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Exploring Co-Creation Value in Tour Experiences: A Bibliometric Approach

Tur Deneyimlerinde Ortak Yaratım Değerini Keşfetmek: Bibliyometrik Bir Yaklaşım

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Abstract / Öz

The concept of co-creation has gained increasing attention in tourism research due to its close association with experience, interaction, and active participation. Building on this theoretical foundation, the present study adopts a bibliometric approach to systematically examine academic research addressing co-creation within the context of tourist tours. A total of 420 articles retrieved from the Web of Science database were analyzed to identify publication trends, leading journals, influential authors, prominent institutions, contributing countries, and frequently used keywords. The findings reveal the intellectual structure and evolution of the co-creation literature, illustrating how the concept has been conceptualized and operationalized in tour-based tourism research over time. The analysis highlights that co-creation plays a crucial role in enriching tourist experiences by fostering deeper engagement, interaction, and personalization during tours. Moreover, the results demonstrate that co-creation contributes to destinations' competitive advantage by supporting innovation, enhancing service quality, and promoting sustainable tourism practices. By mapping the knowledge base and research trends in the field, this study provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding the academic development of co-creation research in tourist tours. In addition, the findings offer practical insights for tourism practitioners and tour operators, guiding them in designing more participatory, authentic, and sustainable tour experiences that align with contemporary tourist expectations.

Ortak değer yaratımı (co-creation) kavramı, deneyim, etkileşim ve aktif katılım ile olan yakın ilişkisi nedeniyle turizm araştırmalarında giderek artan bir ilgi görmektedir. Bu kuramsal temelden hareketle, bu çalışma turist turları bağlamında ortak değer yaratımını ele alan akademik araştırmaları sistematik olarak incelemek amacıyla bibliyometrik bir yaklaşım benimsemektedir. Web of Science veri tabanından elde edilen toplam 420 makale, yayın eğilimlerini, önde gelen dergileri, etkili yazarları, önemli kurumları, katkı sağlayan ülkeleri ve sık kullanılan temaları belirlemek amacıyla analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, ortak değer yaratımı literatürünün entelektüel yapısını ve zaman içindeki gelişimini ortaya koymakta; kavramın tur bazlı turizm araştırmalarında nasıl kavramsallaştırıldığını ve operasyonelleştirildiğini göstermektedir. Analiz sonuçları, ortak değer yaratımının, turlar sırasında daha derin bir etkileşim, katılım ve kişiselleştirme sağlayarak turist deneyimlerini zenginleştirmede önemli bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, ortak değer yaratımının inovasyonu destekleyerek, hizmet kalitesini artırarak ve sürdürülebilir turizm uygulamalarını teşvik ederek destinasyonların rekabet avantajına katkı sağladığı vurgulanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, turist turlarında ortak değer yaratımı araştırmalarının akademik gelişimini anlamaya yönelik kapsamlı bir kuramsal çerçeve sunmakta; aynı zamanda turizm uygulayıcıları ve tur operatörleri için daha katılımcı, özgün ve sürdürülebilir tur deneyimleri tasarlamalarına rehberlik eden pratik çıkarımlar sağlamaktadır.

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1. Introduction

Over the last decade, marketing literature has undergone a profound transformation in how the relationship between firms and customers is conceptualized, with the traditional product- and service-oriented approach being replaced by experience-based and interaction-based approaches (Jaakkola et al., 2015; Saha et al., 2022). Among the key ideas that

have emerged during this transformation is the concept of "customer engagement" which refers to the deep connection that a customer establishes with a brand, product, or service, not only at the transactional level but also at the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral levels (Brodie et al, 2011; Lim et al., 2022; Siddique et al., 2021). Within this framework, the customer is no longer just a passive consumer but an active partner in the experience process (Mascarenhas et al., 2004). This understanding is of strategic importance due to its potential to strengthen not only customer satisfaction but also loyalty, positive word of mouth, and long-term relationships (Jaakkola et al., 2015; Kumar & Mokha, 2021).

By centering on customer interaction, this perspective has stimulated the development of novel theoretical insights in marketing, especially in the service sector (Jaakkola et al., 2015). Central to these emerging perspectives is the notion of "co-creation," which means "co-creation of value". According to the co-creation theory, value emerges through the interaction between the service provider and the consumer (Saha et al., 2022). The consumer not only lives the experience, but also takes an active role in giving meaning to the experience and shaping its content. Thus, value is co-created not through the delivery of a pre-designed service, but through participation, interaction, and the creation of meaning (Galvagno & Dalli, 2014; Sheth, 2020).

Tourism is one of the service areas where the co-creation approach is most strikingly observed. Its experience-focused infrastructure, its ability to facilitate multi-actor interaction, and its activities stemming from perceptual processes shaped by individual differences create fertile ground for co-creation processes (Cabiddu et al., 2013; Mohammadi, et al., 2021; Phi & Dredge, 2021; Prebensen & Xie, 2017). Tourist experiences in a destination are shaped by the physical environment, the quality of the service provided, industry employees, other stakeholders, and the local community (Sugathan & Ranjan, 2019). In this regard, co-creation in the tourism sector not only meets the individual expectations of individuals but also adds meaning to their experiences, helps them establish emotional bonds, and strengthens their perception of uniqueness (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Galvagno & Dalli, 2014).

Through the co-creation process, tourists not only undergo the experience but also contribute to shaping it (Carvalho & Alves, 2023; Mascarenhas et al., 2004). The co-design of tourism products represents a key strategy for fostering customer satisfaction and loyalty (Chathoth et al., 2016; Lončarić et al., 2017; Mathis et al., 2016; Solakis et al., 2024; Woratschek et al., 2020). In guided tours, guides not only provide information but also help create group dynamics and establish an emotional bond with the destination through their ability to organize the experience (Luo et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2021). Whether tourists want to participate in the experience depends on the tour guide's way of telling the story, the attitude he or she displays, his or her ability to facilitate group interaction, and to provide unique content (Chuang, 2023). Therefore, examining co-creation in the context of guided tours is crucial for understanding tourist behavior and the benefits of participation (Leong et al., 2024). Furthermore, this allows tourists to become more immersed in local culture, participate in local culinary workshops, and witness local product production (Bezova & Azara, 2021; Richards, 2021). These experience-based approaches increase the value of tourist products by strengthening the connection of tourists with the destination by offering unique experiences (San Martin et al., 2013; Gursoy et al., 2014; Zhou & Yu, 2022). However, factors such as commitment and loyalty to the destination, intention to revisit, and positive word of mouth can be positively affected by co-creation value (Buhalis & Inversini, 2014; Hurriyati & Sofwan, 2015; Monteiro et al., 2023; Shoukat & Ramkissoon, 2022; Xie et al., 2020).

In this study, articles on co-creation within the scope of tour experiences were systematically evaluated through bibliometric analysis. Bibliometric analyses provide the opportunity to look at the field from a holistic perspective by revealing the development, main trends, prominent actors, and conceptual structures of academic production on a particular subject (Donthu et al., 2021). In this context, 420 articles in the Web of Science database were examined; production trends by years, the most influential publications, institutions, countries, and thematic orientations were analyzed in detail. Although numerous bibliometric studies in the tourism literature have focused on co-creation, there is a limited number of studies specifically addressing tour experiences. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by providing a systematic map for understanding the theoretical background and practical applications of the concept of co-creation in the context of tours.

1.1. Literature Review

In recent decades, the notion of value co-creation (VCC) has gained significant attention in marketing studies, particularly within service-oriented perspectives (Saha et al., 2022). This approach emphasizes that tourists actively participate in shaping their experiences, moving beyond traditional consumption roles (Cabiddu et al., 2013; Mohammadi et. al., 2021; Phi & Dredge, 2021; Prebensen & Xie, 2017). Co-creation involves a dynamic, interactive process in which services are collaboratively developed alongside customers (Mascarenhas et al., 2004). Tourism, as a sector where experiences encompass both service provision and meaning-making, provides a particularly suitable context for examining co-creation practices (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Galvagno & Dalli, 2014).

The concept of value co-creation was initially introduced by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000, 2004), highlighting a strategic, customer-centered approach in which consumers act as active participants rather than passive recipients. In this model, customers contribute to shaping the process through their input and value-added suggestions. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) emphasize that the interaction between businesses and customers—encompassing factors such as access, risk assessment, and transparency—forms the foundational elements of co-creation. Over time, this framework was further developed within the theoretical context of the service-dominant logic (SDL) proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2008). From this perspective, co-creation marks a significant paradigm shift in the literature, moving beyond traditional service-oriented models. Here, value emerges through service-based economic exchanges and is continuously defined by the customer throughout their engagement, making value creation a dynamic, interactive, and multi-dimensional process rather than a one-way transfer from firm to consumer.

Ranjan and Read (2016) examine the concept of value co-creation (VCC) through two primary dimensions: co-production and use value. The co-production dimension highlights the customer's active involvement in designing and delivering products or services, whereas use value emphasizes the benefits and meanings that customers derive from utilizing these offerings within their own context. This dual perspective illustrates that co-creation extends beyond collaboration in production to include participation in the experience itself and its subsequent evaluation. In the tourism sector, this notion is particularly relevant, as tourists contribute not only to selecting routes or activities but also to shaping the overall experience. Saarijärvi (2012) argues that co-creation encompasses an integrated mix of experiential, symbolic, functional, and economic value propositions. Within a touristic experience, customers actively influence sensory, emotional, and social aspects, rendering value creation inherently multidimensional. Tourism provides a natural setting for co-creation, where interactions with tour guides, fellow participants, and local communities transform standard services into personalized, meaningful experiences. In this context, Pine and Gilmore's (1999) experience economy framework becomes especially pertinent, suggesting that the creation of value stems primarily from the quality and richness of the experience rather than from the service itself.

Payne et al., (2008) refer to the mechanisms that allow customers to engage in value creation as "customer value creation processes," emphasizing that these mechanisms are driven by a continuous cycle of interaction between the firm and the customer. In the context of tourism services, this cycle is facilitated through activities such as providing consultancy, offering guidance, sharing experiences, and collecting feedback. Complementing this view, Grönroos (2012) argues that for customers to participate effectively in value creation, service providers must clearly define and implement the roles of "value facilitation" and "value co-creation."

To provide a clearer understanding of the co-creation process, De Koning et al. (2016) examined fifty models from the literature and proposed four foundational meta-models: joint space, co-creation spectrum, co-creation types, and co-creation steps. These meta-models enable a structured analysis and classification of co-creation processes across both design and service contexts. In tourism, they offer a systematic framework for examining how tourists contribute at different stages of the experience, highlighting their active role in shaping the overall journey.

The advancement of digital technologies has greatly broadened the reach and accessibility of co-creation processes, allowing customers to engage more actively with service providers (Rathore et al., 2016). Through channels such as social media, online reviews, user-generated content, and travel applications, tourists can influence the experience both prior to and following their trips (Sigala, 2016). In this context, Piller et al. (2010) highlight that incorporating digital tools into co-creation enables businesses to respond more quickly and deliver solutions that are tailored to individual customer needs.

Mohammadi et. al. (2021) argue that the majority of the articles on co-creation in tourism are empirical studies with a quantitative design. Furthermore, the survey method was preferred in most of the studies, followed by case analysis and other methods. In this context, the measurement model developed by Ranjan and Read (2016) provides a structured scale that separately assesses the dimensions of value in co-production and value in use, making the bidirectional nature of VCC empirically testable. On the other hand, bibliometric approaches make methodological contributions to the field by mapping the developmental trends, thematic clusters, and research intensities of VCC literature (Saha et al., 2020). In their systematic review, Fan and Luo (2020) addressed VCC studies from the perspectives of service science, innovation management, and consumer culture, drawing attention to the theoretical diversity in the field.

The process of co-creation in tourism experience is of strategic importance both academically and in practice. This concept demonstrates that tourists are active actors at every stage of the experience and contribute to value creation processes in multiple dimensions (Busser& Shulga, 2018). Theoretical frameworks such as conceptual models, service-oriented logic, experience economy, and digital interaction provide solid foundations for structuring co-creation processes in the tourism context. To make these theoretical underpinnings more explicit, Table 1 summarizes the main

authors, the frameworks they employed, and their contributions to understanding the VCC process in tourism.

Table 1. *Theoretical Frameworks Applied in the Study of Value Co-Creation (VCC) in Tourism*

Author(s)	Year	Theory/Framework	Application in VCC
Binkhorst & Den Dekker	2009	Agenda for Co-creation Tourism Research	Proposed an agenda for studying co-creation in tourism, emphasizing tourists as active value creators.
Prebensen et al.	2013	Tourist Resources in Co-creation	Showed the significance of tourist resources in co-creation and their impact on value perception.
Campos et al.	2015	Co-creation of Tourist Experiences	Reviewed literature on tourist experience co-creation, highlighting antecedents, processes, and outcomes.
Prebensen & Xie	2017	Co-creation in Tourism Experiences	Demonstrated that co-creation increases perceived value and satisfaction in tourism contexts.
Sugathan & Ranjan	2019	Co-creating the Tourism Experience	Explored the significance of co-creation by investigating its impact on the tourism experience and customers' intentions to revisit the destination.
Tao et al.	2022	Perceived Co-creation Value Model	Developed a model explaining how customized tour services generate perceived co-creation value.
Zhang et al.	2023	Tourist Co-creation & Marketing Outcomes	Analyzed the impact of tourist co-creation on marketing outcomes such as loyalty and satisfaction.
Ribeiro et al.	2023	Systematic Review of VCC in Tourism	Provided a comprehensive review of value co-creation research in tourism and hospitality.
Yin et al.	2024	Co-creation in Smart Tourism Destinations	Investigated factors influencing co-creation experiences in smart tourism settings using mixed methods.
Orts-Cardador et al.	2025	Bibliometric Mapping of Co-creation Research	Mapped the evolution and clusters of co-creation research in tourism.
Zhang & Prebensen	2025	Value Co-creation in Tourism Live Shopping	Examined how live shopping platforms facilitate co-creation between tourists and businesses.

2. Methodology

This research was carried out by means of bibliometric analysis in order to evaluate academic studies that examine the themes of co-creation in the context of tourist tours. Bibliometric analysis is a robust method widely used to examine and evaluate large volumes of scientific data. This approach reveals the developmental dynamics of a specific field while also revealing the emerging trends within that field (Donthu et al., 2021). Researchers use bibliometric analysis for various purposes. These purposes include identifying new trends in the field and examining journal performance, collaboration patterns, and research components, and discovering the intellectual structure of a specific field within the existing literature (Verma & Gustafsson, 2020).

The research was conducted in three main stages: data collection, filtering, and analysis. During the data collection process, a systematic literature review was conducted using the Web of Science (WoS) database, and the search was carried out on 3 October 2025. The search was initiated by using the keywords ("tour guide" OR "guided tours" OR "tour leader" OR "tours" OR "group tour" OR "package tour" OR "tour company") AND ("co-creation" OR "co-create" OR "customer engagement" OR "tourist engagement"). This search focused on finding comprehensive literature on customer engagement and co-creation in the context of tourist tours. In the second stage, the documents obtained were filtered based on specific criteria. First, only publications classified as "articles" were selected. Subsequently, only studies published in English and indexed under the *Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism* category were included in the final dataset used for analysis. In the last stage, the 420 articles gathered after the essential filtering (Figure 1) were transferred to the RStudio software, and bibliometric analysis was utilized. Bibliometric analysis provides the opportunity to systematically examine the scientific outputs published in a specific research field and to reveal important data such as trends in literature, leading journals, influential institutions, and key concepts. This method is useful for mapping the existing body of knowledge and for identifying gaps in the literature. In addition, it enables the analysis of collaborative networks and supports the development of strategic guidelines for future research.

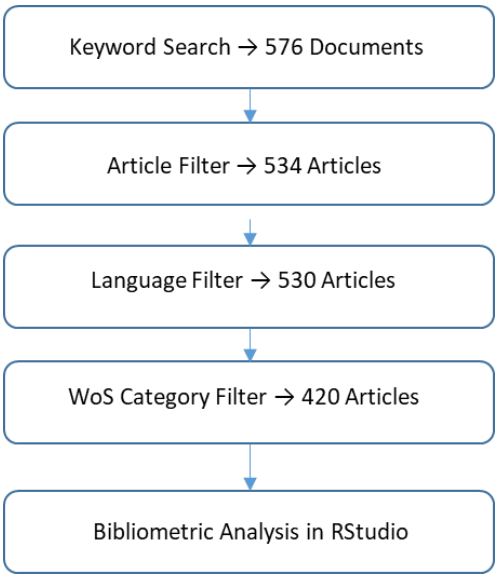

Figure 1. *Flowchart of the Data Acquisition Process*

3. Findings

In this study, the developmental dynamics of the field were thoroughly assessed using analysis techniques such as "Annual Scientific Production", "Most Relevant Journals", "Most Relevant Affiliations", "Most Relevant Countries", "Trending Topics", "Word Cloud", "Most Frequent Words", and "Co-occurrence Network". Thus, a systematic and comprehensive visualization of the literature on co-creation in the context of tourist guiding and tourist tours has been generated.

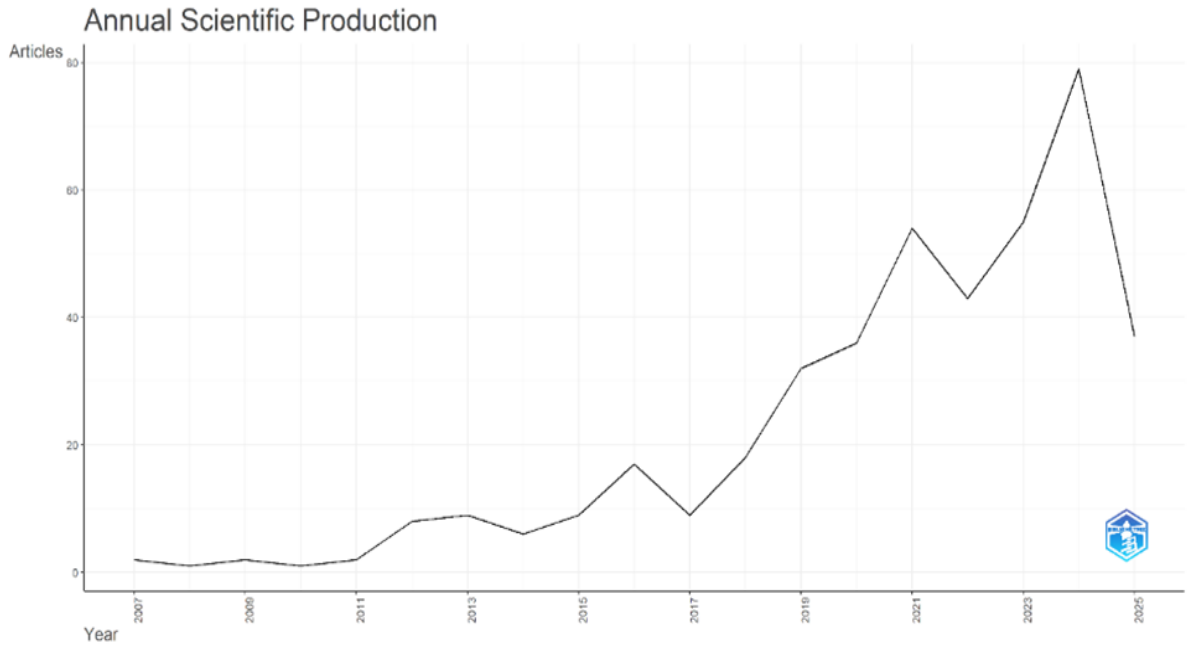

Figure 2. *Annual Scientific Production*

As illustrated in Figure 2, scholarly attention to co-creation within the context of touristic experiences has grown notably, particularly since 2018. The year 2023 stands out as having the highest number of publications, indicating that the topic has become increasingly significant in contemporary tourism research. The apparent decrease after 2024 should be interpreted cautiously, as data for 2025 is still incomplete. Overall, the trend suggests that co-creation is attracting more research interest and that the field continues to gain momentum.

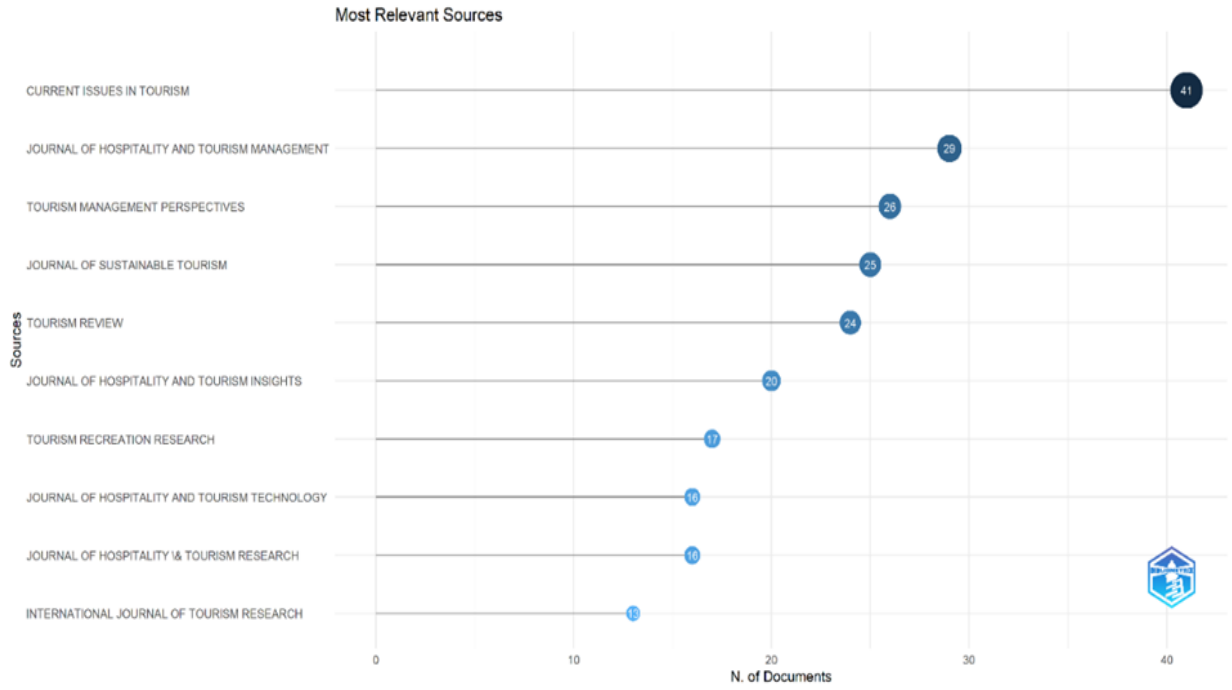

Figure 3. *Most Relevant Journals*

Figure 3 shows that *Current Issues in Tourism* is the leading source, with 41 publications, followed by the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* (29), *Tourism Management Perspectives* (26), and the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (25). Overall, these journals represent some of the most influential outlets in the tourism and hospitality field, suggesting that co-creation is a central topic in the literature, particularly in relation to sustainability and customer experience.

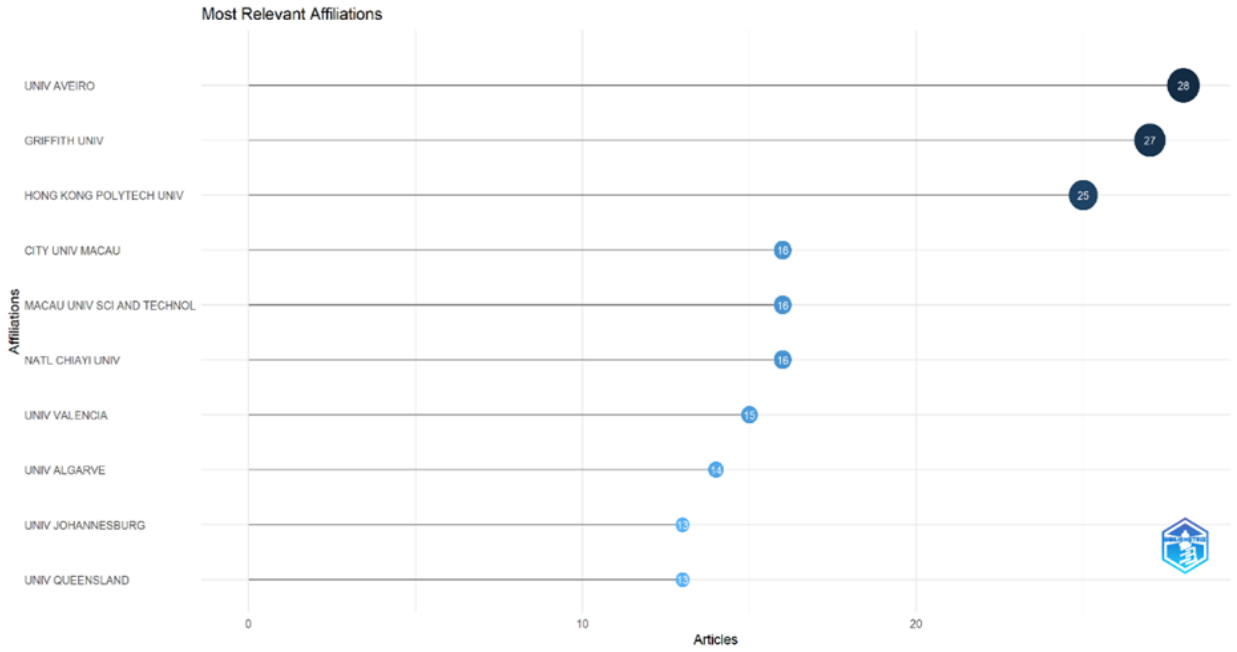

Figure 4. *Most Relevant Affiliations*

Figure 4 presents the distribution of scholarly contributions on co-creation in tourism across various institutions. Leading the list is Universidade de Aveiro (Portugal) with 29 publications, followed by Griffith University (Australia) with 27 and Hong Kong Polytechnic University (China-Hong Kong) with 25. Other notable contributors include City University of Macau (China-Macao), Macau University of Science and Technology (China-Macao), University of Valencia (Spain), and University of Algarve (Portugal), as well as the University of Queensland (Australia), National Chiao Tung University (Taiwan), and University of Johannesburg (South Africa). These results highlight the widespread international interest in the topic.

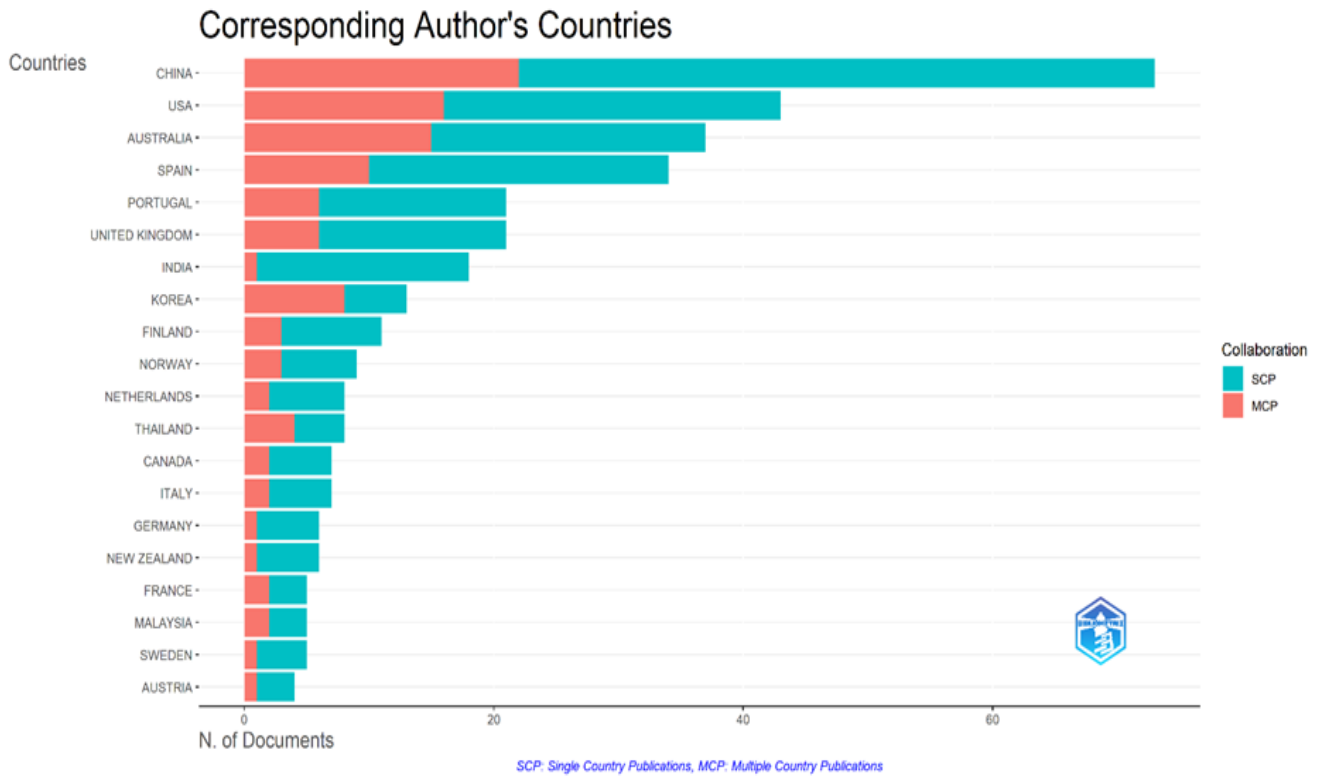

Figure 5. *Most Relevant Countries*

As illustrated in Figure 5, China leads in the number of publications on this topic, with most of its work classified as single-country publications (SCP), reflecting a strong national focus on co-creation research. In contrast, the United States and Australia not only produce a high volume of publications but also engage extensively in multinational collaborations (Multiple Country Publications, MCP), indicating their active participation in international academic networks. Other countries, including Spain, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and India, contribute significantly, primarily through domestic collaborations. Meanwhile, countries such as Norway, the Netherlands, and Thailand demonstrate a relatively higher proportion of international research partnerships.

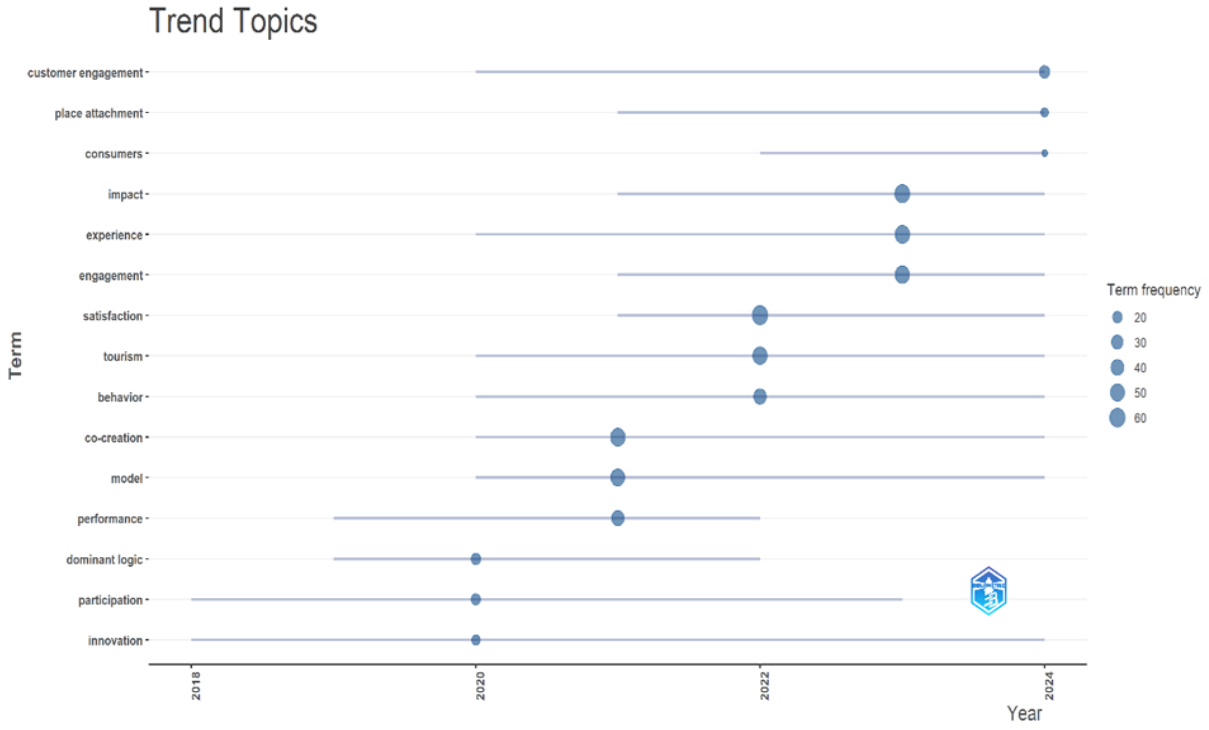

Figure 6. *Trend Topics*

Figure 6 presents a trending topic analysis of literature published after 2018. Keywords such as “experience,” “engagement,” “customer engagement,” and “place attachment” emphasize the experiential and interactional aspects of co-creation. At the same time, terms like “dominant logic” and “innovation” reflect theoretical and strategic perspectives. Additionally, keywords such as “satisfaction” and “behavior” highlight behavioral outcomes, whereas “impact” and “performance” point to the results and effectiveness of co-creation processes. This distribution indicates that research on co-creation in touristic experiences has developed on both theoretical and practical levels.

Figure 7. *Word Cloud*

In Figure 7, the term “co-creation” occupies the central position and appears in the largest font, highlighting its prominence in the literature on this topic. Other frequently noted terms, including “satisfaction,” “experience,” “engagement,” and “impact,” suggest that research often examines how co-creation influences tourists’ overall experience and satisfaction levels. These observations are consistent with previous studies, which indicate that active participation of service users enhances both experience quality and satisfaction. Terms such as “hospitality” and “performance” highlight the sector-specific effects of co-creation, particularly in relation to service quality, while the emphasis on “behavior” underscores its impact on individual actions. This implies that co-creation shapes tourists’ behavioral intentions, including their likelihood of revisiting and sharing positive word-of-mouth. Additionally, the presence of “loyalty” and “place attachment” indicates that the impact of co-creation extends beyond immediate experiences, affecting long-term outcomes such as emotional connection to the destination and future visitation propensity.

Table 2. *Most Frequent Words*

Keyword	f	Keyword	f	Keyword	f
experience(s)	82	co-creation / value co-creation	78	engagement/customer engagement	74
impact(s)	68	satisfaction	64	tourism	52
model	47	behavior	38	performance	36
antecedents	32	hospitality	32	perceptions	29
management	28	motivation(s)	28	intention(s)	27
loyalty	27	quality	26	service	24
social media	23	travel	23	trust	21
authenticity	20	dominant logic	20	involvement	19
participation	18	destination	15	innovation	15
perceived value	15	information	14	visitors	14
consequences	13	consumption	13	CSR (corporate social responsibility)	13
knowledge	13	perspective	13	place attachment	13
scale	13	attitudes	12	industry	12
technology	12	consumers	11	word of mouth	11

To complement the word cloud, Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of key concepts most commonly used in the articles analyzed in this study. Terms such as “experience” (82), “engagement” (74), “participation” (18), and “involvement” (19) reflect tourists’ active participation and interaction within the experience. The co-creation process emphasizes how such engagement not only shapes the experience but also enhances its overall significance. Concepts including “perceived value” (15), “value co-creation” (78), “quality” (26), and “service” (24) indicate that co-creation is closely linked to the value perceived by tourists, which emerges not only from service delivery but also from the personal meaning attached to the experience. The quality of tours and the value of services offered are central factors influencing tourists’ satisfaction and engagement.

Additionally, “trust” (21), “authenticity” (20), and “place attachment” (13) underscore the importance of reliability, authenticity, and emotional connection with the destination in co-creation. Behavioral terms such as “behavior” (38), “intention” (27), “loyalty” (27), and “word-of-mouth” (11) illustrate how co-creation affects tourists’ actions, their willingness to revisit, and their propensity to share experiences. Motivation (28) is identified as a psychological driver shaping tourist participation and the overall co-creation process. The role of digital platforms is also highlighted, with “social media” (23), “information” (14), and “word-of-mouth” (11) emphasizing interactions, information sharing, and experience transfer. Finally, terms such as “model” (47), “antecedents” (32), “consequences” (13), “perspective” (13), “dominant logic” (20), and “mediating role” (11) reflect theoretical and conceptual approaches to co-creation, illustrating the literature’s efforts to understand its components, underlying factors, and outcomes.

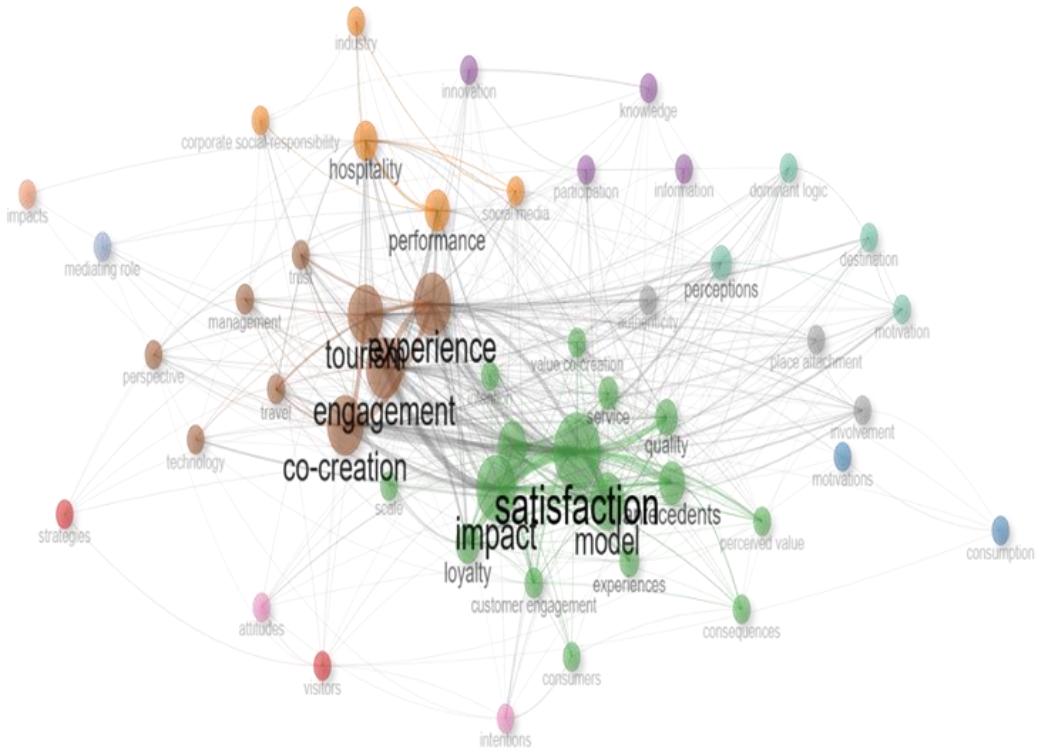

Figure 8. *Co-occurrence Network*

The keyword collaboration network depicted in Figure 8, developed as part of the bibliometric analysis, indicates that research on co-creation in tourist tours exhibits a multidimensional structure. Key terms within the network, such as “co-creation,” “engagement,” “tourist experience,” “satisfaction,” “value,” and “loyalty,” frequently appear together, highlighting their interconnectedness. Notably, the strong connections between “co-creation,” “tourist experience,” and “engagement” emphasize the literature’s focus on tourists’ active participation in the production of experiences. In addition, clusters of keywords related to outcomes, including “satisfaction,” “perceived value,” and “loyalty,” reflect the substantial attention given to understanding how co-creation affects consumer responses. Overall, the clusters illustrate both the experiential and interactional dimensions of co-creation, as well as the outcome-related aspects, such as service quality, behavioral intentions, and overall satisfaction.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The concept of co-creation has gained growing significance in tourism research, particularly in the context of tourist tours, where it is closely linked to experience, interaction, and participation. Evidence from this study suggests that scholarly attention to co-creation in tours emerged around 2007. Since 2018, there has been a notable surge in research output, establishing it as a prominent topic within the field. Nevertheless, most studies remain concentrated on specific countries and academic institutions, highlighting the need for broader geographical coverage and more multidisciplinary approaches in future research.

Word analysis indicates that co-creation functions not only as a marketing strategy to enhance customer engagement but also as a mechanism that enriches and transforms the tourist experience. In tourism—a sector characterized by high experiential value and multiple stakeholders—value is generated through tourists' active participation and tailored interactions, rather than through standardized service packages. Digitalization, however, introduces a new dimension to co-creation, representing a recent trend that reshapes how value is produced. This study provides an indirect framework demonstrating how experience personalization via digital platforms, tourists acting as content creators, and social media interactions are integrated into co-creation processes. The findings highlight the significance of participatory and interaction-focused models in designing tourist tours, illustrating that co-creation offers meaningful benefits for both the quality of the tourist experience and the destination itself.

The analysis reveals that co-creation is closely associated with key concepts such as "engagement," "experience," and "satisfaction," highlighting its critical influence on both tourist satisfaction and the overall quality of experiences. Facilitating individual contributions to tourism products and enabling the co-creation of experiences has been linked in numerous studies to outcomes such as place attachment, positive word-of-mouth, and revisit intentions. These findings suggest that co-creation not only enhances the tourist experience but also contributes positively to the destination's image. The results underscore the importance of incorporating participatory and interaction-focused approaches in the design of tourist tours. By reviewing relevant literature from a comprehensive perspective, this study offers both a theoretical framework for understanding the evolution of co-creation research and practical insights for guiding the tourism industry toward more participatory, authentic, and sustainable experiences.

The analysis also shows that the theoretical foundations of VCC in tour-related studies remain strongly rooted in Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008), the Experience Economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), and the co-creation frameworks introduced by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000, 2004). However, the emergence of digital interaction frameworks and technology-driven perspectives (e.g., Piller et al., 2010) signals a paradigm shift, where co-creation is increasingly mediated by technological infrastructures. This suggests that the field is evolving from purely conceptual discussions toward more practice-oriented, technology-enhanced models of co-creation.

Although this study provides a systematic overview of the literature, it has some limitations. First, the analysis is based only on the Web of Science (WoS) database. While the reliability and comprehensiveness of WoS are remarkable, the exclusion of studies in other important databases, such as Scopus or Google Scholar, limits access to the entire literature. Second, the study only includes articles published in English. Although this choice increased the global inclusiveness of the study, it resulted in the exclusion of valuable research published in languages other than English. This fails to fully represent the linguistic and cultural diversity of the literature. Third, the analysis was restricted to the category of tourism research. While this approach provided a focused and coherent assessment, it excluded contributions from other disciplines that address the concept of co-creation from different angles. Finally, although the bibliometric methodology used in the study was effective in revealing the structure and developmental trends of the literature, the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guideline, a systematic review procedure, was not utilised. The use of PRISMA may provide a more transparent and reproducible structure in the literature selection process. Therefore, the integration of standard protocols such as PRISMA is recommended for future research.

Overall, this study contributes in two main ways. From a theoretical perspective, it provides an integrative overview of the key conceptual frameworks underpinning value co-creation (VCC) research, specifically in the context of tourist tours, showing how foundational theories such as Service-Dominant Logic and the Experience Economy continue to guide the field, while frameworks related to digital interaction indicate emerging trends. From a practical standpoint, the findings provide meaningful implications for the tourism industry by underlining the role of value co-creation as a strategic management approach rather than a merely experiential concept. The study suggests that tour designers, destination managers, and tour guides can actively enhance tourist satisfaction and perceived value by integrating participatory elements into tour planning and delivery. Practices such as involving tourists in decision-making

processes, enabling personalized and flexible tour structures, and facilitating real-time interaction through digital and mobile technologies can strengthen engagement and foster a sense of shared ownership of the experience. Moreover, value co-creation encourages collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including tourists, guides, local communities, and destination management organizations, thereby supporting more inclusive and resilient tourism systems. By emphasizing a tour-focused perspective, the study demonstrates that value co-creation not only improves the quality of tourist experiences but also contributes to destination competitiveness, service innovation, and the advancement of sustainable tourism practices through shared responsibility and collective value generation.

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Ethical approval: Not applicable. This study involves bibliometric analysis of secondary data obtained from published sources.

Conflict of Interest/ Çıkar Çatışması:

Yazarlar, kendileri ve/veya diğer üçüncü kişi ve kurumlarla çıkar çatışmasının olmadığını beyan eder.

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