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RELATIONSHIP MARKETING IN TOURISM: A BIBLIOMETRIC OVERVIEW

VZŤAHOVÝ MARKETING V CESTOVNOM RUCHU: BIBLIOMETRICKÝ PREHLAD

Abstract

The importance of relationship marketing in tourism is to some extent confirmed by the rapid expansion of scientific papers in this area. The primary aim of the presented study was to point to the scientific development of relationship marketing in relation to tourism until 2018. The analysis contained data from the Web of Science (WOS) Core Collection and compared 1565 scientific outputs. A bibliometric analysis based on the neural network principle was used to achieve the main aim. The bibliometric analysis and its graphical presentation can help researchers and experts better understand the current state of knowledge in the scientific field. Several authors clearly emphasized activities supporting the development of relationship marketing in tourism with regard to the demonstrable positive impact on this segment. The results of the analysis primarily pointed out that scientific theory focuses mostly on areas such as “tourism”, “influence”, “model”, “behaviour”, “network”, “experience”, “attitudes”. As secondary outputs of the analysis, we can include an examination of the origin of studies on the analysed issue from several perspectives.

Keywords

Tourism. Relationships marketing. Bibliometrics. Web of Science.

JEL classification

C45; L83; Z32; M31

1. Introduction

Businesses make great efforts to differentiate their offer and gain a competitive advantage. To this end, enterprises focused on measuring the quality of their products and customer satisfaction, trying to identify their shortcomings that they could subsequently remove. This approach has become ubiquitous among companies, but now enterprises are looking for other ways to gain differentiated benefits. Relationship marketing seems to be a very promising tool. Relationships are complex and multidimensional elements of society as a whole and, for this reason, enterprises should focus on relationships with their customers. In terms of customer relationship management (CRM), it is about building trust, commitment through frequent interactions in order to achieve mutual cooperation, compatible values and loyalty to the company. Relationship marketing is discussed by many authors in their studies, for example Hunt et al. (2006) or Larentis et al. (2018) dealt with this issue. Relationship marketing uses the methods that help to gain customer loyalty, which leads to increased competitive advantage and profitability. Kim et al. (2007) identified the following benefits of CRM: (1) increasing customer loyalty and customer retention, (2) increasing profitability, (3) creating value for

customers, (4) adapting products and services, (5) increasing the quality of products and services. The aim of relationship marketing is to create long-term profitable relationships between partners. In the context of the convenience goods market, private labels in traditional categories are considered a tool for developing effective relationships. Miquel-Romero et al. (2014) pointed to the use of relational approach to explain private label loyalty and the success of store brand extension strategies. Their study shows that customer experience, satisfaction, trust and commitment to private labels play an important role in customer loyalty to private labels for everyday consumer goods, increasing consumers' propensity to buy private labels in new categories such as durable goods. Therefore, creating trust and commitment, which will ultimately lead to in loyalty, is a strategic objective and a source of long-term profitability for retailers.

Frajtová-Michalíková and Kramárová (2010) stated that customer loyalty reflects the company's ability to meet customer needs with an expected utility, and a comprehensive customer view of the company in terms of overall satisfaction. Many studies have confirmed the relationship between customer satisfaction and willingness to buy again from the same enterprise, resulting in an extensive and intensive acquisition of customer. Popovic et al. (2018) conducted research focused on identifying the basic factors of hotel supply that could determine the impact on the relationship between the satisfaction of hotel guest and the likelihood of their return. The research confirmed the existence of a high degree of correlation between guest satisfaction (with hotel services and tourist offer) and the probability of returning to the selected Montenegrin destinations. Many studies have addressed customer satisfaction in tourism, such as Albayrak et al. (2017) or Alegre and Garau (2010), confirming the importance of this issue. The following paragraphs are devoted to clarifying the fundamental knowledge on this issue.

Customer-oriented company

The objective of the company's planned and systematic customer-focused activities in the field of relationships is to create and strengthen trust and good relationships between company and important public groups with an emphasis on a favourable company image, goodwill and corporate identity (Štefko et al. 2012). The company's ability to build and maintain successful long-term relationships is one of the crucial tasks in today's financial sector. The idea is that loyal customers buy more, show a higher willingness to spend and act as advocates for the company (Hegner-Kakar et al. 2018). In this context, a profit-oriented company that loses customers is considered very costly. For this reason, it is necessary to emphasize the need to strengthen the company's customer loyalty strategies. Many studies have confirmed that the costs of maintaining a customer are lower than the cost of getting a customer (Oluwafemi and Adebisi 2018).

Customer loyalty is seen as the key to business success. It can also be considered the market currency of the 21st century, which suggests that the value of customer-oriented companies can be determined by the degree of customer loyalty. Studies have shown that increasing customer loyalty can affect business profitability and can lead to lower marketing and customer acquisition costs (Singh and Sirdeshmukh 2000, Gee et al. 2008). Baloglu et al. (2019) dealt with the loyalty of tourism customers, namely the spa and wellness industry. The results revealed that intrinsic motivation significantly influenced memorable experiences. Subsequently, the memorable experiences and emotional well-being significantly affected the loyalty of spa customers. Also, Kim and Lee (2018) confirmed that brand awareness and

perceived quality have an impact on brand image, and brand image is related to brand loyalty in tourism.

Reichheld (1993) showed that, depending on the industry, a 5% increase in retention can increase the company's profitability by up to 60%. It is clear from this that maintaining loyal customers can positively affect the long-term prosperity of companies (Kuusik 2007).

The customer-oriented company focuses its attention on customer loyalty and works with 8 loyalty factors (Ansari and Riasi 2016): (1) satisfaction, (2) transition barriers, (3) trust, (4) commitment, (5) perceived value, (6) perceived quality, (7) intuitive image, (8) empathy. The findings of the study showed that although satisfaction and perceived value are positively associated with customer loyalty, they affect the degree of loyalty with different magnitudes. Specifically, it was found that customer satisfaction has a stronger impact on customer loyalty compared to perceived value. Therefore, customer-oriented companies should allocate more resources to strategies to increase customer satisfaction and relatively fewer resources to strategies to improve perceived customer value. The findings further indicated that trust, perceived quality, empathy and commitment have a significant impact on customer satisfaction, thus managers should focus on these factors in order to indirectly increase customer loyalty. Based on the findings, it is also suggested that managers focus on customer trust, perceived quality and empathy in order to indirectly increase customer loyalty by improving perceived value. A better understanding of these factors can help managers more effectively design their strategies to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction, perceived value, and loyalty (Ansari and Riasi 2016).

Customer Relationship Management - CRM

Relationship marketing can take many forms and has the potential to increase understanding of many aspects of business strategy (Hunt et al. 2006). Implementing a customer relationship management (CRM) strategy in a business is generally considered a way to gain competitive advantage in the market. Companies that implement CRM can build better relationships with their customers, increase customer loyalty, increase revenue and reduce costs (Blery and Michalakopoulos 2006). Many studies focus on CMR, but there is no accepted definition of this term. Ngai et al. (2009) stated that CMR is a comprehensive set of processes and tools that support business strategies aimed at developing long-term and profitable customer relationships. Hung et al. (2010) defined CMR as a management strategy that helps enterprises collect, analyse and manage customer-related information using information technology tools and techniques to meet customer needs and build long-term and profitable relationships. Reinartz et al. (2004) noted that CRM is a systematic process for managing the initiation, maintenance, and termination of customer relationships at all contact points in order to maximize the value of the relationship portfolio. The necessary requirement to support CRM in practice is the right information about customers and their needs, enabling the enterprise to deliver a product or service at the right time and in the right place (Wessling 2003).

A practical framework for applying the CRM strategy is the vision of maximizing business profit as the main objective, which can be effectively achieved through long-term relationships and satisfied customers. A successful CRM strategy helps the company learn more about customers than competitors, effectively develop and use this information in business processes, thereby increasing the company's profitability. Wessling (2003) summarized the following benefits for CRM strategy: business process fluency; reach for more customers; customer-

centric time optimization; competitive differentiation; enhanced company's image and identity; real-time information access; reliable prediction; communication between marketing, sales and service departments; increase teamwork efficiency; increase employee motivation. Many studies have addressed CRM in tourism, for example Fortmuller et al. (2018). Papaioannou et al. (2018) examined customer-oriented strategy and business performance in four-star and five-star hotels in the Region of Peloponnese. The findings indicated that the customer-oriented strategy was widely applied in hotels and that there were significant and positive relationships between the customer-oriented strategy and the company's performance.

The rise of social media challenges the traditional notion of CRM and led to the emergence of social CRM (Chan et al. 2018). Sigala (2018) performed a study that captures the implementation of social CRM in tourism and hospitality. Five approaches for implementing social CRM are proposed: collecting, analysing and interpreting customer insight; monitoring and improving the performance of CRM; developing holistic and seamless personalised customer experiences; gamifying CRM and loyalty programmes; and nurturing community relationship management.

Based on the above-mentioned findings, it can be stated that relationship marketing is an important research issue, including in the tourism sector. For this reason, the presented study focuses on scientific research in this area.

2. Materials and Methods

The primary aim of the presented study was to point to the scientific development of relationship marketing in relation to tourism until 2018. This aim was achieved by using scientific outputs from a scientific database and by applying bibliometric analysis. Inputs (scientific articles, books, conference outputs, etc.) were obtained from the Clarify Analytics Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection. These scientific papers were determined by keywords such as “relationships”, “marketing”, “tourism”. The data consisted of 1565 outputs, which contained title, authors, year of publication, abstract, keywords, references and all available information offered in the WOS Core Collection. The presented research can be included in the field of bibliometric research. The bibliometric analysis itself was divided into three parts in the result section. The first part is devoted to a descriptive analysis, in which the frequency of publication in the analysed issue is provided. This part also shows countries in terms of the frequency of scientific outputs as well as the production of individual authors over time. The second part of the analysis is focused on the evaluation of citations in the given issue. In the last third part, the thematic structure in the specification of keyword links is discussed. The last part also provides the outputs of the authors with the highest contribution, as well as areas (topics) in which the issue of relationship marketing in tourism was clustered. The R programming language and the library of bibliometric analysis (bibliometrix) were used in the analysis (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2019).

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive analysis

The analysis consisted of 1565 scientific papers from 1994 to 2018. In 1994, two papers were identified in the field of relationship marketing, and we can talk about the first scientific contributions to this issue. In one of these papers, the authors present a very valuable idea: effective tourism marketing is impossible without understanding of consumer motivation (Fodness, 1994). The following Figure 1 shows the development of a number of scientific outputs.

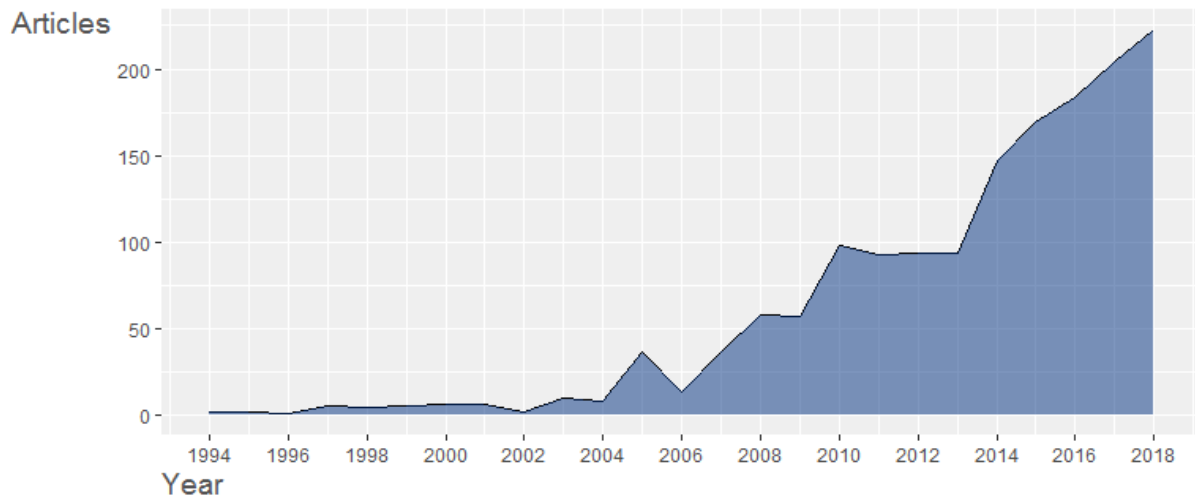


Figure 1. Development of scientific outputs from 1994 to 2018

Source: own processing

Based on Figure 1, it can be stated that the interest in this issue was minimal until 2004. The highest number of publications in this period was in 2003, when 10 documents were published. After 2004, scientific productivity in this area was more intense. The average citation rate was 12.15 citations per document. In the given documents, 3176 authors were identified, with approximately 2.03 authors per document. The largest categories included articles (n = 1202), proceedings papers (n = 252), and reviews (n = 44).

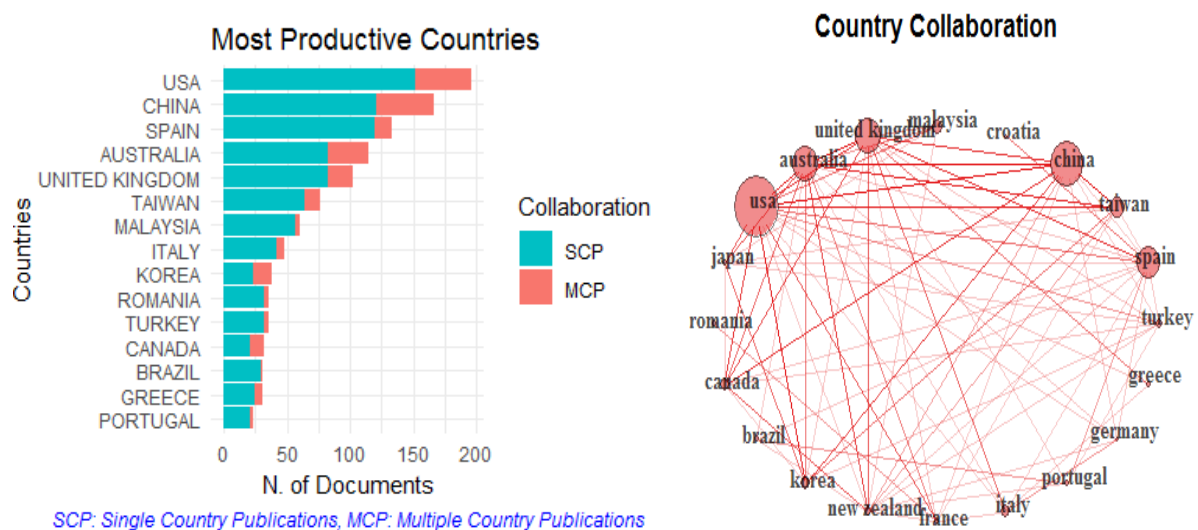


Figure 2. Production and cooperation of countries

Source: own processing

Figure 2 shows the production of countries, which is characterized by the cooperation of authors from various countries. When analysing the collaboration of the authors, it can be noted that the highest degree of cooperation was between countries such as the United States and China or the United States and Taiwan. The most productive authors in this field were Asian authors such as Law, R. (n = 10); Li, X. (n = 9); Lee, S. (n = 9) or Wang, Y. (n = 9). The following Figure 3 shows the production of the authors.

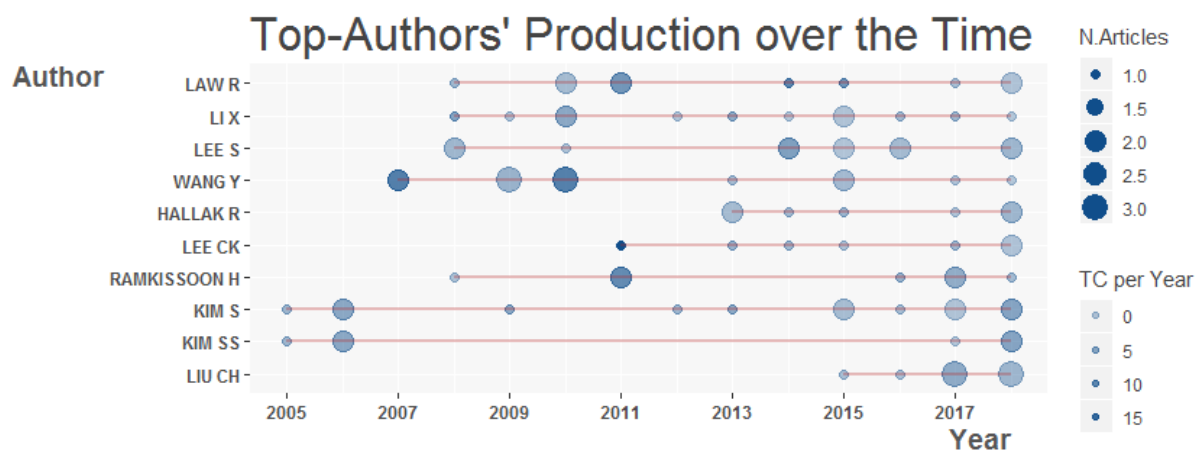


Figure 3. Production of authors
Source: own processing

During the analysed period, based on the number of outputs (N.Articles) and the number per year (TC per Year), the authors shown in the previous figure can be considered the most productive authors in this field.

3.2. Citation analysis

The most cited countries were the United States (3995), Spain (2440), and the United Kingdom (2242). The most frequently cited papers are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Most cited papers

ID	Paper	Times Cited	Times Cited per Year
1	BIGNE JE, 2001, TOURISM MANAGE	610	33.89
2	BEERLI A, 2004, TOURISM MANAGE	328	21.87
3	KOZAK M, 2001, ANN TOURIS RES	325	18.6
4	FODNESS D, 1994, ANN TOURIS RES	322	12.88
5	KIM H, 2003, ANN TOURIS RES	310	19.38
6	HOSANY S, 2006, J BUS RES	266	20.46
7	SAUTTER ET, 1999, ANN TOURIS RES	255	12.75

	WILLIAMS P, 2009, ANN		
8	TOURIS RES	248	24.80
	GETZ D, 2006, TOURISM		
9	MANAGE	248	19.8
	BORNHORST T, 2010,		
10	TOURISM MANAGE	229	25.44
	SONMEZ SF, 1998, ANN		
11	TOURIS RES	204	9.71
	NURYANTI W, 1996, ANN		
12	TOURIS RES	195	8.48
	HOSANY S, 2010, J TRAVEL		
13	RES	178	19.78
	KIM MJ, 2011, TOURISM		
14	MANAGE	177	22.12
	MONEY RB, 2003, TOURISM		
15	MANAGE	177	11.6

Source: own processing

Bigne et al. (2001) stated that the image of tourism is a direct predictor of perceived quality, satisfaction, intention to return and willingness to recommend a destination. This confirms the role of image as a key factor in destination marketing. Kozak (2001) argued that satisfaction affects willingness to return, but this effect is stronger in more developed regions. The results of a study conducted by Beerli and Martín (2004) suggest that: (1) motivation affects the affective component of the image; (2) holiday travel experiences are significantly related to cognitive and affective images; and (3) socio-demographic characteristics affect cognitive and affective image assessment.

Co-Citation Network

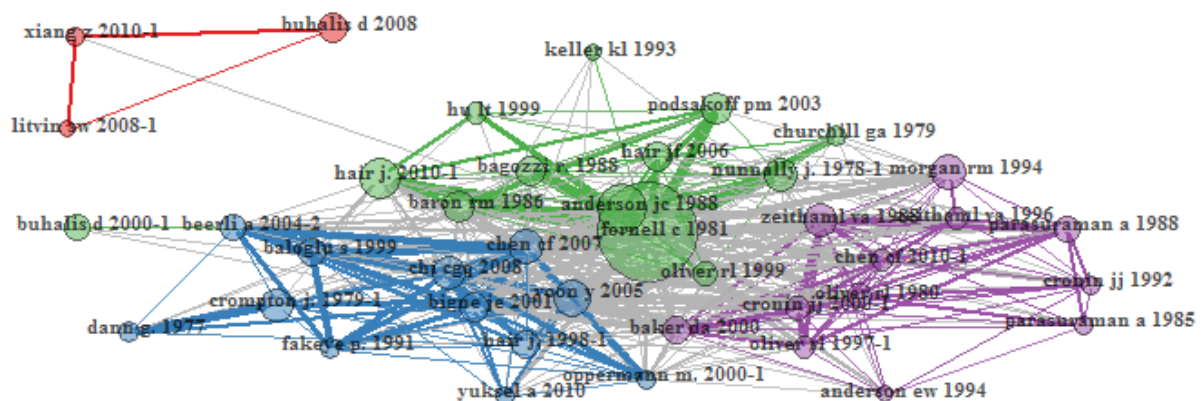


Figure 4. Co-citation network of authors

Source: own processing

The co-citation network in the previous Figure 4 is divided into 4 clusters and shows the links between the 40 most cited authors. Fornell C. (1981), who analysed "structural equation models" (SEM), can be seen in the green cluster. This methodological tool is still often used in the analysis of relationship marketing and tourism.

Co-Citation Network

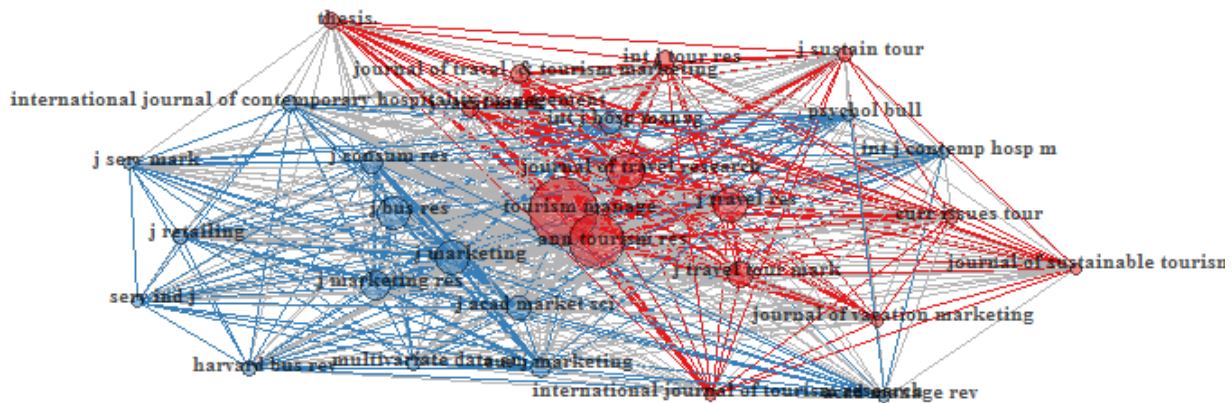


Figure 5. Co-citation network of journals

Source: own processing

Based on the previous Figure 5, it can be stated that “Tourism management” and “Journal of travel research annals of tourism research” are the journals that most often dealt with relationship marketing in tourism.

Historical Direct Citation Network

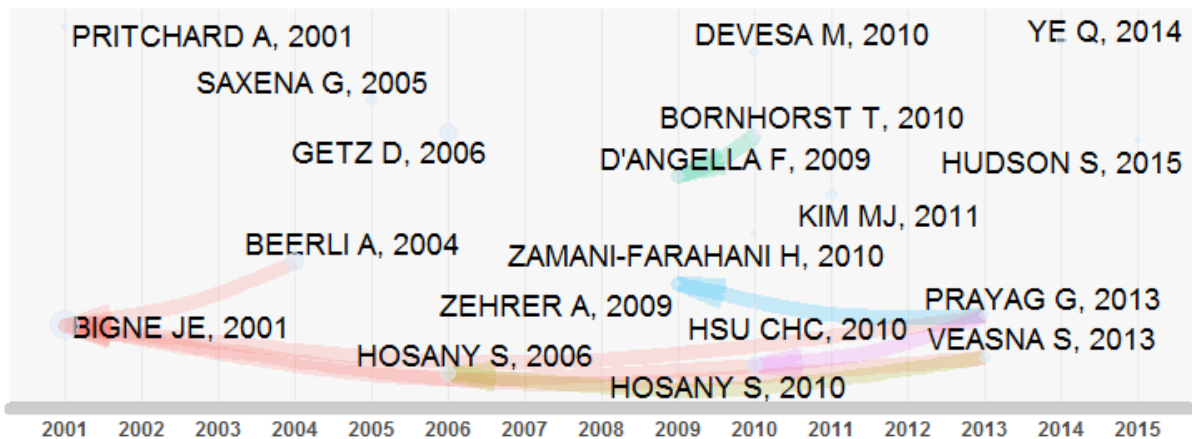


Figure 6. Historical direct citation network

Source: own processing

Figure 6 shows the most relevant direct citation links between authors over time. The analysis was presented by Garfield (2004).

3.3 The conceptual structure (co-word analysis)

The following Table 2 shows the most common keywords in the field of relationship marketing in tourism.

Table 2. Most common keywords

n	Author Keywords (DE)	Articles	Keywords-Plus (ID)	Articles
1	TOURISM	217	TOURISM	198
2	SATISFACTION	64	MODEL	157

cluster consists of links between words such as “performance”, “management”, “word-of-mouth”, “travel” and “perspective”.

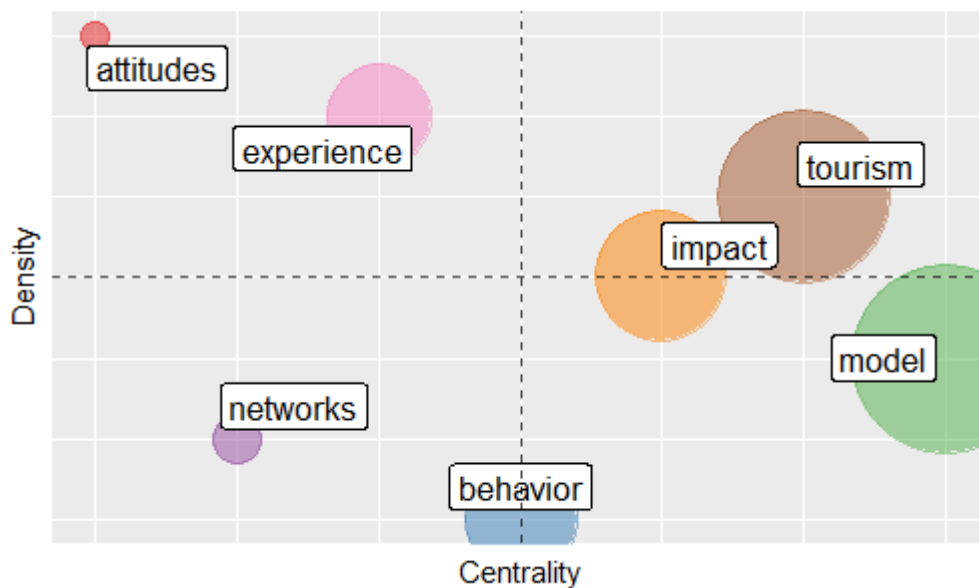


Figure 8. Thematic clusters
Source: own processing

Figure 8 shows that the thematic areas focused on three main clusters, while the first cluster includes words such as “impact”, “tourism” and “model”. The terms “networks” and “behaviour” form the second cluster. The third cluster contains two words, namely “attitudes” and “experience”, it can be noted that this cluster is rather psychological. The principles of this analysis are described in more detail by Cobo et al. (2011).

4. Conclusion

The primary aim of the presented study was to point to the scientific development of relationship marketing in relation to tourism until 2018. This aim was achieved by using scientific outputs from a scientific database and by applying bibliometric analysis. The bibliometric analysis and its graphical presentation can help researchers and experts better understand the current state of knowledge in the scientific field. The data consisted of 1565 scientific papers (scientific articles, books, conference outputs, etc.), which were obtained from the Clarify Analytics Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection. The results show that the scientific interest in relationship marketing in tourism has been increasing since 2004, when an increase in published articles is evident. The most productive authors in the analysed issue were authors from the United States, who most often collaborate with authors from China or Taiwan. The most cited countries were the United States (3995), Spain (2440), and the United Kingdom (2242). Scientific initiatives in the field of relationship marketing in tourism focused mainly on areas such as “tourism”, “influence”, “model”, “behaviour”, “network”, “experience” and “attitudes”. Also, “Tourism management” and “Journal of travel research annals of tourism research” are the journals that most often dealt with relationship marketing in tourism. The presented research can be included in the field of bibliometric research and provides an

overview of a scientific initiative in the field of relationship marketing in tourism, which can help in future research.

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