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Mapping the Knowledge Landscape of Green Economy Policies in Craft Villages: A Bibliometric Analysis Using VOSviewer

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Abstract: Objective: The transition to a green economy is a key priority for sustainable development, yet its implementation in traditional sectors such as craft villages remains fragmented and underexplored, despite their significant environmental impact. This study aims to investigate the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and collaborative networks of research on green economy policies within craft-based production systems to identify knowledge gaps and research trends. **Methodology**: A systematic bibliometric review was conducted using a mixed-method design. A sample of 183 documents was retrieved from the Scopus and Web of Science databases. VOSviewer software was employed for network analysis to visualise relationships among keywords, authors, and publications. **Key Findings:** The findings reveal a marked increase in publications since 2021, highlighting a central paradox: although the field draws upon diverse foundations, including sustainable tourism, institutional economics, and ecological economics, the research community remains divided into "scholarly silos" with limited collaboration. The thematic focus has shifted from merely diagnosing environmental problems to proposing integrated solutions, particularly circular-economy models and systems thinking. However, geographical and disciplinary fragmentation continues to impede knowledge integration and the development of cohesive research. **Conclusion:** The progress of green economy transitions in craft villages is constrained by the gap between integrative knowledge needs and fragmented research communities. To bridge these gaps, policymakers should move beyond isolated environmental policies and adopt holistic strategies. Strengthening interdisciplinary and international collaboration is essential to support sustainable craft-based production. **Recommendations:** This study extends existing green economy research by providing one of the first policy-oriented bibliometric mappings for the craft-village context. It translates thematic clusters into actionable governance, regulatory, and incentive-based policy instruments while identifying structural fragmentation ("scholarly silos") as a key barrier to sustainability transitions. These findings offer both an intellectual synthesis and a practical agenda for policymakers seeking to support sustainable craft-based economies.

Keywords: Green Economy, Craft Villages, Sustainable Development, Circular Economy, Bibliometric Analysis, VOSviewer.

رسم خرائط المشهد المعرفي لسياسات الاقتصاد الأخضر في قرى الحرف اليدوية :تحليل VOSviewer ببليومتري

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الملخص: الهدف: يُعد التحول للاقتصاد الأخضر أولوية رئيسية للتنمية المستدامة، إلا أن تنفيذه في القطاعات التقليدية كالقرى الحرفية يظل مجزأً وغير مستكشف بشكل كافٍ رغم أثره البيئي الكبير. تهدف الدراسة لاستقصاء البنية الفكرية والتطور الموضوعي وشبكات التعاون لبحوث سياسات الاقتصاد الأخضر في أنظمة الإنتاج الحرفي لتحديد الفجوات المعرفية والاتجاهات البحثية. **المنهج:** أجريت مراجعة ببليومترية منهجية باستخدام تصميم مختلط. استُرجعت 183 وثيقة من لتحليل الشبكات وتصور العلاقات بين الكلمات المفتاحية والمؤلفين والمنشورات. **أهم** VOSviewer قاعدتي سكوبس وويب أوف ساينس، واستُخدم برنامج **النتائج:** تكشف النتائج زيادة ملحوظة في المنشورات منذ 2021، مبرزة مفارقة مركزية: رغم استناد المجال لأسس متنوعة، كالسياحة المستدامة والاقتصاد المؤسسي والبيئي، يظل المجتمع البحثي منقسماً إلى "عزلات أكاديمية" بتعاون محدود. وتحول التركيز الموضوعي من مجرد تشخيص المشكلات البيئية إلى اقتراح حلول متكاملة، لا سيما نماذج الاقتصاد الدائري والتفكير النظمي. ومع ذلك، يستمر التشرذم الجغرافي والتخصصي في إعاقة تكامل المعرفة وتطوير أبحاث متماسكة. **الاستنتاجات:** يُقيد تقدم تحولات الاقتصاد الأخضر في القرى الحرفية بالفجوة بين احتياجات المعرفة التكاملية والمجتمعات البحثية المجزأة. لسد هذه الفجوات، يجب على صانعي السياسات تجاوز السياسات البيئية المنعزلة واعتماد استراتيجيات شاملة. ويعد تعزيز التعاون متعدد التخصصات والدولي أمراً ضرورياً لدعم الإنتاج الحرفي المستدام. **التوصيات:** توسع هذه الدراسة بحوث الاقتصاد الأخضر الحالية بتقديم واحدة من أولى الخرائط البيبليومترية الموجهة نحو السياسات في سياق القرى الحرفية. وتترجم المجموعات الموضوعية إلى أدوات سياسات قابلة للتنفيذ في مجالات الحوكمة والتنظيم والحوافز، مع تحديد التجزئة الهيكلية ("العزلة الأكاديمية") كعائق رئيسي أمام التحولات المستدامة. تقدم هذه النتائج توليفة فكرية وأجندة عملية لصانعي السياسات الساعين لدعم الاقتصادات الحرفية المستدامة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاقتصاد الأخضر، القرى الحرفية، التنمية المستدامة، الاقتصاد الدائري، التحليل البيبليومتري، VOSviewer.

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Introduction

In the face of global challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, and social inequality, the transition to a green economy has emerged as a key policy priority in sustainable development discourse. This approach seeks to couple economic growth with enhanced human well-being and social equity while markedly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcity. Its principles are increasingly applied across diverse sectors, including energy, agriculture, industry, and services. The relevance is particularly pronounced in traditional craft villages—heritage-based production systems that contribute to both rural livelihoods and the preservation of cultural identity, values, and artisanal skills recognized as part of intangible cultural heritage. However, these villages face mounting pressures from mass industrial competition and environmental degradation, making the integration of green economy principles a promising pathway to ensure their sustainability.

Despite its significance, the scholarly literature on this topic remains both conceptually fragmented and empirically underdeveloped. Although the potential for sustainability transitions in traditional rural industries has been widely recognized, existing studies are often dispersed across disciplines and lack a coherent, systematic synthesis. This fragmentation limits policymakers' and researchers' ability to develop a holistic understanding of the field's structural characteristics and evolutionary trajectory. To address this gap, the present study conducts a systematic bibliometric review to map the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and collaborative networks in research on green economy policies in craft-based production systems.

Guided by this objective, the analysis seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What are the publication trends and key actors (authors, countries, journals) in this research field?
- What are the core research themes, and how have they evolved?
- What are the intellectual foundations (key theories, seminal works) that underpin this field?
- What is the collaborative structure of the scientific community in this field?

This study makes three original contributions. First, it offers a systematic bibliometric mapping of green economy policy research specifically within craft village production systems, a context underrepresented in broader sustainability reviews (Manisha & Singh, 2025; Zhu et al., 2023). Second, it links the field's thematic evolution to concrete policy instruments relevant to local governance, incentives, and environmental regulation, consistent with emerging work on green rural transformation policies in developing economies (Barbier, 2022). Third, it identifies a collaboration–integration paradox, where the multidisciplinary nature of sustainability challenges is not matched by sufficiently connected scholarly networks, thereby outlining priorities for future research and policy coordination.

The structure of this paper is as follows: After the introduction, a comprehensive literature review is presented, followed by a detailed account of the research methodology. The subsequent section reports the results of the bibliometric analyses. In contrast, the concluding section discusses the key findings, providing both a foundational reference for future empirical inquiries and strategic insights for policymakers aiming to integrate green economy principles into the governance of traditional industries. Drawing on a dataset of 183 documents and employing VOSviewer for network analysis, the study systematically maps the knowledge landscape of this research domain.

Literature Review

Conceptual Foundations: The green economy has become a central theme in global development discourse, defined by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) as an economy that enhances human well-being and social equity while reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcity (Environment, 2018). Rooted in environmental economics (Pearce et al., 1989), it has evolved into a comprehensive framework for sustainable development, characterized by low-carbon, resource-efficient, and socially inclusive growth (Loiseau et al., 2016). Challenging the traditional "growth-at-all-costs" model, it contends that strategic investment in natural capital and clean industries can generate a new, more sustainable form of economic expansion.

Traditional craft villages are intricate socio-ecological systems where cultural heritage, economic activity, and environmental conditions are closely interlinked. They serve as vital clusters of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), underpinning the rural non-farm economy by generating employment and income (Haggblade et al., 2007), while also acting as "living museums" that safeguard artisanal skills and community identity. However, many production processes cause severe environmental degradation, creating "pollution hotspots" that endanger public health and local ecosystems (World Bank Group, 2016). This tension between economic vitality and environmental sustainability renders the adoption of green economy principles essential for their long-term viability.

Microeconomic Foundations of Green Economy Policies in Craft Villages

From a microeconomic perspective, craft villages function as dense clusters of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) embedded in complex socio-ecological production systems. Their environmental challenges can be understood through the lens of negative externalities, where pollution and resource degradation impose costs not reflected in market prices. Consequently, green economy policies must internalize these externalities through regulatory standards, enforcement mechanisms, and corrective instruments, aligning environmental protection with economic competitiveness (Barbier, 2022; Porter & van der Linde, 1995).

A second microeconomic challenge concerns adoption constraints. Craft producers often face limited access to capital, high upfront costs of cleaner technologies, and uncertainty regarding market returns. Such barriers frequently lead to underinvestment in sustainable practices, justifying incentive-based policy tools such as green credit schemes, targeted subsidies, and technical assistance programs (Programme, 2011).

Third, information asymmetries shape the sustainability transition. Consumers may be unable to distinguish genuinely sustainable craft products from "greenwashed" alternatives, particularly in tourism-oriented markets. Policies supporting eco-certification, labeling systems, and transparent governance mechanisms are therefore essential for strengthening market trust and rewarding environmentally responsible producers, especially in community-based craft tourism destinations (UNESCO, 2019; Yang & Wang, 2025).

Overall, applying microeconomic mechanisms as an interpretive lens helps translate bibliometric themes into practical policy pathways. This ensures that green economy transitions in craft villages are not only environmentally necessary but also economically feasible and socially inclusive, consistent with broader sustainability transformation frameworks (Abson et al., 2017; Loiseau et al., 2016).

An overview of bibliometric analysis in academic research: Bibliometric analysis, particularly when combined with advanced visualization tools such as VOSviewer (van Eck & Waltman, 2010), offers a comprehensive method for exploring research trends that surpasses the limitations of traditional literature reviews (Pritchard, 1969). By systematically mapping the scientific literature, this approach allows researchers to visualize the intellectual structure of a field, clarify its theoretical foundations, and identify influential research clusters.

This is accomplished through several network analysis techniques. For instance, co-authorship analysis reveals the social structure and collaboration patterns within a scientific community (Newman, 2004), while co-citation analysis uncovers the intellectual backbone of a field by examining which documents are frequently cited

together, thereby identifying seminal works (Small, 1973). Similarly, co-occurrence analysis, often through co-keyword analysis, maps the conceptual structure by tracking the frequency and relationships between keywords, thereby highlighting research hotspots and emerging trends (Callon et al., 1983). To map the knowledge landscape of green economy policies in craft villages, this study utilizes the authors' co-citation and keyword co-occurrence analyses.

Method

To elucidate the intellectual architecture and thematic evolution of research on green economy policies in craft villages, this study employs a rigorous, reproducible bibliometric methodology. The rationale for this selection is grounded in the method's ability to provide an objective, quantitative synthesis of bibliographic metadata (e.g., authors, keywords, references), thereby ensuring high replicability and mitigating researchers' interpretive bias.

The methodological protocol for this study is predicated on the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) statement. In accordance with this framework, a query was designed to capture a comprehensive and relevant body of literature. The search was performed in early 2024 on the Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) databases, chosen for their scholarly authority and extensive coverage. The search query, which covered the period from 2000 to 2024, integrated two keyword constellations:

Green Economy Cluster: "Green Economy" OR "Economy Policies"

Village Cluster: "Village" OR "craft Village."

The resulting dataset underwent a multi-stage filtering and refinement process—encompassing identification, screening, and data standardization—the specifics of which are visually delineated in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1).

(1) Identification: The original search returned 408 documents from Scopus and 41 from Web of Science, for a total of 449 records. To ensure thematic consistency, analytical dependability, and relevance to the research aims, eleven predefined screening criteria were devised (presented in Table 1). These criteria were rigorously applied to the dataset through a multi-phase filtering process. As a result, the final corpus was reduced to 284 suitable papers, providing the foundation for the next bibliometric study.

Table (1): Summary of data source and selection

No.	Category	Specific standard requirements
1	Time	July, 2024
2	Research Database	Web of Science, Scopus
3	Citation indexes (WoS)	SSCI, SCIE
4	Categories (WoS)	Hospitality, Leisure, and Sport Tourism; Transportation; Transportation Science Technology
5	Subject area (Scopus)	Social sciences; business, management, and accounting; economics, econometrics, and finance; environmental science
6	Searching period	2000-2024
7	Language	English
8	Searching keywords	Green Economy Cluster: "Green Economy" OR "Economy Policies" Village Cluster: "Village" OR "craft Village"
9	Document types	Article
10	Data extraction	Export complete records and cited references in plain text format (WoS); complete records and cited references in BibTeX format (Scopus).
11	Sample size	183 articles

(2) Screening: The screening technique followed PRISMA principles and was conducted in successive steps to ensure topic congruence and analytical rigor. First, 284 document records were imported into Zotero, a reference management program, to improve data organization and deduplicate records. A total of 46 duplicate entries were found and removed, leaving 238 records for screening. Next, a title screening was conducted to avoid patently unnecessary papers, resulting in the deletion of 18 papers. Finally, the abstracts of the remaining articles were assessed to exclude studies that did not directly address green economy policies within the context of craft villages or rural areas. This step resulted in the deletion of a further 37 papers. When abstracts lacked sufficient clarity, full-text assessments were conducted to ensure the inclusion of only topically relevant information.

(3) Data standardization: After the screening process, a final corpus of 183 articles was established. This final set underwent data standardization, particularly for keywords, before bibliometric analyses of co-occurrence patterns were performed. This group of articles constitutes the primary dataset for quantitative analysis, providing insights into research patterns and prospective themes, and identifying significant authors and journals in the field.

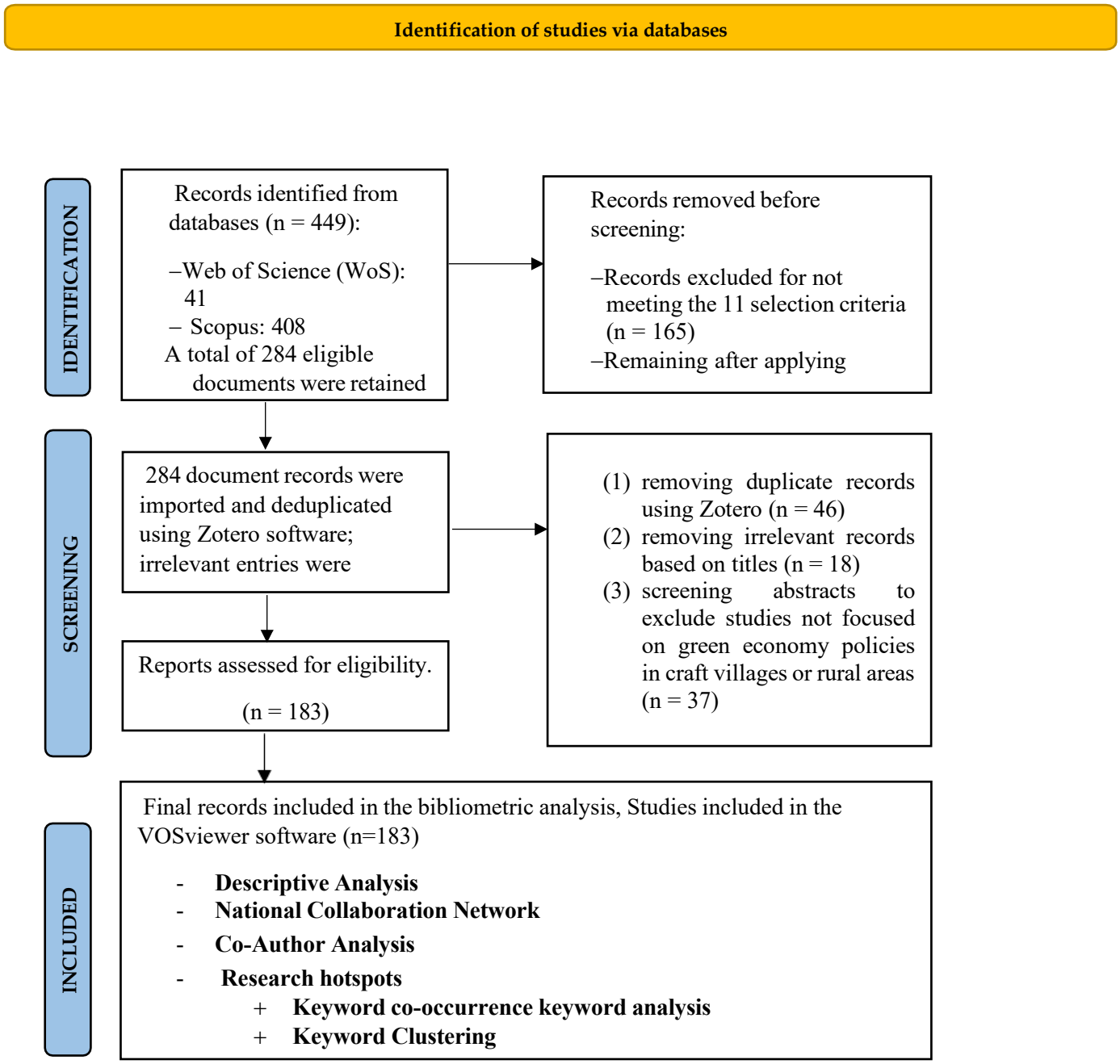

Figure (1): PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Document Screening and Selection Process

Results

Descriptive Analysis:

Number of Studies Over Time

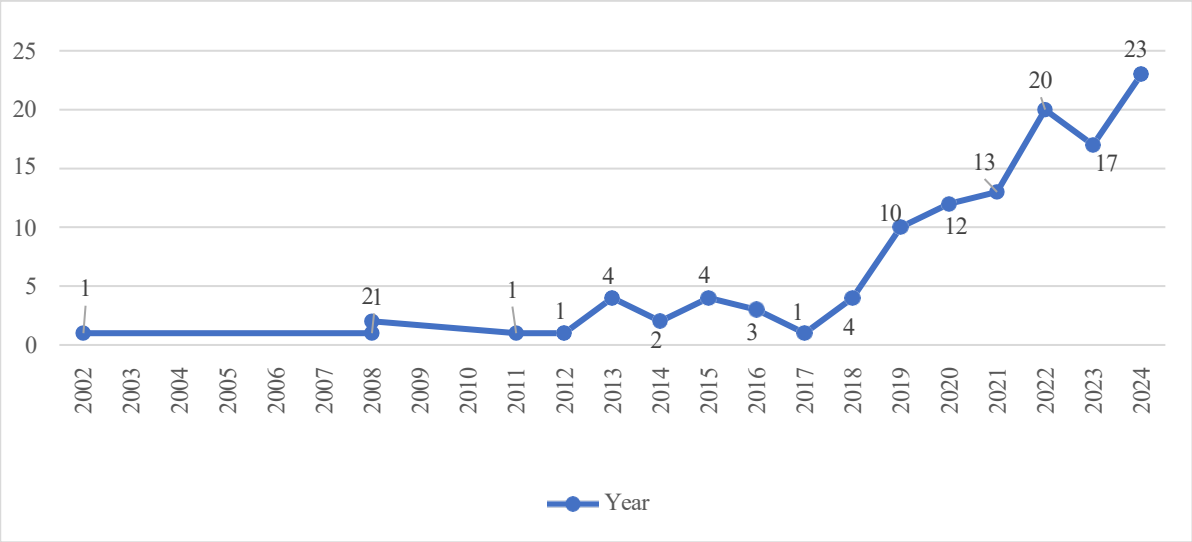

Figure (2): Publication Trend on Green Economy Policies in Craft Villages (2000–2024).

A holistic bibliometric examination of green economy strategies in artisan villages reveals a research ecosystem marked by rapid expansion, thematic complexity, strong intellectual roots, and a paradoxical social structure. The discipline has shifted from a specialist topic to a dynamic area of investigation, with the great bulk of its articles published since 2016, culminating in a research boom from 2021 to 2024. Thematically, the research centers on the basic tensions among tourism development, environmental management, and sustainable policy frameworks, and has shifted from diagnosing problems such as pollution to offering integrated solutions, including the circular economy and resilience. This conceptual richness is built upon a remarkably diverse intellectual foundation, as shown by a co-citation network that draws from at least five distinct pillars: sustainable tourism theory (Butler, 1980), governance of common-pool resources (Ostrom, 1990), economic competitiveness (Porter & van der Linde, 1995), ecological economics (Daly, 1991), and critical social theory (Burchell et al., 1991).

However, a significant paradox emerges from the co-authorship analysis. While the field's intellectual underpinnings are highly integrated and diverse, the researchers' social structure is notably fractured. The scientific community operates in distinct, often geographically delimited "scholarly silos" with significant internal collaboration but few bridges connecting them. Therefore, the fundamental challenge for this rapidly expanding profession is to foster the interdisciplinary and international collaboration required to bridge these social divides. Aligning the collaborative structure with the field's intellectual foundations is vital to addressing its policy-relevant concerns more comprehensively and effectively.

Journal Publication Analysis

Table (2): Statistics of Leading Journals and Sources on Green Economy Policies in Craft Villages

Ranking	Journal	Quartile	H-index	Count
1	IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science	N/A	95	11
2	Sustainability (Switzerland)	Q1	139	6
3	Journal of Rural Studies	Q1	111	4
4	Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering	N/A	33	4
5	AIP Conference Proceedings	N/A	79	3
6	Geojournal	Q2	58	3
7	Environmental Science and Pollution Research	Q1	188	3
8	Energies	Q1	129	3
9	Journal of Environmental Management	Q1	246	2
10	Ecological Economics	Q1	204	2

Research on green economy policies in craft villages is predominantly concentrated in a limited number of leading academic publications. Among the 183 documents analyzed, the IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science ranks first with 11 articles, indicating that a substantial proportion of original or applied research in this field is disseminated through scientific conference proceedings. This is followed by the journal Sustainability, with 6 publications, and both the Journal of Rural Studies and the Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering series, each with 4 articles. These venues share a strong focus on the core themes of sustainable development, rural studies, and environmental science.

The distribution of articles shows a notable degree of concentration, with the top five sources accounting for 15.3% of total publications. A particularly important finding is that many studies in this field are published in high-quality, high-impact journals, underscoring the research's academic rigor and timeliness. These include leading Q1 journals such as the Journal of Environmental Management (H-index: 246), Ecological Economics (H-index: 204), and Environmental Science and Pollution Research (H-index: 188). Additionally, Q2 publications like Geojournal contribute essential geographical and spatial perspectives, enriching the discourse beyond purely environmental or economic dimensions.

Overall, research on the green economy in craft villages is published mainly in reputable outlets specializing in environmental sustainability and rural development, reflecting an emphasis on resource management, governance, and social impacts rather than narrowly defined microeconomic or business management perspectives. Expanding the scope of publication to include journals in public policy, tourism economics, and Entrepreneurship could broaden the diversity of scholarly perspectives and strengthen the practical applicability of research outcomes in this emerging field.

Co-Author Analysis

An analysis of the most prominent authors reveals that research on green economy policies in craft villages is shaped by a global scientific community in which international experts and local researchers engage in cross-border academic dialogue. A single country does not drive the development of this field; rather, it results from synthesizing diverse global perspectives with rich, contextualized local knowledge.

Table (3): Leading authors in research on green economy policies in craft villages

Rank	Author	Organization	H-index	Amount	Total citations
1	Tran, V. T.	Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City	10	5	88
2	Do, T. N.	Hanoi University of Science and Technology	11	4	79
3	Salhofer, S.P.	University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna	38	3	68
4	Grote, U.	Leibniz University Hannover	40	3	55
5	Mahanty, S.	Australian National University	29	3	1985
6	Binns, T.	University of Otago	47	2	2533
7	Folke, C.	Stockholm University Stockholm Resilience Centre	165	2	41
8	Ascher, F.	University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vietnam	14	2	35
9	Kant, S.	University of Toronto	26	2	273
10	Nguyen, T. T. H.	Thuong mai University	8	3	25

Table 3 ranks leading researchers on green economy policies in craft villages, highlighting the field's diversity and global reach. Tran, V.T. (Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City) leads in publication count with an H-index of 10 and 88 citations, followed by Do, T.N. (Hanoi University of Science and Technology; H-index 11, 79 citations), whose work addresses environmental and technological aspects of craft production in Vietnam. Third and fourth are European experts, Salhofer, S.P. (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna; H-index 38, 68 citations) in environmental economics, and Grote, U. (Leibniz University Hannover; H-index 40, 55 citations) in development economics and sustainable value chains.

Kant, S. from the University of Toronto (H-index 26; 273 citations), who approaches the topic from the economics of forest resources. Crucially, the field is also shaped by foundational thinkers such as Folke C., from the Stockholm Resilience Centre. Although this dataset includes only two articles, his monumental H-index of 165 demonstrates that his seminal work on resilience and socio-ecological systems provides a critical theoretical framework for the entire field. Overall, research on the green economy in craft villages continues to thrive, with essential contributions from scholars worldwide, creating a vital dialogue between global theories and local realities to preserve cultural values while sustainably supporting economic development.

Co-authorship network analysis serves as a powerful diagnostic tool in bibliometrics, not merely to identify collaborations but to decode the intellectual architecture and evolutionary trajectory of a scientific domain. This study employs co-authorship analysis, a robust technique for mapping the structure of a field (van Eck & Waltman, 2010), to investigate the research landscape on green economy policies in craft villages. Within policy-oriented research, such analysis is particularly crucial as it reveals whether scientific evidence and policy lessons are being effectively exchanged across geographical and theoretical divides—a prerequisite for robust, evidence-based policymaking.

For this analysis, specific thresholds were set in VOSviewer (a minimum of 1 document and 60 citations per author) to filter for the most impactful researchers. This process yielded a focused network of 46 authors from an initial pool of 569, representing the field's intellectual core.

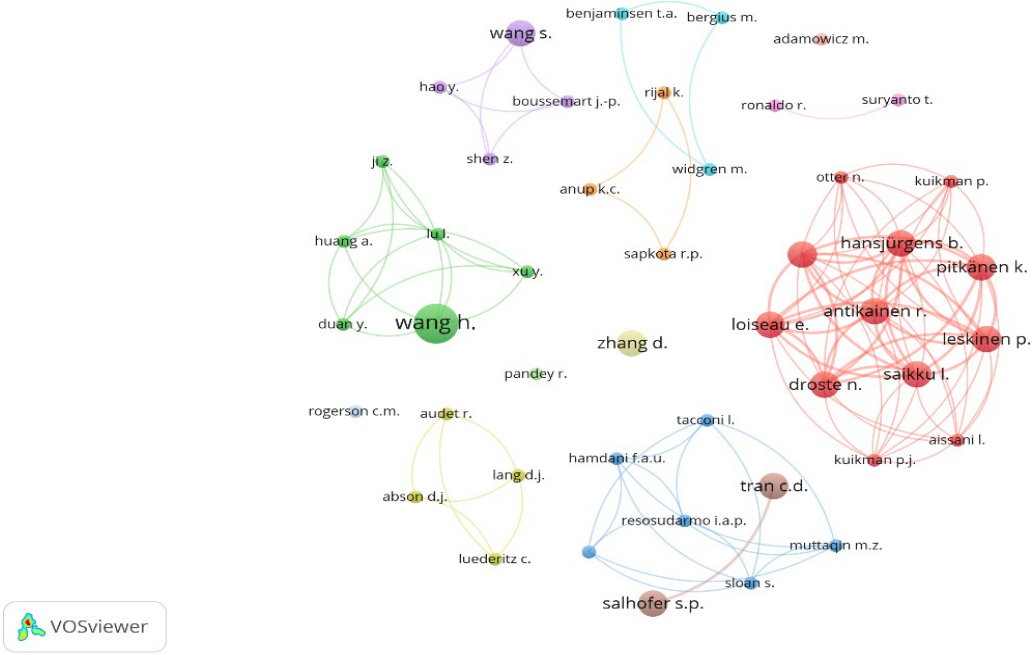

Figure (3): Collaborative network of authors with research topic articles

The resulting network topology (Figure 3) is not a fully cohesive, integrated knowledge network but rather a constellation of distinct scholarly clusters, or "scholarly silos." Each colored cluster represents a community of scholars with high-density internal collaboration but with sparse or weak connections to other clusters. This topology, characterized by high modularity and low between-cluster density, suggests that knowledge in this field is developing in parallel rather than in an integrated fashion. Such a structure is indicative of a research area that is in a critical growth phase but not yet mature or consolidated.

The temporal overlay visualization (Figure 4) reinforces this diagnosis. The recent surge in publications (indicated by the predominance of green and yellow nodes) highlights the field's dynamism. However, this growth primarily reinforces existing silos rather than building the intellectual bridges needed to connect them—thereby fostering a more integrated and globally applicable understanding.

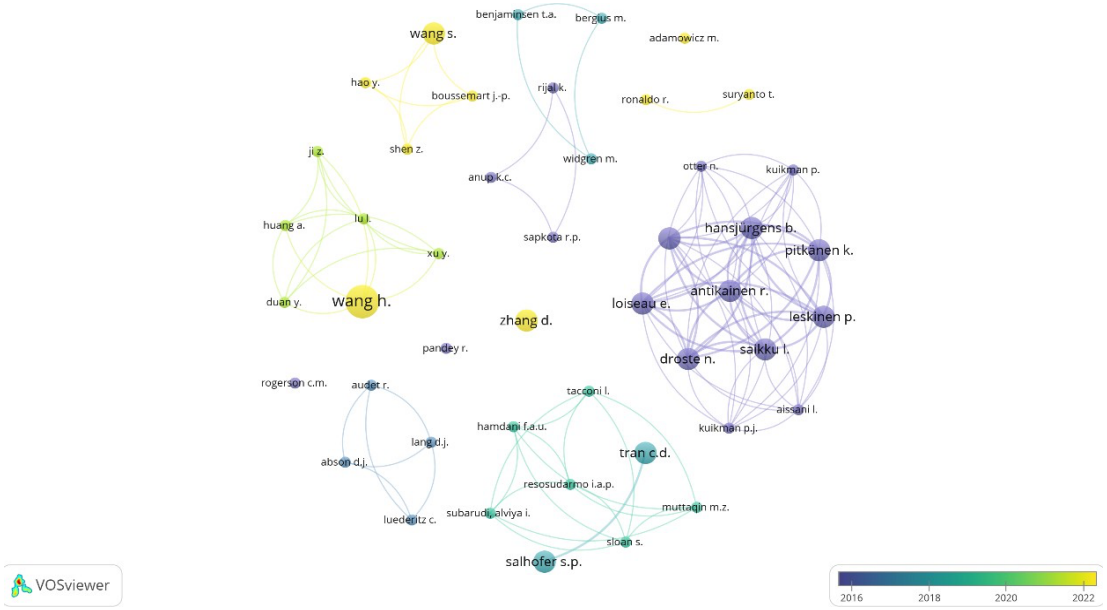

Figure (4): Temporal Overlay of the Co-authorship Network

A granular analysis of the major clusters, enhanced with illustrative citations, demonstrates their diverse scientific agendas.

Cluster 1 (Red): A Hub for European Policy and Circular Economy Research. As the largest cluster, this group, comprising significant authors such as Antikainen, R., Loiseau, E., and Hansjurgens, B., operates as a European intellectual hub. Their key research question is: How can macro-level EU green regulations be translated into viable, sustainable business models at the local level, particularly for heritage-based industries such as artisan villages? Their work focuses on creating practical policy frameworks that link circular-economy principles to the valuation of ecosystem services, providing a model for regional implementation (Moraga et al., 2019).

Cluster 2 (Green): State-led Green Development in an Asian Context. This highly active and recent cluster, led by Duan, Y and collaborators, exemplifies the surge in research from China post-2020. They address the question: What are the socio-economic and environmental outcomes of state-driven rural development policies on the green economic transition of traditional craft villages? Their research provides critical empirical data on the role of state-led ecotourism as a catalyst for economic transformation, presenting insights particular to a state-centric development paradigm (Duan et al., 2021).

Cluster 3 (Blue): The Economics of Policy Implementation in Developing Nations. This cluster, connecting Salhofer, S.P. (Europe) with Resosudarmo, I.A.P. (Southeast Asia/Australia), is focused on the microeconomic realities of green policy implementation. Their research question is: What are the most significant economic impediments and effective governmental incentives for small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in artisan villages to adopt cleaner manufacturing technologies? Their work explores the economic trade-offs and incentives required to devise feasible policies in developing economies.(S et al., 2021; Tran & Salhofer, 2018)

Cluster 4 (Yellow): The Conceptual Foundations of Sustainability Science. This cluster, comprising scholars such as Abson, D. J., and Lang, D. J., provides the theoretical toolkit for the field as a whole. Its contribution is primarily conceptual rather than geographically specific. It addresses how sustainability science frameworks, including leverage points and resilience thinking, can be applied to better understand and guide complex policy interventions in socio-ecological systems such as craft villages. This cluster is particularly important because it helps identify high-impact intervention points through which green economy policies may support more systemic and transformative sustainability transitions in craft-based production systems (Abson et al., 2017).

Smaller Clusters: Introducing Critical and Specialized Perspectives Beyond these hubs,

smaller clusters inject crucial niche perspectives. For instance, the Purple Cluster, featuring Wang, S., and Benjaminsen, T. A., presents a critical political ecological viewpoint. Their past work undoubtedly scrutinizes the social and political repercussions of green policies, questioning whether they contribute to equitable development or new kinds of 'green grabbing' that marginalize local communities. This critical viewpoint acts as a vital contrast to more techno-economic methods.

The co-authorship network map provides important insights into the collaborative structure of the field. This analysis has revealed a fundamental paradox: while scholarly interest in green economy policies for craft villages is accelerating, the knowledge being produced remains largely confined within isolated intellectual silos. This fragmentation is a profound impediment to scientific and practical progress. It prevents the synthesis of knowledge, inhibits the cross-validation of policy lessons across different governance contexts, and ultimately slows the development of a robust, evidence-based global policy framework.

The evident imperative for this discipline is to convert from parallel research streams to a properly integrated scientific pursuit. The next frontier is not necessarily to explore deeper into the individual oases, but to develop the bridges that connect them. Fostering international and inter-cluster research projects, collaborative special issues, and systematic reviews is crucial to overcoming these knowledge barriers and establishing a comprehensive, globally applicable scientific foundation for the sustainable future of craft villages worldwide.

Co-Citation Analysis

Co-citation analysis identifies the relationship between objects that appear in the same reference category of any given document. This technique assumes that when two writings are frequently mentioned together in subsequent publications, they share a conceptual link and likely form a shared intellectual basis for a topic or school of thought (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). By mapping these co-citation links, we can identify the core theories, important works, and influential researchers that represent the intellectual backbone of research on green economic strategies in craft villages.

For this analysis, a minimum of 18 citations was specified in VOSviewer for each author to be included. This strict approach filtered 18,688 cited authors to the 77 most prominent experts, whose relationships form the basis of the knowledge map shown in Figure 5 and Table 4. The resulting network indicates a dense intellectual core surrounded by multiple separate, specialized subfields, indicating a multidisciplinary basis.

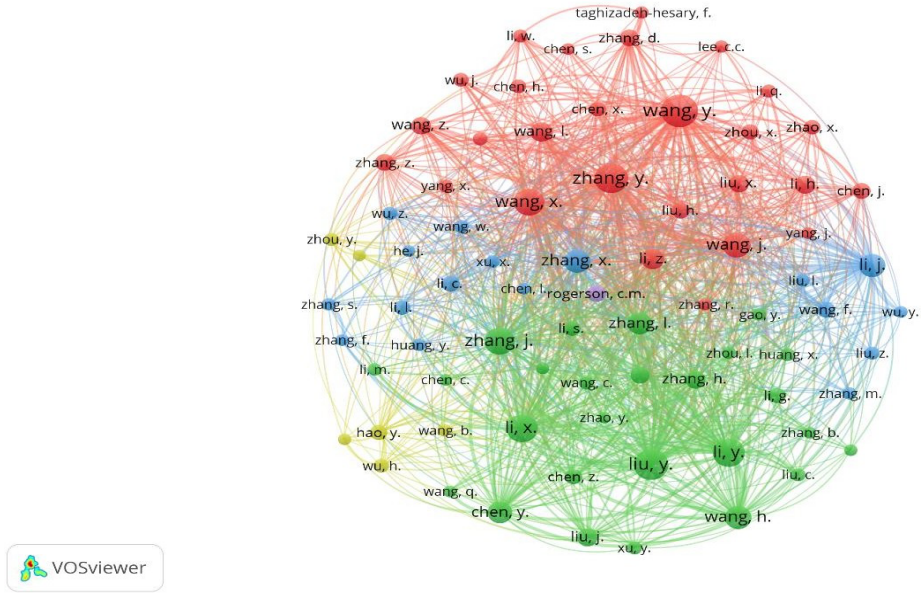

Figure (5): Author Co-citation Map Illustrating the Field's Intellectual Foundation

The most dominant intellectual pillar, encompassing the red (Cluster 1) and green (Cluster 2) author groups, is rooted in macroeconomic policy and its intersection with the socio-spatial dynamics of rural economies. Its centrality is validated by leading figures such as Chen, Y. (48 citations, 45.57 TLS), an intellectual hub integrating multiple lines of inquiry, alongside Chen, J. (30 citations, 28.69 TLS) and Chen, X. (26 citations, 25.53 TLS) in Cluster 1. Together, they reflect a perspective that positions craft villages within national-level sustainable development frameworks, as exemplified by Duan, who argue that micro-level interventions depend on, and must be understood through, macro-policy and spatial planning (Duan et al., 2021).

Shifting from high-level policy to implementation, the second pillar—represented by the blue cluster (Cluster 3)—is anchored by Li, J., whose 54 citations and leading TLS of 53.12 establish him as a central authority. Supported by Li, C. (30 citations, 28.54 TLS) and Huang, Y. (20 citations, 19.94 TLS), this pillar promotes a pragmatic, solutions-oriented approach. Scholars in this stream focus on transition mechanisms, notably circular economy models and green finance frameworks. As a counterpoint to purely top-down policy, it underscores that theoretical concepts must be translated into viable business models and tangible technical strategies to be effective.

The third paradigm, represented by the yellow cluster (Cluster 4), examines the convergence of digital technology and sustainable development. Led by Hao, Y. (28 citations, 26.85 TLS), with key contributors Wu, H. (24 citations, 23.03 TLS) and Wang, B. (21 citations, 20.36 TLS), this pillar argues that digital transformation can be a major driver of green growth (Shen et al., 2022; Yang & Wang, 2025). The author illustrate how technology can open new pathways to sustainability, presenting an optimistic vision of digital tools overcoming traditional environmental and economic constraints.

The fourth pillar, uniquely represented by (Rogerson, 2014) (Cluster 5, Purple), holds a distinct and analytically significant place in the field. With 33 citations but a total link strength of zero, his influential contributions operate as an independent intellectual tradition, disconnected from the main co-citation networks. His work, exemplified by the seminal study on place-based development in South Africa (Rogerson, 2014), introduces a critical Global South perspective that enriches the discourse with comparative insights often absent from mainstream scholarship. By citing his research, scholars guard against policy isomorphism—the uncritical transfer of models across differing socio-economic contexts—ensuring that green economy strategies remain context-sensitive while informed by global development theory.

In sum, the field's intellectual landscape exhibits a clear core–periphery structure. A dominant core, shaped largely by Chinese scholarship on policy and economics, is complemented by specialized sub-fields on technological innovation and critical global perspectives. Influence is concentrated around “intellectual anchors” such as Chen, Y., Li, J., and Hao, Y., whose citation and linkage metrics confirm their role in shaping the discourse. However, a notable "dialogue gap" remains, marked by the isolation of the Global South perspective. Although valued, its limited integration into mainstream debates hinders the field’s maturation. Bridging this gap will require synthesizing the pragmatic, technology-driven models of Pillars II and III with the macro-policy frameworks of Pillar I, while incorporating the critical, context-sensitive insights of Pillar IV to develop more holistic, globally relevant solutions.

Table (4): Most cited authors in each cluster

Cluster	Author	Number of citations	Total link strength
1	chen, h.	24	21.85
	chen, j.	30	28.69
	chen, s.	19	18.80
	chen, x.	26	25.53
	lee, c.c.	20	17.95
2	Chen, C.	18	18.00
	chen, y.	48	45.57
	chen, z.	29	28.56
	gao, y.	20	19.78
	huang, j.	18	16.76
3	chen, l.	18	17.58
	he, j.	18	16.76
	huang, y.	20	19.94
	li, c.	30	28.54
	li, j.	54	53.12
4	hao, y.	28	26.85
	ren, s.	18	17.25
	wang, b.	21	20.36
	wu, h.	24	23.03
	yang, y.	18	17.38
5	rogerson, c.m.	33	0

Co-keyword analysis

Keyword co-occurrence analysis is a powerful tool for mapping a research field's conceptual structure. By examining the frequency and co-occurrence of keywords, it identifies dominant themes, research "hotspots," and the conceptual links that shape the field's thematic architecture (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). This study processed a dataset on green economy policies in craft villages, applying a minimum occurrence threshold of five in VOSviewer. From 2,130 keywords, 82 core concepts were selected and visualized in Figure 4, revealing distinct thematic clusters that define the field's core, interconnected research priorities.

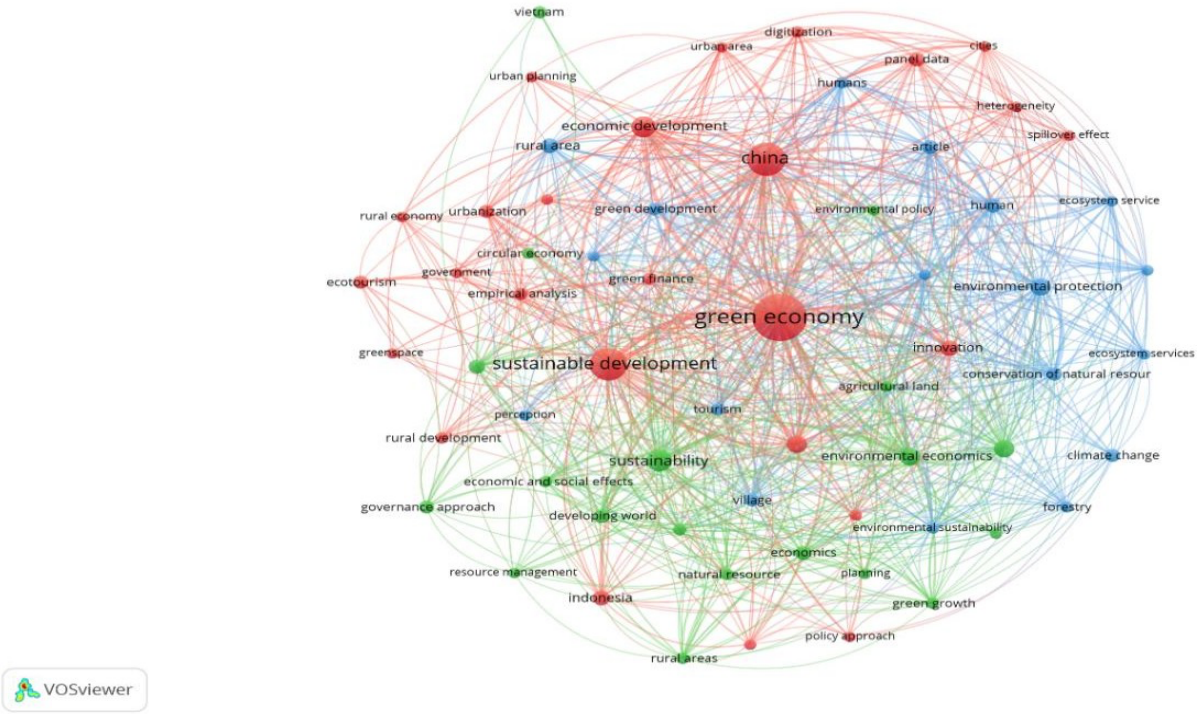

Figure (6): Keyword co-map of review materials

The keyword co-occurrence analysis (Figure 6, Table 5) reveals a thematic structure centered on high-level economic and environmental concepts. "Green economy" is the primary intellectual hub, with 102 occurrences and a total link strength of 435, indicating strong interconnections with nearly all major themes in the field.

Supporting this theme is a cluster of sustainability-focused concepts. "Sustainable development" (48 occurrences, 207 TLS) and "Sustainability" (22 occurrences, 190 TLS) serves as a key bridging node, grounding the discourse in sustainable and green economic models. The network also highlights economic dimensions - "Economic development" (21 occurrences, 115 TLS) and "Economic growth" (14 occurrences, 83 TLS) - framed within an environmental context through "Environmental protection" (15 occurrences, 110 TLS) and "Environmental management" (9 occurrences, 44 TLS). Although less frequent, "Village" (7 occurrences, 53 TLS) ties these broad concepts to the research context. Overall, the field centers on the intersection of the green economy and sustainable development, balancing economic growth with environmental protection at the village level.

Table (5): Top 10 high-frequency keywords

Number	Keyword	Occurrences	Total Link Strength
1	Green economy	102	435
2	Sustainable development	48	207
3	Sustainability	22	190
4	Economic development	21	115
5	Environmental protection	15	110
6	Economic growth	14	83
7	Village	7	53
8	Green development	7	50
9	Economic and social effects	6	36
10	Environmental management	9	44

The 82 keywords comprise five principal subject clusters, each representing a major stream of research within the broader issue.

Cluster 1 (Red): The Tourism Development and Marketing Hub – The largest and most central cluster focuses on the tourism-oriented characteristics of craft villages, anchored by concepts such as tourism development and local tourism. Linked terms include marketing and consumer behavior concepts such as destination image, tourist loyalty, and satisfaction. The inclusion of COVID-19 suggests that the pandemic's impact was examined primarily through the lens of tourism disruption and resilience. Overall, this cluster reflects efforts to position and manage craft communities as competitive tourist destinations.

Cluster 2 (Green): The Environmental Management and Pollution Control Core. This cluster represents the environmental dimension of green economy policies. The fundamental keyword, craft village, is closely linked to terms such as environmental management, pollution, heavy metals, and waste management. This highlights a dominant research stream focused on diagnosing and mitigating the negative ecological externalities of craft production, which is a fundamental prerequisite for any credible green economy policy. The strong association with "human" reflects an emphasis on public health concerns arising from environmental deterioration.

Cluster 3 (Blue): The Sustainable Development Policy and Frameworks Hub. This cluster contains broad, theoretical, and policy-oriented keywords. Anchored by the high-frequency word “sustainable development,” it ties to sustainability, environmental policy, the circular economy, and governance. This cluster works as the conceptual bridge linking the more specific themes in other clusters. It reflects the corpus of literature that aims to develop integrated policy frameworks and theoretical models to achieve sustainability, moving beyond single-issue concerns toward holistic solutions (Meadows, 1999).

Cluster 4 (Yellow): The Rural and Socio-economic Development Context. This cluster grounds the research in its socio-economic and geographical setting. Keywords such as rural development, community, livelihood, and conservation are significant. It focuses on the human dimension of craft villages, studying how green economy policies affect local livelihoods, stimulate community engagement, and contribute to the protection of both cultural and natural heritage. This cluster emphasizes that sustainability must be socially rooted and locally relevant to succeed.

Cluster 5 (Purple): The Resource and Production Systems Focus. This smaller, more specialized cluster focused on the technical aspects of production. With buzzwords such as biogas, biomass, recycling, and energy, it represents research on specific clean technologies and resource management methods relevant to artisan communities. This issue is vital for the "economy" part of the green economy, focusing on resource efficiency, waste valorization, and the shift to renewable energy sources at the production level.

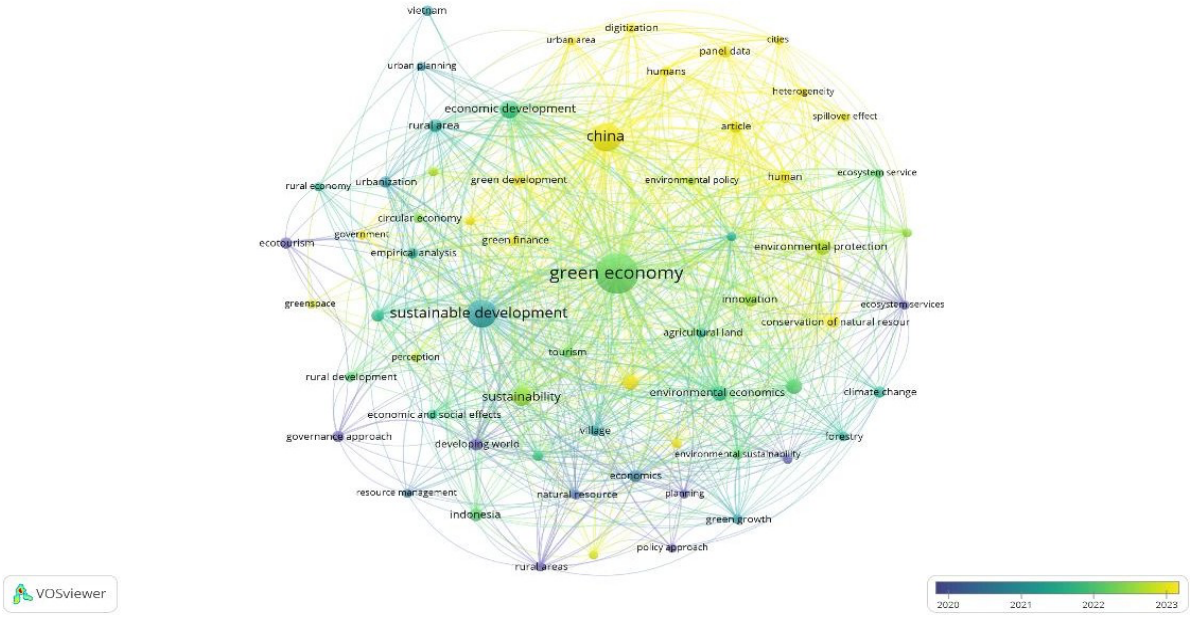

Figure (7): Development trends of keywords (Overlay of keyword map)

Thematic Evolution: A Temporal Overlay Analysis

The overlay visualization of the keyword network (Figure 7) reveals a compelling narrative of the field's intellectual maturation. It is possible to distinguish three distinct epistemological phases, each reflecting a shift in research priorities and a growing sophistication in conceptualizing the problem.

Phase 1: Foundational Problem Diagnosis (c. 2017–2019)

Early research in this domain, shown by the blue and purple nodes, was primarily diagnostic, identifying key issues at the intersection of craft production and rural life. Frequent keywords such as “pollution,” “heavy metals,” “conservation,” and “community” reflect its focus on urgent environmental problems and the social context of craft villages, establishing baseline conditions and the rationale for policy intervention.

Phase 2: The Tourism-as-Solution Paradigm (c. 2020–2022)

Limitations of a problem-focused approach prompted a second phase, marked by the green

nodes, where tourism was framed as the main driver of sustainable development. Keywords such as "tourism development," "village tourism," "ecotourism," and "livelihood" signaled a shift from passive conservation to actively developing tourism products and brands (e.g., “destination image”) to boost local economies, reflecting confidence in the visitor economy as a sustainable pathway for craft communities.

Phase 3: The Systems Integration and Resilience Era (c. 2023–Present)

The most recent research, indicated by the yellow nodes, marks a move toward more holistic and sophisticated concepts. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a critical catalyst, shifting the focus from growth to stability and adaptation. The emergence of high-level keywords such as "sustainability," "circular economy," "governance," and "resilience" signals the field's maturation. The discourse has evolved beyond simple tourism promotion to the challenge of building complex, resilient, and well-governed systems capable of achieving genuine, long-term sustainability that can withstand external shocks (Folke, 2016).

Cluster/ Thematic Trend	Key Mechanism	Policy Instrument	Expected Outcome
Tourism-based sustainability	Demand pressure & carrying capacity	Visitor management, zoning, and eco-certification	Reduced overuse, higher-value tourism (Pham Hong et al., 2021)
Pollution control & waste management	Negative externalities	Emission standards, waste regulation, and monitoring	Lower health/environmental damage (World Bank Group, 2016)
SME green transition	Adoption cost constraints	Subsidies, green credit, and technical support	Higher uptake of clean technologies (Barbier, 2022)
Circular economy models	Resource efficiency incentives	Recycling programs, local circular hubs	Waste reduction, new value creation (Herrador et al., 2023)
Governance & participation	Collective action coordination	Participatory governance, co-management institutions	More legitimate and effective outcomes (Abson et al., 2017)

Table (6): Translating Thematic Clusters into Policy Instruments for Craft Village

Discussion

An examination of the keyword network and prevailing research trends on green economy strategies in craft villages elucidates the field's central aspects and essential linkages. The terms "Sustainable Development," "Craft Village," and "Environmental Policy" emerge as core pillars of the research, demonstrating a robust focus on integrating environmental and sustainability objectives into these villages' development models. Thematic clusters such as "Tourism Development," "Rural Development," and "Circular Economy" illustrate the primary approaches to building a green economy.

Among these, tourism development is regarded as a potent economic instrument, capable of generating new revenue streams, improving infrastructure, and enhancing the quality of life for local inhabitants. However, this potential must be tempered by the imperative to manage environmental impacts and preserve cultural heritage. The engagement of the local community, as represented by the keyword "community," is vital to ensuring that policies are implemented effectively and equitably, thereby empowering residents to safeguard their cultural and environmental assets.

Despite this progress, a comprehensive analysis reveals several critical and interconnected research gaps that offer clear directions for future inquiry. The most significant is the collaboration-integration paradox: the research community often operates in fragmented "scholarly silos," a state that starkly contrasts with the inherently multidisciplinary nature of the problem. This structural fragmentation exacerbates other critical gaps:

The Promotion-Pollution Disconnect: A significant thematic disconnect persists between research focused on tourism promotion and that on environmental management. This poses a tangible risk of "greenwashing," in which destinations are marketed as sustainable without robust, evidence-based ecological practices to support those claims.

The Policy Evaluation Deficit: While “governance” and “policy” are broad concepts, research on policy evaluation and impact assessment remains limited. Few large-scale empirical studies go beyond theoretical models or single cases to examine the real-world effectiveness and long-term impacts of green economy interventions across contexts, leaving policymakers without the evidence to distinguish effective from ineffective policies.

The Digital Transformation Lag: A notable gap exists in research on the role of digital technologies. Insufficient scholarly attention has been paid to how tools like online marketing, virtual tours, and e-commerce platforms can be leveraged to promote craft villages and build their resilience. This is a significant oversight in an era where digital and "contactless" tourism are becoming central to destination strategy and competitiveness (Yang & Wang, 2025).

Closing these interconnected gaps is essential for advancing the field. Future research should adopt an integrated, prescriptive approach, with extensive studies on the economic, social, and environmental impacts of green economy policies to produce generalizable findings. Priorities include developing and testing circular business models suited to individual craft villages— such as waste recycling or renewable energy use—enhancing community capacity and participation in policymaking, and reviewing legal frameworks to identify gaps and propose reforms that foster a genuinely green business environment.

Ultimately, establishing a green economy in traditional craft villages is a complex undertaking that demands a comprehensive approach and robust collaboration among multiple stakeholders. By conducting deeper research into the socio-economic implications, implementing sustainable business models, fostering community participation, leveraging technology, and establishing effective support policies, we can promote development that both preserves cultural heritage and improves the quality of life for residents. This concerted effort is essential to transition the field from a descriptive and diagnostic phase to one that can offer more robust, integrated, and actionable solutions.

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis, drawing on 183 Scopus-indexed publications from 2000 to 2024, provides a comprehensive overview of the intellectual landscape of green economic strategies in traditional artisan villages. The

findings confirm that adopting a green economy is a multifaceted and critical endeavour for achieving balanced, sustainable development in these unique cultural and economic hubs. An in-depth investigation into the economic, social, technological, and environmental dimensions reveals that greening craft villages is not merely a strategy to mitigate environmental harm but also a potent catalyst for innovation, enhanced market competitiveness, and the vital preservation of invaluable cultural heritage.

The findings show a marked surge in publications since 2021, confirming the growing relevance and urgency of this research area. Thematic focus has evolved from diagnosing environmental problems to tourism-based solutions and, more recently, to integrated models such as the circular economy and systems governance. However, a paradox remains:

While the intellectual foundation is diverse and complex, requiring high integration, the research community is highly fragmented. Large-scale empirical studies assessing real-world policy impacts are scarce, and collaboration between clusters focused on economics, the environment, and social issues remains limited.

This study makes several key contributions to the field. Firstly, it offers a definitive map of the existing body of knowledge on green economic strategies in artisan villages, identifying core research themes, influential works, and key scholarly networks. Secondly, by highlighting the evolution of research topics, it provides a clear trajectory of academic inquiry, from problem identification to solution-oriented and integrated frameworks. Finally, it identifies a "paradox of integration," in which the complexity of the subject matter is not matched by the collaborative efforts of the research community, thereby pinpointing a crucial structural weakness that needs to be addressed.

The findings have important implications for stakeholders. Policymakers should move beyond single-issue environmental rules toward integrated governance models that align economic, social, and environmental goals. For village economies, adopting green strategies offers a path to new value creation, access to niche markets, and long-term resilience. For businesses, the study emphasizes that green-driven innovation—through sustainable sourcing, waste reduction, and eco-friendly production—is key to competitiveness and brand value in a sustainability-conscious global market.

The primary limitations of this study stem from its bibliometric methodology. While providing a broad overview of the research landscape, it does not delve into the specific content of the analyzed articles in great detail. The reliance on the Scopus database, though extensive, may exclude relevant publications from other sources or in different languages. Furthermore, the analysis highlights a significant limitation within the research field itself: a paucity of large-scale, empirical, and longitudinal studies, which limits the ability to draw firm conclusions about the long-term, real-world effectiveness of green economy policies in craft villages.

To address current limitations and advance the field, future research should prioritize multidisciplinary and international collaboration to break down existing “scholarly silos.” There is a need for more quantitative, longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impacts of green-economy policies on the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of artisan villages. Efforts should also focus on developing integrated governance models and strengthening community participation. Such research will support genuine sustainable development, preserving cultural assets while improving residents' quality of life. Achieving this will require harmonizing economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection to meet sustainability goals amid globalization and modern socio-economic pressures.

Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations inherent in bibliometric research. First, the dataset is constrained by database coverage, relying primarily on Scopus and Web of Science. Relevant studies indexed elsewhere or published in non-English outlets may therefore be underrepresented. Second, bibliometric results are influenced by keyword selection and indexing delays, which may affect the completeness of thematic patterns.

Third, co-authorship and co-occurrence networks provide descriptive structural insights but cannot establish causal relationships or

directly evaluate the real-world effectiveness of green economy policies. Future research should extend this work through multi-database approaches, qualitative case studies, and longitudinal policy evaluations to validate the operation of sustainability instruments across diverse craft-village contexts.

Disclosure Statements

Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate

This study did not involve human participants or animals. Therefore, ethical approval and informed consent were not required.

Availability of Data and Materials

The datasets analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Bibliometric data were retrieved from the Scopus and Web of Science databases.

Authors' Contributions

Nguyen Quang Vu solely conceived the study, collected and analyzed the data, interpreted the findings, and wrote the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Non-Derivation Statement

This article is not derived from a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation. Although the author is currently pursuing doctoral research on sustainable tourism development in craft villages, the present manuscript is an independent bibliometric study with its own research objectives, dataset, methodology, analysis, and conclusions. Any overlap is limited to general background literature and does not involve the research design, data, findings, discussion, or conclusions presented in this article.

List of Abbreviations

SMEs: Small and medium-sized enterprises.
UNEP: United Nations Environment Program.
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.
PRISMA: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses.
WoS: Web of Science.
VOSviewer: A software tool for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks.
TLS: Total Link Strength.
SSCI: Social Sciences Citation Index. SCIE: Science Citation Index Expanded.

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