

Retracing the past, comprehending the present and contemplating the future of cruise tourism through a meta-analysis of journal publications



Amare Wondirad¹

Sol International Hospitality Management (SIHOM), Sol International School, Woosong University, 171 Dongdaejon-ro, Dong-gu, Daejeon, 34606, Republic of Korea

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the conceptual development and knowledge evolution of a discipline requires in-depth systematic review that examines its previous journey. Subsequently, this meta-analysis paper conducts a review of 222 cruise ship tourism research articles published in 20 tourism, hospitality, marine and environmental journals over the previous three decades with the aim to revisit the past, comprehend the present, and contemplate the future of cruise industry. Research findings reveal valuable insights regarding publication trends, leading themes of cruise tourism research, and issues that deserve due attention to drive the growth of cruise industry in a sustainable track and use it as a vehicle for sustainable development. Drawing upon findings, the current research does not only make substantive theoretical contributions to the existing literature of cruise tourism but also provokes further research on various cruise tourism topics implicated in the discussion.

1. Introduction

Cruise ship tourism is increasingly recognized as a rapidly growing and dynamic subsector of the global tourism industry [1–3]. As the fastest-growing segment of the leisure sector, cruise industry becomes internationally influential [4]. Despite previous global economic turbulence, cruise ship tourism has experienced an explosive growth of 84%, from 13.1 million passengers in 2004 to 22.04 million travelers in 2014 (Cruise Lines International Association, CLIA, now onwards, 2015). This explosive cruise ship tourism growth is attributed to several factors such as the emergence of more new cruise destinations with new itineraries, the introduction of modern cruise ships with massive capacity, the proliferation of cruise travel agents, the increase in consumers' disposable income and leisure time due to international, regional, and national economic development, technological advancement, and strong marketing and advertisement from cruise line companies [5,6]. With approximately 26.6 million international tourists in 2017, the cruise industry plays a substantial role in the global financial and human mobility [4]. According to CLIA [138] forecast, global cruise passenger arrivals increase to 28.2 million in 2018, a 12% increase over 2016, with the entry of new cruise ships into the market. The global economic impact of cruise tourism is also immense as CLIA [138] report demonstrates. Cruise tourism created over one million full-time employment and contributes 134 billion USD in total output globally [138]. In the Caribbean and Latin American destinations,

cruise tourism contributed USD 3.16 billion of direct expenditures and created 75,050 jobs within the participating 35 destinations between 2014 and 2015 Fiscal Year (Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association, FCCA now onwards, 2018). In Europe, which is the second leading cruise destination of the world next to North America, the cruise industry contributed a record 54.5 billion USD in 2017 [137]. Italy, the UK, and Germany are the leading cruise ship destinations in Europe comprising 63% of the direct expenditures [137]. Barcelona remains the busiest port in Europe with 2.7 million cruise passengers in 2017 [2]; CLIA, [137]. Cruise ship tourism contributed a total of 908 million USD to the Catalan city of Barcelona in 2014 with a wide range of rippling economic effect [2].

Looking into a specific destination, the Caribbean (35.4%) and the Mediterranean (15.8%) remain the two most popular cruise ship destinations of the world ([137]; [7]. On the other hand, Asia (9.2%), and Australasia and the Pacific (6.1%) are the most rapidly growing cruise destinations of the globe [7,137]. In recent years, cruise tourism has shown extraordinary growth and it has gradually gained popularity among Asian tourists [8]. Based on CLIA [137] report, between 2012 and 2017, Asian cruise passengers grew from 775,000 to nearly 4.05 million, an estimated 39% average annual growth rate. In terms of a number of ships deployed, Asia experienced 81% annual growth since 2013 (CLIA, 2018). The direct economic contribution of the cruise industry to the Asian economy amounts 3.23 billion USD [136]. For instance, in China cruise industry shows a staggering 183% growth in

E-mail address: amare.wondirad@sis.ac.kr.

¹ His research interests include ecotourism, sustainable tourism, community-based tourism, small-scale tourism business development and cruise tourism.

2016, where the country was ranked second in terms of total ports of call globally [9]. Subsequently, due to the availability of abundant tourism resource and a massive amount of prospective tourism market, cruise ship tourism is gaining a fast-paced momentum in Asia where China emerges as the powerhouse of Asian cruise ship tourism market [10]. Nonetheless, this rapid growth is also being tested with formidable challenges such as infrastructural constraints, lack of qualified human power, insufficient maritime tradition and expertise, inadequate political commitment and environmental sustainability issues [10,11].

Continued economic growth, improved infrastructural development, and a favorable exchange rate make Asia a burgeoning cruise ship destination [12,13]; McCaughey, [14,148]; [9,15]. A concerted effort and steadfast collaboration among the governments, private investors, cruise operators, airlines, and tour operators, in areas such as port development, design and production of new ships, smooth passenger transportation, destination marketing, new and innovative product and service development determine the Asian cruise industry to thrive and prosper in the future [8,13,148]; [16]. Along with the above actors, higher education institutions and research centers significantly contribute to the sustainable development of cruise industry.

Cruise ship tourism keeps growing rapidly and remains one of the major areas of tourism growth since the start of the new millennium [7]. For instance, between 2008 and 2014 cruise travel outpaced general leisure travel in the USA by 22% [7], and global cruise ship is growing at a record pace increasing from 18 million passengers in 2009 to a projected 27.2 million in 2018, a 51% growth (CLIA, 2018).

The number of cruise passengers in Australia has also risen six-fold (just in a decade) from 158,415 in 2004 to 1,003,256 in 2014 [7]. United States of America (11.9%), China (2.4%) and Germany (2.19%) are the top three cruise passenger source countries (CLIA, 2019). As numerous forecasts (e.g. CLIA, 2017, 2018, 2019; FCCA, [141,142]) and academic research (e.g. Refs. [1,17] revealed, cruise ship tourism will continue to grow. According to CLIA (2017) study, 92% of cruisers are highly interested to book a cruise tour as their next vacation. The publication trend in the current study also highlights (see Fig. 2) a recent rapid increase of cruise tourism research, which mirrors the sector's growing international importance within the travel and tourism academia that has a strong correlation with the industry. As a result, it is imperative to pay a closer look and monitor the development of the sector to properly guide its development in a sustainable manner.

Scholars underscore that conducting a comprehensive analysis of scientific research outputs in a certain field of study is instrumental to

precisely describe, better understand, and comprehensively account for the evolution of knowledge across time periods [18]. Similarly [19], emphasized the importance of periodical reviews to a field of study to have an up-to-date archive of knowledge evolution. Given knowledge production and dissemination are key ingredients of informed decision-making, which in turn, determine the survival and profitability of firms in an increasingly competitive and continuously transforming environment [20], studies of the current sort offer decisive implications. In general, tracing and scrutinizing the evolution and trends of knowledge allows us to understand the past, analyze the present, and foresee the future [18,19];). Because of the increasing importance of the knowledge-based economy, the massive and wide range of knowledge generated by academicians and researchers should be systematically compiled analyzed and made readily available for the industry, destination management organizations, and other stakeholders to cultivate their innovative endeavors [20].

To that end, the current study aims to comprehensively analyze cruise ship tourism studies published in 20 top-tiered tourism, marine, and environmental journals between 1984 and 2018. Specifically, this systematic review research intends to:

- 1) examine cruise ship tourism research trends;
- 2) analyze previous cruise ship tourism studies in terms of research methods employed, study contexts, authorship status, and authors' country of residence;
- 3) explore leading cruise ship tourism research themes over the last three decades and
- 4) unravel overlooked, yet crucial research areas in the field of cruise ship tourism for further studies and thereby properly guide the development of this rapidly growing leisure segment.

2. Literature review

Cruise tourism refers to a vacation trip by cruise ships, which are often known as floating resorts dedicated to leisure [21]. As [6]; p. 3) defined, cruise tourism is 'a luxurious form of traveling, involving an all-inclusive holiday on a cruise ship of at least 48 h, according to a specific itinerary, in which the cruise ship calls at several ports or cities.' In doing so, cruising provides myriads of holiday package alternatives to choose ranging between a minimum of two days and lasts for several months [17]. As a famous quote from sailor Alain Gerbault, 'I wanted freedom, open-air, and adventure. I found it on the sea.'

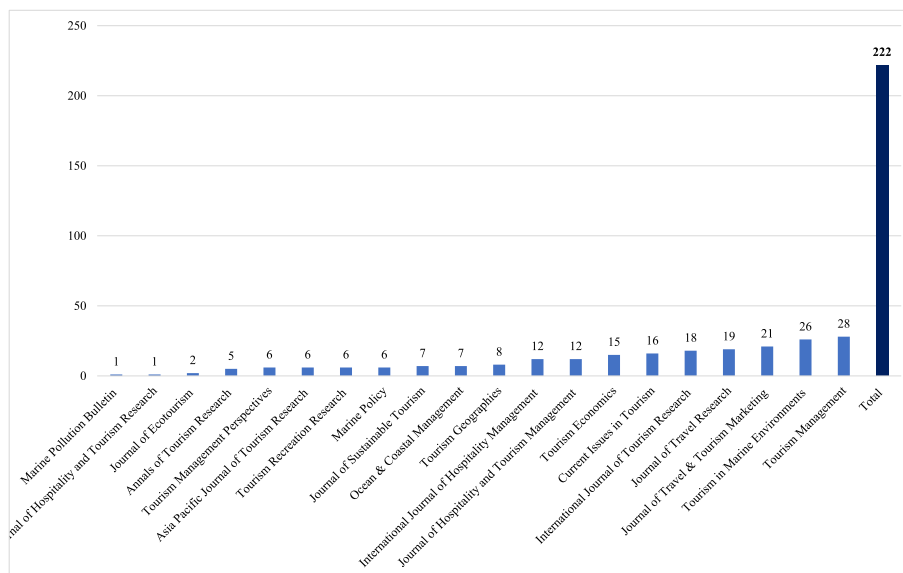


Fig. 1. Number of publications per selected journals.

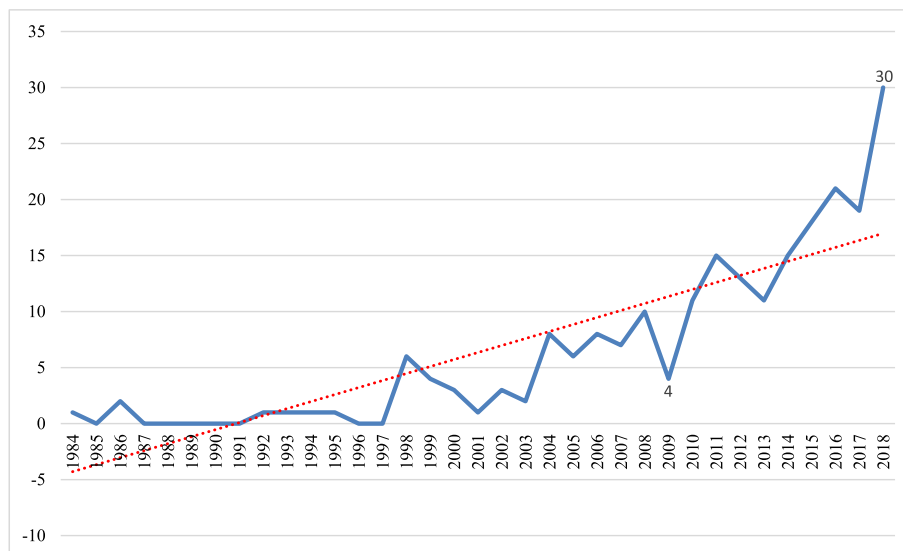


Fig. 2. Publication trends over the years.

explains, cruise tourism is inherently all-inclusive in its nature. According to Cruise Europe (Cited in Ref. [22]; p. 65), a cruise ship tourism is a voyage that lasts a minimum of 60 h by a seagoing vessel, mainly for pleasure where accommodation and all meals are included. Cruise voyage must include at least two visiting ports apart from ports of embarkation and disembarkation. Cruise tourism is currently the fastest-growing segment in the overall tourism sector and has experienced a stable and remarkable worldwide growth in the last three decades where North America and Europe lead the market while Asia-Pacific shows a remarkable growth [21,23]. Despite modern cruising starts to blossom around 1970, the first official round-the-world cruise was conducted in 1922-23 by the Cunard Line, embarked from New York with an itinerary that covers many of present-day ports-off-call [17]. In relation to world cruising, New York, Southampton, Port Everglades, and Tilbury constitute the major embarkation and disembarkation ports [17]. Currently, cruise tourism is growing three times faster than the overall tourism sector [1]. Cruise passengers take part in cruise ship holiday for various reasons including relaxation, socialization, convenience, luxury, escape from usual hustle and bustle of life, and amenities/services are the top motivating factors of cruise travelers respectively [24–26].

2.1. Prior cruise ship tourism systematic review papers

As far as previous cruise tourism research systematic review is concerned, there are a handful of reviews conducted over the years. For instance Ref. [27], investigated the status and progress of cruise ship tourism by analyzing various reports [17], examined trends of world extended-length cruising, and [13] studied current trends, opportunities and outlook of the Asia Pacific cruise line industry. Furthermore, Sun, Feng and Gauri [11], looked at cruise industry development efforts, progress and challenges of China through a review of cruise tourism research outcomes while [28] conducted a systematic review focusing on marketing research and revenue optimization studies of cruise ship tourism. A study by Ref. [29] that investigates the state of research on cruise tourism and the international cruise industry is also another recent collection of cruise tourism systematic review.

Nerveless, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the most recent and advanced systematic review of cruise tourism research was just published quite recently on a top-tier tourism journal by Ref. [9]. [9] reviewed cruise tourism research through the comparison of 88 cruise tourism studies published in prominent English journals (62 articles) and Chinese journals (26 articles). In their review work, the authors

discussed general trends, explored research topics (themes) and examined methodological applications by benchmarking the English and Chinese cruise tourism literature.

While being enormously appreciated to its substantive contribution to this very timely and important research frontier, the work of [9]; however, can be significantly enhanced in many respects. Most importantly, by excluding countless cruise tourism studies published in several top-ranked tourism journals such as *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Current Issues in Tourism*, *Tourism Economics*, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, *Tourism Recreation Research*, and *Journal of Ecotourism*, the picture that this systematic review tries to portray is highly disputable. Moreover, given cruise tourism and the marine ecosystems are two sides of a coin, a substantial amount of cruise ship tourism research outputs are quite frequent in marine and ocean ecosystem journals. Had these journals also been captured, the findings of [9] could offer readers a more comprehensive picture of cruise ship tourism research endeavors to-date. Furthermore, given the work of [9] reviews 20 years of cruise tourism research (1997–2016), it overlooks many years of cruise tourism research, which is vital in understanding the existing body of cruise ship tourism knowledge and in unfolding the evolution of scholarship in this influential tourism sector.

Given research agendas that have been raised and discussed in previous literature determine current activities and shape the future of cruise ship tourism research, the present meta-analysis paper strives to revisit the past, understand the present and foresee the future through the lenses of previous scientific cruise tourism research. To attain its purpose efficiently, this study covers more journal outlets and captures a greater amount of publications. Moreover, in addition the current study strives to discuss leading themes extracted, the evolution of research themes, research context, authors' country of residence, and publication authorship status (Co-authored or single-authored) that previous review papers overlooked. Furthermore, while the work of [9] reviews 20 years of cruise tourism research (1997–2016) published in top six English journals of tourism and hospitality industry, the current study captures and analyzes more than 3 decades of cruise tourism research (1986–2018) published in 20 tourism and marine environment journals. In this juncture, analyzing, scrutinizing and understanding what has been done so far in the cruise industry field of study appears extremely important to guide the industry's future direction.

2.2. Major challenges of cruise tourism in the contemporary world

As [4] stated, in addition to its economic justifications, the social and cultural implications of cruise ship tourism are also enormous. Along with the unique social milieu and landscape created by the cruise industry, new forms of lifestyles and social networks emerged. However, while cruise ship tourism receives a commendable international appeal as the fastest-growing tourism sector, a range of social, economic and environmental issues are also raised in relation to its accelerated growth [2,3,30]. Challenges such as environmental and air pollution from emissions inappropriate waste disposal practices, unsustainable infrastructure and facility development in ports of call are extensively documented in several studies [1,3,31–33]. Ensuring passenger retention, satisfying diverse needs of destination communities and protecting fragile ecosystem and sensitive natural areas while embracing the sector's rapid development remain chronic challenges of contemporary cruise industry [3,33–38]. Issues such as political instability at port destinations, terrorist attacks on a cruise ship or on ports, pirate attacks on a cruise ship, natural calamities, rough and extreme weather conditions, cruise tragedies due to technical issues, and onboard sickness as well as epidemics also remain grave concerns of safety and security in cruise tourism [39,40]. Poor technological applications to improve marine resource mapping, to enhance energy efficiency and waste treatment, overcrowding from enormous concurrent visitors of mega cruise ships require sound destination management competencies [1,30,41].

Particularly from the sustainability point of view, the cruise industry faces growing and harsh criticism from the environmental and socio-economic standpoint. The relationship between cruise tourism and the ecosystem is deeply complex as numerous actors such as tourists, cruise companies, local administrations, suppliers, local companies and environmental and heritage protection associations are involved in the sector [42; Lamers & van Tatenhove, 2017]. A lack of stringent laws and standards for regulating cruise tourism as well as the absence of comprehensive management and assessment strategies exacerbate the negative environmental effects of cruise industry [42]. For instance, in terms of emission, cruise ships produce as much particulate matter as a million cars every day and the air quality on deck can be as bad as the world's most polluted cities [31,43,44]. Especially a strict regulation must be in action to the practices of Flag of Convenience (FOC) where cruise ships register themselves under the maritime laws of countries other than the home country of the owners of the cruise ship to avoid strict environmental regulations and safety requirements [45,46]. From a broader perspective, the practice of Flag of Convenient also contributes to the problem of transnational crimes such as illegal fishing, drug trafficking, and human trafficking [46]. The above-mentioned unsustainable practices of cruise ship tourism contributed towards climate change especially in polar regions where tourism does not only rely on environmental attributes, such as wildlife and scenery but also on a pristine environment that has the potential to be altered irreversibly [31,35,38,43]. As a result, the proper growth and development of cruise industry does require sound management strategies to reduce its negative impacts through integrated and comprehensive actions from various stakeholders and to raise environmental awareness of cruise passengers as well as to ensure fair and equitable distribution of economic returns between destinations and cruise lines [8,30,42,47].

As far as cruise tourism and its economic sustainability are concerned, a systematic review of cruise tourism literature by Ref. [1] indicated that the role of cruise tourism in poverty reduction is highly disputable. According to Ref. [48] especially in destinations that experience rapid growth of cruise ship tourism, communities are negatively impacted by the cruise industry. In a similar vein, a recent study by Ref. [37] that examined the economic, social, and environmental impacts of cruise tourism in Trujillo, Honduras, demystified that in reality, cruise tourism failed to benefit communities, however, triggered negative environmental impacts and worsened corruption.

Furthermore, as [49,50] discussed, in Cartagena de Indias, the Caribbean, the economic contribution of cruise tourism proven to be insignificant. For instance, with regards to shore excursions sold by cruise operators, studies revealed that local tour operators receive only between 25% and 50% of the price paid by the tourist for ashore excursion the rest being hoarded by cruise lines (Brida & Zapata [134]; [51]; Penco & Di Vaio, [149]; [147]). Due to nonlocal employment and purchase of goods/services produced elsewhere, the lion share of cruise tourism income also leaks out of the local economy [1]; [52]. Furthermore, while ports worldwide stick to the \$100 per passenger figure, independent studies, however, show a much lower amount (e.g. average passenger spending of < \$60 in Croatia, \$74.84 in Costa Rica and \$44 in Belize [52]). In light of that [52] attempted to understand the disparity between passenger spending figures produced by cruise industry-supported studies versus independent researchers using a primary data collected in four major ports of Atlantic Canada. Their study uncovered a continuous overstatement of cruise passenger spending reports of studies commissioned or done by the cruise industry that largely arising from methodological issues (sampling bias due to failure to use appropriate methods of probability sampling). Therefore, from the economic point of view, concerns on various issues such as port user fees, and the construction and maintenance of terminal facilities, as well as the fairness in the distribution of cruise revenue to local economies are raised [51].

As [1,53] suggested, cruise industry needs innovative management and creative entrepreneurs to effectively deal with a wide range of challenges it is facing today such as:

- 1) energy and GHG emissions
- 2) sustainable water consumption
- 3) waste and pollution management
- 4) ensuring host community benefit
- 5) ecosystem pollution and loss of biological diversity and effective management of cultural heritage and
- 6) the aging population.

In a nutshell, especially since the advent of mega cruise ships, best known as floating cities, with a passenger capacity of over 5000, the socio-economic and environmental sustainability of cruise ship tourism becomes a huge concern in destinations such as Venice and Barcelona [42,54]. Since cruise passengers remain concentrated in a restricted area of port cities [145], the economic effects of cruise tourism are insignificant to the wider community [51] while it creates excessive areal congestion [33]. In the effort to alleviate such overarching sustainability issues of the cruise industry [30], suggested the application of collective self-governance concept to steer toward sustainable cruise tourism. Collective self-governance is a concept that highlights a process where key stakeholders determine the development course of resources through the adaption of pertinent and up-to-date strategies with the participation of key actors in a win-win scenario [55]. In the context of cruise tourism, the proper execution of collective self-governance complements governmental regulation, advances conflict resolution, boosts trust-building, and enhances the role of the user community that functions as an intermediary between the state and self-governance regulations [30]. In this regard, the roles of media and nonprofit organizations are highlighted as profound especially in the awareness creation campaign and influencing legislative process [41].

3. Methodology

Different research objectives entail different research designs and analysis techniques (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, [143]; Creswell [139]; [56]). The current study employs summative and thematic content analyses to systematically comprehend and analyze data extracted from selected research articles. Summative content analysis counts and compares keywords or contents, and interprets underlying implications

Table 1
Inventory of publications by Journals, themes, research approach used, authors' affiliation and authorship type.

No.	Title of publication	Journal name	Research context	Major theme/s	Research approach employed			Authors (Authors' affiliation by country)		Authorship Type
					Quant.	Quali.	Mix	Single	Co	
1	Ecotourism Excursions for Cruise Passengers	JOST	The Caribbean	Time constraints imposed by cruise operators and an emphasis on selling rather than education. Flexibility from cruise companies, political will, product development and diversification, and investment of time and energy from the tourists, and effective dialogue and partnership between cruise lines and DMOs are pivotal.	✓	✓		UK		✓
2	Collective self-governance for sustainable cruise tourism	JOST	Norway	Collective self-governance complements governmental regulation through access to knowledge, conflict resolution and rule-compliance based on disclosure, traceability, and trust.	✓			The Netherlands		✓
3	Investigating the Sustainability of Cruise Tourism: A Case Study of Key West	JOST	USA, Florida	Mixed emotions about future quantitative and qualitative growth with a fear of continued growth and loss of sustainability	✓			USA		✓
4	Antarctic cruise tourism: the paradoxes of ambassadorship, "last chance tourism" and greenhouse gas emissions	JOST	Arctic	Last chance tourism contributes towards more greenhouse gas emissions and trips to sensitive areas do not necessarily develop greater environmental awareness, change attitudes or encourage more sustainable future travel choices.	✓			The Netherlands		✓
5	Identifying and evaluating adaptation strategies for cruise tourism in Arctic Canada	JOST	Arctic Canada	Cruise tourism rapidly growing. Socio-economic benefits with climate change, and environmental, technical and cultural risks. Disaster management plans, updated technology, and ship navigation systems, improved marine resource mapping, and the development of a code of conduct for cruise tourists to guide visitor behavior and promote a sustainable approach.	✓			Canada		✓
6	Integrating Indigenous values with capitalism through cruise tourism	JOST	Alaska, USA	Integrating indigenous values with capitalism through cruise tourism.	✓			UAS		✓
7	Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Marine Tours	JOST	Australia	Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Cruise tourism. The fastest-growing sector in terms of GHG outputs.		✓		Australia		✓

[144], whereas thematic analysis identifies, analyzes and reports patterns (themes) detected across publications [133]. Largely as qualitative data analysis, content analysis, in general, focuses on collecting, categorizing, analyzing, and compiling data (mostly non-numeric) systematically to establish valid inferences [57]. In doing so, it provides a coherent and synthesized understanding of a given phenomenon ([140]; [58,59]). Since it is problematic for researchers to access the raw data of previous research, the execution of content analysis usually relies on the results and findings of different studies to combine, compile, analyze and create logical patterns [60].

Tourism research benefits from the help of content analysis in various instances. To mention a few [61], employed content analysis to examine tourist destination image while [57] to understand the contributions of economics to hospitality literature. Furthermore [19,62,63], and [9] utilized content analysis to investigate research evolution, trends, and development in their respective research agenda. Content analysis is also widely used in examining websites to understand hospitality and tourism companies' practices [59].

Microsoft Excel is employed to execute the summative analysis, while QDA Miner, version 5.0.24 is applied to extract, comprehend, organize, and synthesize relevant information contained in all the publications. The application of MS Excel and QDA Miner qualitative data analysis enhance the scientific rigor of the content analysis and thereby increase the trustworthiness of research findings. The researcher thoroughly consults previous content analysis studies (e.g. Refs. [9,19,57,62–64]) to ensure methodological validity. To produce a comprehensive and trustworthy outcome, the current study covers 20 relevant journals in the analysis. The journals are:

- 1) Annals of Tourism Research
- 2) Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research
- 3) Current Issues in Tourism
- 4) International Journal of Hospitality Management
- 5) International Journal of Tourism Research
- 6) Journal of Ecotourism
- 7) Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management
- 8) Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research
- 9) Journal of Sustainable Tourism
- 10) Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing
- 11) Journal of Travel Research
- 12) Marine Policy
- 13) Marine Pollution Bulletin
- 14) Ocean & Coastal Management
- 15) Tourism Economics
- 16) Tourism Geographies
- 17) Tourism in Marine Environments
- 18) Tourism Management
- 19) Tourism Management Perspectives and
- 20) Tourism Recreation Research

Keywords such as cruise, cruise ship, cruise ship tourism, ports of call, cruising, cruise tourism, cruise vacation, cruise package, and cruise line are used to search for relevant research articles in each journal. Furthermore, terms such as floating hotels, water-based tourism, maritime tourism, nautical tourism, freighter tourism, and river tourism are used to filter articles that discuss cruise ship tourism without explicitly stating it on their title. This study only considers full-length research articles. Subsequently, book reviews, research notes, conference publications, personal notes and reports, short communications, rejoinders, corrigenda, conference proceedings, theses and dissertations, books, and book chapters are excluded. Relevant information contained in each article was compiled into various forms such as publication trends, leading themes, number of publications per journal and methodology employed, and so forth to address study objectives. 1984 becomes the initial year in the publication trend since it is the year in which the first cruise tourism publication within the chosen journals appears. Before

screening out research themes and extracting other relevant lines of discussion, the researcher develops a catalog comprising the whole list of publications together with the required information from each publication (see Table 1).

4. Results and discussions

4.1. Publications per journal

With regards to the number of publications per selected journals, Tourism Management, 28 (12.6%), Tourism in Marine Environments 26 (11.7%), Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 21 (9.5%), and Journal of Travel Research, 19 (8.6%) become the top three publication outlets respectively by comprising 94 (42.3%) articles out of the entire 222 research papers. Furthermore, as Fig. 1 exhibits, quite a significant number of research outputs are published in The International Journal of Tourism Research, 18 (8.1%), Current Issues in Tourism, 16 (7.2%), and Tourism Economics, 15 (6.8%). In contrast, Journal of Ecotourism, 2 (0.9%) and Marine Pollution Bulletin and Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, 1 (0.5%) each are found to be the lowest three journals in terms of number of publications.

Even though there are a handful of studies related to cruise tourism and sustainability, given the relevance of the sustainability agenda in the face of rapid environmental pollution and ecosystem alteration, much more is yet expected to be done [54,65]. The scarcity of publications in journals such as Journal of Sustainable Tourism, Journal of Ecotourism, Marine Pollution Bulletin, and Ocean and Coastal Management informs that the current cruise literature does not yet adequately examine the nexus between sustainability and cruise ship tourism research [29]. This could be due to the reluctance of cruise line companies, where researchers increasingly face challenges of gaining access to study such sensitive issues in the light of continuous allegations towards the sector [1,9].

4.2. Publication trend

The first cruise tourism research article appeared in 1984 in The Journal of Travel Research (JTR). This primal research paper was published by Ref. [27] with the intention to understand the overall development, progress, and prospects of the cruise industry in the USA. As can be seen in Fig. 2, there were only a few cruise tourism research outcomes until 1998. It was only since 1998 that quite a significant number of cruise tourism research articles start to proliferate with an astonishing speed considering journals covered in this study. Particularly over the last decade cruise tourism publication has shown incremental growth (i.e. an increase from 4 articles in 2009 to 30 articles in 2018). Given a lot yet remain to be explored because of restricted access to conduct research in cruise lines [1,9] and the relative the 'newness' of the sector [29], cruise ship tourism research will continue to boom in the years to come. Subsequently, both the existing literature [29,52,66,67] and the publication trend in the current study (see Fig. 2) resonate a consistent connotation as far as the future of cruise ship tourism growth is concerned.

The whole publications captured in this research are divided into three distinct phases to further understand the evolution of research paradigm and conceptual development through time (see Fig. 3). Accordingly, the first stage covers publications between 1984 and 1996, with 7 (3.15%) publications, while the second phase captures articles between 1997 and 2007, with 48 (21.6%) research outcomes. Finally, the third phase comprehends publications between 2008 and 2018, where a staggering 167 (75.25%) research articles are published. Apart from a tremendous publication surge, this segregation uncovers the evolution of important research paradigm. Cruise tourism researchers in the first phase (i.e. 1984–1996) focused on analyzing cruise ship tourism growth and development [68–70], examining the economic importance of cruise tourism [68], and investigating cruise passengers'

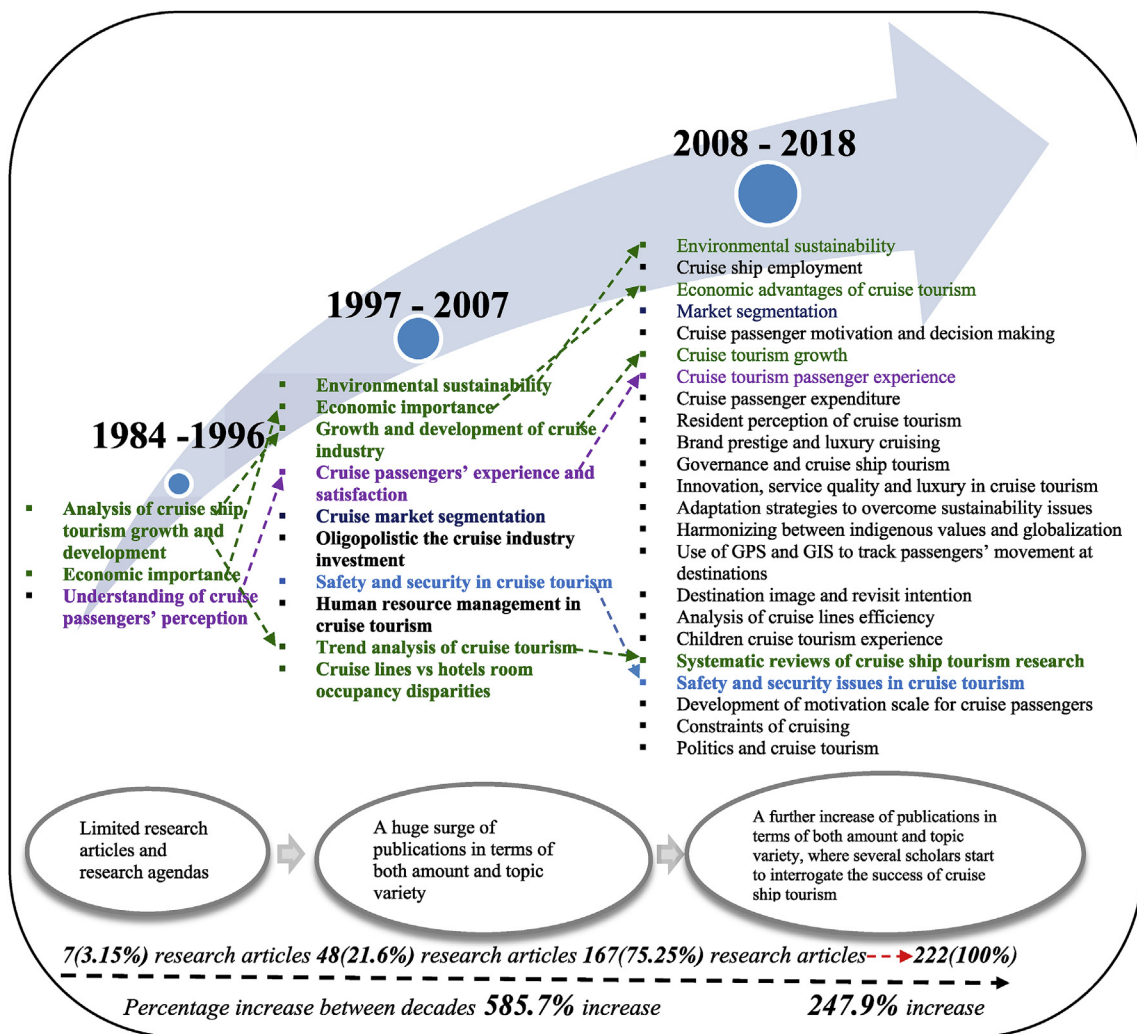


Figure 3. Trends of cruise ship tourism research paradigm.

Table 2
Leading research themes.

No.	Leading themes	Frequency
1	Impacts of cruise tourism (economic, social, and environmental sustainability issues)	46 (20.2%)
2	Passengers' cruise expectations, perception, experience, and satisfaction with service quality, offshore experience, and ship design among others.	31 (13.6%)
3	Growth and development of cruise tourism (including its future, and factors of growth, investment, room occupancies outweighing hotels)	27 (11.8%)
4	Passengers' loyalty, intention to purchase, repurchase and recommend cruise packages, value-attitude-behavior and willingness to pay (different types, eco, luxury)	25 (11%)
5	Motivating factors for cruise holiday consumption and repeat vs first-timers cursing behavior	17 (7.5%)
6	Marketing related themes (Segmenting cruise passengers, market segmentation, marketing techniques, branding, segmenting based on price)	12 (5.3%)
7	Cruise ship ports of call (port selection, port attractiveness, port establishment) and ports' destination attribute	10 (4.4%)
8	Safety and security (vessel sanitation, health, weather, terrorism, piracy and impacts of tragedies)	9 (3.9%)
9	Cruise ship employment (perception, motivation, satisfaction, and recruitment)	9 (3.9%)
10	Passengers' cruise expenditure and spending pattern including overestimation	8 (3.5%)
11	Governance, collaboration, and leadership for sustainable cruise tourism	8 (3.5%)
12	Cruise tourism and resident's attitude	5 (2.2%)
13	Guest-to-guest (C ₂ C) interaction onboard cruise ships	4 (1.8%)
14	Cruise tourism and ecotourism	3 (1.3%)
15	Cruise passengers' behavior in cruise ship destinations	3 (1.3%)
16	Content analysis (systematic review, trend analysis, web content analysis)	3 (1.3%)
17	Constraining factors of cruising	3 (1.3%)
18	Environmental interpretation and cruise tourism	2 (0.9%)
19	Evaluating the efficiency of cruise lines	2 (0.9%)
20	McDonaldization/standardization of cruise tourism	2 (0.9%)
21	Behavioral differences among cruise line passengers	2 (0.9%)
22	Word-of-mouth recommendations in relation to cruise tourism	2 (0.9%)
23	Cruise line logo recognition/brand identification	2 (0.9%)
24	*Other themes	13 (5.7%)
25	Total	228 (100%)

perception [71]. The second stage which covers a period between 1997 and 2007 reveals an extremely rapid publication growth (585.7% increase) where researchers explored a wide range of research agendas. However, some of the thematic research areas such as growth and development, economic importance, and sustainability of cruise industry remain to be appealing research domains regardless of time and place factors. The most recent decade that captures a period between 2008 and 2018 also unfolds a further astonishing increase in research outcomes with 247.9% growth over its predecessor. In this stage, in fact, we do not only observe an exponential growth in cruise tourism research, but also an increased diversification of research agendas where scholars attempted to explore overlooked, yet important research areas such as understanding of children's cruising experience [72], sexual crime in cruise lines [73], onboard live music performance and its impacts on passengers [74] and the use of technology to better understand cruise passengers' behavior and mobility trends in cruise ship tourism destinations [54,75]. As noted by Carr (2011) and [72]; despite children play a significant role in the family's travel decision-making process and thereby consumption pattern, thus far there is no scientific research that attempts to examine children's cruise tourism experience. Moreover, recent cruise tourism research starts to analyze, evaluate and critic the environmental and economic sustainability of cruise industry [33,37,42,49–51,54], residents' attitudes towards cruise tourism [48,76–78], and the enclave nature of cruise ship tourism vis-à-vis the concept of sustainability [79,80].

4.3. Leading cruise ship tourism research themes

Exploring major research areas that have been under scrutiny by cruise tourism researchers over the past three decades enables us to understand the research foci of cruise ship tourism. In this respect, Table 2 exhibits leading research themes that have been constantly drawing researchers' attention in the field of cruise tourism over the past 3 decades. The impact of cruise ship tourism emerges as the most frequently examined research theme constituting 20.2% of the overall research agendas followed by research areas related to cruise passenger experience, perception, and satisfaction. The works of [81–84]; Hefner, McLeod and Crotts [150], [37,85,86], and [87] are examples of cruise tourism impact research while studies conducted by Refs. [15,24,50,72,88–91] and [92] focused on cruise passenger experience, perception and satisfaction. Moreover, authors such as [93–95] examined cruise ship holidaymakers' travel experience. Research areas such as the growth and development of cruise tourism and cruise passengers' loyalty, intention to re (purchase) and recommend as well as the willingness to pay for different types of cruise packages become the third most investigated thematic area (see Table 2). Furthermore, research projects that focus on cruise passenger motivating factors for cruise holiday consumption gained significant coverage across publications.

A significant number of scholars have also explored cruise ship tourism marketing related topics (e.g. Refs. [54,79,96–100]). Similarly a significant number of research articles investigated themes such as safety and security (e.g. Refs. [39,101]), and perception, motivation and satisfaction of cruise ship employment (e.g. Refs. [14,25,26,36,102–105]). As [106] discussed, in the aftermath of cruise tourism tragedies or crisis, academia reports the effects of calamities while stakeholders of the affected industry do make strong marketing and public relations initiatives to dull the tragedy's emotional impact and speed up the evaporation of its impact on the market's decision-making by rebranding the image of the industry. As far as cruise ship tourism is concerned, studies noted that cruise industry is facing formidable challenges in attracting and retaining qualified human resource due to the seasonality nature of cruise ship career which, in turn, affects maintaining consistent service quality and thereby hamper competitiveness [53]. Several researchers (e.g. Refs. [50,81,82,86,88,107–111]) examined the attributes of ports of call as

cruise ship destination. Eventually, the findings of the current study revealed recurring cruise ship tourism research areas such as cruise passenger expenditure and spending patterns (e.g. Ref. [49]; Brida, Bukstein & Tealde [135]; [112–116]), the role of effective governance and strong stakeholder cooperation for sustainable cruise ship tourism (e.g. Refs. [8,11,30,117,118]), and host communities' attitude towards cruise ship tourism (e.g. Refs. [48,76–78]) along with a wide range of themes outlined under Table 2.

* **Other themes include:** Traditional knowledge and capitalism-integration via cruise tourism, Costs involved in cruise tourism, Crisis management in cruise tourism, children's cruising experience, cruise lines and their suppliers, corporate social responsibility in cruising, controlling guest movement via onboard live music performance, cruise liners length of stay, customer compliant in cruise line, sexual crimes on cruise ships, seasonality of cruise tourism, cruise passengers' decision making process, revenue management in the cruise line industry, oligarchy nature of cruise industry, cruise tourism and neo-colonialism, timeshare and cruise tourism, politics and cruise tourism.

Given a cruise experience is co-created between local cruise suppliers (e.g. tourism attractions, ports, and transportation companies) and global cruise liners, the effective participation of stakeholders in port destinations is fundamental for the creation and optimization of value [119]. A high degree of collaboration, which stimulates the suppliers' intentions to provide services, in turn, stimulates local participation and thereby local value creation from cruise arrivals [119].

With regards to the economic contribution of cruise ship tourism, even though countless studies report exaggerated impact (e.g. Refs. [114,120]) a careful investigation conducted by Ref. [52] in Halifax, Nova Scotia and [115] in Norway, disclosed how cruise passenger spending is overstated both by the cruise industry and cruise tourists.

4.4. Moving cruise ship tourism research forward

Despite the presence of a large volume of cruise tourism research publications in the current literature, still, there are numerous overlooked but worthy to investigate thematic areas. Even though cruise tourism is a relatively less explored segment of the overall tourism sector in general, there is lack of emancipative research in some pertinent topics of cruise industry [1,9,29,54,72] such as:

1. Children's cruise ship tour experience,
2. The use and application of technology in cruise ship tourism,
3. The cultural impacts of cruise tourism in cruise ship destinations,
4. Socialization and information sharing of cruise ship tourism experiences using social media
5. Technological application in ensuring sustainable cruise tourism development
6. Anticipation and pre-consumption behavior of cruise passengers
7. Onboard crime, labor, and environmental issues
8. Movement and behavior of cruise passengers onboard and ashore
9. Social constructions including customer to customer onboard interactions
10. Crisis management in cruise tourism and
11. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) in cruising are among the less explored areas of cruise ship tourism research.
12. Given its fast growth and significant regional and global impact, Chinese cruise market also deserves a closer investigation to examine the nature, characteristics, experiences, and trends of Chinese cruise tourists to better understand and thereby harness this massive and growing consumer segment both regionally and globally.

In his pioneering recent study [72] discovered that children play a vital role in choosing the cruise company and while onboard, they demand a certain level of autonomy so that they can co-create their own memorable cruise experience. Given the fact that cruise tourism

increasingly attracts Millennials and Generation Xers for a family holiday (CLIA, 2019) and as savvy, connected, and active consumers, current kids play a determinant role in shaping the future of cruise ship tourism [72]. Therefore, in the light of a rapidly increasing family cruise package, understanding cruise ship travel experiences of children and unfolding their rarely heard voices is extremely important.

Another major issue that existing research overlook is the use of technology to advance the sustainable development of cruise tourism. Apart from two studies, one that employs GPS technology to track cruise passengers' movement and behavior at the destination, and another study which uses GIS to investigate mobility patterns of cruise passengers, there is no research found that pays attention to the role of technology neither in redressing the unwanted impacts of cruise tourism nor advancing the practice of cruise ship tourism research. Similarly, the systematic review study of [9] has not explored a research work that addresses the implementation of technology to enhance the successful development of future cruise tourism. The only exception is a conference paper published by Ref. [121] in a mediocre journal that underlines the substantive role of technical innovations in expediting sustainability practices in cruise tourism.

The socio-cultural impact of cruise tourism as well remains to be an overlooked research area. The current study documents only three studies that tried to examine the socio-cultural impacts of cruise tourism in relation to capital mobility, social development, and labor migration [51,120,122]. Nevertheless, thus far, this study finds no research that exclusively examines the cultural repercussions of cruise tourism in ports of embarkation, disembarkation or ports of destination. Even though the subject of tourism has been studied in relation to climate change ([123,124]; [125], currently there is a limited understanding to the demand side of cruise ship tourism about climate change, which aggravates the vulnerability of sensitive and fragile cruise tourism destinations in the long run [38]. This scarcity of research compromises the ability of decision-makers to formulate relevant policies and adaptation strategies to curtail environmental degradations. In this regard, researchers shall make a concerted effort to develop a broader spectrum of methodological approaches (i.e. interviews, observation or journals) that would allow for more deeper understanding of visitors' perceptions of climate change and decisions to travel to environmentally fragile places such as polar regions and other remote destinations and post-travel behavioral changes [29,38].

There is also a lack of research that examines the sharing of cruise ship experience on social media. Given cruise tourism is all about the hedonistic consumption of hospitality and tourism products and services on the one hand, and information communication technology and digitalization are transforming the way we communicate, on the other hand, cruise passengers could most probably share their cruise ship tourism experience on the available social media. Therefore, what types of cruise ship tourism experiences do passengers tend to share on social media, and how often do they share their experiences, what triggers them to share their experience, how the contents generated by passengers are used by cruise ship companies potential cruise holiday consumers plus other themes might offer experiential pieces of evidence as far as cruise tourists personal experience and consumption patterns are concerned. That in turn, provides various cruise ship tourism stakeholders with useful information in dealing with a rapidly changing consumer demand. However, both in the current meta-analysis study and previous systematic reviews papers, there is no research that investigates the information and experience sharing tendency of cruise passengers on social media. Therefore, social media and cruise ship tourism can be a crucial vantage point for future researchers.

Except for a research note by Ref. [126]; the current research identifies no research that deals with cruise travelers' anticipation and pre-consumption behavior. Since cruise tourists' anticipation is high after they make a booking [126], a better understanding of customers' anticipation provides cruise company managers with a clearer picture of consumer emotions in this phase that will help them to identify

which services and products passengers may require in this pre-consumption journey stage, which in turn, help improve customer satisfaction and increasing revenues [126,127].

In the end, given cruise tourism in China is in its infancy stage with extraordinary growth [9–11], currently, there is a dearth of cruise tourism research that informs cruise tourism stakeholders about the Chinese market characteristics implying the necessity to carry out pertinent scientific studies in the light of this budding and promising cruise passenger generating region. As a result, as a new entrant to the cruise tourism sector with a phenomenal growth rate, China provides a fertile ground for cruise tourism-related research in the years to come. In general, as findings of the current study vividly show, unlike matured destinations such as North America and Europe, cruise tourism study is quite scarce in newly emerging destinations leading to a lack of adequate understanding about the nature, characteristics, attributes, and operations of cruise tourism [9]. The establishment of an academic journal dedicated to cruise tourism research might propel further research in the field [29].

4.5. Publications per research approach employed and authorship status

In terms of research approaches employed across sampled publications, this study evidences quantitative research as a dominant approach used in contrast to qualitative and mixed methods research approaches. As a result, 56% of the studies employed a quantitative research approach, while 29% and 15% of the articles adopted a qualitative and mixed methods research approaches respectively (see Fig. 4). This reconfirms the findings of [9]; where 62.9% of the studies were indicated quantitative, while the rest constitute qualitative and mixed-method categories. Given, impacts of cruise tourism and passengers' cruise expectations, perception, experience, and satisfaction are the leading research themes, it understandable that quantitative studies dominate over the other research approaches.

Many of the quantitative studies employ Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Such research endeavors appeared to be totally pre-determinative and strived to quantify passengers' motivation, experience, and perception into numerical figures that are prone to contention. As Van Bets, Lamers and van Tatenhove [30], [9,41], and [15] suggested the use of qualitative study employing in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations and Delphi techniques to investigate cruise travelers' experience to better understanding cruise tourism from participants standpoint instead of making any presumptions. That way, academicians can make more meaningful theoretical

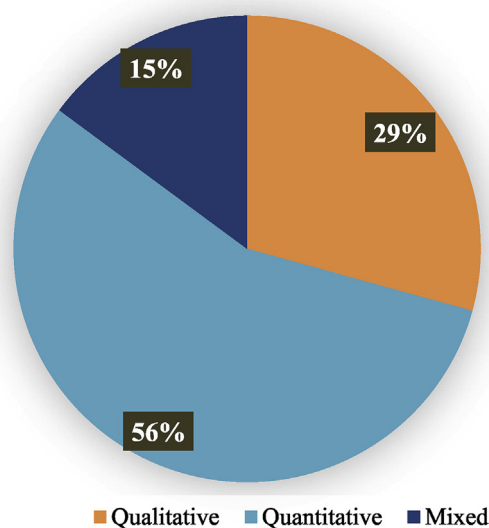


Fig. 4. Publications per research approach employed.

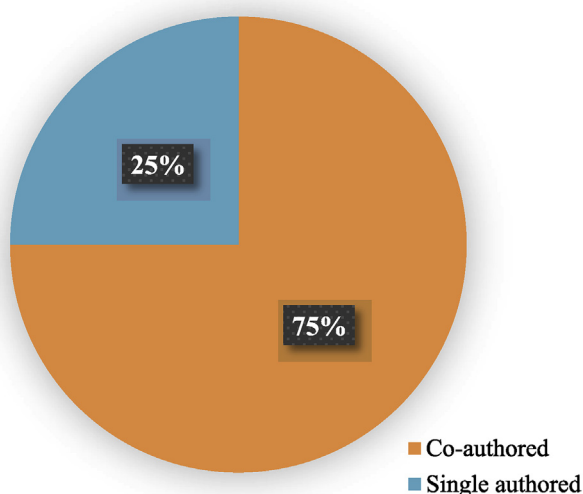


Fig. 5. Publications per authorship status.

and practical implications to cruise tourism research advancement and the sector's development.

As far as the authorship status of publications is concerned, 75% of the articles are found to be co-authored while 25% of the research works are single-authored (see Fig. 5). This is somehow in line with the findings of [9] where they reported that 69% of the English publications were co-authored. It was also noted that while scholars from the USA and Asia tend to publish with other authors, most of the single-authored publications belong to authors from countries such as Germany, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

4.6. Publications per study context (countrywise and regional perspective)

The current study also investigates research publications per specific study context and revealed the US as a prime cruise tourism research context incomparably accounting for 47 research articles. China and Canada become second with 8 research articles followed by the UK and Spain with 7 articles each (see Fig. 6). This is in line with the findings of [9] where they reported 42 research works belonging to North America followed by Asia with 8 publications. As Figs. 6 and 7 portray, there is no cruise ship tourism research documented both in Africa and the Middle East.

With regards to the regional distribution of research publications, North America becomes the leading cruise ship tourism research region constituting 42% followed by Europe 22% and Asia and the Pacific 17% (see Fig. 7). 14% of the studies belong to no specific context since they are rather conceptual research and review papers, which do not necessarily require a specific research context while South America obtains only 5% of the entire research outcomes.

A further investigation of the regional growth of cruise ship tourism research publications reveals a dramatic growth over the previous three decades (see Fig. 8). While cruise tourism research depicts 714.3% growth in North America between 1984 and 2018, it shows 1075% growth between 2007 and 2018 in Europe. Cruise tourism research also demonstrates a fast and steady growth in Asia and the Pacific in the light of solid regional economic development. As can be seen in Fig. 8, during 1984–1996, there was no cruise ship tourism research conducted neither in Europe, Asia, and the Pacific nor in South America.

4.7. Authors by country of residence

With regards to authors country of residence, the vast majority of cruise tourism researchers belong to the USA where 67 authors (31.16%) are spotted followed by the UK and Hong Kong with 13

authors (6.05%) each (see Fig. 9). South Korea is ranked 4th with 12 (5.58%) scholars, while Australia and Italy are placed 5th with 11 (5.12%) scholars each. The other countries where a significant number of researchers reside include Canada and Spain 9 (4.19%) each, China 8 (3.72%) and the Netherlands 7 (3.26%). There is no any researcher or research that belongs to the entire African continent vividly implicating that this leading and fast-growing segment of the tourism market is completely overlooked in African oceans.

5. Conclusion and implications

Cruise ship tourism is currently growing rapidly where North America and Europe continue to lead the cruise tourism industry both as a holiday destination and source market while the Asia-Pacific is catching up with dramatic growth momentum. Comprising 60% of the world's current population [128], and sharing 42.6% of global GDP [129], the Asia-Pacific region becomes the center of gravity for cruise tourism with a bright future. Continued economic growth and infrastructural development that creates a massive number of potential cruise tourism consumers both within and outside the region drive the cruise industry development in the region. Within the Asia-pacific cruising region, China is undergoing a massive growth in terms of inbound cruise ship visits and outbound cruise ship tourists with a positive prospect [9–11]. However, to date, the US leads cruise tourism research both in terms of the number of authors and research context. The provision of affordable all-inclusive cruise package offers, which satisfy value for money and convenience with higher service quality and creative itineraries attract cruise passengers, especially first-time cruisers [13,15,17]. Nonetheless, despite there is an encouraging trend from developing nations, cruise tourism still remains to be mainly a western-centric leisure trip.

Since the cruise industry continues to create a mounting pressure detrimental to fragile ecosystems, the climate change discourse is prevalent in literature [34,35,38,48,117,130]. Ecosystem alterations in sensitive areas such as polar regions due to climate change bring severe consequences to humans requiring immediate countermeasures [35,38,130,131]. Even though tourist arrivals seem small in sensitive habitats such as the Antarctic region compared to other destinations, recent trend shows a dramatic increase with no signs of decreasing particularly in the advent of mega cruise ships [31,34,117,132,146,38]. As cruise ship tourism significantly contributes to climate change and the sector itself is affected by extreme weather because of climate change, the nexus between cruise industry and climate change should be one of the most thematic cruise tourism research areas in the years to come [29,31,34,35,38].

Despite cruise passengers are perceived as big holiday spenders, the overall trend rather shows that in many instances they even spend lower than other tourists [115] and their spending rate has been declining [52]. While studies commissioned or done by the cruise industry claim that cruise passengers spend on average \$100 per ports of call, research conducted by nonpartisan institutions, local community groups, and ports, consistently discover passenger spending to be half (or less) than the industry's \$100 baseline [52]. Because of the rent-seeking tendencies of cruise companies to capture economic values for themselves while minimizing economic trickle-down effects to local stakeholders, only a small portion of passenger spending reaches to local providers in ports of destinations [51,52]. To that end, despite cruise passengers' high expenditure, the overall economic impact of cruise tourism to cruise destinations local economy remains to be disputable due to a high degree of leakage [52]; [1].

Over the previous three decades, cruise ship tourism research exhibits an extraordinary growth both in terms of publication volume and research themes. Nevertheless, still, there are various worthwhile thematic areas that merit further scientific investigation. Subsequently, future cruise tourism research should strive to investigate to provide theoretical insights to academia and offer practical implications to the

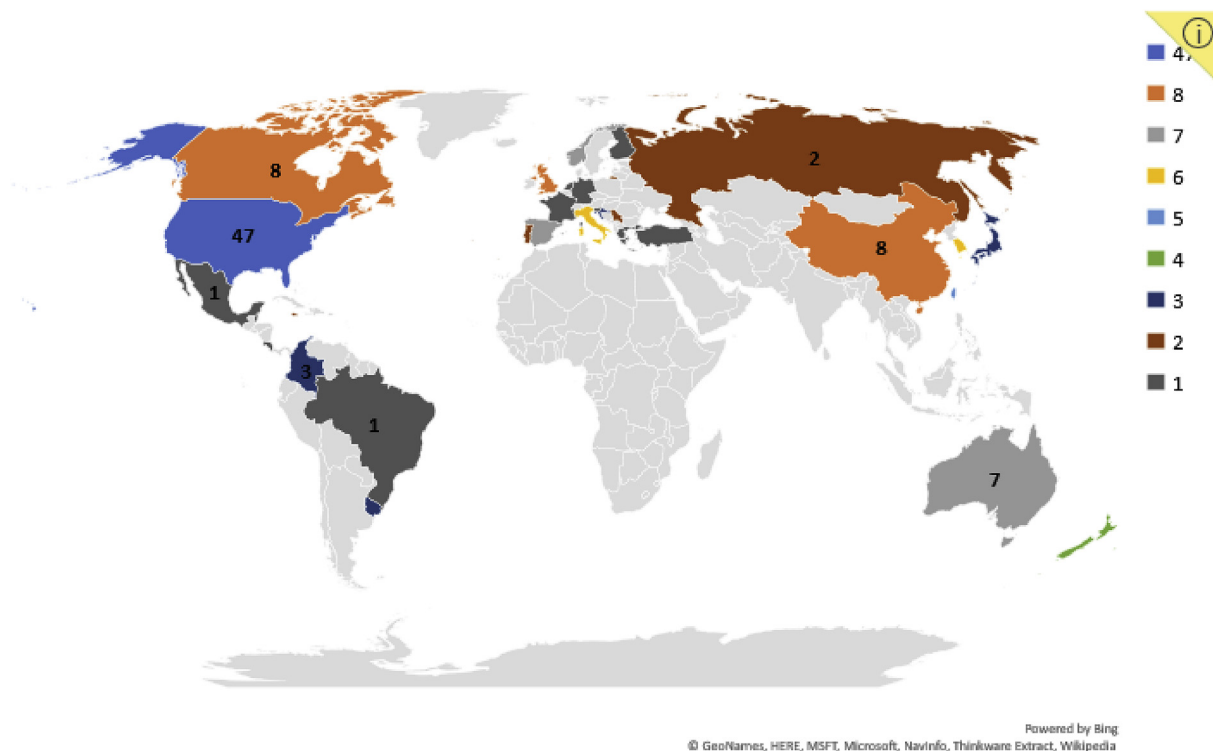


Fig. 6. Publications per study context, country wise.

industry. That helps the industry not only to survive and move forward successfully but also to thrive as the fastest segment of the leisure sector. For instance, as far as the sustainable development of cruise industry is concerned, the current literature portrays a grey picture and further scientific research needs to be conducted to explore more [29]. With regards to the use and application of technology into cruise ship tourism research, this study exposes an acute scarcity. Therefore, future cruise ship tourism studies should pay adequate attention to technological implementations in examining the sector's contemporary pressing challenges and thereby offer substantive theoretical and managerial implications that help to advance efficiency and overcome sustainability challenges.

6. Limitations

Despite the current study makes extensive effort to incorporate as many journals as possible in contrast to previous similar works, but still it faces limitations of capturing some additional journals that might contain cruise tourism research publications. Furthermore, with the objective to focus on actual research articles, the exclusion of other accounts such as research notes, books, book chapters, short communications, news articles, and conference proceedings could be one of its shortcomings. In light of that future studies might include such accounts to demonstrate a full picture of cruise ship tourism research journey hitherto.

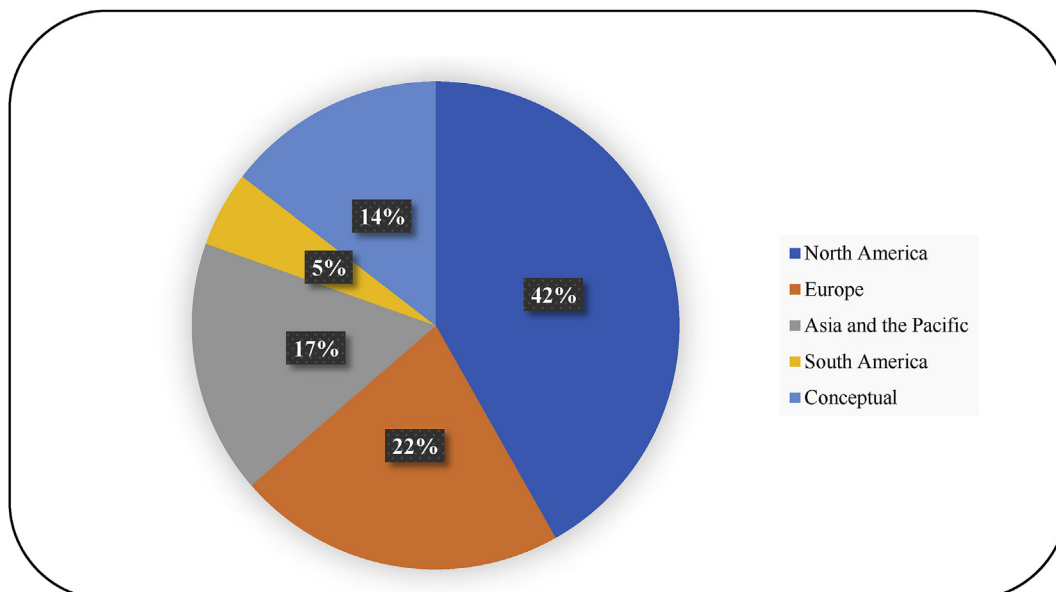


Fig. 7. Publications per study context, regional.

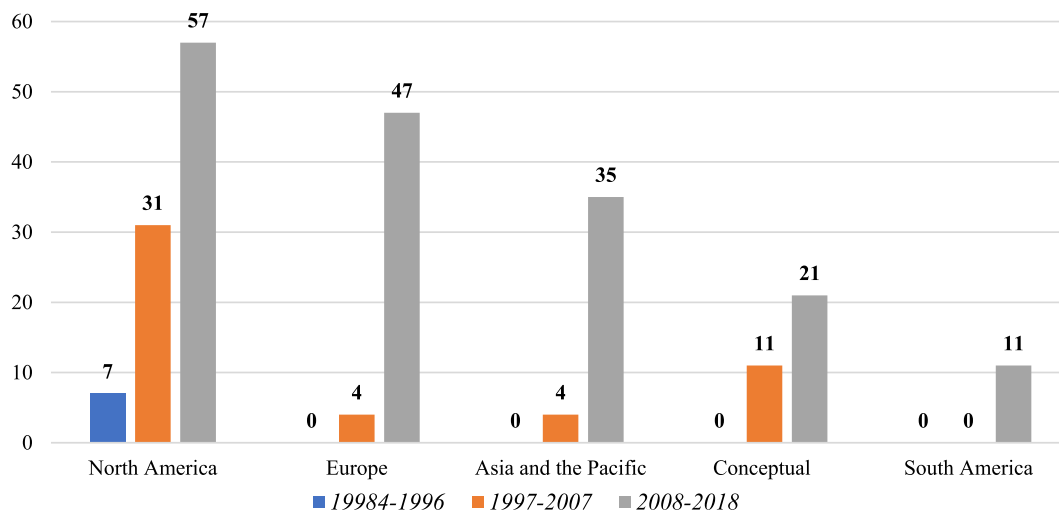


Fig. 8. Regional cruise tourism research growth trend over the past three decades.

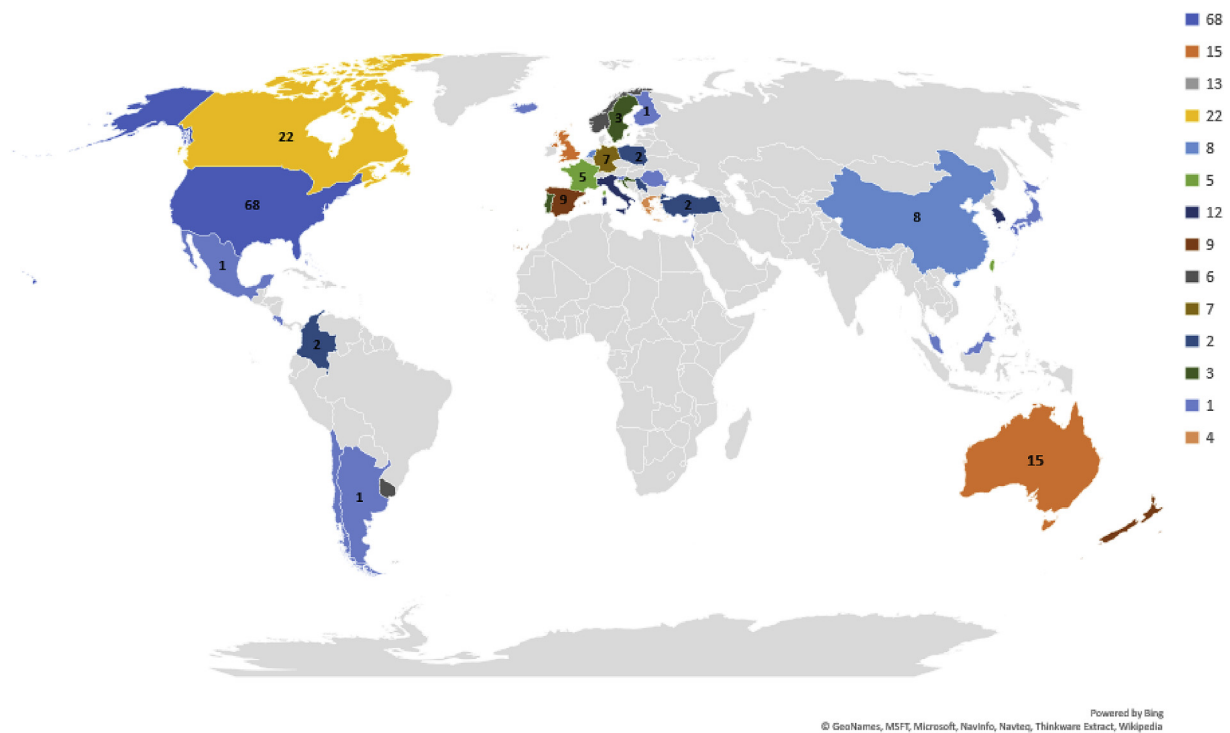


Fig. 9. Authors by country of residence.

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