



Corporate Responsibility and Crisis Response in Wellness Tourism: a Bibliometric Approach

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Received: 2 April 2024 / Accepted: 23 January 2026 / Published online: 27 February 2026
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Abstract

Wellness tourism has rapid growth with an integral role in corporate responsibility (CR) and crisis response. Wellness tourism, identified by the Global Wellness Institute as one of the fastest-growing market segments, experienced significant disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these setbacks, wellness tourism has demonstrated resilience and is projected to expand as travelers increasingly prioritize health and well-being. Through a bibliometric analysis, this study examines existing research on wellness tourism, CR, and crisis management, revealing thematic clusters and publication trends from 2001 to 2023. Through an analysis of 347 publications, the analysis identifies key journals, influential countries, and research clusters, including themes of destination management, traveler motivations, the impact of COVID-19, and the intersection of medical and wellness tourism. The findings offer insights into various aspects of wellness tourism, CR in tourism, and crises in tourist management. Findings highlight the importance of CR in crisis recovery, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable development. This study emphasizes the need for ethical practices, effective communication, and proactive crisis management within wellness tourism to ensure resilience against future disruptions. Contributing to the scholarly discourse, this study identifies knowledge gaps and proposes future directions, advocating for interdisciplinary collaboration and deeper exploration into how wellness tourism can navigate crises while fostering sustainable growth and enhancing tourist well-being. These insights provide a foundation for industry stakeholders to develop strategies that align with both traveler expectations and global sustainability goals.

Keywords Wellness tourism · Corporate responsibility · Crises · Tourism management · Bibliometric analysis · VOSviewer

Introduction

According to the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) and Global Wellness Summit, wellness tourism is one of the fastest-growing market segments globally. Between 2017 and 2019, the sector exhibited an annual growth rate surpassing the overall tourism industry. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted wellness tourism expenditure, plummeting from \$720.4 billion in 2019 to \$435.7 billion in 2020. Nevertheless, the Global Wellness Institute data 2021 indicated that the decline in wellness tourism expenditure was marginally less severe compared to the broader tourism sector during 2020. In recent years, the niche segment of wellness tourism has gained traction, marked by the popularity of detox travel trips and a diverse range of wellness retreat offerings. Projections suggest that this trend will continue to thrive in the future (Mohanani & Shekhar, 2022).

Wellness tourism, a growing trend in the industry, is a concept that goes beyond the traditional focus on sustainability, emphasizing the importance of integral health and life quality (Lindell et al., 2022). It is a significant factor in destination competitiveness, focusing on collaboration between stakeholders and developing core competencies (Voigt, 2013). Wellness in health tourism is vital, with wellness programs playing a pivotal role in prevention, physical exercise, and beauty (Majeed & Gon Kim, 2023). More recently, vacation travel is beginning to be regarded as a means of intervention for health and wellness tourism with the potential that tourism and hospitality service providers can make an essential contribution to this process (Lehto, 2019; Wu & Legohérel, 2024).

The idea of wellness tourism emerged in reaction to the global economic crisis with accent on recreation and health (Koncul, 2012). Nonetheless, tourism is one of the industries that have greatly suffered the most from COVID-19, and tourist discrimination and anxiety (Yang & Wong, 2020, Yang et al., 2022). This stance is important to support the recovery of tourism through proactive strategies when handling a crisis (Raki et al., 2021), where the emphasis should be on consumer well-being. The pandemic also put a major emphasis on well-being and resilience in the tourism sector, an area that deserves much more academic research (Pocinho et al., 2022).

In this study, the term Corporate Responsibility (CR) is used as an inclusive construct that encompasses the social, environmental, ethical, and economic responsibilities of organizations. While much of the tourism literature employs the term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), we adopt the broader term CR to reflect the expanded scope of responsibilities that go beyond purely social concerns. For consistency, CR is used throughout the manuscript, while acknowledging its alignment with the established CSR literature. The wellness tourism industry around the world has grown significantly in recent years, fueled by a growing global population of health-aware travelers. As this sector grows, there is also a greater need for CR and crisis response knowledge. It better understands important topics, trends, and research gaps on CR and crisis response in wellness tourism via a comprehensive bibliometric analysis that reveals the overall state of existing studies about these issues. According to Gani and Singh (2019), effective response to disasters needs swift managerial action in the direction of relationship marketing, and comprehensive communication strate-

gies are required for tourism destinations during a crisis or post-crisis recovery. The studies highlight the importance of a pre-emptive human-centric approach to crisis response in wellness tourism — by focusing on vulnerability analysis, relationship marketing, and effective communication strategies. Nevertheless, this is not widely agreed upon in the literature. The wellness tourism, CR in tourism, and crises in tourist management literature lack consensus and further research. The literature on wellness tourism, CR in tourism, and crises in tourist management is characterized by a need for more consensus and further research. Font and Lynes (2018) and Coles et al. (2013) highlight the importance of integrating a range of stakeholder perspectives and needs in CR initiatives, particularly emphasizing the role of communities and ecosystems. Aliperti et al. (2019) and Vong et al. (2021) underscore that the tourism crisis and disaster risk management, particularly in the context of health-related crises, requires closer study collaboration and more cross-disciplinary examinations.

Depending upon the previous studies, the paper intends to integrate wellness tourism, CR and crisis management. The tourism industry has been greatly impacted by CR in crisis management and re-establishing its reputation (Wut et al., 2023). CR practices are more effective when implemented immediately after a crisis and should align with the company's business scope (Wut et al., 2023). In the context of wellness tourism, incorporating wellness vacations into corporate wellness strategies can benefit both employees and employers (Hamed, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted international tourism, highlighting the importance of CR efforts in shaping travelers' attitudes and behavioral intentions (Han et al., 2020). CR can help address environmental and social issues arising from overdevelopment in tourism destinations, as seen in the Spanish model of tourism (Argandoña, 2010). Overall, CR initiatives in wellness tourism can contribute to crisis response, employee well-being, and sustainable tourism development, making it an essential component of corporate strategies in the industry. A bibliometric study on CR in tourism can reveal the evolution, interdisciplinary growth, and impact of CR on crisis management, employee wellness, and sustainable development, highlighting critical trends and future research directions.

Recent bibliometric analyses reveal a significant increase in wellness tourism research over the past two decades (Demir & Zečević, 2022; Suban, 2023; Ronda et al., 2022). These studies identify key journals, authors, and research clusters in the field (Suban, 2023; Ronda et al., 2022), with Tourism Recreation Research being a leading publication source (Ronda et al., 2022). The research landscape encompasses health tourism, general tourism, wellness topics, and specific wellness tourism studies (Demir & Zečević, 2022). Moreover, Bibliometric analyses reveal a growing body of literature on CR in tourism, with environmental responsibility emerging as a dominant theme (Wong et al., 2021a, b). The field encompasses eight major thematic areas, including sustainable tourism, environmental awareness, and the impact of major events (Sánchez-Camacho et al., 2022). Crisis management and destination recovery are prominent topics in tourism crisis research, with a surge in publications following the COVID-19 pandemic (Sampaio et al., 2023). Studies on CR in tourism have focused on stakeholder theory and identified research clusters, though community perspectives remain underexplored (Wong et al., 2021a, b). The evolution of CR research in tourism shows an upward trend, with scholars proposing future research

agendas to consolidate this scientific discipline (Lechuga Sancho et al., 2020). These findings highlight the importance of CR and crisis response in shaping the intellectual structure of wellness tourism literature. These bibliometric analyses provide valuable insights into the evolving structure and trends of wellness tourism and CR research, offering a foundation for future studies in these rapidly growing fields. However, there is no bibliometric paper to see the direction of wellness tourism on CR, especially during a crisis like covid-19. Using bibliometric approaches, we mean to blend existing information, pinpoint holes, and add to a nuanced comprehension of how the wellness tourism sector explores difficulties and lines up with dependable corporate works during wild times.

Thus, this study aims to examine three interconnected themes within the tourism sector: wellness tourism, CR in tourism, and crises in tourist management. The dynamic tourism sector is a significant contributor to the global economy, impacting both the experiences of travelers and local economies. The following research questions (RQs) are addressed in this study:

- RQ1. What are the publication trends from 2001 to 2023 in the study field?
- RQ2. What are the most frequent journals in wellness tourism from 2001 to 2023?
- RQ3. What are the Leading Countries in the field?
- RQ4. What is the bibliometric coupling of documents in the field?
- RQ5. What is thematic analysis in the field?

The initial phase of the manuscript involves an exhaustive examination of existing literature, delving into fundamental notions pertinent to the research domain, including wellness tourism, CR in tourism, and crises in tourist management. Subsequently, an exploration of bibliometric studies within the realm of tourism is undertaken. A thorough depiction of the scientific research methods employed in this paper is provided, followed by a comprehensive presentation of the results, discussion, and conclusions derived from these findings.

Theoretical Background

Building on these bibliometric analyses, it is essential to theorize wellness tourism, CR, and crisis management within the broader context of the knowledge economy. The knowledge economy is characterized by the production, distribution, and utilization of knowledge as the primary driver of sustainability, encompassing productivity and competitiveness (Ülker et al., 2023). By this view, wellness tourism acts as more than a free activity; it is a versatile area of knowledge generation and exchange where multidisciplinary competence in business economics, tourism, health sciences, hospitality, technology, and management collectively produce creative methods. This advancement of CR and crisis management increases this knowledge's importance by driving ethical learning governance and updates innovation embedded strategies of recovery in each sector. From this point of view, wellness tourism becomes an example of the knowledge economy; it changes intellectual capital in different ways, consistently advancing and boosting human skills, sustainable management

of resources, and technological updating, along with the advancement of all factors. CR capabilities act as tools for knowledge expansion, boosting responsible innovation that collaborates with the aim of business, along with environmental and social results during times of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. (Moroojo et al., 2024)

Wellness tourism empowers the effective tackling of the network of knowledge and digital platforms that are well-equipped to provide services consistently, protecting stakeholder trust, and fostering adaptive learning approaches. This illustrates how knowledge creation and collective knowledge, including all intellectual capital, serve as a shock absorber of economic resilience in dangerous situations.

The theoretical connection between wellness tourism and the knowledge economy can be further defined by the Triple, Quadruple, and Quintuple Helix frameworks. The Triple Helix ensures collaboration in different fields like academia, industry, and government as the main source and power of innovations (Zakaria et al., 2024). The Quadruple Helix increases this connection to include community, society, and cultural dynamics, showing how social collaborations and wellness values form innovation. The Quintuple Helix merges the human interaction with nature, situating wellness tourism in a socio-sustainable ecological system where knowledge about the environment is mixed up from sustainable growth (Wang et al., 2025) All together, these models show that wellness tourism, CR, and crisis management are not individual factors but tools and components of a progressive knowledge-based ecosystem that supports sustainable competitiveness, flexibility, along resilience.

In recent years, the global tourism industry has grown unheard of, significantly boosting the global economy while providing travelers with various travel options and boosting regional economies (Haryanto, 2020). Three interconnected themes have developed as critical areas of research and analysis within the field of tourism management: wellness tourism, CR in tourism, and crises in tourism management. This literature review digs into these crucial topics, examining how they have developed, the state of the research, and how they interact with the dynamic global tourism sector. There are different theories applied in this filed and below presenting them in detail.

As highlighted in the Triple Helix Model, Quadruple Helix, and Quintuple Helix, cooperation enhances the wellbeing of all stakeholder groups so that CR and Crisis Response in wellness tourism can be reframed through the lens of those theoretical approaches. The Triple Helix stresses the concept of university, industry, and government as driving force behind innovation (Liu & Zhu, 2023; Figueiredo et al., 2023) and Quadruple Helix encompasses civil society and cultural dynamics (Carayannis & Campbell, 2010; Lopes et al., 2020; Bustard et al., 2023; Akmalluddin & Ediyono, 2023), contributing to the enriching knowledge flows of the innovation processes. It is also important to mention the Quintuple Helix, which incorporates the natural environment and relates to sustainability and socio-ecological challenges such as climate change (Carayannis et al., 2012). These models reinforce the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) literature to explain individual behavior primarily based on intentions of behavior that are shaped by three categories of behaviors that include attitudes, social norms, and perceived control (Hudson et al., 2017; Subawa et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2021a, b) which directly provide explanatory behavior to decision-making context in tourism and sustainability. Similarly, Stakeholder Theory

highlights ethical decision-making that reflects the interests of all concerned parties, including customers, employees, and entire communities (Wong et al., 2021a, b; Barakat & Wada, 2021; Byrd, 2007), whilst the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) emphasizes equilibrating social, environmental and economic concerns in business practice (Wang et al., 2021a, b). The Health Belief Model (HBM) adds an individual-level understanding of attitudes and beliefs that guide health behaviors to this framework (Huang et al., 2020). Collectively, these theories deliver a solid structure to examine how CR and crisis response approaches in wellness tourism can contribute to greater innovation, sustainability, and collaboration amongst stakeholders (Murillo-Luna & Hernández-Trasobares, 2023; García-Piqueres & García-Ramos, 2020; Lohmann et al., 2023; Gallego-Álvarez et al., 2011).

Wellness tourism contributes to the global knowledge economy by promoting innovation, human capital development, and digital transformation. It drives modernization in institutions such as hospitals and universities through knowledge sharing and technology use, fostering collaboration and sustainable product development. Human capital investment through workforce training, education, and well-being enhances productivity, resilience, and innovation, extending benefits beyond individual firms to the wider economy. Digital transformation, including AI-driven health technologies and data systems, reshapes service delivery and supports real-time decision-making. Collectively, these pillars innovation, human capital, and digitalization embed wellness tourism within a knowledge-driven framework that strengthens adaptability and economic growth, especially during crises. The theories applied in this field are as follows in Table 1.

Wellness Tourism

Wellness tourism is now one of the fastest-growing sectors in the global tourist industry as travelers seek experiences that will enhance their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Wellness tourism includes a wide variety of spa and spa treatments, fitness retreats, yoga and meditation retreats, and nature-based experiences. According to Zhang et al. (2023), bibliometric analysis suggests that the wellness tourism study is new, especially the first article published in 2000. Nevertheless, the field has seen a boom (355 publications in 2014 vs. 10 in 2000). Third, the review also showed that wellness tourism research is extremely fragmented across a wide range of issues. Some of the more common themes include wellness travelers-related motives, the effects of wellness tourism on destinations, managing wellness tourism sites; and marketing wellness tourism. Traveler motivations, benefits, destination location effects, management, and marketing are all hot subjects in wellness tourism. It is impressive that more conventional and digital marketing methods have been integrated successfully to expand consumer reach and promote wellness tourism (Tchamyou, 2017). See (Fig. 1).

For instance, some recent analyses based on bibliometric indices by Wang et al. (2020) and Wang et al. (2023), wellness tourism is experiencing rapid growth and evolving into a more interdisciplinary field with contributions from the fields of theory and practitioners in tourism, hospitality, public health, and marketing. That growth comes because travelers are seeking out experiences that promote physical,

Table 1 Theories applied in this filed

Theory	Definition	Reference
Triple Helix Model	Focuses on the interactions between universities, industry, and government as key agents of innovation, emphasizing their collaborative roles in fostering knowledge production and economic development.	(Liu & Zhu, 2023; Figueiredo et al., 2023)
Quadruple Helix Model	Expands the Triple Helix by adding a fourth dimension: the media-based and culture-based public, which emphasizes the role of civil society and the public sphere in innovation processes.	Bustard et al., 2023; Akmal-luddin & Ediyono, 2023; Lohmann et al., 2023)
Quintuple Helix Model	Further expands the framework by including the natural environment, highlighting the importance of sustainability and addressing ecological challenges like climate change. This model integrates ecology, knowledge, and innovation for socio-ecological transitions.	(Carayannis et al., 2012)
Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)	Explains human behavior as driven by intentions, which are influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. It is widely used in understanding decision-making processes in various contexts, including tourism and sustainability.	(Hudson et al., 2017; Subawa et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2021a, b)
Stakeholder Theory	Suggests that organizations should consider the interests and well-being of all stakeholders—including customers, employees, suppliers, and the community—in their decision-making processes. This approach emphasizes the importance of ethical relationships and responsibilities beyond just shareholders.	(Wong et al., 2021a, b; Barakat & Wada, 2021; Byrd, 2007).
Triple Bottom Line (TBL)	Encourages businesses to commit to focusing on social and environmental concerns just as they do on profits. The TBL posits that instead of one bottom line, there should be three: profit, people, and the planet, measuring a company's degree of social responsibility, economic value, and environmental impact.	(Wang et al., 2021a, b)
Health Belief Model (HBM)	A psychological model that explains and predicts health behaviors by focusing on the attitudes and beliefs of individuals. It considers factors like perceived susceptibility, severity, benefits, barriers, and cues to action.	(Huang et al., 2020)

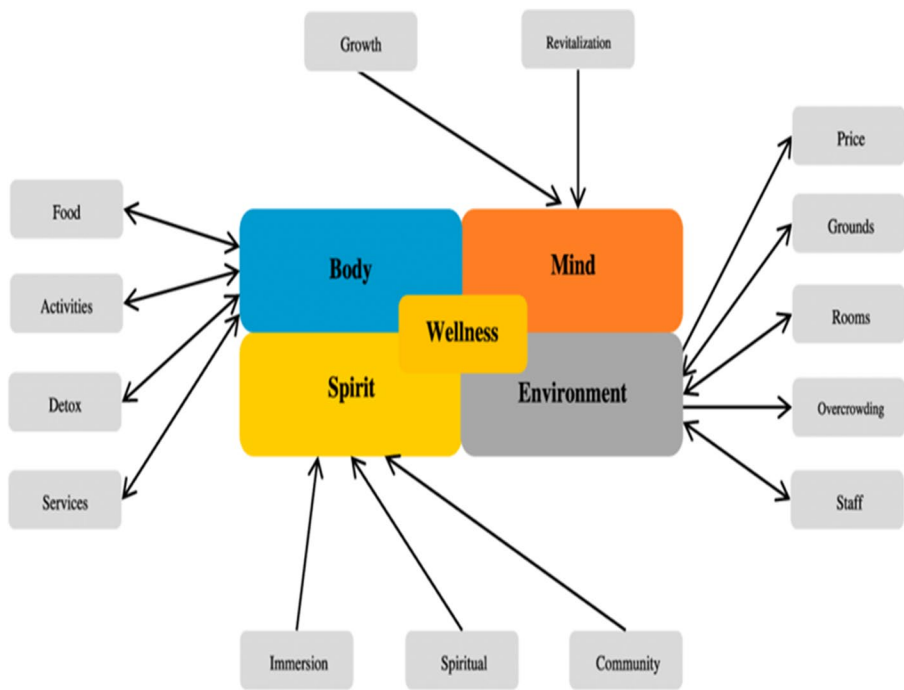


Fig. 1 Wellness Tourism Research Trends.(Source: Dillette et al., 2021)

mental, and emotional health which has caused an increase in activities within the wellness tourism space with offerings such as spas, fitness retreats yoga, and nature experiences. Smith (2022) and Chen et al. (2008) contributed to the understanding of industry dynamics, indicating that emerging trends like sustainable practices, digital technologies, and customized wellness offerings for various demographic groups and cultural settings will be the subject matter for upcoming investigations. In some countries, based on wellness tourism ways were implemented to boost well-being and stress relief (Sandhu & El-Gohary, 2023).

CR in Tourism

Businesses and organizations in the tourism industry should commit to an ethical, sustainable manner so that their business activities will lessen environmental externalities, and increase local welfare while promoting virtuous tourist growth (Wang et al., 2021a, b). This notion accentuates the role of the tourism industry in social development and environmental protection, which corresponds to a more extensive concept of CR. Environmental knowledge is an increasingly critical driver of sustainable practices in hospitality, shaped by various predictors and gaining urgency during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (Martinez-Martinez et al., 2023). In this area of study, some relevant work remains focused on ethical dilemmas confronted by tourism operators, stakeholder involvement, and how sustainable tourism must be developed, among others. In recent years, researchers like Harris et al. (2020) have made

landmark contributions by tackling urgent issues in sustainable development and responsible tourism. Adding to the scholarly relevance of this topic (Table 2), future studies may explore industry best practices, challenges associated with adopting CR in wellness tourism, and growth potential for integrating CR into wellness tourism.

CR in the tourist industry is the role of each tourism business to practice ethical and sustainable practices. CR in tourism can manifest itself in several forms, including environmental conservation, supporting the local community; providing fair working conditions to employees; and promoting good business practices. Based on a bibliometric analysis of the field, the first paper identified as reproductive CR research was published in 1995; thus, we can conclude that CR in tourism research is very immature (Barrios et al., 2008). (2008). On the other hand, publications have rapidly increased over the past few years: 5 from 5 in 1995 to 202 in 2007. In a highly fragmented tourism industry, it also discovered that an immense range of topics are being investigated in CR. That said, a few of the most common ones are The motivation for CR adoption among tourism firms. The benefits of CR to tourism companies, the influence of CR on tourism destinations, the barriers to CR implementation in the tourism sector, and stakeholder pressure towards CR adoption in tourism. Yang et al. (2020) in a newer bibliometric study found that the CR field has grown rapidly in tourism research over the years. Another finding from the investigation was that the area is becoming more and more interdisciplinary, with researchers from a multitude of other disciplines—such as tourism, business, and ethics—feeding into the area. CR in the tourist industry is not only about being ethical and sustainable on behalf of the people working at all levels of the business. CR in tourism can include practices such as environmental preservation, community development, labor codes (worker rights), and business ethics. Sustainability in Business performance and international tourism is fundamental to eco-friendly innovations (Rahman et al., 2023).

Crises in tourism management can be defined as unexpected events or conditions, natural disasters, civil strife, health-related issues (especially pandemics), and economic recession (Folinas & Metaxas, 2020). Crisis management has to be efficient to minimize their negative impacts on tourist destinations and businesses. For example, Stackpole et al. (2021) mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic's immense impacts on the tourism industry and recovery strategies have been a key driver of this

Table 2 Integration of CR in wellness tourism

Research Focus	Key Objectives
CR initiatives of wellness tourism providers	Examine how wellness tourism businesses incorporate CR principles and their impact on sustainability and community well-being (Park & Kim, 2023).
Responsible marketing in wellness tourism	Investigating ethical marketing practices within the wellness tourism sector, including greenwashing concerns and consumer perceptions (Kessler et al., 2020), must be investigated.
Stakeholder engagement in wellness tourism	Analysis of partnerships and collaborations among wellness tourism stakeholders to promote responsible practices and destination development (Luo et al., 2018).

research. Choong and Leung (2022) critically reviews the evolution of the knowledge economy, concluding that it should be understood as a social-economic system driven by technology, knowledge, and innovation, emphasizing social values and knowledge products, with research implications for economic management, innovation, and knowledge-based indicators. Given current global developments, the availability of further study is warranted on how resilient the tourist sector is and how it can compensate for unexpected challenges. This includes exploring wellness tourism crisis management strategies as well as understanding how principles of CR will enhance disaster-resilience in crises. To be clear, tourism crisis management is all about preparation for, response to, and recovery from crises affecting the sector. Tourist crises can arise from a host of circumstances, including natural disasters, terrorism, pandemics, and political unrest.

Mrčela et al. (2015) conducted a bibliometric analysis of crisis management in tourism research and discovered that the field is relatively new, with the first article appearing in 1990. However, the field has significantly expanded recently, with 230 articles in 2014 compared to 1 in 1990. The analysis also revealed that many tourism research subjects, such as crisis management, are being explored. However, a few of the most popular subjects are as follows: There are several sorts of crises that might harm the travel and tourism sector, the effects of crises on the sector, how to manage crises in the sector, and how to recover from crises. The part stakeholders play in tourist crisis management. According to a more recent bibliometric analysis by Zopiatis et al. (2021), crisis management in tourism research has been expanding quickly lately. A further investigation finding was that the area is growing increasingly interdisciplinary, with scholars from many other fields—including management, commerce, and tourism—contributing to it. Tourism crisis management is preparing for, responding to, and recovering from crises that may impact the sector. Natural catastrophes, terrorist attacks, pandemics, and political upheaval are just a few examples of the various ways that tourist crises can occur.

- The first publication on the subject was released in 1990, making the discipline of crisis management in tourist study entirely new. However, the field has significantly expanded recently, with 230 articles in 2014 compared to 1 in 1990.
- Tourism research on crisis management could be more cohesive, covering many themes. However, a few of the most popular subjects are as follows:

Crises in Tourism Management There are several sorts of crises that might harm the travel and tourism sector, the effects of crises on the sector, how to manage crises in the sector, and how to recover from crises. The part stakeholders play in tourist crisis management. According to a recent bibliometric analysis by Zopiatis (2021), crisis management in tourism research has been expanding quickly lately. A further investigation finding was that the area is growing increasingly interdisciplinary, with scholars from many other fields—including management, commerce, and tourism—contributing to it (See Table 3).

Table 3 Crisis resilience in wellness tourism

Research Focus	Key Objectives
Crisis management strategies in wellness tourism	An analysis of the crisis management and recovery techniques used by wellness tourism providers during the COVID-19 pandemic (Song & Song et al., 2022).
Role of CR in crisis resilience	An examination of how CR procedures in wellness tourism companies support efforts for disaster resilience and recovery Prayag et al. (2024)

Methodology

We comprehensively examined the literature on wellness tourism, CR on tourism, and crises in tourism management, covering articles spanning 22 years. Our approach involved quantitative field mapping through a bibliometric analysis that integrated both qualitative and methodologies (Abbas et al., 2022; Dash et al., 2023; Majeed et al., 2024). Bibliometrics employs mathematical and statistical methods and models to analyze various forms of written communication, such as books, journals, e-books, theses, reports, etc. Assessing the influence and impact of an article becomes imperative after its publication (Ali et al., 2021, 2023; Gupta et al., 2022). The comparison between Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus as scientific evaluation tools has been extensively studied. Both databases provide valid evaluation indicators and yield similar results when assessing research performance at the macroscopic level (Pranckutė, 2021; Fayad et al., 2025; Samsuden et al., 2024). However, Scopus generally offers better coverage in specific areas, with a larger number of articles, journals, and citations (Álvarez-García et al., 2018). While WoS has traditionally dominated, Scopus is increasingly challenging its position, with researchers from various countries and knowledge domains adopting its use (Zhu & Liu, 2020).

Thus, the Scopus database chosen for this study yielded 763 documents across all periods without any restrictions. The specific query employed was (TITLE-ABS-KEY (“corporate social responsibility” OR “CSR” OR “corporate responsibility” OR “business ethics”) AND (“crisis management” OR “crisis response” OR “emergency management” OR “disaster response”) AND (“wellness tourism” OR “health tourism” OR “spa tourism” OR “medical tourism”).

Additional filters were applied for research efficiency, including a publication year range of 2001–2023. The year 2001 marks the beginning of substantial growth in wellness tourism and a global emphasis on CR practices in tourism. As argued by Smith and Puczkó (2008), wellness tourism began gaining recognition as a distinct tourism segment in the early 2000s, coinciding with the broader integration of CR initiatives across industries (Sheldon & Park, 2009). The study covers document types such as articles (497), reviews (25), and conference papers (70), and excludes notes, letters, editorials, and short surveys. The study focused on these three terms with documents limited to English. Following these refined settings, 347 documents were identified as the focal point for this research and were subjected to further analysis. See the Fig. 2 below.

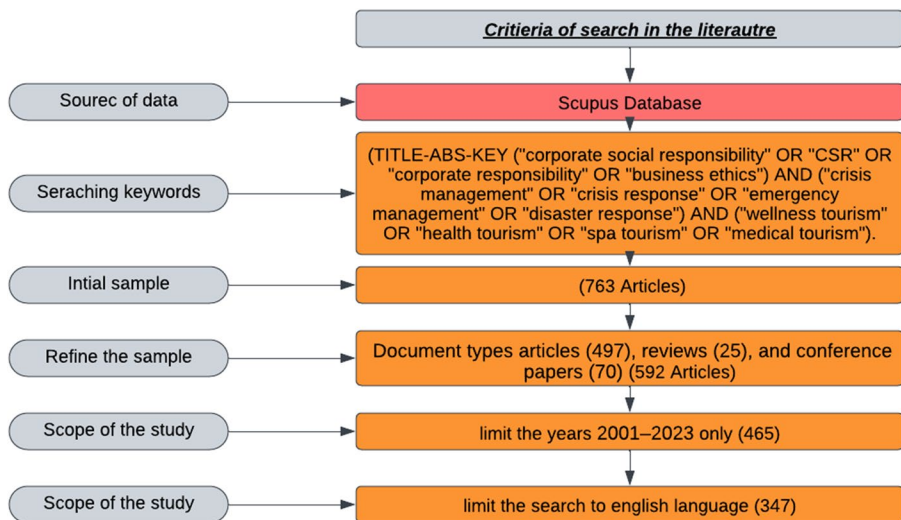


Fig. 2 Flow chart showing a collection of the literature

Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis, as a computer-assisted evaluative approach, enables the identification of critical articles, authors, and their connections within a particular topic or field by scrutinizing all associated publications (Zulfiqar et al., 2024; Talpur et al., 2023; Abbas et al., 2025). Providing an impartial, systematic, and replicable methodology, bibliometric analysis significantly improves the efficiency of literature reviews. This method facilitates the objective mapping of study domains and pertinent works, ensuring a comprehensive and unbiased research process (Van et al., 2022; Jusoh et al., 2024; Mohd Dari et al., 2024).

Bibliometrics Over the years, researchers have employed various techniques to investigate their research topics, define the knowledge fields, or gather statistical data about the authors and journals that comprise the research field's network (Fauzi et al., 2023). Narrative tactics are one of the most popular techniques, although many scholars disagree with them because they are only seen from one point of view, which is when describing the data (Jiang & Yu, 2019). Hudha et al. (2020) additionally make the case that these methods must be more thorough. As a result, research that used narrative methodologies had to contend with these drawbacks, which was why most other studies favored more methodical approaches. In this study, bibliometric analysis was employed not only to provide a quantitative mapping of the literature but also to trace knowledge flows, highlight the evolution of intellectual structures, and systematically identify gaps within the fields of wellness tourism, CR, and crisis management.

For the visualization of the networks, the VOSviewer software (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010) was selected, as it uses a unified structure for mapping and clustering (Waltman et al., 2010) and has been utilized in more than 500 publications since 2006 (www.vosviewer.com/pub locations). According to Van Eck and Waltman (2010),

VOSviewer is a software tool for building and viewing networks focusing on graphical representation, and valuable for interpreting large bibliometric maps. Recent research has shown that VOSviewer can be effectively used as a preliminary research tool for exploratory bibliometrics, helping to generate new avenues of inquiry and shape subsequent research employing more formal approaches (Kirby, 2023). The choice of VOSviewer is justified by its unique strength in visualizing complex bibliometric networks. By enabling the mapping of co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence, it allows for the detection of interdisciplinary connections and thematic clusters that might otherwise remain obscured. This capability is especially valuable in this study, which seeks to integrate diverse perspectives from tourism, CR, and crisis management into a coherent knowledge structure.

Our research process is directed by the academic quest for information and a viable goal to give valuable insights to industry stakeholders, policymakers, and individual researchers. Together, we plan to add to the development of a resilient and capable future for wellness tourism, even with vulnerabilities and crises. This bibliometric analysis aims to thoroughly examine wellness tourism, CR in the travel industry, and management crises in the tourism industry. Our goal is to discover prospective directions for future research by a thorough analysis of the existing literature in order to detect emerging trends, highlight significant contributors, and highlight emerging trends. Understanding these subjects' complex relationships and implications is essential for advancing resilient and sustainable practices in the dynamic global tourism industry.

Results

Publication Trend

To determine the basic continuous pattern of publication on this topic, a descriptive analysis of 347 publications was conducted. The publication trend was examined in terms of total publications by journal, country, area, and year (see Fig. 3). The analysis period begins in 2001, marking the earliest appearance of publications explicitly addressing CR and crisis response within wellness tourism, and the field did not experience much growth until 2010. the prevalence of the term 'wellness' in European tourism emphasizes the expanding supply and underexplored demand for wellness programs, focusing on the rising significance of quality management in the wellness industry (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001). The publication trends reflect the impact of external events, with several research summits producing bursts of papers after particular incidents. For example, wellness tourism research started to grow in late 2010 due to the 2008 global Financial Crisis. Other crises worldwide (e.g., earthquakes and bushfires) contributed to a rapid growth of research after 2019. However, after 2020, the publication trend has increased tremendously because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic adversely affects travel-induced well-being through increased anxiety and prolonged depressive processes. Active social media engagement serves as a buffering mechanism, offering insights for crisis management by tourism authorities and contributing to sustainable tourism literature, addressing

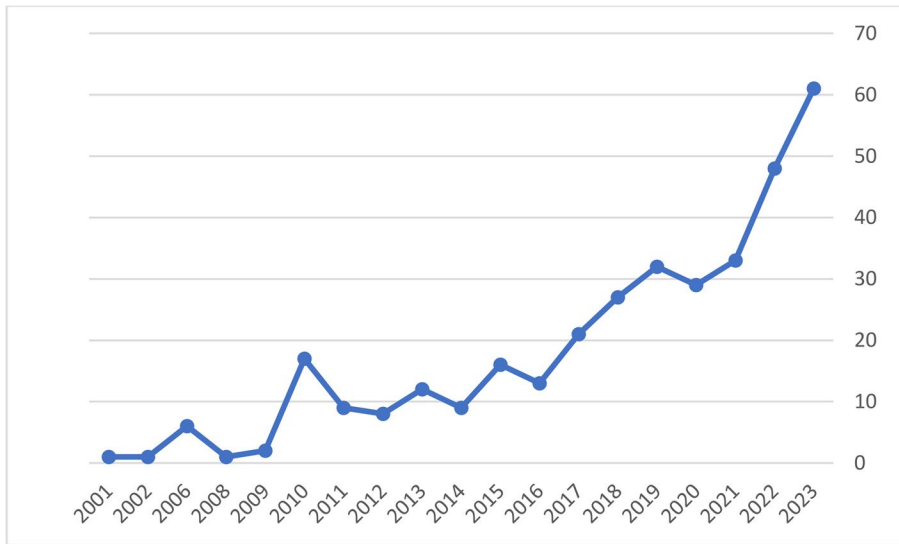


Fig. 3 Publication Trend

threats to well-being in public health emergencies and informing responsible recovery strategies in the post-COVID world (Yang & Wong, 2020; Wen et al., 2021). Until reached the highest trend in 2023, trying to understand the psychological, emotional, and risk consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals, mainly focusing on the impact of associated measures like confinement and social distance, which represent the linkage between wellness tourism and crises, and also CR (Li & Huang, 2022; Robledo et al., 2023; Iwu et al., 2019).

Journal Quality Analysis

Table 4 enumerates the primary publications that have contributed substantially to contagious wellness tourism combined with management crises and CR. The bibliometric analysis of CR and crisis response publications in wellness tourism reveals several key journals shaping the discourse. The International Journal of Spa and Wellness records the highest number of publications (28 documents), though with modest citation impact (108 citations, CiteScore 3.8, SJR 0.379). By contrast, Tourism Review demonstrates both strong productivity and influence, with 9 publications, 782 total citations, and a CiteScore of 18.0, underscoring its prominence in the field. Similarly, Tourism Recreation Research (14 documents, 556 citations, CiteScore 12.1, SJR 1.036) and the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (8 documents, 263 citations, CiteScore 14.9, SJR 2.158) also contribute high-quality outputs. Among these outlets, the Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing is particularly noteworthy: despite publishing only 9 documents, it has attracted 317 citations, with a CiteScore of 13.8 and an SJR of 2.299. This means that on average each article has been cited more than 13 times, reflecting its strong influence relative to volume. Such performance highlights the journal's relevance and credibility as a core resource

Table 4 Most frequent journals

Source Title	Documents	Total citations	Cite score	SJR
International Journal Of Spa And Wellness	28	108	3.8	0.379
Sustainability Switzerland	21	184	7.7	0.688
Tourism Recreation Research	14	556	12.1	1.036
Geojournal Of Tourism And Geosites	9	53	3.7	0.296
International Journal Of Environmental Research And Public Health	9	37	8.5	0.919
Journal Of Travel And Tourism Marketing	9	317	13.8	2.299
Tourism Review	9	782	18.0	1.887
Asia Pacific Journal Of Tourism Research	8	256	7.2	0.885
Journal Of Hospitality And Tourism Management	8	263	14.9	2.158
African Journal Of Hospitality Tourism And Leisure	7	67	3.1	0.276

for tourism and marketing scholars. Other journals, including Sustainability (Switzerland) (21 documents, CiteScore 7.7), Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research (8 documents, CiteScore 7.2), and the African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure (7 documents, CiteScore 3.1), provide additional avenues of contribution, though with varying degrees of impact.

Figure 4 illustrates the intellectual structure of journals contributing to wellness tourism, CR, and crisis management research. The International Journal of Spa and Wellness emerges as the central hub with strong linkages to journals such as Tourism Recreation Research, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, and Tourism Review. Distinct clusters highlight thematic orientations: the red cluster reflects journals focused on tourism management and marketing; the green cluster emphasizes sustainability-driven outlets such as Sustainability (Switzerland) and GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites; and the blue cluster captures journals with broader hospitality and tourism scope. The visualization underscores both the concentration of scholarship in specialized wellness outlets and the increasing integration of sustainability and hospitality perspectives, thereby reflecting the field's interdisciplinary evolution.

The Leading Countries

Table 5 lists various countries and territories along with corresponding documentation numbers. The United States leads with 41, China with 38, India with 33, Australia with 30, and the United Kingdom with 27 documentation items. The numbers

Bibliometric Coupling of Documents

In Fig. 5, The bibliographic coupling figure provides insight into the thematic landscape of wellness tourism by revealing 12 clusters of research publications that share a significant number of references, suggesting interconnected themes. By examining the highest total links strength of these clusters, we can finalize 5 clusters to see how wellness tourism intersects with broader areas such as, psychological frameworks, cultural perspectives, consumer attitudes,, experiences, CR, and crisis resilience, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of wellness tourism's impact on the tourism industry.

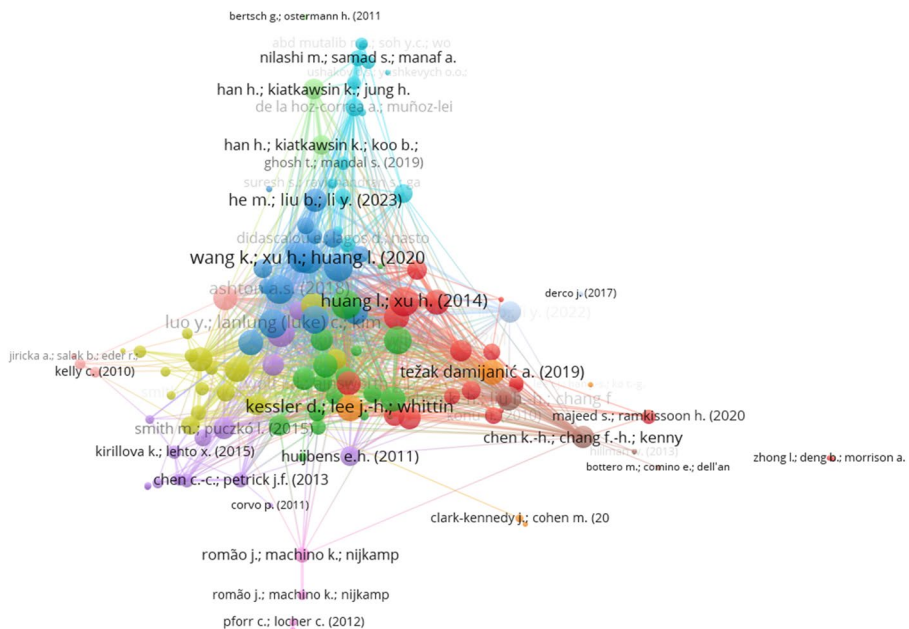


Fig. 5 Bibliographic coupling

Table 6 highlight the 10 coupled documents the studies collectively explore various dimensions of wellness tourism, encompassing five thematic clusters in wellness tourism: cultural and rural tourism, psychological and holistic wellness, customer motivations and experiences, CR, and crisis resilience. These clusters highlight the industry's potential to enhance individual well-being, foster community support, and integrate sustainable and crisis-responsive practices to address evolving tourist needs and societal challenges, which are presented in Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 in detailed.

Cluster 1: Cultural and Rural Wellness Tourism

This cluster delves into the intersection of cultural sensitivity, rural tourism, and wellness experiences, emphasizing CR and tailored strategies to enhance tourist satisfaction and community well-being. Huang and Xu (2014), highlight the importance of incorporating cultural perspectives in wellness tourism. They advocate for practices that respect local traditions while positively contributing to communities. During crises such as pandemics, wellness tourism providers can play a vital role by supporting affected populations and adopting culturally respectful crisis response strategies.

Table 6 Bibliographic coupling for top 10 coupled documents for the whole clusters

Authors	Title	Source Title	Citation	Total links strength
Wang et al. (2020)	Wellness tourism and spatial stigma: A case study of Bama, China (C3)	Tourism management	49	169
Huang and Xu (2014)	A cultural perspective of health and wellness tourism in China (C1)	Journal of China Tourism Research	37	148
Hudson et al. (2017)	Wellness tourism: stress alleviation or indulging healthful habits? (C2)	International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research	30	147
Ashton (2018)	Spiritual retreat tourism development in the Asia Pacific region: Investigating the impact of tourist satisfaction and intention to revisit: A Chiang Mai, Thailand case study (C3)	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	30	146
Luo et al. (2018)	Towards quality of life: The effects of the wellness tourism experience(C3)	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	59	145
Kim et al. (2017)	Investigating wellness tourists' motivation, engagement, and loyalty: In search of the missing link	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	66	136
Koskinen and Wilska (2019)	Identifying and understanding spa tourists' wellness attitudes. (C2)	Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	16	129
Backman et al. (2023)	Engaging with restorative environments in wellness tourism (C5)	Current Issues in Tourism	15	127
Dillette et al. (2019)	Yoga tourism—a catalyst for transformation? (C2)	Annals of Leisure Research	65	126
Kessler et al. (2020)	The wellness tourist motivation scale: A new statistical tool for measuring wellness tourist motivation (C7)	International Journal of Spa and Wellness	13	119

Table 7 Bibliographic coupling for the highest linkage strength in documents cluster 1

Cluster Name	Total Number of Papers	Studies with the highest TLS	Focus	Total Linkage Strength
Cultural and Rural Wellness Tourism (Cluster 1)	20	Huang and Xu (2014)	Cultural perspectives in wellness tourism, CR in culturally sensitive practices, and crisis response strategies.	148
		Medina-Muñoz & Medina-Muñoz (2013)	The commodification of healthcare and wellness tourism, socio-demographic insights, visitor motives, and marketing strategies in Gran Canaria.	99
		Medina-Muñoz & Medina-Muñoz (2014)	Destination attractiveness, performance, and satisfaction analysis for wellness tourists in Gran Canaria.	74
		Pesonen and Kompula (2010)	Rural wellbeing tourism motivations in Finland, focus on relaxation, privacy, and nature.	67
		Pesonen et al. (2011)	Benefit segmentation of tourists in Finland, revealing distinct segments and market targeting insights.	74

Canaria, Medina-Muñoz and Medina-Muñoz (2013) investigate the commodification of healthcare and wellness tourism, investigating socio-demographic profiles, visitor motives, and behaviors. This study contributes actionable implications in terms of the diversification of coastal tourism and improvements in marketing strategies. A subsequent paper by the same authors (2014) uses an importance–performance–satisfaction perspective and evaluates the attractiveness of different facets of a destination and how this relates to satisfaction, providing key information to enhance the attractiveness of a destination.

Focusing on rural wellness tourism, Pesonen and Kompula (2010) identified a specific segment of tourists in Finland looking for relaxation, privacy, and nature. The tourists, mainly middle-aged women, prove that there is a market for fit-for-purpose long-term rural tourism planning. To elaborate on this, Pesonen et al. (2011) employed benefit segmentation to identify four target tourist segments within Finland’s Savonlinna region to inform future strategic market targeting. Again, using online behavior and activity-based preferences, Pesonen and Tuohino (2017) segment the rural wellness tourist market into three segments, in turn allowing the refinement of the rural wellness tourist experience to optimize tourism product development.

Table 8 Bibliographic coupling for the highest linkage strength in documents cluster 2

Cluster Name	Total Number of Papers	Studies with highest TLS	Focus	Total Linkage Strength
Psychological and Holistic Wellness Tourism (Cluster 2)	19	Koskinen and Wilska (2019)	Explores tourists' motivations for wellness tourism to alleviate stress and promote mental well-being, with implications for CR in stress relief programs.	129
		Dillette et al. (2019)	Yoga tourism fosters transformative experiences and psychological well-being, with calls for broader research in wellness tourism contexts.	79
		Thal and Hudson (2019a, b)	Characteristics of wellness destinations enhancing psychological well-being, such as staff interactions, activities, mindfulness, and confidence-building.	57
		Hartwell et al. (2018)	Multifaceted relationships between tourism and well-being, emphasizing health, emotional, and spiritual benefits for sustainable destination development.	141
		Koskinen and Wilska (2019)	Influence of demographic factors on Finnish spa visitors' wellness attitudes, revealing shifts toward holistic health approaches.	129
		Koskinen (2019)	Promotion of holistic wellness through spa tourism among retirees, with strategies targeting aging well.	79
		Hudson et al. (2017)	Behavioral intention in wellness tourism is linked to health involvement, with implications for managing and marketing this subsector in the USA.	174
		Konu (2010)	Finnish wellbeing tourists based on lifestyles using AIO segmentation	40

Table 9 Bibliographic coupling for the highest linkage strength in documents cluster 3

Cluster Name	Total Number of Papers	Studies with highest TLS	Focus	Total Linkage Strength
Wellness Tourism Dynamics and Impacts (Cluster 3)	17	Wang et al. (2020)	Examines spatial stigma in Bama Yao Autonomous County, China, highlighting local residents' perceptions, resistance strategies, and concerns about tourism influx.	169
		Luo et al. (2018)	Reveals that customer experience in wellness tourism enhances leisure and non-leisure satisfaction, improving quality of life and informing marketing strategies.	145
		Ashton (2018)	Explores push and pull factors influencing satisfaction and revisit intention in spiritual retreat tourism, emphasizing authentic and peaceful experiences.	146
		Kim et al. (2017)	Analyzes tourists' motivations like prestige, novelty, and relaxation, linking them to engagement and loyalty at wellness destinations.	136
		Liu et al. (2022)	Integrates Cognitive Appraisal Theory to study the motivation-inspiration dynamic, highlighting how frequent visits affect wellness tourists' goal congruence and inspiration.	103
		Dillette et al. (2021)	Examines international wellness tourism experiences through user-generated content, identifying dimensions influencing outcomes: body, mind, spirit, and environment.	126
		Chen et al. (2023)	Develops a scale for spa hotel experiencescape, exploring factors like authenticity and memorability, and their effects on revisit intention post-pandemic.	99
		Yoo et al. (2015)	wellness values, along with motivations like social interaction, family togetherness, cultural exploration, and relaxation, significantly influence festival attendance	96

Wolf et al. (2017) explore transformative travel in protected areas, highlighting motivations and traits associated with psychological, social, and ecological benefits. Their research provides a model of sustainable park experience development and marketing, demonstrating how wellness tourism and environmental stewardship can marry transformative experiences for guests. All in all, this cluster highlights the ability of wellness tourism to honor local traditions, meet a spectrum of tourist intentions, and promote sustainability for both tourists and host communities. See Table 7 below.

Cluster 2: Psychological and Holistic Wellness Tourism

This cluster explores the psychological and emotional dimensions of wellness tourism, emphasizing its role in stress alleviation, mental well-being, and CR during crises. According to Koskinen and Wilska (2019), wellness tourism brings mental well-being support in the long run. When it comes to wellness businesses, providing relief through discounts or community wellness programs amid a crisis highlights their commitment to CR and social welfare.

Yoga tourism, gaining prominence in the Western world, is highlighted by Dillette et al. (2019) for fostering transformative experiences that enhance psychological well-being during and after trips. Despite its growth, the study identifies a need

Table 10 Bibliographic coupling for the highest linkage strength in documents cluster 4

Cluster Name	Total Number of Papers	Studies	Focus	Total Linkage Strength
CR and Wellness Tourism Experiences (Cluster 4)	17	Voigt et al. (2010)	Applies positive psychology and Stebbins's leisure framework to classify wellness tourism experiences along a hedonic-eudaimonic continuum.	93
		Heung and Kucukusta (2013)	Highlights China's potential for wellness tourism growth by leveraging environmental assets and promoting the sector through media and government support.	90
		Voigt et al. (2011)	Identifies six benefit factors sought by wellness tourists, revealing preferences among different types of visitors for physical, psychological, or spiritual transformation.	60
		Choi et al. (2015)	Examines the mediation of functional and wellness values in the relationship between quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions in South Korean spa visitors.	65

for further exploration of yoga tourism within the broader wellness tourism context. Similarly Thal and Hudson (2019a, b), using self-determination theory, identify core characteristics of wellness destinations—such as quality interactions, engaging activities, mindfulness, camaraderie, and confidence-building—that significantly enhance guests' mental well-being. Hartwell et al. (2018) expand this perspective by emphasizing the multifaceted relationships between tourism and well-being. Their research highlights the health, emotional, and spiritual benefits for tourists, communities, and destinations, calling for well-being-focused research to sustain competitive destination development and marketing. Koskinen and Wilska (2019) also discuss the demography of Finnish spa visitors and find a trend of young women engaged in holistic health practices, suggesting that wellness services should be developed for a variety of visitor profiles. Menegaki and Tiwari (2024) shows that tourists' willingness to pay for new and environmental hotel technologies is influenced by prior experience, stay frequency, age, income, and gender, offering hoteliers insights for

Table 11 Bibliographic coupling for the highest linkage strength in documents cluster 5

Cluster Name	Total Number of Papers	Studies	Focus	Total Linkage Strength
Niche Wellness Tourism and Crisis Resilience (Cluster 5)	16	Backman et al. (2023)	Emphasizes restorative benefits of wellness tourism, focusing on high-quality, health-focused services and CR during crises.	127
		Chen et al. (2016)	Finds holiday recovery experiences like relaxation and work detachment improve tourism and life satisfaction, offering recommendations for well-being and business success.	127
		Smith & Puczka ³ (2015)	Explores health tourism, refining definitions and addressing data gaps, with insights from a global survey of 420 suppliers.	69
		Huijbens (2011)	Examines Iceland's potential as a wellness destination, highlighting geothermal resources while critiquing lack of entrepreneurial vision and alignment with Nordic well-being concepts.	57

pricing, investment, and targeted marketing strategies. Koskinen (2019) explores the role of spa tourism among retirees, demonstrating how regular wellness activities promote holistic wellness and support strategies for aging well. This study underscores the importance of considering life stages in developing and targeting wellness tourism services. Additionally, Hudson et al. (2017) extend the Theory of Planned Behavior to apply to wellness tourism, showing that health involvement is an important dimension influencing intention to behave. Lastly, AIO segmentation is used to segment Finnish wellbeing tourists into six different groups with statistically significant differences in demographics, travel habits, and activity interests giving valuable insights into an understudied area of tourist wellbeing (Konu, 2010). As this subsector continues to flourish in the USA, their findings offer practical implications for managing and marketing wellness tourism. Wellness tourism is framed as something to balance with the responsibility of returning to good health from work so they both influence each other as both good for the individual as well as the societal support mechanism. See Table 8.

Cluster 3: Motivation and Customer Experience in Wellness Tourism

This cluster captures the relationships among tourists' motivations, the customer experience, and its effect on loyalty and satisfaction in wellness tourism. This looks at how the variation of motivators and customized experiences influence traveler behavior and destination success. Wang et al. (2020) explore the spatial stigma associated with wellness tourism in Bama Yao Autonomous County, China. Their study presents residents' ambivalent views, counter strategies, and perceptions about the inflow of patients with chronic health conditions. The results offer important theoretical and managerial implications for managing tensions and perceptions within communities. Luo et al. (2018) highlight that customer experience is another literature of wellness tourism, the study suggests that leisure and non-leisure experiences influence customer satisfaction which would lead to improving quality of life. They wrote a book that provides creative marketing ideas to market travelers' well-being and increase the attractiveness of a destination. In addition, the factors influencing tourist satisfaction in spiritual retreat tourism, such as push factors (transcendence and relaxation) and pull factors (authentic experiences and peaceful atmosphere) are discussed by Ashton (2018). This feeling of contentment becomes a key driver of intentions to return, offering a roadmap for destinations hoping to foster longer-term loyalty among wellness tourists. Kim et al. (2017) provide some key motivations for engagement and loyalty at wellness destinations, such as prestige, novelty, self-development, and relaxation. Their research provides insights that can help predict and improve tourist behavior, allowing marketers to match their offerings with the desires of visitors.

Liu et al. (2022) integrate Cognitive Appraisal Theory to explore the dynamic between wellness tourists' motivations and inspiration. The study shows that motivation affects goal relevance and congruence, inspiring visitors in two phases that wear off with subsequent visits. These insights are key to understanding the way motivations change over time and strategies providers can use to keep visitors returning. Dillette et al. (2021) use user-generated content analysis to pinpoint four holistic wellness tourism dimensions—body, mind, spirit, and environment that impact the achievement of wellness outcomes. Yoo et al. (2015) Justification on health and wellness values along with motivations such as socialization, family togetherness, cultural exploration, and relaxation influences festival attendance. Finally, Chen et al. (2023) proposed a scale for experiences cape of spa hotels, which includes authenticity, memorability, and organizational identification. The findings provide practical implications for the design and marketing of post-pandemic wellness tourism through these mediating elements between experiences and revisiting intention. Together, this cluster emphasizes the importance of why tourists travel and improving customer experience as drivers of wellness tourism destination satisfaction, loyalty, and overall success. See Table 9.

Cluster 4: CR and Wellness Tourism Experiences

This cluster explores the integration of CR within wellness tourism, emphasizing how businesses can balance customer satisfaction with broader societal contribu-

tions. The results underscore the outlook of wellness tourism to not just strengthen personal wellness but also to tackle public health and community issues, specifically in times of crisis. Voigt et al. (2010) use positive psychology and Stebbins's leisure framework to establish a classification scheme for wellness tourism experiences along a hedonic - eudaimonic continuum. Hedonic experiences are mainly featured in beauty spas, whereas spiritual retreats predominantly promote eudaimonic well-being, and lifestyle resorts combine both types of experiences with a predilection for eudaimonia. This classification helps to understand the different types of goals wellness tourists want to achieve while assisting providers in preparing prospective offerings that meet these targets. Heung and Kucukusta (2013) argue that China has a lot of room for growth in the wellness tourism market, taking advantage of its natural assets such as clean air and picturesque surroundings. For example, they highlight how government backing, coverage from mass media channels, and local activities improve the sector's competitive profile and help secure China's status as a global wellness destination. Moreover, Voigt et al. (2011) identify six key benefits sought by wellness tourists—i.e., transcendence, physical health, relaxation, connection, self-esteem, and indulgence. Their research demonstrates that visitors to beauty spas are interested in distinct experiences compared with those typically sought at lifestyle resorts or spiritual retreats, based on different demographic profiles and desired outcomes in personal transformation — physical, psychological, or spiritual. However this information allows providers to better tailor their offerings to the diverse needs of wellness travelers. Finally, Choi et al. (2015) investigate the mediating process between quality, satisfaction, and behavior intentions through functional and wellness values. Their research in Korean Spas shows how important these values are for return on investment by gaining repeat visitors and visitor recommendation of the destination which indicates the need to deliver quality experiences according to what visitors expect. This cluster highlights that wellness tourism creates opportunities beyond individual benefits and can play a pivotal role in delivering societal good through CR initiatives. It finally means the importance of knowing and serving for different tourist motivations to design and generate significant and satisfying experiences. See Table 10 below.

Cluster 5: Niche Wellness Tourism and Crisis Resilience

This cluster highlights the reprogramming opportunities wellness tourism delivers to meet the current crisis, while establishing the relevance of the industry as a major player in defining resilience and recovery. It focuses on both the implementation of CR and sustainable practices together to safeguard tourists and to further help in local society. Backman et al. (2023) discuss the restorative potential of wellness tourism, directly connecting it with CR by promoting quality, healthy experiences. Wellness tourism operators have a key role in emergencies like natural disasters or global health crises as they can provide safe, accessible, and restorative services. For example, businesses may host wellness retreats for frontline workers or other victims of disaster, solidifying their role in community recovery, and expanding their impact on society overall. Additionally, Chen et al. (2016) intertwine busy Christmas from which holiday recovery emerges and reveal that factors such as relaxation, work

detachment and engaging in activities strongly improve tourism satisfaction and life satisfaction. Their conclusions have actionable implications as they provide suggestions that enable tourism to support well-being – that is not only good for business but also good for the tourists, which ultimately supports the duality of restorative tourism.

Smith and Puczkó (2015) review health tourism, clarifying its definitions and examining data shortfalls based on a worldwide survey of 420 suppliers. Their research also shows that 43% of users of health, wellness, and spa facilities are tourists—many of whom are core consumers. These insights emphasize the need to understand the shifting requirements of health-savvy travelers and to adapt offerings to meet those needs. Iceland is broached by Huijbens (2011) also as a possible wellness destination, but this source involves its thermal ground resources, particularly the well-known Blue Lagoon and a center in the northeast. However, the study identifies a lack of entrepreneurial vision, as well as a mismatch with Nordic well-being concepts (emphasizing local roots over foreign outreach), despite emphasizing these assets. This underscores the need for an integrated approach to capitalizing on the country's wellness tourism offering. This cluster flesh out the importance of wellness tourism for the recovery of individuals and societies after crisis alongside calling for more sustainable and health-oriented practices. It also stressed how leveraging unique natural assets and aligning offerings with consumer expectations to ensure that the tourism sector is more resilient and attractive. See Table 11 below.

Instruments like the Wellness Tourist Motivation Scale created by Kessler et al. (2020) could offer an adaptable template for assessing how effective CR initiatives are in times of crisis. For instance, such tools could track the effectiveness of wellness programs to support communities through crises, so that corporate efforts and tourist motivations and expectations can align. With a restorative angle in wellness tourism, CR strategies could also involve active crisis management. Wellness tourism companies can put in place protocols for health crises, including how to provide clean facilities and offer flexible booking policies. When COVID-19 struck, many wellness tourism businesses quickly adapted by offering virtual wellness sessions, showcasing CR through creative solutions that not only kept them relevant but also enabled them to contribute back to the communities. The wellness industry, as noted in your ongoing paper, faces challenges such as maintaining quality while addressing the growing demand. CR can be positioned as a framework to overcome these challenges by focusing on sustainable development, community involvement, and ethical business practices. For instance, CR strategies could address wellness disparities between regions by making wellness services more inclusive and accessible, particularly in crisis scenarios.

Cluster Analysis

Using this data, the subsequent phase involved performing a clusteranalysis (Sahi et al., 2021, 2022) on these 347 concepts. The software identified four groups of theoretical analyses determined by the co-occurrence of keywords or keyword frequency. The resulting clusters are depicted in Fig. 6. Below, we delineate these four clusters and their primary focus areas in the literature.

Cluster 1: Tourism Destination and Tourism Management

The first cluster comprises 35 papers that collectively address a wide spectrum of issues within the tourism industry. Figure 6 illustrates the citation frequency of the keywords associated with this cluster. The studies examine wellness tourism from multiple perspectives, offering insights into tourist behavior, recovery processes, destination management, and the implications of shifting travel trends. Subawa et al. (2023) expanded the Theory of Planned Behavior model in the context of wellness tourism in Bali, incorporating wellness motivation, pull-factor motivation, and tourist value as determinants of behavioral intentions. Their results highlight that attitudes were significantly shaped by pull motivation and tourist value, while subjective norms and perceived behavioral control were not significant predictors of visit intention suggesting the need for further refinement of theoretical models. Similarly, Wang et al. (2022) investigated the restorative experiences of wellness tourists, finding that health goal salience strongly predicts perceived destination qualities and visitor engagement, with implications for designing recovery-oriented tourism offerings. Mihardja et al. (2023) explored how Batur Geopark in Bali could be reconfigured into a mental recreation destination through “forest bathing,” demonstrating both wellness benefits and opportunities for sustainable branding and disaster mitigation.

Other studies examine destination perceptions and visitor profiles. Wang et al. (2020) analyzed the stigmatization of Bama, a Chinese wellness tourism destination, showing how local residents developed coping strategies to manage the stigma associated with patient-based tourism. Tapia et al. (2022) studied medical tourism in Spain, identifying the typical medical tourist as young, internet-savvy, non-European, and cost-sensitive, with a preference for accredited centers. Medina-Muñoz and Medina-Muñoz (2014) investigated the motivations of European visitors to Gran Canaria, providing insights into how medical and wellness tourism can diversify coastal tourism strategies. In the context of spiritual and niche tourism, Ashton (2018) explored how spiritual retreats influence satisfaction and revisit intention, while Gabor and Oltean (2019) analyzed babymoon tourism in Romania, emphasizing its potential as an emerging wellness trend. Kato and Progano (2017) examined spiritually motivated travel along the Nakahechi pilgrimage trail in Japan, highlighting tourists’ preference for sustainability and slow tourism practices.

Although the studies within this cluster cover diverse destinations, contexts, and methodological approaches, they converge around a core knowledge domain of tourism destination management and wellness-related travel behaviors. The common focus lies in understanding how motivations, perceptions, and well-being outcomes shape destination choice, visitor satisfaction, and recovery processes. At the same time, the cluster demonstrates clear innovation trends, including the adaptation of psychological models (e.g., the Theory of Planned Behavior) to wellness tourism, the use of advanced analytical techniques such as logit models and artificial intelligence (Pinos-Navarrete et al., 2022), and the emergence of novel niches such as babymoon and spiritual tourism. Together, these studies illustrate how wellness tourism research is evolving toward greater theoretical sophistication and diversification, while providing practical insights for sustainable destination management and policy development.

Cluster 2: Motivation, Wellbeing, and Psychology

Cluster 2 comprises 26 papers exploring the multifaceted motivations behind wellness tourism. Naidoo et al. (2023) examined global retreat attendees, finding that most were motivated by relaxation and health improvement, with 41% managing medical conditions pointing to the potential of identifying subgroups for targeted programs. Goyal and Taneja (2022) studied Indian tourists, identifying key motivational drivers such as relaxation, escape, socialization, kinship, and destination/service-specific attributes, which explained 52% of travel motivation. Gan et al. (2023) confirmed that wellness motivations significantly predict behavioral intentions, while Saari et al. (2023) emphasized eudaimonic well-being, linking meaning-seeking to preferences for destinations such as spas, urban retreats, national parks, and outdoor recreation. Complementing these works, Kessler et al. (2020) developed the Wellness Tourist Motivation Scale (WTMS), encompassing seven dimensions: movement and fitness, healthy food and diet, meditation and mindfulness, rest, wellness learning, self-care, and nature/disconnection. Wellness tourism's proliferation due to its effects on human, social, and economic well-being (Kazanov & Oyner, 2021). The field encompasses medical, health, and wellness tourism as dynamic economic activities, with markets, destinations, and development environments emerging as main research themes (Zhong et al., 2021). Supply chain optimization through open innovation approaches can enhance profitability by strategically integrating diverse medical services into tourism frameworks, though capacity challenges emerge with anticipated tourist volume increases (Dinkoksung et al., 2023).

This scale comprehensively explains the diverse elements contributing to wellness tourists' motivations. Despite their shared focus on traveler motivations, these studies demonstrate notable differences. Goyal and Taneja (2022) offer geographically specific insights from India, while Saari et al. (2023) contribute a temporal dimension by examining motivational changes during crises. Other works extend this focus to distinct contexts such as festivals, wellness retreats, and rural tourism (Yoo et al., 2015; Kelly, 2012; Pesonen & Komppula, 2010). Looking ahead, future research should pursue subgroup identification through cluster analysis, conduct cross-cultural comparisons to capture regional variations, and employ longitudinal designs to trace motivational dynamics over time. Integrated approaches are also recommended to examine how wellness values interact with broader tourism contexts. Taken together, the studies in Cluster 2 reflect a coherent knowledge domain centered on traveler psychology, motivation, and well-being. At the same time, they reveal innovation trends such as the creation of refined measurement tools (e.g., the Wellness Tourist Motivation Scale), the contextual adaptation of motivational models across regions, and the incorporation of wellness practices into tourism during times of crisis. This convergence illustrates how research on wellness tourism motivations is evolving to address shifting traveler expectations and global challenges, ultimately positioning motivation and well-being as a core axis of intellectual development in the field.

Cluster 3: COVID-19, Health, Yoga, and Digital Resilience

Cluster 3 comprises 14 papers focusing on the intersection of the COVID-19 pandemic, health, and yoga within tourism. Bhatta et al. (2022) examined post-pandemic travel motivations in Nepal, showing distinct preferences among those traveling with family and friends, which suggests opportunities for targeted rural tourism packages. Li and Huang (2022) found that health and psychological risks negatively influenced Chinese Generation Z's wellness tourism intentions, while Salman et al. (2022) highlighted pandemic-induced anxiety in Malaysia and the role of domestic tourism in supporting mental health. Yang and Wong (2020) demonstrated how perceived discrimination during the pandemic undermined tourist well-being. Collaborations among tourism providers, healthcare institutions, and digital platforms are pivotal for fostering innovation, sustainability, and service quality. Peer-to-peer collaborations and open innovation within tourism ecosystems enhance sector sustainability and resilience, as demonstrated by initiatives that leverage Indigenous Knowledge Systems and youth entrepreneurship (Novelli, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic also accelerated the adoption of network technologies, social media platforms, and AI/ML solutions in hospitality and tourism, underscoring their role in building resilience and ensuring post-pandemic survival (Elkhwesky et al., 2022). Similarly, healthcare systems leverage digital platforms as value-generation enablers that allow actors to interact and share resources in innovative ways, supporting value co-creation essential for system sustainability (Faggini et al., 2018, 2021; Gössling & Michael Hall, 2019). These platforms contribute to both short- and long-term sustainability across complex service systems, though challenges remain regarding equitable governance and digital accessibility.

Several studies emphasize yoga and spiritual practices as responses to health crises. Santos et al. (2023) and Nagarathna et al. (2020) highlighted yoga's benefits for immunity, respiratory function, and mental health, while Patange and Sawarkar (2020) reported its potential to regulate nano immune responses to COVID-19 symptoms. Halder et al. (2021) further stressed yoga's value as a low-intensity, scalable intervention. Telej and Gamble (2019) examined India's efforts to enhance authenticity in yoga tourism, with Swamy and Agoramoorthy (2021) noting the sector's vulnerability during the pandemic and Choudhary and Qadir (2022) emphasizing its role in post-COVID recovery. Complementary research also pointed to the transformative potential of yoga retreats (Abdou et al., 2022) and the rise of spiritual tourism through Sufi, yogic, and Ayurvedic practices (Arora et al., 2021). Although these topics pandemic impacts, health, and yoga may appear disparate, they collectively represent a knowledge domain centered on health, resilience, and well-being in crisis contexts. The cluster also reveals innovation trends, including the integration of holistic practices into tourism, the repositioning of yoga as a preventive and therapeutic tool, and the growing convergence between wellness and spiritual tourism, all of which underscore the sector's adaptive strategies in response to global crises.

Cluster 4: Medical Tourism Differentiation, Perception, and Innovation

Cluster 4 comprises 11 studies that collectively address a wide range of issues within the tourism domain, spanning wellness and medical tourism, spa tourism, babymoon travel, and specialized medical tours. The diversity of topics within this cluster is reflected in the citation frequency of the associated keywords. Several works focus on the broader evolution of medical and wellness tourism. Wright and Zascersinska (2023) explore whether the growing popularity of wellness and medical tourism may be linked to humanity's search for longevity and even immortality. Similarly, Ushakov et al. (2019) highlight Thailand's competitive advantage in this sector, noting how the availability of medical services distinguishes its tourism products. Pinos-Navarrete et al. (2022) emphasize the role of product differentiation in enhancing the competitiveness of medical tourism destinations, particularly in the Thai context. Other studies examine revisit intentions, with Wang et al. (2020) identifying physician expertise and safety as critical determinants, while Li and Huang (2022) investigate how perceived health and psychological risks influence Chinese Generation Z's willingness to engage in wellness tourism. The cluster also incorporates geographically distinct perspectives. For example, Gabor and Oltean (2019) examine babymoon tourism in Romania, whereas Medina-Muñoz and Medina-Muñoz (2013) analyze the competitiveness of the Canary Islands in the Nordic market.

Recent developments also point to the role of Big Data and Artificial Intelligence (BDAI) in transforming medical and wellness tourism. In tourism, BDAI enhances efficiency, productivity, and profitability for providers while delivering rich, personalized experiences for travelers (Samara et al., 2020; Wong & Sa'aid Hazley, 2021). In healthcare, personalized approaches stratify patients based on individual biomarkers rather than population averages (Fröhlich et al., 2018), and AI operates at three levels: enabling rapid, accurate image interpretation, improving workflow and reducing errors for health systems, and empowering patients to manage their own data (Topol, 2019). These applications highlight the growing integration of tourism and healthcare innovations, positioning BDAI as a driver of personalization and competitiveness in medical and wellness tourism.

Likewise, Pinos-Navarrete et al. (2022) study spa tourism perceptions among university students in Spain and Germany. Methodologically, these works also vary: while some adopt conceptual and theoretical approaches, others combine advanced techniques such as artificial intelligence with traditional survey methods to capture consumer motivations and perceptions. Overall, Cluster 4 integrates themes of wellness and medical tourism, product differentiation, and revisit intention. Although the studies differ in focus, geography, and methodology, they collectively enrich our understanding of how medical and spa tourism are positioned in global tourism markets. The findings underscore the growing importance of consumer perceptions, safety, and specialized offerings in shaping destination competitiveness and traveler decision-making.

The sample of 347 studies was systematically categorized into four primary clusters: Tourism Destination and Management, Motivation and Wellbeing, COVID-19 and Health, and Medical Tourism and Spa through a bibliometric cluster analysis based on keyword co-occurrence, capturing the most frequently explored themes

within wellness tourism. By setting a co-occurrence threshold, only the most relevant studies were included in each cluster, ensuring that each group reflects a dominant research focus. This structured approach justifies the distribution across clusters as it accurately represents the diversity of current research trends, with larger clusters indicating broader, more heavily studied areas (such as destination management) and smaller clusters highlighting emerging or specialized topics (such as medical tourism). Consequently, this clustering method offers a balanced and data-driven depiction of wellness tourism research, aligned with thematic relevance and academic attention within the field. See Table 11 below.

Comparison of Bibliometric Coupling and Cluster Analysis in Wellness Tourism Research

To better understand these two different approaches to identifying research similarities and thematic trends in the field of wellness tourism, bibliometric coupling and cluster analysis are compared. The comparison of bibliometric coupling and cluster analysis across cluster analysis of wellness tourism (up to October 2023) is presented in Table 12. Bibliometric coupling establishes links between documents over shared references and provides in-depth development of foundational works on research topics including cultural perspectives, psychological frameworks, and CR in wellness tourism. Alternately, the cluster analysis examines more broad, thematic relationships through keyword co-occurrence, emphasizing general concepts like cultural awareness, mental health methods, and crisis response. The visualizations of each cluster illustrate the degree to which the two methods complement each other, wherein bibliometric coupling reveals direct citation-based ties to superior studies, while cluster analysis organizes related keywords to detect prevailing themes and shifting areas of overall study. Collectively, these offer a big-picture overview of the landscape of research on wellness tourism, covering niche issues of rural wellness tourism through to global matters of resilience within crises and the impact of COVID-19 on tourism behavior. See Table 13 below.

Discussion

The dynamic tourism sector is a pivotal contributor to the global economy, serving as a vibrant arena that caters to the diverse needs and desires of travelers and plays a crucial role in propelling local economies. As tourism management evolves, various themes and study areas have emerged, reflecting the multifaceted nature of this industry. This bibliometric analysis delves into three prominent and interconnected subjects within the realm of tourism study: wellness tourism, CR in tourism, and crises in tourist management.

Evaluating journals and the authors contributing to them constitute a significant portion of bibliometric applications within the tourism literature. The descriptive analysis of 347 publications on wellness tourism reveals a nuanced evolution of the field. Initiated in 2001, the scholarly attention to wellness tourism significantly

Table 12 Cluster analysis according to the topic

Custer	Topic	Number of Papers
Cluster 1: Tourism Destination and Tourism Management (Red)	Destination Management, Tourist Behavior, and Recovery Processes	Subawa et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022; Mihardja et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2020
	Spirituality in Tourism	Ashton, 2018; Kato & Progano, 2017
	Sustainable Practices and Tourism Trends	Romão et al., 2017; Gabor & Oltean, 2019
Cluster 2: Motivation, Wellbeing, and Psychology (Yellow)	Wellness Tourist Motivation	Naidoo et al., 2023; Goyal & Taneja, 2022; Gan et al., 2023
	Wellness Tourist Satisfaction	Yoo et al., 2015; Lim et al., 2016
	Specific Motivation Contexts (e.g., Festivals, Rural Tourism)	Kelly, 2012; Pesonen & Komppula, 2010
	Wellness Tourism and Wellbeing Outcomes	(Kazanov & Oyner, 2021; Zhong et al., 2021; Din-koksung et al., 2023)
Cluster 3: COVID-19, Health, and Yoga (Blue)	Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism Behavior	Bhatta et al., 2022; Li & Huang, 2022; Salman et al., 2022
	Yoga and Health in Tourism	Santos et al., 2023; Telej and Gamble, 2019; Swamy & Agoramoorthy, 2021
	Yoga as Therapy in Post-COVID Context	Patange & Sawarkar, 2020; Halder et al., 2021
	Digital Innovation and Resilience in Tourism and Healthcare	(Elkhwesky et al., 2022; Faggini et al., 2018; Faggini et al., 2021; Novelli, 2023)
Cluster 4: Medical Tourism Differentiation, Perception, and Innovation (Green)	Medical Tourism Differentiation and Perception	Wright & Zascierinska, 2023; Ushakov et al., 2019; Pinos-Navarrete et al., 2022
	Spa Tourism Perception	Pinos-Navarrete et al., 2022
	Babymoon Tourism and Other Niche Markets	Gabor & Oltean, 2019
	Big Data and Artificial Intelligence (BDAl)	(Samara et al., 2020; Fröhlich et al., 2018; Topol, 2019; Wong & Sa'aid Hazley, 2021)

expanded around 2010, influenced by external events like the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and subsequent crises. The COVID-19 pandemic, mainly after 2020, led to an unprecedented surge in publications, emphasizing its adverse effects on travel-induced well-being. Journals such as the *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, *Sustainability Switzerland*, and *Tourism Recreation Research* emerged as prolific

Table 13 Comparison of bibliometric coupling and cluster analysis

Cluster	Bibliometric Coupling	Cluster Analysis
Cultural and Rural Wellness Tourism	Focuses on documents sharing references about cultural perspectives and rural tourism (e.g., Huang & Xu, 2014).	Groups broader concepts such as cultural sensitivity, CR, and crisis management based on keyword co-occurrence or recurring themes.
Psychological and Holistic Wellness Tourism	Links documents sharing foundational references on psychological frameworks and stress relief (e.g., Koskinen & Wilska, 2019).	Highlights broader thematic connections such as mental rejuvenation, holistic health, and CR in stress relief programs, derived from high-frequency keywords.
Motivation and Customer Experience in Wellness Tourism	Emphasizes shared references in studies addressing motivation dynamics and customer experiences (e.g., Luo et al., 2018).	Categorizes broader thematic concepts like goal congruence, inspirational experiences, and loyalty drivers, identified from recurring keywords in customer experience and satisfaction studies.
CR and Wellness Experiences	Identifies documents sharing references on CR strategies and wellness values (e.g., Voigt et al., 2010).	Groups broader topics such as hedonic-eudaimonic frameworks, functional and wellness values, and quality experiences, using thematic overlaps and recurring keywords.
Niche Wellness Tourism and Crisis Resilience	Links studies with shared references on resilience strategies and restorative tourism (e.g., Backman et al., 2023).	Highlights broader concepts like health-focused services, crisis responsiveness, and community recovery, derived from emerging trends during global crises like COVID-19.
COVID-19, Health, and Yoga	Connects documents with shared references about pandemic impacts, health tourism, and yoga's role in wellbeing (e.g., Santos et al., 2023).	Groups broader topics such as pandemic-induced anxiety, mental wellbeing strategies, and yoga for immunity, reflecting themes extracted from keyword co-occurrence and recurring pandemic-related concepts.
Medical Tourism, Perception, and Spa	Identifies references shared among documents discussing medical tourism differentiation and spa perceptions (e.g., Pinos-Navarrete et al., 2022).	Highlights broader themes like perception analysis, healthcare commodification, and tourism product differentiation, focusing on recurring thematic keywords and emerging niche markets.

contributors, with the Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing leading in paper productivity. The global distribution of wellness tourism research is evident, with significant contributors to the United States, China, India, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Moreover, bibliographic coupling, leveraging shared references, identifies cohesive research themes and contributes to ongoing scholarly discourse.

The analysis employs a bibliometric approach, combining biographic coupling and cluster analysis by keyword visualization to identify key thematic clusters in wellness tourism research. By examining total linkage strength and influential studies, the analysis uncovers interconnections between topics such as cultural sensitivity, psychological well-being, customer motivation, CR, and crisis resilience. This method enables a structured understanding of how various aspects of wellness tourism contribute to individual and societal well-being while highlighting actionable insights for marketing strategies, sustainable practices, and crisis preparedness within the industry.

Limitations and Future Research

The growing interest in travel experiences that enhance physical, mental, and emotional health has fueled the rapid growth of wellness tourism, establishing it as one of the most dynamic segments of the global tourism industry. Positioned at the intersection of changing travel patterns and multiple disciplinary perspectives, wellness tourism research has expanded considerably and is expected to continue doing so in the long run. As travelers increasingly prioritize well-being, future studies can further deepen insights into its significance for individuals, destinations, the tourism sector, and broader societal development. Tourism businesses and organizations are therefore encouraged to adopt ethical and sustainable practices, which can reduce the sector's environmental footprint, safeguard biodiversity, and improve the well-being of host communities, while supporting sustainable growth. Aligned with the broader CR agenda, this approach underscores the industry's capacity to contribute to social progress and environmental sustainability. Moreover, recognizing the disruptive impact of unexpected crises such as natural disasters or global health emergencies (e.g., COVID-19) highlights the necessity of effective crisis management and business continuity strategies in tourism (UNWTO, 2020). Future research could further investigate frameworks and practices that enhance destination resilience during and after crises.

Beyond these directions, future studies should also align wellness tourism with the emerging dynamics of the knowledge economy. First, scholars could explore how big data and artificial intelligence (AI) enable personalized wellness experiences through predictive analytics, wearable technologies, and tailored health programs, as emphasized in recent studies on digital health and smart technologies in tourism and healthcare (Topol, 2019). Second, research should examine cross-sector partnerships, for example, collaborations between tourism providers, healthcare institutions, and digital platforms that can foster innovation, sustainability, and service quality (Samara et al., 2020; Fröhlich et al., 2018). Third, future work could investigate the economic contributions of wellness tourism to local and global knowledge economies, not only in terms of revenue and employment but also through the creation of

expertise, knowledge transfer, and innovation capacity (Faggini et al., 2018, 2021; Novelli, 2023). Finally, longitudinal and comparative analyses across different cultural and economic contexts are recommended to capture evolving trends and deepen understanding of wellness tourism's role in driving innovation and socio-economic resilience (Kazanov & Oyner, 2021; Zhong et al., 2021).

Moreover, we acknowledge the geographical and linguistic limitations of this study, as it relied primarily on English-language publications indexed in Scopus. To enhance generalizability and inclusivity, future research could incorporate multilingual and regional databases (e.g., such as Web of Science, Dimensions, and Google Scholar). Future studies could address this limitation by expanding database coverage to include multilingual and regional sources, employing machine translation tools to incorporate non-English literature, and fostering collaboration with scholars from underrepresented regions. Such efforts would enhance the generalizability and global relevance of wellness tourism research and ensure a more inclusive understanding of its diverse contexts. Finally, while bibliometric techniques are powerful for mapping intellectual structures and research trends, they do not capture the nuanced, context-specific perspectives that qualitative approaches can provide. Future research could therefore combine bibliometric analyses with qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, case studies, content analysis) to explore the dynamic interplays between wellness tourism, CR, and crises more deeply. Such mixed-method approaches would provide a richer understanding of evolving themes and enhance the robustness and generalizability of the field's knowledge base. Table 14 presents future research directions in wellness tourism, CR, and crisis response in tourism according to bibliometric coupling and cluster analysis.

This study has several limitations that inform future research. Since the bibliometric analysis was confined to specific databases, some relevant but less-cited or non-English works may have been excluded. While it identifies major trends in wellness tourism, crisis response, and crisis management, it lacks qualitative depth to explore their complex interrelations. Moreover, most studies focus on certain regions, mainly Asia and Europe, limiting generalizability. Finally, reliance on bibliometric coupling and clustering provides valuable mapping but may not capture the evolving motivations and long-term effects of crises such as COVID-19.

Conclusion

Wellness tourism is dynamic and multifaceted and caters to a wide variety of tourists' motives, emphasizing community wellness while also integrating CR and sustainability. Highlighting thematic areas of cultural and rural wellness, psychological well-being benefits, customer experiences, and resilience to crises, the study provides concrete suggestions and implications regarding the impact of wellness tourism on not only improved personal well-being but also the socio-economic recovery and sustainable development of society.

Investigations into wellness tourism in Bali by Subawa et al. (2023) and the recovery-acquisition process by Wang et al. (2021a, b) contribute nuanced insights, urging a potential refinement of the Theory of Planned Behavior model. The adoption of

Table 14 Future research directions

Research Area	Future Research Directions	Related References
Cultural Sensitivity and Rural Wellness Tourism	Explore the integration of cultural sensitivity and CR in tourism during crises.	Wang et al. (2020); Liu et al. (2022)
	Conduct comparative research on the role of cultural nuances in shaping rural tourism experiences.	Wang et al. (2020); Chen et al. (2023)
	Examine evolving psychological needs and their impact on holistic wellness frameworks post-pandemic.	Koskinen and Wilska (2019); Dillette et al. (2019); Backman et al. (2023)
Psychological and Holistic Wellness Tourism	Conduct longitudinal studies on stress relief and life satisfaction across diverse demographic groups.	Hartwell et al. (2018); Thal and Hudson (2019a, b); Santos et al. (2023)
Motivation and Customer Experience in Wellness Tourism	Investigate how goal congruence and inspiration dynamics evolve over repeated visits.	Luo et al. (2018); Ashton (2018); Liu et al. (2022); Kim et al. (2023)
	Enhance personalized experiences using data-driven insights into tourist behavior and satisfaction.	Wang et al. (2020); Dillette et al. (2021)
CR and Wellness Tourism Experiences	Assess the effectiveness of CR initiatives in addressing global crises and supporting communities.	Choi et al. (2015); Heung and Kucukusta (2013); Choi et al. (2020)
	Study the impact of CR strategies on customer loyalty and destination branding	Voigt et al. (2011); Chen et al. (2023); Hudson et al. (2017)
Niche Wellness Tourism and Crisis Resilience	Explore the role of restorative wellness tourism in fostering resilience during crises.	Backman et al. (2023); Chen et al. (2016); Chen et al. (2023)
	Integrate sustainable practices and CR into niche markets like spiritual retreats.	Voigt et al. (2010); Santos et al. (2023)
Motivation, Wellbeing, and Psychology	Examine cross-cultural motivational drivers, expand wellness tourism into sustainable policies and supply chains, and study digital/AI effects on satisfaction and wellbeing outcomes.	Naidoo et al. (2023); Gan et al. (2023); Yoo et al. (2015); Kazanov & Oyner (2021); Zhong et al. (2021)
COVID-19, Health, and Yoga	Study the long-term effects of COVID-19 on tourist behavior, focusing on yoga's role in mental health recovery.	Nagarathna et al. (2020); Patange and Sawarkar (2020)
	Explore virtual wellness tourism to maintain engagement during global disruptions.	Salman et al. (2022); Li and Huang (2022); Halder et al. (2021)
	Assess post-pandemic resilience strategies, examine yoga/mindfulness in wellness travel, and evaluate health protocols' impact on competitiveness.	(Elkhwesky et al., 2022; Faggini et al., 2018; Faggini et al., 2021; Novelli, 2023)
Medical Tourism, Perception, and Spa	Examine how medical tourism destinations can differentiate services and address perceptions of safety post-pandemic.	Pinos-Navarrete et al. (2022); Wright and Zascersinska (2023); Ushakov et al. (2019)
	Study the rise of niche markets like babymoon tourism and their integration with wellness experiences.	Gabor and Oltean (2019); Tapia et al. (2022)
	Investigate patient trust and ethics in cross-border medical tourism, integrate spa/health services with digital platforms, in emerging markets.	(Samara et al., 2020; Fröhlich et al., 2018; Topol, 2019; Wong & Sa'aid Hazley, 2021)

forest bathing in Batur Geopark, Bali, as studied by Mihardja et al. (2023), suggests sustainable approaches to mental recreation, while Wang et al. (2020) explore the stigmatization of the Bama wellness tourism destination in China. These studies collectively enrich destination management strategies, emphasizing the need for sustainable practices, refinement of existing models, and a holistic approach to well-

ness tourism planning. Future research could delve into integrating findings, refining models, and exploring emerging trends in this dynamic field. Other clusters focus on motivation, well-being, and psychology in wellness tourism; the studies delve into diverse facets of the subject. From the global analysis of wellness retreats by Naidoo et al. (2023) to the identification of factors influencing wellness tourists in India by Goyal and Taneja (2022), these studies provide a nuanced understanding of motivations and contribute to the development of the Wellness Tourist Motivation Scale by Kessler et al. (2020). While commonalities exist, such as exploring motivation factors, differences in geographical focus and temporal considerations are evident. Future research directions may involve subgroup identification, cross-cultural analyses, and longitudinal studies to track evolving motivations, further enriching our understanding of wellness tourism and guiding strategic planning for the industry.

This study finds and strongly aligns with the journal's all-inclusive focus on Policy integrations, modernization, innovation, and sustainability practices, which are required for broader purposes. Wellness tourism's convergence with CR and crisis management fundamentally manifests in the knowledge economy by transforming goodwill and other intangible assets like trust, collaboration, and innovation into calculable economic and reputation in the environment. Corporate social responsibility practice supports directly to wellness tourism directly, and also gets support from other frameworks of sustainability, especially the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) concerned with partnerships for sustainable development (Goal 17), reducing consumption and production (Goal 12), and health and well-being (Goal 3). Wellness tourism companies enhance destination resilience by integrating intellectual and social capital through ethical, learning, and governance-based business models. Policymakers should recognize wellness tourism as a strategic driver of the knowledge economy and promote collaboration among governments, universities, businesses, and tech firms. Strengthening public–private partnerships and digital systems for knowledge sharing is essential to foster innovation and develop fair, resilient wellness tourism policies.

Crisis management in wellness tourism relies on data analytics, digital innovation, and governance policies to help stabilize local economies during crises. Knowledge sharing and community support drive recovery and long-term growth, reinforcing wellness tourism's role in the knowledge economy through sustainability and resilience. Bibliometric evidence shows its contribution to key UN SDGs health (SDG 3), decent work and growth (SDG 8), responsible consumption (SDG 12), and climate action (SDG 13) (Bengtsson et al., 2018). Partnerships with communities, sustainable practices, and policy alignment between government, academia, and industry further enhance innovation and preparedness. Thus, wellness tourism emerges as a vital tool for economic stability, sustainability, and crisis recovery in future planning.

Authors' Contributions Alhamza F. Abbas: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft Preparation. Gül Erkol Bayram, Ali Raza: Data Curation, Visualization, Writing – Review and Editing. Abdul Wajid Moroojo, Radulescu Magdalena: Methodology, Supervision, Project Administration.

Funding Open access funding provided by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK). This research received no external funding.

Data Availability No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare no competing interests.

Human Ethics and Consent This study did not involve human participants, human data, or human tissue; therefore, ethics approval and consent to participate were not required (Human Ethics and Consent to Participate declarations: not applicable).

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Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

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