

Mapping the scholarly landscape of lifestyle migration in tourism: bibliometric patterns of trend, themes and future directions

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Abstract: This study analyses the evolution and intellectual structure of lifestyle migration research in tourism through bibliometric analysis. Despite its growing relevance, no systematic review has mapped the intersection of these fields. To address this gap, we have examined 145 publications indexed in the Web of Science (1990–2023) using VOSviewer. The findings identify key contributors, thematic clusters, and emerging research directions. The analysis reveals four dominant themes: migration and socio-economic impacts, tourism-driven mobility, transnational lifestyle patterns, and second-home tourism. Research output has grown significantly since 2010, with Spain and the USA leading contributions. The study highlights an increasing focus on digital nomadism, tourism gentrification, and sustainability. Future research should explore lifestyle migration's socio-economic effects, digital infrastructure's role, and policies that balance migration-driven tourism with sustainability. By providing the first structured bibliometric synthesis, this study offers theoretical insights and practical implications for policymakers and tourism practitioners.

Keywords: lifestyle migration, tourism, bibliometric analysis, VOSViewer

Introduction

Today, international migration is a crucial issue in both academic discourse and political spheres. International migration has become a phenomenon similar to tourism. In certain contexts, particularly lifestyle changes, international migration increasingly mirrors tourism, as migrants move primarily for leisure, well-being and other quality of life goals typically associated with holidays. Lifestyle migration is similar to tourism, when people move mainly for leisure or lifestyle reasons, favouring attractive destinations and making an economic contribution. However, unlike short-term tourists, these migrants tend to stay longer, aspire to residency and integrate more deeply into the local society. While the motives and spending behaviour often overlap, the duration and social engagement of lifestyle migration differs from typical tourism. This aspect of research was identified by Lundmark

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(2006). The term lifestyle migration encompasses various related concepts, such as elderly migration (Sastry, 1992), residential tourism, amenity migration (Üngüren & Kaçmaz, 2021), retirement migration (Huete & Mantecón, 2012), second homes (Pitkänen, 2008), long-stay tourism (Stedman et al., 2006), and leisure migration (Huete & Mantecón, 2012). This concept has been of interest to researchers for the past two decades, but it has been in use since the late 1970s (Arrones, 1979). Meanwhile, according to Markowitz and Stefansson (2004), this form of tourism received little attention in international academic research during the 1980s. However, due to globalization, the transition to a post-industrial society, and an increase in the number of second home owners, there has been a notable resurgence of research interest in this key aspect of the contemporary global economy.

Tourism and lifestyle migration are two types of human mobility that demonstrate interconnectedness and mutual influence, especially in the Mediterranean world (Huete & Mantecón, 2012). The concept of lifestyle migration has evolved over time, as shown in the following figure.

Figure 1. Timeline of lifestyle migration



Source: authors' representation

Williams and Hall (2000) highlighted the neglected research interest in the linkage between tourism and migration. The phenomenon of lifestyle migration is an area of significant research interest due to the continued ambiguity in defining terminology such as tourism, migration, and quality of life, as highlighted in Ibrahim and Tremblay's (2019) research. This bibliometric analysis aims to examine the evolution dynamics and current research status in this specific area to enhance the understanding of relevant aspects and determine their significance in the context of contemporary social and economic processes.

Understanding the dynamics of lifestyle migration in tourism is essential due to its growing significance and impact on host destinations. Although researchers have widely explored this phenomenon across various disciplines, no integrative review synthesizes how lifestyle migration is framed in tourism studies. Additionally, while bibliometric analysis has been applied to tourism and lifestyle migration separately, no study has systematically mapped the intersection of these

two domains. This study fills the gap by identifying key academic contributions, thematic clusters, and future research directions in lifestyle migration in tourism.

To accomplish this, we explore the following research questions:

- RQ (1): What are the dominant research themes that link lifestyle migration and tourism, and how have studies explored this relationship across different contexts?
- RQ (2): What are the publication trends in lifestyle migration in tourism?
- RQ (3): Who are the key academic contributors in this field?
- RQ (4): What are the primary thematic clusters in lifestyle migration research in tourism?
- RQ (5): What are the emerging themes and potential future directions?

The first research question is examined through an in-depth analysis of the existing literature, mapping the theoretical and empirical perspectives that have framed discussions on lifestyle migration in tourism. Research on mobility patterns, sustainability issues, and socio-economic challenges offers valuable insights into how lifestyle migration and tourism interact, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of this field. The second research question is examined through a bibliometric analysis of the volume and growth of academic contributions indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database (1990–2023), highlighting key milestones and trends in this research field. Examining the most influential journals, authors, institutions, and countries identifies the most impactful research and provides an overview of the intellectual structure of the field, while also revealing potential gaps in under-researched areas. Geographical patterns could reveal potential research gaps in under-represented regions. Through co-occurrence and network analysis, this paper determines dominant research themes and illustrates how different conceptual approaches shape the field. Finally, synthesizing insights from recent publications allows for the identification of emerging research areas, providing guidance for future studies and policy directions.

This research makes several important contributions. First, it provides a conceptual contribution by offering a structured bibliometric synthesis of how lifestyle migration is positioned within tourism research, explaining its evolution and thematic expansion. Second, this study contributes to the scientific understanding of lifestyle migration within tourism by mapping co-occurrence networks and identifying key research themes, offering insights into the intellectual structure and evolution of the field. Finally, the study offers practical insights for policymakers and destination managers by highlighting the economic, social, and environmental aspects of lifestyle migration, helping them develop policies that balance tourism-driven migration with sustainable destination management. The structure of the remainder of the paper is as follows: Section 2 details the data collection and bibliometric methodology, Section 3 presents the results, and Section 4 discusses the findings in relation to the broader academic discourse. The final section outlines the study's conclusions, contributions, limitations, and directions for future research.

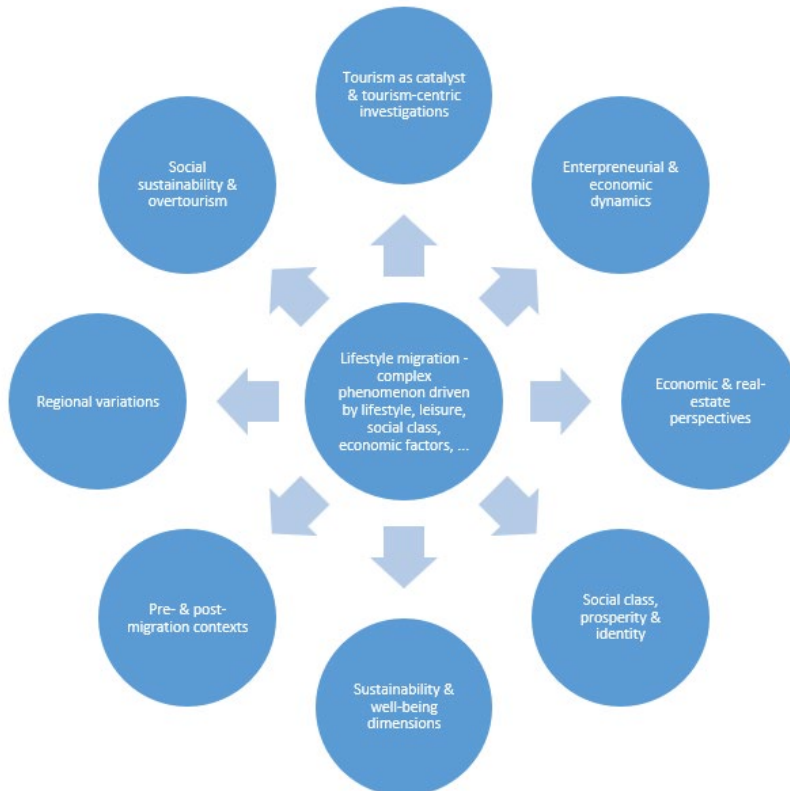
1. Literature review

In an era of increasing mobility, more and more people are moving not only for economic reasons, but also in search of a higher quality of life characterised by cultural and personal aspirations, leading to the phenomenon of lifestyle migration (Åkerlund, 2017; O'Reilly & Benson, 2016; Zhang & Su, 2020). Lifestyle migration generally describes the movement of individuals driven by a desire for a better quality of life, often influenced by personal fulfilment, environmental attractiveness or social aspirations (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). In contrast to economic or forced migrants, lifestyle migrants move primarily for non-economic reasons. They look for destinations that offer a favourable climate, rich cultural experiences, leisure activities and a sense of personal fulfilment (Williams & Hall, 2002). Their decisions are often driven by a desire to leave behind the stressors in their home countries and settle in places that better reflect their ideal way of life (O'Reilly & Benson, 2016).

Tourism often serves as a crucial entry point into lifestyle migration, and a certain evolutionary link between the two phenomena can be observed. Many lifestyle migrants initially experience their chosen destinations as tourists, using short-term visits or holidays to explore the local culture, climate and community dynamics (Williams & Hall, 2002). These positive tourist experiences can develop into long-term stays or permanent relocations, especially if the regions offer special amenities such as natural beauty, recreational opportunities or a vibrant cultural scene (Torkington, 2012).

Given this complexity, an extensive literature has explored lifestyle migration in diverse contexts, emphasizing different theoretical and empirical approaches (Figure 2). Researchers have examined how lifestyle migration intersects with economic opportunities, social structures, environmental motivations, and tourism-driven transformations.

Many lifestyle migrants relocate to establish businesses or capitalize on favourable economic conditions, highlighting *entrepreneurial and economic dynamics* as a key driver of this phenomenon. Stone and Stubbs (2007) analysed lifestyle-induced migration from northern Europe to rural areas in southern France and Spain, demonstrating the entrepreneurial nature of this movement. Similarly, Hayes (2014) introduced the concept of geographical arbitrage, explaining how migrants leverage exchange rate advantages and lower living costs to start businesses or invest in real estate. These economic advantages allow migrants to enhance their financial stability while also influencing labour markets, real estate development, and local consumption patterns. Carson et al. (2018) further examined international entrepreneurs in Sweden's winter tourism industry, revealing how lifestyle migration is often temporary and cyclical. Eimmermann et al. (2020) extended this discussion by assessing gender differences in employment patterns among Dutch rural tourism entrepreneurs in Sweden.

Figure 2. Existing research approaches and directions

Source: authors' representation

Tourism often acts as a *catalyst for lifestyle migration*, as initial visits foster a sense of attachment to destinations, influencing later relocation decisions. Hall and Müller (2004) highlighted how tourism exposure frequently leads to property acquisition and business investment. Entrepreneurial activities contribute to the diversification of the local tourism economy, often through the development of boutique accommodation, cultural tourism initiatives or wellness-orientated businesses. Yang and Lu (2008) laid the methodological foundations for studying tourism migration, providing key insights into how lifestyle migration is systematically examined. Müller and Marjavaara (2012) demonstrated that as lifestyle migrants settle, they attract like-minded individuals, reinforcing tourism demand and shaping the long-term identity of destinations. Janoschka and Haas (2013) examined the contested spatial realities, conflicts and frictions associated

with lifestyle migration and residential tourism, emphasising the complexity of these phenomena.

The economic consequences of migration extend beyond entrepreneurship, as *economic and real estate perspectives* emphasize how lifestyle migrants reshape housing markets. Huete et al. (2013) and O'Reilly and Benson (2016) examined how migration contributes to real estate inflation, gentrification, and shifts in local housing markets. Their studies emphasize that migration often triggers a rise in property prices, impacting affordability and accessibility for local residents. In addition, the socio-cultural effects are manifold: new arrivals can promote intercultural exchange, but they can also form enclaves and contribute to gentrification, which changes both the social fabric and the cost of living.

In many cases, *social class, prosperity, and identity* shape lifestyle migration, as migrants often seek improved quality of life and social mobility. Benson and O'Reilly (2009) identified affluence as a defining characteristic of lifestyle migrants, with Oliver and O'Reilly (2010) applying Bourdieu's framework of habitus, social fields and capital, to examine British migrants in Spain. Their findings illustrate how the socio-economic status influences relocation decisions, integration strategies, and their social positioning in the host country. This approach emphasises the structural dimensions of lifestyle migration and shows how individual mobility decisions are embedded in broader socio-economic hierarchies and power relations. In addition, Torkington (2012) analysed how personal and collective identities develop during the migration process. These studies highlight the socio-cultural dimensions of lifestyle migration and the ways in which class-based distinctions shape migrant experiences.

A growing body of research explores the influence of both *pre- and post-migration contexts* on migratory decisions, as demonstrated by Benson (2010), who examined British resettlement in rural France and analysed how pre-migration experiences shape post-resettlement outcomes. Ono (2015) studied Japanese retirees in Malaysia, illustrating how migration is commercialized and shaped by both economic incentives and social expectations. Shebanova et al. (2023) examined the role of personal crises in tourism lifestyle mobilities, emphasizing how life changes can catalyse relocation. These findings suggest that migration is often driven by both voluntary and circumstantial factors, reinforcing the need to understand lifestyle migration as a dynamic and evolving process.

Regional variations further define lifestyle migration trends, as motivations and settlement patterns differ across geographic contexts. Eimermann (2015) investigated Dutch families migrating to rural Sweden, illustrating Northern European lifestyle migration patterns, while King (2018) framed migration within broader European youth mobility trends, highlighting different geographical and generational dynamics. McGarrigle (2021) analysed urban lifestyle migrants in Lisbon, revealing how metropolitan environments present distinct challenges and opportunities. These studies highlight the various ways in which regional

characteristics, infrastructure, and socio-economic conditions influence lifestyle migration.

As *sustainability* concerns gain importance, sustainability and well-being dimensions have become key motivators for lifestyle migration. Simona (2003) highlights that individuals actively pursue more sustainable and localized lifestyles. These migrants prioritize sustainability by reducing their carbon footprints and adopting eco-friendly practices. Kolopaking (2016) examined social inequalities within tourism communities, demonstrating how migration can exacerbate existing disparities. Shebanova et al. (2023) provided further insights into how personal crises can act as a catalyst for the adoption of a regenerative or well-focused lifestyle. Collectively, these studies highlight how the environment, social justice and personal motivations interact in shaping lifestyle migration pathways.

The impact of lifestyle migration extends to broader urban and environmental concerns, particularly in the context of *social sustainability and over-tourism*. Jover and Diaz-Parra (2020) investigated the effects of lifestyle migration on over-touristed cities, revealing how migration-driven gentrification can strain local resources and displace long-term residents. Rainer et al. (2014) examined the social conflicts arising from leisure-related mobilities in Tafi del Valle, Argentina, while Kolopaking (2016) analysed the socio-economic inequalities generated by lifestyle migration in Indonesian tourism villages. These findings suggest that migration can both enrich and disrupt local communities, necessitating policies that balance economic benefits with social equity.

The literature review provides a comprehensive analysis of the key issues and emphasises the role of tourism as a catalyst for the migration of lifestyles. By examining the intersection of travel experiences, relocation motives and economic engagement, it offers insights into the ways in which temporary visits evolve into long-term settlement patterns and reshape the dynamics of destinations. Overall, these studies illustrate the wide-ranging motivations, processes and impacts associated with lifestyle migration of lifestyles. They also emphasise how tourism as a facilitating mechanism both stimulates and shapes lifestyle migration, bringing into focus important debates about sustainability, community integration and the evolving identity of destinations. By linking lifestyle migration and tourism, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of how personal choices and broader systemic forces interact to shape destinations.

2. Data and methodology

Bibliometric analysis is the method used to analyse the concept of lifestyle migration in the context of tourism. This scientific method relies on numerical metrics to assess the significance and impact of specific books, authors, or journals. It is widely accepted by leading research institutions such as the National Science Foundation or the European Commission (Thomson Reuters, 2008). It applies

statistical and mathematical techniques to evaluate research results at different levels, including countries, authors, journals, research centres and other factors (Osareh, 1996). This approach is particularly beneficial for researchers as it allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the scope and importance of various research contributions. Furthermore, it excels in analysing citation trends, providing valuable insights into the evolving landscape of scholarly literature (Cuéllar-Rojas et al., 2022).

The basis of this analysis is the principle of the citation network, which is a reference point for the evaluation of the impact and relevance of research papers (Hirsch, 2005; Milán-García et al., 2021). A thorough examination of the prevailing scientific discourse provides a fundamental structure for formulating accurate conclusions, identifying unexplored areas that require further attention, and emphasising the need for additional research that is pertinent to enhancing and expanding knowledge in a particular research context (Fink, 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003).

The bibliometric analysis followed the PRISMA-2020 framework established by Page et al. (2020), as shown in Figure 3. The analysis started by defining the search criteria, selecting relevant keywords, choosing databases and categories of interest for researchers, and defining the study period. The final keywords used to search are presented below:

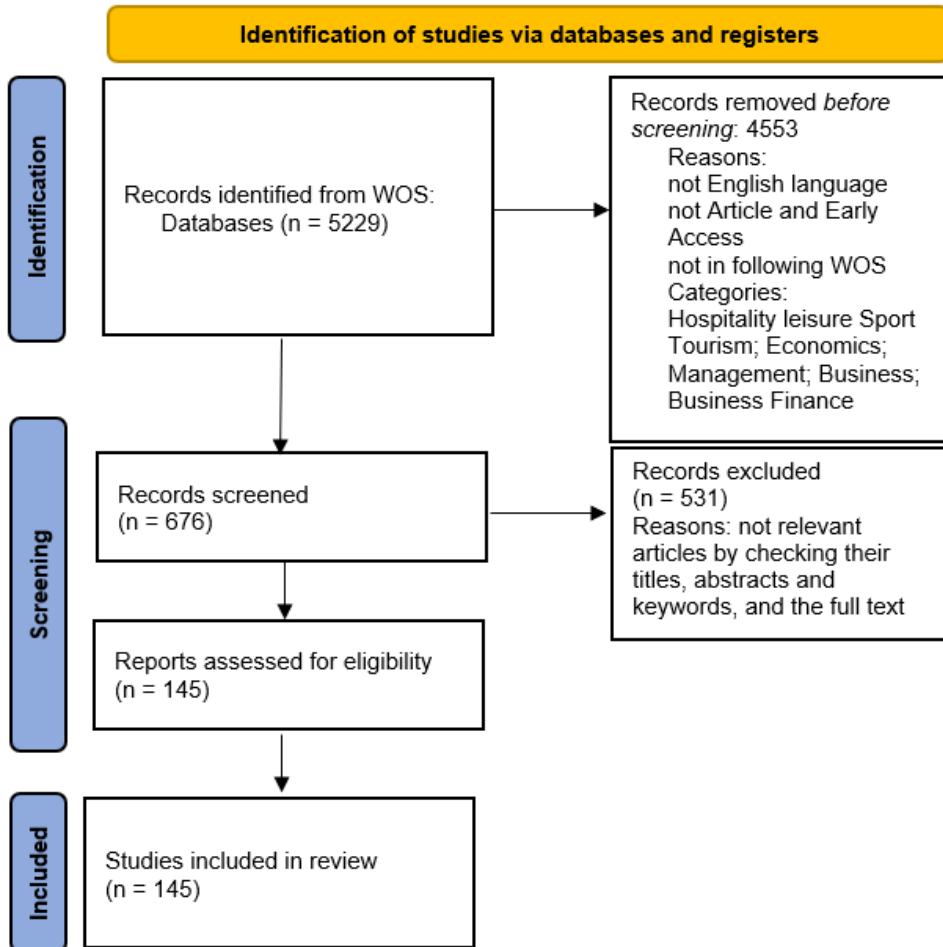
TS=(lifestyle OR retirement OR leisure) AND migrat*) OR (residential
tourism) OR (second home* tourism)

The term ‘TS’ refers to a ‘Topic Search’ in the Web of Science database, which searches within the title, abstract, author keywords, and Keywords Plus. The asterisk in ‘migrat’ is a truncation symbol used to capture all word variants beginning with ‘migrat’ (e.g., migration, migrations, migrant), and similarly, ‘second home*’ captures variations such as ‘second home’ and ‘second homes’.

We conducted the bibliometric analysis using the Web of Science (WoS) database, selecting it for its rigorous indexing standards and its ability to include high-quality, peer-reviewed research (Bramer et al., 2017; Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020; Miah et al., 2024; Raghuram et al., 2019). WoS was chosen not only for its strict selection criteria but also for its consistency and reliability in bibliometric analysis. Several key factors further justify this choice. First, WoS applies stricter selection criteria for journal inclusion, reducing the risk of predatory or lower-impact publications (Okagbue et al., 2020). Second, it provides broader coverage of social sciences and a more detailed indexing of social science topics than Scopus (Gaberli, 2023). Additionally, WoS metadata integrates more effectively with bibliometric visualization tools like VOSviewer, particularly in terms of structured formatting (Zhao et al., 2019). As Chavarro et al. (2018) explain, “WoS

structure allows for targeted, well-structured searches with a high value of thoroughness”.

Figure 3. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram



Source: authors' representation

This structured format ensures cleaner citation records, standardizes author affiliations, and improves the clarity of journal names, ultimately reducing pre-processing efforts. Finally, merging datasets from multiple databases requires extensive data manipulation to standardize records, increasing the risk of researcher-induced errors (Kumpulainen & Seppänen, 2022). Relying on a single database, such as WoS, has proven to be an effective bibliometric strategy without significantly impacting research outcomes (Bramer et al., 2017)

While bibliometric analysis is valuable for identifying research trends, it has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. The primary concerns include keyword selection bias, database selection bias (as discussed in previous sections), and study exclusion criteria (Figure 3). Since results depend on chosen search terms, there is a risk of omitting relevant studies. Given the lack of a comprehensive literature review on the relationship between lifestyle migration and tourism, we conducted a preliminary keyword assessment on lifestyle migration research and refined our selection through test searches to minimize omissions. As previously discussed, the exclusive use of WoS introduces a potential limitation, however, WoS was selected to ensure data consistency and avoid duplication issues. Additionally, we included only English-language journal articles within specific subject categories, which strengthened methodological reliability but may have excluded relevant non-English studies. Another concern is the reliance on citation-based metrics alone. To mitigate this, we incorporated average annual citations and co-occurrence patterns to provide a more balanced evaluation.

After analysing the included studies, we identified key contributors to the field. To generate graphical representations of bibliometric data, visualize keyword co-occurrence relationships, and detect research trends, we used the VOSviewer analytical tool (van Eck & Waltman, 2020). VOSviewer employs a distance-based approach to visualize bibliometric networks, where the proximity between nodes (e.g., publications, journals, researchers, or keywords) indicates their relatedness (van Eck & Waltman, 2014). Researchers can use this tool to construct networks based on co-authorship, co-occurrence, citation, bibliographic coupling, or co-citation links (van Eck & Waltman, 2023). We chose VOSviewer for its efficiency in processing large datasets, intuitive interface, open-source accessibility, and strong clustering capabilities (Bukar et al., 2023). Its widespread adoption in bibliometric research further supports its selection (Kirby, 2023). However, VOSviewer has limitations, particularly in interpreting complex visualizations and its inability to perform statistical significance testing or regression-based validation of trends.

Following the initial bibliometric analysis, we conducted a keyword co-occurrence analysis, a crucial step in identifying prominent themes within the research field based on term frequency and relevance (Phoong et al., 2022). This analysis revealed the interrelationships and structural patterns of lifestyle migration within tourism research by illustrating how keywords associate and combine across publications (Altarturi et al., 2020). In the visualization, the size of the circles indicates keyword frequency, with larger circles representing terms that appear more often in the literature (Guo et al., 2019; Shi et al., 2020). Furthermore, knowledge mapping plays a vital role in identifying knowledge elements, their configurations, and their dynamics, helping researchers manage technological activities and define research agendas (Murdayanti & Khan, 2021). In bibliometrics, scientific mapping is widely used to create landscape maps that visually represent research topics,

offering a structured approach to understanding the development of a field (Tupan & Rachmawati, 2017).

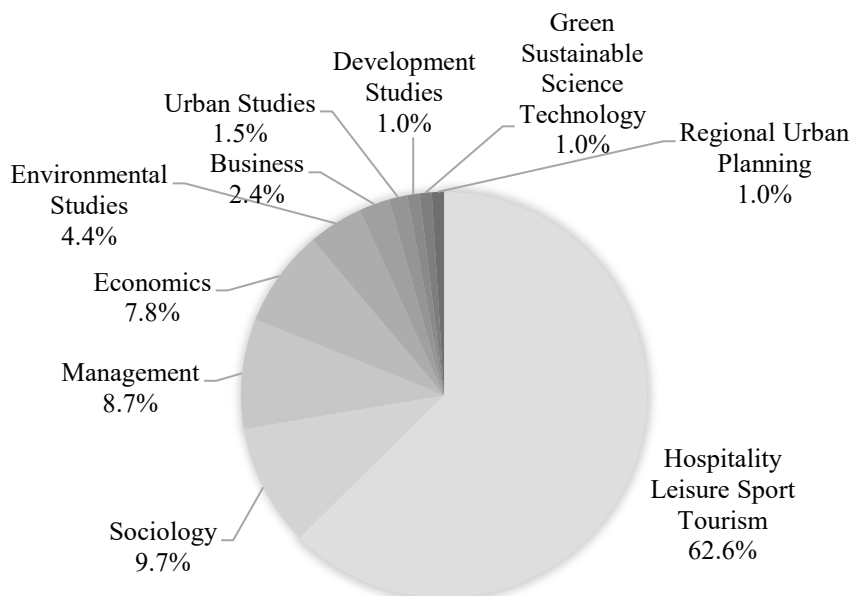
To construct a co-occurrence network of keyword relationships, we set a minimum threshold of three occurrences per keyword. This threshold served two purposes. First, it balanced comprehensiveness and relevance by including frequently discussed topics while filtering out low-frequency keywords to minimize noise. Second, given the relatively small set of extracted keywords (376), a higher threshold could have excluded relevant terms, making this threshold an appropriate compromise. One limitation of VOSviewer is its treatment of similar terms as distinct entities. For example, the software differentiates between ‘2nd homes’ and ‘second-homes,’ despite their identical meanings. To address this, we created a thesaurus file that consolidated synonymous terms under a single author-defined keyword. In this case, we standardized ‘second-homes’ as ‘2nd home’ to ensure consistency and prevent duplicate counting.

3. Research results and discussion

This research covers the time span from 1990 to 2023 and is based on the data analysis of 145 academic papers. The study provides a detailed insight into the evolution of research interest in the field of lifestyle migration and tourism over the past three decades. Figure 4 shows the analysis of publication topics, providing an overview of the main research areas that have garnered academic attention during the considered time period.

The analysis of the graphical representation shows that the majority of the papers examined (62.6%) cover subject areas related to ‘Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism’. ‘Sociology’ is the second most prominent subject area, accounting for 9.7% of the papers, followed closely by ‘Management’ at 8.7%, and ‘Economics’ at 7.8%. The top four subject areas make up a significant proportion, accounting for almost 88.8% of the papers surveyed. The strong focus on tourism-related topics reflects the growing importance of lifestyle migration as a subset of global mobility studies.

The prevalence of Sociology and Economics in this field suggests that researchers explore lifestyle migration not only as a form of tourism consumption but also in relation to social integration, economic impact, and policy considerations. The presence of Management studies reflects a rising interest in destination management, entrepreneurship, and the contributions of lifestyle migrants to local economies. These findings highlight a multidisciplinary approach to lifestyle migration, integrating tourism studies with broader social science perspectives (Huete & Mantecón, 2012; Jover & Díaz-Parra, 2022; Montezuma & McGarrigle, 2019).

Figure 4. Top 10 WOS Categories

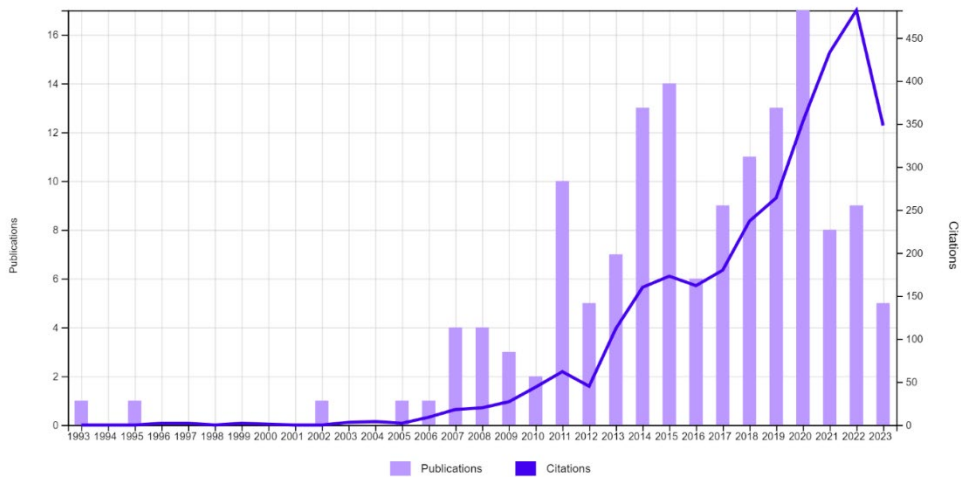
Source: authors' representation based on WoS data

Following the initial screening, it is apparent that research interest began in 1993, but was sporadic until 2005 when research interest in the field of lifestyle migration began to grow. The discontinuity in research from 1995 to 2002 likely resulted from the absence of structured theoretical frameworks on lifestyle migration within tourism. Early studies focused primarily on retirement migration and second-home tourism, which had not yet been conceptualized within the broader context of lifestyle migration. The renewed academic interest after 2005 coincides with globalization, increased international mobility, and greater accessibility to long-term tourism experiences. During this period, research expanded to examine transnational mobility, real estate investment, and the economic contributions of lifestyle migrants. The increase in lifestyle migration studies after 2010 aligns with advancements in air travel, the rise of digital nomadism, and evolving work patterns, particularly among retirees and expatriates seeking leisure-based living arrangements.

This evolutionary development of scientific production is visible in Figure 5, indicating a relatively new research interest with a growing trend. From 1993 to 2023, the annual growth rate of published papers was 18.0%. The breakdown of annual growth rates by decade reveals that the most fruitful period was 2001-2010, with an annual growth rate of 27.7%. During this period, 290 authors published research on the subject in 55 journals, achieving 3151 citations. On average, papers

in this area receive more than 112.54 citations annually. The peak in publications in 2020 reflects a growing scholarly focus on COVID-19's impact on mobility restrictions, tourism resilience, and migration behaviour. The slight decline in research output after 2020 may be due to temporary shifts in academic priorities toward crisis management, sustainability, and travel disruptions.

Figure 5. Annual growth in academic research interest regarding the domain of lifestyle migration



Source: authors' representation based on WoS data

The first study on the relationship between lifestyle migration and tourism was published in 1993 by Girard and Gartner (1993). Entitled 'Second home second view: Host community perceptions', it appeared in the *Annals of Tourism Research*. The paper highlights the impact that second home owners and lifestyle migrants can have on community amenities, services, and socio-cultural aspects. Additionally, it is important to note that the attitudes and perceptions of these subjects hold equal significance to those of permanent residents in determining the direction of community development. This research is pioneering in its recognition and analysis of lifestyle migrations within the context of tourism, and provides valuable insight into the perceptions of local communities regarding this phenomenon. This paper emphasises the importance of studying lifestyle migration in the context of tourism and lays the foundations for further research in this area.

In 1995, Stallmann and Siegel (1995) published a study titled "Attracting retirees as an economic development strategy: Looking into the future" in the journal *Economic Development Quarterly*. This was the second research study to consider this topic. The study examines the idea of using retirees to stimulate economic development in rural communities. The concept assumes that retirees will continue to migrate to rural areas, bringing with them relatively high incomes and low

demands for services. However, the study identifies potential deviations from this concept in future retiree behaviours. These findings serve as a warning to planners and policymakers considering the recruitment of retirees as a rural development strategy, and also highlight avenues for future research in this area. Between 1995 and 2002, there was no research conducted on the relationship between lifestyle migration and tourism.

In 2002, Gustafson (2002) published the third paper on this topic, “Tourism and Seasonal Retirement Migration”, in the journal *Annals of Tourism Research*. The research examines the impact of tourism-induced seasonal retirement migration on anti-tourism, social differentiation, and authenticity. Unlike earlier studies that viewed anti-tourism as opposition to specific aspects of tourism, this research shows that it also reflects broader social divisions, particularly between seasonal migrants and local residents, rather than being confined to tourism-related issues. Challenging traditional notions of tourism as escapism and migration as one-way integration, the article reveals the complexity of the social position of retired seasonal migrants. It also suggests that tourism studies can be significantly enhanced by examining mobility between tourism and permanent migration. The examined unique strategies and perceptions demonstrate individuals’ attempts to establish a separate social space between tourism and migration, transitioning between the established categories of tourists and local residents. In contemporary society, mobility and transnationalism are becoming increasingly important, leading to challenges in defining social roles, categorisation, and self-identification. Therefore, the author stresses that more research needs to be done in this area, both within and outside the social sciences.

Since 2005, there has been a continuous increase in research interest in the topic under study. The peak of interest was reached in 2020, with 17 articles focusing on the links between lifestyle migration and tourism. Scholars have recognised the potential implications and complexities of this topic, which has encouraged further research and analysis in this area.

Conversely, the number of citations has shown a much more consistent trend compared to the number of research studies. As shown in Figure 5, the number of citations peaked in 2022, with a total of 382 citations. The citation performance indicates the lasting scientific impact and resonance of the research findings in the academic community. Table 1 ranks the most cited papers on lifestyle migration within tourism, based on citation counts from our analysis.

These studies make a significant contribution to the field. The five papers mentioned above account for 22.7% of the total number of citations in the field. This data suggests that these articles have had a significant impact and recognition in the academic community, helping to shape debates and advance scientific understanding in the field. They introduced new frameworks, methodologies, and conceptual insights that have influenced subsequent research.

Table 1. Top 5 most cited papers

Authors	Citations	
	Average per year	Total
Chen, Y & Rosenthal, S.S. (2008). Local amenities and life-cycle migration: Do people move for jobs or fun? <i>Journal of Urban Economics</i>	18.06	289
Gustafson, P. (2002). Tourism and seasonal retirement migration. <i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	6.95	153
Duncan, T., Scott, D. G. & Baum, T. (2013). The mobilities of hospitality work: an exploration of issues and debates. <i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	8.91	98
Stone, I. & Stubbs, C. (2007). Enterprising expatriates: Lifestyle migration and entrepreneurship in rural southern Europe. <i>Entrepreneurship and Regional Development</i>	5.53	94
Kaltenborn, B., Andersen, O., Nellemann, C., Bjerke, T. & Thrane, C. (2008). <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>	5.13	82

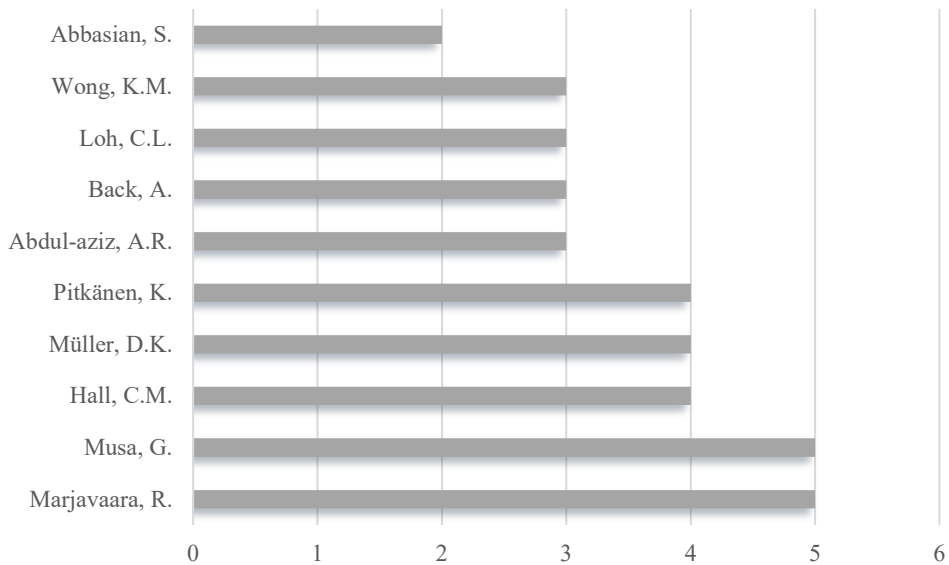
Source: authors' representation based on WoS data

Table 1 displays papers analysing lifestyle migration from different perspectives: quality of life, retirement migration, tourism and hospitality workers, expatriates, attitudes of local residents. Migration processes are driven by factors such as the attractiveness and quality of life in a destination, including business motives Chen and Rosenthal (2008). These findings provide valuable insights into the complexity of migration decisions and highlight the importance of integrating quality of life issues into regional development strategies. Their study developed a quantitative model that connects migration patterns to urban amenities, showing that lifestyle preferences increasingly influence migration flows rather than purely economic factors. This approach has since been applied in tourism studies to examine how destination appeal drives long-term visitor mobility. Gustafson (2002) suggests that tourism can be seen as an escape from everyday obligations, while migration as a one-way integration process. His research introduced the concept of “seasonal retirement migration,” distinguishing it from permanent migration and highlighting how retirees move cyclically between multiple homes. This work significantly influenced future studies on transnational mobility and second-home ownership. The lifestyle migration phenomenon can also be examined through the lens of tourism and hospitality workers, who form networks, gain work experience, and travel, leading to the development of new senses of identity and belonging

(Duncan et al., 2013). This paper introduced the concept of “mobility regimes” in hospitality work, demonstrating how flexible labour structures facilitate lifestyle migration. Since then, researchers have applied this concept to analyse migrant employment in tourism economies. Tourism infrastructure, particularly aimed at domestic tourists and expatriates, can stimulate migration and generate new business opportunities for expatriates. Stone and Stubbs (2007) examined this intersection and introduced the concept of “lifestyle entrepreneurship”, where expatriates establish businesses to support their migration-driven lifestyles. Their work has shaped research on how lifestyle migrants contribute to local economies through small-scale enterprises. In terms of the socio-cultural benefits of lifestyle migration and tourism development, Kaltenborn et al. (2008) highlight the challenges faced by local populations. Their study introduced an environmental perspective, highlighting the long-term impact of second-home tourism on rural landscapes and resource use. This research has since influenced sustainability discussions in lifestyle migration studies.

Figure 6 highlights the most productive researchers in the field. Marjavaara (Back, A. & Marjavaara, 2017; Back et al., 2022; Marjavaara, 2009; Müller & Marjavaara, 2012; Nodin & Marjavaara, 2012), and Musa (Wong & Musa, 2014a; 2014b; 2015; 2017; Wong et al., 2017) have published 5 papers each, followed by Hall (Hall & Müller, 2004; Hall & Williams, 2013; Williams & Hall, 2000; 2002), Müller (Back et al., 2022; Hall & Müller, 2004; Müller & Marjavaar, 2012) and Pitkänen (2008) with 4 papers each, and Abdul-aziz, Back (Back & Marjavaara, 2017; Back et al., 2022), Loh, and Wong (Wong & Musa, 2014a; 2014 b; 2017; Wong et al., 2017) with 3 papers each. These authors made significant contributions to the field of tourism related lifestyle migration.

Marjavaara (2009) in collaboration with other researchers, examines the relationship between tourism and second homes. His research introduced the concept of ‘second-home displacement’, showing how rising demand for second homes drives up property prices and limits housing availability for permanent residents (Marjavaara, 2009). Later, Back and Marjavaara (2017) expanded this argument by examining how seasonal population shifts in peripheral regions affect local economies and social structures. The effects of tourists who own a second home on the housing market of the host country vary depending on the spatial context (Back et al., 2022). This research provided empirical evidence on how different types of second-home users (e.g., short-term visitors vs. semi-permanent migrants) shape regional development patterns. Marjavaara’s (2009) findings have influenced discussions on the socio-economic transformations linked to second-home migration.

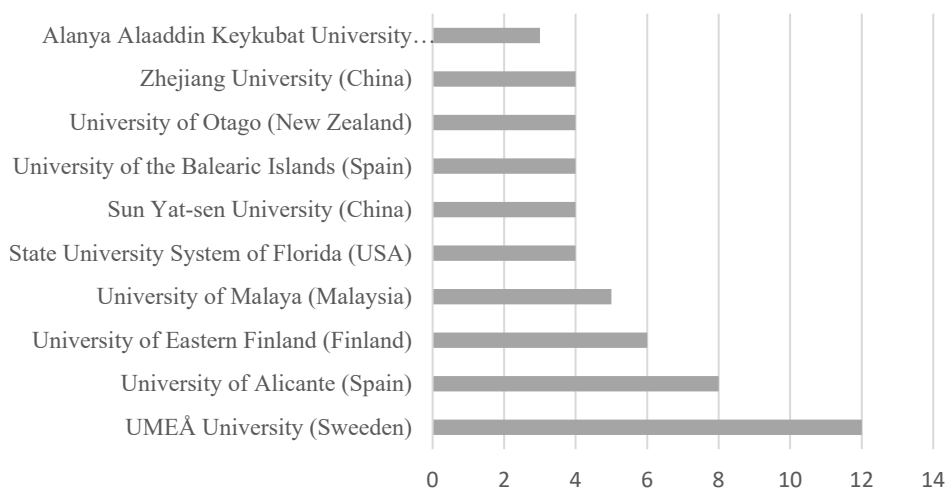
Figure 6. Number of papers by authors

Source: authors' representation based on WoS data

As noted, owners of second homes can actively participate in the social life of their destinations and should be considered a resource for local development rather than a problem for communities that would otherwise have limited opportunities (Nodin & Marjavaara, 2012). This perspective challenges previous critiques of second-home tourism as purely disruptive and suggests that second-home owners can contribute positively to destination resilience. Second homes serve as a link between tourism and migration, as permanent migration is often associated with second-home ownership (Müller & Marjavaara, 2012). Researchers led by the second most productive scholar, Musa, G, have shown that retirement migration in Malaysia is influenced by various factors, including the search for self-actualisation, and that their decisions are guided by push-pull factors (Wong & Musa, 2014a; 2014b). This work was among the first to systematically assess lifestyle migration in Southeast Asia, emphasizing cultural and economic factors unique to non-Western contexts. Furthermore, Wong and Musa (2015) examined the growing disparity between Asian and European retirees in Malaysia. Their research also focused on the consumer dynamics of second home retirement tourism (Wong & Musa, 2017) and identified the 'push' and 'pull' motivational factors of the second home retirement tourism programme in Malaysia (Wong et al., 2017). The authors examined how government incentive programmes, such as Malaysia's 'My Second Home' programme, attract lifestyle migrants and influence policy discussions on migration-driven economic development.

In terms of institutional affiliation (Figure 7), notable contributions come from UMEA University with 12 research contributions, followed by the University of Alicante with 8, the University of Eastern Finland with 6, and the University of Malaysia with 5.

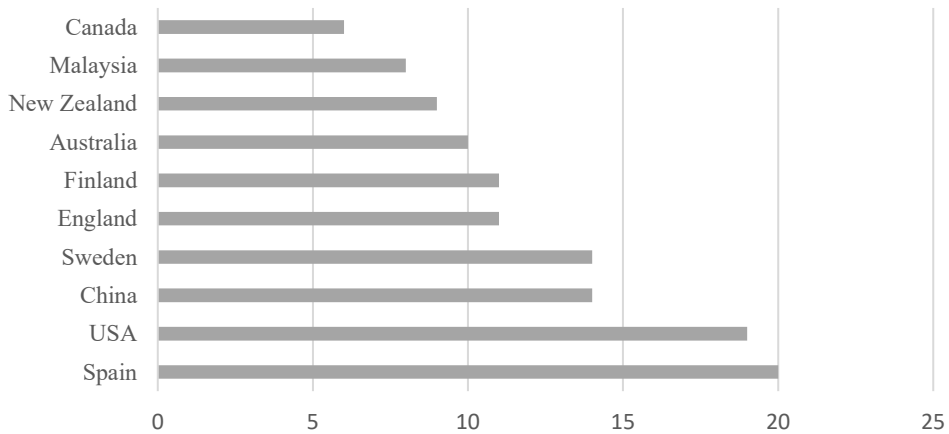
Figure 7. Published research by affiliations



Source: authors' representation based on WoS data

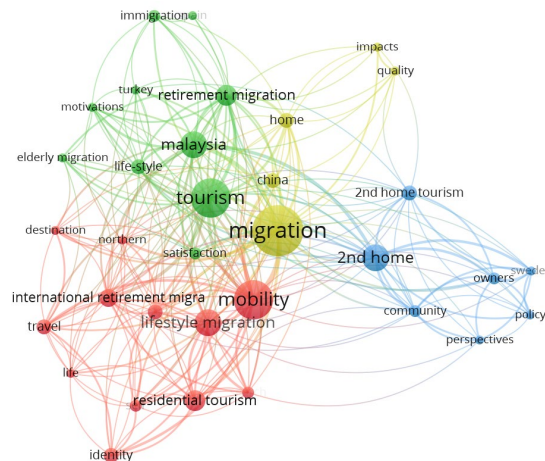
The geographical distribution of research outputs (Figures 7 and 8) reveals that Spain (20 papers) and the USA (19 papers) lead in academic contributions to lifestyle migration research. Spain's dominance is unsurprising, given its status as a major retirement destination, particularly for Germans in coastal and rural regions (Kordel, 2016). Similarly, the USA has a well-documented history of lifestyle migration, especially among retirees moving from northern states to warm-weather destinations such as Florida, Arizona, and California (Dorfman & Mandich, 2016; Simpson & Siguaw, 2013). Other significant contributors include China, Sweden, England, and Finland, where research approaches lifestyle migration from different perspectives. In Sweden and Finland, studies have primarily focused on second-home tourism and seasonal migration patterns in Nordic regions, highlighting how these mobility trends shape rural and peripheral communities (Carson et al., 2018; Müller & Marjavaara, 2012; Rinne et al., 2015).

The top six countries with the most significant evidence are illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 8. Published research by countries

Source: authors' representation based on WoS data

Figure 9 provides a detailed illustration of the thematic clusters in lifestyle migration research. The co-occurrence network identifies four primary research domains, each reflecting interconnected themes within the field.

Figure 9. Co-keyword network visualization based on the occurrences

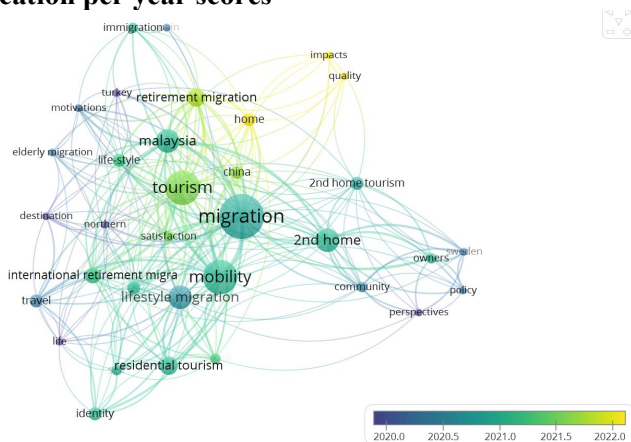
Source: authors' representation based on WoS data (using VOSviewer)

Cluster 1 (yellow) is related to the theme of 'migration', represented by keywords such as 'migration', 'impacts', 'quality', and 'home'. This cluster illustrates how lifestyle migration is influenced by well-being and socio-economic factors, with 'home' emphasizing the crucial role of identity and place attachment in

migration decisions. Cluster 2 (green) represents ‘tourism and various forms of migration’, with central keywords such as ‘tourism’, ‘Malaysia,’ and ‘retirement migration’. The prominence of ‘Malaysia’ reflects its significant role in lifestyle migration research, particularly concerning expatriate retirees. The strong link between ‘retirement migration’ and ‘tourism’ suggests that tourism-driven migration remains a key theme in academic discourse. Cluster 3 (red), labelled ‘international mobility as a lifestyle’ includes terms such as ‘lifestyle migration’, ‘mobility’, ‘travel’, and ‘international retirement migration’. The high frequency of ‘mobility’ and ‘travel’ indicates that lifestyle migration is often examined within the context of transnational movement. The presence of ‘residential tourism’ within this cluster suggests a growing overlap between temporary tourism and permanent migration. Cluster 4 (blue) represents the ‘second-home tourism perspective’ featuring keywords such as ‘second home’, ‘community’, ‘owners’, and ‘policy’. This cluster highlights challenges related to housing markets, regulatory frameworks, and community integration. The relationships among these clusters demonstrate the strong connection between lifestyle migration and tourism, highlighting how temporary stays often evolve into permanent residency.

Building on the thematic clusters identified in Figure 9, Figure 10 and Table 2 trace the evolution of lifestyle migration research, highlighting shifts in academic focus and emerging trends in the field.

Figure 10. Co-keyword overlay visualization based on the occurrences and average publication per year scores



Source: authors' representation based on WoS data (using VOSviewer)

Each keyword is assigned a different colour based on its average year of occurrence in the literature. Purple nodes represent keywords that appeared earlier, while yellow nodes indicate more recent keywords. The colour gradient displayed in

the lower right corner provides precise segmentation details (Weng et al., 2023). The deeper the shade of colour on the nodes, the more extensive the discussion of the topic in research.

Earlier research (pre-2020), represented by purple and blue nodes, primarily examined ‘destinations’, ‘perspectives’, and ‘identity’. This indicates that initial studies were largely descriptive, focusing on the characteristics of lifestyle migrants and their motivations for relocation. Over time, the research focus shifted toward community dynamics, economic impacts, and housing-related concerns. More recent studies (2021–2022), represented by yellow and lime nodes, emphasize ‘tourism’, ‘retirement migration’, ‘second-home tourism’, and ‘home’. This shift reflects a growing interest in second-home ownership, the integration of lifestyle migrants into local communities, and the socio-economic effects of migration on host destinations within the broader discourse on lifestyle migration.

To identify key emerging themes and future research directions, an analysis was conducted on the top five trending articles. The recommendations from these articles were used as the basis for identifying future trends. The articles were selected based on their average citations per year over the last five years of the analysed period. This procedure allowed for control of the time lag (total number of citations).

Table 2. Top five trending articles by average citations per year (2019–2023)

Authors	Average citations per year
Seraphin, H. & Dosquet, F. (2020). Mountain tourism and second home tourism as post COVID-19 lockdown placebo? <i>Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes</i>	16.75
Zoğal, V., Domènech, A. & Emekli, G. (2022). Stay at (which) home: Second homes during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. <i>Journal of Tourism Futures</i>	16.5
Jover, J. & Diaz-Parra, I. (2022). Who is the city for? Overtourism, lifestyle migration and social sustainability. <i>Tourism Geographies</i>	12.75
González-Pérez, J. M. (2020). The dispute over tourist cities. Tourism gentrification in the historic Centre of Palma (Majorca, Spain). <i>Tourism Geographies</i>	11.8
Montezuma, J. & McGarrigle, J. (2019). What motivates international homebuyers? Investor to lifestyle ‘migrants’ in a tourist city. <i>Tourism Geographies</i>	11.8

Source: authors’ representation based on WoS data

Figure 10 and Table 2 show that recent research trends closely align with the thematic clusters identified in Figure 9. The rise in studies on ‘second-home tourism’ and ‘tourism-related migration’ suggests that post-pandemic mobility patterns have become a major focus of academic inquiry. Additionally, increasing concerns about overtourism and tourism gentrification, as highlighted in recent studies (González-

Pérez, 2020; Jover & Diaz-Parra, 2022), reflect the growing efforts of policymakers to address these challenges. The recommendations can be categorised into four emerging themes: second homes, lifestyle migrants, overtourism, and tourism gentrification.

Second homes are significantly altering the landscape of tourist destinations. They are in high demand for holiday enjoyment, lifestyle, retirement (Zoğal et al., 2022), investment (Montezuma & McGarrigle, 2019), and as a means of escape from external shocks (Seraphin & Dosquet, 2020). According to the aforementioned authors, possible future research avenues could include investigating: the benefits of second homes as a buffer in the case of external shocks (climate change, energy crisis, terrorism and pandemics); the shift in the main preference for accommodation between second homes and traditional ones; the evolution of the tourist rental market; the effects of long-term rental housing prices; the impacts on different social groups, regions and neighbourhoods; the socioeconomic factors that influence the decision to make second homes permanent residences.

What drives the lifestyle migrants to move and buy? Montezuma and McGarrigle (2019) identified three distinct groups of international homebuyers: safe haven investors, lifestyle income optimizers, and safe haven lifestyle migrants. The authors argue for a conceptual and analytical connection between investment, tourism, and various forms of mobility within the framework of lifestyle migration. Future research could investigate the effectiveness of government incentives in attracting lifestyle migrants to purchase and reside in specific countries, regions, or cities.

The negative effects of overtourism, as demonstrated in Seville, particularly in historic city centres, should also be considered. The increase in accommodation supply and demand has resulted in a decrease in permanent residents, a loss of perceived authenticity, and a weakening of the local community (Jover & Diaz-Parra, 2022). The following research questions arise from this paper: Are there similarities in the consumer practices of lifestyle migrants and tourists? Is there a correlation between displacement and tourism? How does overtourism affect visitors' perception?

Tourism investment and property purchases in city centres can lead to tourism gentrification, a process that can displace local low-income residents due to the revitalisation of historic districts (González-Pérez, 2020). Further research is needed to investigate the relationship between holiday homes, reduced supply of traditional rental accommodation, and higher property prices as part of the tourism gentrification process. González-Pérez (2020) proposes an examination of resistance movements against processes of gentrification and anti-gentrification attitudes among local residents. Additionally, scholars could assess the effectiveness of regulatory measures aimed at tackling the issue of tourism-related gentrification, such as the ban on holiday rentals in residential apartment blocks.

Conclusion

Understanding the performance and intellectual framework of a research domain through bibliometric investigations is an essential aspect of scholarly inquiry (Lim & Kumar, 2023). The term ‘lifestyle migration within tourism’ has become increasingly popular, transitioning from a phenomenon exclusive to the elite classes to a more common occurrence. In modern society, the importance of quality of life is emphasised as a primary value, surpassing traditional aspects of material wealth. This evolution has been significantly influenced by advancements in digital communication, remote work technologies, and affordable air travel, which have facilitated greater mobility and flexibility for lifestyle migrants. The rise of high-speed internet, video conferencing, and digital nomad visa programmes has enabled individuals to work remotely while residing in preferred destinations, making lifestyle migration more accessible to a broader demographic. Additionally, the expansion of low-cost airlines and improved global connectivity have reduced travel costs, allowing migrants to maintain transnational lifestyles more easily (Dwyer et al., 1993). The relationship between tourism and migration is characterised by deep interconnectedness and similar development dynamics (Hall & Williams, 2013), which has intensified in recent years (Coles & Timothy, 2004; Feng & Page, 2000). This phenomenon is becoming increasingly significant in the contemporary context, triggering a wide debate about its implications in academic circles.

Main findings

Our research conducted a bibliometric analysis of lifestyle migration research within the context of tourism, addressing key research questions regarding publication trends, leading contributors, thematic clusters, and emerging research directions. First, an analysis of the existing literature (RQ1) identified the dominant research themes linking lifestyle migration and tourism, revealing how scholars have conceptualized their relationship across different contexts. Second, an examination of publication trends (RQ2) revealed that academic interest in lifestyle migration and tourism has grown significantly since 1993, peaking in 2020. While earlier studies focused on retirement migration and second-home tourism, the research after 2010 expanded toward transnational mobility, digital nomadism, and the socio-economic impacts of lifestyle migrants. The post-2020 decline in research output may reflect a shift in academic focus toward crisis management and travel disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Third, the study identified key contributors (RQ3) in terms of productive authors, institutions, and countries. The most prolific researchers include Marjavaara and Musa, while UMEA University and the University of Alicante emerged as the leading institutions in this field. Geographically, Spain and the USA dominate research output, likely due to their significance as lifestyle migration destinations. Fourth, the thematic structure of lifestyle migration research

(RQ4) was mapped through co-occurrence analysis, revealing four primary clusters: (1) migration, which focuses on socio-economic impacts and quality-of-life considerations; (2) tourism and migration, particularly in the context of retirement migrations and tourism-driven migrations; (3) mobility as a lifestyle, emphasizing transnational movement and digital nomadism; and (4) second-home tourism, highlighting real estate investment, community integration, and policy-related challenges. Lastly, emerging themes and research trajectories (RQ5) suggest a growing interest in tourism gentrification, the intersection of lifestyle migration and sustainability, and the evolving dynamics of second-home ownership. The shift toward digital work and remote lifestyles is expected to further influence future research in this field.

Study limitations

Despite providing a comprehensive bibliometric analysis, this study has certain limitations. The database selection bias is an inherent constraint, as the analysis relies solely on the Web of Science (WoS), potentially excluding relevant studies indexed in other databases such as Scopus or Google Scholar. Expanding the data sources in future research could improve the comprehensiveness of bibliometric mapping. The study is also limited by language restriction, as it only includes English-language publications. This may exclude valuable insights from non-English studies, particularly in regions where lifestyle migration is prevalent but underrepresented in international academic discourse. Incorporating multilingual research could provide a more globally inclusive perspective. From a conceptual and methodological standpoint, bibliometric analysis depends on keyword-based searches and visualization tools, which may overlook studies using different terminologies. Additionally, VOSviewer does not perform statistical significance testing, which may limit the interpretation of conceptual relationships. Another limitation relates to the scope of interdisciplinary integration. Although many of the analysed papers adopt interdisciplinary approaches, the study primarily focuses on research published in Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, Tourism; Economics; Management; Business; and Business Finance categories. As lifestyle migration is also studied in fields such as urban studies, human geography, and migration economics, future research could benefit from incorporating literature from these broader domains to provide a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

Theoretical and practical contributions

This study provides several important contributions to the field. Theoretically, it offers the first comprehensive bibliometric analysis of lifestyle migration within tourism studies, systematically mapping the intellectual structure of the field. Unlike previous fragmented studies, this research integrates lifestyle migration and tourism

perspectives, offering a holistic understanding of their interconnections. By identifying key thematic clusters and emerging trends, it strengthens the conceptual foundation for future studies exploring the relationship between lifestyle mobility and tourism. In addition to advancing theoretical insights, this study contributes to the scientific understanding of lifestyle migration within tourism by mapping co-occurrence networks and identifying key research themes, offering insights into the intellectual structure and evolution of the field. By analysing bibliometric patterns, the study highlights thematic trends, influential contributors, and existing research gaps, providing a clearer perspective on how the field has developed over time. The findings validate the use of bibliometric mapping as an effective tool for understanding the evolution of research fields and provide a framework for similar studies in other interdisciplinary areas. From a practical perspective, the study has significant implications for policymakers and tourism practitioners, as lifestyle migration increasingly influences local economies, housing markets, and community dynamics. A deeper understanding of these impacts can inform regulatory strategies that balance migration-driven tourism with sustainable destination management. Policymakers must develop regulatory frameworks that address the socio-economic and environmental impacts of lifestyle migration, particularly in managing housing affordability, infrastructure strain, and community integration. Implementing targeted policies, such as taxation on second-home ownership, zoning regulations, and residency programmes, can help balance economic benefits with sustainable urban and rural planning. A coordinated governance approach that aligns migration policies with tourism, housing, and employment strategies is essential to maximizing the positive contributions of lifestyle migrants while mitigating potential negative effects. Tourism practitioners should recognize lifestyle migrants as an emerging visitor segment that requires long-term accommodation options, co-living spaces, and tailored cultural experiences. Destination managers and hospitality providers can leverage this trend by designing services that integrate lifestyle migrants into local communities, fostering inclusive and socially sustainable tourism.

Implications for future research

The findings of this study highlight several promising directions for future research on lifestyle migration within tourism. One key area for further investigation is the geographical scope of existing studies. The analysis reveals a significant research gap in regions such as Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, where lifestyle migration is increasing due to the growing presence of digital nomads and expatriate retirees. Expanding research beyond Europe and North America would provide a more comprehensive understanding of global migration trends and their implications. A promising avenue for future research is exploring how lifestyle migrants can contribute to regenerative tourism as a response to tourism gentrification and housing affordability challenges. While recent studies

have examined the effects of migration-driven property demand on socio-economic inequalities and displacement, less attention has been given to how lifestyle migrants can play a positive role in fostering sustainable and community-centred development. Future research could explore how regenerative tourism principles—such as supporting local economies, engaging in community-led initiatives, and promoting responsible land use—can be integrated into lifestyle migration patterns, allowing migrants to actively contribute to circular economies, cultural preservation, and inclusive urban planning. The policy framework for lifestyle migration is another critical area for future research. Policymakers are increasingly implementing measures to regulate the impacts of migration-driven tourism, including taxation policies, zoning regulations, and residency programmes. Further studies should assess the effectiveness of these strategies in managing migration flows, supporting local economies, and ensuring sustainable development. Examining best practices across different destinations could inform policy recommendations that balance the benefits and challenges of lifestyle migration. The rapid growth of digital nomadism and remote work presents additional research opportunities. As remote work becomes more common, lifestyle migration is no longer limited to retirees or long-term expatriates. Future studies should explore how digital infrastructure, visa policies, and cultural integration shape the mobility patterns of digital nomads. Understanding the economic contributions and social integration of this group would provide valuable insights for destination managers and policymakers adapting to evolving migration trends.

Acknowledgment: This research was supported by the University of Rijeka, Faculty of tourism and hospitality management under grant ZIP-FMTU-019-5-2023. The current study has been presented at the SSERS 2nd International Conference on Global Perspectives in Business, Economics, Management Sciences & Finance, Budapest.

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