



## A Decade of Women's Empowerment Research in Tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis (2014–2024)

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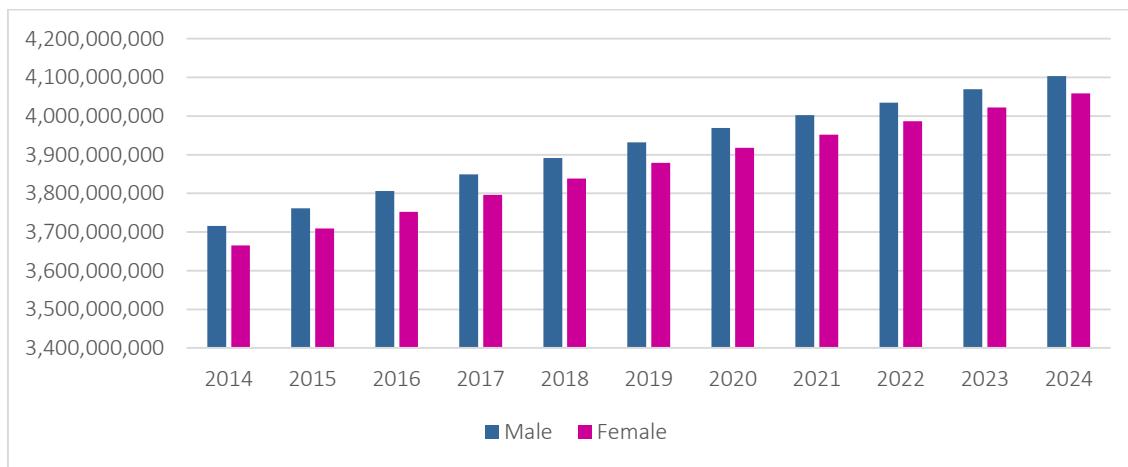
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**Abstract.** This study aims to identify research trends related to women's empowerment in the tourism industry over the past ten years, from 2014 to 2024. The method used in this study is qualitative, using a literature review approach. The data was collected through the Scopus database, which resulted in 117 publication documents that met the criteria in the period 2014 to 2024. Data analysis was carried out using the VOSviewer application. The results of the study show that there are 117 publication documents related to women's empowerment in the tourism industry. However, the topic of women's empowerment has not been explored much from the perspective of tourism empowerment. Women's empowerment is considered important to be discussed in the context of tourism, as tourism activities provide new opportunities for women to access resources and employment. However, women's empowerment still faces various obstacles. Therefore, effective collaboration between stakeholders is needed to be able to increase women's empowerment, especially in the field of Tourism.

**Keywords:** Bibliometric; Empowerment; Gender; Tourism; Women.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment is one of the main issues in developing countries (Bayeh, 2016; Fox & Moyser, 2018). This is an important topic that needs to be discussed from multiple dimensions. Empowering women allows them to have control over resources, assets, and income (Eerdewijk et al., 2017). Women's empowerment benefits the world in general, as well as countries, companies, communities, and groups, by increasing the number and quality of human resources available for development (Mahbub, 2021).



**Figure 1.** Total Population by Gender in 2014-2024 (Millions).

Source: <https://statisticstimes.com>, 2025.

The female population makes up almost half of the country's total population. However, women still experience significant losses compared to men in various aspects, especially in literacy levels, education, labor force participation, and income (Alkhayl et al., 2024; ILO,

2020). Social, economic, and political empowerment is crucial (Laszlo et al., 2017), as it is a fundamental approach to conceptualizing women's empowerment in terms of personal agency, self-esteem, and self-confidence, as well as their ability to protect themselves. Women's empowerment allows them to participate in socio-political activities, achieve economic independence, have productive assets, and take on leadership roles (Siddaraju, 2019).

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process in which individuals gain control over their own lives, cultivating power in themselves, their communities, and society (Bayeh, 2016; Vijayachandrika, 2022). Based on this definition, women's empowerment refers to women's ability to make strategic life choices in situations where they previously did not have such agency. Therefore, empowerment is at the heart of ensuring the benefits of women at the individual, household, community, and broader societal levels (Dushkova & Ivlieva, 2024; Malhotra et al., 2009).

Tourism is one of the most labor-intensive industries in the world, experiencing rapid development (Tas, 2022). Tourism activities involve individuals traveling to different regions for vacation, business, or other purposes (Camilleri, 2018). The main goal of the tourism industry is to provide tourism services, which rely heavily on skilled workers (Tas, 2022). Most of the tourism workforce is made up of local people living near tourist destinations (Ollivaud et al., 2019). Therefore, empowerment is a crucial issue in the tourism industry, especially in improving the quality of human resources (Bindawas, 2025; Kokkranikal et al., 2011).

Women play an important role in all aspects of the tourism industry (Tristanti et al., 2022). As women tend to be more creative than men, they are becoming increasingly valuable in the tourism sector (World Bank Group, 2017). Their participation in tourism activities has proven to be beneficial to the industry in various dimensions, including socio-economic, cultural, and environmental aspects. Women's involvement in tourism contributes to gender equality and justice in the family, fosters harmonious partnerships with men, creates equal opportunities for both sexes, and enhances women's roles and independence (Fernando et al., 2022).

Women's empowerment in community-based tourism increases their self-esteem and social status while promoting sustainable development. Therefore, incorporating gender analysis in tourism development policies is very important (Nara & Irawan, 2020). Although gender inequality continues in the tourism sector, tourism has significant potential as a vehicle for women's empowerment by offering better employment opportunities compared to other economic sectors (Ramchurjee & Paktin, 2011).

The tourism industry plays an important role in promoting the empowerment of local communities, especially among women. Tourism activities are considered important for women's empowerment, as they provide equal opportunities for women and men to access jobs (Keng et al., 2022). This is in line with goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which emphasizes a commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment (UNWTO, 2022).

Gender equality ensures that women and men have equal opportunities, rights, and responsibilities in all aspects of life (England et al., 2020; Jaramillo, 2014; Wardhani et al., 2023; Wardhani & Susilowati, 2021). An important aspect of promoting gender equality is women's empowerment, which focuses on identifying and addressing power imbalances while enabling women to make decisions about their own lives (Dandona, 2017). From a tourism perspective, empowerment must support vulnerable community groups, including women (Arroyo et al., 2019). Conceptually, tourism creates new job opportunities that women can take advantage of to improve their economic conditions (Dandona, 2017; Kunjuraman & Hussin, 2017; Wen et al., 2021).

Employment opportunities generated by tourism activities allow women to participate in the workforce, with women accounting for as much as 54% of the workforce in the tourism sector (UNWTO, 2019). Although women make up the majority of the global tourism workforce, they are mostly concentrated in the informal sector (Irandu & Shah, 2014). Many tourism service providers, such as lodging businesses, are owned by women, and women also play a dominant role in entrepreneurial activities in the tourism sector (Kabil, Ali, Marzouk, & Dénes, 2022). It highlights the important role of women in tourism development.

The relationship between women and tourism is mutually beneficial. Tourism has a positive impact on women's lives by providing employment opportunities, fostering prosperity, and increasing self-affirmation (Abou-shouk et al., 2021). Women's involvement in tourism strengthens and enhances the resilience of the industry, however, despite its strong and significant role in the tourism sector, women continue to face many challenges and barriers that hinder their ability to achieve full empowerment (Mulder, 2020).

This study aims to analyze the trend of women's empowerment in the tourism industry using bibliometric analysis. Bibliometric analysis is a research method that examines the literature on a specific theme to provide insights for future studies. This method was chosen to assist researchers in selecting, organizing, recording, and presenting research findings related to women's empowerment in the tourism industry.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section outlines the relevant theories underlying the research topic and provides a review of some of the relevant previous research and provides a reference and foundation for this research to be conducted. If there is a hypothesis, it can be stated as unexplicit and does not have to be in the question sentence.

Women's empowerment is a multidimensional process that allows women to gain control over resources, assets, and income, as well as make strategic decisions in their lives (Bayeh, 2016; Eerdewijk et al., 2017). In the context of the tourism industry, empowerment not only increases women's confidence and participation in decision-making, but also strengthens their role in leadership and business ownership, thereby improving their social and economic status in society (Dushkova & Ivlieva, 2024; Siddaraju, 2019). Thus, women's empowerment is central to ensuring that women benefit at various levels, from individuals to the wider community (Abou-Shouk et al., 2021; Ogbari et al., 2024)

The tourism industry, as a labor-intensive sector, offers significant opportunities for women to participate as workers and entrepreneurs. Tourism not only creates jobs but also opens up women's access to economic resources and leadership opportunities, contributes to economic independence and strengthens women's role in community development (Camilleri, 2018; Tas, 2022). However, although women make up more than 50% of the labour force in this sector, they are still mostly concentrated in the informal sector and low-wage jobs, and face barriers in accessing education and capital (Evaristus M. Irandu & Parita Shah, 2014; Kabil, Ali, Marzouk, & David, 2022; Nair & Dileep, 2020). Structural and institutional barriers remain a major challenge to women's empowerment in tourism. Socio-cultural norms that limit women's roles, lack of policy support, and male dominance in the ownership and management of tourism destinations are the main inhibiting factors (Boley et al., 2017; Moswete & Lacey, 2015a; Mulder, 2020). Therefore, collaboration between various stakeholders and inclusive policies is essential to promote gender equality and accelerate women's empowerment in the industry (Arroyo et al., 2019; Fernando et al., 2022).

Women's empowerment in tourism contributes to sustainable development and increases community resilience (Keng et al., 2022; Nara & Irawan, 2020). There are still gaps regarding women's empowerment in specific tourism subsectors, the impact of policy interventions, and the influence of local culture and institutional support (Anup et al., 2020, 2021). Further in-depth studies are needed to identify effective strategies to overcome barriers and strengthen the role of women in the tourism sector, in line with the 2030 sustainable development agenda targeting gender equality and women's empowerment (Wardhani & Susilowati, 2021).

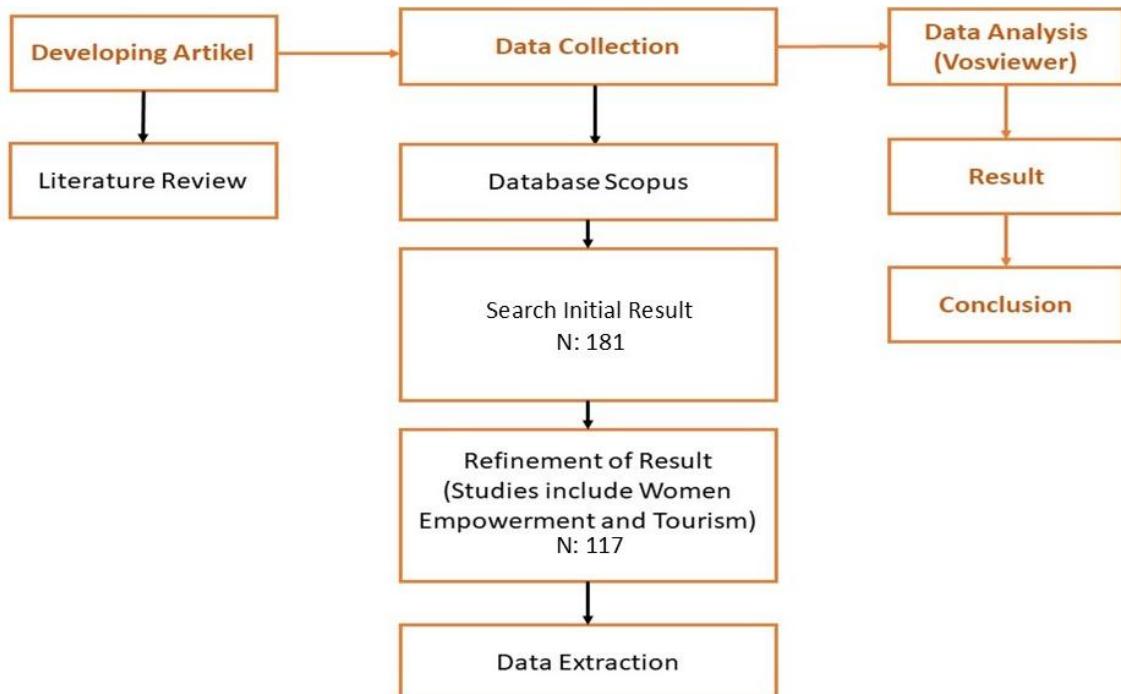
The importance of collaboration among various stakeholders and inclusive policies is key to promoting gender equality and accelerating the process of women's empowerment in the tourism industry. A multidimensional approach that integrates personal, economic, and socio-political aspects is needed to ensure optimal women's empowerment. In addition, further research is needed on women's access to formal employment, entrepreneurial opportunities, and cultural influences and institutional support in various tourism contexts (Wardhani et al., 2023).

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative research approach using a literature review (Mack et al., 2005). The literature review aims to compare previous findings and identify gaps that may not have been addressed by previous research. It was used in this study to analyze the current trends of women's empowerment in the tourism industry. Literature review is considered the most appropriate method to achieve research objectives.

The data for this study is sourced from the Scopus database. Over the past ten years, data filtering has been carried out by selecting journal articles with a high number of citations and limiting the collection period to 2014–2024. Keywords used for searches include "empowerment," "women," and "tourism." The data collection process involves selecting and retrieving relevant articles from Scopus using the following search queries: (TITLE-ABS-KEY (empowerment) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (women) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (tourism)) AND PUBYEAR > 2013 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND ( LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE,"English")) AND ( LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Empowerment") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Tourism") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Women") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Women's Empowerment") ).

A total of 117 articles were obtained. Journal articles were then extracted from the Scopus database in CSV format and imported into VOSviewer for further bibliometric analysis (Pan et al., 2018). The next step involves processing the data in CSV format to build a bibliographic mapping. The data were then visualized using network, overlay, and density visualization techniques to identify clusters and trends in the literature analyzed.



**Figure 2.** Research Stages.

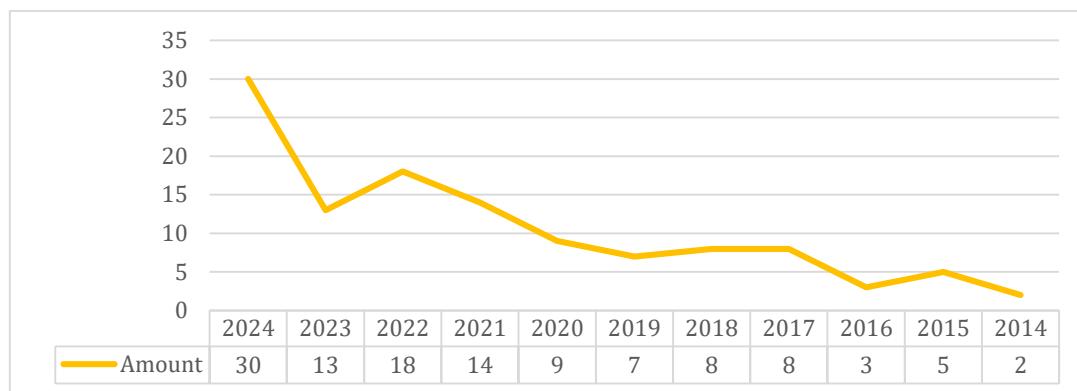
#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Development trends related to women's empowerment research in the tourism industry based on the analysis of 117 documents every year fluctuate. Over the past ten years, there has been an increase and decrease in the number of publications. Based on these figures, the trend of women's empowerment research in the tourism industry fluctuates every year. Over the past decade, the number of publications has varied, showing an increase and a decrease. Research on women's empowerment and tourism continues to grow every year.

As shown in Figure 3, the number of publications peaked in 2024 with 30 publications, followed by 2022 with 18 publications and 2023 with 13 publications. However, the number of studies fluctuated significantly over the years, decreasing to 14 in 2021, 9 in 2020, and 7 in 2019. The trend remained relatively stable in 2018 and 2017, both with 8 publications, before declining further to 3 in 2016, 5 in 2015, and 2 in 2014. This pattern shows a dynamic development in research on women's empowerment in the tourism industry, with significant increases in recent years, highlighting the growing scientific interest in this topic.

The most cited publication related to women's empowerment in the tourism industry was in 2015 with the publication document "*Empowering women through cultural tourism in Botswana*" written by Moswete & Lacey, (2015) as the most cited publication, with 117 citations focusing on research related to women's economic empowerment through cultural tourism in Botswana. The study highlights how community-based tourism policies provide

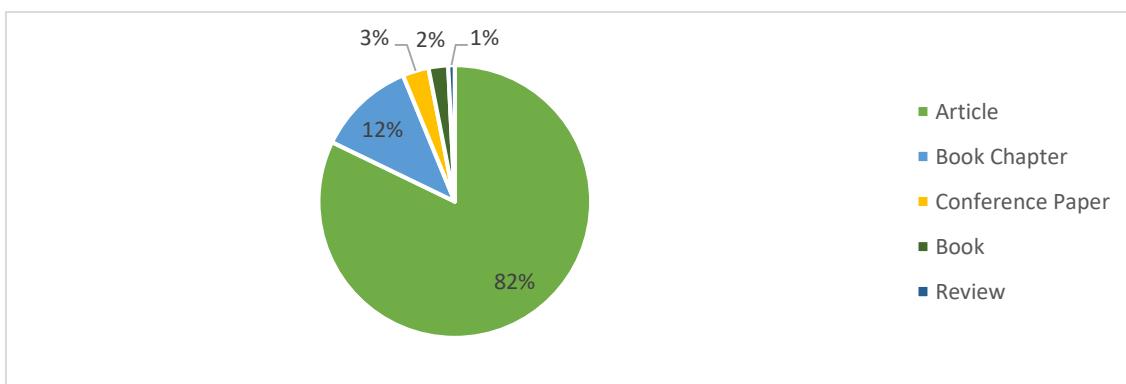
opportunities for women to actively participate as entrepreneurs and leaders in the tourism sector. Moswete & Lacey, (2015) emphasize that women's empowerment in tourism development occurs when they challenge social and cultural norms that limit their role in society. In the context of Botswana, women experience increased economic independence by engaging in the business of cultural tourism, despite facing challenges such as limited start-up capital, low levels of education, and centralized control over major tourism sites. This study provides insights into how women are transitioning from passive roles to active participation in the tourism industry. However, more inclusive policy support is needed to accelerate their empowerment process.



**Figure 3.** Publication Document for 10 Years.

*Source: Scopus, 2025.*

Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of 117 documents in the Scopus database related to the theme of women's empowerment and tourism in five types of documents: articles, book chapters, conference papers, books, and reviews. Among these, articles make up the majority, accounting for 82% of the total documents. This is followed by book chapters (12%), conference papers (3%), and books (2%), while reviews represent the least common types of documents at 1%.

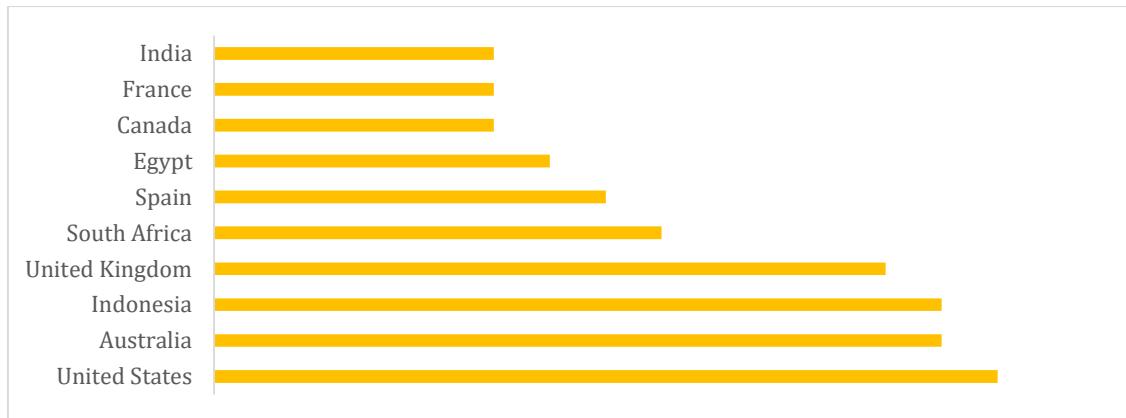


**Figure 4.** Document type.

*Source: Scopus, 2024.*

Research on women's empowerment in tourism has become a widely discussed and significant topic in various academic publications (Sama, 2017). This is evident from the substantial volume of literature that has addressed this issue over the past decade. Article documents dominate the type of publication, with 117 publications from 2014 to 2024. The extensive published literature contributes to a deeper understanding of the development of women's empowerment in the tourism industry (Widiastini et al., 2018).

Trends over the past ten years related to women's empowerment and tourism research in the Scopus database show the contributions of several countries. Figure 5 presents the number of documents published in the ten countries with the highest number of publications. The United States ranks first, with 14 publications, followed by Australia and Indonesia, each contributing 13 publications. The UK holds an important position with 12 publications, followed by South Africa with 8 publications and Spain with 7 publications. Meanwhile, Egypt (6 publications), Canada (5 publications), France (5 publications), and India (5 publications) also contributed to the research landscape, albeit with a relatively lower number of published studies. This trend highlights the global academic interest in women's empowerment in the tourism industry, with developed countries leading research contributions. However, developing countries such as Indonesia, Egypt, and South Africa are also actively involved in this field, demonstrating a growing scientific focus on the role and empowerment of women in the tourism sector.



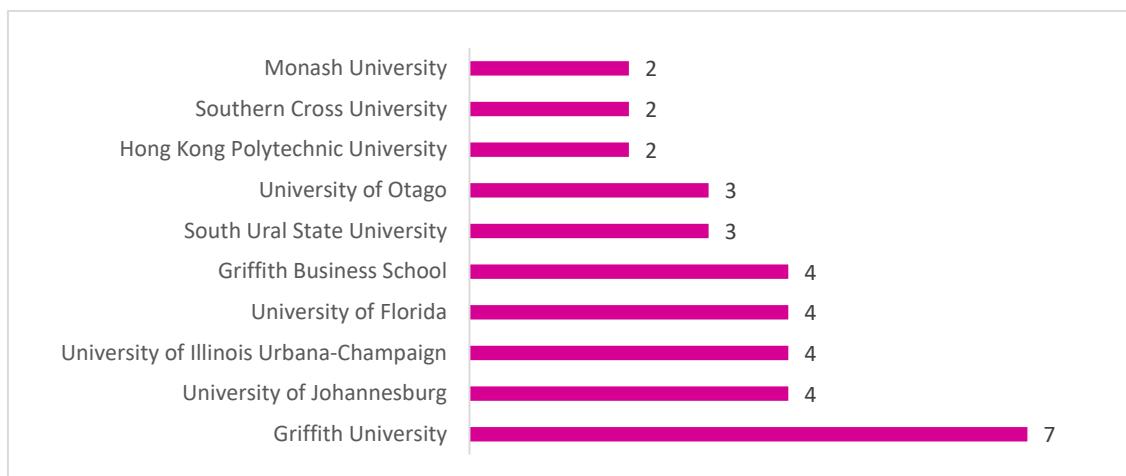
**Figure 5.** Top 10 Countries with the Largest Women Empowerment Publications in the Tourism Sector.

*Source: Scopus, 2025.*

Between 2014 and 2024, research on women's empowerment in the tourism industry primarily focuses on the role of women's empowerment from a gender perspective in sustainable tourism and ecotourism. Sustainable tourism and ecotourism contribute to women's empowerment through institutional support, infrastructure development, and local cultural

influence (Anup et al., 2021). The expansion of tourism activities has created greater employment opportunities, allowing women to improve their economic well-being (Anup et al., 2020).

Affiliates can show the distribution of institutions/organizations that contribute to women's empowerment and tourism. Based on Figure 6, Griffith University occupies the first position with several publications related to women's empowerment as many as 7. The second to fifth affiliates have the same number of publications, which is 4. The sixth to seventh number of publications of each affiliate is 3. Eight to ten have a total of 2 publications with the theme of women's empowerment.



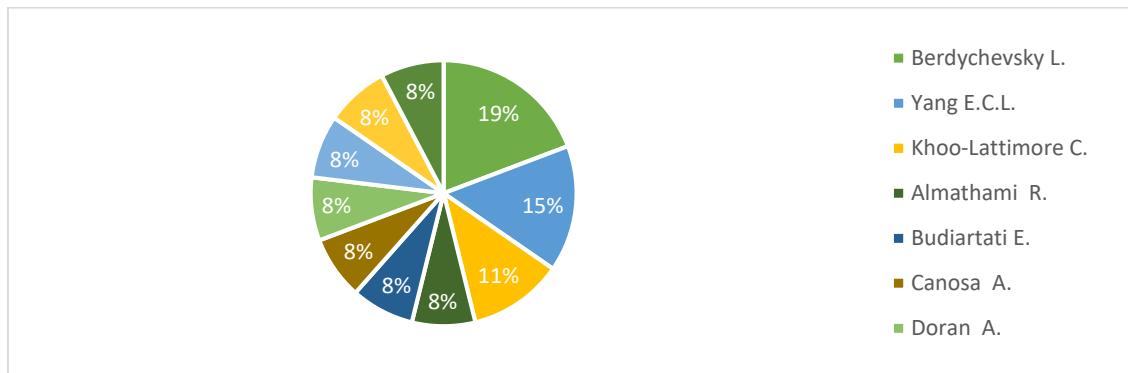
**Figure 6.** Top 10 Affiliates with Women's Empowerment Publications in the Tourism Sector.

Source: Scopus, 2025.

Publications related to women's empowerment in the tourism industry with Griffith University affiliations during the publication period from 2017 to 2022 had two dominant topics in the publications. Where from 2017 to 2018, research related to women's empowerment in the tourism industry focused on economic empowerment; The research was conducted by Rimmer (2017), Movono & Dahles (2017) and Movono & Dahles, (2017). In the period 2019 to 2022, the topic most often discussed by Griffith University was related to women's empowerment related to tourism events conducted by five researchers, namely Kong et al. (2022), Almathami et al. (2022), Almathami et al. (2021), and Khoo-Lattimore et al. (2019).

Several authors have focused on women's empowerment and tourism research over the past ten years. Figure 7 shows that Berdychevsky L. is the author with the highest number of publications on the theme of women's empowerment, 19% or as many as five publication documents. ECL ranks second with a percentage of 15%, with 4 publications. Khoo-Lattimore C. ranks third with a percentage of 11% with a total of 3 publications. Then the fourth and tenth

places, namely Almathami R., Budiartati E., Canosa A., Doran A., Ferguson L., Gibson HJ, and Higgins-Desbiolles F., have the same percentage and number of publication documents, which is 8%, and two documents. Publications.



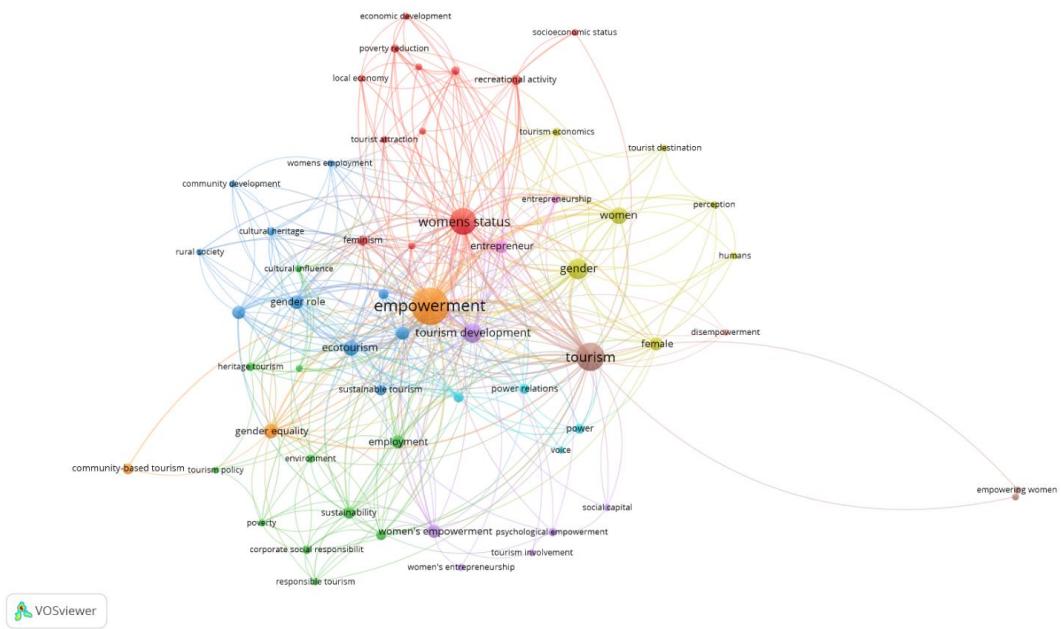
**Figure 7.** Author Ranking by Number of Publications.

Source: Scopus, 2025.

Berdichevsky L. has conducted a lot of research on women's empowerment with a focus on women's attitudes towards tourism from a sexual health perspective, where women's empowerment in sexual awareness and health in tourism is important to study. Note. So in the tourism industry, it is important to convey or promote the importance of sexual health for women (Berdichevsky, 2017)

### Inter-Keyword Network Related to Women's Empowerment in the Tourism Industry

The bibliometric study used to establish the network between topics consisted of 129 documents from the Scopus database. This research was carried out by building Vosviewer network visualization, *overlay*, and density. Bibliometric networks are made up of the same nodes and edges. The relationship between different sets of nodes is represented by a line called *an edge*, and each *node* is represented by a circle that can be in the form of a publication, journal, or keyword. Not only does it describe the relationship between two nodes, but *the edges* also represent the intensity of the connection with distance (Prastyo et al., 2021). The stronger the connection between two nodes, measured by how far apart they are from each other, the smaller the distance between them. Figure 8 below presents a study conducted with Vosviewer, which allows visualization of a network of terms related to women's empowerment.



**Figure 8.** Keyword Network Visualization.

Source: VOSviewer 2025.

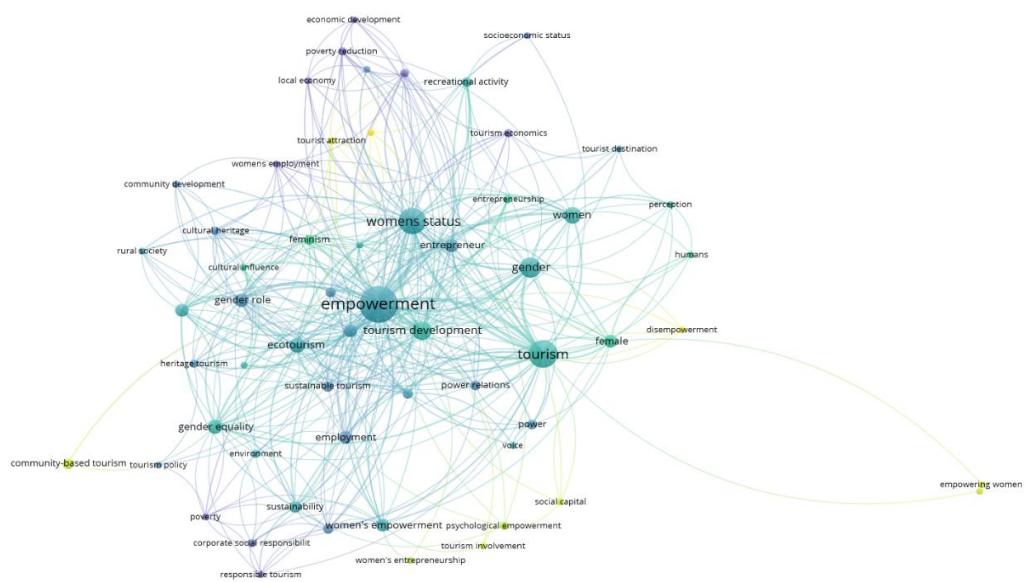
Figure 8 shows some of the keywords that appear frequently, and the color differences show clusters that can provide an overview for bibliometric groupings (Tri et al., 2021). The circle that appears shows the keywords that appear frequently in the publication document, the larger the size of the circle, the more publication documents that have relevance to those keywords with the topic of women's empowerment and tourism (Prastyo et al., 2021; Vukovic et al., 2023). With the keywords of women's empowerment and tourism from 117 publication documents, there were 10 clusters formed, with the largest cluster being cluster 7 with the highest incidence rate being empowerment (orange) with an incidence value of 57 and a total link strength of 211, in the second largest cluster was cluster 8 with the largest incidence rate was tourism (chocolate) with an incidence value of 33 and a total link strength of 113. The third largest cluster is cluster 1, with the largest keyword of female status with an incidence rate of 29 and a total link strength of 139.

The relationship between empowerment, tourism, and women's status is closely related to women's empowerment. Empowerment is an important concern in tourism development where women can maximize their roles (Hao et al., 2021; Vukovic et al., 2021). Women's empowerment provides opportunities for women to be able to get equal opportunities in accessing the labor market (Lehmann, 2023; Vukovic et al., 2021) so that their status that has been considered long due to limited access can become stronger and more self-independent (Petersen & Tilse, 2023; Seyfi et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2018). Women's status has a strong relationship between keywords and empowerment. Empowerment can empower women to

change their status, which was initially labeled as a vulnerable community to a society that has power and can affect tourism (Ali et al., 2024; Mulder, 2020).

The keyword tourism has a relationship with the keyword empowerment, but the relationship between keywords is no stronger than the keyword status of women. Although tourism has an important role in empowering women (Keng et al., 2022; Zafar et al., 2024) research related to women's empowerment with tourism is still too small; it can be seen from the picture that the relationship between the keywords tourism and women's empowerment is very distant. Women's empowerment and tourism are inseparable and must be studied more deeply.

In addition to analyzing documents published through network visualization, an overlay visualization can be displayed to show the year the article with the keyword in Figure 8 was published. The darker the color indicates that the topic discussed in the study has been around for a long time, while the lighter the color of the overlay means that the research topic is still new (Tri et al., 2021). An overlay visualization can be seen in Figure 9.



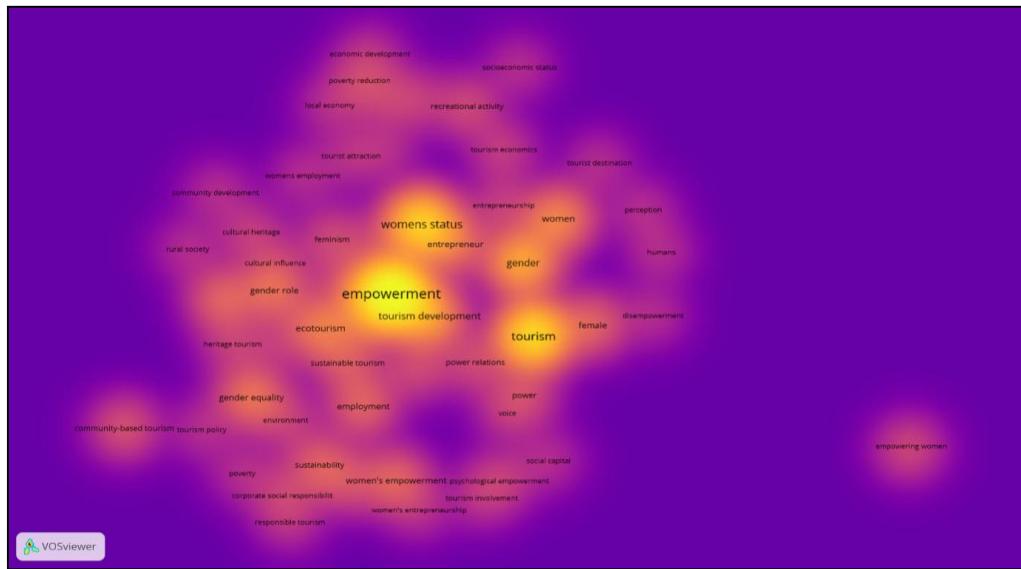
**Figure 9.** Overlay visualization.

Source: VOSviewer 2025.

Topics related to empowerment, status of women, tourism, ecotourism, tourism development, and other nodes with purple to green colors are the topics of publications that were widely published in the period 2016 to 2020. In comparison, the topics of women's empowerment, disempowerment, tourism attraction, and other yellow nodes are the topics of publication that are often discussed in 2025.

Density is used to see how many topics have been studied. Vosviewer will present density-related visualizations using RGB, namely the base colors of red, green, and blue, where

the redder the color of the topic node, the more research will be done on the topic (Kabil, Ali, Marzouk, & Dénes, 2022). Conversely, the greener the topic node indicates that the topic still doesn't have much to discuss.



**Figure 10.** Density visualization.

Source: VOSviewer 2022.

Based on Figure 10, topics that have been saturated or discussed a lot in the study are bright yellow. In contrast, topics around empowerment and tourism are saturated or have undergone many theoretical developments. Empowerment and tourism in its research have been extensively conducted, where empowerment is considered a measure of the success of sustainable tourism development (Merkel Arias & Kieffer, 2022). However, the literature related to empowerment that focuses on women in the tourism industry has not been widely discussed, so topics related to women's empowerment are very interesting to discuss and develop. Because one of the targets of sustainable development in 2030 is women's empowerment, gender equality is included in the fifth goal (Hidayati & Prasetyo, 2020; Mkono et al., 2021).

Empowerment has now become a benchmark for sustainability-oriented development (Deagon et al., 2021) including in the tourism industry, which currently includes empowerment as one of the benchmarks of its development success. Empowerment in the tourism sector is important in increasing the role of women. This happens because the emergence of tourism activities provides access to job opportunities for women, where women manage many business actors in the tourism sector. They can position themselves as a new pillar of strength for their families through tourism activities (Hosseini et al., 2022).

Women's empowerment that runs well will later increase their capacity as independent individuals both economically and psychologically. However, empowering women is not easy; Women face many obstacles to achieve good empowerment. Women still face societal stigma that makes the empowerment process unable to run properly (Marco & Katsoni, 2021). Issues related to empowerment are things that need to be studied multidimensionally because empowerment can not only be seen from one side but from many sides that need to be seen to achieve optimal empowerment. Therefore, good cooperation between relevant stakeholders is needed.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study investigates research trends and thematic developments on the topic of women's empowerment in the tourism industry using bibliometric analysis. Six bibliometric indicators were applied: time trends, document type, subject area, geographic distribution, relevant authors and publications, and co-occurrence of keywords. Bibliometric analysis uses VOSviewer visualization to identify research gaps and improve understanding of the literature and theoretical relationships in this field. The study highlights a fluctuating but increasing trend in publications over the past decade (2014–2024), with the majority of documents being peer-reviewed articles and significant contributions from the United States, Australia, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom. Thematic mapping reveals that the dominant research topics include gender, empowerment, sustainable tourism, and community development, with a strong focus on women's role in economic participation and leadership in tourism. However, the analysis also shows that the intersection of women's empowerment with specific tourism sub-sectors and the impact of policy interventions is still underexplored in the co-emergence network, suggesting a promising direction for future research. Gaps identified include the need for studies on women's access to formal employment, entrepreneurial opportunities, and the influence of local culture and institutional support in diverse tourism contexts. In addition, issues such as access to capital, education, and leadership positions continue to present barriers for women in tourism, highlighting the importance of inclusive policies and stakeholder collaboration.

This study contributes to the advancement of scientific knowledge at the intersection of gender studies, tourism policy, and sustainable development. This research provides insights for researchers and policymakers, especially in developing countries, to drive interdisciplinary discourse and actionable strategies for gender equality and inclusive growth in the tourism

sector. For further research, quantitative research can be carried out to see how much of the level of women's empowerment already exists in the tourism sector.

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