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Bibliometric Analysis of Cultural Event Publications (2001-2023)

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Abstract: Scholars from all around the world are paying more and more attention to cultural event studies as evidenced in several academic publication databases. The existing studies are mainly based on empirical studies using surveys and interviews, and some are based on conceptual papers. However, bibliometric analysis of cultural events has been largely neglected. This study uses a bibliometric analysis approach to get an overview of the landscape, development, and trends of cultural event studies. In addition to that, a bibliometric analysis also enables the researcher to identify prominent authors, institutions, and countries that actively participated in the cultural event studies. This study also aimed at establishing a series of visualization maps using VOSviewer software that displays the links between authors, institutions, and keyword occurrences. A total of 3,578 scientific documents relating to cultural events in various forms were retrieved from the Elsevier Scopus database. Using this database, the bibliometric analysis has been able to identify some prominent authors in this field, the most productive institutions, frequent keywords, top funders, and so on. In conclusion, this paper also provides some key information for future researchers in identifying important research gaps by examining the keyword occurrences relating to cultural events.

Keywords: *Bibliometric analysis, cultural events, VOSviewer*

1. Introduction

The event industry is an important economic sector, especially due to its contribution to national income through tourism activities. Events have also been used as a tool to attract tourists to destinations around the world. Studies have shown that many people travel to experience events at some point in their lives (Fordjour & Cruz, 2023). The event industry is diverse and one of the important parts is cultural events. In many countries, cultural events are organized to become part of the tourism calendar. In addition to economic importance, cultural events can also conserve and promote local culture. Cultural events also play a crucial role in shaping the identity and vibrancy of societies around the world (Raposo, 2023). These events encompass a wide range of activities that celebrate, showcase, and preserve the diverse aspects of a community's heritage, arts, tradition, and values. From festivals and performances to exhibitions and workshops, cultural events create spaces for people to connect, share, and appreciate the richness of their own and other cultures.

The research associated with cultural events has emerged since 1949 (Elsevier Scopus, 2024). It started slowly but gained momentum by 2001. The latest database in January 2024 indicated that there are a total of 3,578 published documents relating to cultural events or arts events in various disciplines. In addition to that, several programs of study in event management have also been introduced at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in recent years (Malaysian Qualification Agency, 2024). Postgraduate students researching this topic are also growing based on the number of theses relating to this topic (Dissertation Sage, n.d.). However, very few studies in the form of bibliometric analysis were carried out to examine the emerging topics, current trends, prominent authors, research networks, and countries of origin associated with this topic (Elsevier Scopus, 2024). This information is important for future researchers researching this field of study. The information presented here based on the bibliometric analysis will provide a bird's eye view of the study in this area. The data for bibliometric analysis in this paper was retrieved from the Elsevier Scopus database available from online library services at Universiti Utara Malaysia. This paper in particular will address the following research questions:

What is the current landscape, development, and trend of cultural events?
What are the current stakeholders (authors, affiliations, organizations, countries) impacting the growth of cultural events literature?
What are the potential research gaps that can be further pursued in cultural events?

2. Literature Review

There have been limited studies carried out on cultural events or cultural festivals using the bibliometric analysis approach (Elsevier Scopus, 2024). Based on the systematic search of the Scopus database, only 12 publications using this method were found. Kement (2024) for example, investigated music festivals research using bibliometric analysis. He managed to extract 462 published documents between 1991 and 2024 from the Scopus database. His study discovered that some themes related to this topic are on the increase such as music festivals, experience, social media, and co-creation. In addition to that, the most notable emerging topic is related to COVID-19. Meanwhile, Mensah et al. (2023) conducted a bibliometric analysis of festival research based on 955 documents published between 1978 and 2020. They found that the most popular themes were festival impacts, sustainability, management, festival quality, satisfaction, behavioral intentions, and festival authenticity.

A research team from the United Kingdom, Fletcher and Bostock (2022) analyzed 480 documents about event literature indexed in Scopus and Scimago Institutional Rankings between 2008 and 2018. Their analysis showed that the United States produced the highest number of published documents and established the widest international collaboration. From their findings, most of the prominent authors were from Australia, Europe, New Zealand, and North America. These authors developed extensive collaborations at both the national and institutional levels, which were also responsible for the growing number of publications on this topic. On the other hand, Srivastava et al. (2022), conducted a bibliometric analysis based on 570 articles related to event management to obtain an in-depth understanding of the research trends from 2006 to 2020. Their analysis indicates that there is a significant growth in the number of publications and citations on this topic. The analysis also identified major 5 clusters of themes: event management, customer satisfaction and service quality, mega-events, legacy sports, and economic feasibility. The findings have some similarities with a study by Mensah et al. (2023).

On the other side of the world, Ghaderi et al. (2023) examined 1,582 articles using bibliometric analysis on the event industry obtained from the Scopus database. The United States ranked first in publication volume with 640 documents, followed by the United Kingdom, Australia, and China with 308, 300, and 299 respectively. However, the most influential works came from Ireland, Canada, and Cyprus with an average citation of 63.8, 45.2, and 39.8. In terms of top-ranked keywords or themes, words such as tourism management, festival tourism, event tourism, festivals, and music festivals were frequently found throughout the publication list. Last but not least, a bibliometric study by Richards et al. (2022) explored the event literature in the non-English languages. This time the data was extracted from the ATLAS Events Group (Biaett & Richards, 2020). The articles analyzed were from Arabic, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, Slovenian and Spanish languages. One of the objectives is to explore research that may be missing from the mainstream databases. From initial analysis, it was found that most of the articles were published in Portuguese and Italian languages representing 227 and 179 articles respectively from a total of 527 extracted. Only 2 articles were found to be written in Arabic. The major keywords translated from the articles into English were: outcomes and the impact, patterns and processes, planning, design, and management, event experience and meaning, and personal antecedents and decision-making.

The above literature review was aimed at providing a bird's eye view of the research on bibliometric analysis related to cultural events. In general, the number of publications on this topic is growing significantly signaling its importance. The main contributors to this research are still mainly dominated by the United States, United Kingdom, and European countries. One of the main weaknesses of bibliometric analysis is due to its over-dependent on the Scopus database. Future studies using this method should be extended to other databases such as Web of Science, ERA, ATLAS, and others.

3. Method

Among the first mentions of bibliometrics analysis was in 1950 by Wallin (2005). The number of publications using bibliometric analyses has been growing steadily in various fields including social sciences, arts and humanities, business and economics, psychology, education, engineering, medicine, agriculture, and so forth especially within the past 15 years ago (Kumar et al., 2021). Currently, in the Scopus database alone, there are

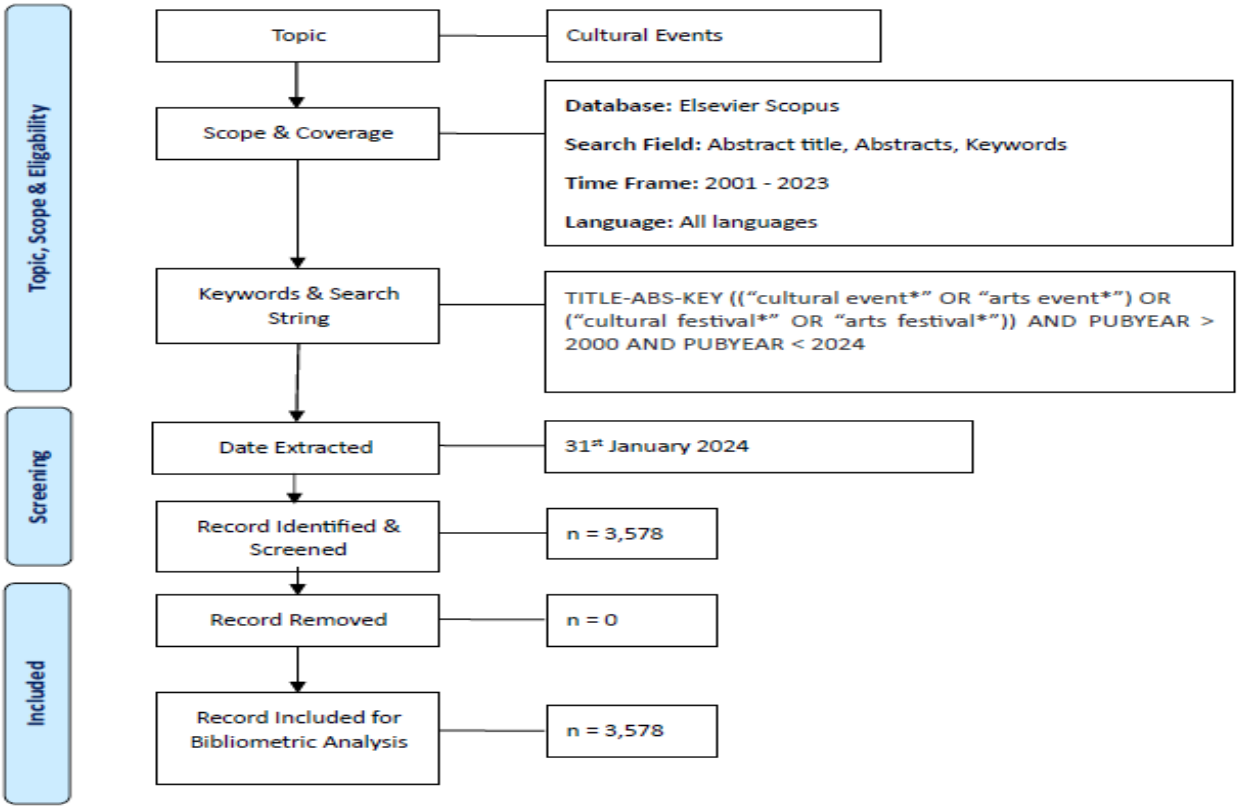
a total of 35,860 documents found with the keyword "bibliometric" indicating an enormous number of publications using this method (Elsevier Scopus, 2024). Furthermore, the creation of databases like Scopus and Web of Science together with the introduction of various computer applications such as VOSviewer, Gephi, and Harzing have enabled a more systematic bibliometric analysis (Otitolaiye & Aziz, 2023).

This paper uses the Elsevier Scopus database as the main source for searching the publication list of materials associated with cultural events, arts events, cultural festivals, and arts festivals. Although the list is not exhaustive as it doesn't include the Web of Science database, it still provides a meaningful large number of publications on this topic, especially within social science disciplines. These keywords were chosen as they appeared very frequently when searching for "cultural events". The search strategy used includes the following keywords:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (("cultural event*" OR "arts event*") OR ("cultural festival*" OR "arts festival*")) AND PUBYEAR > 2000 AND PUBYEAR < 2024

The search limit for the time frame of publications was decided between 2001 and 2023. This is because the number of publications started to show significant increases in 2001. Before that, very few published documents were found on this topic. The search shows that there were 3,578 documents published in the database associated with cultural events within that period. The list of published documents from the database was then retrieved into the Comma-separated values (CVS) file and can be displayed using Microsoft Excel. CVS file stores tabular data (number and text) which are separated by commas. Using VOSviewer, the data from CVS can be analyzed to create various maps based on bibliometric data. VOSviewer is a software tool for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks (VOSViewer Manual, 2020). The map created by the VOSviewer can display the network visualization of several functions such as the networks between co-authorship and institutions or citations and authors among others. In summary, the following chart exhibits the flow of identification, screening and analysis processes of bibliometric analysis for cultural events (Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Flow diagram of the search strategy



4. Results and Discussion

General publication trends: Based on the executed search strategy above, the majority of publications were in the form of articles representing 63.4% of the total published documents. This is then followed by conference papers (13.9%), book chapters (12.0%), reviews (6.2%), books (2.6%), and the rest as displayed in Table 1. This means that cultural events are covered by almost all types of publications. In terms of subject areas, social sciences (28.5%), arts and humanities (19.0%), and business management (12.3%) are the three top subject areas where cultural events were researched and published as presented in Table 2. This is logical as the research in cultural events was mostly in the social sciences context rather than in physical sciences. Although some publications on cultural events were in computer sciences and engineering domains, they are still largely connected to social sciences elements, for example, one topic in an engineering journal entitled "Engineering students' involvement in sporting events".

Table 1: Document types of distribution of the published document (2001 – 2023)

No.	Types of publications	Percentage
1	Articles	63.4
2	Conference papers	13.9
3	Book chapters	12.0
4	Reviews	6.2
5	Books	2.6
6	Editorials	0.6
7	Notes	0.5
8	Conference reviews	0.3
9	Short surveys	0.3
10	Erratum	0.1
11	Others	0.3

Source: Elsevier Scopus Database

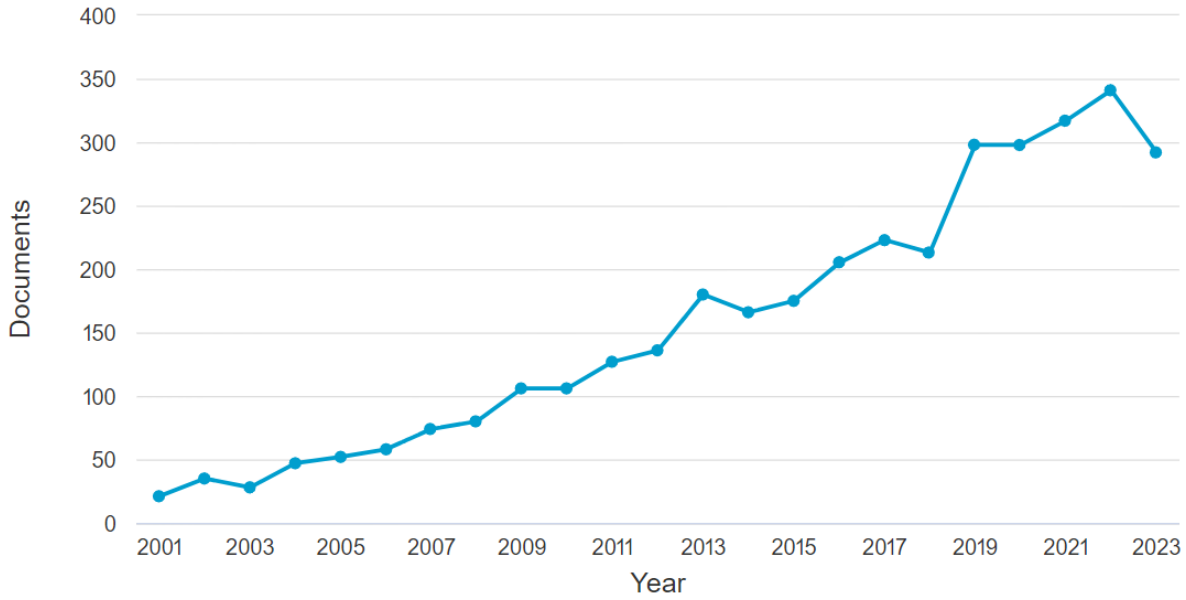
Table 2: Subject areas distribution of published documents (2001-2023)

No.	Subject areas	Percentage
1	Social sciences	28.5
2	Arts and humanities	19.1
3	Business management	12.3
4	Computer sciences	8.0
5	Engineering	5.5
6	Economics	4.0
7	Environmental Sciences	4.0
8	Medicine	3.7
9	Earth and planets	2.2
10	Psychology	2.2
11	Others	10.5

Source: Elsevier Scopus Database

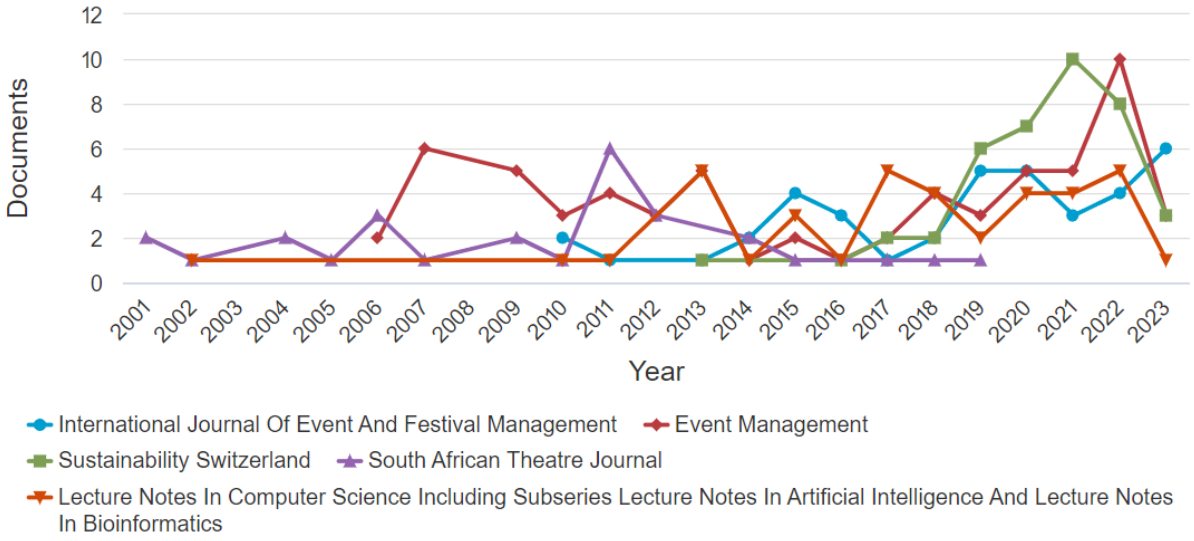
The number of documents published on cultural events has been on an upward trend since 2001 (Figure 2). This indicates the growing amount of interest received from authors around the globe. By 2023, almost 300 documents were published annually on this topic. Meanwhile, in terms of the source of publications, Event Management (64 documents), Sustainability (Switzerland) (40 documents), and International Journal of Event and Festival Management (39 documents) were placed as the top three (Table 4). Sustainability (Switzerland) journal in particular is a multi-disciplinary journal that focuses on social science, geography, planning, and development under the publishing group of MDPI. This journal although does not specifically focus on event management, still became one of the chosen journals for publication on cultural events by authors. Other sources of publications like South African Theatre Journals, Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure, and Events, International Journals of Cultural Policy, and African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure can be said to be very relevant to event management.

Figure 2: Publications trend (2001 – 2023)



Source: Elsevier Scopus Database

Figure 3: Distribution of documents per year by source (2001 – 2023)



Source: Elsevier Scopus Database

The bibliometric analysis also enables the readers to look at the journal's performance in terms of total publication (TP), CiteScore (CS), Scimago Journal Ranking (SJR), and source normalized impact per paper (SNIP) (Otitolaiye & Aziz, 2023). CiteScore is essentially the average number of citations per document that a title receives over three years. Meanwhile, SJR is a journal ranking indicator that measures the journal's impact and influence or prestige in the Elsevier Scopus database. This is calculated by the average number of weighted citations received by the documents published in the journal over three years. The last one is SNIP, which "measures contextual citation impact by weighting citations based on the total number of citations in a subject field" (Elsevier Scopus, 2024). This calculation enables the direct comparison of citations based on different

subject fields. The citation value is weighted higher when the paper is cited from the same subject field compared to other fields.

In the above context, the Tourism Economics journal was ranked first followed by Sustainability (Switzerland), and Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure, and Events in terms of CiteScore, SJR, and SNIP. In particular, Tourism Economics obtained a 7.7 CiteScore and 1.092 SJR is a journal based in the United States under SAGE publication with a 69 *h*-Index and currently positioned at Quartile 1 (Scimago, 2024). However, despite a lower ranking, Event Management (previously known as Festival Management and Event Tourism) which is positioned at Quartile 3 became the main target for publication with a total of 64 articles (2001 -2023). Event Management is an open-access journal that requires authors to pay publication fees of USD200 (Cognizant Communication Corporation, n.d.). Event Management takes on average about 86 days from submission to publication, which is reasonably fast. There are various aspects considered by authors when submitting to publication in journals among others, indexing, peer review process, publication fees, processing time, and so forth (Suiter, & Sarli, 2019).

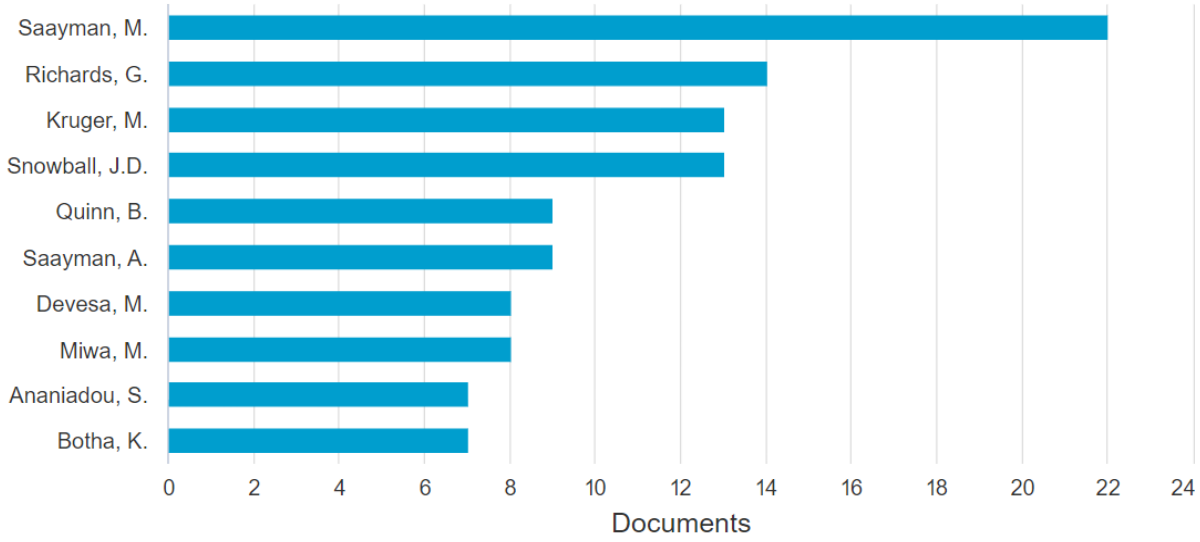
Table 3: Details of journal sources for publications in cultural events

Source titles	T.P.	Source types	CS	SJR	SNIP
Event Management	64	Journal	1.7	0.309	0.655
Sustainability (Switzerland)	40	Journal	5.8	0.664	1.198
International Journal of Event and Festival Management	39	Journal	3.0	0.562	0.852
Lecture Notes in Computer Science	38	Book series	2.2	0.320	0.542
South African Theatre Journals	28	Journal	0.3	0.103	0.211
Journal of Policy Research in Tourism Leisure and Events	21	Journal	4.8	0.561	1.103
CEUR Workshop Proceedings	19	Proceedings	1.1	0.202	0.223
International Journals of Cultural Policy	19	Journal	3.8	0.703	1.880
African Journal of Hospitality Tourism and Leisure	18	Journal	2.1	0.216	0.375
Tourism Economics	16	Journal	7.7	1.092	1.758

Note:
TP – Total Publications, CS – CiteScore, SJR – Scimago journals ranking; SNIP – Source normalized impact per paper
Source: Elsevier Scopus Database

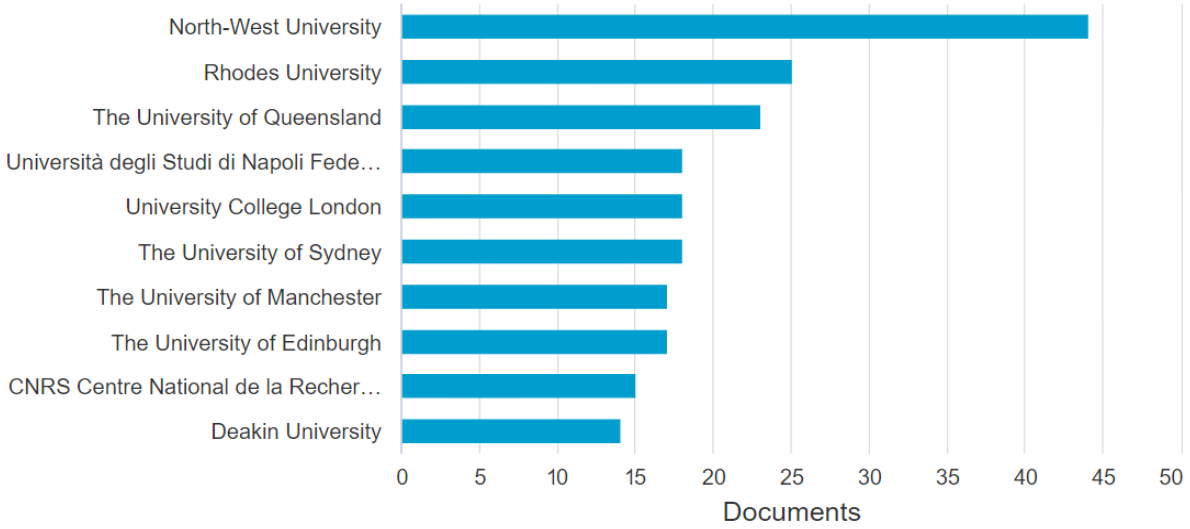
Top research stakeholders: Figure 4 below displays the list of top authors in terms of the number of published documents on cultural events between 2001 and 2023. In detail, Melville Saayman (22 documents), Greg Richards (14 documents), and Martinette Kruger (13 documents) took the top three positions. Greg Richards is currently attached to Breda University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands and already obtained a 40 *h*-index (Researchgate, 2024). On the other hand, both Melville Saayman and Martinette Kruger are currently affiliated with North-West University in South Africa. Greg Richards and Melville Saayman have authored and co-authored many articles on tourism-related studies. Meanwhile, Martinette Kruger is focusing more on marketing, management, innovations, and strategic management. Surprisingly, North-West University also scored first place with a total of 44 published scientific documents on cultural events, followed by Rhodes University (25 documents) and The University of Queensland (23 documents) as can be seen in Figure 5. One of the reasons why North-West University produced the highest number of scientific documents on cultural events was due to its very productive authors, namely Melville Saayman, Martinette Kruger, and Andrea Saayman as listed in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Top authors working on cultural events



Source: Elsevier Scopus Database

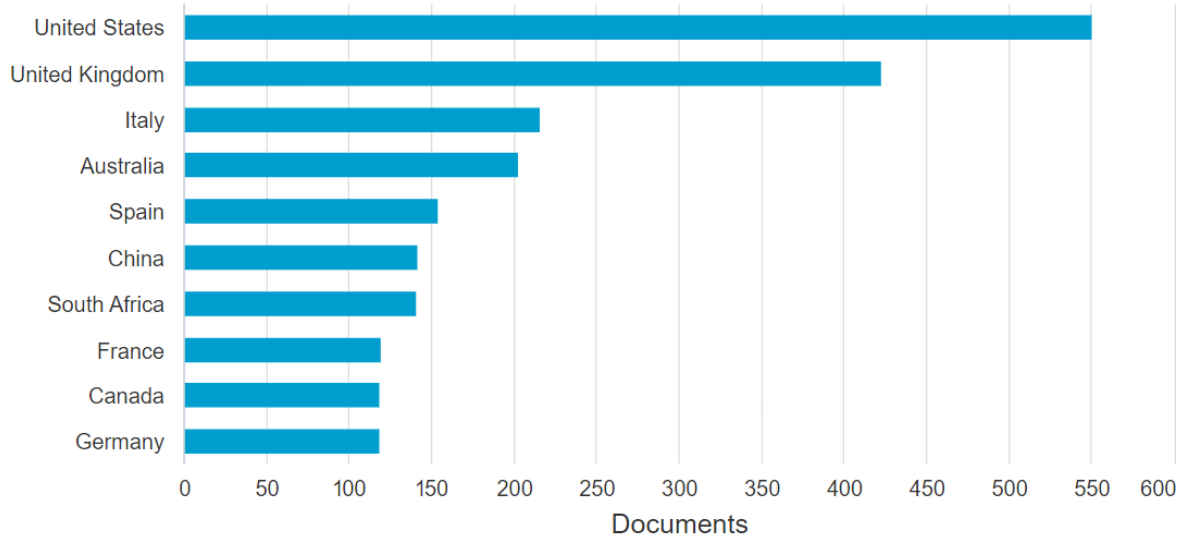
Figure 5: Top Institutions and organizations contributing to cultural event research



Source: Elsevier Scopus Database

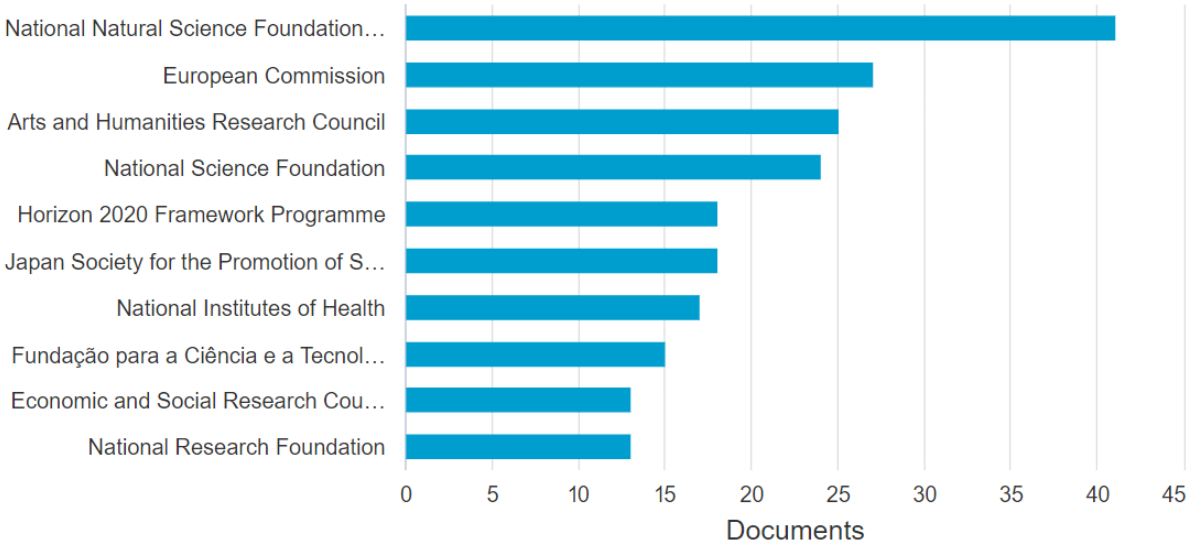
The top 10 countries that actively researched cultural events and published over 100 scientific documents from 2001 to 2023 are displayed in Figure 6. The most productive country was the United States (550 documents), followed by the United Kingdom (425 documents), and Italy (220 documents). From the list, the majority of countries on the top list were from Europe. In terms of research funder, the National Natural Science Foundation of China was found to be at the top of the list with over 40 research projects (Figure 7). The National Natural Science Foundation of China was established in 1986 and tasked with the mission of supporting basic research, nurturing talented researchers, fostering international collaboration, and encouraging socioeconomic development (National Natural Science Foundation of China, 2024). Currently, this organization has awarded about 38,000 grants to 1,500 host institutions in various disciplines. Among the recent research on cultural events funded by this organization were (Diao & Lu, 2022; Liu et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2023; Zhang & Dai, 2023). Next on the list are the European Commission, Arts and Humanities Research Council, and National Science Foundation which individually has funded more than 20 cultural events research projects. Annually.

Figure 6: Top countries contributing to cultural events research



Source: Elsevier Scopus Database

Figure 7: Top funders for cultural events research



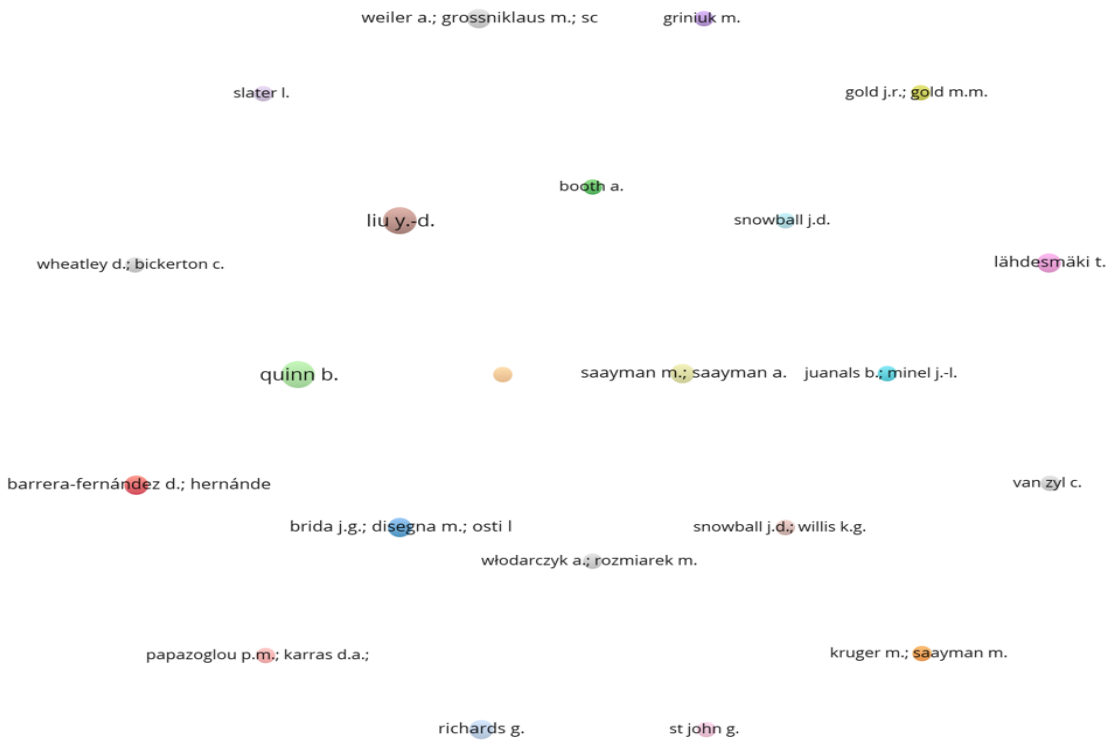
Source: Elsevier Scopus Database

Bibliometric analysis: The VOSviewer visualization map displays the networking between top authors who gained at least 3 published documents and 3 citations. Unfortunately, the top authors were not found to have co-authorship with other top authors outside their institutions when researching cultural events (Figure 8). For example, Melville Saayman, Martinette Kruger, and Andrea Saayman co-authored several articles but are affiliated with the same institution. When there are two or more authors from the same country in a publication, only one article will be counted, thus not producing any network link (Viana-Lora & Nel-lo-Andreu, 2022). Figure 9 on the other hand, showcases the network link of inter-institution collaboration in cultural events research. Only institutions with at least 2 published documents on cultural events were included in this network visualization. From the observation, five institutions were found to establish research collaboration, namely Chiba University in Japan, Conseil Européen Pour la Recherche Nucléaire (CERN), Kyoto City University of Arts, University of Arts in Belgrade, and Ars Electronica Linz GmbH, in Austria.

For example, a paper was published entitled “Embrace through the universe: sound design with cosmic muons

and the parameters of solar wind" in collaboration with authors from Kyoto University of Arts, University of Arts in Belgrade, CERN, Ars Electronica Linz GmbH, University of Bern, and Chiba University (Tanaka et al., 2022). This paper revolves around the planning and staging of an artistic performance of the sound of the universe during a cultural event in Tokyo in 2021.

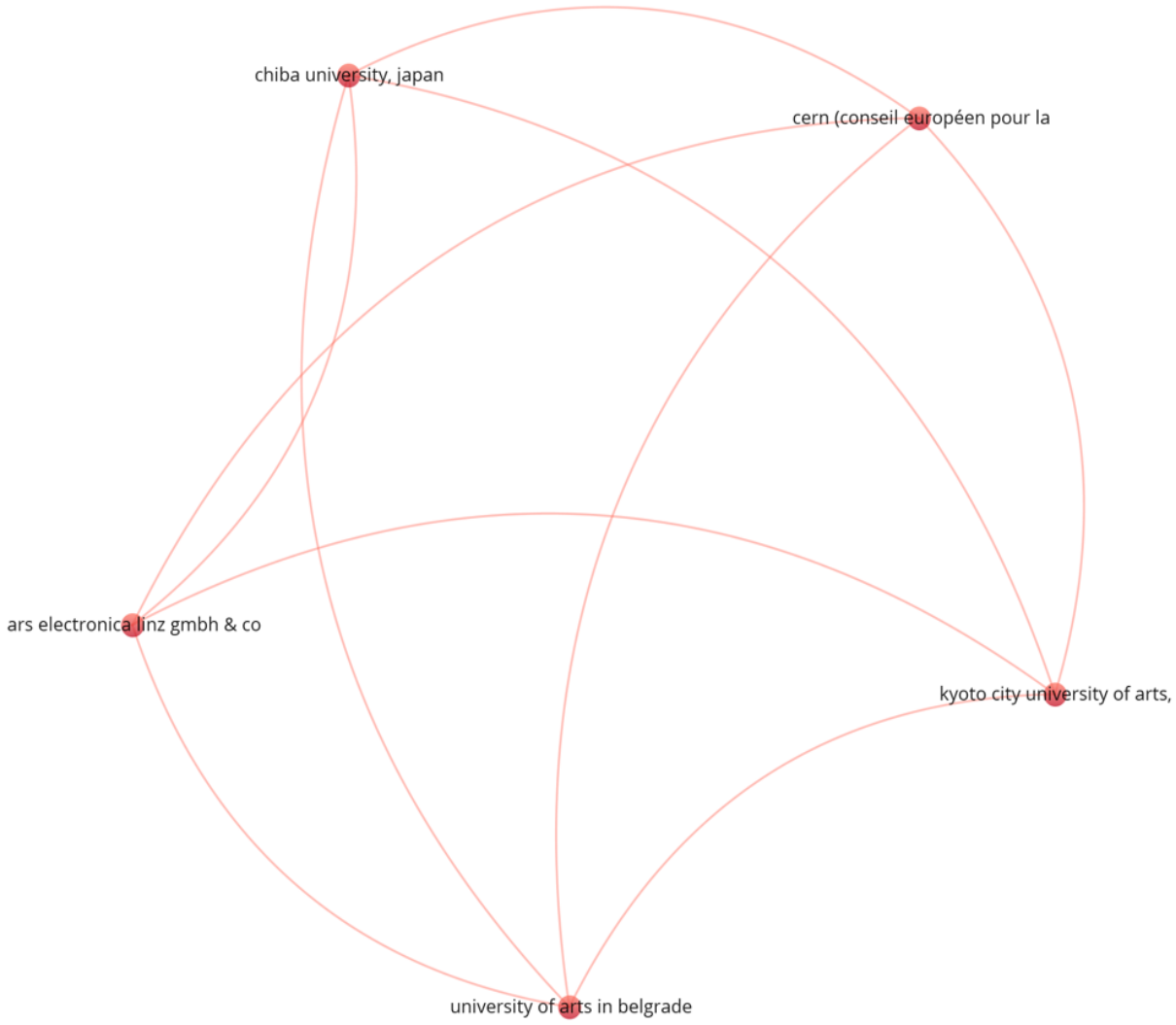
Figure 8: Network visualization map of co-authorship among top authors



Notes: Minimum 3 published documents and 3 citations for each author
Source: VOSviewer

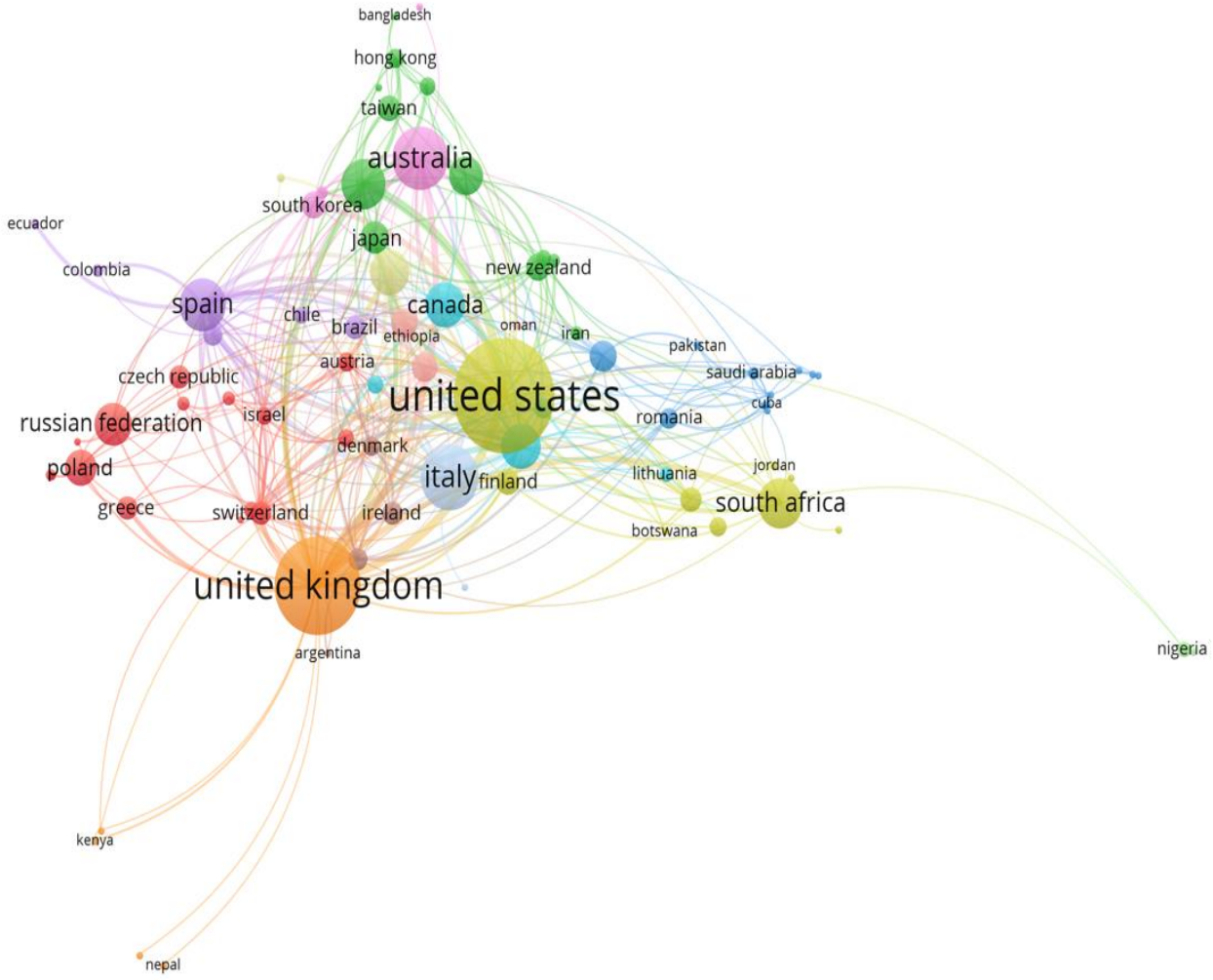
A network visualization map of co-authorship among countries is created based on a minimum of 3 publications and 1 citation yielding a total of 13 clusters (Figure 10). The three most influential countries are the United States (544 documents and 9,240 citations), the United Kingdom (419 documents and 7,520), and Italy (214 documents and 2253 citations). This is represented by the size of the nodes or circles (Brika et al., 2022; Djeki et al., 2021). The largest cluster (represented by a yellow-green color) comprises countries like the United States, Botswana, Croatia, Finland, Jordan, Qatar, South Africa, Turkey, and Zimbabwe. These countries within the same color have common research interests. Meanwhile, the thickness of the link represents the strength of collaboration. The United States formed the largest collaboration links with other countries (link strength=167), followed by the United Kingdom (link strength=165), Spain (link strength=84), and China (link strength=70). Meanwhile, the strongest link between two individual countries was between the United States and China with 20 links.

Figure 9: Network visualization map of co-authorship among institutions



Notes: Minimum 2 published documents without any citation for each author
Source: VOSviewer

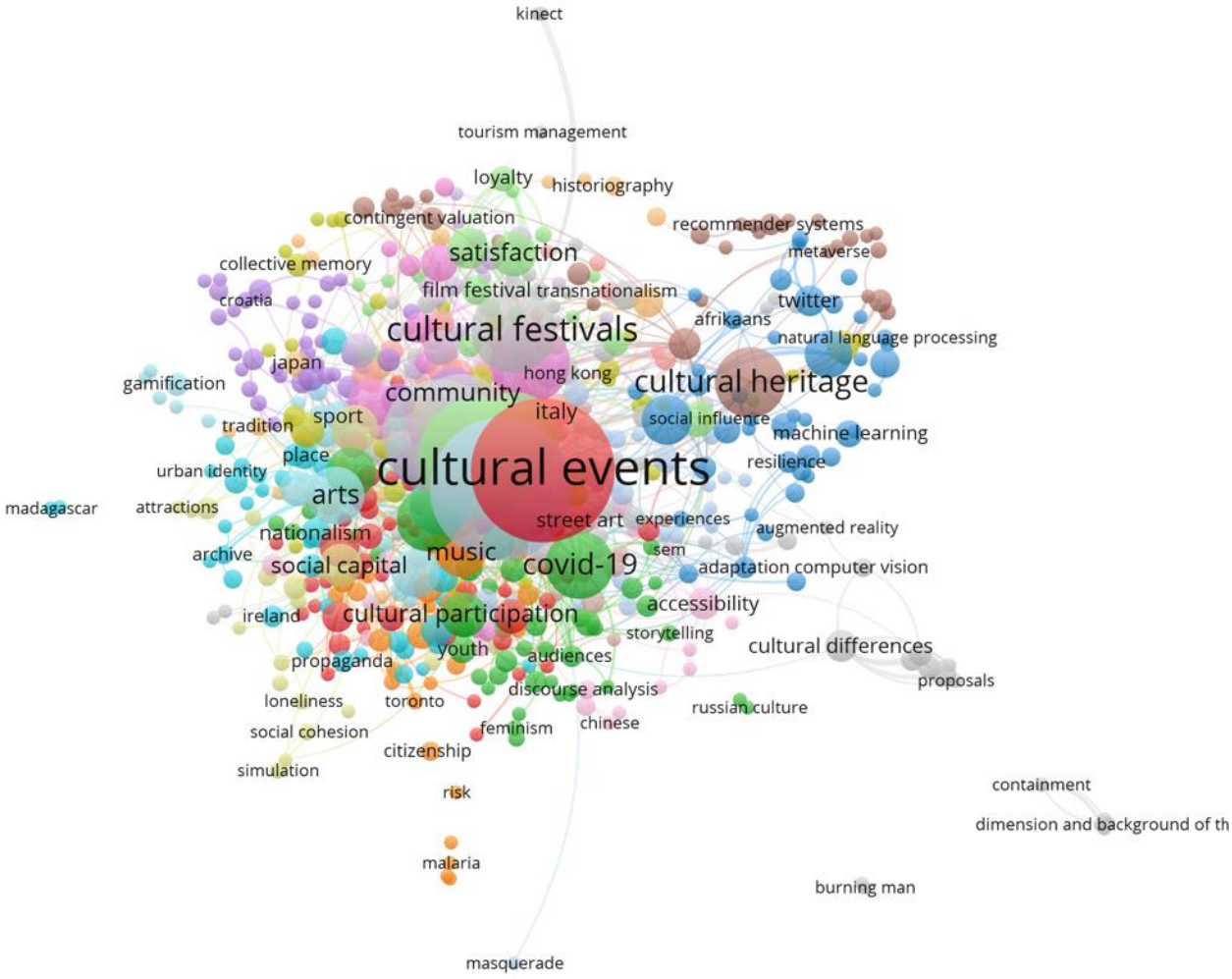
Figure 10: Network visualization map of co-authorship among countries



Notes: Minimum of 3 published documents and 1 citation for each author
Source: VOSviewer

The analysis of the co-occurrence of keywords used in the published documents is presented in Figure 11. After a careful screening process, several keywords were combined due to their similarity in meaning despite different spellings. For example, the word "art festival" was combined with "arts festivals", "event" was replaced with "events", and so forth. This screening process is to avoid similar keywords reappearing many times on the list which will significantly affect the counting process. All these screening processes can be carried out within VOSviewer with the assistance of a Windows notepad and Microsoft Excel. The most frequently used keyword by authors was "cultural events", which appears 139 times. The second is "festivals" (138 times), "culture" (103 times), "arts festivals" (96 times), "cultural festivals" (58 times), and "cultural tourism" (52 times). However, cultural event studies have only established weak associations with other research niches (link strength less than 10) such as smart city, internet-of-thing, big data, willingness to pay, security, aging, sexuality, digital arts, risk, and urban identity to name a few. All these research gaps in cultural events should be further investigated in the future.

Figure 11: Network visualization map of co-occurrence of authors' keywords



Notes: The minimum co-occurrence is set at 3 times.
Source: VOSviewer

5. Conclusion

This paper has successfully analyzed the publication trends, research landscape, and scientific developments related to cultural event studies. The data source was taken from the Elsevier Scopus database with a period of 22 years from 2001 to 2023. The search strategy and screening process indicate that 3,578 scientific documents consist mainly of journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, reviews, and books. The journal named Event Management was found to be the top publisher for cultural events-related studies, followed by Sustainability (Switzerland). The two most productive authors were Melville Saayman and Greg Richards from North-West University in South Africa and Breda University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands respectively. North-West University in South Africa is also positioned as the top contributor of scientific documents in this discipline. In terms of countries, the United States and the United Kingdom remain the most productive countries when it comes to the number of studies. The majority of other countries on the top list are in Europe. This paper also discovered that the National Natural Science Foundation of China became the biggest funder for research on cultural tourism with over 40 projects worldwide. This may provide crucial information for the researchers in identifying potential funders for research projects on this topic.

The visualization network provided by VOSviewer indicates several key findings and issues relating to cultural events. First of all, the collaboration among top authors and institutions on cultural events studies has been very limited. Thus far, only a handful of institutions collaborated as partners for research projects on cultural events, namely Chiba University in Japan, Conseil Européen Pour la Recherche Nucléaire (CERN), Kyoto City University of Arts, University of Arts in Belgrade, and Ars Electronica Linz GmbH, in Austria. This could be attributed to the fact that studies on cultural events mainly cantered around local interests rather than international affairs. Lastly, network visualization also provides a glimpse of the current popular topics and gaps in cultural events research. In particular, cultural events research associated with smart cities, internet-of-thing, big data, willingness to pay, security, aging, sexuality, digital arts, risk, and urban were found to be highly neglected. These gaps could be further investigated by the researcher in the future to further develop a more comprehensive understanding of this topic.

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