Bibliometric Analysis of the "International Journal of Spa and Wellness"

"International Journal of Spa and Wellness" Bibliyometrik Analizi

Havva Gözgeç Mutlu[a*] 🆔

[a] Dokuz Eylül University, Efes Vocational School, Department of Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Services, İzmir, Türkiye. ORCID: 0000-0003-3891-8960

Abstract / Öz

This study presents the first bibliometric analysis of the International Journal of Spa and Wellness (IJSW) to assess its academic influence, publication trends, and thematic research focus. IJSW was chosen for this analysis due to its specialized focus on SPA and wellness tourism—an emerging and rapidly growing niche in health tourism. Unlike broader wellness and wellbeing journals, IJSW provides a dedicated academic platform for SPA tourism research, making it a key source in this field. However, despite its increasing contributions, no systematic bibliometric evaluation of the journal has been conducted to date. To address this gap, this study employs bibliometric analysis using data retrieved from the Scopus database, covering all articles published in IJSW between 2018 and 2024. Microsoft Excel and VOSviewer 1.6.20 software were used for data processing and visualization. Overlay Visualization was applied for citation analysis, while Network Visualization was used to identify key research topics through keyword analysis. The results indicate a steady increase in IJSW's academic influence, with notable growth in publication and citation counts. The most cited authors, the countries contributing the most, and the prominent research themes have been identified, with "wellness," "tourism", "wellness tourism," "Spa," and "well-being" emerging as the most dominant topics, respectively. The findings underscore IJSW's role as a critical platform in SPA and wellness tourism research and provide valuable insights into emerging trends and future research directions.

Bu çalışma, International Journal of Spa and Wellness (IJSW) üzerine gerçekleştirilen ilk bibliyometrik analizi sunarak derginin akademik etkisini, yayın eğilimlerini ve tematik araştırma odaklarını değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. IJSW, SPA ve wellness turizmine odaklanan özel bir akademik dergi olması nedeniyle bu çalışmaya konu edilmiştir. Sağlık turizminin hızla büyüyen bir alt dalı olan SPA turizmi, giderek artan bir akademik ilgi görmektedir, IJSW bu alandaki temel kaynaklardan biri olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Ancak, derginin akademik katkıları üzerine sistematik bir bibliyometrik değerlendirme bugüne kadar yapılmamıştır. Bu boşluğu doldurmak amacıyla, çalışmada 2018-2024 yılları arasında IJSW'de yayımlanan makaleler üzerinde Scopus veritabanından elde edilen verilere dayalı bir bibliyometrik analiz gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veri işleme ve görselleştirme için Microsoft Excel ve VOSviewer 1.6.20 yazılımları kullanılmıştır. Atıf analizleri için Overlay Visualization, anahtar kelime analizi için ise Network Visualization yöntemleri uygulanmıştır. Sonuçlar, IJSW'nin akademik etkisinin istikrarlı bir şekilde arttığını ve yayın ile atıf sayılarında önemli bir yükseliş yaşandığını göstermektedir. En çok atıf alan yazarlar, en fazla katkı sağlayan ülkeler ve öne çıkan araştırma temaları belirlenmiş olup, "wellness" "turizm", "wellness turizmi", "Spa" ve "well-being" sırasıyla en baskın konular olarak tespit edilmiştir. Bulgular, IJSW'nin SPA ve wellness turizmi alanında önemli bir akademik platform olarak konumunu güçlendirdiğini göstermekte ve alandaki yükselen eğilimler ile gelecekteki araştırmalar için değerli içgörüler sunmaktadır.

1. Introduction

SPA tourism encompasses travel experiences focused on relaxation and rejuvenation, typically including treatments like massages, facials, and other health-related therapies. While overlapping with SPA tourism, wellness tourism offers a broader scope, covering activities that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being, such as yoga camps, meditation sessions, and holistic healing practices (Smith & Puczkó, 2014). The significance of SPA and wellness tourism extends beyond personal health benefits, playing a critical role in the global economy. This sector has become an

essential component of the broader health tourism industry (GWI, 2023).

According to estimates from the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), the wellness tourism market is expected to more than double between 2022 and 2027, with expenditures anticipated to surge dramatically from $651 billion in 2022 to $868 billion in 2023, reaching $1 trillion in 2024, and ultimately $1.4 trillion by 2027 (McGroarty, 2023). In 2023, the SPA market size grew significantly, rising from $65.21 billion in 2023 to $72.97 billion in 2024, with an annual compound growth rate (CAGR) of 11.2% (The Business Research Company, 2024).

With the growing interest in SPA and wellness within academia and the business world, the "International Journal of Spa and Wellness" (IJSW) was launched in 2018. IJSW focuses on publishing both academic research and practical insights related to best practices in areas such as SPA design and management, wellness tourism and accommodation, medical tourism, health and wellness, sustainable environments, innovations in wellness technologies, health psychology, beauty, fitness, nutrition, holistic medicine and complementary practices, and education and training. Reflecting the diversity and complexity of the field, articles in IJSW include research papers, case studies, reports, and book and conference reviews (Taylor & Francis, 2024).

The IJSW was first published in 2018 under the editorship of Dr. Eleni (Elina) Michopoulou (Taylor & Francis, 2024). Since its inception, the journal has released 18 issues, including two special issues, and has been indexed in major bibliographic databases such as Scopus. As of 2023, IJSW holds a citation score of 2.7 and is classified in the Q3 quartile (Scopus, 2024). As one of the few specialized academic journals in the SPA and wellness tourism field, IJSW plays a crucial role in advancing research and bridging a significant gap in the literature.

To assess the journal's scientific impact and development, bibliometric analysis is a widely used method that quantitatively evaluates scholarly publications. According to Van Raan (2005), this approach examines various metrics, including citation counts, author collaborations, keyword trends, and publication patterns. By analyzing data from academic databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar, bibliometric studies help identify research trends, assess academic influence, and map the evolution of a specific field. As Schwert (1993) highlights, establishing a bibliometric profile of a journal provides historical insights that contribute to a critical evaluation of its growth and significance.

In recent years, specific analyses of scientific journals have garnered increased attention, with numerous studies published on the topic. For example, Mulet-Forteza et al. (2018) conducted a bibliometric analysis of the Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, identifying it as a leading journal with contributions from authors, institutions, and countries worldwide. Kumar et al. (2020) examined publications in the Journal of Heritage Tourism from 2006-2019, identifying core themes such as cultural heritage, sustainable development, and intangible heritage. Sigala et al. (2021), in their analysis of the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (2006-2020), highlighted themes such as tourism experiences, service quality, and sustainability. Göral and Kılınç (2023) analyzed Tourism Management using bibliometric methods, determining that the most productive authors were British and the most active institution was the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

As one of the few journals dedicated exclusively to SPA and wellness research, the IJSW serves as a key academic resource for advancing knowledge in this specialized area of health tourism. This study conducts a bibliometric analysis to evaluate the journal's scientific impact and publication performance. Unlike broader wellness and wellbeing-oriented journals, IJSW specifically focuses on SPA tourism and related topics. By providing a dedicated platform for research in this niche field, IJSW makes a significant scholarly contribution, making it an ideal subject for bibliometric assessment.

As one of the few academic journals dedicated specifically to SPA and wellness research, the IJSW serves as a vital resource for knowledge production and academic advancement in this specialized area of health tourism. This study conducts a bibliometric analysis to assess the journal's scientific impact and publication performance. Unlike broader journals that focus on wellness and wellbeing, the IJSW distinguishes itself by placing a specific emphasis on SPA tourism and its related subjects. By offering a dedicated platform for research in this niche field, the journal represents an ideal subject for bibliometric evaluation.

The bibliometric analysis of IJSW provides an objective assessment of its research contributions and scientific influence. The analysis not only highlights the journal's academic visibility but also serves as a valuable reference for understanding the overall dynamics of the field and identifying new research opportunities.

This study presents the first-ever bibliometric analysis of IJSW. While previous bibliometric studies have generally focused on the broader wellness research landscape, no systematic study has specifically examined IJSW's academic influence, citation patterns, or publishing trends. In this context, the primary aim of this study is to conduct a

bibliometric analysis of IJSW, providing an in-depth observation of the evolution of its scientific publications. The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the total publication and citation counts in IJSW?

2. Which are the most highly cited core articles in IJSW?

3. Who are the main researchers, institutions (units/faculties), and countries contributing to IJSW?

4. What are the primary journals cited in IJSW?

5. Which universities are affiliated with contributing researchers?

6. What are the main topics covered in IJSW articles?

2. Method and Data

This study conducts a bibliometric analysis of the publications in the "International Journal of Spa and Wellness" from 2018 to 2024. The study was conducted between August 25-30, 2024. Bibliometric analyses are commonly used to understand research trends, performance assessments, and the knowledge structure within scientific fields (Hood & Wilson, 2001). Bibliometric methods provide a comprehensive overview of academic research related to a field or journal by identifying leading trends in publications, citations, authors, keywords, and institutions (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). VOSviewer is a software specifically developed for bibliometric analyses, preferred for its ability to process large datasets and support various types of analyses. VOSviewer has the capacity to handle extensive bibliometric datasets (Van Eck & Waltman, 2014). Compared to traditional multidimensional scaling (MDS) methods, it provides more accurate and meaningful mappings (Waltman et al., 2010).

In the first stage of this research, articles published in IJSW between 2018 and 2024 were retrieved from the Scopus database. Scopus is a widely used, comprehensive, and reliable bibliographic database, particularly notable for its extensive coverage of the social sciences (Archambault et al., 2009). It is a multidisciplinary database owned by Elsevier Publishing and has provided citation analyses since 1996.

Although all published articles are available on the journal's website, utilizing Scopus offers several advantages in the data collection and analysis process. First, Scopus provides systematic and reliable bibliometric data, including citation analysis, author collaborations, publication trends, and keyword distributions essential components of a comprehensive bibliometric study. Additionally, Scopus offers advanced filtering options that allow for the precise selection of publications within a specific timeframe, facilitating efficient data extraction and analysis using bibliometric software. Since such analytical tools are not available on the journal's website, Scopus enhances the academic rigor and scope of the study by enabling a more structured and comparative evaluation of the journal's impact within the broader research landscape.

Within the scope of this research, journal performance-based analyses were conducted, focusing on IJSW's publication years, publication counts, and citation numbers. Additionally, author, country, and institutional citation analyses were performed, along with an evaluation of the most cited journals, the most cited articles within IJSW, and keyword distributions.

For the analysis, Microsoft Excel and VOSviewer software were utilized (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). VOSviewer creates visual maps of bibliographic data, such as authors, institutions, countries, and keywords, allowing for a structural analysis of scientific fields (Waltman & Van Eck, 2010).

In this study, overlay visualization was employed for author, country, and institutional citation analysis. Citation count was selected as the weighting measure to reflect the impact of citations, while the average citation score (ACS) served as the scoring metric. According to the VOSviewer manual, assigning weights to elements or links based on attributes such as citation count or publication count enhances their prominence in the visualization. In the overlay visualization, items are colored based on their scores, with default colors ranging from blue (indicating low scores) through green (medium scores) to yellow (high scores) (Van Eck, & Waltman 2023).

Furthermore, network visualization was used for keyword analysis to identify conceptual structures and research trends. This method was chosen for its effectiveness in visualizing relationships and clustering keywords (Van Eck & Waltman, 2014). Occurrences was selected as the weighting metric to reflect keyword frequency. Network visualization also facilitated topic clustering, where node size indicates keyword importance, and link density represents relationship strength. This analysis helped identify key research trends and core topics (Waltman et al., 2010).

The parameters in this study publication counts, citation analyses (by author, country, and institution), most cited

articles and journals, and keyword analysis were chosen based on their relevance to understanding IJSW's academic influence and thematic evolution. Also, ethics committee approval from the institution was not required for this study.

3. Findings

### 3.1. Publication and Citation Structure of the Journal

Between 2018 and 2024, IJSW published 118 articles. As of August 26, 2024, the journal received a total of 482 citations, with an h-index of 12. All publications in the journal are in English. Figure 1 shows the total number of publications in IJSW from 2018 to 2024, distributed by year. Table 1 details annual productivity from 2018 to 2024 using various metrics, presenting the number of publications per year and volume along with cumulative numbers for these publications.

Table 1. *Annual productivity of IJSW*

		Issue						
Years	Volume	1	2	3	TP	CP	TI	CI
2018	Vol 1	10	7	7	20	20	3	3
2019	Vol 2	6	5	5	16	36	3	6
2020	Vol 3	5	8		13	49	2	8
2021	Vol 4	8	9		16	65	2	10
2022	Vol 5	8	7	8	23	88	3	13
2023	Vol 6	8	6	4	17	105	3	16
2024	Vol 7	5	8		13	118	2	18

Note: *TP: Total publications, CP: Cumulative publications, TI: Total issues, CI: Cumulative issues*
Source: Scopus IJSW page
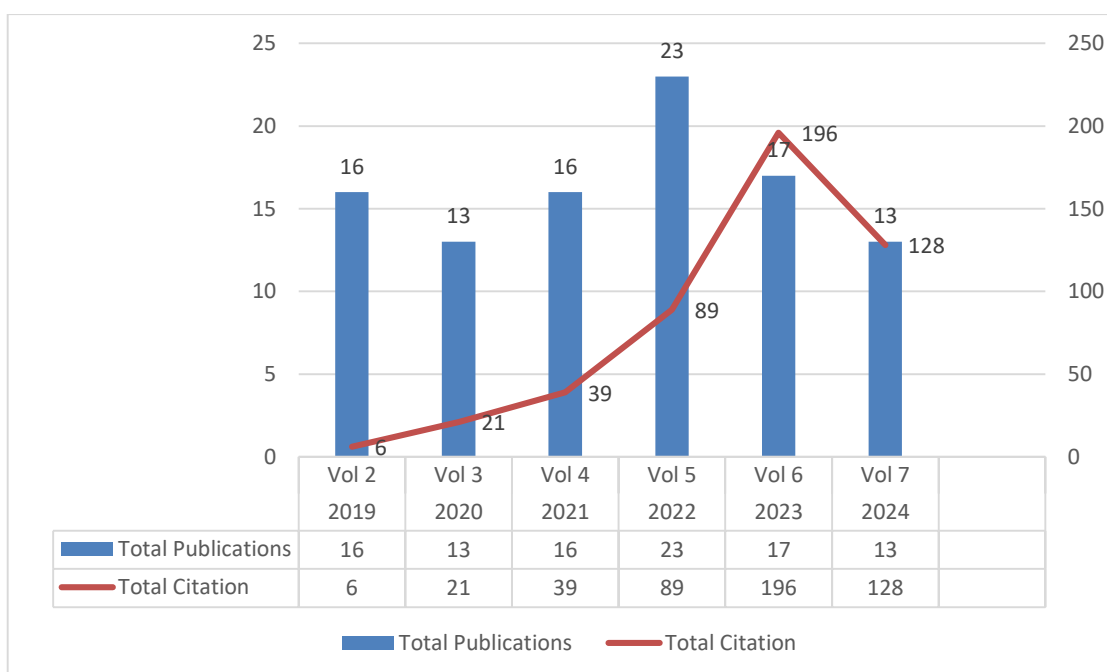
Figure 1. *Number of publications and citations by year*
Source: Scopus IJSW citation page

According to Figure 1 and Table 1, the annual publication count of IJSW has shown fluctuations each year. The journal began with a total of 20 publications in 2018, experienced a decrease to 16 publications in 2019, and subsequently displayed more stable productivity in 2020 and 2021, with 13 and 16 publications, respectively. In 2022, a significant increase to 23 publications was observed, marking 2022 as a peak year for the journal's productivity. Publication counts for 2023 and 2024 were recorded at 17 and 13, respectively. The cumulative publication count clearly reflects the

journal's growth over the years. Starting with a cumulative publication count of 20 in 2018, the total rose steadily each year, reaching 118 by 2024. Metrics for total scores and cumulative scores demonstrate the journal's progress over the years, not only in publication numbers but also in other criteria. By 2024, cumulative scores for the journal had reached 18. As of August 27, 2024, citation counts, starting with only 3 citations in 2018, grew steadily to 6 in 2019, 21 in 2020, 39 in 2021, 89 in 2022, 196 in 2023, and 128 in 2024. The numerical distribution of different publication types in IJSW is shown in Figure 2.
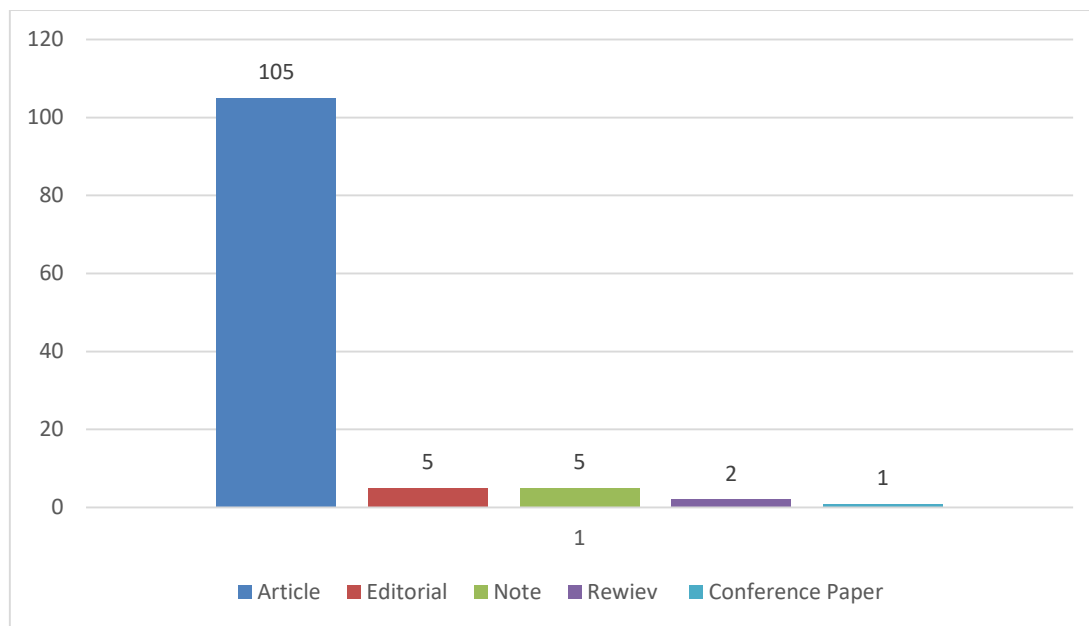
Figure 2. *Distribution by publication type*
Source: Scopus, IJSW page

This distribution is visualized as a bar chart, which displays "articles" as the category with the largest share, totaling 105 publications. Additionally, there are 5 publications each in the editorial and note categories, 2 review articles, and only 1 conference paper.

As of August 28, 2024, the top 10 journals most cited by IJSW and their citation counts are listed in Table 2. Table 2 also presents the top 10 contributing universities and the number of contributing authors affiliated with these universities. Figure 3 provides content based on institutional contributions, while Table 2 is organized according to contributing universities.

Table 2. *Information on journals cited by IJSW and universities contributing to the journal*

Journals Cited	Number of Citations	Contributing Universities	Number of Contributing Authors
Tourism Management	139	University of Derby	22
International Journal of Hospitality Management	78	University of Nottingham	6
Journal of Travel Research	76	Pannon Egyetem	5
Annals of Tourism Research	72	Budapesti Metropolitan Egyetem	5
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	52	AGH University of Krakow	3
International Journal of Spa and Wellness	52	University of Nottingham	3
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	49	Tartu Ülikool	3
Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	47	Budapest Business University	3
Current Issues in Tourism	43	Tartu Ülikooli Pärnu Kolledž	3
Sustainability Switzerland	40	Derby Business School	3

Source: *Compiled by the author from the journal page on the Scopus database.*

Table 2 summarizes the journals cited by IJSW and the universities that contributed to it. The most cited journal is Tourism Management, which received 139 citations, with the highest number of contributing authors (22) from the University of Derby. The International Journal of Hospitality Management ranks second with 78 citations, with the University of Nottingham as its leading contributor.

Table 3. *Top 10 most cited publications of IJSW*

| Publication Title	Authors	Year	Citations
De-stigmatising self-care: impact of self-care webinar during COVID-19	Kotera, Y.	2021	29
The wellness tourist motivation scale: a new statistical tool for measuring wellness tourist motivation	Kessler, D., Lee, J.-H., Whittingham, N.	2020	21
Consumer motivation and behaviour when selecting a wellness holiday destination	Aleksijevits, K.	2019	16
Towards a better understanding of memorable wellness tourism experience	Sthapit, E., Björk, P., Coudounaris, D.N.	2023	15
Effect of social media influence on consumer's purchase intention of organic beauty products: the role of customer's engagement and generativity	Gani, M.O., Roy, H., Rahman, M.S., ... Gupta, V., Prova, H.T.	2023	15
Tourism and wellbeing: transforming people and places	Pope, E.	2018	15
Visual analysis of the international wellness tourism WOS literature from 1992 to 2019	Wang, L., Togtokhbuyan, L., Yadmaa, Z.	2021	14
Life in a pandemic: intersectional approach exploring experiences of LGBTQ during COVID-19	Bhalla, R., Agarwal, S.	2021	14
Spa tourism as a part of ageing well	Koskinen, V.	2019	14
Integrating concepts of destination image, travel motivations, expectation, and future behavior to create a model of wellness travel intentions	Tiwari, R., Hashmi, H.	2022	13

Source: *Compiled by the author from the journal page on the Scopus database.*

Table 3 provides details on selected publications, authors, publication years, and citation counts. The most-cited article, "De-stigmatizing Self-Care: Impact of a Self-Care Webinar during COVID-19," was published by Kotera Y. in 2021 and has been cited 29 times. This is followed by "The Wellness Tourist Motivation Scale: A New Statistical Tool for Measuring Wellness Tourist Motivation," published in 2020 by Kessler, D., Lee, J.-H., and Whittingham, N., with 21 citations. Third is "Consumer Motivation and Behaviour When Selecting a Wellness Holiday Destination," authored by Aleksijevits, K. in 2019, with 16 citations.

3.2. Author, Country, and Institutional Citation Analysis in IJSW

During the analysis, authors with at least one publication and one citation were selected, resulting in 183 of the 248 authors being included. In this study, author names were evaluated based on citation counts and the number of documents. Although the citation analysis draws on multiple publications per author, the specific works cited are not identified in the output. Additionally, some authors included in the citation analysis may have collaborated with other researchers on joint publications; however, not all of these co-authors were within the scope of the analysis. Consequently, listing authors in the references solely due to their association with those included in the analysis poses a risk of a scientifically and methodologically unjustifiable inconsistency. Therefore, references were omitted for authors mentioned solely in the author citation analysis section. Figure 1 presents the analysis results for the most-cited authors.
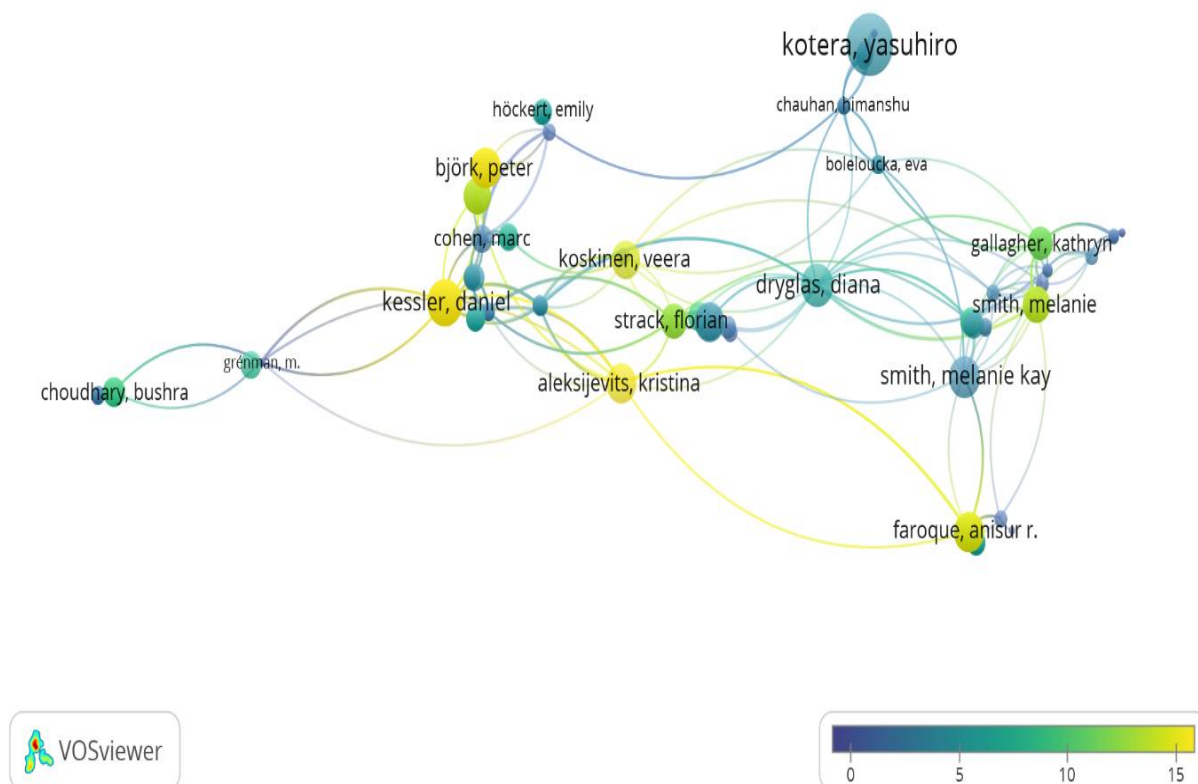
Figure 1. *Citation analysis of authors publishing in the journal*
Note: *Of the 183 authors, the largest cluster of interconnected items consists of 98 items, which the program used to generate the visual*

According to author citation analysis and Figure 2, the top 10 most cited authors in the dataset exhibit varying levels of citation impact as reflected in their ACS.

Authors with the highest ACS values include Kessler, D. (1 publication, 21 citations, ACS: 21.00), Lee, J. H. (1 publication, 21 citations, ACS: 21.00), and Whittingham, N. (1 publication, 21 citations, ACS: 21.00). These authors, despite having fewer publications, have achieved a high citation impact per publication. Similarly, Aleksijevits, K. (1 publication, 16 citations, ACS: 16.00) also demonstrates a strong ACS value. Authors with moderately high ACS values include Togtokhbuyan, L. (2 publications, 17 citations, ACS: 8.50) and Yadmaa, Z. (2 publications, 17 citations, ACS: 8.50). Dryglas, D. (3 publications, 18 citations, ACS: 6.00) also maintains a relatively strong citation impact per publication. Authors with lower ACS values, despite having a higher number of publications, include Kotera, Y. (9 publications, 38 citations, ACS: 4.22), Smith M. (5 publications, 17 citations, ACS: 3.40). While these authors have the highest total number of publications, their ACS remains lower due to the broader distribution of citations across multiple Works.

In analyzing country citations, each country with a minimum of one publication and zero citations was selected, resulting in 48 countries contributing to the journal. According to country citation analysis results, the United Kingdom ranks as the country with the highest number of publications (32) and citations (142) in the journal, resulting in an ACS of 4.44. India follows with 13 publications and 73 citations (ACS: 5.62), while Finland ranks third with 6 publications and 54 citations (ACS: 9.00).

The United States has 11 publications and 52 citations (ACS: 4.73), whereas Canada recorded 5 publications and 49 citations (ACS: 9.80). Hungary also contributed 11 publications with 48 citations (ACS: 4.36), while Poland has 4 publications and 29 citations (ACS: 7.25).

China published 4 documents with 23 citations (ACS: 5.75), and South Korea, despite having only 1 publication, received 21 citations (ACS: 21.00), indicating a high citation impact. Mongolia contributed 2 publications with 17 citations (ACS: 8.50), whereas Denmark recorded 1 publication with 15 citations (ACS: 15.00). Additionally, Bangladesh, Fiji, and Japan each have 1 publication with 14 citations (ACS: 14.00), while Spain has 3 publications with 13 citations (ACS: 4.33). Citation analysis results by country are shown in Figure 2.
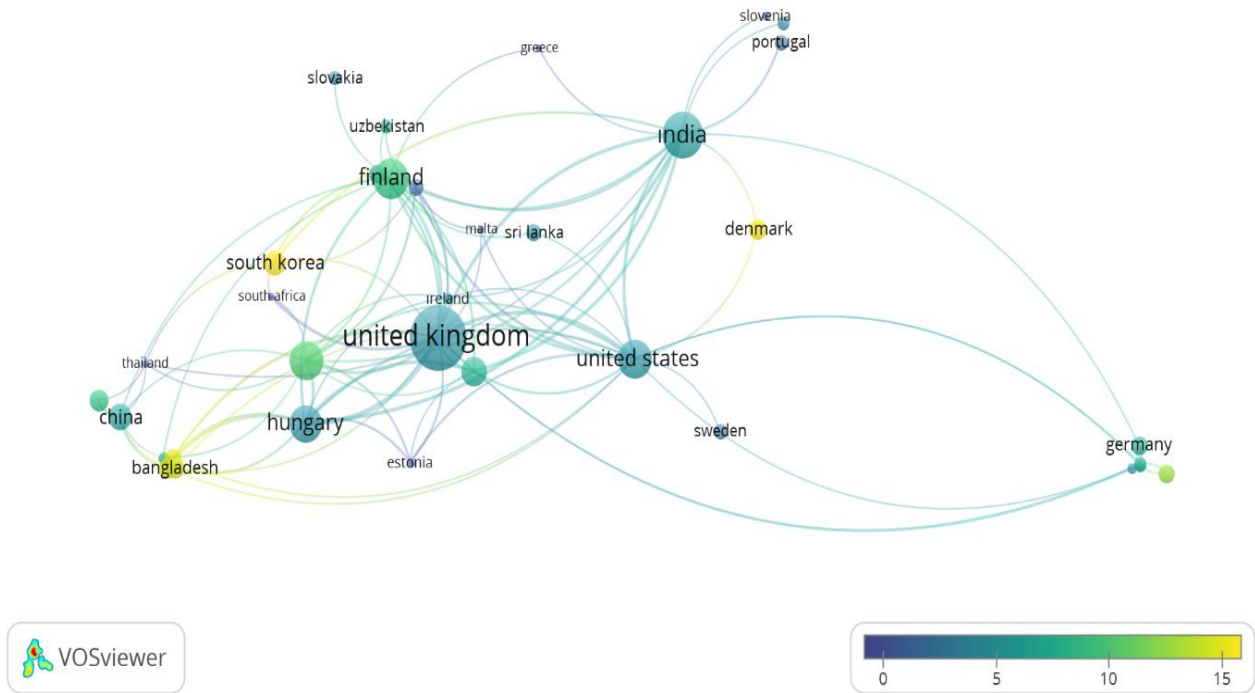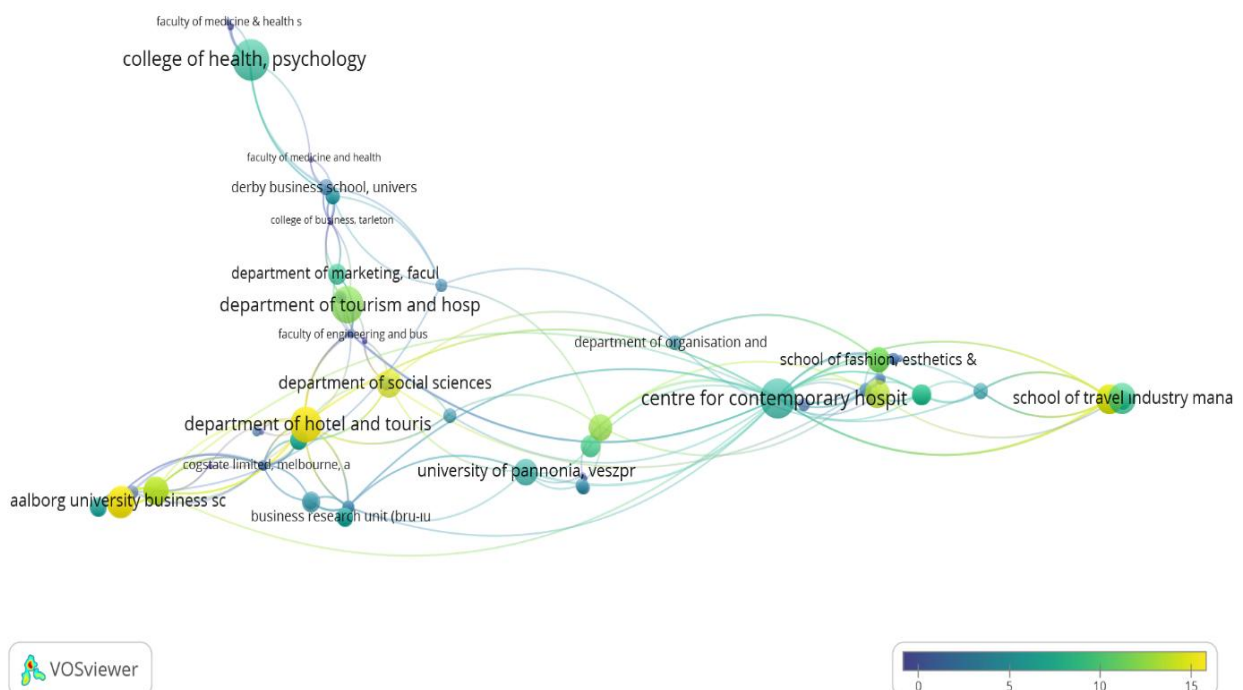
Figure 2. *Country citation analysis results*
Note: *The largest cluster of interconnected items among the 48 countries consists of 35 items, which the program used to generate the visual*

According to Figure 2, countries with the highest ACS are represented in yellow, indicating a strong citation impact per publication. These countries include South Korea (ACS: 21.00), Denmark (ACS: 15.00), and Bangladesh (ACS: 14.00). Countries with moderately high ACS values appear in green, reflecting a relatively strong citation impact. Among these, Canada (ACS: 9.80) and Finland (ACS: 9.00) demonstrate a particularly strong presence, while Mongolia (ACS: 8.50) and Poland (ACS: 7.25) also show notable citation performance. In contrast, countries with lower ACS scores appear in blue or blue-green, suggesting that their citations are more evenly distributed across a larger number of publications. These include the United Kingdom (ACS: 4.44), the United States (ACS: 4.73), Hungary (ACS: 4.36), and Spain (ACS: 4.33). Although these countries contribute a higher number of publications, their ACS remains lower due to the broader distribution of citations. India (ACS: 5.62) falls between blue-green and green, reflecting a moderate citation impact.

For institutional citation analysis, each institution with a minimum of one publication and zero citations was selected, identifying 190 institutions that have published in this journal. The citation analysis results by institution are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. *Institutional (Unit) citation analysis results*

According to Figure 3 and the institutional citation analysis, institutions with the highest ACS exhibit a strong citation impact per publication. The Department of Hotel and Tourism Management at the Graduate School of Youngsan University, South Korea, has 1 publication and 21 citations (ACS: 21.00), representing the highest ACS among the listed institutions. Similarly, the Aalborg University Business School, Denmark, and the Department of Marketing, Retail, and Tourism at Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom, each have 1 publication and 15 citations (ACS: 15.00), indicating a high citation impact relative to their number of publications.

Institutions with moderately high ACS values include the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India, which has 2 publications and 23 citations (ACS: 11.50). The University of Guelph, Canada, and the School of Economics and Business at the Mongolian University of Life Sciences each have 2 publications and 17 citations (ACS: 8.50). The School of Travel Industry Management at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA, also holds 2 publications and 17 citations (ACS: 8.50), demonstrating a consistent level of citation impact per publication.

Institutions with lower ACS values, despite contributing a higher number of publications, include the College of Health, Psychology, and Social Care at the University of Derby, United Kingdom, with 4 publications and 30 citations (ACS: 7.50). Similarly, the Centre for Contemporary Hospitality and Tourism at the same university has 4 publications and 27 citations (ACS: 6.75), while the HRSM Department at the University of Derby, Buxton, United Kingdom, has 2 publications and 16 citations (ACS: 8.00). These institutions, despite their higher research output, show a broader distribution of citations across multiple works, leading to a lower ACS.

3.3. Keyword Analysis

During the keyword analysis, terms with a minimum occurrence of one were selected, resulting in 374 keywords, all of which were included in the analysis. Keyword analysis revealed 15 key terms with distinct occurrence frequencies and total link strengths, illustrating major themes in the journal. "Wellness" emerged as the most frequently used keyword, appearing 23 times with a total link strength of 95. "Tourism" followed, appearing 17 times with a total link strength of 71. Other frequently used keywords included "Wellness tourism" (15 occurrences, total link strength: 57), "Spa" (13 occurrences, total link strength: 59), and "Wellbeing" (12 occurrences, total link strength: 57). Additionally, "COVID-19" (9 occurrences, total link strength: 37) and "Health" (8 occurrences, total link strength: 36) also appeared prominently. Keywords related to specific aspects of wellness and tourism included "Spas" (6 occurrences, total link strength: 24), "Health tourism" (4 occurrences, total link strength: 19), and "Mindfulness" (4 occurrences, total link strength: 16). Similarly, "Spa tourism" (3 occurrences, total link strength: 16), "Stress" (3 occurrences, total link strength: 13), and "Motivation" (3 occurrences, total link strength: 11) were also identified. Additionally, terms such as "Customer satisfaction" (3 occurrences, total link strength: 11) and "Anxiety" (2 occurrences, total link strength: 10) were included in the analysis. Figure 4 presents the Keyword Analysis Results.

Figure 4. *Keyword analysis results*
Note: *The largest cluster of interconnected items among the 374 keywords consists of 73 items, which the program used to generate the visual.*

According to Figure 4, the publications in the IJSW are divided into thematic clusters, each represented by a different color. The purple cluster is centered around the keyword spa. The pink cluster is centered around wellness, while the orange cluster is grouped around wellbeing. The light-yellow clusters focus on the keyword wellness tourism. The grey cluster is shaped around the keyword tourism, and the green cluster is centered around health.

4. Conclusion

This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the International Journal of Spa and Wellness (IJSW) from 2018 to 2024, focusing on the publication and citation structure, author and institutional contributions, country-based citation distribution, and keyword trends. The results provide an in-depth understanding of the journal's evolution, impact, and key research themes within the field of spa and wellness tourism.

The findings indicate that IJSW has experienced consistent growth in its publication output, reaching a total of 118 articles by 2024. The journal has also seen a steady increase in citations, accumulating 482 citations with an h-index of 12 as of August 2024. While the annual number of publications fluctuated over the years, a notable increase was observed in 2022, marking the highest productivity period. The distribution of publication types highlights that research articles constitute the majority of contributions, followed by editorials, notes, and a limited number of review articles and conference papers.

The citation analysis of publications in IJSW reveals the most influential studies in the field. The most-cited article, "De-stigmatizing Self-Care: Impact of a Self-Care Webinar during COVID-19" by Kotera (2021), has received 29 citations, highlighting the relevance of mental well-being in wellness tourism research. This is followed by "The Wellness Tourist Motivation Scale: A New Statistical Tool for Measuring Wellness Tourist Motivation" by Kessler, Lee, and Whittingham (2020), which has 21 citations, emphasizing the growing interest in understanding traveler motivations. Additionally, "Consumer Motivation and Behaviour When Selecting a Wellness Holiday Destination" by Aleksijevits (2019) has been cited 16 times, reflecting the significance of consumer decision-making in wellness tourism.

Author citation analysis reveals a diverse range of contributions, with certain authors achieving high ACS despite having a lower number of publications. Notably, Kotera has the highest total citation count (38), while Kessler, Lee, and Whittingham exhibit the highest ACS values (21.00), reflecting strong citation impact per publication. In terms of country contributions, the United Kingdom leads with the highest number of publications (32) and citations (142, ACS: 4.44). Other countries with significant citation influence include India, Finland, the United States, Canada, Hungary, Poland, China, South Korea, Mongolia, and Denmark, with South Korea achieving the highest ACS (21.00) despite a single publication.

Institutional analysis highlights the College of Health, Psychology, and Social Care at the University of Derby as the leading contributor, followed by the Centre for Contemporary Hospitality and Tourism at the same university. Institutions such as Youngsan University (South Korea), Aalborg University Business School (Denmark), and Manchester Metropolitan University (United Kingdom) demonstrate high citation impact per publication, with ACS values exceeding 15.00. Also, the most cited journal as a source citation is Tourism Management.

In the keyword analysis, a total of 374 terms with a minimum occurrence of one were included. The analysis revealed that the dominant keywords are as follows: *Wellness, Tourism, Wellness tourism, Spa* and *Wellbeing*. Additionally, terms such as *COVID-19, Health, Mindfulness, Stress, Motivation,* and *Customer satisfaction* also appeared with relatively high frequency and link strength. These findings indicate that wellness and tourism-related themes are central within the journal's content.

The results demonstrate that IJSW plays a significant role in the academic study of spa and wellness tourism, serving as a platform for interdisciplinary research that spans health, tourism, psychology, sustainability, and consumer behavior. The study provides a foundation for future research by identifying core themes, leading contributors, and emerging trends in the field. Further bibliometric analyses and comparative studies with other leading journals may offer deeper insights into the journal's long-term impact and scholarly contributions. Notably, the main topics and trends highlighted in the study may guide SPA and wellness businesses in diversifying their services and adopting innovative approaches.

4.1. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The use of Scopus may present certain limitations. Scopus covers a large number of journals; however, compared to other databases like Web of Science (WoS), it may not include certain high-impact or field-specific journals (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). The coverage of open access journals can also vary. For instance, Google Scholar indexes open access journals more comprehensively, while Scopus applies a more selective indexing policy. Additionally, citation data in Scopus can differ when compared to Web of Science and Google Scholar (Martín-Martín et al., 2018).

Future studies are recommended to conduct cross-analyses with Web of Science or domain-specific databases to obtain more comprehensive results. In particular, domain-specific databases such as PubMed (for medical and biomedical research), IEEE Xplore (for engineering), and SSRN (for social sciences) can provide more in-depth and extensive data in their respective fields. This approach can enhance the reliability and validity of research findings.

This study provides a bibliometric analysis specifically focused on IJSW. However, conducting comparative analyses with other leading journals in health tourism and wellness tourism could offer deeper insights into the field. Future research could explore IJSW's academic positioning in relation to other wellness tourism journals, compare citation and publication trends across different journals, and examine how the most frequently cited topics evolve over time.

References

Aleksijevits, K. (2019). Consumer motivation and behaviour when selecting a wellness holiday destination. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *2*(2), 78-97. https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2020.1771017

Archambault, É., Campbell, D., Gingras, Y., & Larivière, V. (2009). Comparing bibliometric statistics obtained from the Web of Science and Scopus. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 60*(7), 1320–1326. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.21062

Bertin, A., Arnould, C., Moussu, C., Meurisse, M., Constantin, P., Leterrier, C., & Calandreau, L. (2015). Artificially increased yolk hormone levels and neophobia in domestic chicks. *Animals, 5*(4), 1220–1232. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani5040408

Birdir, S. S., İflazoğlu, N., & Birdir, K. (2019). Turist rehberi adaylarında yeni yiyecek deneme korkusu (Neophobia). *Gastroia: Journal of Gastronomy and Travel Research, 3*(4), 350–362. https://doi.org/10.32958/gastoria.587550

Bhalla, R., & Agarwal, S. (2021). Life in a pandemic: Intersectional approach exploring experiences of LGBTQ during COVID-19. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *4*(1), 53-68. https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2021.1880204

Gani, M. O., Roy, H., Rahman, M. S., Faroque, A. R., Gupta, V., & Prova, H. T. (2023). Effect of social media influence on consumer's purchase intention of organic beauty products: the role of customer's engagement and generativity. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *6*(1), 54-77. https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2022.2096292

Göral, R., & Kılınç, H. (2023). Tourism Management dergisinin bibliyometrik analizi: Son 25 yıl üzerine bir değerlendirme. *Selçuk Turizm ve Bilişim Araştırmaları Dergisi, 3*, 22–39.

Global Wellness Institute (GWI). (2023). *Global wellness economy monitor 2023*. Retrieved August 26, 2024, from https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/industry-research/2023-global-wellness-economy-monitor/

Hood, W. W., & Wilson, C. S. (2001). The literature of bibliometrics, scientometrics, and informetrics. *Scientometrics, 52*(2), 291–314. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1017919924342

Kessler, D., Lee, J. H., & Whittingham, N. (2020). The wellness tourist motivation scale: A new statistical tool for measuring wellness tourist motivation. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *3*(1), 24-39. https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2020.1849930

Koskinen, V. (2019). Spa tourism as a part of ageing well. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *2*(1), 18-34. https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2019.1668673

Kotera, Y. (2021). De-stigmatising self-care: Impact of self-care webinar during COVID-19. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *4*(2-3), 213-217. https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2021.1892324

Kumar, S., Sureka, R., & Vashishtha, A. (2020). The Journal of Heritage Tourism: A bibliometric overview since its inception. *Journal of Heritage Tourism, 15*(4), 365–380. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2020.1754423

Martín-Martín, A., Orduna-Malea, E., Thelwall, M., & Delgado López-Cózar, E. (2018). Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Scopus: A systematic comparison of citations in 252 subject categories. *Journal of Informetrics, 12*(4), 1160–1177. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2018.09.002

McGroarty, B. (2023, October 28). Wellness tourism will cross the $1 trillion mark in 2024. *Global Wellness Institute*. Retrieved August 26, 2024, from https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/global-wellness-institute-blog/2023/11/28/wellness-tourism-will-cross-the-1-trillion-mark-in-2024/

Mongeon, P., & Paul-Hus, A. (2016). The journal coverage of Web of Science and Scopus: A comparative analysis. *Scientometrics, 106*(1), 213–228. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-015-1765-5

Mulet-Forteza, C., Martorell-Cunill, O., Merigó, J. M., Genovart-Balaguer, J., & Mauleon-Mendez, E. (2018). Twenty five years of the Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing: A bibliometric ranking. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 35*(9), 1201–1221. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2018.1487368

Pope, E. (2018). Tourism and wellbeing: transforming people and places. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *1*(1), 69-81. https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2018.1438559.

Schwert, G. W. (1993). The Journal of Financial Economics a retrospective evaluation (1974–91). *Journal of Financial Economics, 33*(3), 369–424. https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-405X(93)90012-Z

Scopus. (2024, August). *Scopus IJSW citation page*. Retrieved August 29, 2024, from https://www.scopus.com/pages/citationOverview?key=b4f7ba1e-66ac-45a5-a882-e4736f78ac52

Scopus. (2024, August). *Scopus IJSW page*. Retrieved August 29, 2024, from https://www.scopus.com/results/results.uri?sort=plf-fvesrc=svesid=cfbe6b370cd77d93487a756bb6280d23vesot=avesdt=avesl=23ves=SOURCE-ID+(21101096145)

Sigala, M., Kumar, S., Donthu, N., Sureka, R., & Joshi, Y. (2021). A bibliometric overview of the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management: Research contributions and influence. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 47*, 273–288. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.04.005

Smith, M., & Puczkó, L. (2014). *Health, tourism and hospitality: Spas, wellness and medical travel*. Routledge.

Sthapit, E., Björk, P., & Coudounaris, D. N. (2023). Towards a better understanding of memorable wellness tourism experience. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *6*(1), 1-27. https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2022.2136120

Taylor & Francis. (2024, August). *About this journal*. Retrieved August 19, 2024, from https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rspa20/about-this-journal

The Business Research Company. (2024, January). *Spa global market report 2024*. Retrieved August 26, 2024, from https://www.thebusinessresearchcompany.com/report/spa-global-market-report

Tiwari, R., & Hashmi, H. (2022). Integrating concepts of destination image, travel motivations, expectation, and future behavior to create a model of wellness travel intentions. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *5*(2), 185-206. https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2022.2057714

Van Eck, N. J., & Waltman, L. (2010). Software survey: VOSviewer, a computer program for bibliometric mapping. *Scientometrics, 84*(2), 523–538. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-009-0146-3

Van Eck, N. J., & Waltman, L. (2014). Visualizing bibliometric networks. In Y. Ding, R. Rousseau, & D. Wolfram (Eds.), *Measuring scholarly impact: Methods and practice* (pp. 285–320). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-10377-8_13

Van Eck, N. J., & Waltman, L. (2023). *VOSviewer manual* (Version 1.6.19). Centre for Science and Technology Studies, Leiden University. Retrieved from https://www.vosviewer.com/documentation

Van Raan, A. F. J. (2005). Fatal attraction: Conceptual and methodological problems in the ranking of universities by bibliometric methods. *Scientometrics, 62*(1), 133–143. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-005-0008-6

Waltman, L., Van Eck, N. J., & Noyons, E. C. (2010). A unified approach to mapping and clustering of bibliometric networks. *Journal of Informetrics, 4*(4), 629–635. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2010.07.002

Wang, L., Togtokhbuyan, L., & Yadmaa, Z. (2021). Visual analysis of the international wellness tourism WOS literature from 1992 to 2019. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *4*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2020.1830527