



Article

The Importance of City Logistics for Urban Tourism Development: Searching for a New Research Field

Ewa Hacia * , Natalia Wagner * and Aleksandra Łapko

Faculty of Economics and Transport Engineering, Maritime University of Szczecin, 70-507 Szczecin, Poland * Correspondence: e.hacia@pm.szczecin.pl (E.H.); n.wagner@pm.szczecin.pl (N.W.)

Abstract: This paper presents the results of a study on city logistics in the urban tourist area as a research field. Both disciplines are developing intensively, and the research results have many implications for business practices, in particular for alternative fuel for transport, energy savings, waste management, and creating new business models that meet the challenges of modern society. In the era of decarbonisation, city logistics and tourism must define new rules for coexistence. The identified dominant subfields (tourism, logistics, urban transport, urban development and planning, new technologies, and sustainable development) and the links between them have pointed to some research gaps and suggested a direction for further research. The research procedure applied, adapted to the overall goal of the study, consists of an analysis of publications in the Scopus database (February 2022). A keyword co-occurrence network for the research field of city logistics in the urban tourist area is constructed with the use of the VOSviewer software. It follows from the analysis that the research area combining city logistics and city tourism remains relatively unexplored. Forming only a small part of research into city logistics, it has unexplored research potential. The research area under analysis is interdisciplinary in nature.

Keywords: city logistics; city tourism; urban freight distribution; tourism management; decarbonisation



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1. Introduction

Today's cities face many challenges, as they are often at the crossroads of many different areas of economic and social activity. Examples of these overlapping activities include city logistics on the one hand and tourism on the other. Both play an important role in building cities that are good places for business, social, cultural, and leisure activities and contribute to the widely understood well-being of city dwellers. The aim of city logistics is to completely optimise logistics and transport activities using private companies with the support of advanced information systems in urban areas [1], targeting different types of customers. An additional challenge is the handling of the growing number of shipments to individual customers—citizens of the city—which is related to the dynamic development of e-commerce. This phenomenon has accelerated in recent years as, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions in force, even more people decided to shop online [2,3].

Cities face problems stemming from intensive transport development leading to air pollution, noise, traffic disruption, and reduced road safety. Heavy tourist traffic observed in city centres or in the vicinity of tourist attractions can also contribute to many of them. Problematic issues include the difficulty of co-using public space as well as the limited capacities of urban services and urban infrastructure. Tourism developed in urban areas also requires efficient deliveries to companies from the HoReCa (Hotels, Restaurants, Café/Catering) sector, which is a challenge for urban logistics [4,5]. Municipal authorities often focus on implementing solutions that are geared towards urban mobility. However, city logistics also offers several instruments that can help to reduce these problems, e.g., limited access to city zones, time windows for freight deliveries, new technologies (e.g., environmentally friendly vehicles), business models (e.g., based on sharing economy), or

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new ways of organising freight transport (e.g., urban transhipment hubs). Properly selected and effectively implemented logistics solutions are the right way to improve the functioning of a city while simultaneously making it a good place for living and an attractive tourist destination. The search for ways to improve coexistence between citizens and tourists from a city logistics point of view is a major challenge for municipal authorities and business entities, but it is also an interesting topic for researchers.

This paper discusses the results of a study in the research field *city logistics in the urban tourist area*. Both disciplines are developing intensively, and the research results have many implications for business practices, in particular with respect to alternative fuel for transport [6], energy savings [7], waste management, and creating new business models to meet the challenges of modern society. In the era of decarbonisation, city logistics and tourism must define new rules for coexistence. Dominant subfields and interconnections between them are identified, and research gaps and directions for further research are pinpointed. The following research question was defined: What is the level of homogeneity of *city logistics in the urban tourist area* in the research area, and is it possible to isolate the interconnected subfields?

The structure of this article and the method of presenting the results of the research were subordinated to the implementation of the goal. In Section 2, the theoretical background is presented. In Section 3, the study methodology is described. Section 4 presents the results and discussion. The final part of the manuscript, Section 5, provides the conclusions.

The conducted research made it possible to determine that the analysed research area is non-homogeneous. It was also noted that the research area combining city logistics and tourism is not a popular field of study and that, despite the increasing trend in the number of publications, there is still a research gap to be filled. It can be concluded that the added value of the article is the identification of a new research field and its features.

2. Theoretical Background

Cities have multiple functions, ranging from being a place of residence and a place of work, to being the location of key industrial, commercial, administrative, scientific, and cultural facilities [8–11]. As such, they attract prospective inhabitants as well as numerous businesspeople, customers, and tourists. The resulting development of urban areas is only possible provided that adequate passenger and cargo transport solutions are guaranteed. Growing numbers of inhabitants as well as service and manufacturing establishments operating in urban areas drive the demand for supplies as well as the disposal of waste and efficient waste management. Any bottlenecks may cause disruptions in the functioning of the urban community and businesses operating in the city. In the longer term, they may impede the development of the city through compromising its attractiveness for prospective inhabitants, tourists, or business investors [12].

City logistics is a concept developed in order to find common ground between the different functions of the city or interests of various stakeholders operating in the city. According to E. Taniguchi and D. Tamagawa, city logistics is aimed at the "integration of existing resources in order to solve problems arising from the motorisation index increase in the city" [13]. What is more, it is of key importance that the related processes flow in a sustainable way, ensuring environmental balance, fulfilment of social needs, and maximisation of profits of businesses operating in the city [14,15]. Actions taken as part of city logistics are therefore aimed at reducing the negative impact of freight transport and may include, but are not limited to, supply and/or demand management, conscious planning of the city space and infrastructure development, implementation of ICT (information and communication technologies) and ITS (intelligent transport systems) solutions supporting the management of cargo flow in cities, promoting vehicles using alternative power sources (also alternative fuel), and proper management of reverse logistics. According to some researchers, the latest solutions in the field of city logistics will lead to smart and zero

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emission city systems [16]. To bring real benefits to the city, all decisions taken as part of city logistics management must result from public–private collaboration [17,18].

City logistics, as one of the techniques of city management, has become a necessity in recent years. Obviously, the introduced solutions are customised, as every city has its own needs, depending on size and spatial layout, degree of economic development [19], and the city's individual character and cultural and environmental resources.

These resources are the driving force behind the development of tourism. Regardless, an analysis of motives for which tourists visit cities proves that there are very few of them. The typical ones include sightseeing, attending cultural events, business, attending sports events or practising sports, visiting family, socialising, and shopping. The term 'city tourism' is intrinsically connected with the destination—an urban or metropolitan area featuring an advanced city infrastructure with public transport facilities, accommodation, restaurants, as well as cultural, sports, entertainment, commercial, municipal, and other facilities serving both tourists and residents [20,21]. City tourism has been on an upward trend in recent years and has become one of the most rapidly growing forms of tourism [22]. In many destinations, city tourism is one of the major determinants of economic success [22], laying foundations for social and economic development [23] by stimulating entrepreneurship [24] and the labour market [25], improving the life quality of residents [26,27], activating the local economy, and rejuvenating urban areas.

However, with the benefits of tourism for host communities, there comes a price [28]. They often come into conflict with other functions of cities, such as residential, industrial, or medical functions. Heavy tourist traffic may undermine the city's value as a tourist destination and make it less attractive [29]. The inflow of tourists generates high demand for certain goods and services [30] and the resulting increased demand for deliveries on the part of entities offering them. In the era of decarbonisation, this is a very important issue in city management. Enterprises operating in the HoReCa sector, whose services tourists use the most, are usually based in city centres or in the vicinity of tourist attractions such as, e.g., historical monuments, and the character of their operations requires regular and frequent deliveries of goods [31]. In special circumstances, e.g., an unexpected arrival of a large group of tourists, an unplanned and instant delivery of goods may be required [32]. This may in turn cause conflicts with other users of the urban space and contribute to degradation of the natural environment or even the tourist value of the area. Here, again, we face the issue of sustainability, this time in the domain of tourism which, in line with the concept, should ensure a destination with lasting livelihoods while minimising resource depletion, environmental damage, cultural instability, and social disruption [33,34]. A lot of damage that tourism does in urban areas is caused by means of transport; not only that used for passenger transport, but also that used for the transport of goods and employed to supply goods to entities handling tourist traffic. To mitigate the negative impact on the environment (e.g., pollution, noise) and the local community (e.g., distraction to the life of residents, restricting the number of available parking spaces), city logistics activities may be helpful. New concepts are trying to reconcile these two areas by, e.g., integrating passenger and freight transport [35–37], using information and communication technology and intelligent transport systems to improve effectiveness and efficiency of logistics flows [38], and reducing negative externalities including these associated with urban tourism.

There has been an increasing amount of research into city logistics and city tourism, which means that the related issues are being noticed and recognised as important. In the face of the challenges of the current world (including energy savings, waste management, and decarbonisation), this is becoming more and more important.

City logistics is often explored for working out solutions to specific problems occurring in a city or region [17,39], or for applying certain tools to streamline the flow of goods in cities [40–42]. Some researchers have reviewed the literature, applying bibliometric analysis to identify research gaps in this regard [19,43–46].

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Many studies of city tourism have been aimed at finding opportunities for the development of certain regions [47–49] or exploring the opportunities offered by emerging technologies that have recently been used in promoting city tourism [50,51]. Any negative impact of city tourism on the environment and local community life is mostly related to over-tourism or improper behaviour of tourists at certain destinations [52–54]. The issue of air pollution is looked at from the perspective of its influence on city tourism [55–57] rather than from the perspective of how city tourism contributes to air pollution [58]. Research into transportation in city tourism is mostly focused on passenger transport [59–61]. Therefore, it seems justified to undertake a study that would combine city logistics and city tourism. Graham, Mehmood, and Coles note that "cities are complex entities, like cells. They do not work simplistically but are composed of many technical, social and physical systems that interact in a myriad of ways, like a human body or an eco-system" [62]. It is therefore impossible to detach the tourist subsystem from the transport subsystem, let alone from the freight sector, being part of the transport subsystem.

3. Research Method

The research procedure applied is shown in Figure 1. In step one, the literature was analysed and key words were selected, which helped specify the framework for the research area of *city logistics in the urban tourist area*.

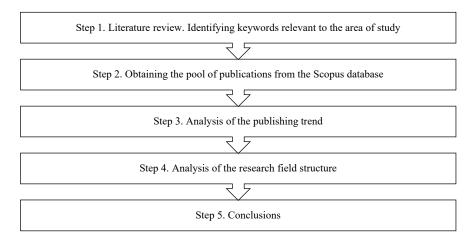


Figure 1. Research framework.

As a result of the analysis conducted in step one, the following research question was formulated: What is the level of homogeneity in the research area of *city logistics in the urban tourist area*, and is it possible to isolate the interconnected subfields?

In step two, information on relevant publications was obtained from a citation database. The data set used in this study was retrieved from the Scopus database. The data were collected through the Scopus database, as it is a recommended source of publications with more inclusive content coverage and more openness to society, and it is generally better suited for evaluating the research results compared to other databases [63,64].

To retrieve a pool of publications that would best suit *city logistics in the urban tourist area* as the research area, the following research quest was used: Title–Abstract–Key ((city OR urban) AND logistics AND touris*). The choice of the research question was based on the knowledge of the authors, who have previous long-term experience in studying this research field. Moreover, an analysis of the state of the art identified in step one of the research process was conducted. A synthesis of the analysis results is included in Section 2. The retrieved pool was reduced to exclude any irrelevant publications that had been included in the pool because the term 'logistic regression' appeared in their abstracts. The ultimate pool, obtained on 23 February 2022, consisted of 166 publications.

In step four, the research was extended to include an analysis of papers with the largest number of citations. The selected pool comprised papers in the fields of business,

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management, and accounting. The number of citations of a specific paper can be considered a measure of its impact or even usefulness [65]. Citations show links between scientific concepts published previously and those currently under investigation, and they inspire other researchers to further explore certain research areas. Moreover, they help identify new research trends as well as remaining research gaps. This approach was applied in the analysis of the most frequently cited publications.

The research discussed in this paper bears the hallmarks of both a quantitative and qualitative study. The quantitative character boils down to an assessment of the degree of dissemination of a certain phenomenon [66], in this case, the popularity of the research area under analysis among authors of publications indexed in the Scopus database. Restricting the study to a quantitative analysis was found to be insufficient to answer the formulated research question. Moreover, the growing share of qualitative studies in the scientific fields directly related to the research area under analysis [67] was also taken into consideration. A quantitative analysis supported with a qualitative one, i.e., a mixed study [68,69], is treated here as a form of methodological triangulation. Furthermore, the selection of members of the research team was purposeful and aimed at achieving a triangulation of researchers. The authors verified the obtained results at each stage of the research process in accordance with their respective knowledge and skills.

4. Results and Discussion

First, the pool was analysed with respect to the number of publications in consecutive years. The first paper was published in 1994, and the following one not until 2001. The number of papers published in the last 20 years is shown in Figure 2. We can see an increased interest of researchers in the research area under analysis in the years 2008–2014, followed by a drop in the number of publications over the following four years. The trend picked up again starting in 2019. The number of publications for 2022, shown in Figure 2, is incomplete, as it includes only the publications released in the first two months of the year. It follows from the analysis that the research area combining city logistics and city tourism remains relatively unexplored and constitutes only a small part of research into city logistics. For a comparison, the keyword 'city logistics' retrieved a several times larger pool of 1235 documents from Scopus.

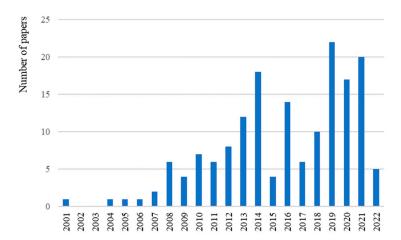


Figure 2. Number of papers related to city logistics and tourism. Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Scopus database.

In step two, we analysed the pool for the most commonly used terms. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 1. Apart from *tourism* and *logistics*, which obviously must have appeared in the pool as they had been included in the research question, there were terms that point to a certain interest of the researchers in development of both tourism and cities, as well as sustainable development. The most commonly occurring country name in the pool was China.

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| Term | Occurrence | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--|--|
| Tourism | 20 | | |
| China | 11 | | |
| Logistics | 11 | | |
| Tourism development | 9 | | |
| Urban development | 8 | | |
| Sustainable development | 8 | | |

Table 1. The most common terms in the pool under analysis.

In the following step, the keyword co-occurrence network for the research field *city logistics in the urban tourist area* was constructed with the use of the VOSviewer software package. The resulting network, shown in Figure 3, consists of nodes and the connections between them. The sizes of nodes and labels were determined by weights, calculated on the basis of the number of instances for particular terms. The higher the weight of an item, the larger the label and the node. The distance between nodes also carries some significance—the smaller the distance between the nodes, the stronger the relation between the terms, i.e., the more frequent their occurrence jointly in one publication. Nodes marked in the same colour belong to a cluster—a set of closely related nodes [70].

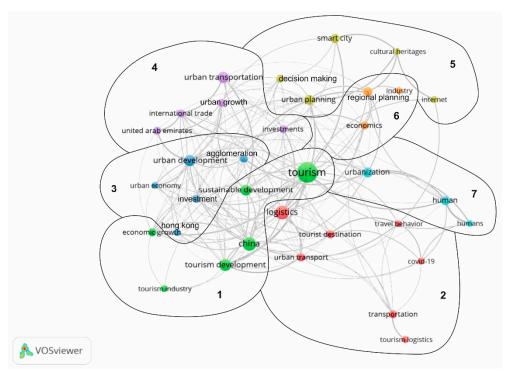


Figure 3. Map of links between the analysed keywords (1–7-cluster number). Source: Own elaboration using the VOSviewer software.

Seven clusters were distinguished in the pool under analysis. Cluster one, centred around the term with the largest number of instances, *tourism*, is about tourism and its development as related to sustainable development and economic growth. In this context, one of the countries of greatest interest to researchers is China.

China is a huge country. Therefore, the problems discussed in the article, which appear in many cities around the world, are also often raised by scientists from this country. With this in mind, the nationality of the authors of the publication was not analysed in the article. However, the term China, which appeared frequently in publications, was included in Table 1.

The focus of cluster two is on logistics and transport, as well as other themes which, in relation to those, are relevant for tourism. This cluster features such expressions as

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tourist destination, urban transport, and travel behaviour, often in conjunction with COVID-19. The term tourism logistics was identified in this cluster. This is a relatively new term in the literature and still does not have a widely recognised definition. For example, [71] emphasises three aspects of this notion: planning and design of tourism logistics routes, integrated design of tourist commodity logistics, and tourism waste logistics collaborative treatment systems. Puchongkawarin and Ransikarbum (2020), on the other hand, point to a need for strengthening the relations among tourism logistics, public transportation, and the smart city concept [72].

Cluster three is about *urban development* and, apart from that term, features such terms as *urban economy, agglomeration*, and *investment*, with references to the city of Hong Kong.

Cluster four builds a bridge between *urban transportation* and *urban growth, investments,* and *international trade*, with many references to the United Arab Emirates.

Cluster five, centred around new technologies, features such terms as *smart city* and *the internet*, interestingly, used in conjunction with *cultural heritage* and *urban planning*.

Clusters six and seven focused on, respectively, regional planning and economics, and the relations between urbanisation and people's lives have the smallest number of nodes.

The pool was also analysed for changes in research areas over time. The results of the analysis are shown in Figure 3 as an overlay visualisation. Figures 3 and 4 have the same shape; they differ only in colour. Each term shown in Figure 4 was assigned an attribute representing the arithmetic mean for the dates (years) of release of the papers they appear in. The attributes make it possible to identify terms that appear in papers published in recent years. The two most frequently used terms in the last two years are *travel behaviour* and *COVID-19*. Their proximity to each other in Figures 3 and 4 represents an increased interest of researchers in changes in the behaviour of tourists as well as issues caused and consequences brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

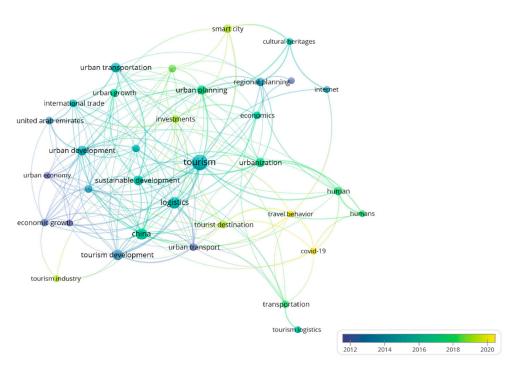




Figure 4. Map of links between the analysed keywords, broken down by the mean year of publication release. Source: Own elaboration using the VOSviewer software.

The dominant subfields in the research area of *city logistics in the urban tourist area* are shown in Figure 5.

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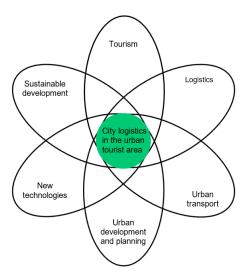


Figure 5. Dominant subfields in the research area of city logistics in the urban tourist area.

Another interesting viewpoint was obtained by breaking down the pool of papers within the research field under analysis by the main subject areas. Publications are assigned to certain subject areas by the Scopus database. A paper can be assigned to more than one subject area. The percentages of main subject areas found in the pool of papers are shown in Figure 6.

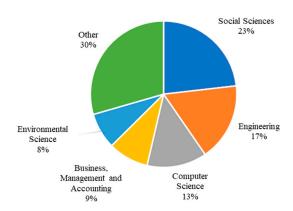


Figure 6. Number of papers related to city logistics and tourism by subject area. Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Scopus database.

The pool of papers have the largest share in social sciences, followed by engineering, computer science, and business, management, and accounting. Considering our special interest in papers dealing with management and practical applications in business, and the related attempt to identify the current interest in city logistics in the urban area as a research field, we analysed the most frequently cited papers in the subject area of business, management, and accounting for the past 12 years. The time framework was set with a view to obtaining papers of substantial importance for the analysis that were also still valid. We obtained a pool of 24 articles meeting the predefined criteria, the top 10 of which are listed in Table 2. The entire collection of 24 documents, including information on the method used and the geographic area involved, is presented in Appendix A (Table A1). The pool of papers have a total of 57 citations. Considering the time span of 12 years under analysis, the number is relatively small. The number of citations is typically directly proportional to the time of availability of a certain paper (counted from the year of publishing); nevertheless, this correlation has not been found here. The papers with the largest number of citations were not published until 2016, i.e., more or less the middle of the period under analysis. It is worth noting that two of the papers have as many as 34 citations, a number that constitutes

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almost 60% of the total number of citations. Additionally, the average number of citations per year was analysed (within a period from the year of publishing to 2021), the results of which can serve as an indicator of citation intensity. The publication that comes second in Table 2 has the highest indicator value, having been cited on average as many as 5 times per year since 2019. A value lower than one was obtained for the publications with close ranking that were cited not more than twice throughout the period under analysis.

Table 2. The most frequently cited papers related to city logistics in the urban tourist area, in the subject area of business, management, and accounting, in 2011–2022. Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Scopus database.

| Authors' Names | Title | Year | Source |
|---|--|------|---|
| Li et al. [73] | From obscurity to global prominence—Yiwu's emergence as an international trade hub | 2016 | Cities |
| Orel [74] | Coworking environments and digital nomadism: balancing work and leisure whilst on the move | 2019 | World Leisure Journal |
| Niemets et al. [75] | Research of brownfields and greyfields of the city: Theory and practice | 2018 | Proceedings of the 32nd International Business Information Management Association Conference |
| Roongsaprangsee & Piboonrungroj [76] | Spatial analysis of perceived logistics and traffic impacts from Chinese tourists on Nimmanahaeminda residents | 2016 | International Journal of Supply Chain Management |
| Campbell [77] | The dynamics of handcart as a means of informal transportation in support of logistics and tourism: The case of downtown Kingston, Jamaica | 2020 | Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes |
| Colavitti & Usai [78] | Applying the HUL approach to walled towns of Mediterranean seaport cities: Lessons and guidelines through the experience of four UNESCO walled towns | 2019 | Journal of Place Management and Development |
| Gabdullina et al. [79] | Transport and logistics innovations in supply chain management: Evidence from Kazakhstan | 2020 | Uncertain Supply Chain Management |
| Tunming et al. [80] | The increasing of potential in tourism logistics supply chain to Khon Kaen ME city, Thailand | 2019 | African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure |
| Loo et al. [81] | Exploring the factors and strategies in implementation of sustainable land transport system in Ayer Keroh, Melaka | 2018 | Journal of Advanced Manufacturing Technology |
| Ngamsirijit [82] | Demand responsive transportation for creative tourism logistics planning | 2015 | International Journal of Intelligent Enterprise |

The relatively small total number of citations and low citation intensity for the publications in the research area under analysis may result from the fact that the publications are still small in number, i.e., the area still has a lot of unexplored research potential.

Several interesting conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the papers listed in Table 2. Firstly, most of the papers are single case studies, i.e., focused on a certain social and economic phenomenon at a single tourist destination. Secondly, the papers deal with a wide variety of topics, from ways of spending leisure time [74] to the organisation of

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deliveries in historic city centres [78] to problem solving in the surroundings of historic city centres [75].

Links between tourism and logistics constitute the thematic focus of a majority of the publications. The articles of Gabdullina et al. (2020) [79] and Loo et al. (2018) [81] take a different approach and view tourists as one of many groups of recipients of logistics solutions.

The publications that include citations of the two most frequently cited papers were not included in the selection under analysis. The authors of some of those papers do appear in the list, however, for other publications. It can therefore be inferred that publications dealing with the research area under analysis have an impact on other, more or less closely related research areas. The key words in the publications that include citations from the first item in Table 2 are related to economics, transport, and aspects of the city; the most frequent of them are globalisation, international trade, market system, roads and streets, urban development, and urbanisation. The publications were cited in a total of 51 items in the list, of which 19 included a citation to the same publication.

The key words in the publications including citations of the second item listed in Table 2, on the other hand, are related primarily to the sharing economy, coworking, digitalisation, and policy making. As mentioned before, the second item listed in Table 2 is the paper with the highest citation intensity.

The fact that the papers listed in Table 2 have been published in journals with various profiles only strengthens the notion that the research area under analysis is interdisciplinary in nature. The publications can be found in journals dedicated to cities in the broadest meaning of the word, but also in supply chain, logistics, tourism, and management industry journals.

An in-depth analysis makes it possible to link the results of the application-oriented research to the potential beneficiaries of the proposed solutions. An example of a cluster identified in this research is new technology. In the most popular tourist destinations, i.e., metropolitan and historic cities, the use of IT (information technology) solutions for municipal authorities and city services, as well as various types of applications and digital platforms aimed at individual users, is becoming increasingly popular.

New technological solutions make it possible to collect a great deal of data on urban transport—mainly the number of vehicles (broken down into different categories, also specifying delivery vehicles), travel routes, and emissions. However, data on city operations are only one of several components for the effective management of logistics systems in tourist attractive areas. They need to be complemented with scientific knowledge gained from articles, R&D (research and development) projects, and other scientific sources, as well as observations and information on the functioning of logistics systems in other cities facing similar problems.

Only by building up knowledge resources will city authorities be able to make optimal decisions on the implementation of ITS, select its tailor-made functionalities, adapt public transport to the current needs of city dwellers, manage the urban space, and plan for its future development, e.g., specifying the place for new tourist objects (i.e., museums or hotels). The results of this study show that a more comprehensive comparative research work is needed to analyse in detail the effects of the implemented logistics solutions in individual cities, particularly in their historical centres and in tourist attraction areas. An analysis of previous research work shows that the research field "city logistics for urban tourism development" is addressed much more often in the form of a single case study, while a broader perspective identified on the basis of multiple case studies is missing. The main beneficiaries of these studies would be urban authorities planning to introduce ITS systems to improve urban traffic management. For them, such comparative studies would be an ideal guide to making their own decisions, as they would be able to choose the best option, avoid repeating the mistakes of others, and reduce the costs of implementing similar solutions. The search for and analysis of benchmarks for socio-business and technology solutions is also recommended for business entities.

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The Implementation of sustainable"urba' tourism involves the use of green transport, sustainable energy/materials (fuel/lighting/water) usage, sustainable waste management, and green food consumption throughout the city's tourism industry. All of these areas require efficient logistics systems and support from city and state authorities. An example of an area that requires massive investment and support to develop could be the widespread use of alternatively fuelled vehicles. This is part of the climate and energy reform introduced by the EU (European Union). The EU is moving towards carbon-neutral city logistics and intends to phase out conventionally powered vehicles. The registration ban on new combustion engine vehicles, including vans, will apply in the EU starting in 2035. The implementation of these plans will require further intensive scientific work on the development of alternative powered means of transport, as well as investment in the infrastructure of recharging points and alternative fuel refuelling points (e.g., hydrogen and liquid methane).

One research problem that appears all too seldom in studies from the field of city logistics in urban tourism is the issue of waste management. In this study, it was not identified as a stand-alone cluster, although the authors believe that these issues are of key importance and require in-depth research. The large number of tourists not only causes a great demand for supplies from restaurants, hotels, and shops, it also means a large amount of rubbish generated during the tourists' stay, especially in the city centres. This waste requires efficient collection, removal, and further processing or disposal. Reverse logistics processes for urban tourism should certainly be better analysed and improved by city services, but also need to be addressed more often in research.

5. Conclusions

It was found that the research area of *city logistics in the urban tourist area* was non-homogeneous. As a result of an analysis of the publication activity, based on the data retrieved from the Scopus database, seven clusters or subfields were distinguished. They are interconnected on one hand and point to the interdisciplinary character of the area under analysis on the other. They also show the trends prevailing in this area of research.

The subfields that scored the largest numbers of publications show clear connections among tourism, sustainable development, economic growth, logistics, transport, and the tourist destination. It was noted, too, that some attention has been paid to the changing environment. An explicit example here is the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected all areas of life, be they social or economic. This observation has been confirmed in the analysis of changes in the thematic scope of publications over time. A rising trend has been detected in publications dealing with the changed behaviour of travellers as well as problems caused and consequences brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also important to find a place for logistics and tourism in the implementation of the principles of sustainable development. In the era of decarbonisation, city logistics and tourism must define new rules for coexistence.

In one of the clusters, the term *tourism logistics* was identified. As mentioned previously, this is a relatively new term that pinpoints the relationship between tourism and logistics. It leads to a conclusion that the research area under analysis is conducive to the emergence of new areas of research interest, causing it to grow while also deepening its non-homogeneity.

Non-homogeneity of the research area under investigation has also been confirmed by the analysis of publications scoring the largest number of citations. Cited works inspire further research, often more in-depth and dealing with other, related topics. Although the analysis has been limited to business, management, and accounting, considering our special interest in papers in this subject area, we observed that various topics are discussed in the pool under analysis. It is interesting that many of the papers were single case studies, which again confirms a wide thematic scope of the research area under analysis. Most of the research studies published explore relationships between tourism and logistics.

It is worth noting here that the research area combining city logistics and tourism is not a popular field of study and constitutes a small part of research into city logistics. The Energies **2023**, *16*, 175

analyses prove an increasing trend in the number of publications, although there is still a research gap to be filled.

The results of this research can be useful for both researchers dealing with city logistics and those focused on tourism. A combination of the two areas of research could contribute to the creation of interesting scientific as well as practical results. All city actors—municipal authorities, logistics operators, citizens and tourists—will experience benefits of the development of *city logistics in the urban tourist area* as a research field. It may also bring notable benefits to tourism organisations and businesses dealing with tourism management in cities. The research results have many implications for business practice, in particular with respect to alternative fuel for transport, energy savings, waste management, and creation of new business models that meet the challenges of modern society. These are important issues on the way to implementing the principles of sustainable development.

The research carried out in this article focuses on the body of literature in only one subject area, albeit that considered most relevant for municipal authorities and business entities: business, management, and accounting. This narrowing can be regarded as a kind of limitation of the research work. To present a complete picture of the analysed research field, it is certainly worth extending the research to other subject areas, especially social sciences, engineering, computer science, and environmental science.

Further developing the concept of 'tourism logistics' is also a recommendation for future research. This study has shown that this is only the beginning of the concept creation process. This concept requires the development of a coherent and generally accepted definition and intensive research in order to (1) embed this concept in the management sciences, (2) develop the necessary research tools, and (3) achieve the high level of knowledge and understanding needed to create possible scenarios for future urban development and to formulate a set of managerial guidelines applicable to city authorities, city services, logistics operators, tour operators, the HoReCa sector, and others.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Documents related to city logistics in the urban tourist field, in the subject area of business, management, and accounting, in 2011–2022. Source: Own elaboration based on data collected from Scopus database on 23 February 2022.

| No | The Authors' Names | Document Title | Year | Source | Citation in Scopus | Methodology | Geographical Area |
|----|-----------------------|---|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---|
| 1. | Li et al. [73] | From obscurity to global prominence—Yiwu's emergence as an international trade hub | 2016 | Cities | 19 | Case study | Yiwu, China |
| 2. | Orel [74] | Coworking environments and digital nomadism: balancing work and leisure whilst on the move | 2019 | World Leisure Journal | 15 | Interviews | 21 interlocutors from Ljubljana, Leipzig, Berlin and Prague |

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Table A1. Cont.

| No | The Authors' Names | Document Title | Year | Source | Citation in Scopus | Methodology | Geographical Area |
|-----|--|---|------|---|-----------------------|--|--|
| 3. | Niemets et al. [75] | Research of brownfields and greyfields of the city: Theory and practice | 2018 | Proceedings of the 32nd International Business Information Management Association Conference | 5 | Case study | Kharkiv, Ukraine |
| 4. | Roongsaprangsee & Piboonrungroj [76] | Spatial analysis of perceived logistics and traffic impacts from Chinese tourists on Nimmanahaeminda residents | 2016 | International Journal of Supply Chain Management | 4 | Case study | Nimmanahaeminda, Chiang Mai, Thailand |
| 5. | Campbell [77] | The dynamics of handcart as a means of informal transportation in support of logistics and tourism: The case of downtown Kingston, Jamaica | 2020 | Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes | 3 | Case study; Qualitative and quantitative techniques | Kingston, Jamaica |
| 6. | Colavitti & Usai [78] | Applying the HUL approach to walled towns of Mediterranean seaport cities: Lessons and guidelines through the experience of four UNESCO walled towns | 2019 | Journal of Place Management and Development | 3 | Multi-case study | Mediterranean seaport cities |
| 7. | Gabdullina et al. [79] | Transport and logistics innovations in supply chain management: Evidence from Kazakhstan | 2020 | Uncertain Supply Chain Management | 2 | Case study, conceptual analysis | Kazakhstan |
| 8. | Tunming et al. [80] | The increasing of potential in tourism logistics supply chain to Khon Kaen ME city, Thailand | 2019 | African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure | 2 | Case study | Khon Kaen ME city, Thailand |
| 9. | Loo et al. [81] | Exploring the factors and strategies in implementation of sustainable land transport system in Ayer Keroh, Melaka | 2018 | Journal of Advanced Manufacturing Technology | 2 | Case study | Ayer Keroh, Melaka, Malaysia |
| 10. | Ngamsirijit [82] | Demand responsive transportation for creative tourism logistics planning | 2015 | International Journal of Intelligent Enterprise | 2 | Case study | Pattaya City, Thailand |
| 11. | Ngamsirijit [83] | Using Capacity Flexibility Model for responsive tourism logistics: The case of Pattaya city | 2013 | Proceedings of 2013 IEEE International Conference on Service Operations and Logistics, and Informatics, SOLI 2013 | 2 | Case study | Pattaya City, Thailand |
| 12. | Devkota et al. [84] | Rethinking westernization in destination: Tourists' perception of a touristic city | 2021 | Journal of Tourism and Services | 0 | Case study | Pokhara, Nepal |
| 13. | Au [85] | The economic costs of protests and policy recommendations for preventing them: the case of Hong Kong | 2021 | Journal of Chinese Economic and Foreign Trade Studies | 0 | Case study | Hong Kong |
| 14. | Florido-Benítez [86] | How Málaga's airport contributes to promote the establishment of companies in its hinterland and improves the local economy | 2021 | International Journal of Tourism Cities | 0 | Case study | Malaga, Spain |
| 15. | Šego et al. [87] | Methods of goods delivery to the historic core of the city of Šibenik during the tourist season | 2020 | LOGI—Scientific Journal on Transport and Logistics | 0 | Case study | Šibenik, Croatia |
| 16. | Du Cros & Jolliffe [88] | Brand Hong Kong: Art hub for China's belt and road initiative | 2019 | Urban Events, Place Branding and Promotion: Place Event Marketing | 0 | Case study | Hong Kong |
| 17. | Ambrósio et al. [89] | Marian midsize shrines: Three itineraries between Portugal and Slovakia | 2017 | International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage | 0 | Multi-case study | Marian Midsize Shrines, e.g., |

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Table A1. Cont.

| No | The Authors' Names | Document Title | Year | Source | Citation in Scopus | Methodology | Geographical Area |
|-----|---|--|------|--|-----------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 18. | - | Conference review | 2013 | WIT Transactions on Information and Communication Technologies | 0 | N/A | N/A |
| 19. | - | Conference Review | 2013 | WIT Transactions on Information and Communication Technologies | 0 | N/A | N/A |
| 20. | - | Conference Review | 2013 | WIT Transactions on Information and Communication Technologies | 0 | N/A | N/A |
| 21. | Teeranantawanich & Fongsuwan [90] | Foreign real estate holdings and in Thailand's Special Autonomous Systems (SAS) Bangkok and Pattaya: A structural equation model | 2014 | Research Journal of Business Management | 0 | Multi-case study, quantitative research | Bangkok and Pattaya, Thailand |
| 22. | Tirosh [91] | Mutual strategy relationship of Eilat vs. Aqaba as tourism destinations | 2013 | Journal for Global Business Advancement | 0 | Multi-case study | Akaba, Jordan; Eilat, Israel |
| 23. | Böll [92] | Economic trends: United Arab Emirates | 2011 | Betonwerk und Fertigteil- Technik/Concrete Plant and Precast Technology | 0 | Case study | Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates |
| 24. | - | Conference Review | 2011 | APBITM 2011—Proceedings 2011 IEEE International Summer Conference of Asia Pacific | 0 | N/A | N/A |

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