cost-benefit analysis," "economic impact," and "local participation," indicating a shift from descriptive to evaluative scholarship. Complementing these dominant clusters, Table 7 examines the niche themes, which, although isolated from mainstream discourse, may represent emerging methodological frontiers.

Table 7. Niche Themes of Research

Occurrences	Words	Cluster Label
3	optimization	optimization
2	income generation	optimization
2	rural landscape	optimization

Taken together, tables 4–7 reveal a clear directional shift in the literature. Early-stage research relied on general normative terms such as "poverty alleviation" and "living standards" (Basic Themes), whereas more recent Motor Theme keywords, including "cost-benefit analysis," "economic impact," and "income distribution," reflect a transition toward evidence-based performance measurement. This shift aligns with the broader maturation of tourism economics as a discipline, where qualitative aspirations are increasingly complemented by quantitative assessment frameworks (Purnomo et al., 2020).

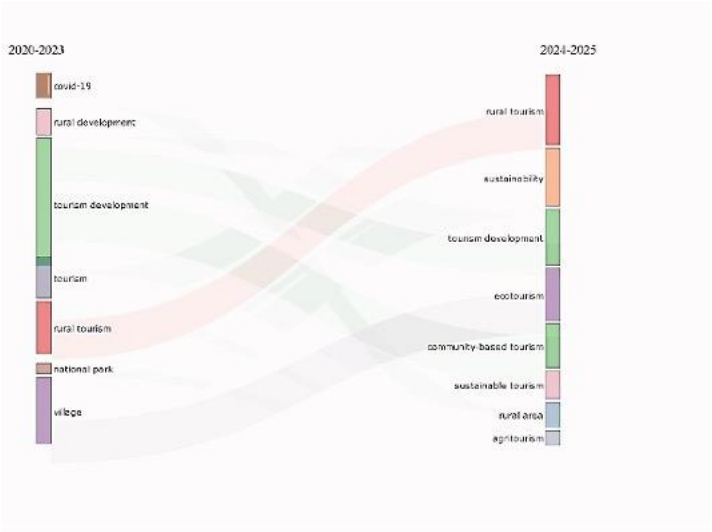


Figure 5. Thematic Evolution Conceptual Structure by Keyword

The analysis confirms that "Tourism" and "Rural Development" remained consistent pillars across both periods. However, the 2023–2025 phase witnessed the emergence of more specialized themes such as "Optimization" and "Income Generation," alongside a modest but notable appearance of "Environmental Protection," suggesting nascent awareness of ecological trade-offs in economic-driven tourism development (Liu et al., 2023). The persistent dominance of economic growth themes over environmental ones, however, points to a structural bias in the field that warrants attention in future research agendas.

RQ 3: Who are the most influential journals, researchers, institutions, and countries in this research landscape?

Beyond the thematic structure of the field, an examination of the most influential dissemination outlets is essential for understanding the scholarly ecosystem through which knowledge in this domain is produced and validated. Table 8 presents the local impact indicators of the nine most influential publication sources.

Table 8. Top Sources' Local Impact

Source	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	For example	PY_start
Sustainability (Switzerland)	6	8	1	91	8	2020
Geojournal Of Tourism And Geosites	3	5	0,75	32	7	2022
Journal Of Sustainable Tourism	3	3	0,5	114	3	2020
Discover Sustainability	2	2	2	6	3	2025
E3s Web Of Conferences	2	3	0,333	36	3	2020
International Journal Of Environmental Research And Public Health	2	2	0,5	17	2	2022

Source	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	For example	PY_start
International Journal Of Sustainable Development And Planning	2	4	0,5	16	4	2022
Tourism And Hospitality	2	2	1	7	4	2024
Worldwide Hospitality And Tourism Themes	2	2	0,4	18	2	2021

The Journal of Sustainable Tourism records the highest total citations (TC = 114) despite publishing only three papers, indicating exceptionally high per-article influence and its status as a premier outlet for tourism sustainability research. Sustainability (Switzerland) leads in publication volume (NP = 8) and holds the highest h-index (6) and g-index (8), confirming its role as the primary dissemination platform in this field. Discover Sustainability, though newly active from 2025, records the highest m-index (2.000), reflecting rapid early citation accumulation and growing scholarly relevance. The Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites demonstrates strong output productivity (NP = 7) with consistent citation performance (h-index = 3).

Building upon the source-level analysis, it is equally important to identify the individual scholars whose contributions have most significantly shaped the field. Table 9 presents the ten most productive authors along with their fractionalized contribution scores, which correct for collaborative authorship by proportionally weighting each scholar's individual share of co-authored works.

Table 9. The Most Relevant Authors

Author	Articles	Articles Fractionalized
Wang J	3	1,50
Brito Dmc	2	0,40
Chambwe M	2	0,83
Da Cruz Fontoura Ag	2	0,40
De Almeida Lmld	2	0,40
By Vasconcelos Im	2	0,40
Guo Y	2	0,83
Hilario Rr	2	0,40
Liu Y	2	0,53
Mohd Nor Na	2	0,67

Wang J leads in both publication count (3 articles) and fractionalized score (1.50), indicating high individual contribution relative to co-authorship. The fractionalized score differentiates individual productivity from team output: Chambwe M (0.83) and Guo Y (0.83) reflect smaller collaborative teams, whereas Brito Dmc and affiliated authors (0.40 each) consistently publish within a larger, cohesive research group, as further evidenced by Figure 6.

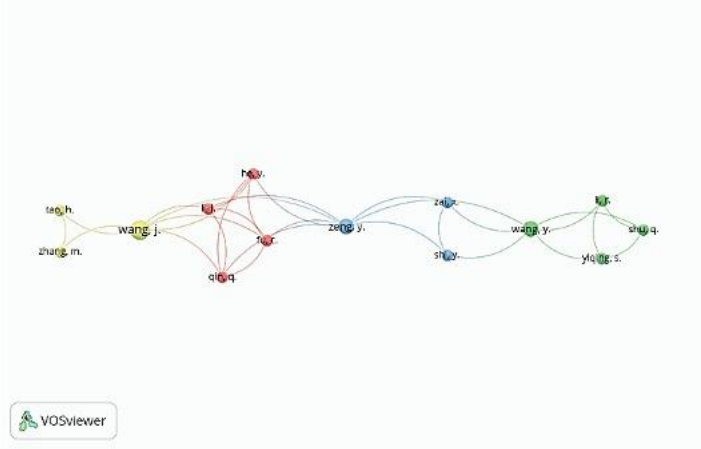


Figure 6. Network Visualization of Author Collaboration

Figure 6 reveals distinct collaboration patterns. The cluster comprising Brito Dmc, Da Cruz Fontoura Ag, De Almeida Lmld, De Vasconcelos Im, and Hilário Rr forms a tightly integrated research team with uniform publication and fractionalization profiles. Wang J, by contrast, exhibits a broader and more flexible collaboration network. A notable portion of authors in the dataset operate independently, suggesting that cross-institutional and international collaboration in this field remains limited, consistent with the 21.24% international co-authorship rate reported in Table 1.

The authorship patterns identified above are also reflected at the institutional level. To map the organizational centers of knowledge production in this field, Table 10 lists the ten most productive institutions, providing insight into which universities and research centers have most consistently invested in this area of inquiry.

Table 10. Top Institutes that Have Contributed to Research

Affiliation	Articles
Hungarian University Of Agriculture And Life Sciences	8
Brawijaya University	4
Tsinghua University	4
West Virginia University	4
Hasanuddin University	3
Mamirauá Institute for Sustainable Development	3
University of the Azores	3
Universidade Federal Do Amapa	3
Islamic University of Bandung	3
Mahasaraswati University Denpasar	3

The Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences leads with 8 publications, reflecting a sustained institutional research agenda on rural tourism economics. Three institutions, Brawijaya University, Tsinghua University, and West Virginia University, each contribute 4 articles, representing geographic diversity across Eastern Europe, East Asia, and North America. The presence of four Indonesian universities (Brawijaya, Hasanuddin, UNISBA, and Unmas Denpasar) collectively reinforces Indonesia's position as the most productive national contributor in this field, a pattern that is further confirmed when the analysis is extended to the national level.

Extending the institutional analysis to the national level, Table 11 presents the top ten contributing countries, illuminating the geopolitical distribution of scholarly output and the degree to which research priorities in this field are shaped by regional development contexts.

Table 21. Top 10 Countries that Contributed to Writing Articles

Country	Freq
Indonesia	57
China	42
India	21
USA	14
Brazil	13
Malaysia	13
Hungary	12
Portugal	8
Serbia	8
Ecuador	6

Indonesia leads with 57 publications, followed by China (42) and India (21). The dominance of Global South nations reflects the strategic centrality of rural tourism in developing countries' economic agendas, where tourism villages serve as key instruments for poverty alleviation and regional development (Haulle et al., 2024). The United States (14), Brazil (13), and Malaysia (13) confirm that the topic also attracts interest from middle-income and developed economies. However, the limited representation of Global North research institutions, as noted in Section 5.5, points to an imbalance in knowledge production that may constrain theoretical generalizability.

DISCUSSION

As an important theoretical contribution to the rural tourism economics literature, this research is situated alongside previous bibliometric reviews that, while still critical, generally focus on the concept of sustainable tourism or on community-based management in the broad sense, as has been done by others. This comparison is necessary to confirm the novelty of this study, given that previous studies have tended to map the literature with a strong emphasis on the environmental dimension or social participation without elaborating on specific economic aspects. For example, tracing the development of the term sustainable tourism over two decades without explaining economic indicators in technical terms, while examining rural tourism through the dominance of case studies that generally focus on the European context. While both studies affirm the importance of community participation as a sustainability factor, they have not provided an explicit mapping of the evolution of economic benefit measurement or a shift from normative goals of poverty alleviation to more measurable quantitative analysis. Unlike previous research, this study expands the scope. It deepens the analysis by combining bibliometric analysis and science mapping to track the development of economic benefit themes in the context of tourism villages from 2020 to 2025. This research also shows a geopolitical shift in knowledge production, now dominated by countries from the Global South, especially Indonesia and China, and reveals a transformation of the economic pillar from the general narrative of poverty alleviation to a more sophisticated cost-benefit analysis and optimization (Ruhanen et al., 2015; Ruiz-Real et al., 2020).

The dynamics of thematic evolution show a significant maturation in the academic approach to tourism village economics. Themes such as Poverty Alleviation and Living Standards, included in the Basic Themes category, serve as normative objectives that underpin this sector. Over time, the focus of research shifted to Motor Themes such as Tourism Development and Rural Areas, which emphasized more technocratic indicators, including economic impact, cost-benefit analysis, and income distribution. This shift suggests that academics have moved beyond the idealistic assumption that tourism automatically brings prosperity toward a more critical, evidence-based assessment of the economic value generated and how that income is distributed. In addition, the emergence of Optimization and Income Generation as Niche Themes indicates increasing interest.

However, it remains limited to technical and mathematical modeling of rural income flows, in line with the development patterns of other fields as they move from qualitative descriptions to optimization-based quantitative approaches.

Although the knowledge map produced is quite comprehensive, the empirical findings also reveal structural challenges that need to be taken into account. One important finding is the position of the Environmental Protection theme, which is in the Emerging or Declining category, with low centrality and density. This condition shows a tendency toward profit-orientation bias in the literature, in which the search for economic benefits, especially through the study of economic impacts, increasingly separates from ecological considerations. This gap poses the risk that the development of tourist villages in developing countries such as Indonesia, China, and India prioritizes short-term economic benefits over long-term environmental sustainability. The analysis of the state's contribution also indicates the potential for the formation of knowledge silos, given that the research landscape is strongly influenced by national policies such as Indonesia's Tourism Village program and China's Rural Revitalization agenda. The lack of collaboration with research institutions in the Global North and the limited cross-regional comparative studies can hinder the generalizability of findings globally, so the challenge is to integrate the success of local economies into a universal theoretical framework that balances human profit and environmental conservation.

The implications of these bibliometric and thematic findings require a reorientation of strategies for both practitioners and researchers. For education practitioners and policymakers, the dominance of the cost-benefit analysis theme indicates that the measure of success can no longer be based solely on the number of tourists, but must also consider more stringent financial instruments to assess whether tourism revenues can cover operational and social costs. In addition, practitioners need to bridge the gap related to environmental protection by incorporating conservation aspects into the economic model, for example, through ecotourism, and diversifying income according to the findings in the optimization theme to avoid vulnerability to fluctuations due to over-tourism. On the other hand, for the academic community, this research shows the need for a more integrated research agenda, including linking economic benefits with environmental costs through approaches such as green accounting or payment for ecosystem services, so that the environmental dimension can move from a fringe position to the center of scientific discussion. Researchers are also encouraged to integrate the optimization model currently under development into the research niche, alongside broader social science research, and to strengthen collaboration between researchers from the Global South and the Global North to generate a deeper theoretical understanding of the political economy of rural tourism across a variety of regulatory contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the study of economic benefits in the development of tourist villages has increased sharply over the period 2020 to 2025. Through bibliometric analysis, this topic is no longer seen as a complementary issue but has become a rapidly growing research stream, mainly driven by the post-pandemic recovery agenda. Overall, the study underscores three key points.

First, there is a shift in research orientation from a normative approach, such as poverty reduction efforts, to a more technocratic, measurement-based approach. The emergence of new themes such as cost-benefit analysis, economic impact, and optimization indicates that academic discussions now demand stronger empirical evidence on economic performance and income distribution patterns, no longer relying solely on the assumption that tourism automatically improves people's welfare.

Second, the knowledge production map shows the dominance of contributions from the Global South, especially Indonesia and China. This condition underscores the importance of tourism villages in national development strategies in developing countries. On the other hand, this dominance also shows limited collaboration with institutions from the Global North, so the potential for more universal theoretical development remains suboptimal.

Third, the study identified an important gap between economic interests and environmental sustainability. The theme of environmental protection emerged as a weak focus, separate from the discussion of economic benefits. These findings show a bias toward profit, increasing the risk of neglecting ecological aspects in the development of tourist villages. From a practical perspective, tourism village managers and policymakers need to abandon their reliance on indicators such as the number of tourists and adopt financial evaluation instruments that better reflect performance efficiency. For the next research agenda, it is necessary to develop integrative models, such as green accounting, that explicitly include environmental costs in the analysis of economic benefits, enabling tourism development without neglecting the sustainability of natural resources, which are the foundation.

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