

Bibliometric Analysis of Publications on the Digital Nomad with VOSviewer

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the bibliometric characteristics of studies on digital nomadism published in the Scopus database to guide those who want to conduct research on digital nomadism. Studies on digital nomadism published in the Scopus database were systematically analysed under the headings of authors, citations, sources, countries, institutions, and keywords. The data obtained were examined and mapped in terms of bibliometric indicators using VOSviewer. In addition, in the literature review, studies on digital nomadism were examined in terms of variables such as the findings and analyses used. Using the keyword “digital nomad” in the Scopus database, 1,080 results were obtained by selecting the “all fields” tab. According to the results of the analysis, while most publications on digital nomadism are published in the journal “Proceedings of the Acm on Human-Computer Interaction,” the most cited journal is “Sociology.” In terms of the number of citations, it was found that the study “Mobility and Proximity” dated (2002) was the most cited study. It was also concluded that the author who published the most publications was Daniel Schlagwein. The most cited institution was Unk “Syracuse University.” It was determined that the most publishing country was the USA and the most used keywords in terms of keywords were “digital nomads,” “Covid-19,” “remote working,” “digital nomadism” and “mobility.” This study found that interest in digital nomadism has increased rapidly in recent years, mainly because of the acceleration of the transition to remote working due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the increase in the opportunity to work remotely with technological developments, and the opportunity to work while travelling. On the other hand, although digital nomadism is generally associated with freedom and flexibility, difficulties in managing work-life balance, the difficulties of constant travel, and the lack of stability and regular income encourage researchers to conduct more studies in this field. In this context, the data obtained can guide future studies.

Keywords: Digital nomad, Remote Work, Mobility, Digital Work

Introduction

Today, the spread of digitalisation has significantly affected the way of doing business practises. (Sutherland and Jarrahi, 2018:328). Digital nomadism has emerged as a new form of work. The increase in digitalisation increases the number of digital nomads. Digital nomadism has become widespread since the 2010s (Cook, 2023:256). The COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing measures, and nationwide lockdowns have inevitably increased the use of digital technology. People and institutions have had to adapt to the new ways of living and working created by the changing world order (Pandey and Pal, 2020:1). Therefore, the number of studies on digital nomadism is increasing. However, differences in the use of the digital nomadism concept stand out. When the literature on digital nomadism is examined, it is observed that the focus is on explaining lifestyles rather than determining the theoretical framework of digital nomadism. (Wang et al., 2018:1).

Makimoto and Manners first used the term “digital nomad”. He stated that the arrival of the Internet would be revolutionary and would cause significant changes in lifestyle. He expressed the change in working life as “You are stranded on a desert island, still running your business or doing your job” (Makimoto and Manners 1997:39). Digital nomadism refers to a mobile lifestyle in which freelancers, digital entrepreneurs, and remote workers integrate their work with an active travel process (Aroles, Vaujany and Dale, 2021:7). A digital nomad “mobile knowledge worker equipped with digital technologies to work anytime, anywhere” is referred to as (Liegl, 2014:163). According to another definition, digital nomads are defined as “a new generation of location-independent freelancers, young entrepreneurs, and online freelancers” (Müller, 2016:344). According to another definition, digital nomadism is defined as the ability of individuals to travel the world without being tied to the office by working remotely via laptops. In other words, digital nomadism is recognised as a lifestyle (Thompson 2019:27). Digital nomadism is a lifestyle that enables

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individuals to work from anywhere, travel, and explore the world owing to portable technology and widespread Internet access. This phenomenon is shaped by societal changes, such as increased mobility, ubiquitous technology, and increasingly flexible, precarious employment (Mancinelli 2020; Hannonen, 2020).

Digital nomadism includes remote freelancers, digital entrepreneurs, location-independent company employees, and knowledge workers who combine several activities. The most common occupations that digital nomads engage in are computer programming, marketing activities, various online consultancies, online tutoring, writing and translation jobs, graphic design, and customer service. Digital nomads gain flexibility in terms of location, time, and how work is done owing to digital technologies. Platforms such as Upwork, TaskRabbit, and RemoteOK offer independent workers opportunities to find jobs online. On the other hand, increased flexibility destabilises jobs, increases casualisation, reduces social benefits and makes workers vulnerable (Bonneau and Aroles, 2021:161).

In recent years, it has been determined that the number of publications on digital nomadism has increased significantly in searches made with the keyword 'digital nomad' in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. When the literature is examined, it is seen that bibliometric analysis studies on the subject of digital nomadism are limited (Simova, 2023; İli and Büyükbaykal, 2022; Shawkat et al., 2021). At this point, the latest studies on this subject are important for ensuring currency. Although previous studies have examined the issue of digital nomadism through bibliometric analysis, the small dataset used in this study has led to a limited understanding of the general trend. The rapid growth and diversification of the literature in the field of digital nomadism made it necessary to repeat this study with a larger dataset.

With the increasing interest in digital nomadism, revealing new findings in the literature and deepening knowledge in this field will shed light on future studies on digital nomadism. Since most studies on digital nomadism are found in the Scopus database, this database was preferred. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by repeating this study with up-to-date data.

Literature Review Of The Concept Of Digital Nomads

The digital revolution has radically changed the way people work by enabling remote work. The flexibility offered by the Internet and digitalisation has paved the way for digital nomadism, especially accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Sanul, 2022:272). The proliferation of portable computer technologies and increased Internet access enables individuals to work from anywhere and is claimed to facilitate a digital nomadic lifestyle (Mancinelli, 2020:417). Advances in computer and information technologies, together with the widespread use of mobile devices, have opened new lifestyles and work organisation options, such as digital nomadism (Devčić and Pražić, 2022:87).

The penetration of technology into all aspects of daily life and the rise of increasingly flexible and precarious forms of employment have led to the rise of digital nomadism (Hannonen, 2020:335). On the other hand, the ease of international migration and flexibility provided by digital technologies have paved the way for the emergence of digital nomadism as a form of remote work (Sanul, 2022:272).

It has been argued that digital nomads use digital technologies to combine work, leisure, and travel, adopting a lifestyle that transcends traditional work structures (Green, 2020:431). Digital nomadism has emerged as a new form of work. Digital nomadism challenges traditional forms of work by combining the opportunities offered by digital technologies with global travel (Nash et al., 2018:207).

One of the most important positive aspects of digital nomadism is its flexibility. Digital nomadism allows individuals to explore different places and cultures while maintaining their professional responsibilities (Mancinelli, 2020; Orel, 2019). It is also claimed that having a high level of self-discipline can lead to a proper work-life balance and a fulfilling lifestyle (Cook, 2020:355). However, digital nomadism may increase the likelihood of individuals interacting with local communities. In this way, it can promote creative tourism that contributes to the local economy through co-working spaces and skill-sharing (Chevtava and Denizci-Guillet, 2021:1).

Digital nomadism causes instability. Difficulties in achieving a consistent work-life balance and coping with the uncertainties of constant travel (Cook, 2020:355). It is argued that digital nomadism is often characterised by people from richer countries benefiting from lower living costs in developing countries. This may deepen global inequality (Mancinelli, 2020:417).

A significant number of studies on digital nomadism have been conducted to investigate the flexibilization of the labour market by focusing on various forms of flexible work rather than directly examining the issue of digital nomadism (Lamovsek and Cerne, 2023; Sulintang et al., 2024; Iliescu, 2021). In some studies, the relationship between digital nomadism and tourism was revealed through bibliometric analysis (Do Rosário Mira et al., 2023).

Reichenberger (2018) defined the digital nomad, conceptualise this phenomenon, and examine how digital nomads realise their motivations and lifestyles. This study emphasises that digital nomads adopt a satisfying and balanced lifestyle by combining work,

leisure, and travel because of their spatial and personal freedom. While digital nomads see work as an enjoyable and motivating activity rather than an obligation, this lifestyle also brings personal challenges along with travel.

Hannonen (2020) describes the mobile lifestyles of digital nomads and examines how they are shaped by social changes such as mobility, technology, flexible working conditions, and precarious employment. The study emphasises that the existing literature on digital nomadism is scattered and interdisciplinary, thus lacking a common understanding and holistic perspective on the concept. This study provides a conceptual framework by addressing digital nomadism in the context of mobility and location-independent work.

Cook (2020) states that digital nomads' understanding of freedom generally refers to an idealised lifestyle in which the boundaries between work and leisure are removed. However, he revealed that this lifestyle requires discipline and self-discipline rather than autonomy. The study emphasises that digital nomads initially underestimate the importance of discipline and that working in entertainment environments can make work-life balance difficult.

Mancinelli (2020) examined the lifestyle of digital nomads based on their ability to work from anywhere thanks to portable technologies and internet access. In the context of individualisation theory and lifestyle mobility, Mancinelli (2020) examined digital nomads' understanding of freedom based on minimalism, uncertainty and risk. Drawing attention to how structural constraints limit the pursuit of freedom, this study evaluates the compatibility of digital nomadism with economic strategies and entrepreneurial ideology. It has been argued that digital nomadism is an adaptation that takes advantage of capitalist inequalities and is compatible with neoliberal influences.

Nash et al. (2018) emphasise in their study that despite the popularisation of digital nomadism, empirical research on lifestyle, future of work and supporting technologies is limited. This study explains the work of digital nomads through four key elements. These include digital work, temporary work, nomadic work, and adventure-oriented global travel. Digital nomads are defined as communities of workers in which these elements are combined with digital technologies. This study contributes to the body of knowledge on the future of work, digital natives, and relations with digital platforms.

Studies on digital nomadism based on bibliometric analysis are limited. One of these studies was by Simova (2023). Using bibliometric analysis, Simova systematically analysed articles on digital nomadism in the Web of Science database. In this study, she identified authors and countries that can be pioneers in digital nomadism. In another study, Özyürek et al. (2024) scanned and analysed research on digital nomads published in the Web of Science database using bibliometric techniques, such as scientometric mapping using VOSviewer, MAXQDA and R programmes (Özyürek et al., 2024). Although there are studies on bibliometric analysis and VOSviewer programmes in the literature on different topics, there are very few studies that directly examine the issue of digital nomadism. In a study conducted in 2021, Shawkat et al. identified 23 articles containing the keyword "Digital Nomads" and analysed 10 articles that directly addressed the topic of digital nomads. In 2022, 44 studies were examined in the bibliometric analysis of İli and Büyükbaykal on "digital nomad" in the Scopus database.

Methodology

This study examined studies on digital nomadism using a bibliometric analysis method. Bibliometric analysis is a method used to map the state-of-the-art in the field in relation to specific scientific knowledge and to identify gaps and trends in research to validate scientific research (De Oliveira et al., 2019:47). According to another definition, bibliometric mapping is a systematic analysis that uses a mix of relational techniques to understand the evolution of literature on a topic (Soliman et al., 2021:1-5). In bibliometric analysis, it is aimed to reveal the structure of the field researched by the researcher by mapping science and to determine the dominant themes (Chen et al., 2023:1). Bibliometric methods provide a measure of objectivity when analysing the literature. This study examines the literature by combining the views of scientists working in the field. This method increases rigour in examining the literature and can reduce researcher bias (Zupic and Cater, 2015:429). Bibliometric methods provide a measure of objectivity in analysing the literature. This study aims to examine the literature by bringing together the views of scientists working in the field. This method increases the rigour in examining the literature and can reduce the bias of the researcher.

In this study, a bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer. The VOSviewer programme is an alternative mapping technique known as multidimensional scaling (MSS). Some studies have shown that maps created using VOSviewer provide more satisfactory results than those created using the MLS approach (Van Eck et al., 2010:2405).

In this study, publications on digital nomadism in the Scopus database were analysed using bibliometric analysis techniques. This study reveals the general trend of studies on digital nomadism using bibliometric analysis. For this purpose, the studies on digital nomadism;

1. What is the distribution according to the publication categories?
2. What is the annual distribution of publications?

3. Which countries have the highest number of publications, citations, and total linking powers?
4. Who are the researchers with the most publications, citations, and total linking power?
5. Which institutions have the highest number of publications and citations?
6. What are the sources with the most publications, citations, and total linking power?
7. What were the most frequently used keywords?

Questions were then sought.

Limitations of the Research

In this study, 1080 studies from the Scopus database were considered. In terms of subject matter, it is limited only to the concept of “digital nomad.” In terms of time, these studies were limited to 1998-2024. The use of only the Scopus database constituted the biggest limitation of this study.

Data Analysis

On 12.08.2024, 1,080 results were reached in the research conducted by selecting the “all fields” tab with the keyword “digital nomad”. It consists of 641 articles, 169 book chapters, 116 conference proceedings, 69 books, 46 reviews, 19 editorials, and 20 other studies from 23 different disciplines, with the oldest being in 1998 and the newest being in 2024. Publication category, year, country, author, institution, source and keywords were used to analyze the data. Studies indexed in Scopus were used as the databases.

Results

Table 1 shows the number of publications in the Scopus database according to the categories of studies on digital nomadism. Accordingly, most published studies are in the social sciences category. The social sciences category is followed by business administration, management and accounting, computer science, economics, econometrics and finance, arts and humanities, and environmental sciences.

Table 1. Numbers by Publication Categories in the Scopus Database

Categories	Publication Numbers	Categories	Publication Numbers
Social Sciences	658		
Business, Management and Accounting	391		
Computer Science	259		
Economics, Econometrics and Finance	172		
Arts and Humanities	99		
Environmental Science	97		
Engineering	86		
Psychology	49		
Data Unit	48		
Energy	37		
Mathematics	36		

Source: Created by the author using the VOSviewer programme.

The distribution of articles on digital nomadism by years is shown in Figure 1.

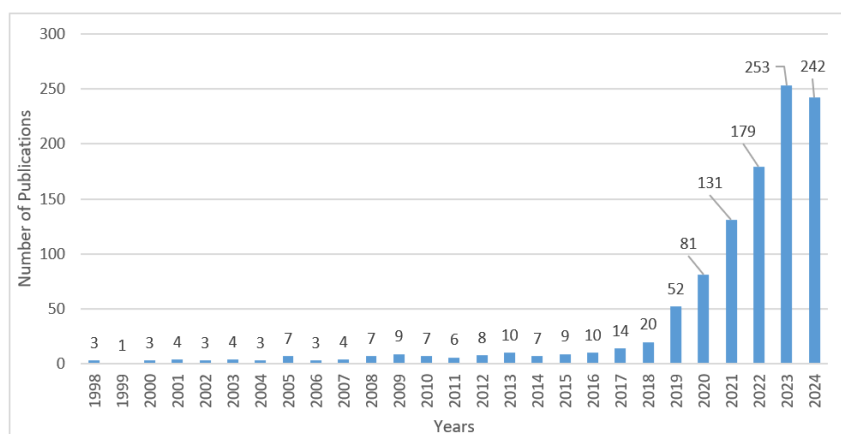


Figure 1. Distribution of Digital Nomad Studies by Year.

Source: Created by the author using the Scopus database.

As shown in Figure 1, most studies on digital nomadism were conducted in 2023. Since studies until 12.08.2024 are included in the data analysis, it is likely that the number of studies conducted in 2024 will exceed 2023. As of 2019, studies of digital nomads have gained momentum.

In the bibliometric analysis, a network map of citations by country visually presents international interactions in scientific research. In this way, the influence of countries in specific scientific fields can be revealed, and the countries that stand out can be identified (Hassan-Montero et al., 2014; Marshakova-Shaikovich, 2018).

Figure 2 shows the attribution network map of countries regarding the digital nomad issue.

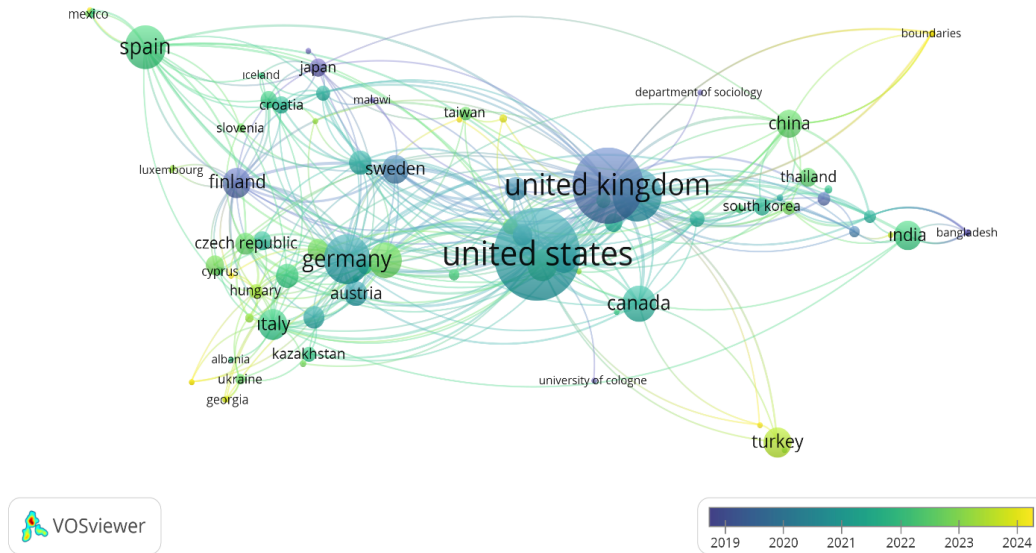


Figure 2. Network map of citations on digital nomadism by country.

Figure 2 shows the citation network map of 97 countries that fulfil the condition of making at least one publication on digital nomadism. The countries with the highest number of publications are Anglo-Saxon countries, such as the USA, UK, and Australia. These countries also stand out in terms of the number of citations. Table 2 shows the ranking of the number of publications and citations and the total link strength of the publications on the subject of digital nomadism by country.

Table 2. Distribution of the Number of Publications, Number of Citations and Total Link Power on Digital Nomadism by Country

Country Name	Number of Publications	Number of Citations	Total Connection Strength
USA	204	3.904	389
United Kingdom	148	4.140	601
Australia	82	1.346	273
Germany	73	1.266	213
Spain	59	1.019	266
Canada	44	573	126
Portugal	43	342	201
France	35	342	157
Italy	34	592	76
Turkey	33	39	108
Finland	33	651	91
India	32	193	104
Netherlands	31	335	130
Sweden	30	1.129	63
China	29	231	34
Austria	24	754	257
Norway	23	290	100
Poland	23	97	39
Denmark	22	388	16
Russia	21	421	22

Source: Created by the author using the VOSviewer programme.

As shown in Table 2, the highest number of publications on digital nomadism was made in the USA, with 204 publications. The UK, Austria, Germany, and Spain in the publication ranking followed the USA. The most cited countries were the UK (4,140

citations), the USA (3,904 citations), and Australia (1,346 citations). These countries share the first three in terms of link strength, number of works, and number of citations. The USA, the UK, and Australia, which are among the Anglo-Saxon countries, are among the countries with the highest number of studies on digital nomadism.

The co-author analysis network map reveals academic collaborations by visualising the links between authors and co-authored papers. It also identifies the key researchers and research groups (Qiu et al., 2014; Scherbakova and Bredikhin, 2021). In the analysis, at least two publication criteria were determined and a network map was created. The results generated by the VOSviewer programme are shown in Figure 3.

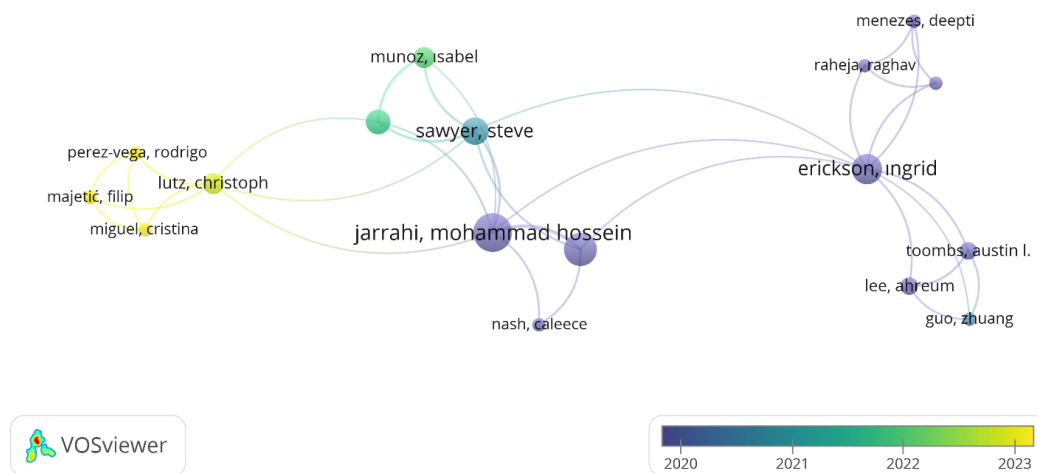


Figure 3. Publication and citation network maps of authors in studies on digital nomadism.

According to the analysis conducted among the authors with the highest number of links, five clusters consisted of 34 links. there are relationships between the 233 authors, but these are not strong. Within these five clusters, 17 authors were found to have a strong relationship.

Table 3 shows the number of articles, citations, and total link strength of the most cited authors on digital nomadism.

Table 3. Distribution of the Number of Publications, Number of Citations and Total Link Power Related to Digital Nomadism by Authors

Authors	Number of Publications	Number of Citations	Total Connection Strength
Schlagwein, D.	11	207	25
Cecez-Kecmanović, D.	10	177	25
Jarrahi, M.H.	10	1.034	18
Orel, M.	10	178	4
Uzayr, S.	10	0	0
Mirbabaie, M.	8	112	15
Sutherland, W.	8	1.007	13
Erickson, I.	7	102	14
Marx, J.	7	43	12
Urry, J.	7	1.185	0
Schneider, D.	6	37	16
Sawyer, S.	6	222	14
Stieglitz, S.	6	112	13
Aroles, J.	6	224	7
De Vaujany, F.	6	234	6
Karami, A.	6	192	4

Source: Created by the author using the VOSviewer programme.

Most cited: John Urry, 1.185 citations; Mohammad Hossein Jarrahi, 1.034 citations; Will Sutherland, 1.007 citations; Daniel Schlagwein, who has the most publications, has 11 publications; Mohammad Hossein Jarrahi, Marko Orel, Dubravka Cecez Kecmanovic, Sufyan Bin Uzayr have 10 publications each; Daniel Schlagwein and Dubravka Cecez Kecmanovic, who have the highest link strength, have 25 links; Mohammad Hossein Jarrahi has 18 links.

To create a network map of inter-institutional citations, publishing at least two works was set as the criterion. Of the 1,899 organisations, 107 met the threshold. In this context, 97 links in seven clusters and 170 link strengths were identified. Figure 4 shows a network map of citation ties in terms of organisation.

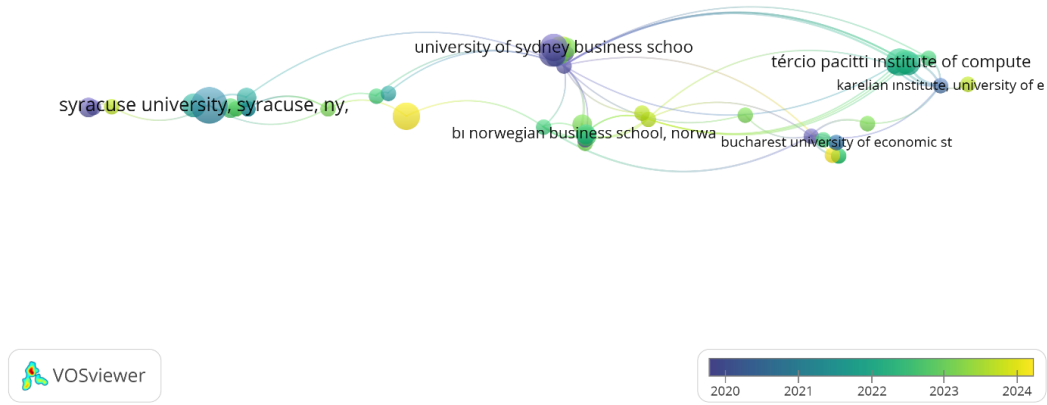


Figure 4. Citation Links in terms of institution.

Syracuse University ranks first with eight publications, followed by the Tercio Pacitti Institute of Computer Applications and Research, Anadolu University, University of Sydney Business School, Unsw Business School, and Parakozm, with five publications each. In the citation analysis of institutions, Lancaster University ranked first with 1.009 citations, followed by the University of Bath with 305 citations and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with 192 citations. The institutions with the highest number of total network connections are the University Paris-Dauphine, the Tercio Pacitti Institute of Computer Applications and Research, and the Postgraduate Programme in Informatics.

For the source citation network map for the Digital Nomad topic, the analysis was performed by selecting the minimum number of documents in the VOSviewer programme. Figure 5 shows the network map based on the source citation analysis.

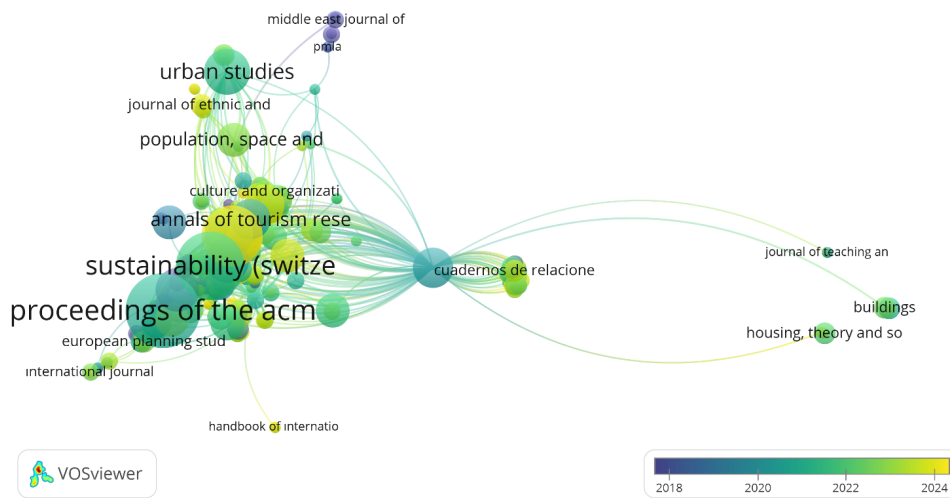


Figure 5. Network Map According to the Source Citation Analysis.

The five most cited sources are Sociology (1 publication, 815 citations, 9 link strengths), Information Technology and Tourism (8 publications, 757 citations, 284 link strengths), International Journal of Information Management (2 publications, 611 citations, 11 link strengths), Proceedings of The Acm on Human-Computer Interaction (22 publications, 562 citations, 14 link strengths) and New Technology, Work and Employment (5 publications, 417 citations, 64 link strengths).

'digital nomads', 'digital nomadism', 'digital nomad' and 'digitalisation', which are shown in green, have become more common in 2021 and beyond, especially during Covid-19.

Table 5. Most Frequently Used Words and Total Link Strengths According to Keyword Analysis

Keyword	Occurrences	Total Link Strength
Digital nomads	75	101
COVID-19	50	67
Remote work	43	74
Digital nomadism	40	76
Mobility	31	43
Tourism	29	40
Digital nomad	29	36
Social media	25	31
Digital work	22	45
GIG economy	21	27
Migration	20	19
Lifestyle	19	35
Dijitalization	17	22
Sustainability	17	18

Table 5 shows the most commonly used keywords in studies on the subject. It is seen that the most used words are 'digital nomads' with 75 repetitions, 'Covid-19' with 50 repetitions, 'remote work' with 43 repetitions, 'digital nomadism' with 40 repetitions, 'mobility' with 31 repetitions, 'tourism' and 'digital nomad' with 29 repetitions. These words are followed by 'social media' with 25 repetitions, 'digital work' with 22 repetitions, 'GIG economy' with 21 repetitions, 'migration' with 20 repetitions, 'lifestyle' with 19 repetitions, 'digitalisation' and 'sustainability' with 17 repetitions. The data in figure 6 and table 5 may be instructive for researchers who want to follow the current issues.

Conclusion

Globalisation, increased flexible working conditions, and advances in technology have led to a rapid increase in the number of digital nomads. This method of working is expected to become more widespread in the future. Digital nomads gain spatial and temporal flexibility by working from wherever they want, can continue their work even while travelling, and have the opportunity to explore various cultures by living in different geographies. However, there are also some negative aspects of this lifestyle, such as the challenges of balancing work and private life, the inconvenience of constant travel, and financial instability without regular income. To determine the trend of studies on digital nomadism, a detailed examination of the studies conducted in this field will guide researchers who will conduct studies on this subject.

The most commonly used keywords in publications on digital nomadism are digital nomads, Covid-19, remote work, digital nomadism, mobility, tourism, social media, digital work, and gig economy. It is noticeable that the keyword COVID-19 is one of the most frequently used words in studies on the subject. This situation can be considered an important relationship between COVID-19 and digital nomadism. Another keyword that attracts attention is the word tourism. This way of working is intertwined with tourism. In other words, this type of work is considered working while travelling while working at the same time. With this form of work, employees have the opportunity to work flexibly on the one hand and face precarious work. At this point, it would be appropriate to expand studies on the advantages and disadvantages of digital nomadism.

According to the results of the research, the countries with the highest number of publications on digital nomadism between 1998 and 2024 are the USA, UK, Austria, Germany, and Spain. The first three countries in the publication ranking are Anglo-Saxon countries. Digital nomadism is associated with the spread of flexible work. The USA is a country with the lowest rigidity index (Belot, 2004; Kugler, 2007; Emerson 1988). Studies on digital nomadism are expected to be intensively conducted in the USA, where flexible working forms are widely practised and have low employment protection.

An increase in the number of publications on digital nomadism began in 2019. While 20 publications were published on this subject in 2018, there were 52 publications in 2019, 81 publications in 2020, 131 publications in 2021, and 179 publications in 2022. Most publications on digital nomadism will be published in 2023, with 253 publications. By 2024, 242 publications had been published, and it is expected that the number of publications will exceed 2023 by the end of 2024. The increase in the number of publications on digital nomadism since 2019 is related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many studies have suggested that the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the demand for flexible working styles (Izak et al., 2023; Spurk and Straub, 2020; Gellert et al., 2022; Chang and Chiu, 2022). At this point, COVID-19 has also accelerated studies on digital nomadism.

The results of this study are expected to guide future studies on this subject. It is expected that the results obtained will shed light on future studies. This study examined studies on the concept of digital nomads published in the "Scopus" database using

a bibliometric analysis method. In future studies, different studies can be prepared using different databases (Web of Science, Science Direct, EBSCO, etc.). In this study, bibliometric analysis was performed using the VOSviewer programme. In future studies, the analysis can be performed using different visualisation programmes, such as the citespace and Sci2Tool.

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