Bibliometric Analysis of Academic Studies on Cittaslow

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Abstract

The Cittaslow movement aims to develop human-scaled urban models based on sustainability, the preservation of local culture, infrastructure adequacy, and the integration of innovative technologies. A bibliometric analysis of academic publications containing this keyword may provide significant insights. In this research, co-authorship analysis, co-word analysis, and citation analysis were conducted. To this end, a search was carried out in the Core Collection database of the Web of Science (WoS). On May 4, 2025, a search was performed using the keyword "cittaslow*" (slow city = calm city) in the WoS Core Collection, yielding 113 results. Descriptive and bibliometric analysis methods were used to analyze the resulting dataset. For the bibliometric analysis, the VOSviewer software (version 1.6.20) was employed, while the Analyze Results tool in the WoS database was utilized for descriptive content analysis. Based on descriptive statistical inferences, it was determined that the majority of the 113 publications were research articles. The primary keywords most frequently employed by authors include "Cittaslow," "slow city," "sustainability," "slow tourism," "sustainable development," "sustainable tourism," and "slow food." The leading journals publishing research in this area include Tourism Planning & Development, Sustainability, Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, and Local Environment. The inclusion of several Turkish researchers in this analysis reflects the scientific progress and recognition achieved in the field of Cittaslow. It is particularly encouraging to note the involvement of multiple Turkish universities at this stage. Within the context of citation network analysis at the country level, Türkiye's prominent ranking, coupled with its high degree of connectivity and interaction strength, represents a noteworthy accomplishment.

1. Introduction

Cittaslow is an international network of municipalities committed to enhancing quality of life through sustainable and locally driven urban development. The movement originated in 1999 in Italy, inspired by the vision of Paolo Saturnini, the former mayor of Greve in Chianti. Saturnini sought to establish a model whereby cities could assess their development strategies based on quality of life rather than economic growth alone. His ideals were soon embraced by the mayors of Bra (Francesco Guida), Orvieto (Stefano Cimicchi), and Positano (Domenico Marrone), as well as by Carlo Petrini, the founder of the Slow Food movement. The name *Cittaslow* derives from the Italian word *"Città"* (city) and the English word *"Slow"*, reflecting a philosophy that values local identity, cultural heritage, and a slower pace of life. As a global initiative, Cittaslow promotes urban environments where individuals can engage in meaningful social interactions, and where communities are self-sufficient, environmentally sustainable, respectful of artisanal traditions and natural landscapes, and free from infrastructure deficiencies. It also emphasizes the adoption of renewable energy and appropriate technologies to improve everyday urban living [1]. The 72 criteria established by the Cittaslow network are organized under the following thematic categories [1]:

- Energy and Environmental Policies
- Infrastructure Policies
- Urban Quality of Life Policies
- Policies on Agriculture, Tourism, Local Artisans, and Craftspeople
- Hospitality, Awareness, and Education Policies
- Social Cohesion
- Partnerships

Municipalities with a population of less than 50,000 and a governance approach aligned with the Cittaslow philosophy are eligible to apply for membership. The current list of member cities can be accessed through the official website of the International Cittaslow Association [1]. The consumption-oriented lifestyle, which fails to bring happiness and tranquility to individuals, has led people to seek an alternative way of living, giving rise to the Cittaslow movement at the urban level. The Cittaslow philosophy advocates for a pace of life that allows individuals to derive pleasure from living [1]. The member regions of the Cittaslow Türkiye network are listed below (Table 1, Figure 1).

Table 1. Member Towns of the Cittaslow Türkiye Network

City	Town	City	Town	City	Town
Bitlis	Ahlat	Çanakkale	Gökçeada	Ordu	Perşembe
Muğla	Akyaka	Bolu	Göynük	Karabük	Safranbolu
Malatya	Arapgir	Ankara	Güdül	İzmir	Seferihisar
Isparta	Eğirdir	Şanlıurfa	Halfeti	Tekirdağ	Şarköy
Isparta	Yalvaç	Antalya	İbradı	Artvin	Şavşat
Kastamonu	Daday	Bursa	İznik	Erzurum	Uzundere
Antalya	Finike	Erzincan	Kemaliye	Kırklareli	Vize
İzmir	Foça	Muğla	Köyceğiz	Aydın	Yenipazar
Sinop	Gerze	Bolu	Mudurnu		

Source: [2] cittaslow TÜRKİYE. (2025: Cittaslow Türkiye Ağı. https://cittaslowturkiye.org/tr/uye-kentler/

Figure 1. Cities Affiliated with the Member Towns of the Cittaslow Türkiye Network
Source: [2] cittaslow TÜRKİYE. (2025): Cittaslow Türkiye Ağı.

It is noted that significant research is being conducted on the topic of Cittaslow, which, despite appearing as a niche subject, demonstrates substantial progress annually in Türkiye and globally. First of all, an attempt was made to present collectively the studies on Cittaslow in Türkiye that could be found according to the literature review (Table 2).

Table 2. Some of the Studies Conducted in the Context of Cittaslow Cities in Türkiye

Name of the study	Author/s	Short Content
Cittaslow - Association of Cities Worth to Live: Example of Vize	[3] Ergüven, M. H. (2011)	In this study, the Cittaslow process of Vize, a district of Kırklareli, was examined from a theoretical and practical perspective.
Evaluation of Online Consumer Reviews in terms of Travel Motivation: The Case of Cittaslow Finike	[4] Tuncer, M. A. (2024)	This research seeks to evaluate 75 online consumer reviews of Finike, posted on TripAdvisor by visitors who experienced Finike as a designated Cittaslow.
The Concept of Liveability and the Slow City and a Survey about Liveability	[5] Ekşi, Y. E., Baz, İ. (2019)	In municipalities affiliated with the Cittaslow network, efforts have been undertaken to formulate perspectives and recommendations concerning livability from diverse viewpoints.
The City where the Silence has been lost after the Announcement of Cittaslow: Taraklı	[6] Toprak, M. (2018)	The developments in a municipality that met the Cittaslow accreditation standards were examined through a critical lens.
Externality Examination of the Cittaslow Movement: The Case of Seferihisar	[7] Ciğerci, İ., Turan, M. (2023)	Initiatives implemented in Seferihisar have yielded beneficial impacts on urban living. Broadly, the executed projects have been observed to generate positive externalities.
An Online Research on Cittaslow in the Aegean Region: The Case of TripAdvisor	[8] Alimanoğlu, Ç., Ayyıldız, A. Y. (2021)	The favorable and unfavorable experiences of both domestic and international tourists visiting these destinations are systematically categorized.
A Cittaslow on the Side of the River Firat: Arapkir	[9] Tapan, İ. (2024)	The historical development of the cittaslow movement, its relationship with sustainable tourism in Arapkir was investigated.
The Effect of Slow City Phenomenon on Tourism: A Case of Foca	[10] Tamer, M. (2024)	It was discovered that Foça's participation in the slow city movement, the city image has become more distinct, slow tourism has developed, and the marketing and employment opportunities of local products have increased.
City Branding and Slow City Model (Cittaslow) From the Public Relations Perspective	[11] Kuşay, Y., Türkden, D. K. (2021)	The results explored that corporate web pages, Instagram and Facebook posts are not used effectively enough in purposeful communication.
Evaluation of Yalvaç under the International Criteria of Cittaslow	[12] Çolak, E. C. (2019)	Considering the historical heritage and natural beauties of the Yalvaç district, it has been concluded that Yalvaç meets the International Cittaslow criteria to a significant extent.
Seferihisar'ın Sakin Şehir Ünvanını Almasının Morfolojik Yapısına Etkisinin İncelenmesi	[13] Dural, G., Köseoğlu, E. (2022)	This study aims to examine the differentiation in the morphological characteristics of Seferihisar, the first Slow City in Türkiye, before and after receiving this title.
Cittaslow Movement and Settlement Geography	[14] Özür, N. K. (2016)	The study states that as the number of slow cities increases, a new understanding of settlement will emerge, this new understanding will also mean innovation and change for settlement plans, land use, social-eco.activities
Impact of the Cittaslow Approach on Sustainable Local Development: The Case of Şavşat	[15] Öztürk, A., İpek, F., Kayacan, B. (2023)	It has been noted that the Cittaslow initiative positively influences Şavşat's sustainable local development across social, economic, and environmental dimensions; however, the magnitude of this effect remains at a moderate level.

Table 2. Some of the Studies Conducted in the Context of Cittaslow Cities in Türkiye (continued)

Name of the study	Author/s	Short Content
An Investigation of Urban Design Projects in Slow City Vize	[16] Çakır, H. K., Arabulan, S., Çay, R. D., Uğurlu, B. (2022)	Sustainability criteria were evaluated in Vize district of Kırklareli province to provide and develop the Cittaslow criteria.
Cittaslow and Rural Tourism: A Research in Eğirdir District)	[17] İnanır, A., Uslu, A., Çarpak, D. (2019)	In the study, the comments made by local and foreign tourists who visited and had a touristic experience in Eğirdir district, which has a great attraction within the scope of rural tourism and is included in the quiet city network, on the TripAdvisor website were analyzed by content analysis method.
A Study on the Perceptions and Attitudes of Local Stakeholders on the Cittaslow City Network: The Case of Ahlat Cittaslow City	[18] Alkan, A. (2020)	In Ahlat, which was the last city to join the Slow City Movement in Bitlis, Türkiye, it was examined how local stakeholders, namely public institutions and organizations, professional organizations, non-governmental organizations, and individuals and organizations in the tourism industry.
Citta Slow in Middle Black Sea Region: Perşembe: Problems and Contrabitions in the Process of Being Citta Slow	[19] Kabacık, M. (2015)	It is aimed to identify the problems encountered by Ordu province Perşembe district in the process of becoming a slow city and to determine the positive and negative contributions of being a slow city.
The Role of Municipalities in Local Sustainable Development: The Example of Yeniboğaziçi the Cittaslow	[20] Atakara, C. (2016)	The aim of this study is to examine Cittaslows, one of the sustainable local development strategies, and to share the change experienced by the Yeniboğaziçi region in Northern Cyprus with the Cittaslow title.
A Review of Cittaslow Practices on the Economic and Fiscal Structure of Seferihisar	[21] Tunçer, M., Olgun, A. (2017)	This study initially examines the Cittaslow Movement, which significantly enhances urban life, particularly in tourism, by safeguarding local characteristics. Subsequently, through the case study of Seferihisar, Türkiye's inaugural Cittaslow, the economic and fiscal contributions facilitated or potentially enabled by this movement were analyzed.
The Cittaslow Movement and It's Sustainability: Assessments in Gokceada	[22] Bayraktar, S. (2023)	The capacity of Gökçeada, as a Cittaslow member, to fulfill the network's accession criteria, thereby establishing a framework for sustainability and ensuring its long-term continuity, has been investigated.
A Study on the Perceptions and Attitudes of Local Stakeholders on the Cittaslow City Network: The Case of Kemaliye	[23] Orhan, F., Tavuz, M. (2024)	This research, carried out in Kemaliye, a district integrated into the Cittaslow network in 2022, sought to assess the awareness, perceptions, and attitudes of local residents regarding the slow city movement.
An Example of Sustainable Kitchen Application Within the Slow Food Current in Cittaslow Akyaka: Adile Teyze's Cold Fermented Sour Dough Breads	[24] Şahin, S. K. (2022)	This study aims to explore the interplay between the slow food movement and sustainable culinary practices in Akyaka, a designated Cittaslow city in Türkiye.

Table 2. Some of the Studies Conducted in the Context of Cittaslow Cities in Türkiye (continued)

Name of the study	Author/s	Short Content
Slow City as an Alternative of Modern City: Halfeti	[25] Aslan, D. (2019)	This research examines the nature and extent of transformation in Halfeti, a district of Şanlıurfa, Türkiye, accredited as a Cittaslow member, analyzing the opportunities the movement has extended to the district and its community, evaluating its achievements within the region, and identifying any limitations or deficiencies.
Sustainability of Local Food Culture: The Case of Cittaslow Göynük	[26] Yurt, İ. (2024)	This study seeks to elucidate the unique characteristics of the local cuisine in Göynük, a district of Bolu province designated as a Cittaslow, to analyze the factors influencing the sustainability of these culinary traditions.
Cittaslow Policies and Sustainability of Recreational Water Resources in Tourism Areas: An Evaluation Based on Uzundere (Erzurum)	[27] Özgeriş, M., Karahan, F. (2021)	This study seeks to identify the adverse impacts of tourism on recreational water resources in Uzundere and to assess the efficacy of the Cittaslow Union's policies in safeguarding and ensuring the sustainability of these resources.
Evaluation of the Contributions of being a Calm City to Gerze in terms of Indicators of being a Calm City	[28] Öztürk, C. (2024)	The promotion of local products, stimulation of the regional economy, and initiatives fostering tolerance, hospitality, and social cohesion, coupled with robust collaborations among public, private, and civil society entities, substantiate Gerze's eligibility for the Cittaslow designation.
Evaluation of the Tourism Potential of Cittaslow Güdül	[29] Eşiyok, H., Öztürk, Y. (2023)	This study aims to investigate the tourism potential of Güdül district within the framework of the Cittaslow initiative.
To Be a Slow City in The Rural Slowness: Yenipazar	[30] Ak, D. (2019)	The study employed a survey to elucidate the perceptions of Yenipazar residents regarding the district's designation as a Cittaslow.

Advancements in Cittaslow research and related studies are ongoing in Türkiye and globally, with continuous updates to the methodologies employed. For example, the research concentrates on developing alternative tourism routes for Cittaslow Seferihisar using GIS and Network Analysis methods to promote sustainable tourism through informed decision-making processes. Beyond the technical analyses conducted, the study proposes a Strategic Action Plan for Seferihisar and other Slow Cities in Türkiye, aligned with the country's legal planning framework, to translate the study's methodological approach into actionable and feasible strategies [31]. The study highlights how Seferihisar, Türkiye's inaugural Slow City, has emerged as a distinctive brand, successfully fostering a vibrant tourism culture that consistently generates substantial value through adherence to Cittaslow principles [32]. This study seeks to identify the salient visual characteristics of Slow Cities in social media communication, specifically on Instagram, by analyzing content generated by destination management organizations (DMOs) and users. To achieve this, a netnographic approach, rooted in qualitative research methodologies, was employed. The investigation focuses on Instagram as a key

social media platform, examining the nature and themes of content produced by both users and DMOs to elucidate their respective contributions to the portrayal of Slow Cities. The study selected three Slow Cities in Türkiye—Ahlat, Eğirdir, and Halfeti—as the research sample [33]. Although research on slow tourism exists, studies adopting a territorial perspective to examine whether local governments in slow destinations promote their tourism offerings as slow, responsible, and sustainable remain scarce. Grounded in the theoretical framework of the International Cittaslow Network, which delineates the principles of slow tourism, this study employs a range of analytical tools to investigate the characteristics of 12 Cittaslow locations in Spain and two in Africa. The analysis seeks to ascertain whether the representation of their territorial resources on official websites aligns with the philosophical tenets of the Cittaslow network. Findings suggest that most locations need to enhance their communication strategies to better emphasize their status as slow destinations. Consequently, a practical recommendation is proposed to encourage these destinations to promote themselves as slow, responsible, and sustainable tourism hubs without incurring additional costs [34].

Bibliometric analysis, utilizing mathematical and statistical methods (including algorithms and software packages), aims to: i) assess the performance of research parameters (such as studies, authors, journals, keywords, countries, and institutions) through classification, measurement, and ranking; and ii) visualize the intellectual, conceptual, and social structures of the research domain using mapping techniques [35].

While traditional literature reviews provide an in-depth examination of a relatively limited number of studies, bibliometric analyses offer a broader yet more superficial overview of a research field by encompassing hundreds or even thousands of publications. As such, bibliometric research can serve as a foundation for more detailed investigations, including traditional literature reviews and content analyses. Specifically, bibliometric analysis allows researchers to identify the current structure of a research domain, seminal studies, theoretical and methodological linkages, as well as collaborative networks among influential authors. The insights gained from these analyses help to map the field and highlight areas that warrant further, more focused investigation. Consequently, traditional literature reviews and content analyses can be employed to explore these areas in greater depth. In this context, bibliometric analysis should be viewed as a complementary tool rather than a substitute for traditional approaches to literature review [36].

While traditional literature reviews provide an in-depth analysis of a relatively limited set of studies, bibliometric research offers a broader yet more superficial overview by examining hundreds or even thousands of publications within a given field. Consequently, bibliometric analysis can serve as a foundation for traditional literature reviews and content analysis. Specifically, it enables the identification of the structural composition of a research area, key pioneering studies, interconnections between theories and approaches, and the collaborative networks among influential scholars who shape the field. The outcomes of such analyses help to construct a comprehensive map of the research landscape, highlighting topics that warrant more focused and in-depth investigation. These topics can then be further explored through traditional literature reviews and content analysis. In this regard, bibliometric analysis functions as a

complementary tool rather than a replacement for conventional literature review methods [36]. The process of scientific field mapping involves two fundamental components: analysis and visualization [37]. During the analysis phase, similarity matrices and the relationships among various elements—such as authors, keywords, publications, and journals—are computed. The visualization phase then represents these relationships and collaborations through network structures [38]. According to the literature review, a limited number of bibliometric analyses have been conducted on studies related to Cittaslow in Türkiye. A summary of the key findings from the identified sources is presented below.

The bibliometric analyses were conducted using VOSviewer and the Web of Science (WoS) database. Visualization network analysis revealed that the literature on the Cittaslow concept is organized into four main clusters: sustainable tourism, the slow movement, marketing and sustainability, and Türkiye. Furthermore, density-based word cloud analysis identified "Calm City" as the most frequently occurring term. Notably, the findings indicate that the literature on this concept has not yet reached a stage of maturity, and that Türkiye stands out as the most prolific country in terms of scholarly output on the topic [39].

Another study aimed to examine postgraduate theses on the topic of "Cittaslow" in Türkiye between 2010 and 2019. The population of the study consisted of all theses written during this period, identified through a keyword search—"Calm/Slow City", "Cittaslow", and "Slow City"—in the national thesis database of the Council of Higher Education. The sample included 82 master's and doctoral theses that met the inclusion criteria and were publicly accessible. The findings revealed that the majority of the theses on Cittaslow were at the master's level, and academic interest in the topic has increased over time, peaking in 2019. Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University was identified as the institution with the highest number of theses on the subject, most of which were conducted within the Institute of Social Sciences, particularly in the Department of Tourism. Additionally, the theses frequently associated the concept of Cittaslow with sustainability or sustainable cities, with Seferihisar commonly used as a case study [40].

A study aimed to examine the bibliometric characteristics of academic articles and postgraduate theses in the Turkish literature on the topic of "slow city," as well as to identify the current state of research and existing gaps in the field. Academic studies conducted between 2010 and 2023 were identified through searches in the databases of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) Thesis Center, YÖK Academic, Dergipark, Google Scholar, EBSCO, İdeal Online, and SOBİAD using the keywords "slow city," "Cittaslow," and "citta slow." As a result, a total of 353 studies were found, consisting of 127 postgraduate theses and 226 academic articles. These studies were classified according to various parameters, including university, department, advisor title, subject, keywords, author, journal/institution, publication date, and frequency. The data were then analyzed and visually presented. The findings revealed that the majority of studies focused on themes such as tourism, local development, and sustainability. Moreover, the study identified gaps in the literature and provided suggestions for future research directions [41].

This research investigated the branding processes of cities pursuing sustainability goals within the framework of the Cittaslow (Calm City) movement. The study aimed to establish a connection between the features emphasized in the promotional materials of calm cities and tourists' evaluations of these destinations, thereby uncovering the positioning of these cities as destination brands. Data obtained from promotional content and tourist reviews were analyzed using content analysis, and the aspects deemed insufficient in promotional efforts were identified. Additionally, a destination reputation matrix and a destination positioning map were developed for calm cities. According to the matrix, the most successful destination brands among the 25 Cittaslow cities in Türkiye were Eğirdir, Köyceğiz, and Safranbolu [42].

This study conducted a content analysis of postgraduate theses on the topic of Cittaslow in Türkiye. The findings revealed that the majority of graduate research in this field was conducted at the master's level, and that the most influential articles were frequently cited in the bibliographies. It was also observed that more than 70% of the cited sources were domestic, while the use of international sources remained at approximately 30% [43].

The aim of this study is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of research on the concept of Slow City indexed in the Web of Science database. A quantitative research method was employed, and the data were analyzed using VOSviewer and the Bibliometrix R package. Visual network maps were generated to illustrate the relationships among authors, keywords, and publications. The study includes a total of 122 English-language articles published in the Web of Science between 2002 and July 15, 2024. The findings indicate a growing academic interest in the topic, with "slow city," "slow food," and "sustainability" emerging as the most frequently used keywords. Moreover, an evaluation based on Lotka's Law suggests that the field is still in its developmental stage and requires further scholarly attention and contribution [44].

In this study, publications indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases between 2008 and 2022 were analyzed. Initially, 90 publications were identified in the WoS database, where the majority were categorized under tourism-related topics associated with slow cities. An analysis by country revealed that Türkiye ranked first with 33 publications. The most prolific author was Sarah Pink, who also received the highest number of citations. The most frequently used keywords by authors in the WoS database were: "slow city," "slow cities," "sustainable development," "sustainability," "sustainable tourism," "slow food," "slow tourism," and "quality of life." In the second phase, 94 publications were retrieved from the Scopus database. Among these, journal articles were the dominant publication type, accounting for 66 entries. Similar to the WoS findings, Türkiye again ranked first in publication count with 28 studies. The most frequently used keywords in the Scopus database included: "slow cities (Cittaslow)," "Slow City," "sustainability," "quality of life," "slow food," "sustainable tourism," "sustainable development," "slow tourism," "destination marketing," and "small towns/cities" [45].

In a research purpose, a scan was conducted in the National Thesis Center of the Higher Education Council (YÖKTEZ) between October 3 and October 14, 2024. Using the keywords "Slow Tourism," "Slow City," "Cittaslow," and "Slow Food," a total of 61 relevant theses on slow tourism were identified. The findings indicate that the studies

were conducted between 2019 and 2024, primarily within Institutes of Social Sciences, and that most of them were master's theses ranging between 50 to 100 pages in length. Various research methodologies were employed, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. It was found that interviews and observations were commonly used in qualitative research, while standard data collection techniques were adopted in quantitative studies. Based on the analysis, a framework outlining the development process of slow tourism in the academic literature was proposed, along with recommendations for future research focus areas [46].

In another study conducted within this context, academic research on the topic of "slow city" was examined using bibliometric analysis, based on studies that included the keyword "Cittaslow." The publications were retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) database, and a total of 101 English-language articles were included in the analysis, which was conducted using the R programming language. Based on bibliometric indicators such as year of publication, authorship, publication sources, categories, and keyword usage, the total number of contributing authors was found to be 203, with Jaszczak, A. identified as the author with the highest h-index. Globally, the most cited study was an article by Pink, S., published in Local Environment in 2008. The journal Sustainability was the most frequent publication source on the subject, and 2021 emerged as the most productive year in terms of publication count. Furthermore, the keywords most frequently associated with the studies were "Cittaslow," "Slow City," and "Sustainability." Based on these findings, it is recommended that future researchers interested in Cittaslow-themed studies take into consideration these bibliometric insights when designing their research [47].

In the Scopus database, scientific mapping was conducted using the RStudio-based Biblioshiny software. According to the analysis results, a total of 182 publications on the topic were identified between 2003 and 2024, with the highest number of publications occurring in 2021. The most prolific authors in this field were Pink and Jaszczak. In terms of country distribution, Türkiye, Poland, and the United Kingdom (UK) ranked as the top three contributors to the literature on slow cities. Prominent institutions involved in this research area included Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie, Loughborough University, Queensland University of Technology, Dokuz Eylül University, Istanbul Technical University, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute. According to the data analyzed via Biblioshiny, the most frequently cited journals were Sustainability (Switzerland), Journal of Sustainable Tourism, and Tourism Planning and Development. In addition, thematic maps and factorial analyses were generated to visualize the statistical patterns in the dataset. The most frequently occurring keywords across the publications were "sustainable development," "quality of life," "urban development," "urban planning," "slow tourism," "urban areas," and "globalization" [48].

This study employed a bibliometric approach to analyze academic literature that includes the keyword *cittaslow*, utilizing the VOSviewer software package to visualize and interpret the data [49].

2. Materials and Methods

In the study, several types of bibliometric analyses were conducted, including co-authorship analysis, co-occurrence analysis, and citation analysis.

In bibliometric research, scientific field mapping is conducted in accordance with the principles outlined below [35]. To uncover the social structure of the research field, a collaboration network is constructed using co-authorship analysis. To reveal the conceptual structure, a conceptual network is developed through co-word (co-occurrence) analysis. Lastly, the intellectual structure of the field is identified through a citation network, which is examined using co-citation and bibliographic coupling analyses.

For this purpose, data were retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection database. Within the WoS database menu, searches were conducted using the "Editions" option and by selecting "All Fields" under the "Documents" menu to ensure comprehensive coverage. Initially, keyword searches were performed without the use of quotation marks, which resulted in retrieval of documents that were only partially relevant to the intended concepts. To improve accuracy and retrieve more precise results, subsequent searches enclosed keywords in quotation marks. Additionally, wildcard characters (e.g., *) were used during the search process to capture variations in spelling and word forms. By placing an asterisk either before or after a search term, it was possible to include all relevant derivatives of a keyword, thereby expanding the scope of the search and ensuring more inclusive results [35].

The search was carried out in the Core Collection database of the Web of Science (WoS). On May 4, 2025, a search was performed using the keyword "cittaslow*" (slow city = calm city) in the WoS Core Collection, yielding 113 results. Descriptive and bibliometric analysis methods were used to analyze the resulting dataset.

To download the dataset, the *Tab-Delimited File* option was selected under the *Export* menu on the Web of Science (WoS) database results page. Since the total number of search results was 113, the *All Records on Page* option under the *Record Options* menu was chosen. Because the number of results was below 500, the records were exported in a single batch ranging from 1 to 113. In the same window, under *Record Content*, the *Full Record and Cited References* option was selected before clicking the *Export* button. The resulting file was then saved in an appropriate location for further analysis. To ensure systematic organization and transparency of the data collection process, the classification and reporting of the dataset followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram framework [50, 51].

In the analysis of the obtained dataset, both descriptive analysis—a qualitative research method—and bibliometric analysis were employed. The bibliometric analysis method was previously described in detail in earlier sections. Descriptive analysis refers to systematic investigations that aim to identify and evaluate the general trends in scientific research within a specific framework [52, 53, 54]. From a methodological perspective, content analysis plays a critical role in identifying overarching trends in the field. It serves to guide stakeholders by organizing and interpreting scientific studies conducted according to defined topics and criteria [55]. For the bibliometric analysis, the

VOSviewer software package (version 1.6.20) was used, while the *Analyze Results* feature of the Web of Science (WoS) database supported the descriptive content analysis. The data, originally obtained in "txt" format, were transferred to Excel for processing.

VOSviewer is a network analysis software designed to construct and visualize bibliometric maps based on network data. In this study, the analyses focused on co-authorship, co-word (co-occurrence), citation, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation. VOSviewer provides three primary visualization options for these analyses: (i) network visualization, (ii) overlay visualization, and (iii) density visualization. It should be noted that overlay visualization is not available for co-citation analysis within VOSviewer [55]. As the study utilizes secondary data sources, it is exempt from ethics committee approval.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Descriptive Analysis

Within the framework of descriptive statistical inferences, based on the WoS category, the primary journals containing the 113 studies with the search term "cittaslow" are listed as follows: Sustainability (9), Tourism Planning Development (5), Journal of Geography - Coğrafya Dergisi (3), Journal of Sustainable Tourism (3), Land (3), and other journals.

When the distribution of studies by year was examined, it was observed that the highest number of studies was conducted in 2020 (51 studies), followed by 2021 with 17 studies, and 2022 with 11 studies. Additionally, 9 studies were carried out in 2015, 8 studies each in 2019 and 2024, and 7 studies in 2018. The remaining studies were distributed across other years with lower frequencies. It was determined that approximately 90% of the studies were journal articles, while the remaining 10% consisted of proceeding papers, book chapters, review articles, and early access publications. Among the 113 studies analyzed, 105 were written and published in English. The research areas in which studies on the Cittaslow concept have been conducted are presented below (Figure 2).
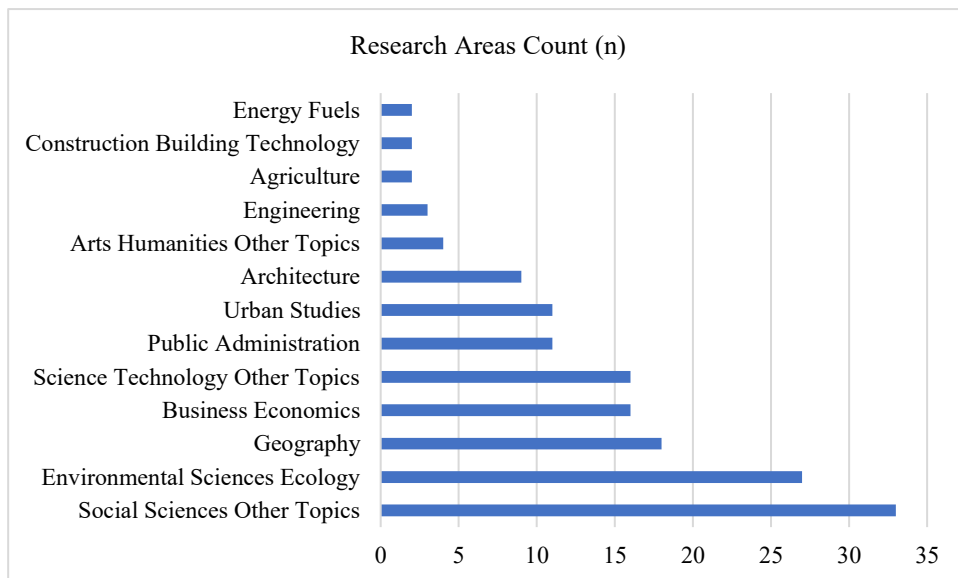

Research Areas Count (n)

Figure 2. The Research Areas in which Studies on the Cittaslow Issue

"Social Sciences - Other Topics" ranked first among the research areas. An overview of some of the most frequently cited studies is provided below (Table 3). Among the ten most cited studies, two publications are authored by Pink, S.

Table 3. Major studies with the highest number of citations

The Name of the Study	Authors	Journal	Citation Count (n)
Sense and Sustainability: The Case of the Slow City Movement	Pink, S.	Local Environment, 2008. 13, 2, 95-106.	77
Role of Place Attachment Dimensions in Tourists' Decision-Making Process in Cittaslow	Han, J. H., Kim, J. S., Lee, C. K., Kim, N.	Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 2019. 11, 108-119.	75
CittaSlow: Producing Slowness against the Fast Life	Miele, M.	Space and Polity, 2008. 12, 1, Special Issue, 135-156.	71
'Cittaslow' Eco-Gastronomic Heritage as a Tool for Destination Development	Nilsson, J. H., Svärd, A. C., Widarsson, Å., Wirell, T.	Current Issues in Tourism, 2011. 14, 4, 373-386.	62
Re-thinking Contemporary Activism: From Community to Emplaced Sociality	Pink, S.	Ethnos, 2008. 73, 2, 163-188.	51
The Cittaslow Philosophy in the Context of Sustainable Tourism Development; The Case of Türkiye	Ekinci, M. B.	Tourism Management, 2014. 41, 178-189.	49
A Place-Sustaining Framework for Local Urban Identity: An Introduction and History of Cittaslow	Radstrom, S.	Italian Journal of Planning Practice, 2011. 1, 1, 90-113.	46
Exploring Slow City Attributes in Mainland China: Tourist Perceptions and Behavioral Intentions toward Chinese Cittaslow	Chi, X., Han, H.	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 2020. 37, 3, 361-379.	43
The Potential of Cittaslow for Sustainable Tourism Development: Enhancing Local Community's Empowerment	Park, E., Kim, S.	Tourism Planning & Development, 2016. 13, 3, 351-369.	43
The Value of Cittaslow as an Approach to Local Sustainable Development: A New Zealand Perspective	Semmens, J., Freeman, C.	International Planning Studies, 2012. 17, 4, 353-375.	40

3.2. Bibliometric Analysis

In this section, the results of the bibliometric analysis are presented and evaluated in detail.

3.2.1. Co-Authorship Analysis

Co-author analysis aims to identify collaboration networks among authors, their affiliated institutions, and their countries based on the studies included in the dataset. Unlike analyses that explore the intellectual structure of a research field, co-authorship analysis focuses on social connectivity, as co-authorship is considered an indicator of strong social ties within academic networks.

In the co-author analysis, the type of analysis was set to "co-authorship," and the unit of analysis was defined as "authors". A total of 5 clusters were identified across 12 units, with 21 links and an overall link strength of 23.

The threshold for inclusion was set at a minimum of one study and one citation per author. Of the 215 authors evaluated, 160 satisfied these criteria and were found to be interconnected within the network (see Figure 3). The distribution of the most prolific authors is presented in Table 4 below. The prominence of numerous Turkish scientists at the forefront of the list underscores Türkiye's notable success in this domain.

Table 4. Co-Authorship Analysis Based on Individual Authors

Author name	Number of publications (n)	Total link strength	Author name	Number of publications (n)	Total link strength
Jaszczak, A.	6	13	Cosar, Y.	2	3
Farelnik, E.	5	6	Kozak, M.	2	3
Wierzbicka, W.	5	3	Kucukergin, F. N.	2	3
Kim, S.	4	6	Ozturen, A.	2	3
Pink, S.	4	2	Ozturk, Y.	2	3
Park, E.	3	4	Senetra, A.	2	3
Pochodyla, E.	2	6	Ince, E.	2	3
Abbate, T.	2	5	Can, M. C.	2	2
Kristianova, K.	2	5	Chi, X.	2	2
Stanowicka, A.	2	4	Han, H.	2	2

In the co-authorship analysis, the analysis type was designated as co-authorship, with organizations selected as the unit of analysis. The minimum threshold for institutions was set at one study and one citation. Of the 127 organizations evaluated, 97 met these criteria (Table 5).
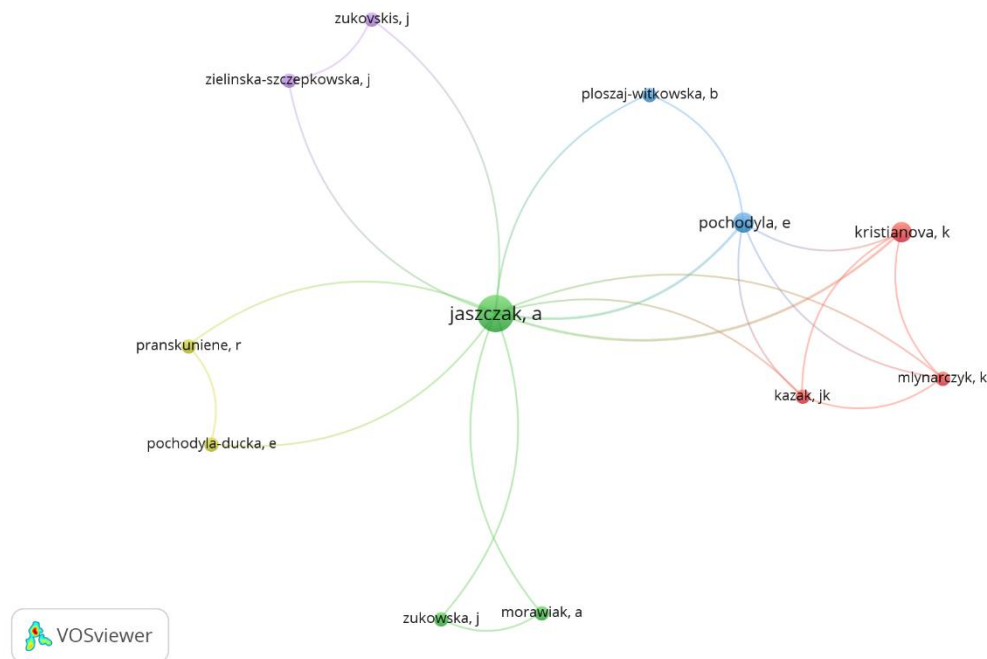

Figure 3. Visualization of Author Collaboration: Co-Authorship Network Map

Upon examining the co-authorship analysis within the organizational context, it is evident that the co-authorship connections are relatively weak. However, the prominent ranking

of numerous Turkish organizations suggests that substantial and impactful research on the topic of Cittaslow is being conducted in Türkiye (Figure 4). Nevertheless, the connection strengths of organizations originating from Türkiye appear to be comparatively low. The co-authorship network analysis identified four clusters comprising seven units, with a total of seven connections and an overall connection strength of eight.

Table 5. Co-Authorship Analysis within the Organizational Framework

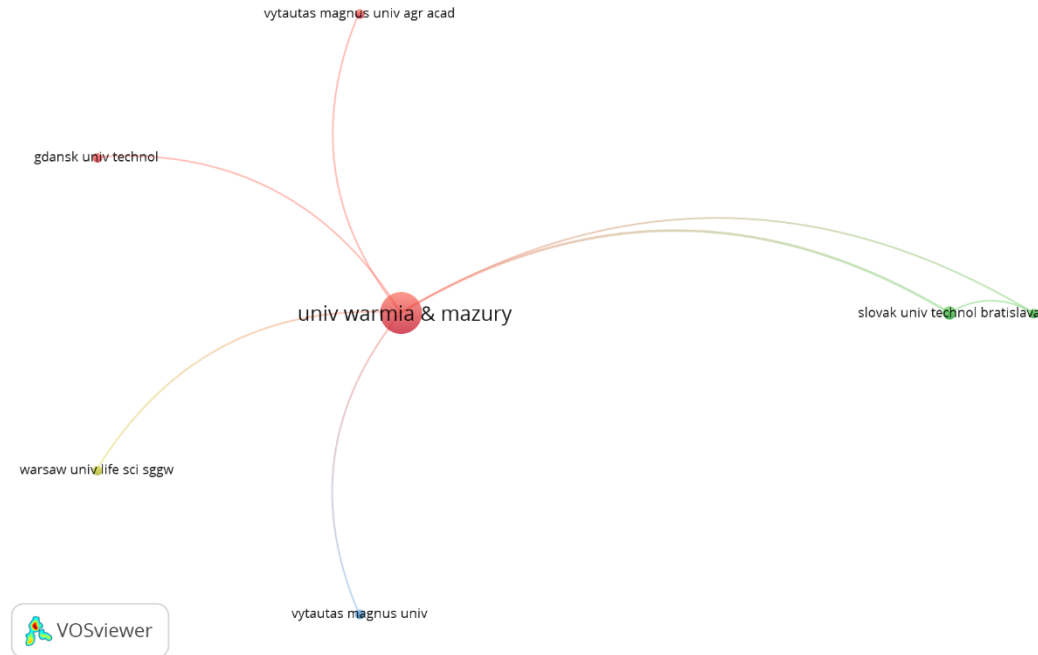| Organization name	Number of publications (n)	Total link strength	Organization name	Number of publications (n)	Total link strength
Univ. of Warmia & Mazury	18	7	Istanbul Univ.	2	2
Dokuz Eylul Univ.	5	0	Bilecik Seyh Edebali Univ.	2	1
Ankara Haci Bayram Veli Uni.	4	2	Canakkale Onsekiz Mart Univ.	2	0
Nanjing Xiaozhuang Univ.	2	5	Eastern Mediterranean Univ.	2	0
Univ. of Messina	2	4	Karadeniz Tech. Univ.	2	0
Slovak Univ. of Tech. Bratislava	2	3	Sejong Univ.	2	0
Istanbul Tech.Un.	2	3	Univ. of Gdansk	2	0
Flinders Univ. S. Australia	2	2	Univ. of Loughborough	2	0
Lincoln Univ.	2	2	Jiangsu Univ. of Technol.	1	4
Rmit Univ.	2	2	Nanjing Univ. Posts & Telecommun	1	4

Figure 4. Co-Authorship Network Analysis in the Context of Organizations

The co-authorship network map analyzed at the country level is presented in Figure 5, with the most prominent countries highlighted in Table 6 below. In the co-authorship analysis, the analysis type was designated as co-authorship, with countries as the unit of analysis. The minimum threshold was set at one document and one citation per country. Of the 35 countries evaluated, 25 met these criteria and were found to be interconnected within the network. The countries with the highest research output were identified as Türkiye, Poland, Australia, England, the United States, and China, in that order, as detailed in Table 6. The network map (Figure 5) visualizes these relationships, highlighting the collaborative dynamics among these nations.

Table 6. Co-Authorship Analysis within a Country-Level Context

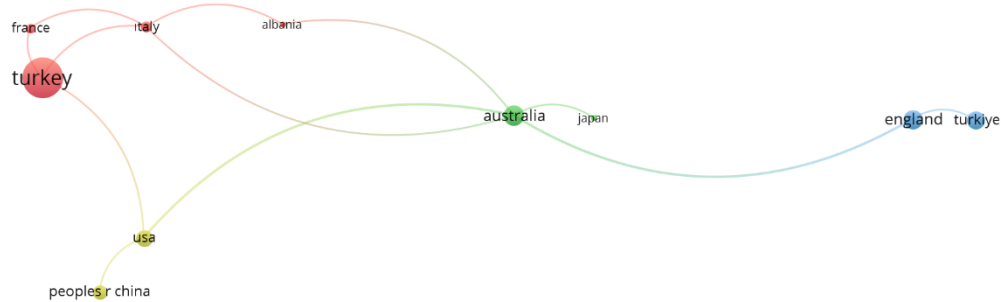| Country name	Number of publications (n)	Total link strength	Country name	Number of publications (n)	Total link strength
Türkiye	36	3	South Korea	3	0
Poland	24	4	France	2	2
Australia	9	7	Lithuania	2	2
England	8	3	Slovakia	2	2
Türkiye	7	1	Canada	2	1
USA	6	4	Sweden	2	1
China	5	1	Germany	2	0
Italy	3	4	Albania	1	2

Figure 5. Co-Authorship Network Map in the Context of Countries

3.2.2. Co-Word/Co-Occurrence Analysis

Co-word analysis is a method used to assess the frequency of terms appearing in the titles, abstracts, and keywords of studies within a specific research field, as well as to map the relational networks among these terms. The unit of analysis in this approach consists of terms extracted from the title, abstract, and keyword sections of publications. However, two challenges may arise in the context of common-word analysis: (i) keywords may not be included in the bibliographic data of certain journals, and (ii) relying solely on keywords may introduce an "indexing effect," where the validity of the analysis depends on whether the indexer has accurately captured relevant terms from the text. The co-

occurrence of two keywords across different articles within the same field indicates a connection between those terms, facilitating the identification of subtopics within the research domain. The underlying assumption of this analysis is that the frequency of co-occurring words in publications and the meanings they represent are closely interconnected. In the VOSviewer software, used for common-word analysis, a minimum threshold of five citations and one article was applied to enhance the clarity of the visualizations. The resulting outputs were ranked based on the frequency of keyword occurrences [35]. This approach enables a structured exploration of key themes and their interconnections within the research field.

The network map generated through Co-Word analysis of the author keywords is illustrated in Figure 6. The minimum occurrence threshold for a keyword was set at 1, resulting in the selection of 312 keywords. The analysis identified 290 units, 32 clusters, 1083 links, and a total link strength of 1188. The primary keywords most frequently used by the authors were determined to be "cittaslow," "slow city," "sustainability," "slow tourism," "sustainable development," "sustainable tourism," and "slow food" (Figure 6) (Table 7).
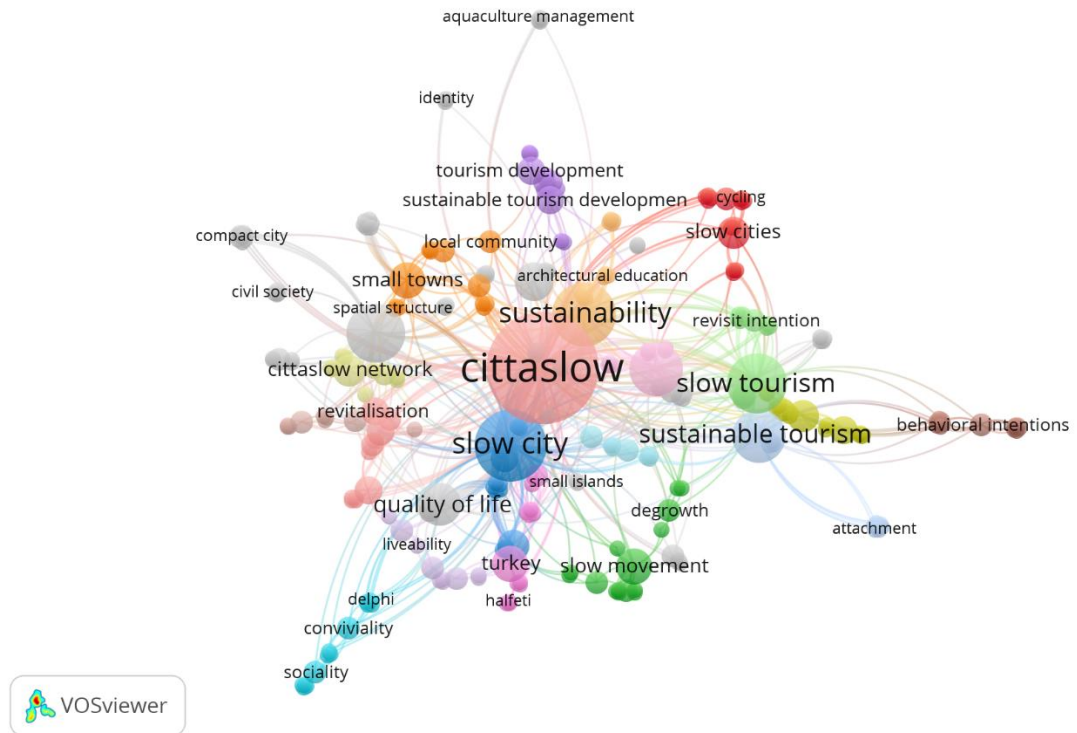

Figure 6. Network Map of Co-Word Analysis Based on Author Keywords

Table 7. Co-Occurrence Analysis of Author Keywords

Key word	Number of occurrences (n)	Total link strength	Key word	Number of occurrences (n)	Total link strength
Cittaslow	48	222	Türkiye	5	22
Slow city	20	96	Slow movement	5	17
Sustainability	16	75	Seferihisar	4	21
Slow tourism	14	71	Slow cities	4	16

Sustainable development	13	64	Destination marketing	4	15
Sustainable tourism	11	53	Cittaslow network	4	13
Slow food	11	48	Sustainable urban development	3	16
Quality of life	7	37	Revitalisation	3	13
Tourism	6	24	Sustainable tourism development	3	13
Small towns	5	28	Network of cities	3	12

3.2.3. Citation Analysis

Citation analysis is employed in the literature with two distinct meanings and purposes. These are: (i) citation analysis based on the studies within the downloaded dataset, and (ii) citation analysis based on the bibliographies of those studies. VOSviewer adopts the first approach, focusing on the analysis of the studies included in the dataset. In this context, the general structure of the research field is determined using specific statistical indicators. Consequently, when conducting citation analysis via VOSviewer, it becomes possible to identify the most influential studies, journals, authors, institutions, and countries—limited to those present in the downloaded dataset. Therefore, citation analysis, as implemented by VOSviewer, serves as a method for evaluating the performance or contribution of various elements within a research field based on publication and citation counts. It should also be noted that citation information reflects only the number of citations received by the articles in the dataset from other publications indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) [35].

At this stage, after selecting citation analysis as the type of analysis, studies, journals, authors, institutions, and countries can be chosen as the units of analysis. In the first step, citation analysis was conducted at the level of individual studies (Figure 7).

A minimum citation threshold of 1 was applied, leading to the inclusion of 89 out of 113 studies in the analysis. Table 8 presents the top-ranking studies along with their respective authors, citation counts, and link values. As noted above, the number of citations to the author Pink is quite high.

Table 8. Citation Analysis Based on Studies

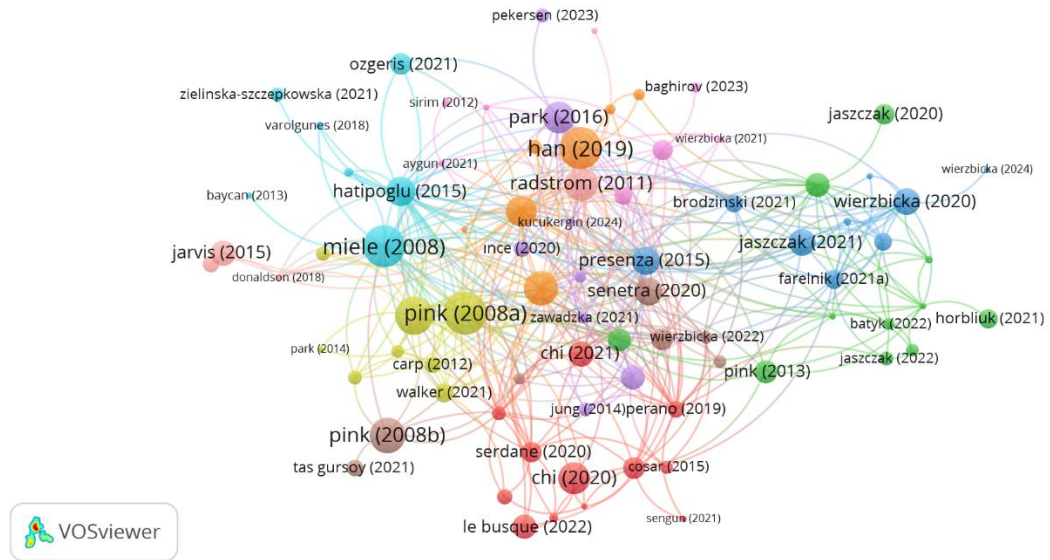| Author name	Citation count (n)	Total link count (n)	Author name	Citation count (n)	Total link count (n)
Pink (2008a)	77	26	Hatipoglu (2015)	37	30
Han (2019)	75	8	Senetra (2020)	33	15
Miele (2008)	71	29	Presenza (2015)	32	17
Nilsson (2011)	62	21	Wierzbicka (2020)	30	17
Pink (2008b)	51	8	Jaszczak (2021)	30	6
Ekinci (2014)	49	20	Jarvis (2015)	27	3
Radstrom (2011)	46	28	Chi (2021)	26	7
Park (2016)	43	19	Zawadzka (2017)	25	19
Chi (2020)	43	4	Le Busque (2022)	24	4
Semmens (2012)	40	32	Pink (2013)	23	6

Figure 7. Citation analysis map in the context of studies

This time, after selecting citation analysis as the type of analysis, sources (journals) were selected as the unit of analysis (Figure 8). The minimum thresholds were set to at least one publication and one citation per source (journal). A total of 66 out of 81 sources met these criteria, as shown in Table 9. The journals titled Tourism Planning & Development, Sustainability, Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, Local Environment are the journals in question are at the top.

Table 9. Source-Based (Journal-Level) Citation Analysis

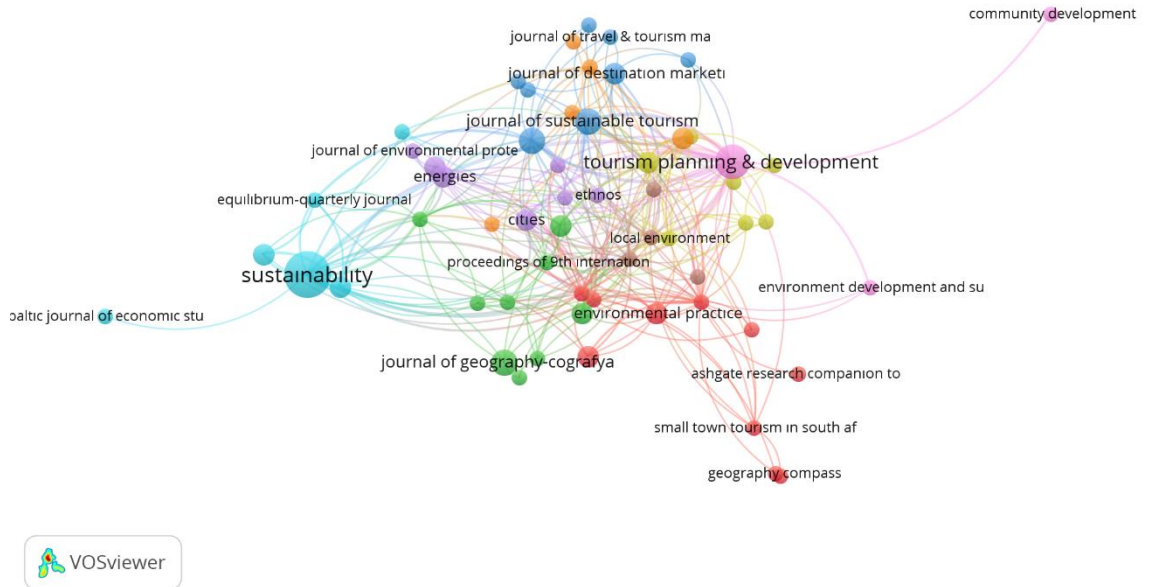| Source (Journal)	Number of publications (n)	Citation count (n)	Total link strength	Source (Journal)	Number of publications (n)	Citation count (n)	Total link strength
Tourism Planning & Development	5	130	80	Italian Journal of Planning Practice	1	46	30
Sustainability	9	79	47	Oeconomia Copernicana	2	44	26
Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	2	79	14	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	1	43	4
Local Environment	1	77	26	International Planning Studies	1	40	35
Space and Polity	1	71	32	Cities	2	35	24
Current Issues in Tourism	2	64	29	Land	3	34	30
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	3	62	24	Geography Compass	1	27	3
Ethnos	1	51	8	Transylvanian Rev.of Administ. Sciences	1	25	21
Tourism Management	1	49	21	Tourism Recreation Research	1	24	5

Figure 8. Citation Network Map Based on Source Journals

At this stage, citation analysis was performed using authors as the unit of analysis. A threshold of at least one document and one citation per author was applied. Among the 215 authors, 160 satisfied these criteria.
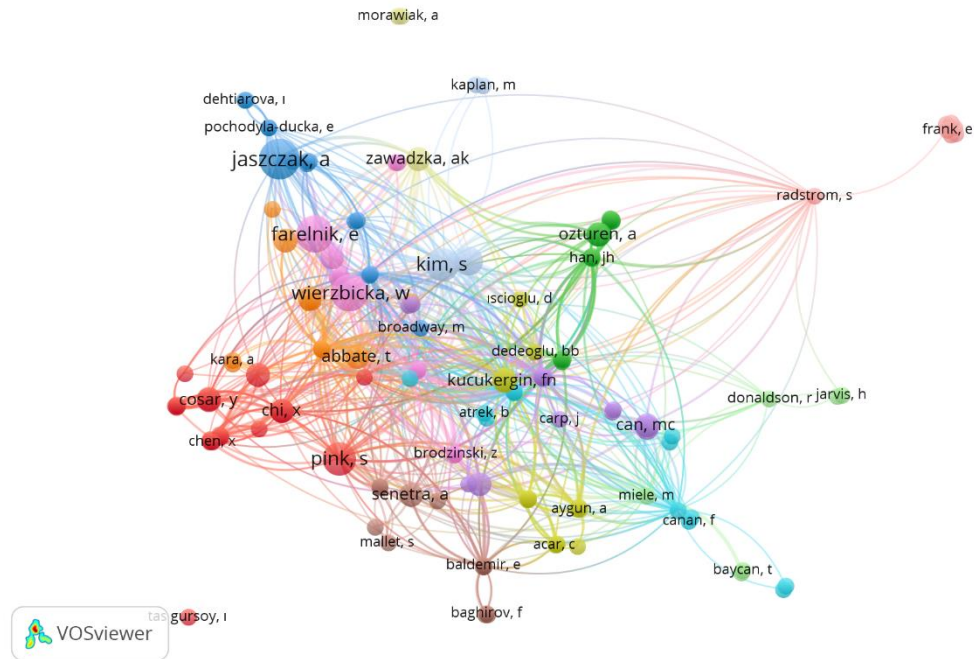

Figure 9. Citation Network Map Based on Authors

The inclusion of certain Turkish researchers in this analysis reflects the scientific progress and recognition attained in the field of Cittaslow. In this phase of the study, citation analysis was conducted using organizations as the unit of analysis (Figure 10).

The minimum publication count for an institution has been set at 1, and the minimum citation count for an institution has been established as 1. Out of 127 institutions, 97 have met these threshold criteria. It is gratifying to note that, at this stage, several Turkish universities are also included.

In this section, citation analysis was selected as the type of analysis, and countries were chosen as the unit of analysis (Figure 11). The minimum publication count for a country has been set at 1, and the minimum citation count for a country has been established as 1. It has been determined that 25 out of 35 countries have met these threshold criteria.

In the context of citation network analysis among countries, Türkiye's prominent ranking, along with its high level of connectivity and interaction strength, is regarded as a significant achievement.
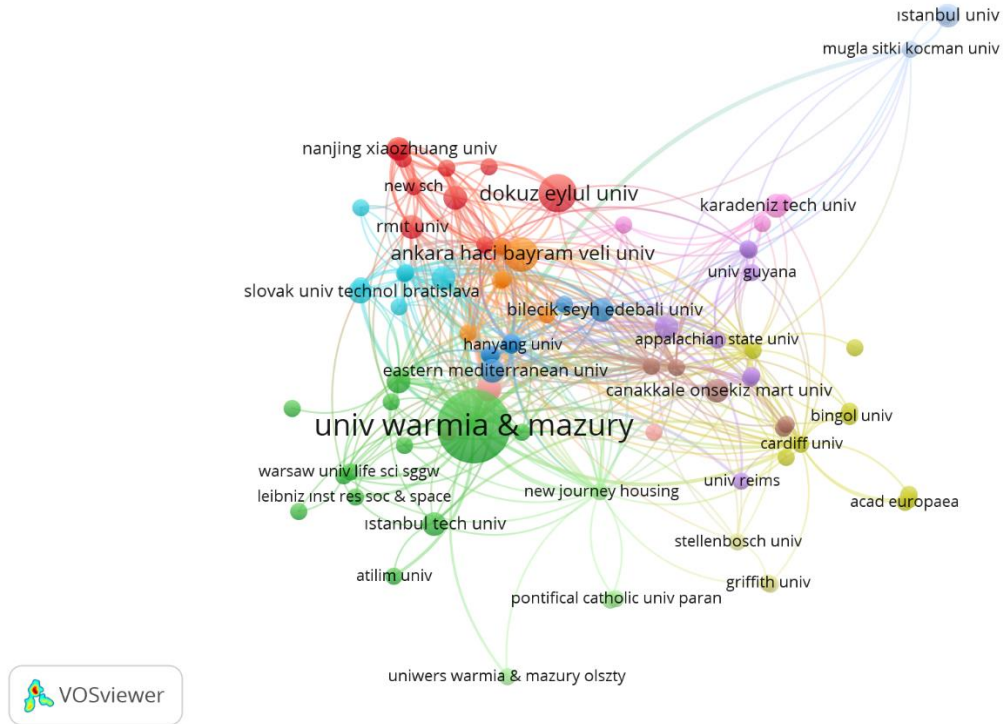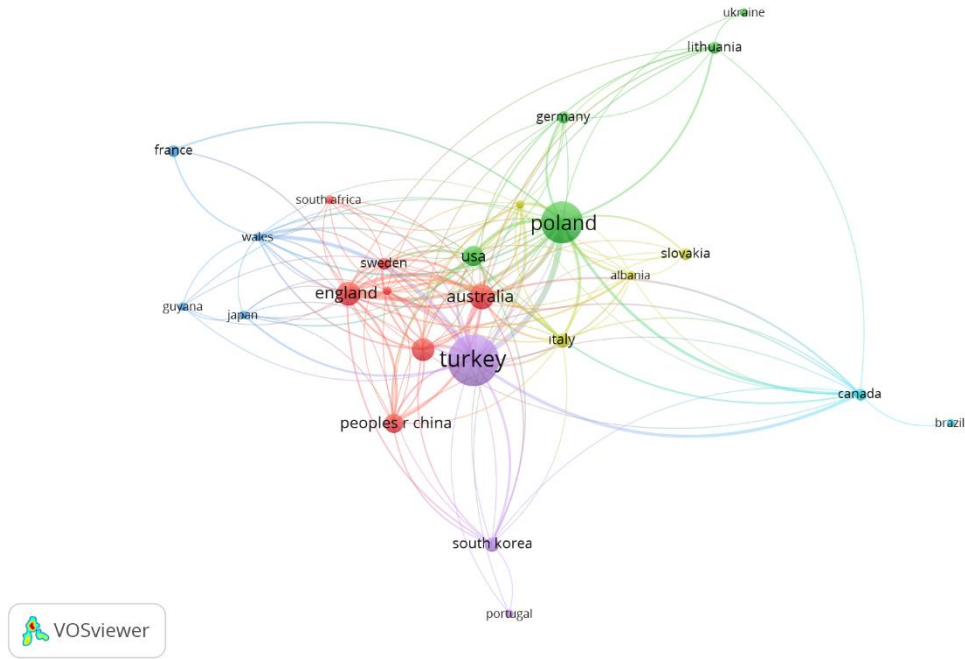

Figure 10. Citation Network Map Based on Organization

Figure 11. Citation Network Map Based on Countries

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The realization that a consumption-driven lifestyle does not bring happiness or tranquility has led individuals to seek alternative ways of living, giving rise to the Cittaslow movement at the urban level. The Cittaslow philosophy advocates for a pace of life that allows individuals to derive pleasure from living. The Cittaslow movement aims to foster cities that serve as realistic alternatives—cities where people can communicate and socialize with one another, which are self-sufficient, sustainable, and committed to preserving their crafts, nature, traditions, and customs. At the same time, these cities are envisioned to be free from infrastructure problems, utilize renewable energy sources, and benefit from the conveniences of technology. The Cittaslow movement seeks to develop human-centered urban models grounded in sustainability, the preservation of local culture, adequate infrastructure, and the integration of innovative technologies. Research involving the Cittaslow concept spans a diverse array of disciplines, reflecting its interdisciplinary relevance. A bibliometric analysis of academic publications featuring this keyword can offer valuable insights for all stakeholders engaged in the movement. In this study, co-authorship analysis, co-word analysis, and citation analysis were performed to explore these dimensions. The prominence of numerous Turkish researchers at the forefront of this field underscores Türkiye's significant achievements in Cittaslow-related research. An examination of co-authorship analysis within an organizational context reveals relatively weak co-authorship connections. Nevertheless, the high ranking of several Turkish institutions indicates that substantial and impactful research on the Cittaslow concept is being conducted in Türkiye. However, the connectivity strength of Turkish organizations remains comparatively low.

A co-authorship network map, analyzed at the country level, highlights the most prominent countries in this domain. For the co-authorship analysis, the analysis type was set as co-authorship, with countries designated as the unit of analysis. The minimum threshold was established at one document and one citation per country. The countries with the highest research output were identified as Türkiye, Poland, Australia, England, the United States, and China.

The primary keywords most frequently employed by authors include "Cittaslow," "slow city," "sustainability," "slow tourism," "sustainable development," "sustainable tourism," and "slow food." Notably, the author Pink has garnered a substantial number of citations. The leading journals publishing research in this area include Tourism Planning & Development, Sustainability, Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, and Local Environment. The inclusion of several Turkish researchers in this analysis reflects the scientific progress and recognition achieved in the field of Cittaslow. It is particularly encouraging to note the involvement of multiple Turkish universities at this stage. Within the context of citation network analysis at the country level, Türkiye's prominent ranking, coupled with its high degree of connectivity and interaction strength, represents a noteworthy accomplishment.

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