

# Mapping the Architecture of Community Involvement in Traditional Craft Village Tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis

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## Abstract

The intersection of traditional craft villages and tourism has emerged as a critical domain for both rural revitalization and cultural heritage preservation. While tourism acts as an economic catalyst, unchecked development frequently leads to cultural commodification and the marginalization of local artisans. Consequently, community involvement is recognized as an essential structural mechanism for sustainable tourism. This study presents a systematic bibliometric analysis of 731 Scopus articles published between 2015 and 2025 to map the evolutionary trajectory of this academic domain. Using descriptive and science mapping techniques, the analysis tracks the transition of rural tourism research from isolated case studies to complex empirical frameworks. These frameworks position community empowerment as a crucial mediating variable connecting tourism development to ultimate tourist satisfaction. Results reveal an exponential surge in publications, with 2024 and 2025 accounting for over 45% of the decade's output. Geographically, empirical work is concentrated in emerging economies, where state-led artisan initiatives intersect with local execution. Thematic analysis reveals a recent literature shift toward power dynamics, localized equity, and genuine participation, contrasting with earlier top-down heritage management logistics. Synthesizing these documents exposes critical methodological gaps. The field requires a fundamental shift toward rigorous mixed-methods designs, specifically combining qualitative community assessments with quantitative tourist metrics to mathematically validate how active participation authentically drives destination success.

**Keywords:** Traditional Craft Villages, Community Empowerment, Sustainable Rural Tourism, Perceived Authenticity, Local Artisans.

## 1. Introduction

Traditional craft and artisan villages are frequently marketed as pristine repositories of intangible culture, serving as a critical engine for rural economic rejuvenation. In theory, tourism acts as a benign catalyst that injects capital into marginalized areas while incentivizing the preservation of general craftsmanship. In reality, unchecked rural tourism operates as an extractive industry (Greenwood, 1989; Cole, 2007). Without rigorously enforced management, tourism rapidly cannibalizes the very cultural capital it relies upon for attraction. The influx of external capital and infrastructure development frequently marginalizes the local artisans, displacing them from decision-making processes and reducing them to mere performative props in a staged cultural economy (MacCannell, 1973; Cohen, 1988). This dynamic

transforms authentic traditional settlements into heavily commodified, sterile environments dictated by external developers rather than the communities who build them. Consequently, the overarching academic discourse has been forced to shift away from merely celebrating rural tourism as an economic panacea, pivoting instead toward the critical structural mechanisms required to prevent cultural erosion and ensure long-term viability (Besculides et al., 2002; Gao & Wu, 2017).

The primary asset of any traditional craft village is its perceived authenticity. Tourists do not travel to remote rural destinations for generic leisure. They seek existential and objective authenticity rooted in the historic continuity of the local community (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Wang, 1999). However, a severe tension emerges between authentic craft manufacturing and the demands of high-volume mass tourism when traditional villages shift into commercialized tourist destinations. When local artisans are alienated from the tourism planning process, the resulting cultural output becomes sanitized and mass-produced to meet tourist expectations (Xie, 2011; Trinh et al., 2020). This alienation directly degrades the authenticity of the tourist experience. Crucially, authenticity is not a nebulous, subjective concept; it is a highly quantified determinant of destination loyalty and overall tourist satisfaction (Bryce et al., 2015; Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2011). Therefore, the preservation of authenticity is not only an ethical obligation of the community but also an absolute economic imperative for the sustained success of the destination itself. When a village loses its authenticity due to the structural exclusion of its artisans, tourist plummets, and the economic model collapses.

To combat the destructive lifecycle of unmanaged tourism, literature over the past decade has increasingly centered on community involvement as a necessary intervention. However, “involvement” is often treated as a vague, tokenistic concept in both policy and academic analysis, frequently amounting to nothing more than superficial consultation (Tosun, 2000). Meaningful analysis requires acknowledging that genuine community empowerment operates as the central mediating variable between destination development and tourist satisfaction. When local artisans possess social, psychological, and economic empowerment, granting them actual control over how their culture is displayed and sold, the quality, depth, and authenticity of the tourism product improve exponentially (Boley & McGehee, 2014; Scheyvens, 1999; Tosun, 2000). Empowered communities are highly invested in the reciprocal exchange with visitors, which directly dictates the psychological outcomes of the tourist (L. Su et al., 2018). Therefore, understanding the success of a traditional craft village requires analyzing the community empowerment not only as a socio-political goal but also as a critical, measurable mediator that dictates whether structural tourism inputs actually result in high yield tourist satisfaction.

Despite the theoretical consensus that community empowerment drives destination success, the empirical literature remains methodologically stagnant. A critical review of the current paradigm reveals a disproportionate reliance on single-method, cross-sectional, qualitative case studies (Nunkoo et al., 2013). Researchers have historically focused exclusively on quantitative assessments of localized realities. It fails to scientifically prove the overarching economic model. To build robust, actionable frameworks, the field must fundamentally shift towards rigorous mixed-method approaches (Molina-Azorín & Font, 2016). The qualitative data were extracted from the tourists themselves. Only by combining deep qualitative community assessment with hard, qualitative metrics on tourist satisfaction can researchers mathematically validate how varying levels of resident empowerment dictate the commercial and experiential success of the destination (Boley et al., 2014).

### **1.1.Objectives of the study**

This study aims to systematically dismantle and analyze the existing academic architecture surrounding

traditional craft villages, tourism, and community involvement. This paper identifies critical gaps in current theoretical frameworks and proposes a necessary methodological evolution by executing a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of peer-reviewed literature published between 2015 and 2025. This study addresses the following research questions;

### **1.2. Research questions**

RQ1: What are the structural growth trends, temporal trajectories, and methodological patterns of literature within this domain over the past decade?

RQ2: Which core journals, institutions, and highly cited foundational papers dictate the intellectual boundaries of this field?

RQ3: How does the geographic distribution of the research output reflect global policy priorities regarding rural rejuvenation and cultural preservation?

RQ4: What are the dominant thematic clusters within the literature, and how do they fail or succeed in integrating community empowerment as a mediating variable for tourist satisfaction?

## **2. Review of literature**

### **2.1. The theoretical nexus of heritage, power, and tourism**

The academic evolution of traditional craft and artisan villages cannot exist in a theoretical vacuum. It sits at a highly contested intersection of cultural geography, heritage economies, and political ecology (Mostafanezhad, 2016; Throsby, 1999). Historically, early research treated rural settlements merely as a static background for leisure consumption, focusing primarily on basic infrastructure logistics and macro metrics (Archer, 1978; Bryden, 1973). However, modern scholarship has evolved beyond these reductionist models, increasingly analyzing traditional villages through the lens of complex socio-ecological systems where the preservation of intangible cultural heritage directly collides with the capitalist imperatives of global tourism markets (Strickland-Munro et al., 2010; J. Su, 2023).

When a community commodifies its generational craftsmanship, spatial practices, and daily domestic rhythms for tourist consumption, it fundamentally alters its internal power dynamics and social structures (Cohen, 1988; Shepherd, 2002). To map this transformation, Goodwin & Santilli (2009) synthesize the foundational literature across two core dimensions, which are the authenticity-commodification paradox and the structural evolution of community-based tourism. It then establishes an integrated theoretical framework that bridges the structural distribution of institutional power with resident cost-benefit perceptions by operationalizing Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation alongside social exchange theory.

### **2.2. The commodification of rural heritage and the authenticity construct**

The primary currency of tourism within traditional artisan spaces is authenticity. Yet within tourism production, authenticity is rarely a pristine, untouched state; rather, it is a highly negotiated, staged, and contested resource (Cohen, 1988; MacCannell, 1973). Scholars separate this construct into three distinct epistemological categories: objective, constructive, and existential authenticity (Seyitoğlu et al., 2022). Objective authenticity relates to the scientifically verifiable, historical accuracy of an artifact or architectural space (Zhu, 2012). Within artisan villages, this manifests as raw, unadulterated use of traditional tools, local materials, and ancient techniques. Constructive authenticity emerges when imagery and experiences are socially constructed by marketing agents, tour operators, and state entities to project a romanticized version of rural life that conforms to pre-existing expectations of urban consumers (Cohen, 1988; Zhu, 2012). Finally, existential authenticity refers to an intrapersonal state of being where the tourist

experiences a sense of liberation, connection, and self-actualization by engaging with a traditional community (Zhu, 2012).

The critical friction points within the literature occur when the pursuit of constructive authenticity triggers severe cultural commodification (Bai & Weng, 2023). When external capital dominates a destination, the local community is frequently forced to alter its traditions to maximize commercial throughput. Complex, multi-day artisan rituals are condensed into twenty-minute performances tailored for tourist bus schedules; highly technical craft manufacturing is replaced with cheap, mass-produced replicas sourced externally but marketed as locally handmade. This process alienates local artisans from their own labor, turning genuine heritage into a superficial performance (Bai & Weng, 2023).

Crucially, this commodification cycle contains the seeds of its own economic destruction. Because contemporary tourists increasingly possess sophisticated, hyper-aware consumer preferences, they rapidly detect the artificiality of staged heritage. When a destination transitions from an organic artisan community to a commercial theme park, perceived authenticity drops, dragging tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty down with it (Seyitoğlu et al., 2022). Therefore, maintaining a baseline of authentic cultural production is not a luxury but the core economic prerequisite for keeping the destination viable.

### **2.3. Evolution and structural pitfalls of community-based tourism (CBT)**

To counter the predatory mechanics of top-down mass tourism, the conceptual framework of community-based tourism (CBT) emerged as an alternative model designed to return equity and control to the local residents (Hoff & Morgan, 2010). In its idealized form, CBT dictates that tourism within the specific geographic territory should be owned, managed, and operated by the community itself, ensuring that economic leakages are minimized and the financial benefits are distributed equitably among local stakeholders (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). However, a cold, objective reading of the empirical data from the past decade reveals that the majority of CBT initiatives suffer from systematic structural failures (Manyara & Jones, 2007; Tosun, 2000). The literature shows that true community-led management is incredibly rare, particularly in the global south. Instead, most craft village tourism initiatives operate under a façade of CBT while masking deep systemic dependencies.

Three primary structural bottlenecks recur across the literature to undermine the operational reality of these initiatives. First, elite capture frequently skews project outcomes; even when tourism initiatives are technically localized, the benefits and decision-making powers are monopolized by entrenched local elites such as village elders, political officials, or wealthy landowners, completely marginalizing low-income artisans, women, and indigenous subgroups (Blackstock, 2005; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Second, a severe lack of local capacity cripples operational independence. Traditional craft communities often possess world-class artistic skills but completely lack the digital literacy, financial accounting capabilities, language skills, and strategic marketing expertise required to navigate competitive global tourism supply chains, forcing an immediate asymmetric dependency on external brokers and intermediaries (Simpson, 2008). Finally, chronic economic leakage ensures that the host community remains impoverished. Because local residents rarely own the border distribution networks, inbound travel agencies, hotel chains, or transport logistics, the vast majority of tourist expenditure leaks out of the rural economy, leaving the host community to bear the immediate social and environmental externalities while receiving only residual, low-wage employment benefits (Djenane et al., 2026).

### **2.4. Theoretical lens 1: social exchange theory**

To mathematically model and conceptually understand how local residents perceive and respond to these structural realities, tourism scholars rely heavily on social exchange theory (SET) (Ap, 1992; Gursoy &

Rutherford, 2004). SET operates on an economic and psychological calculus. It posits that individual and collective behavior is determined by a continuous cost-benefit analysis (Emerson, 1976). Within the context of traditional craft villages, residents evaluate the tangible and intangible trade-offs associated with hosting tourists across multiple distinct dimensions (Sharpley, 2014).

**Table 2.1: The Socio-economic calculus of social exchange theory**

| Dimension             | Positive Benefits                                                                | Negative Costs                                                                         |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Economic</b>       | Direct craft sales, infrastructural upgrades, and supplementary homestay income. | Inflation of local commodity prices, soaring land valuation, and economic instability. |
| <b>Socio-Cultural</b> | Revitalization of dying crafts, global prestige, and heightened community pride. | Commodification of sacred rituals, overcrowding, and erosion of traditional values.    |
| <b>Environmental</b>  | Conservation of historic spaces, waste management investments.                   | Resource depletion, severe plastic pollution, and spatial degradation.                 |

According to SET, if the local community perceives that the economic and cultural benefits outpace the environmental and social costs, they will display high levels of psychological support for tourism development (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). Conversely, if they feel exploited by external capital, they will exhibit resistance, ranging from passive non-cooperation to active hostility toward visitors (Sharpley, 2014). The current literature exposes a major limitation in how SET is traditionally applied. It assumes that residents are rational, fully informed actors with equal bargaining power (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Sharpley, 2014). In reality, marginalized artisans in developing nations rarely have the agency to reject tourism development, even when they perceive the costs to be devastatingly high. Therefore, SET must be paired with an explicit analysis of institutional power dynamics to accurately depict the structural inequalities at play (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012).

## 2.5.Theoretical Lens 2: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

To address the hidden power imbalances skipped over by SET, scholars use Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation to evaluate the depth and authenticity of community involvement (Arnstein, 1969; Okazaki, 2008). Arnstein's framework categorizes participation across an explicit eight-rung hierarchy, separating empty public relations maneuvers from genuine citizen control.

When mapped against the last decade of Scopus data on craft villages, the empirical reality is sobering. The overwhelming majority of tourism projects stall at the levels of Informing or Consultation (Marzuki et al., 2012; Tosun, 2006). Government agencies or corporate developers finalize tourism master plans in centralized offices, presenting them to the village as a finished choice (Informing), or they host perfunctory town halls to collect signatures without altering the project's structural design (Consultation).

True sustainability requires pushing the destination into the upper tiers of Partnership and Citizen Control (Okazaki, 2008). In these rungs, the artisan community holds veto power over spatial development, sets caps on visitor volume to preserve environmental integrity, and establishes community-led trusts to guarantee equitable financial distribution.

## 2.6.The Conceptual Framework: Empowerment as a Mediating Engine

By synthesizing the insights of the 731 articles within our dataset, we can discard the naive assumption

that simple community "presence" leads to successful tourism. Instead, we adopt a rigorous conceptual model that positions Community Empowerment as the central mediating engine converting structural inputs into destination success. Empowerment must be treated as a multidimensional construct comprising four interlocking pillars (Boley et al., 2014a). Economic empowerment requires secure, long-term financial independence for artisans, insulated from external predatory intermediaries. Psychological empowerment fosters a distinct elevation of local self-esteem and cultural pride, where traditional knowledge systems are respected on a global stage. Social empowerment yields heightened community cohesion and cooperation, enabling the community to act collectively against external threats. Finally, political empowerment establishes democratic mechanisms that allow even the most marginalized artisan to actively reshape local tourism policy and land-use zoning.

When these four dimensions of empowerment are actualized, the local community naturally maintains the integrity and authenticity of its cultural assets (Cole, 2007; M. M. Su et al., 2016). This authentic preservation directly shapes the experiential reality of the visitor. Tourists do not encounter a staged, artificial performance; they experience an integrated, organic, and respectful cultural exchange.

This deep sense of authenticity functions as the primary driver of destination satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth, and repeat visitation (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Ram et al., 2016). Ultimately, the literature demonstrates a clear causal chain: you cannot build a sustainable, high-yield tourism destination without first establishing a structurally empowered host community.

### **3. Methodology**

Bibliometric analysis is a commonly used method among scholars for assessing scientific performance (Farooq, 2023; La et al., 2021). Accordingly, its results clearly illustrate scientific production, the development of the literature on a topic, and its current status through visuals (maps, graphs, etc.). In this study, bibliometric analysis was employed to identify the areas where cultural heritage tourism and sustainability intersect, to determine the effectiveness of scientific publications in this field, and to observe the development and direction of the literature.

#### **3.1. Research Design and the Value of Bibliometric Mapping**

To study how traditional craft villages manage tourism, researchers need a clear, systematic way to review existing literature before running field interviews or surveys. Standard narrative reviews often struggle to synthesize thousands of scattered papers across different regions (Donthu et al., 2021). To avoid missing key trends or bringing subjective bias into the review process, this study uses a quantitative bibliometric analysis guided by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework (Page et al., 2021).

Bibliometrics uses mathematical and statistical tools to measure scientific output and map how research field topics connect over time (Zupic & Čater, 2015). As demonstrated by Li et al. (2020), combining systematic study filtering with metadata analysis highlights research gaps and institutional biases that standard narrative reviews easily overlook. The steps below detail how the final dataset of 731 articles was collected, filtered, and cleaned.

#### **3.2. Database Selection**

Scopus (by Elsevier) was selected as the sole database for this study. While Web of Science is widely used for natural sciences, Scopus offers significantly broader coverage for social sciences, business management, and tourism studies (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016).

Scopus was chosen over search engines like Google Scholar because Google Scholar indexes unreviewed

white papers, duplicate files, and lower-quality publications without strict editorial control (Haddaway et al., 2015). Filtering through Scopus guarantees that every paper in the dataset passed formal peer review, ensuring reliable theoretical frameworks on topics like perceived authenticity (Rickly, 2022).

### 3.3. Search Strategy and Query Construction

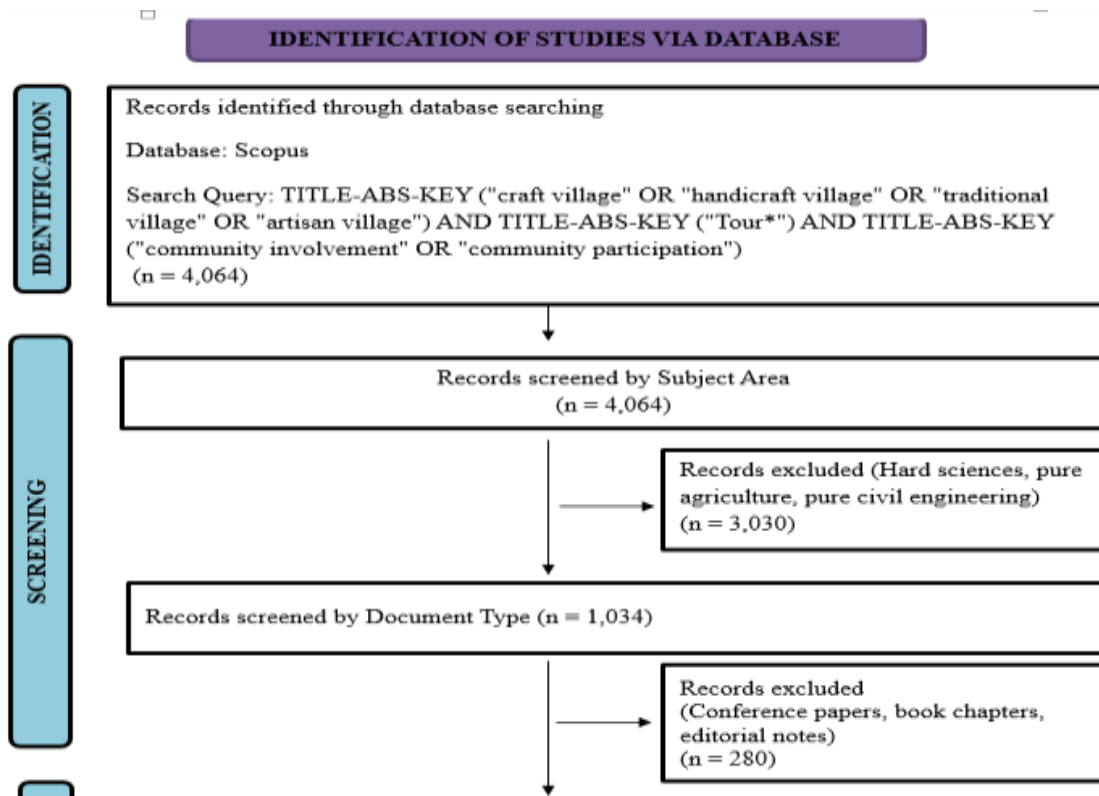
The search strategy was designed to capture papers at the intersection of three key topics: traditional artisan settlements, tourism, and local community involvement. A Boolean search query was executed across the "Article Title, Abstract, and Keywords" (TITLE-ABS-KEY) fields in Scopus.

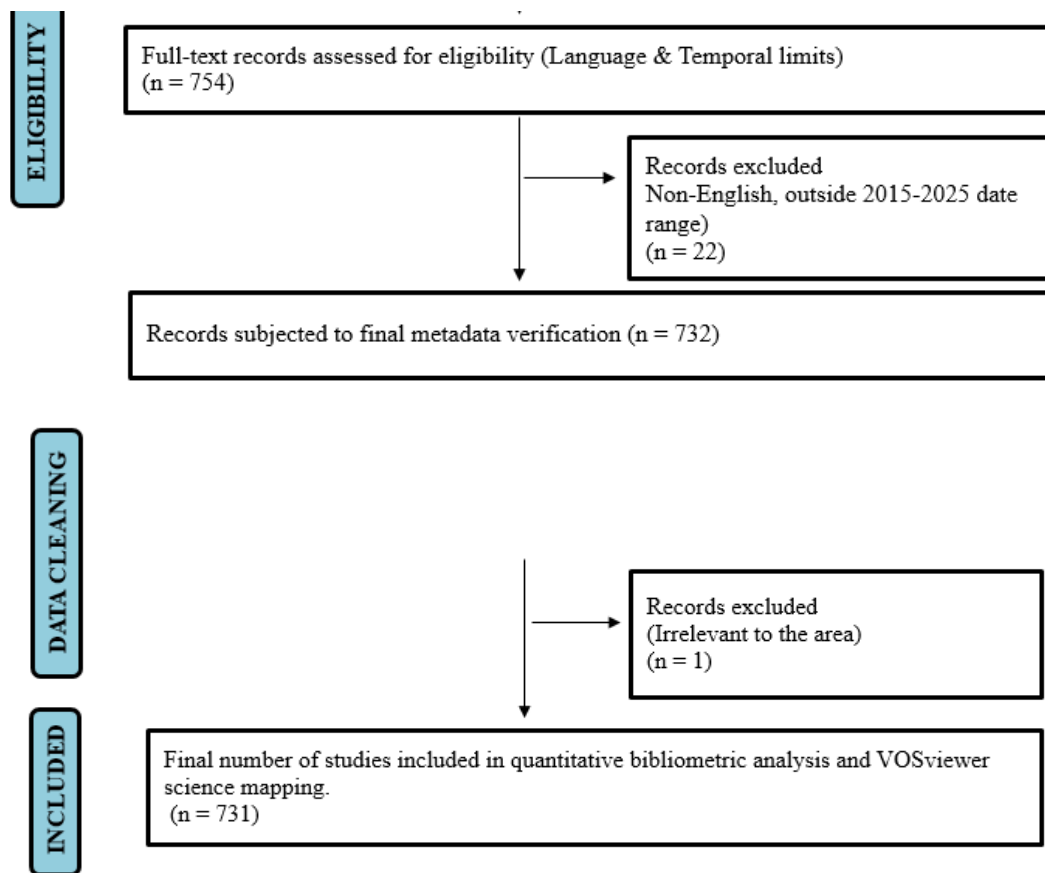
TITLE-ABS-KEY ("craft village" OR "handicraft village" OR "traditional village" OR "artisan village") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Tour\*") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("community involvement" OR "community participation")

Using the wildcard Tour\* ensured the inclusion of terms like "tourism," "tourist," and "touristic." Requiring terms like "community involvement" or "community participation" removed irrelevant papers that focused purely on village architecture or geography without considering local residents.

### 3.4. The PRISMA Filtering Workflow

The initial search returned 4,064 records. To narrow this down to a focused, high-quality dataset, a four-stage filtering process was applied based on PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021). First, the dataset was filtered by subject area. The raw search contained hundreds of engineering and agricultural papers studying soil composition or building materials. Restricting the dataset to Social Sciences and Business/Management reduced the total to 1,034 papers. Second, document types were restricted exclusively to peer-reviewed journal articles, dropping 280 conference papers, book chapters, and editorial notes to maintain research quality. Third, results were limited to English-language papers published between 2015 and 2025 to focus on modern research trends, leaving 732 papers. Finally, the CSV metadata was cleaned by the researcher, and 1 was irrelevant area, data was removed. This left a final, verified dataset of 731 articles.





### 3.5. Network Visualization and VOSviewer Parameters

To visualize the structural networks of the 731-document dataset, VOS viewer software (version 1.6.19) was employed (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The software's default "Association Strength" normalization method was applied to correct for total occurrences, preventing high-frequency terms from mathematically overshadowing niche, meaningful connections (Eck & Waltman, 2009).

Two distinct science mapping techniques were executed. First, keyword co-occurrence analysis was utilized to map the conceptual boundaries of the field (Donthu et al., 2021). Fractional counting was applied, and a minimum occurrence threshold of five was established to filter out isolated terms. VOS viewer's modularity clustering algorithm then objectively grouped the remaining keywords into thematic sub-disciplines.

Second, bibliographic coupling was conducted at the document level to visualize the current research front (Zupic & Čater, 2015). A minimum threshold of fifty citations per document was established to include only highly impactful studies. This technique algorithmically grouped documents based on shared references, exposing the structural development and theoretical schools of thought within recent community-based tourism literature.

### 3.6. Data Extraction and Analytical Techniques

The analysis of the 731-article dataset was bifurcated into two distinct methodological approaches: Performance Analysis and Science Mapping (Donthu et al., 2021)

**Performance Analysis:** Using Python data frames, descriptive statistics were generated to evaluate the productivity and impact of the field. This involved calculating the annual growth rate of publications, identifying the most prolific source journals, and parsing author affiliations to determine the geographic

concentration of institutional funding (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Citation metrics were evaluated to identify the foundational literature anchoring the field.

Science Mapping and Network Analysis: Descriptive statistics identify who is publishing, but science mapping identifies what they are publishing (Cobo et al., 2011). VOS viewer software was utilized to construct bibliometric networks based on author keyword co-occurrence and bibliographic coupling (van Eck & Waltman, 2010) and Microsoft excel is used to create the graphs. By algorithmically clustering keywords that frequently appear together in the same documents, this technique visually renders the sub-disciplines and thematic boundaries of the literature (Zupic & Čater, 2015). This process moves the analysis beyond manual interpretation, providing statistical evidence of how concepts like "authenticity," "heritage," and "empowerment" structurally relate to one another.

## 4. Results and Descriptive Bibliometrics

### 4.1. Publication Trajectory and Growth Dynamics

A rigorous evaluation of any academic sub-discipline begins with its publication velocity. Tracking the chronological distribution of research output reveals whether a topic is a stagnant niche or an accelerating priority. Analyzing the 731 peer-reviewed articles extracted from the Scopus database reveals an aggressive, non-linear growth trajectory that fundamentally redefines the scope of traditional craft village research.

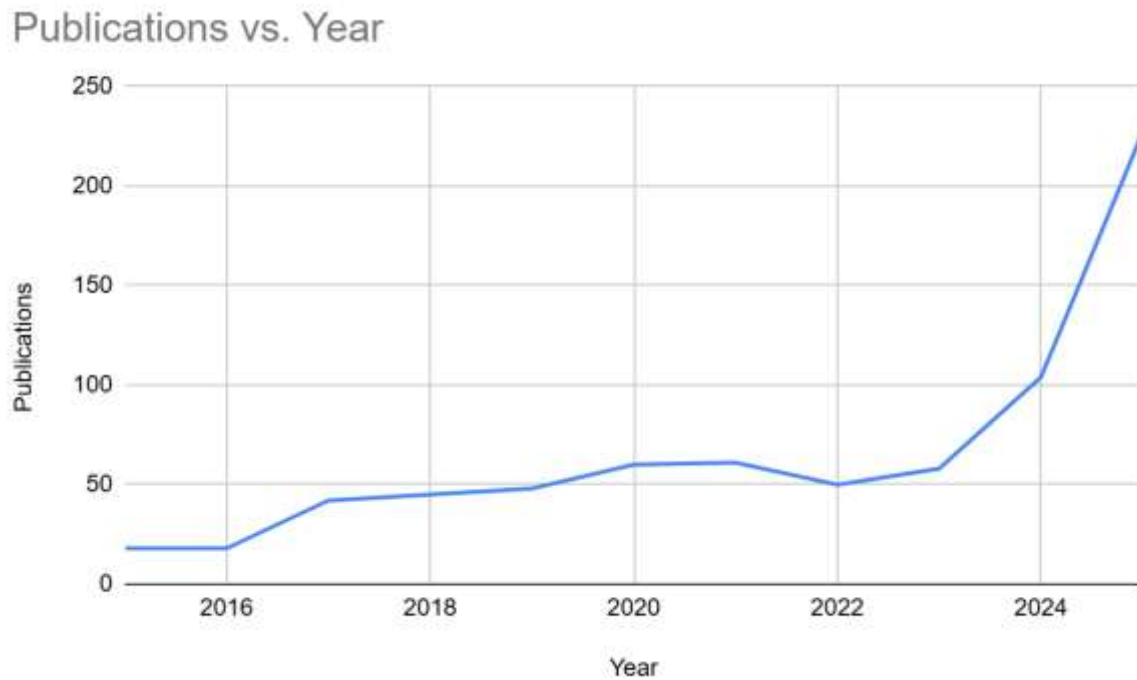
Between 2015 and 2016, the field was relatively marginalized, producing only an average of 18 articles annually. During this early phase, literature on community involvement in tourism was largely relegated to fringe sociological studies rather than mainstream economic development frameworks. A steady escalation occurred between 2017 and 2019, climbing to an average of 45 annual publications, heavily influenced by the adoption of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which forced academics to quantify the socio-economic survival of rural communities (Siakwah et al., 2020).

The defining structural shift in the literature occurs in the post-pandemic era. While publication rates plateaued slightly at roughly 60 articles per year during 2020 and 2021, reflecting the global halt in tourism fieldwork, the subsequent rebound is unprecedented. In 2024, the output broke the 100-article threshold (104 publications). The finalized data for 2025 reveals a massive spike to 227 articles, accounting for over 31% of the entire decade's output in a single year. This exponential surge is a direct academic response to global state-sponsored rural recovery initiatives; governments worldwide are aggressively deploying tourism capital to rescue failing rural economies, and researchers are rapidly mobilizing to measure the fallout.

**Table 4.1: Annual Publication Growth**

| Year | Annual Publications | Year | Annual Publications |
|------|---------------------|------|---------------------|
| 2015 | 18 articles         | 2021 | 61 articles         |
| 2016 | 18 articles         | 2022 | 50 articles         |
| 2017 | 42 articles         | 2023 | 58 articles         |
| 2018 | 45 articles         | 2024 | 104 articles        |
| 2019 | 48 articles         | 2025 | 227 articles        |
| 2020 | 60 articles         |      |                     |

**Figure 4.1: Annual Publication Growth**



## 4.2. Source Impact and Publisher Dominance

Identifying where this research is published provides critical insight into how the academic community categorizes the intersection of craft villages and community involvement. An analysis of publisher distribution exposes an oligopoly in academic curation. Routledge (Taylor & Francis) dominates the field, publishing 229 of the 731 articles (31.3%), followed by Elsevier Ltd with 91 articles (12.4%), and Africa Journals with 42 articles. This concentration dictates the theoretical guardrails of the field, as these publishers prioritize rigorous empirical modeling over purely descriptive ethnographic narratives. When drilling down to the specific journal level, the data exposes the field's highest-impact platforms. The dominance of these specific journals (Table 4.2) proves a critical paradigm shift: community involvement in traditional villages is no longer a peripheral ethical debate; it is central to the core logistics of global tourism management (Lane & Kastenholtz, 2015).

**Table 4.2: Journals that published the highest number of articles**

| Rank | Journal Title                                       | Total Articles | Publisher       | Focus Area                                                         |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Journal of Sustainable Tourism                      | 43             | Routledge       | Environmental/social carrying capacity and mass tourism solutions. |
| 2    | African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure | 42             | Africa Journals | Post-colonial rural development, poverty alleviation.              |
| 3    | Tourism Management                                  | 31             | Elsevier        | Mathematical modeling of community constraints and planning.       |

|   |                                           |    |           |                                                                      |
|---|-------------------------------------------|----|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | Current Issues in Tourism                 | 29 | Routledge | Emerging debates on perceived authenticity and tourist satisfaction. |
| 5 | International Journal of Tourism Research | 26 | Wiley     | Destination management and resident attitudes.                       |

### 4.3. Geographic and Institutional Stratification

Analyzing the author affiliations of the 731 articles reveals a severe geographic stratification, demonstrating that research on traditional craft villages is disproportionately driven by emerging economies in the Global South and Asia.

China exerts absolute dominance over this field, accounting for 337 institutional affiliations. This is the direct academic byproduct of Beijing's "Rural Revitalization Strategy," prompting institutions like Sun Yat-sen University to systematically evaluate state-led infrastructural injections against authentic rural preservation (Gao & Wu, 2017). Indonesia ranks second globally, heavily supported by institutions conceptualizing the decentralized Desa Wisata (Tourism Village) model, which focuses on bottom-up community micro-entrepreneurship.

Western output is significantly lower, largely contributing theoretical frameworks rather than primary, localized rural fieldwork. Critically, despite their lower aggregate volume, research out of South Africa and India frequently pioneers vital socio-economic frameworks, tackling complex intersections of spatial justice, Geographical Indications (GI) for artisans, and the survival of traditional knowledge systems.

**Table 4.3: Geographic Ranking of Institutional Affiliation**

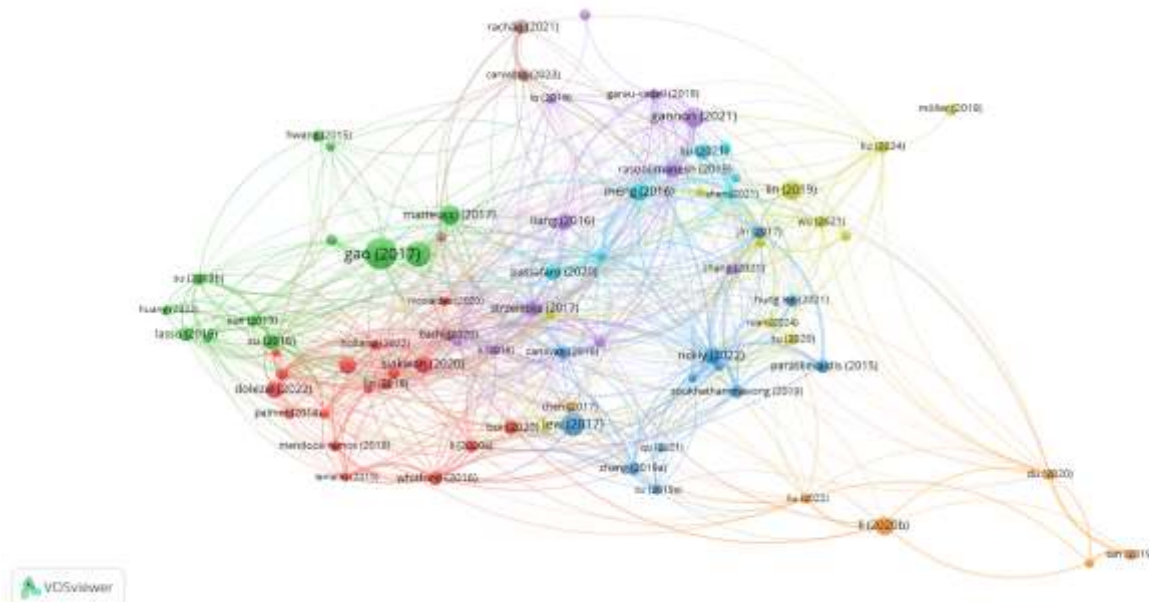
| Rank | Country        | Total Affiliations | Primary Research Focus                                              |
|------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | China          | 337                | State-led Rural Revitalization, Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). |
| 2    | Indonesia      | 181                | Desa Wisata models decentralized micro-entrepreneurship.            |
| 3    | United States  | 102                | Theoretical modeling, global synthesis.                             |
| 4    | South Africa   | 75                 | Post-Apartheid spatial justice, black community empowerment.        |
| 5    | India          | 72                 | Artisan Geographical Indications (GI), and urbanization pressures.  |
| 6    | Australia      | 71                 | Sustainable metrics, natural resource management.                   |
| 7    | United Kingdom | 66                 | Heritage policy, theoretical authenticity constructs.               |

### 4.4. Citation Analysis and the Foundational Hierarchy

Across the dataset, the 731 articles have generated a total of 15,865 citations, averaging 21.7 citations per paper. However, a small cluster of foundational papers dictates the theoretical boundaries for the rest of the field. Deconstructing the top five most globally cited documents (Table 4.4) reveals the evolutionary DNA of this research domain.

**Table 4.4: Citation Ranking of Top Journals**

| Rank | Author(s) & Year         | Journal                        | Citations | Core Theoretical Contribution                                                                                                                                            |
|------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Gao & Wu (2017)          | Tourism Management             | 598       | Anchored the discourse on Chinese rural revitalization; modeled tourism as a double-edged sword capable of both poverty alleviation and severe heritage commodification. |
| 2    | Lane & Kastenholz (2015) | Journal of Sustainable Tourism | 393       | Warned that rural destinations would suffer the destructive lifecycle of coastal resorts without community-controlled sustainability metrics.                            |
| 3    | Lew (2017)               | Tourism Geographies            | 335       | Distinguished between organic "place-making" (bottom-up artisan control) and top-down "placemaking" (engineered marketing).                                              |
| 4    | Gannon et al. (2021).    | Journal of Travel Research     | 259       | Utilized Social Exchange Theory (SET) to mathematically prove that community support is a highly volatile variable reliant on cost-benefit perceptions.                  |
| 5    | Matteucci & Gnoth (2017) | Annals of Tourism Research     | 247       | Deployed Grounded Theory to systematically map the psychological impacts of staged authenticity on both the artisan and the visitor.                                     |



**FIGURE 4.2**

## 4.5. Thematic Keyword Co-Occurrence and Structural Science Mapping

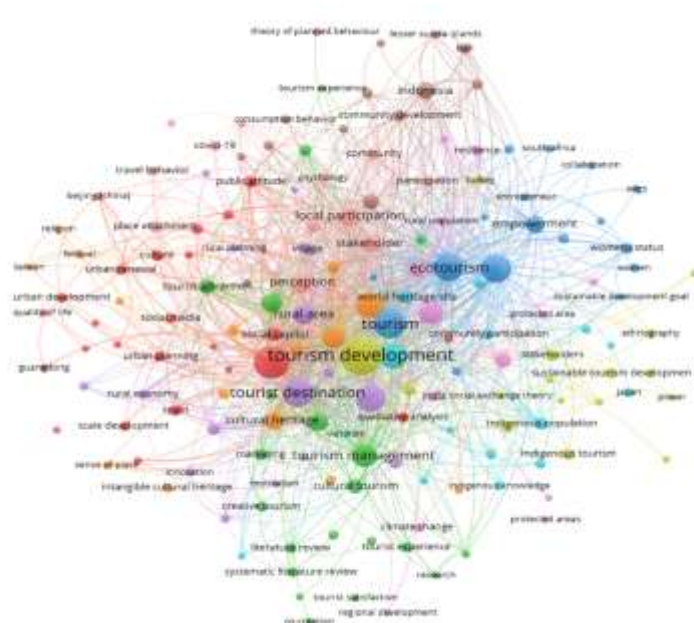
Descriptive statistics identify the actors, but thematic science mapping reveals the intellectual architecture. By algorithmically extracting and clustering the highest-frequency author keywords, the specific thematic pillars that define current research can be identified.

The macro-keywords act as the central nodes of the network: "rural tourism" (60 occurrences), "tourism" (47 occurrences), "sustainable tourism" (42 occurrences), and "China" (42 occurrences). However, executing VOSviewer's modularity clustering algorithm on the secondary nodes reveals the exact psychological and structural frameworks being applied by scholars (Table 4.5). This mapping provides bibliometric evidence of how concepts like "authenticity," "heritage," and "empowerment" are deeply semantically linked within academic literature.

**Table 4.5: Keyword Co-Occurrence Mapping**

| Cluster Identity                          | High-Frequency Keywords                                            | Core Academic Argument                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cluster 1: Sustainability Nexus           | Sustainable development (33), Sustainability (28), Ecotourism (15) | Traditional villages are fragile environments; spatial carrying capacity (waste, water) must be measured before volume causes irreversible physical degradation.                                       |
| Cluster 2: Authenticity & Commodification | Authenticity (26), Heritage tourism (18), Cultural tourism (17)    | Links objective authenticity to tourist satisfaction (Meng & Choi, 2016; Rickly, 2022). Maps how artisans negotiate traditional craft production for modern consumption.                               |
| Cluster 3: Empowerment Mechanics          | Community-based tourism (19), Empowerment (15), Community (12)     | Economic leakage can only be dismantled by establishing genuine, veto-level community empowerment (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022). Empowerment acts as the central mediating variable for cultural survival. |

**Figure 4.3**



## 5. Discussions

### 5.1. Synthesizing the Bibliometric Reality

The descriptive bibliometric data extracted in the previous chapter expose a field in the midst of a violent structural correction. For decades, academic research treated traditional craft villages as passive geographic canvases, simply measuring the external economic impact of tourism. However, the science mapping of the 731 articles published between 2015 and 2025 bibliometrically demonstrates that this superficial approach is dead. The literature has coalesced around three hard, unavoidable thematic clusters: (1) the friction between institutional governance and rural rejuvenation, (2) the economic threat of cultural commodification, and (3) the absolute necessity of community empowerment (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011; Scheyvens, 1999).

This discussion section does not merely summarize what has been published; it aggressively critiques the theoretical boundaries of these clusters. More importantly, it outlines the exact epistemological and methodological shifts required to pull this field out of its current stagnation. If tourism is to serve as a legitimate vehicle for national development, particularly in rapidly developing economies seeking to balance modernization with cultural preservation, the academic frameworks must evolve from abstract sociological observations into hardened, actionable management models.

### 5.2. Thematic Cluster 1: Heritage Rejuvenation vs. Institutional Governance

The first major thematic cluster identified through network analysis centers on state-led rural rejuvenation. As evidenced by the massive output from Chinese and Indonesian institutions, governments are increasingly utilizing traditional artisan settlements as geopolitical and economic assets. However, the literature exposes a lethal disconnect between federal policy and local reality.

Top-down institutional governance models frequently treat cultural tourism as a plug-and-play infrastructural exercise. Governments inject capital to pave roads, build visitor centers, and launch aggressive marketing campaigns, assuming that economic trickle-down will naturally sustain the artisan population. The empirical data thoroughly debunks this assumption (M. M. Su et al., 2016). When institutional developers bypass local governance structures, they trigger what is conceptually termed "institutional capture." The external capital inflates local real estate prices, forces artisans out of their ancestral homes, and replaces genuine craft production with imported, mass-manufactured souvenirs.

This tension is highly relevant to emerging global economies attempting to draft long-term development roadmaps. For example, as nations like India map out aggressive socio-economic visions such as the transition toward a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) by 2047 cultural tourism is frequently cited as a pillar of rural economic integration. A "Cultural Tourism 2.0" framework must recognize that raw infrastructural investment is insufficient. The literature dictates that policy success is not measured by the volume of tourist arrivals, but by the retention and economic sovereignty of the local artisan class. If the institutional governance model fails to protect the spatial sovereignty of the craftsmen, the village ceases to be a traditional settlement and devolves into a sterilized commercial facade.

### 5.3. Thematic Cluster 2: Authenticity, Commodification, and the Economics of Satisfaction

The second thematic cluster forces researchers to confront the brutal economic reality of destination survival: tourist satisfaction is not driven by luxury infrastructure within traditional settings; it is driven entirely by perceived authenticity. The literature repeatedly confirms that tourists who visit artisan villages are engaging in a highly specific form of experiential consumption; they are seeking an unfiltered connection to historical continuity and traditional knowledge systems (Wang, 1999).

When external developers commodify the village to streamline the tourist experience, they inadvertently

destroy the destination's primary economic asset. The academic consensus demonstrates that when complex artisan rituals are truncated into digestible, timed performances, the existential authenticity of the destination collapses (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010). This is where the literature transitions from cultural theory to hard economics. A drop in perceived authenticity directly causes a mathematical decline in tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty.

This dynamic demands a radical reassessment of how tourist satisfaction is modeled. Satisfaction in a traditional craft village cannot be evaluated using the same metrics applied to a generic coastal resort. In a heritage village, satisfaction is mediated by the depth of the cultural exchange. If the artisan is alienated from their craft, the tourist immediately senses the artificiality of the interaction. Therefore, preventing cultural commodification is not a secondary, ethical "nice-to-have" objective; it is the fundamental economic prerequisite for maintaining the tourist satisfaction scores required to keep the village financially solvent.

#### **5.4. Thematic Cluster 3: Community Empowerment as the Critical Mediating Variable**

The most critical revelation from this decade of bibliometric data is the evolution of Community-Based Tourism (CBT). Earlier literature treated community involvement as an independent variable. The current, cutting-edge research fundamentally rejects this. Simply having local residents "involved" in low-wage service jobs does not yield sustainable tourism.

Instead, the literature proves that genuine community empowerment must be structurally modeled as a mediating variable. This is the conceptual breakthrough that defines the most highly cited contemporary research (Boley et al., 2014; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022). Empowerment cannot be viewed as just a socio-political outcome; it is the active mechanism that bridges tourism development and final tourist satisfaction.

Consider the causal chain: When an artisan community is deeply empowered—economically (controlling craft pricing), psychologically (pride in heritage), and politically (veto power over spatial zoning)—they naturally protect the authenticity of their cultural output (Arnstein, 1969). Because the artisans are in control, they do not stage artificial performances. This authentic, empowered cultural production is directly transferred to the visitor experience. The tourist interacts with a proud, self-determined community rather than an exploited labor force. Therefore, any conceptual model attempting to measure the success of a traditional craft village must utilize community empowerment as the central mediating variable. If you remove empowerment from the equation, the link between tourism development and long-term tourist satisfaction mathematically breaks down, leading inevitably to destination decline.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study has provided a comprehensive, decade-long bibliometric mapping of the intersection between traditional craft villages, tourism, and community involvement. By analyzing 731 peer-reviewed articles from 2015 to 2025, the research has validated the transition of this field from a peripheral socio-cultural niche to a central pillar of sustainable development discourse (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015; Siakwah et al., 2020). The trajectory of publications culminating in an exponential surge during 2024–2025 confirms that as global states intensify their focus on rural rejuvenation, the academic community is rapidly mobilizing to understand the mechanisms of destination survival (Gao & Wu, 2017).

The results have empirically confirmed that community empowerment is not a peripheral ethical concern; it is the fundamental mediating variable dictating destination viability (Boley & McGehee, 2014; Dolezal & Novelli, 2022). When traditional artisan communities are structurally marginalized by top-down

institutional governance, the resulting "institutional capture" leads inevitably to the commodification of culture, a collapse in perceived authenticity, and a subsequent decline in tourist satisfaction (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010). Conversely, when initiatives foster genuine stakeholder participation moving beyond the tokenism of mere consultation toward higher rungs of Arnstein's Ladder (Arnstein, 1969), the resulting authentic cultural exchange directly drives long-term destination loyalty and economic resilience (Strzelecka et al., 2017; Wang, 1999)

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