UMRAH TRAVELING, THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS USING VOSVIEWER

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Abstract

At present, Umrah travelling has become one of the most lucrative industries all over the world, leading to a growing number of publications in the field of Umrah. However, the bibliometric analysis of Umrah remains lacking. This study aims to identify the pattern of past research on the Umrah (a kind of religious traveling), specifically its research status and the most up-to-date (emerging) topics in this field. This study presents a visual analysis of 81 research articles listed in the Scopus databases between the years 2012 and 2023 related to Umrah. The knowledge mapping analysis using VosViewer presents the current research status, which comprises the analysis of co-authorship, co-occurrence, citation, and co-citation analysis. Using the most recent data and the bibliometric technique, this study is one of the pioneers in illuminating the state of Umrah research today. The findings from this study are expected to benefit the researchers that specialize in Umrah and religious tourism by providing them with the current state of the research and thus help to serve as a guide for future research.

Keywords: Umrah, Islamic tourism, Bibliometric analysis, VosViewer, knowledge mapping

Paper type: Empirical article

Introduction

Umrah or also known as Al-Hajj Al-Asghar is one of the types of pilgrimage that are made essential in the holy Quran, based on the following ayat: "And complete the Hajj and Umrah for Allah" (Basahel et al., 2021; Gannon et al., 2017; Othman et al., 2020). Additionally, a verse from Holy Quran mentioned the obligations of umrah for a Muslim, indicates the importance of Umrah as for the Muslim.

"Indeed, as-Safa and al-Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So, whoever makes Hajj to the House or performs 'umrah - there is no blame upon him for walking between them. And whoever volunteers good - then indeed, Allah is appreciative and Knowing" (Quran: 2; 158).

The primary motivation for performing Umrah is revealed to be gratitude to a higher authority (Allah in Islam). (Almuhrzi and Alsawafi, 2017). Muslims are urged to conduct Umrah to deepen their faith, ask for forgiveness of their sins, and make supplications in order to accomplish their commitments and/or or seeking Allah's support (Saabiq, 2004). According to the Ministry of Hajj and

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Umrah, 4.8 million international pilgrims have conducted Umrah since the start of the Islamic year, which began at the end of July 2022. Of those pilgrims, 4,329,349 travelled by air, 507,430 entered through land crossings, and 3,985 travelled through sea crossings (Arab News, 2023) . It is also reported there will be ten million Jemaah or pilgrims expected to perform umrah in 2023 (mymetro, 2023). As the Muslim population around the world grows and accounts for 26.4% of the global population by 2025, these numbers are projected to rise to 17 million (Arab News, 2023; Othman et al., 2020). According to Gulf News, since the beginning of Ramadan, 9.35 million pilgrims have been to the Saudi Arabian Grand Mosque to pray and perform Umrah (Moroccoworldnews, 2023). Due to the increasing in demand and regarded as one of the obligations for Muslim, Umrah tourism, which is a form of religious travel, has grown in popularity and attracted a sizable market share in all over the world, especially for Saudi Arabia and Muslim countries. (Al-Tawfiq et al., 2017; Arab News, 2023; Muslim et al; 2020).

Post Covid-19, the application of IoT technologies have also attracted noticeable attention for the Umrah Management. It specifically can be seen at several locations around the two holy towns, Makkah and Madinah (Shambour and Gutub, 2022). In light of Covid-19, utilization of smartphone applications (like Tawakkalna and Nusuk) to handle the digital transformation of Umrah and Visitation also has become a must nowadays (Aljuwaiber, and Elnagar, 2022). Also, previously, people would emphasize performing their Umrah during the first or end ten days of Ramadan. But lately, trends reveal that people are not only conducting Umrah during Ramadan, but also bringing their entire family and staying at five-star hotels, as mentioned by umrah manager at MKM Ticketing, Travel & Tours. (2022).

Despite an increase in scholarly interest from both theoretical and practical standpoints (Arab News, 2023; Mursid and Wu, 2022), a full bibliometric description of the topics covered in the field of research on Umrah is a still very much under-presented in the literature. Therefore, this study making an attempt to fill the identified gap. In the importance of fulfilling the research gap, the aim of this study is to identify the pattern of the past research on the Umrah, specifically on its research status in and the most up-to-date (emerging) topics in this field. The rest of the paper is structured as follows. The literature review is presented. The methodology and data analysis section which consists of material and methods, results and discussion are outlined. Finally, the implication, limitation and future research direction were presented.

Literature Review

Numerous publications on Umrah and religious tourism have looked into the key issues of destination, demand, and marketing (Mursid and Wu, 2022). Past studies on Umrah management mostly focus on the intrinsic and extrinsic factors for intention to perform Umrah, leveraging Umrah experience and Umrah behavior. For instance, attitudes towards Umrah visit (Nugraha and Widyaningsih, 2022), perceived value (Alkhawaldeh, 2022), satisfaction (Wu and Mursid, 2020), religious belief, religious expectation , emotional connection (Taheri, 2016), hedonic value, novelty , intention to revisit and positive WOM (Alhothali et al., 2022; Alhothali et al., 2021) were suggested to play an important role for enriching Umrah experience and increasing the Umrah intention and behaviour. In addition, there are also a growing interest for the study of the effect of technology and artificial intelligence for enhancing the Umrah experience and satisfaction. For example, Virtual Reality (VR) Based Interactive (Kabir et al., 2021), User Interface on Virtual Umrah (Isa et al., 2017), information system (Brdesee et al., 2013), information and communication technology (ICT) and apps usability (Hassan et al.,2022) are regarded to have a positive effect on boosting the positive Jemaah or pilgrims experience. Thus, it showed that information and communication technology (ICT) has a significant impact on religious tourism, with implications for the specifics of religious sites and the practises, traditions, and rituals connected to them (Hassan et al., 2022). Different authors defined Umrah in different ways, which are shown in Table 1. Overall, Umrah is an act of worship performed by millions of Muslims throughout the year, non-obligatory, but important pilgrimage to Muslims to the holy city of Masjid al-Haram in Mecca.

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Table 1: Definition of umrah in past studies

Variable	Definition	Sources
Umrah	Umrah is considered as one of the religious tourism which visitors are motivated partially or exclusively by religious premises.	Karyal (2023)
	"Umrah is a recommended act of worship which is related to Hajj, often described as a minor or lesser Hajj. Umrah are, however, required to be performed physically at Masjid al Haram among other holy sites in Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA),"	Muneeza and Mustapha (2021)
	"Umrah is a religious ritual that takes place inside the Holy Mosque in Makkah. Umrah can be performed any time during the year; however, performing Umrah in the month of Ramadan is much rewarded"	Elgammal et al. (2023)
	"Umrah is another Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah (shorter than the Hajj) that can be undertaken at any time of the year. The Umrah is not compulsory, but is still highly recommended. Umrah during Ramadan is equal to Hajj in terms of religious value, according to a statement that is attributed to the Prophet Mohammad"	Hoang et al. (2020)
	"Umrah is voluntary and can be performed anytime with the only exception being during the days of Hajj, and in much the same way it maintains a particular ritualised practice. Muslims can perform Umrah at any time of the year apart from the period of Hajj and undertaking Umrah during Ramadhan is considered more beneficial in terms of the extent of Allah's rewards"	Almuhrzi and Alsawafi (2017)
	"Umrah, which is another Arabic term for ziarat, refers to a visit to Ka'abah. In performing Umrah, Muslims must perform circumambulation (tawaf in Arabic) around the Ka'abah seven times,walking back and forth seven times between hills of Safa and Marwah"	Saabiq (2004)
	"Umrah pilgrimage is a Muslim religious ritual continuously held throughout the year. It is considered the 'smaller' pilgrimage compared with the Hajj"	Ebrahim and Memish (2020)
	"Umrah is a type of religious tourism in which Muslims take part in optional or non-mandatory pilgrimages to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, at any periods during the year except the time of Hajj"	Wu and Mursid (2020)
	"Umrah denotes a voluntary trip to holy sites"	Taheri (2016)
	"Umrah is a pilgrimage that is performed at any time beyond the Hajj season"	Hassan et al. (2022)

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Methods and Materials

It is necessary to obtained high-quality literature for bibliometric analysis, thus a reliable database should be chosen as the data source (Zhang and Quoquab, 2022). Hence, Scopus, which is regarded as one of the scientific publishing research database that is widely used by the researchers all over the world is suitable for the purpose. Compared to Web of Science, Scopus provides around 20% more coverage, whereas Google Scholar provides results with inconsistent accuracy (Falagas et al., 2008; Mesdaghinia et al. 2015).

According to the information from Scopus, the total of literature with the search string of "Umrah" is 287. After the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the documents used for analysis is 81. This study only considered social science and management studies, in English language. This is because this study intends to identify a pattern of studies from the business and marketing perspectives. The years covered is from 2012 to 2023. The detailed search information is summarized in Table 2. The search process was completed on May 15, 2023.

Table 2: Summary of searching details

Criteria	Description
Source website	Scopus
Years	2012-2023
Searching terms/ searching strings	"Umrah"
Inclusion criteria	Business Management and Accounting, Social Sciences, Art and humanities Language : English
Exclusion criteria	Medicine, Computer Science, Engineering , Environmental science , Mathematics , Decision Sciences
Sample size	81
Reference size	287

Then, the data were uploaded into VOSviewer software for the bibliometric analysis. This study used Vos Viewer software because it one of the bibliometric software that offers good clarity visual mapping. It also created the visualization network that researchers can use it directly (Markscheffel and Schröter, 2021; Zhang et al., 2023).

Results

This study presents the results of the analyses of the publication materials from Scopus indexed documents/ journals. The bibliometric analysis includes co-authorship analysis, co-occurrence analysis, citation analysis and cocitation analysis. Co-occurring analysis and co-citation analysis are the main analysis tools in bibliometric analysis.

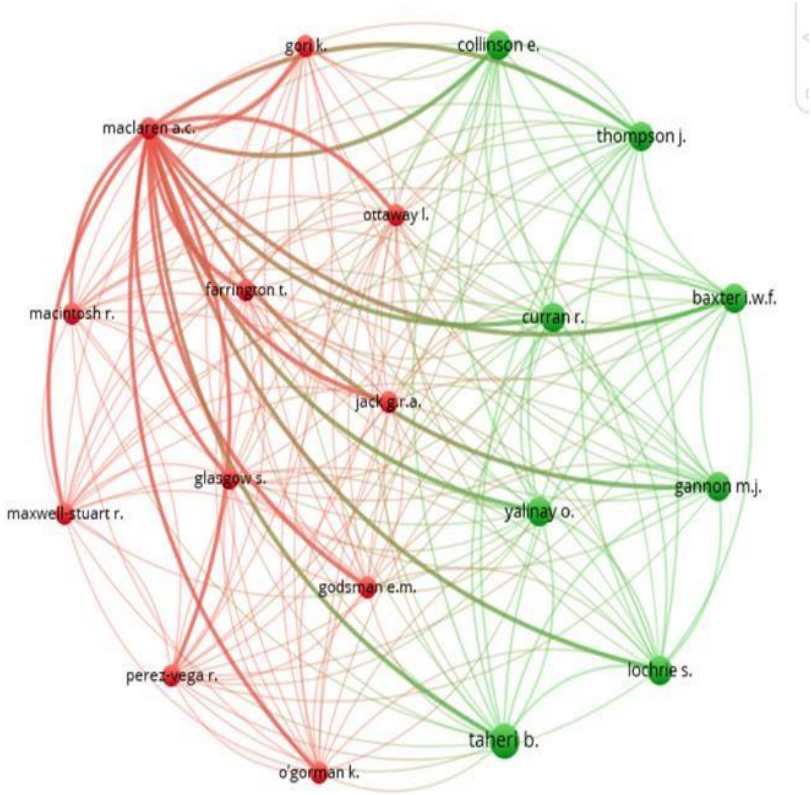
A. Co-authorship analysis

Co-authorship is a common metric for assessing the scientific interactions and relationships between authors and countries. Co-authorship is considered as one the most effective methods of scientific collaboration among the various bibliographic methods (Ullah et al., 2022). Co-authorship analysis is generally used to assess collaboration in co-authorship research. Figure 1(a) showed the co-authorship relations among authors. As shown in Figure 1(a), Taheri (2016) has the highest number of citations

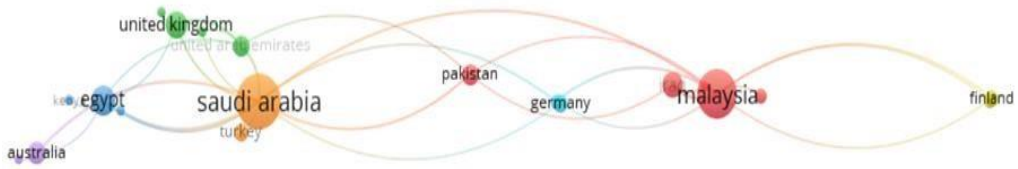
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with 108 citations from the three documents. It indicates that this author is one of the most prominent authors with the highest impact and scientific interactions among other authors across the field.
Figure 1b showed the co-authorship relations among countries. According to Figure 1(b), Saudi Arabia has the most publications with 28 documents, followed by Malaysia with 23 documents, with 144 citations. It indicates that Saudi Arabia and Malaysia are the most prominent countries in the field of Umrah. Also, Egypt and United Kingdom contributes eight and seven documents respectively with total number of citations of 232 citations.

Figure 1. (a) Co-authorship_authors; (b) Co-authorship_countries



(b)



B. Co-occurring/ Co-occurrence analysis

By using the method of co-occurrence analysis, high-frequency keywords have been identified and categorized into 4 clusters corresponding with the areas of research interest in the field. Table 3 showed the interpretation of cooccurrence clusters displayed in Figure 2. Based on the visual mapping, the size of nodes manifests the frequency of keyword's occurrence, while lines show relationships among keywords. As shown in Figure 2, umrah, Saudi Arabia and haj are the most frequent keywords, with total number of co-occurrences of 46 occurrences. It is befitting the themes of the field of interest which focusing on Umrah and related. The top 10 keywords based on number of occurrences is illustrated in Table 4.

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Figure 2. Co-occurrence networks of high frequency keywords

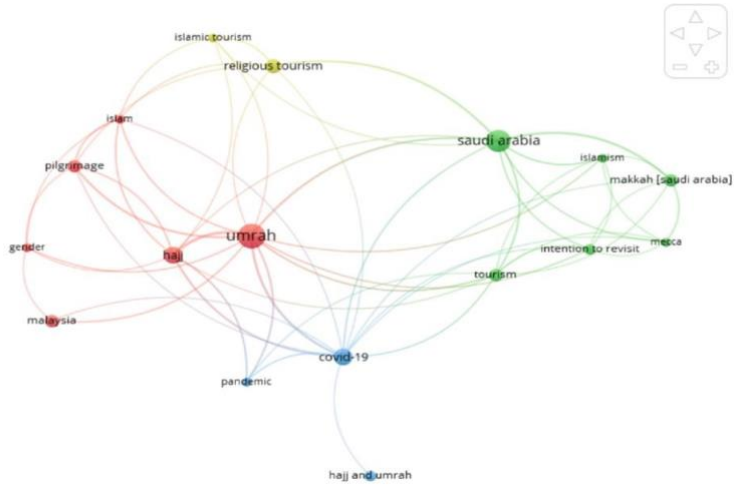


Table 3. The interpretation of co-occurrence clusters displayed in Figure 2

Cluster	No. of items	Color	Label/ keywords
1	6	red	umrah, hajj, pilgrimage, gender, Malaysia, islam
2	6	green	Saudi Arabia, Makkah (Saudi arabia), Islamism, Intention to revisit, mecca, tourism
3	3	blue	Covid 19, pandemic, hajj and umrah
4	2	yellow	islamic tourism, religious tourism

Table 4. Top 10 keywords based on the number of occurrences

Rank	Keyword	Occurrences
1	umrah	20
2	Saudi arabia	16
3	hajj	10
4	Covid 19	10
5	Religious tourism	7
6	Makkah (saudi arabia)	5
7	islam	5
8	pilgrimage	5
9	Hajj and umrah	4
10	malaysia	4

C. Citation analysis

Bibliometric analysis for measuring citations generally focus on the most cited research, organization and country in the field of interest. Specifically, citations are used to determine the degree of impact, whereby it is considered significant if an article is most often cited. Citation analysis may provide information about the relative importance of publications, (Ullah et al., 2022). As showed in Figure 3(a), El-gohary (2016) has the highest number of citations, which is 147 citations. It reflects that the citation

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document/ paper from this author has the greatest impact in this field of Umrah. The citation document indicated by the name of the authors in the VosViewer result's mapping. The top five cited documents based on the citation frequency is illustrated in Table 5.

Figure 3(a). Citation document, network visualization

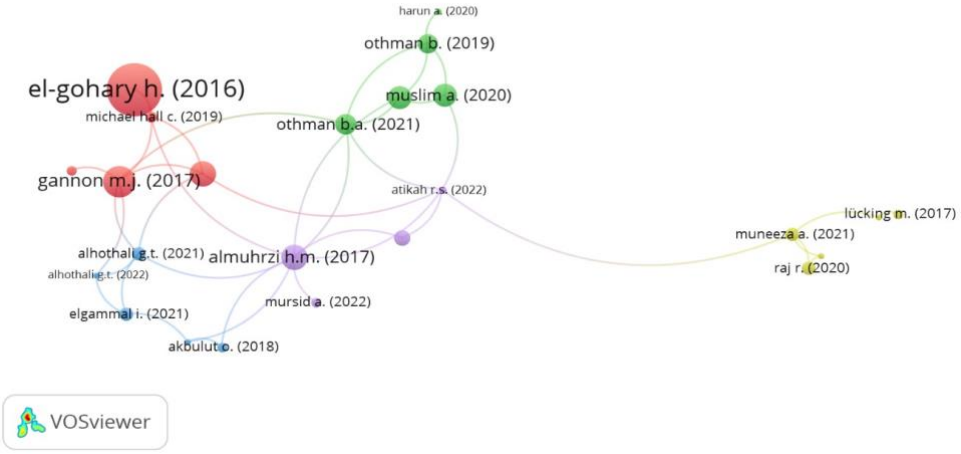
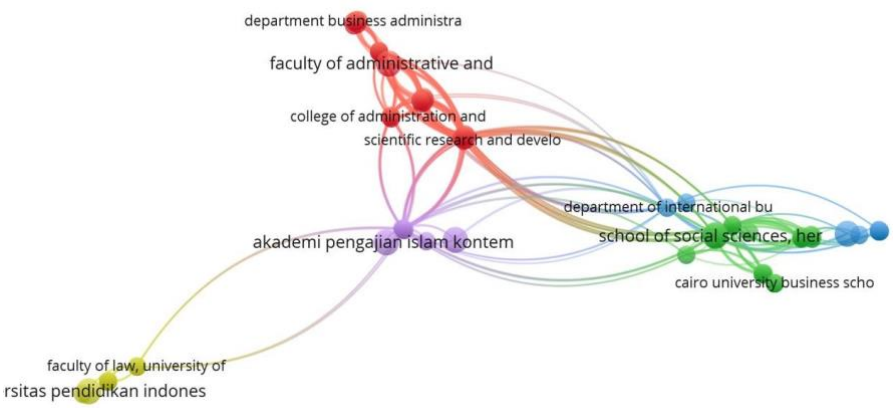


Table 5. Top 5 documents based on citation frequency

Rank	Document	Citation
1	el-gohary h.	147
2	gannon m.j.	53
3	almuhrzi h.m	35
4	muslim.a	28
5	othman b.a	27

As shown in Figure 3(b), Cairo University business school of Egypt with 147 citations is recorded as an organization with the highest citation. It indicates that this organization has largest impact and contribution in the field of interest which is Umrah. Based on the visual mapping of the network visualization, there are 5 clusters, denoted by red, green, blue, yellow and purple colour. The largest cluster is red coloured, representing 24 organizations.

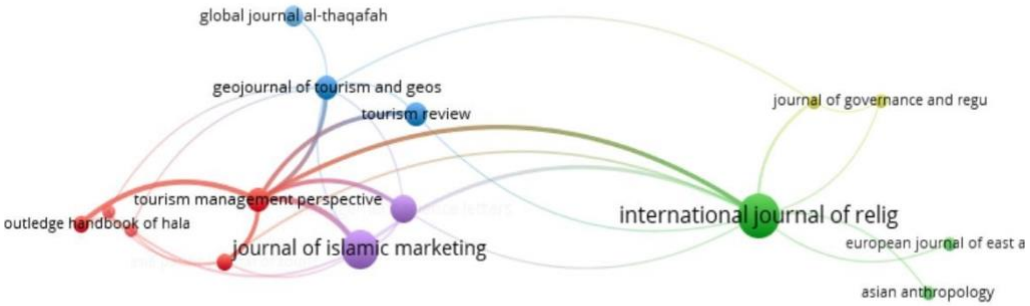
Figure 3(b). Citation organization, network visualization



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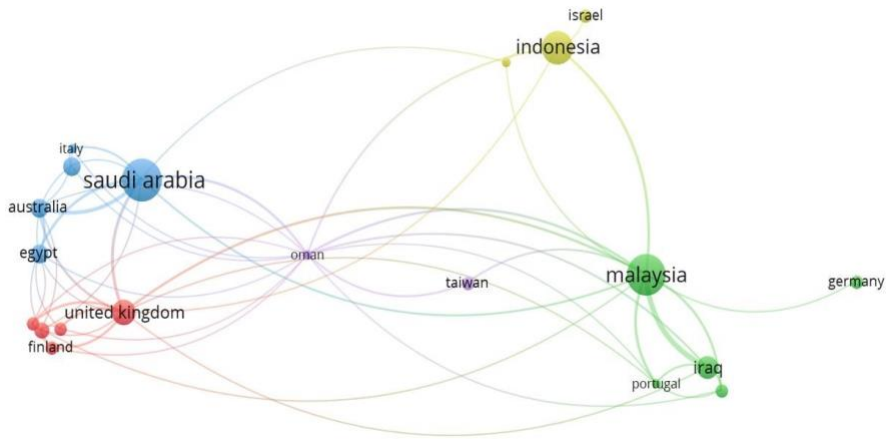
As shown in Figure 3(c), the citation sources/ journals represented with 5 clusters. Tourism management perspective is the most cited sources/ journal with 182 citations. It followed by Service Industries Journal (53), Journal of Islamic Marketing (34) and International Journal of and Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage. It showed that the stated sources/ journals are the largest contributors to the dissemination of the Umrah related literature globally.

Figure 3(c). Citation sources network visualization



As depicted in Figure 3(d), Malaysia, Iraq and Saudi Arabia contributes to the highest number of citations with 113, 99 and 71 citations respectively. It indicates that these three countries have the largest impact towards enriching Umrah literature. It is showed that most citations are from Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, which is consistent with the results of the analysis of the results of the countries collaboration of authorship.

Figure 3(d). Citation country network visualization



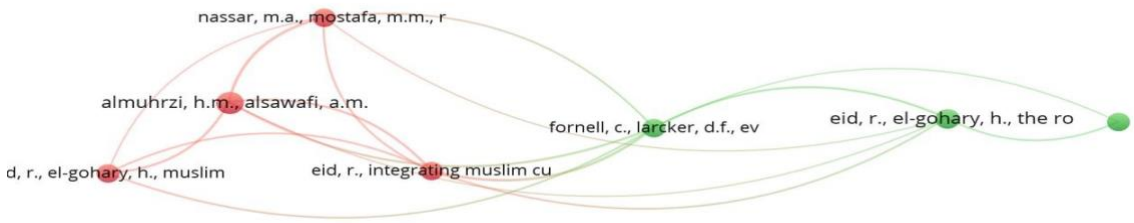
D. Co-citation analysis

Co-citation connect journals, documents, and authors based on joint presence the reference list. Author co-citation networks can identify the authors who have contributed the most to a particular topic (Zhang and Quoquab, 2023). "In the co-citation network analysis, the journals, articles and authors of a specified research field with the most citation frequency can be found. The higher the citation frequencies of an article, a journal and an author, the more important it is" (Zhang et al., 2023). Co-citation analysis provides a summary of publications that have been mentioned jointly in other publications while focusing on the link or interaction between two articles. (Huang et al. 2022). As showed in Figure 4(a), there are two clusters emerged from the mapping of co-citation of the cited references, which are represented by red and green colours. The cited references indicated by the name of the authors in the VosViewer result's mapping. Amuhrzi,h.m,., alsawafi, a.m has the highest number

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of citation and link strength with 7 citation and total link strength of 15. It indicates that this cited reference has the highest impact and responses among others references.

Figure 4(a). Co-Citation cited ref network visualization



Based on Figure 4(b), the co-citation for the cited sources represented with 7 clusters. Tourism management has the highest number of citations of 115 and total link strength of 5089. It showed that tourism management has the highest impact and interactions from the scientific sources to the research results. The top five co-citation for the cited sources based on the number of citation and total link strength are shown in Table 6.

Figure 4(b). Co-Citation cited sources network visualization

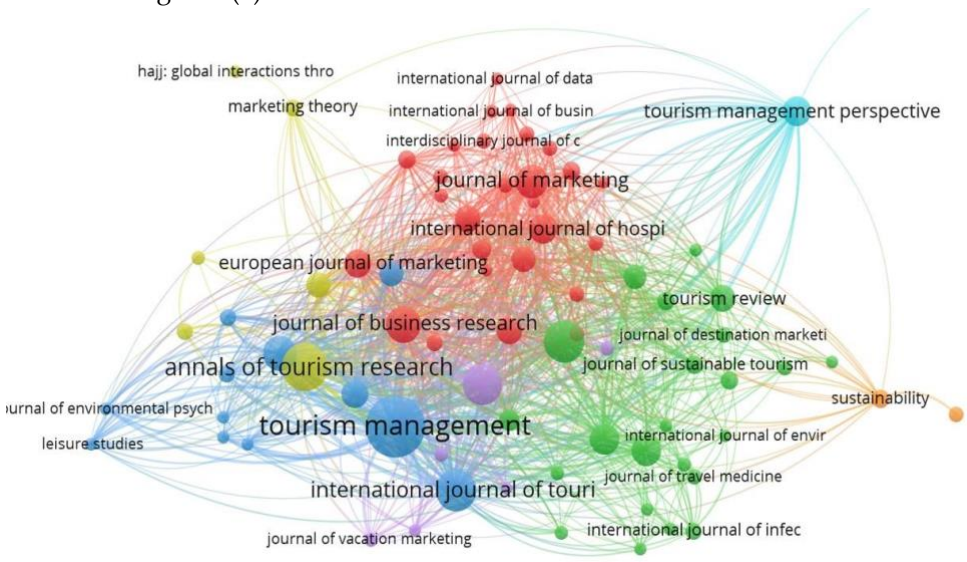


Table 6. Top 5 cited sources based on citation and total link strength

Rank	Cited source	citation	Total link strength
1	Tourism management	115	5089
2	Annals of tourism research	70	2771
3	Journal of Travel research	59	2441
4	International journal of tourism research	53	2187
5	Journal of consumer research	37	1889

As illustrated by Figure 4(c), five clusters emerged from the mapping of co-citation of the cited authors, which are represented by red, green, blue, yellow and purple colour. Eid.r, with the highest number of

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citation (36) and total link of strength (1438) is the most contributing author with highest impact and interaction in Umrah field. The top five most cited authors with co-citation frequency and total link strength are shown in Table 7.

Figure 4(c). Co-Citation cited authors network visualization

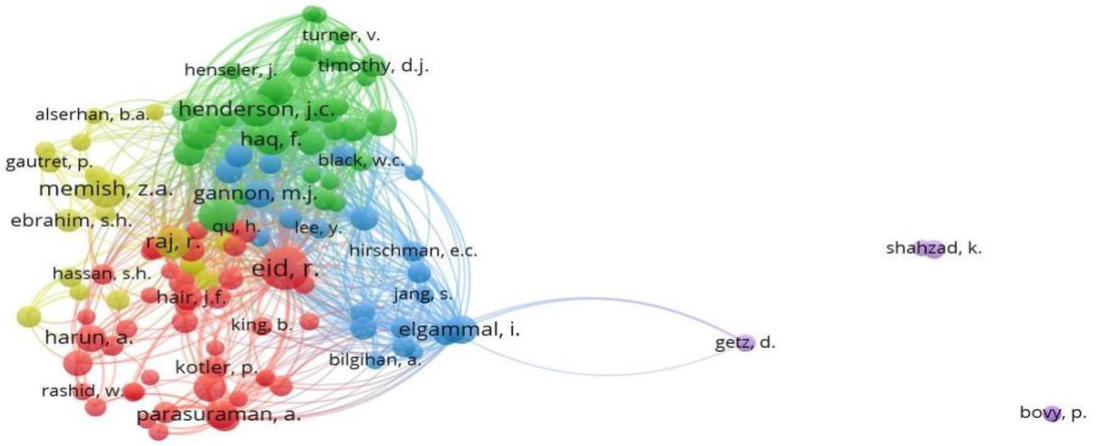


Table 7. Top 5 cited authors based on citation and total link strength

Rank	Cited authors	citation	Total link strength
1	eid, r.	36	1438
2	taheri,b.	26	1002
3	el-gohary, h.	22	889
4	ringle, c.m	19	885
5	Gannon, m.j,	14	818

Discussion and Conclusion

The Muslim community is increasingly more interested in Umrah since it not only serves as an alternative pilgrimage but also helps people and families grow spiritually and religiously (Nugraha and Widyaningsih, 2022). This study provides a holistic and comprehensive bibliometric analysis for scholars that specialized in the religious tourism management. Specifically, this study assist researchers to understand the definition and concept of Umrah and visually mapping the co-authorship analysis, co-occurrence analysis, citation analysis and co-citation analysis. Th findings may help researchers to see the status of the research and will provide them a general grasp of the direction that research will be trend in the future. This study considered only "Umrah" as the search keyword. Future studies can consider expanding the research scope by adding more keyword, such as Umrah and Hajj etc. Also, this study used VosViewer for the bibliometric analysis. Instead, future studies can consider using the different software like CiteSpace etc. to have more comprehensive analysis on the subject matter. Lastly, this study used bibliometric analysis, instead, future studies can use systematic literature review (SLR) analysis to summarize and have better understanding on the pattern of the past studies.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests in relation to this study and its publication.

Data availability

The datasets generated and analysed during this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethics Declaration

This research analysed secondary data obtained from publicly available sources. No direct participation, interaction, or intervention involving human subjects was undertaken; therefore, formal ethical approval was not applicable.

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