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Article

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Article

Research Trends in Communication and Tourism: A Systematic Review and a Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to analyze research trends in communication and tourism through a systematic review and bibliometric analysis of the academic literature in order to identify patterns, areas of interest and possible gaps in knowledge, thus contributing to the understanding and development of these interdisciplinary fields. The methodology includes a bibliometric analysis performed with the R Core Team 2022-Bibliometrix software 4.2.3, in addition to the use of VOSviewer software 1.6.20 and a systematic review of the Scopus and Web of Science databases to analyze the most researched topics, authors, their affiliations, countries, most influential publications, keywords and trends. The results of this research are a valuable contribution to the literature and the scientific community by providing a comprehensive and relevant analysis of the current landscape of communication and tourism research. To conclude, this analysis promotes a deeper understanding of the theoretical and conceptual framework of the studies published to date, which is essential for enriching the academic debate on trends in communication and tourism research.

Keywords: communication; tourism; systematic review; bibliometrics



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1. Introduction

The study of research trends in the fields of communication and tourism has gained increasing interest in recent years. Communication plays a fundamental role in the promotion of tourist destinations, reputation management and interaction with travelers (Tiago et al. 2021). On the other hand, tourism has become one of the most dynamic and significant industries globally (Meha and Zeqiri 2021). Analyzing trends in these fields through a systematic review and bibliometric analysis of academic literature allows us to obtain a comprehensive and detailed vision of its evolution, providing valuable information for researchers, academics and professionals in the area.

This methodological approach not only identifies predominant patterns and areas of interest, but also reveals potential gaps in existing knowledge. By mapping academic production, it is possible to highlight the most researched topics, the collaborations between different institutions and countries, and the main journals and authors that lead research in communication and tourism. Additionally, bibliometric analysis provides quantitative metrics that facilitate the evaluation of the impact and relevance of research, contributing to a deeper understanding of how these fields interact and influence each other.

The importance of these types of studies lies in their ability to guide future research and development efforts in key areas. By identifying gaps in knowledge, researchers can direct their efforts toward less explored topics, thereby promoting innovation and advancement at the intersection of communication and tourism. Likewise, this systematic review and bibliometric analysis can inform policymakers and professionals in the area

about emerging trends and best practices, facilitating evidence-based decision-making and contributing to the sustainable and effective development of the touristic industry.

Having said that, this article aims to analyze research trends in communication and tourism through a systematic review and bibliometric analysis of academic literature, in order to identify patterns, areas of interest and possible gaps in knowledge, thus contributing to the understanding and development of these interdisciplinary fields.

1.1. Communication and the Relationship through Tourism

Communication has radically transformed the way in which companies and organizations in the touristic sector interact with their audiences (Labanauskaitė et al. 2020). Through platforms such as social media, websites, blogs and emails, companies can reach a global audience quickly and efficiently (Hanief et al. 2023). The ability to personalize messages and segment audiences allows for more effective communication, which can attract and retain potential customers (Law et al. 2020). In addition, communication facilitates instant feedback, allowing companies to adjust their strategies in real time and improve the customer experience (Pato and Duque 2021).

For Kersulić et al. (2020), creativity in communication is essential for standing out in a competitive touristic market. Using engaging visual content, such as high-quality photos and videos, can capture users' attention and convey the essence of a touristic experience more effectively than text alone (Abbasi et al. 2022). Creative campaigns that use visual narratives and storytelling can generate greater engagement and emotional resonance with the audience (Yayla et al. 2023). Furthermore, the use of emerging technologies such as augmented reality and virtual reality allows potential tourists to experience destinations in an immersive way before deciding to visit them, which can positively influence their travel decisions (Cuic Tankovic et al. 2022).

The relationship between communication and tourism is symbiotic and crucial for success in the modern era (Flew and Kirkwood 2020). Today's tourists seek authentic and personalized experiences, and communication can meet these demands by offering relevant and engaging content that resonates with their interests and desires (Marchi et al. 2023). Well-executed digital marketing strategies not only attract tourists, but also build an online community around the brand, fostering loyalty and positive word of mouth (Dharmayanti et al. 2023).

This research is organized in a clear and coherent structure, which includes an introduction, a detailed methodology, the presentation of results, an exhaustive discussion of the findings, well-founded conclusions and the final presentation of the results obtained. This structure allows a comprehensive approach to the proposed objectives, ensuring a rigorous analysis and accurate interpretation of the data, which contributes to the development of significant and relevant conclusions in the context of this study.

1.2. Tourism

Tourism is an economic and social activity of great worldwide relevance, which involves the movement of people from one place to another for recreational, cultural or business purposes (Salgado Moreno et al. 2024). This activity not only generates significant income for local economies, but also encourages cultural exchange and understanding between different communities (Aguinis et al. 2023). In many countries, tourism represents an important source of employment and development, contributing to the improvement of infrastructure and services. Furthermore, the influx of tourists can revitalize urban and rural areas, promoting the conservation of heritage and the promotion of local traditions (Miller and Torres-Delgado 2023).

Tourism's impact goes beyond economic and cultural benefits; in environmental terms, tourism can be both a positive and negative force (Wei et al. 2023). On the one hand, sustainable tourism promotes responsible practices that protect and conserve natural ecosystems, ensuring that future generations can enjoy these resources. On the other hand, for (Ladkin et al. 2023), poorly managed tourism can lead to environmental degradation, the overexploitation of resources and the loss of biodiversity. It is crucial that tourism

policies incorporate sustainability principles, encouraging local communities' participation and the implementation of green technologies.

In the digital era, tourism has experienced significant transformations thanks to technology and social networks (Shang et al. 2023). Online platforms allow travelers to plan and book their trips in an easier way, as well as real-time sharing of their experiences (Chen et al. 2023). This connectivity has led to new forms of tourism, such as experience tourism, where travelers seek authentic and personalized experiences (Page and Duignan 2023). At the same time, data analytics and artificial intelligence are revolutionizing the industry, providing touristic companies with tools to better understand customer preferences and optimize their operations (Wickramasinghe and Naranpanawa 2023).

Tourism and communication are intrinsically connected, as the way in which tourism destinations are presented and promoted can significantly influence visitor perception and experience. In their bibliometric analysis, (Bujdosó et al. 2024) highlight that broader landscapes, when communicated effectively, are transformed into attractive tourism landscapes. This suggests that communication plays a crucial role in the interpretation and valorization of landscapes, transforming them from simple natural or urban spaces into tourist destinations with a specific attractiveness that responds to travelers' expectations and desires (Tóth et al. 2024). The visual and textual narrative in the promotion of these landscapes is, therefore, an essential tool for building the identity of a destination.

In the context of sports tourism, Tóth et al. (2024) underline the fundamental role of digital platforms in the promotion of events such as the 2020 European Football Championship in Budapest. These platforms not only facilitate the dissemination of information about the event, but also enable the creation of a global community of fans who share and amplify the sports experience. Digital communication, in this case, acts as a bridge between the event and potential tourists, creating a narrative around social responsibility and sustainable tourism, which reinforces the attractiveness of the destination and encourages responsible tourism practices.

The evolution of communication in tourism is also reflected in the growing importance of digital strategies for destination promotion and management. Recent studies cited show how the combination of data analytics, visual storytelling and digital platforms can transform the way tourism is experienced. From landscape management to the promotion of major sporting events, communication is positioned as a key element in creating meaningful and sustainable tourism experiences, adapting to the changing demands of modern travelers and the need for more responsible practices in the industry (Santos et al. 2019).

2. Methodology

The methodology used in this study includes a bibliometric analysis carried out with the R Core Team 2022-Bibliometrix software, as well as the use of the VOSviewer software and a systematic review of the Scopus and Web of Science databases. The analysis focused on identifying the most researched topics, prominent authors, their affiliations, countries of origin, the most influential publications, the most recurring keywords and trends in the intersection of communication and tourism concepts. The search strategy used in both databases was the following: (TITLE-KEY-ABS (communication and narrative) and TITLE-KEY-ABS (tourism) OR TITLE-KEY-ABS (visual and communication)). This strategy allowed us to identify the following relevant publications for the analysis.

The systematic review established rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the relevance and quality of the selected studies. Initially, 2062 records were identified through the Scopus and Web of Science databases. After 659 duplicate records were removed, 1403 papers were examined. We excluded studies in languages other than English (324 papers), those that were not available for retrieval (200 reports), studies unrelated to the central theme (516 studies), and those that focused solely on communication without direct relevance to the object of study (306 studies). Subsequently, 57 papers were assessed for eligibility, of which 37 were excluded at this final stage. Finally, 20 studies met all criteria and were included in the systematic review (Figure 1).

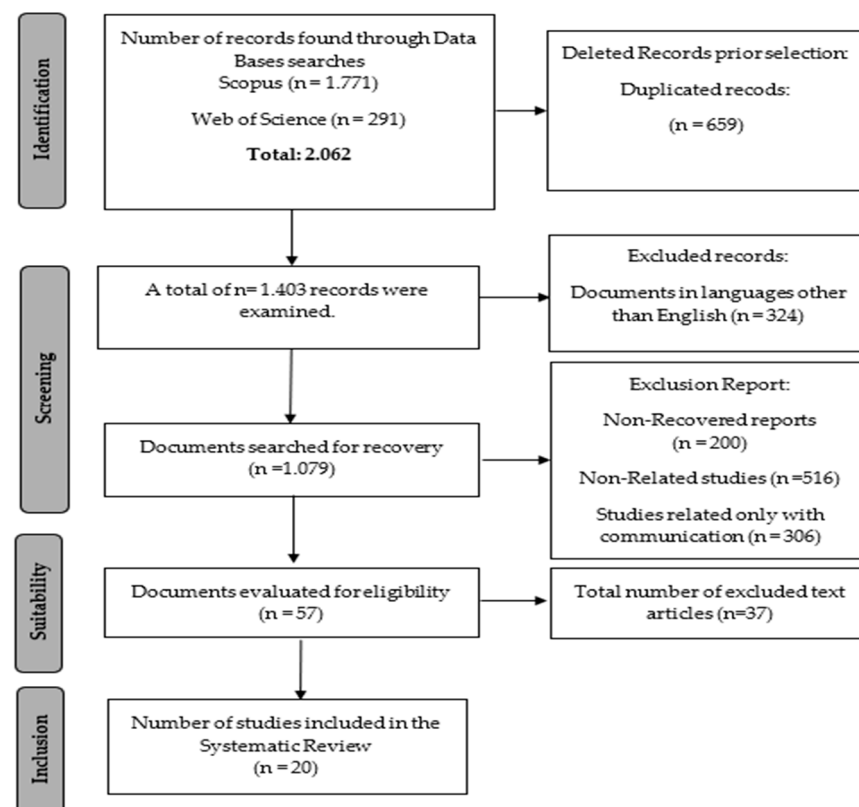


Figure 1. PRISMA Statement. Own elaboration.

3. Results

3.1. Bibliometrics

Bibliometrics is a discipline focused on the quantitative study of bibliographic production and its evolution over time, with the purpose of analyzing patterns and trends in scientific research (Mora Forero et al. 2023). In the context of communication and tourism, bibliometrics becomes an invaluable tool to understand the evolution of these interdisciplinary areas. In particular, in the field of touristic communication, bibliometrics allows us to identify the most relevant research trends, the most researched topics, the most influential authors, the most quoted publications and the relationships between different thematic areas. This provides a panoramic view of communication and tourism research, thus contributing to the development and understanding of these constantly evolving fields.

3.2. Systematic Review

In the systematic review process on communication and tourism, the main databases were searched. Scopus identified 1771 records, while Web of Science found 291 records, making a total of 2062 raw records. Subsequently, 659 records were removed as duplicates in Scopus. Next, 1403 records were examined, from which 324 non-English-language documents were excluded. After this first screening, 1079 documents were identified for retrieval.

The next step was an exhaustive review of these 1079 documents, which excluded 200 unrecovered reports, 516 studies not related to the topic of interest and 306 studies focused on communication only. After this stage, 57 documents were evaluated to determine their eligibility; 37 full-text articles that did not meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria were excluded. Finally, 20 studies were included in the systematic review (Table 1).

Table 1. Systematic review.

Authors	Document Title	Objective	Method	Determinants
(Zhu and Shan 2024)	Netographic narratives of user-generated travelogues on tourist destination image of Thailand	Analyzes Netographic narratives from users' travel diaries to understand the image of Thailand as a tourist destination.	Netographic approach	Communication trends in tourism are determined by the growing influence of Netographic narratives, such as user-generated travel diaries, which shape the image of touristic destinations such as Thailand. These personal stories, shared on digital platforms, impact the perception and choice of destinations, highlighting the importance of user-generated content in touristic promotion.
(Johnson et al. 2024)	It's so meta: Metacommunicative storytelling on news organizations' Instagram accounts.	Analyzes how news organizations use Metacommunicative storytelling on Instagram to interact and communicate with their audiences in the tourism sector.	Qualitative approach	Communication trends in tourism are influenced by Metacommunicative narratives on social media, particularly on Instagram, where touristic organizations use narrative strategies to engage their audience and promote touristic destinations.
(Matas and Gil 2024)	Visual communication and narrative discourse in social networks: Emma Watson's digital identity on Instagram	Analyzes visual communication and narrative discourse on Instagram, highlighting the digital identity of Emma Watson as a touristic place.	Qualitative approach	Explores how visual communication and narrative discourse on platforms like Instagram can shape a public figure's digital identity, which in turn impacts the perception of touristic destinations and travel-related experiences.
(Ramírez 2024)	Non-negotiable components of participation in the digital age of communication for development and social change	Identify essential components for effective participation in the digital era, promoting touristic development and social change.	Qualitative approach	It highlights that the key determinants of communication trends in tourism include digital accessibility, interactivity, content personalization and collaborative creation, which drive active user participation and promote social change.
(Dinis et al. 2024)	Sound contexts of cultural heritage tourism in the Iberian Peninsula.	Analyze and document the characteristic contexts and sounds of cultural heritage tourism in the Iberian Peninsula.	Qualitative approach	Communication trends in tourism are determined by the growing importance of the travel experience, the influence of social networks on the perception of cultural heritage, and the search for authenticity and emotional connection with destinations.
(Foscale and Galofré Pujol 2024)	Literary tourism in the Canary Islands: the legacy of Sanmao	Explore the impact and legacy of Sanmao on literary tourism in the Canary Islands.	Qualitative approach	Growing influence of social networks and digital narrative, which allow a broader and faster dissemination of Sanmao's literary experience in the region, generating interest and touristic attraction.
(Pérez-Ordóñez et al. 2024)	Beyond the venue: the role of digital visual communications in sustaining and recreating the music festival experience	Explores how digital visual communications maintain and recreate the music festival experience, overcoming physical limitations.	Qualitative approach	It highlights the importance of digital platforms in the promotion and preservation of the festival experience, beyond the physical location of the event.
(Zhang and Ramayah 2024)	Solving the mystery of storytelling in destination marketing: A systematic review	Analyze how storytelling in destination marketing impacts the perception and attraction of tourists.	Qualitative approach	Communication trends in tourism are determined by various factors, such as the search for authenticity and unique experiences, the influence of social networks and user-generated content, and the importance of storytelling to create emotional connections with travelers.

Table 1. Cont.

Authors	Document Title	Objective	Method	Determinants
(Yang et al. 2024)	Make the Effort Visible: The Effect of Process Transparency on Public Forgiveness in Tourism Crisis Communication.	Analyze how transparency in processes influences public forgiveness during touristic crisis communication.	Qualitative approach	Transparency in processes influences public forgiveness during tourism crisis communication. It is highlighted that transparency in crisis management, speed and sincerity in communication are key determinants of communication trends in tourism.
(Liu et al. 2024)	Can anthropomorphic interpretation cues motivate tourists to have civilized behavioral intentions? The roles of meaningful experience and narrative.	It explores how anthropomorphic signs influence the civilized behavior of tourists, highlighting the importance of experience and narrative.	Experimental approach	Communication trends in tourism are influenced by determinants such as anthropomorphic interpretation, meaningful experience and narrative. These elements can motivate tourists to adopt civilized behaviors, creating emotional connections and offering enriching contexts that encourage respectful interaction with the environment and the local community.
(Tiago et al. 2021)	Digital sustainability communication in tourism	Explore how digital communication can promote sustainable practices in the touristic industry.	Qualitative approach	The importance of sustainability in tourism communication, highlighting the influence of technology, environmental awareness and market demand on current communication trends in the sector, promoting responsible and transparent practices.
(Labanauskaitė et al. 2020)	Use of E-marketing tools as communication management in the tourism industry	Explore how E-marketing improves communication in the tourism industry through various digital tools.	Qualitative approach	Communication trends in tourism are determined by the growing use of E-marketing tools, which allow more effective management of communication in the industry. These tools include social networks, interactive websites and digital content strategies, which seek to improve the customer experience and increase the visibility of tourist destinations.
(Tölkes 2018)	Sustainability communication in tourism—A literature review	Reviews how sustainability is communicated in tourism, highlighting effective strategies to promote responsible practices.	Qualitative approach	They include growing environmental awareness, the demand for transparency, the influence of social networks, and the need for differentiation and positioning in an increasingly competitive market.
(Xiang and Tussyadiah 2014)	Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2014	Analyzes the impact and evolution of information and communication technologies in tourism in 2014.	Qualitative approach	They are determined by several factors, such as the growing use of information and communication technologies (ICT), the demand for personalized experiences, the influence of social networks on decision-making and the importance of sustainability and social responsibility in touristic communication.
(Pesonen and Horster 2012)	Near field communication technology in tourism	Explore how NFC technology improves the tourist experience by facilitating interaction with local devices and services.	Qualitative approach	Communication trends in tourism are shaped by various factors, including the growing adoption of near-field communication (NFC) technologies. These technologies facilitate the interaction between tourist destinations and visitors, improving the tourist experience and allowing more direct and personalized communication.

Table 1. Cont.

Authors	Document Title	Objective	Method	Determinants
(Baggio et al. 2011)	Technological aspects of public tourism communication in Italy	Explores how technology impacts tourism communication in Italy, highlighting its role in public promotion.	Qualitative approach	In Italy, they are strongly influenced by technological aspects. The adoption of digital platforms, social networks and mobile applications has transformed the way tourist destinations promote themselves and connect with travelers, creating more direct and interactive communication.
(Egger 2013)	The impact of near field communication on tourism.	Analyzes how near-field communications affect tourism, evaluating its influence on the visitor experience.	Mixed approach	Analyzes how factors such as mobile technology, social networks and personal interaction influence communication trends in tourism. These determinants have transformed the way people share information, experiences and recommendations, directly affecting travel decision-making.
(Buhalis and O'Connor 2005)	Information Communication Technology Revolutionizing Tourism	Analyzes information and communication technologies and how they transform tourism, improving the experience and management of the sector.	Qualitative approach	Communication trends in tourism are determined by information and communication technologies (ICTs). The growing adoption of mobile devices and social networks has transformed the way tourists search for information, share experiences and relate to destinations and tourism companies.
(Buhalis and Deimezi 2004)	E-Tourism Developments in Greece: Information Communication Technologies Adoption for the Strategic Management of the Greek Tourism Industry	Analyzes how Greece has implemented information technologies to improve strategic tourism management.	Qualitative approach	Highlights several determinants of communication trends in tourism. These include the adoption of information and communication technologies for the strategic management of the Greek tourism industry, as well as the key role of technology in the digital transformation of the area.
(Ritchie et al. 2004)	Crisis Communication and Recovery for the Tourism Industry	Explore how effective crisis communication can help the touristic industry recover from challenges such as epidemics.	Qualitative approach	The determinants of communication trends in tourism during crises include speed of response, transparency, coordination between key actors and adaptability to the evolution of the situation.

Own elaboration.

3.3. Annual Scientific Production

Scientific production on communication and tourism began in a minimal way in 1980, with growing interest, but with low impact in the years 1988, 1993, 1995 and 1998. However, starting in 2001, positive annual growth is observed, reaching its highest point between 2017 and 2022. Surprisingly, 2023 saw a significant decline in publications, indicating a decline in interest in this specific topic during that year. The results obtained through Bibliometrix are crucial, since they allow trends to be identified, the impact of research to be evaluated and future studies to be guided, underlining the relevance and evolution of this interdisciplinary field (Figure 2).

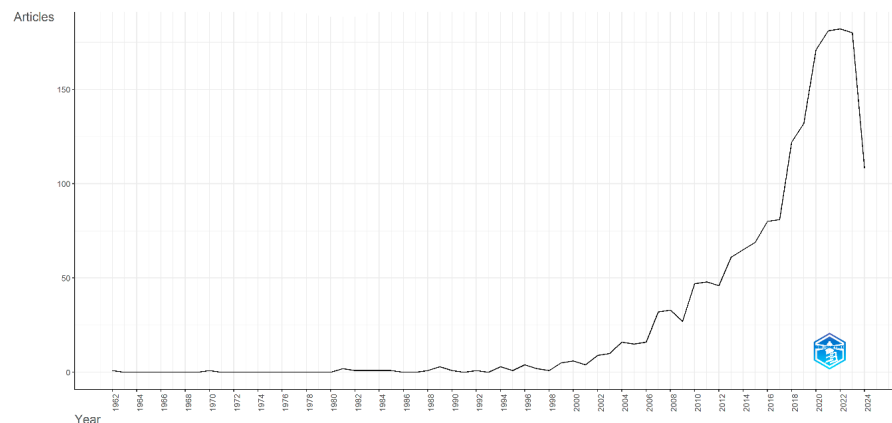


Figure 2. Annual scientific production. Own elaboration.

3.4. Source Production over Time

This panorama of scientific production reveals how communication and tourism have been significantly influenced by various academic sources over time. The most influential publication *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics*, has had a considerable impact from 1999 to 2023. Secondly, *Visual Communication* came to prominence in 2009, while *Health Communication* has remained relevant since 2012. Other medium-impact sources include *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, which has published major work since 2012. *ACM International Conference Proceeding Series* and *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems-Proceedings* had an impact in 2003 and 2009, respectively. Finally, *Springer Series in Design and Innovation* and *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems* have contributed to the field since 2009 and 2019, respectively (Figure 3).

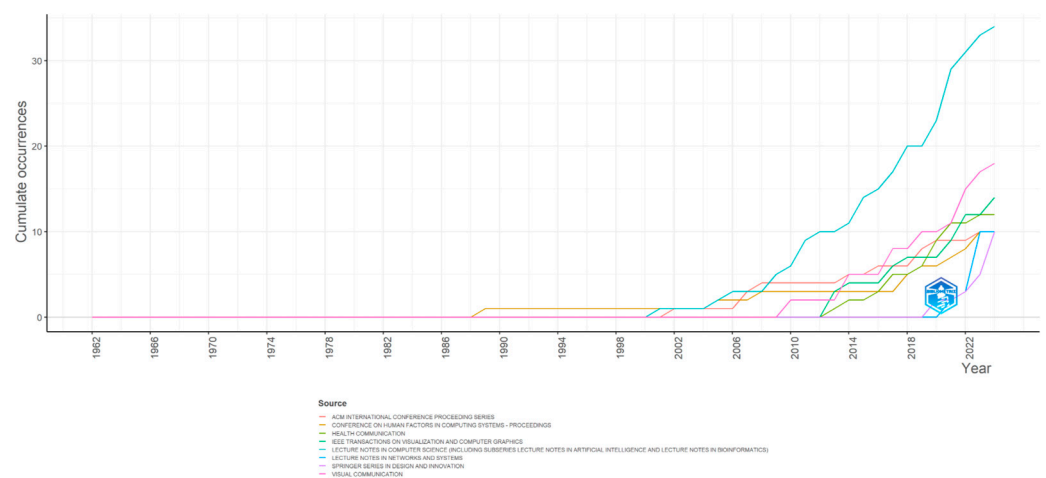


Figure 3. Most relevant sources over time. Own elaboration.

3.5. Production of the Most Relevant Authors over Time

Taking into account the production of the sources over time, the production of the most relevant authors is established. That said, in the last eight years, the author Cohen has been especially relevant (2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020 and 2021), with a notable concentration of publications on communication and tourism in 2020. On the other hand, the author Rich stood out between 1999 and 2010, reaching his highest number of citations in 2000 with ten mentions. Author Chalfen also distinguishes himself, although with a smaller number of annual citations compared to Rich. Author Davison began to have a significant impact on communication and tourism publishing from 2002 to 2013. Authors such as Zhang, Fusté-Forné, Iqani and Manfredi have gained relevance from 2016 to 2024, while Marini had an impact from 2008 to 2020. In contrast; Schnabel shows less intensity and relevance, with interest limited to the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 (Figure 4).

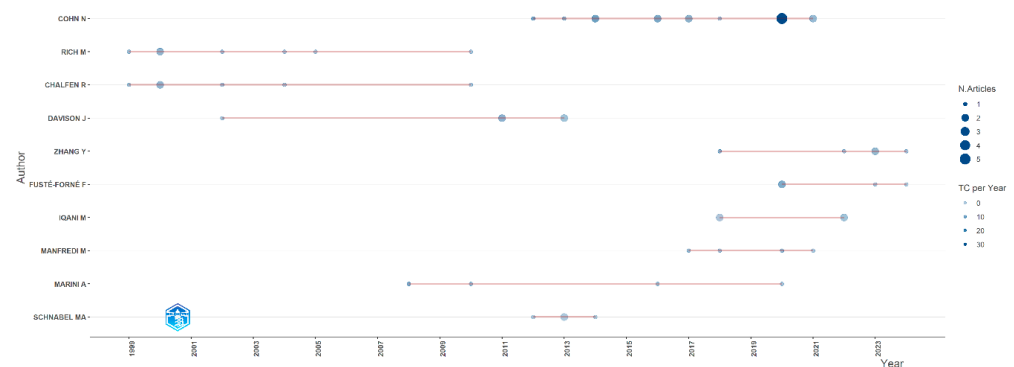


Figure 4. Authors' production over time. Own elaboration.

3.6. Most Relevant Affiliations

Communication is a crucial component in tourism, as it facilitates promotion, information and interaction between tourists and destinations. The results of the analysis of academic affiliations highlight the importance of key institutions in the production of knowledge in this field. The University of Toronto and the University of Pennsylvania lead in the number of publications, underscoring their central role in communication and touristic research. This leadership suggests strong research capacity and significant influence in the development of effective communication strategies in the touristic sector. The other universities mentioned also contribute significantly, although to a lesser extent. The diversity of institutions involved reflects a global and multidisciplinary interest in the study of communication in tourism. The presence of multiple affiliations with a considerable number of publications evidences a collaborative effort and a wide range of perspectives and methodological approaches, thus enriching the understanding of the topic (Figure 5).

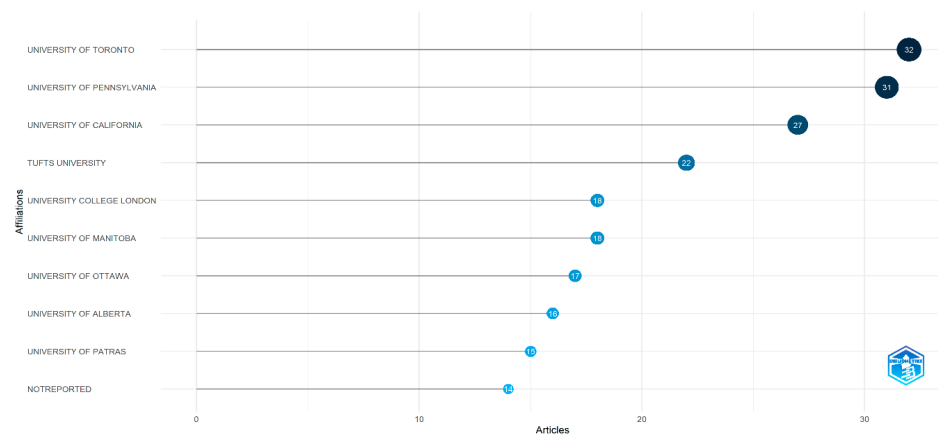


Figure 5. Most relevant affiliations. Own elaboration.

3.7. Scientific Production of the Countries

Considering the most relevant affiliations, each of them stands out in scientific production at the national level. This is clearly reflected in Figure 5, which shows scientific production in the field of tourism and communication for several countries. The United States heads the list with 1189 publications, followed by the United Kingdom with 499, Canada with 262 and Australia with 246. Spain also presents a significant contribution with 236 publications, while Italy has 231. Other countries with notable scientific production include China with 182 publications, Germany with 165, Portugal with 123 and the Netherlands with 94 (Figure 6).

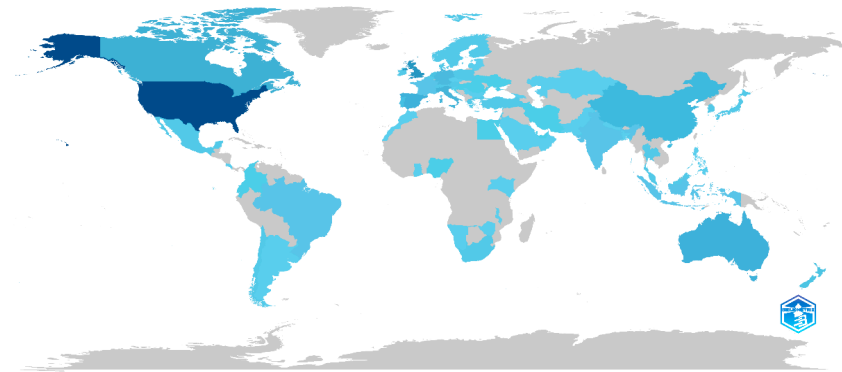


Figure 6. Country scientific production. Own elaboration.

3.8. Production of the Most Quoted Countries over Time

Communication and tourism are intrinsically connected since effective communication is essential for the promotion and management of tourist destinations. The analysis of the results in Figure 6 reveals the predominance of certain countries in research on these topics, highlighting the United States as the undisputed leader in academic production. This could be a reflection of its robust educational infrastructure and focus on interdisciplinary research.

The United Kingdom and Australia also show a significant contribution, which may be due to their developed tourism sectors and the importance they place on research and development in these fields. Canada, although with fewer publications, maintains a notable presence, possibly thanks to its interest in sustainable tourism and intercultural communication. The participation of other countries such as Italy, the Netherlands, Qatar, Spain, Germany and Sweden underlines a growing globalization in communication and tourism research. These countries have recognized the importance of these issues in economic and cultural development, investing in studies that can influence tourism policies and strategies (Figure 7).

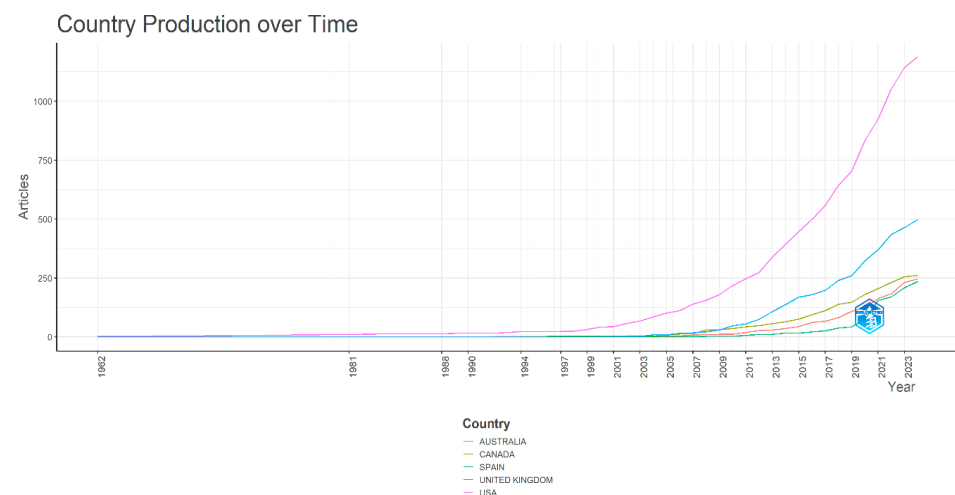


Figure 7. Production of the most quoted countries over time. Own elaboration.

3.9. Coupling Grouping

The analysis of Figure 7 reveals significant insights into how communication and tourism are interrelated. Verbal communication, which dominates one of the groups with 31.2%, underlines the importance of direct human interactions in the touristic context. Human settings and trust are also crucial as they suggest that human relationships strongly influence tourism experiences. In this way, the high comprehension indicator, represented by 97.3% in the second group, shows that good communication facilitates a better understanding and appreciation of touristic information. Data visualization, with 100% in the third group, highlights the need to present clear and visually accessible information to improve the user experience.

Finally, the high score in persuasive communication and touristic destinations (100% and 75%, respectively) in the fourth group indicates that effective marketing and communication strategies are essential to attract tourists and promote destinations. These results highlight the interdependence between effective communication and success in the tourism industry, suggesting that investing in communication skills and visual tools can significantly improve the tourist experience and destination promotion (Figure 8).

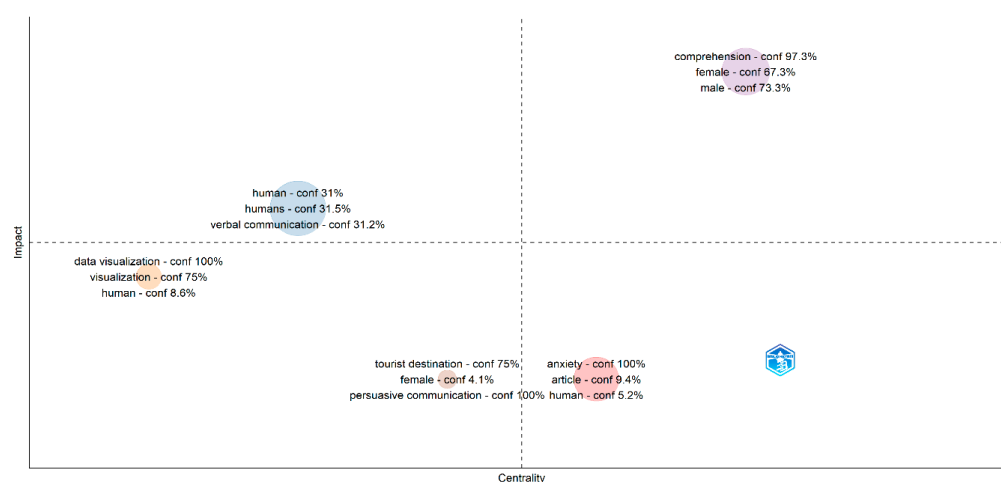


Figure 8. Clusters by document coupling. Own elaboration.

3.10. Keyword Co-Occurrence

Keyword co-occurrence analysis reveals how communication and tourism interrelate across diverse contexts and disciplines. The importance of this analysis lies in identifying the predominant topics and the connections between them, which facilitates a deeper understanding of how these fields are structured and related. The presence of terms such as “interpersonal communication” and “qualitative research” in the green cluster underlines the relevance of communication in tourism, especially in the delivery of health services and qualitative research.

In the red cluster, the association of “communication” with terms such as “narrative” and “visual communication” highlights the importance of visual and narrative communication in education and tourism. This suggests that visual and narrative communication techniques can be effective tools to improve the touristic and educational experience. However, the yellow cluster, with terms such as “verbal communication” and “comprehension”, suggests that verbal communication skills and understanding are crucial in experimental and physiological contexts, which can be applied to the development of more inclusive and understandable touristic experiences for various audiences.

Finally, the blue cluster, which includes terms such as “language ability” and “aged”, indicates that language ability and demographic considerations are essential to serving a diverse audience, including middle-aged and elderly people, which is essential for the design of communication strategies in tourism (Figure 9).

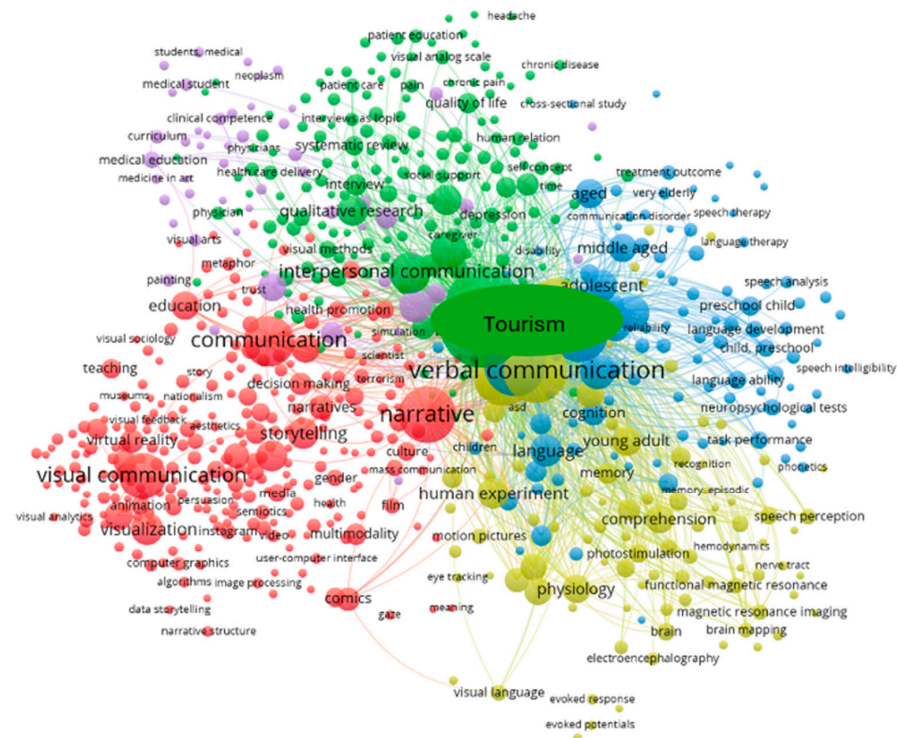


Figure 9. Keyword co-occurrence. Own elaboration.

3.11. Research Trends in Communication and Tourism

Research trends in communication and tourism are intrinsically linked to the evolution of society and technology. Technological advances, such as the growth of social media and online platforms, have transformed the way people communicate and how they access information about touristic destinations. This has generated the need to study how digital communication impacts tourist behavior and the promotion of destinations, highlighting the importance of understanding and adapting to these new forms of communication (Figure 9).

On the other hand, the growing awareness of sustainability and responsibility in tourism has driven research that seeks to understand how communication can promote more sustainable practices in the tourism industry. This approach reflects the need to address the environmental and social impacts of tourism, and how communication can play a key role in raising awareness and adopting more responsible practices.

To conclude, research trends in communication and tourism reflect the importance of adapting to a constantly changing environment, where technology and sociocultural trends influence the way we communicate and experience tourism. These trends offer opportunities for research that not only contributes to the sustainable development of the touristic industry, but also improves the tourist experience and the relationship between people and the destinations they visit (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Research trends in communication and tourism. Own elaboration.

4. Discussion

Communication has proven to be a fundamental element in the touristic industry, transforming the way in which companies and organizations relate to their audiences. (Labanauskaitė et al. 2020) highlight that platforms such as social networks, websites and blogs allow companies to reach a global audience quickly and efficiently. This ability to personalize and segment messages, as mentioned by (Hanief et al. 2023), not only facilitates more effective communication, but also contributes to attracting and retaining potential customers. That said, the findings suggest that communication in the touristic sector not only is crucial for the promotion of destinations and services, but also can influence tourists' decision-making and overall travel experience.

On the other hand, tourism is positioned as an economic and social activity of great relevance worldwide, as (Aguinis et al. 2023) point out. It not only generates significant income for local economies, but also encourages cultural exchange and understanding between different communities. However, the results of this review suggest several areas of interest and potential gaps in knowledge. For example, although the use of digital platforms in tourism communication has been widely researched, there are fewer studies on the effectiveness of these strategies in different cultural and regional contexts. Furthermore, while the reviewed literature highlights the positive impact of tourism on society, the need to further investigate potential negative effects, such as tourism overload and environmental degradation, is identified.

In this context, according to the results, the systematic review and bibliometric analysis of the academic literature on communication and tourism reveals the importance of continuing research in these areas. Although progress has been made in understanding how communication impacts the tourism industry and the socioeconomic benefits of tourism, there are still gaps to explore. It is necessary to deepen the study of intercultural communication in tourism, as well as the effectiveness of communication strategies in emerging markets.

In the systematic review of the literature on communication and tourism, the results reflect an evolution in scientific production since 1980, with a sustained growth from 2001, peaking between 2017 and 2022, and an unexpected decrease in 2023. This trend is comparable to that described by (Buhalis and O'Connor 2005), who highlighted the transformation that information and communication technologies (ICTs) have had on tourism, boosting knowledge generation in this field. However, the decline in scientific output in 2023 suggests a contrast with authors such as (Pesonen and Horster 2012), who anticipated continued growth in research on emerging technologies such as NFC in tourism, suggesting that, despite optimistic projections, interest in some specific aspects of the intersection between communication and tourism may be declining or evolving into new areas.

In terms of the most influential sources in communication and tourism research, the sustained relevance of publications such as *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer*

Graphics and Visual Communication reflects the increasingly visual and technological approach to tourism promotion, aligning with (Zhang and Ramayah 2024), who stress the importance of visual storytelling and authenticity in creating emotional connections with travelers. This emphasis on visual and technological communication contrasts with the perspective of (Dinis et al. 2024), who place more emphasis on authenticity and sensory experience in cultural tourism, suggesting a divergence in the way communication is understood and studied in the tourism context.

The analysis of annual scientific output and the influence of sources highlights the importance of adapting tourism communication strategies to emerging trends, as evidenced by the rise of digital storytelling on social platforms. This is consistent with the perspective of (Buhalis and Deimezi 2004), who argued that the adoption of communication technologies is crucial for strategic tourism management. However, Ritchie et al.'s (2004) view of crisis communication in tourism, which emphasizes transparency and coordination, distances itself from this trend towards the visual and digital, emphasizing the need for clear and direct communication in crisis situations, an aspect that may be underestimated in current research on communication and tourism.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of research trends in communication and tourism through a systematic review and bibliometric analysis reveals clear patterns in academic production. Recurring themes such as the impact of social networks on tourism, brand communication in tourist destinations and the role of the media in promoting destinations were identified. These patterns reflect a growing intersection between communication and tourism, underscoring the importance of digital media and social platforms in shaping the modern touristic experience.

The systematic review and bibliometric analysis of research trends in communication and tourism have provided valuable insights into the evolving academic landscape of these interconnected fields. The identification of recurring themes, such as the impact of social networks, brand communication in tourist destinations and the role of media in promoting destinations, highlights the growing significance of digital media and social platforms in shaping the modern touristic experience. These findings underscore the increasingly pivotal role that communication strategies play in influencing traveler behavior and perception, suggesting that a comprehensive understanding of these elements is essential for both academic research and practical application in the tourism industry.

Moreover, while this study reveals a strong concentration on topics like touristic marketing and destination reputation management, it also points out significant gaps in the literature, particularly in the areas of intercultural communication and the effectiveness of communication strategies in emerging markets. These unaddressed areas present promising opportunities for future research that could deepen the understanding of how communication influences tourism across diverse cultural contexts and economic settings. By mapping out both well-researched and underexplored areas, this study not only enriches the academic discourse but also provides actionable insights for professionals in tourism and communication, enabling them to devise more nuanced and effective strategies in an increasingly competitive global market.

In this way, the predominant areas of interest in the academic literature point to a concentration on certain key topics, such as touristic marketing, destination reputation management and the influence of communication on travelers' perceptions. However, despite the abundance of studies in these areas, significant research gaps were detected, particularly in the exploration of intercultural communication and its impact on tourism, as well as the effectiveness of communication strategies in emerging markets. These gaps indicate opportunities for future research that could expand the understanding and effectiveness of communication strategies in the touristic field.

This study contributes to the development of the interdisciplinary fields of communication and tourism by providing a solid base of knowledge and a map of researched

and unresearched areas. By identifying patterns and areas of interest, as well as existing gaps, it facilitates the planning of future research and promotes greater integration of these fields. This expanded understanding benefits not only academics, but also tourism and communication professionals, who can use these findings to develop more effective strategies adapted to the changing dynamics of the global touristic market.

Future lines of research in communication and tourism could focus on further exploring the influence of intercultural communication on the touristic experience, especially in emerging touristic destinations. Furthermore, it would be relevant to investigate the effectiveness of communication strategies in underexplored touristic markets, as well as in the promotion of sustainable and responsible tourism. Other areas of interest could include the analysis of communication in touristic crises, the personalization of touristic communication through emerging technologies, and the study of communication in virtual and augmented touristic experiences. These lines of research could expand current understanding and improve communication practices in the tourism field.

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