

Festivals and Music as a Tourism Attraction: A Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Festivals and music events have become integral components of tourism development, offering cultural enrichment, economic stimulation, and unique visitor experiences. This study conducts a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to map the intellectual, conceptual, and geographical landscape of academic research on festivals and music as tourism attractions. Using data retrieved from the Scopus database and analyzed through VOSviewer, the study examines the co-occurrence of keywords, co-citation patterns among authors, and international collaboration networks. The results identify central themes such as cultural tourism, tourist behavior, and event marketing, with emerging interest in sustainability, music tourism, and digital engagement. Influential authors including Getz, Gibson, and Richards are highlighted as key intellectual contributors, while dominant research hubs are located in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia. The findings reveal a dynamic and evolving field, with strong interdisciplinary linkages and opportunities for expanded research in underrepresented regions and novel event formats. This analysis provides a foundational reference for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers aiming to advance the understanding and strategic development of festival and music tourism.

Keywords: Festival Tourism, Music Tourism, Bibliometric Analysis, Cultural Events, VOSViewer

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary tourism landscape, festivals and music events have emerged as powerful cultural and economic assets that significantly influence destination attractiveness. These events serve not only as expressions of cultural identity and creativity but also as strategic tools for tourism development and place branding [1]. From local folk celebrations to international music festivals, these events draw large crowds, stimulate local economies, and foster intercultural dialogue. The rise of experiential tourism, where tourists seek emotional, participatory, and memorable experiences has further elevated the role of festivals and music in shaping travel motivations and behavior [2]. Consequently, the integration of cultural events into tourism planning has become a priority for many destinations aiming to diversify their offerings and enhance competitiveness.

The interplay between festivals, music, and tourism is particularly evident in the development of event tourism, a field that has matured significantly over the past two decades. Event tourism conceptualizes events not merely as cultural expressions but as catalysts for tourism flows and regional development [3]. Music festivals such as Tomorrowland in Belgium, Coachella in the United States, and Glastonbury in the UK illustrate the magnetism of these experiences, often drawing international tourists, media coverage, and substantial economic impact. Moreover, smaller-scale and indigenous music festivals have also gained attention for their potential to promote sustainable tourism and community engagement, providing platforms for heritage preservation and local empowerment [4].

Academic interest in festivals and music as tourism attractions has followed this growth trajectory, marked by an increasing volume of research exploring various dimensions such as

economic impact, visitor motivation, cultural authenticity, and sustainability. Researchers have applied a wide array of theoretical frameworks (from stakeholder theory to place attachment) to examine the socio-cultural and economic implications of festival tourism [5]. In recent years, sustainability and responsible tourism have become central themes, reflecting broader concerns about overtourism, environmental degradation, and the commodification of culture. These shifts indicate a dynamic and evolving research field that intersects with broader trends in tourism studies and cultural policy.

The growing diversity of research in this area necessitates a comprehensive synthesis of existing studies to map out thematic clusters, identify influential works, and reveal research gaps. Bibliometric analysis provides a robust methodological approach for such a task, offering insights into the intellectual structure of a field by analyzing publication trends, citation patterns, and co-authorship networks [6]. By utilizing tools such as VOSviewer, researchers can visualize conceptual, intellectual, and social networks, enabling a clearer understanding of how the field has evolved and where it is heading.

In light of the global challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the festival and music tourism sector faced unprecedented disruptions. Events were cancelled, rescheduled, or shifted to digital platforms, leading to significant implications for both the industry and academic discourse. This disruption has prompted renewed interest in resilience, innovation, and the digital transformation of cultural events [7]. Understanding how the academic community has responded to these challenges through research can offer valuable insights into future directions and priorities in festival and music tourism studies.

Despite the substantial body of literature on festivals and music as tourism attractions, there has been limited systematic effort to synthesize this knowledge using bibliometric techniques. Most existing reviews are narrative in nature and may lack objectivity or fail to capture the full scope of the field's evolution. As the academic output continues to grow, it becomes increasingly difficult for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to navigate the literature, discern key contributions, and identify emerging themes. Therefore, a bibliometric analysis is needed to provide a data-driven overview of the knowledge landscape, highlight influential authors and journals, and uncover underexplored areas that warrant further investigation. This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of the academic literature on festivals and music as tourism attractions to map the intellectual, conceptual, and social structure of the field.

2. METHODS

This study adopts a **bibliometric analysis** approach to systematically examine the academic literature related to festivals and music as tourism attractions. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method that uses statistical tools to analyze publication metadata, allowing researchers to identify patterns, trends, and structures within a body of scholarly work [6]. The method is particularly effective in mapping the intellectual and conceptual development of a research field, including the identification of prolific authors, influential publications, key journals, and collaborative networks. To ensure methodological rigor, the study follows established protocols for data collection, cleaning, and visualization using bibliometric tools such as VOSviewer.

The data collection process was conducted using the Scopus database, which is widely recognized for its comprehensive indexing of peer-reviewed literature in the social sciences and humanities. The search query included keywords such as "festival tourism," "music tourism," "event tourism," "cultural festivals," and related terms in titles, abstracts, and keywords. The search was limited to articles, reviews, and conference papers published in English between 2000 and 2024

to capture the evolution of the field over the past two decades. After removing duplicates and irrelevant entries through manual screening, a final dataset of relevant publications was compiled and exported in RIS and CSV formats for further analysis. Subsequently, data analysis was conducted using VOSviewer to perform co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence analyses.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Network Visualization

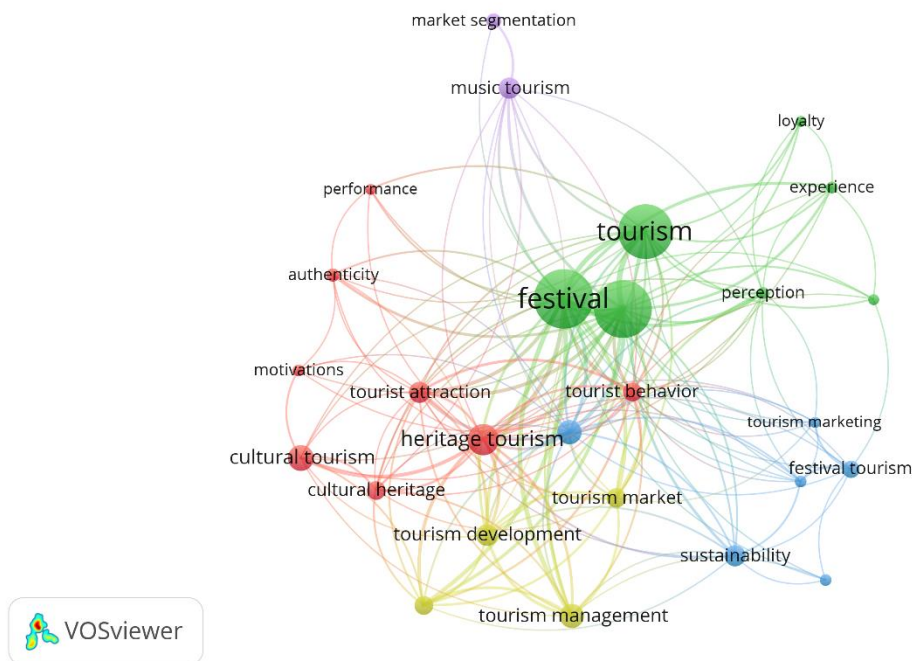


Figure 1. Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

This figure provides a comprehensive map of the conceptual structure in the field of festivals and music as tourism attractions. This map is built on the frequency and strength of keyword co-occurrence within the dataset, resulting in clusters of related concepts. The size of each node reflects the frequency of the keyword's appearance, while the thickness of the connecting lines (edges) represents the strength of co-occurrence between terms. In this visualization, key terms such as "tourism", "festival", and "heritage tourism" emerge as dominant nodes, indicating their central role in the literature.

The green cluster, which includes the terms *tourism*, *festival*, *tourist behavior*, *experience*, *loyalty*, and *perception*, suggests a strong thematic focus on tourist experiences and behavioral responses to festival tourism. These connections reflect an interest in how festivals and music events influence tourist satisfaction, brand loyalty, and overall travel experiences. This cluster highlights the experiential and emotional dimensions of festival attendance, supporting previous findings that emotional engagement is a key driver of destination loyalty (Lee et al., 2008). The red cluster, which groups terms such as *cultural tourism*, *heritage tourism*, *authenticity*, and *tourist attraction*, underscores the significance of cultural and heritage elements within festival tourism research. This suggests that many studies frame festivals as vehicles for preserving and promoting cultural identity and heritage, with authenticity being a recurring concern. The linkage with *motivations* also indicates that cultural appeal is often a major motivator for tourist participation in these events. This aligns with the discourse on cultural commodification and the balancing act between preserving heritage and generating tourism revenue (McKercher & du Cros, 2002).

The **blue cluster** is oriented around terms such as *festival tourism*, *sustainability*, *tourism marketing*, and *tourism market*. This suggests an emerging body of research focusing on the strategic and sustainable management of festivals as tourism products. Issues such as environmental sustainability, destination branding, and market segmentation are addressed within this theme. This reflects a shift toward more critical and managerial approaches to understanding the long-term viability of festival-based tourism strategies, especially in the face of environmental and social challenges. Meanwhile, the **purple cluster** centers on *music tourism* and *market segmentation*, suggesting a niche but distinct thematic thread that differentiates music tourism from broader festival or cultural tourism. The connection with *performance* also implies interest in the performative and entertainment aspects of music events. Though relatively smaller in scale, this cluster points to an opportunity for more focused research on the role of music-specific festivals and their audience characteristics, particularly in terms of genre preferences, demographics, and travel behaviors.

3.2 Overlay Visualization

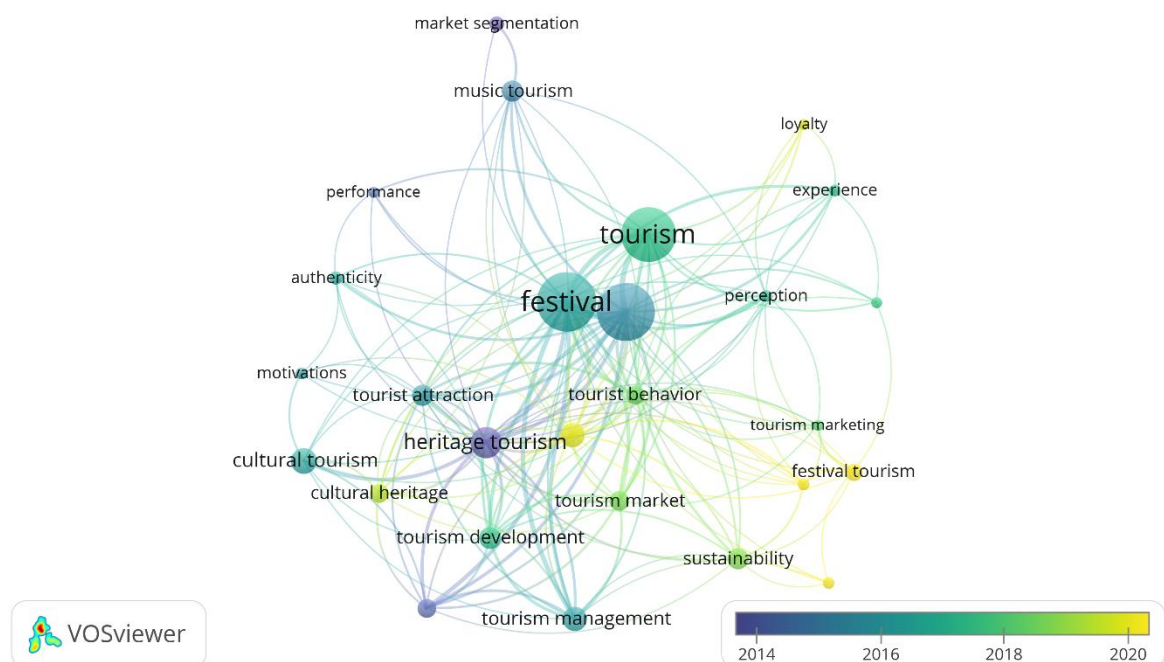


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

Figure 2 provides temporal insights into the evolution of research themes in the field of festivals and music as tourism attractions. The color gradient—from purple (earlier years) to yellow (more recent years)—indicates the average publication year of documents associated with each keyword. Terms such as "cultural tourism," "heritage tourism," and "tourism development" appear predominantly in darker shades (purple and blue), suggesting these were among the earlier focal points of academic attention in the field, with strong foundations in the 2014–2016 period. These early studies often explored the role of festivals in heritage preservation, cultural representation, and local identity building.

In contrast, keywords like "festival tourism," "sustainability," "experience," "loyalty," and "perception" appear in lighter green to yellow hues, indicating more recent scholarly interest from around 2018 to 2020. This temporal shift reflects the growing emphasis on visitor-centered experiences and the sustainability of tourism practices, particularly in the post-2015 tourism discourse. The rise of these topics corresponds with broader shifts in tourism research toward emotional engagement, environmental responsibility, and long-term destination resilience. It also

reveals how academic inquiry has transitioned from macro-level cultural and heritage concerns to more nuanced, consumer-behavior-focused investigations. Additionally, the presence of "music tourism" in light blue suggests that this niche domain is gaining momentum, though still less central compared to broader terms like "festival" and "tourism." Its peripheral location and relatively newer color coding indicate an emerging interest in exploring how music-based events shape tourism flows and destination branding.

3.3 Citation Analysis

Table 1. The Most Impactful Literatures

Citations	Authors and year	Title
398	[8]	The effects of social media on emotions, brand relationship quality, and word of mouth: An empirical study of music festival attendees
323	[9]	Pine and Gilmore's Concept of Experience Economy and Its Dimensions: An Empirical Examination in Tourism
188	[10]	Tamworth, Australia's 'country music capital': Place marketing, rurality, and resident reactions
167	[11]	Commensurability and sustainability: Triple impact assessments of a tourism event
118	[12]	Listening and tourism studies
115	[13]	The greening of music festivals: Motivations, barriers and outcomes. Applying the Mair and Jago model
113	[14]	Experiential places or places of experience? Place identity and place attachment as mechanisms for creating festival environment
96	[15]	Socio-spatial authenticity at co-created music festivals
92	[16]	Music, tourism and the transformation of memphis
83	[17]	A critical comparative study of visitor motivations for attending music festivals: A case study of glastonbury and v festival

Source: Scopus, 2025

3.4 Density Visualization

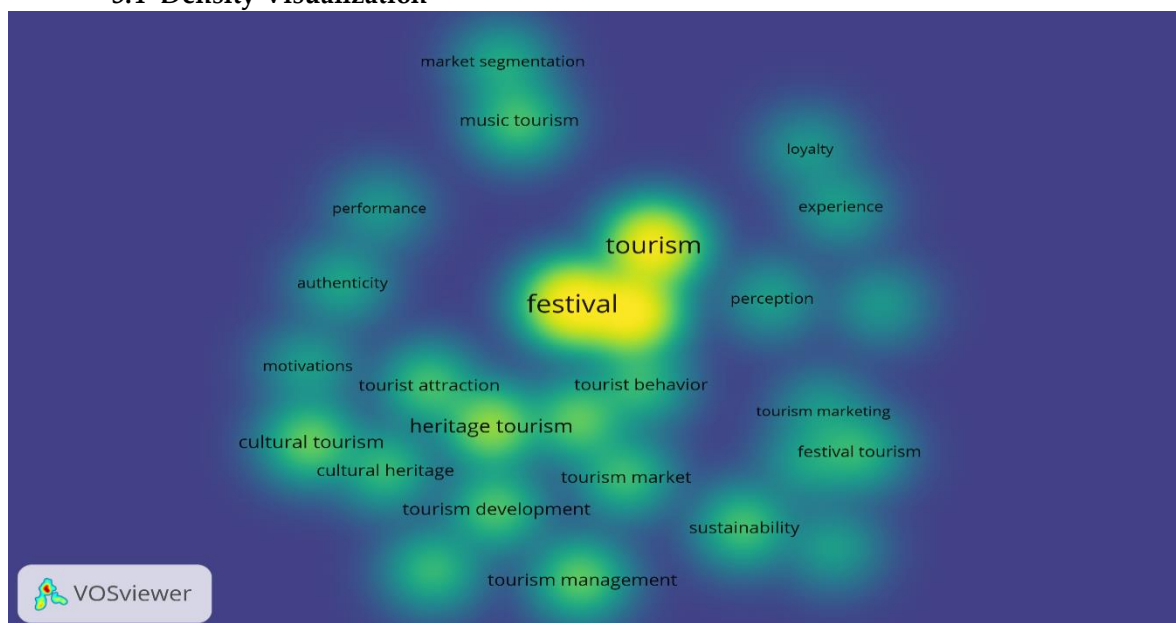


Figure 3. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

Figure 3 provides insight into the concentration and prominence of keywords in the research field of festivals and music as tourism attractions. The intensity of color ranging from dark blue (low density) to bright yellow (high density) indicates how frequently certain terms co-occur within the literature. The core of the visualization is dominated by the keywords “festival” and “tourism”, highlighted in bright yellow. This signifies that these two terms form the conceptual nucleus of the field, frequently appearing together and serving as anchors for other related topics. Around this core are moderately dense areas like “heritage tourism,” “tourist behavior,” and “cultural tourism,” indicating strong supporting themes that have consistently contributed to the academic discourse. Less dense, peripheral areas such as “music tourism,” “loyalty,” “experience,” and “market segmentation” appear in cooler green to blue shades, suggesting these are emerging or less frequently explored topics. Their spatial distance from the central cluster implies specialized or niche research paths within the broader theme. Despite being peripheral, these keywords are important as they signal potential growth areas in the literature, especially as the field becomes more diversified and interdisciplinary.

3.5 Co-Authorship Network

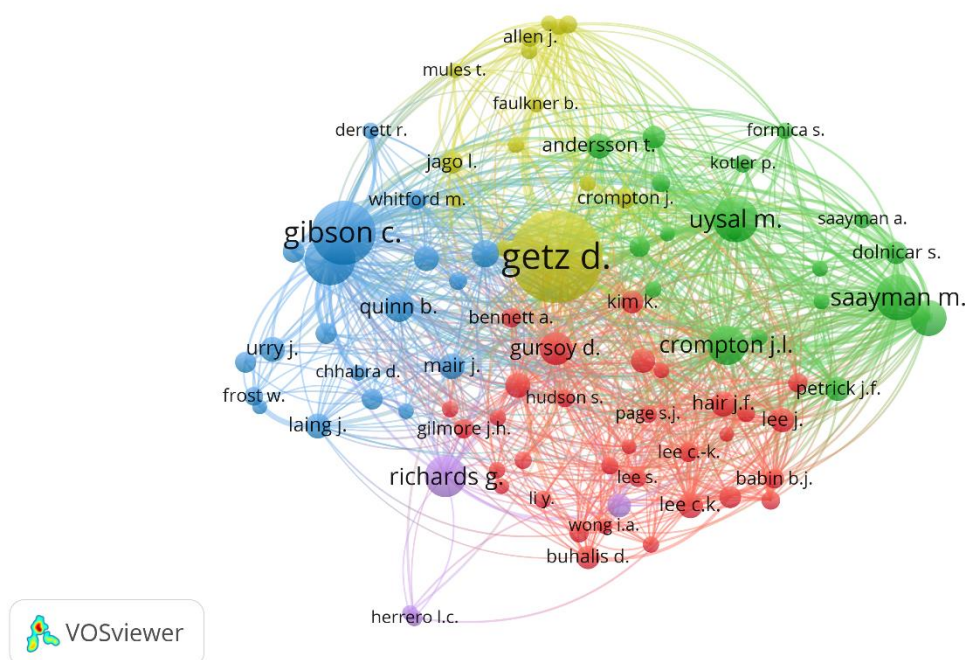


Figure 4. Author Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

Figure 4 reveals the intellectual structure of research in the domain of festivals and music as tourism attractions. At the center of the map, Getz D. emerges as the most influential and frequently cited scholar, serving as a pivotal node that connects multiple research clusters. Surrounding Getz are prominent authors like Gibson C., Uysal M., Saayman M., and Richards G., each representing different thematic concentrations. The blue cluster (e.g., Gibson, Derrett, Laing) seems to focus on cultural and community-based tourism, while the green cluster (e.g., Uysal, Saayman, Crompton) leans toward tourism behavior and destination development. The red cluster, dense with names like Lee C.K., Hair J.F., and Babin B.J., likely represents a stream grounded in quantitative tourism marketing and behavioral modeling. The map indicates a well-networked academic community, with interlinkages suggesting interdisciplinary collaboration and citation.

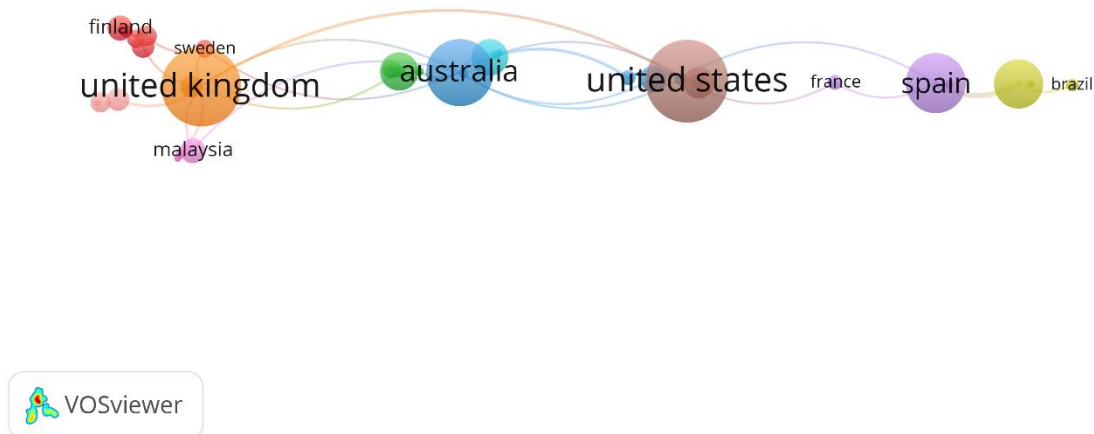


Figure 5. Country Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

Figure 5 highlights the global landscape of scholarly contributions and partnerships in the field of festivals and music as tourism attractions. The United States, United Kingdom, and Australia emerge as the most influential countries, as indicated by their larger node sizes and multiple co-authorship links, reflecting both high publication output and extensive international collaboration. The United Kingdom appears particularly central, linking actively with countries such as Sweden, Finland, Malaysia, and Australia, suggesting a strong global research network centered around European and Commonwealth academic institutions. Similarly, the United States maintains robust ties with Australia and several European countries, underlining its pivotal role in shaping the discourse. Countries like Spain, France, Brazil, and Malaysia are also visible on the map, though with fewer interconnections, indicating emerging or more localized contributions.

Discussion

The keyword co-occurrence analysis reveals that the most frequently occurring terms in the literature are "festival" and "tourism," indicating their central role in the academic discourse. These two keywords serve as hubs that connect various conceptual clusters such as cultural heritage, tourist behavior, event marketing, and sustainability. Closely linked terms like "heritage tourism," "cultural tourism," and "authenticity" suggest that a significant portion of research has historically focused on the cultural dimension of festival events, particularly those with historical or community roots. This is consistent with earlier studies by [18] and [19], who emphasized the cultural-economic nexus of festival tourism as a driver of place identity and heritage commodification.

Another prominent theme emerging from the map is visitor behavior and experience, with keywords such as "tourist behavior," "experience," "loyalty," and "perception" forming a strong conceptual cluster. This reflects a broader trend in tourism studies that increasingly incorporates psychological and behavioral dimensions to understand how tourists perceive and engage with festival environments. Recent literature emphasizes the affective and immersive nature of festivals, with tourist loyalty being closely linked to the quality of experience and emotional attachment to both the event and the destination [20], [21]. This shift toward consumer-focused research is critical as destinations seek to enhance experiential value in an increasingly competitive tourism market.

The emergence of sustainability and festival marketing as connected but distinct nodes indicates a growing awareness of environmental, economic, and social impacts of festivals. As events scale up in size and scope, scholars have raised concerns about over-tourism, environmental degradation, and the loss of authenticity [22]. The inclusion of terms such as “tourism development,” “tourism market,” and “sustainability” in close proximity highlights efforts to balance tourism growth with long-term destination management and responsible practices. This aligns with the global sustainability agenda and reflects the incorporation of sustainable tourism principles into festival planning and evaluation frameworks.

In terms of temporal evolution, the overlay visualization shows that earlier research (pre-2016) concentrated on foundational themes such as cultural tourism, heritage preservation, and tourism management. In contrast, more recent studies (post-2018) have shifted attention toward experience design, visitor satisfaction, and sustainability. This suggests an evolution in research focus from macro-level structural concerns to micro-level visitor-centric perspectives. The appearance of terms like “festival tourism” and “perception” in yellow hues indicates new areas of interest, including branding, digital engagement, and post-event evaluation metrics. Furthermore, the appearance of “music tourism” as a standalone but connected concept suggests a specialized research niche that is gaining momentum, potentially driven by the global rise of music festivals and the growing popularity of music-based travel experiences.

The density visualization reinforces these insights by showing the highest research concentration around the terms “festival” and “tourism.” These bright yellow zones denote conceptual saturation and academic maturity in these core areas. Conversely, the less dense (green to blue) regions, including “music tourism,” “performance,” “market segmentation,” and “loyalty,” represent relatively underexplored themes with room for further development. Music tourism in particular, while conceptually linked to festivals, has received comparatively less bibliometric attention despite its growing cultural and economic relevance. This points to a research gap where future studies can explore genre-based tourism, audience segmentation, and the integration of music events in destination branding.

The author co-citation network further reveals the intellectual pillars of the field. Dominant scholars such as Getz D., Gibson C., Richards G., Uysal M., and Saayman M. form the core of the academic network, with extensive influence across multiple subfields. Getz, for instance, is frequently cited for his theoretical contributions to event tourism and festival typologies, while Richards is known for his work on cultural tourism and creativity. The clustering of authors into distinct color-coded communities indicates intellectual specialization—some scholars focus on festival economics and planning, while others contribute to cultural theory, marketing, or tourism psychology. This suggests a multidisciplinary foundation that enriches the discourse and offers diverse methodological perspectives, from ethnography to structural modeling.

In addition, the country collaboration map reflects the global distribution of research activity and cooperation. The United States, United Kingdom, and Australia dominate the network, both in terms of publication volume and co-authorship linkages. These countries have established academic institutions and funding structures that support event and tourism research, explaining their centrality. The collaboration with countries such as Spain, France, Finland, Malaysia, and Brazil shows a growing internationalization of the field. However, the limited presence of African and South Asian countries suggests a geographical imbalance that warrants attention. As festivals and music play significant roles in the cultural economies of these underrepresented regions, future research should seek to diversify geographic representation through comparative case studies and south-south collaborations.

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this bibliometric review have important implications for tourism planners, event organizers, and policymakers. First, the strong linkage between tourist experience and festival loyalty highlights the importance of designing immersive, engaging, and culturally meaningful events. Second, the integration of sustainability into festival tourism research calls for the adoption of green event practices, such as waste reduction, carbon

offsetting, and community involvement. Third, the growing emphasis on perception and marketing suggests that branding strategies should go beyond aesthetics to emphasize authenticity, cultural relevance, and emotional resonance.

This bibliometric analysis provides a foundation for future research agendas. Scholars should consider longitudinal studies that track how festivals evolve over time in response to shifting tourist demands, technological innovation, and global crises such as pandemics. Comparative studies between different types of festivals—music, food, religious, indigenous—can also deepen our understanding of how context influences visitor behavior and destination outcomes. Moreover, with the rise of digital platforms, hybrid and virtual festivals are emerging as new formats, presenting unexplored terrain for academic inquiry. Issues such as digital engagement, virtual experience quality, and online community building in the context of music and festivals remain largely absent in the current literature and represent promising avenues for further investigation.

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study provides a comprehensive overview of the academic landscape surrounding festivals and music as tourism attractions, revealing the field's conceptual foundations, intellectual structure, and emerging research trajectories. The findings highlight that core themes such as cultural and heritage tourism, tourist behavior, and experiential value dominate the discourse, while newer topics like sustainability, music tourism, and digital engagement are gaining momentum. Influential scholars such as Getz, Gibson, and Richards continue to shape the field, and research collaboration is largely concentrated among institutions in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia. The analysis also uncovers opportunities for future inquiry, particularly in underrepresented regions and evolving formats like hybrid and virtual festivals. This study not only maps the evolution of scholarly contributions but also offers strategic insights for advancing research and practice in festival and music tourism.

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