

Exploring Research Progress and Development Trends in Tibetan Villages of China: A Bibliometric Visualization Study

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| Journal: | <i>Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering</i> |
| Manuscript ID | JAABE2405370AH |
| Manuscript Type: | Architectural History and Theory |
| Keywords (up to 5): | Tibetan villages, bibliometrics, visualization, CiteSpace |
| Categories: | AH: History of Architecture/City/Urban Planning < Architectural History and Theory |
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Exploring Research Progress and Development Trends in Tibetan Villages of China: A Bibliometric Visualization Study

ABSTRACT

Tibetan villages, embodying the rich integration of Tibetan culture and nature, have garnered research interest in China amidst the rapid development of ethnic minority villages, showcasing multidisciplinary approaches with a strong policy orientation. This study utilizes the bibliometric visualization tool CiteSpace to conduct a comprehensive visual analysis of keyword patterns, including co-occurrence, clustering, timelines, bursts, and collaboration networks. The analysis covers 866 articles from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database spanning 1998 to 2023. Additionally, the study analyzes 283 papers on funding and publishing trends, along with 50 English-language articles from the Web of Science (WOS) for a balanced perspective. Furthermore, the study systematically reviews literature related to China's major policies and the most cited papers. The findings highlight a focus on the physical and cultural aspects of Tibetan villages, the spirit of place, and sustainable development. There is significant emphasis on rural revitalization, public spaces, and spatial forms, especially in Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan. The findings suggest enhancing protection and inheritance systems for Tibetan villages across disciplines and promoting the adaptive development of residential structures under policy directives. Overall, this study offers a novel bibliometric visualization approach for analyzing the dynamics of this field.

KEYWORDS

Tibetan villages, bibliometrics, visualization, CiteSpace

1. Introduction

China is home to a vast number of ethnic minority villages, each reflecting the historical development, environmental characteristics, residential styles, regional cultures, and customs of their respective ethnic groups. The Tibetan ethnic group, a unique branch among China's ethnic minorities, is primarily distributed in the Tibet Autonomous Region, Qinghai Province, western Sichuan Province, Gansu Province, and Yunnan Province. Through long-standing practices in production and inter-ethnic exchanges, the Tibetan people have created a distinctive regional architectural culture. Their architectural skills integrate traditional ethnic culture with the concept of adapting to local conditions, carrying regional characteristics and the wisdom of their ancestors. These architectural works, which coexist harmoniously with nature, are considered shining gems within the treasury of architectural culture (Wang 2018; Hu et al. 2023).

In the context of today's urbanization, which has shifted toward quality and acceleration, China's emphasis on rural construction has increasingly intensified. Following the implementation of a series of policies aimed at rural revitalization, research on characteristic villages and traditional settlements is flourishing. Unlike uniform urban settlements, ethnic minority villages not only possess high recognizability but also carry a wealth of cultural and

emotional significance (He 2023). In recent years, Chinese scholars have dissected Tibetan villages (see Figure 1) from various perspectives. Their research primarily focuses on local architecture, tourism, economy, ethnic culture, and geology and geography in areas such as western Sichuan, Jiarong, Weizang, Kham, and Amdo Tibetan regions. However, up to this point, there has been no bibliometric research specifically dedicated to the holistic development, historical culture, and architectural space of Tibetan villages.



Figure 1. Tibetan villages in Danba County, western Sichuan Province, China.

This study, which utilizes CiteSpace for bibliometric visualization analysis, provides an objective summary of research hotspots, thematic directions, development trends in the field, and networks of cooperation among researchers and institutions. It presents the current status and development trends of the field in an intuitive and clear manner through maps. While this method has been preliminarily applied in disciplines such as geography, landscape architecture, ecology, and urban and rural planning in recent years, it has been seldom used in the study of traditional ethnic minority villages. Therefore, this study constructs a visual knowledge map based on CiteSpace, carefully selects related literature from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and Web of Science (WOS) databases for in-depth exploration and analysis, and comprehensively elucidates the research progress, current status, and trends of Tibetan village studies. It aims to provide references and benchmarks for further research into the latest dynamics and hotspots in this field, offering a methodological and theoretical guide for bibliometric visualization analysis of the dynamics in research related to Tibetan villages.

2. Materials and Methods

In November 2023, domestic and international literature related to Tibetan villages were systematically retrieved. Using the advanced search tool in CNKI with the terms "Tibetan village" OR "Tibetan residential house" OR "Tibetan area residential house" OR "Tibetan ethnic village" OR "Tibetan area village" OR "Tibetan ethnic settlement" OR "Tibetan ethnic community" OR "Tibetan area settlement" OR "Tibetan area community" as the theme for search, and after excluding papers with irrelevant keywords, reports, and papers with weak relevance, a total of 866 highly relevant papers were obtained. In WOS, the search was conducted with TS = "Tibetan house" OR "Tibetan village" OR "Tibetan dwelling" OR "Tibetan settlement", and after removing papers with weak relevance, 50 related papers were finally selected.

The CiteSpace 6.1.R6 software was used for the quantitative analysis of the 866 papers retrieved from CNKI between 1998 and 2023, and the 50 papers retrieved from WOS between 2008 and 2023, including the disciplines they belong to, keyword co-occurrence, keyword clustering, the publication time span of documents containing each keyword cluster, keyword bursts, author collaboration relationships, institutional collaboration relationships, and citation analysis. This generated visual network knowledge maps such as keyword co-occurrence maps, keyword clustering maps, keyword timeline maps, author collaboration network maps, and institutional collaboration network maps of research literature on Tibetan villages. The development trends of the research were analyzed based on the annual changes in the number of published papers on Tibetan village studies. The themes and main research contents of Tibetan village studies were identified using keyword co-occurrence and clustering maps. The current characteristics, hotspots, and development trends of Tibetan village research were analyzed using keyword timeline and keyword burst timeline maps. The collaboration among scholars engaged in Tibetan village research and their institutions was analyzed using author collaboration network maps and institutional collaboration network maps.

3. Knowledge Map of Tibetan Village Studies

3.1. Analysis of International Publications

The number of publications per year and their annual changes are crucial indicators for measuring the research interest trend in a specific topic. In the CNKI database, the research on Tibetan villages in China from 1998 to 2007 was in its nascent and initial development stages, with the annual publication volume gradually increasing from an initial rate of one paper per year to 16 papers per year. The total publication volume over these 10 years was 47 papers, accounting for 5.42% of the total publications from 1995 to 2023.

The research on Tibetan villages entered its second growth period from 2008 to 2016, with the annual publication volume increasing from 23 papers per year to 70 papers per year. Between 2017 and 2019, it was in a steady development stage, with an average annual publication volume of approximately 64 papers. Subsequently, research on Tibetan villages entered a third development stage, with a significant increase in the annual publication volume, reaching 86 papers per year by 2022 (see Figure 2).

In contrast, the period covered by the WOS database from 2008 to 2023 shows that research on Tibetan villages from 2008 to 2016 was in an embryonic stage; from 2017 to 2023,

it was in a period of rapid development, with the publication volume in 2022 being six times that of 2016 (see Figure 1). Overall, whether in the CNKI or WOS databases, the research interest in Tibetan villages demonstrates an upward trend, indicating that research on Tibetan villages is increasingly gaining attention and actively developing.

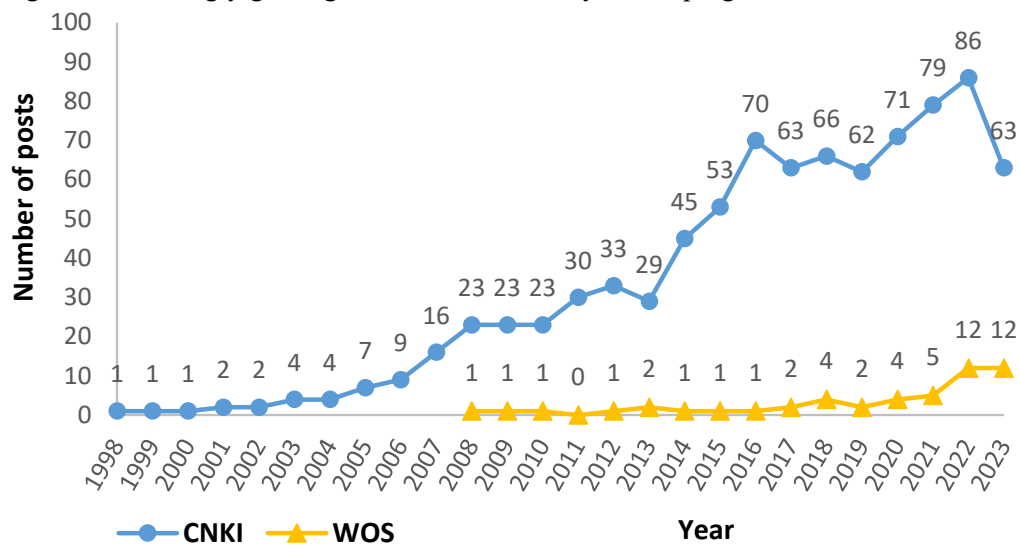


Figure 2. Annual publication volume of research papers on Tibetan villages

The discipline distribution data for Tibetan village studies, obtained through the visualization function of discipline distribution in the CNKI database (see Figure 3), spanning from 1995 to 2023, reveals that Chinese scholars' publications on Tibetan village research mainly fall into ten disciplines: Architectural Science and Engineering, Tourism, Geography, Administration and National Administration Management, Agricultural Economy, Ethnology, Culturology, Fine Arts (Calligraphy Sculpture and Photography), Sociology, Statistics, and Archaeology. Among these, the disciplines of Architectural Science and Engineering, Tourism, Geography, Administration and National Administration Management, Agricultural Economy, and Ethnology have the most publications. Research in China on Tibetan villages primarily includes studies on traditional Tibetan residences, rural tourism in Tibetan areas, the natural environment of Tibetan villages, the revitalization of Tibetan areas under government guidance, and research on traditional Tibetan culture.

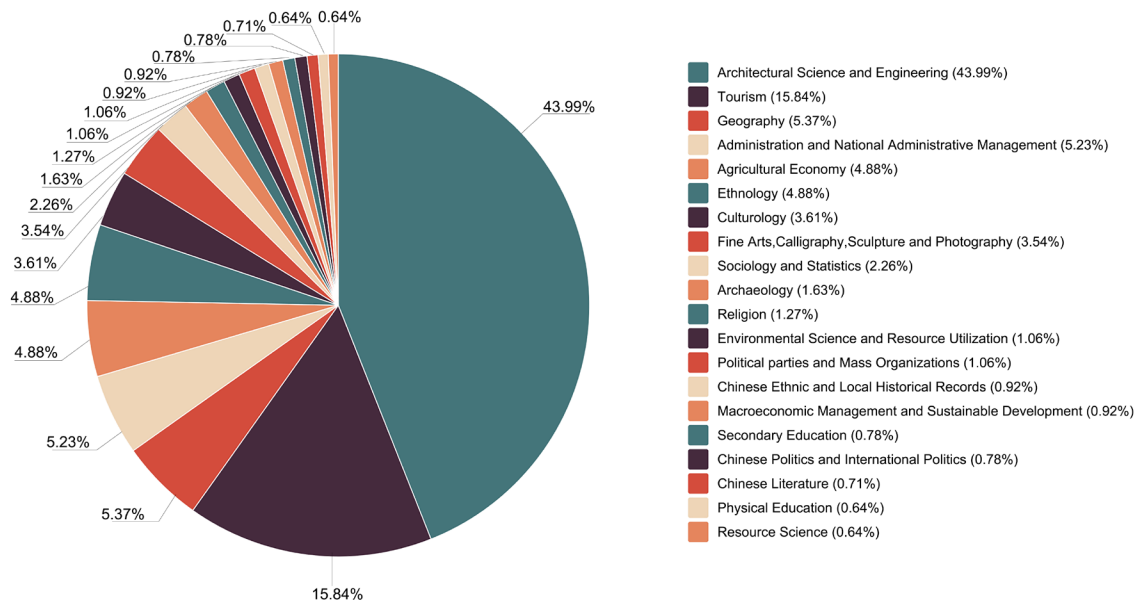


Figure 3. Discipline distribution map of Tibetan village studies based on the CNKI database

3.2. Distribution and Collaboration Map of Major Research Institutions

Analyzing the affiliations of authors can provide insights into the institutions currently involved in Tibetan village research and their collaborative relationships. This analysis helps build new research collaborations and models, promoting sustained and in-depth development of research (Zhang et al., 2023). Using CiteSpace 6.1.R6 software and selecting the CNKI database, we set the node type to institutions, the time span to 1998-2023, and the time slice to one year, resulting in a co-occurrence map of Tibetan village research institutions with 350 nodes, 119 links, and a density of 0.0019 (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Collaboration network of institutions on Tibetan village studies based on the CNKI database

The map reveals that the main research institutions conducting Tibetan village studies

hotspot issues and their evolving trends in a particular research area (Gao, Su, and He 2023).

Using CiteSpace 6.1.R6 software and importing research literature data from CNKI, we analyzed data with a time span from 1998 to 2023, time slices of one year, node type set as keywords, and default parameters. This resulted in a keyword co-occurrence graph with 518 nodes, 777 links, and a density of 0.0058 (Figure 6). In the graph, node size represented the frequency of keyword occurrence, the font size of the label text on nodes indicated the centrality strength of the nodes, and the number of links between nodes represented the co-occurrence frequency of keywords. More links between nodes indicated stronger co-occurrence relationships between keywords.



Figure 6. Keyword co-occurrence graph of Tibetan village research based on the CNKI database

The three largest nodes in the graph were "Tibetan dwelling," "Tibetan," and "Jiarong Tibetan." These three keywords formed a triangle distribution in the graph, with the highest number of connections to other keywords. This suggests that "Tibetan dwelling," "Tibetan," and "Jiarong Tibetan" had the highest frequency of appearance in the 866 papers analyzed, the highest network density, and the most significant centrality, making them the main research topics.

Other larger nodes with high-frequency keywords indicated that research on Chinese Tibetan villages from 1998 to 2023 mainly focused on topics such as traditional dwellings, traditional villages, traditional settlements, Jiarong Tibetan villages, and the spatial forms of Tibetan villages. This indicates that Jiaju Tibetan villages in the Jiarong Tibetan area were the primary research objects in this field.

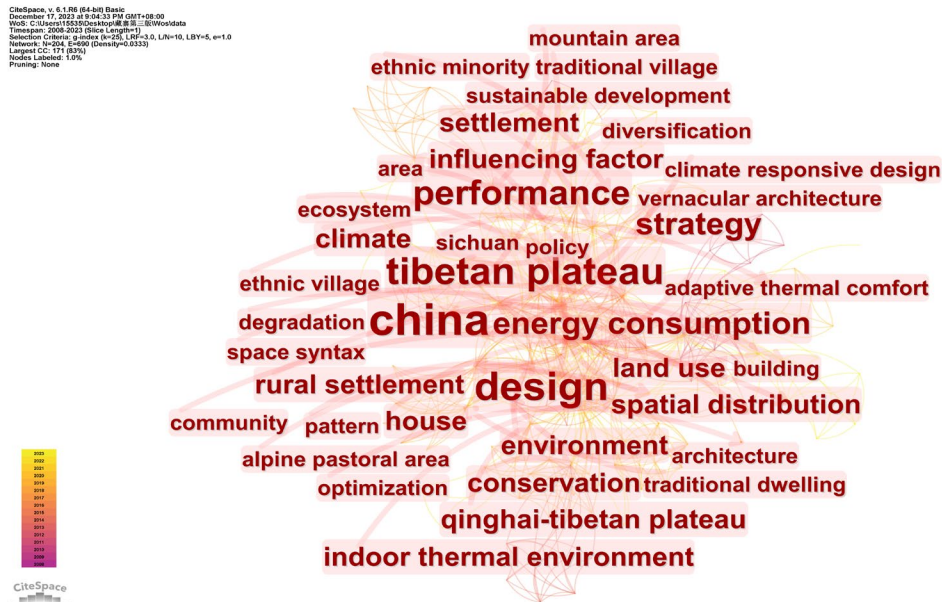


Figure 7. Keyword co-occurrence graph of Tibetan village research based on the WOS database

Co-occurrence analysis of keywords in the WOS database (see Figure 7) revealed the top ten keywords as China, design, Tibetan plateau, performance, energy consumption, strategy, spatial distribution, indoor thermal environment, and settlement. It was evident that "design" played a pivotal role in the entire network. Unlike the CNKI database, the research hotspots in the WOS database primarily revolved around architectural energy development, utilization, and conservation in mountainous regions, particularly the Tibetan Plateau, as well as the ecosystem services of clustered settlements and sustainable development concepts.

3.4. Analysis of Research Theme and Content

Keyword clustering analysis simplifies co-occurring keywords into a smaller number of keyword clusters using statistical clustering methods (Chen et al. 2015). The log-likelihood ratio (LLR) algorithm in CiteSpace 6.1.R6 software was employed to conduct cluster analysis on the selected keywords from both the CNKI and WOS databases, resulting in the generation of a keyword clustering graph (see Figure 8). In the graph, keyword clusters are represented along with label numbers, cluster sizes, and average cited years, reflecting the research hotspots in Tibetan village studies and their temporal changes. The size of a keyword cluster indicates the number of keywords within that cluster, with smaller label numbers indicating a larger number of keywords in the cluster. Keyword clusters with a later average cited year signify emerging research hotspots.

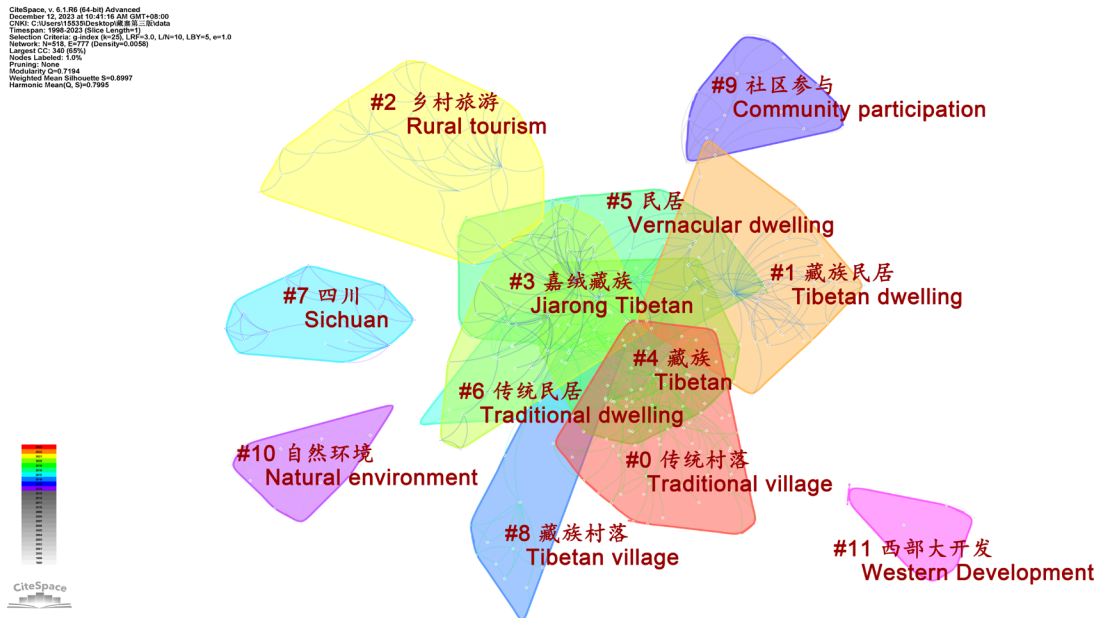


Figure 8. Keyword clustering graph of Tibetan village research based on the CNKI database

The keyword clustering graph of Tibetan village research, based on the CNKI database, displayed 12 main keyword clusters, indicating that the primary content of Tibetan village research in China included traditional villages, Tibetan traditional houses, rural tourism, Jiarong Tibetan, Tibetan people, dwellings, traditional dwellings, Sichuan, Tibetan villages, community participation, natural environment, and western development (Li et al. 2022; Chen 2022). Keyword clustering analysis revealed that research on Tibetan villages in China went through a developmental process from studying traditional dwellings and settlements to research on development and human-environment relationships.

According to the keyword clustering graph of Tibetan village research and the top five co-occurring keywords within each keyword cluster, Tibetan village research could be categorized into four research domains (see Table 1).

Research on Tibetan villages: This research domain's keyword clustering included #0 Traditional village and #8 Tibetan village. Co-occurring keywords encompassed Traditional village, traditional settlement, residential architecture, conservation and development, Anduo Tibetan Area, Tibetan village, Functions, Jiarong Tibetan residential architecture, and Zhagana, among others. The primary research topics included the preservation and development of traditional villages, human habitat environments, residential architecture, historical contexts, and identity.

Research on Tibetan dwellings: This research domain's keyword clustering included #1 Tibetan dwelling, #5 Vernacular dwelling, and #6 Traditional dwelling. Co-occurring keywords included Tibetan traditional dwelling, Tibetan Buddhism, Vernacular architecture, Residential renewal, Geographical adaptability, Vernacular dwelling, Kangba Tibetan Area, Indoor thermal environment, Lhasa, Traditional dwelling, Gannan Tibetan Area, Gene map, Architectural space, and Regional gene. The primary research focuses on exploring Tibetan Buddhist culture, studying architectural expressions as symbols in vernacular houses, investigating indoor thermal environments in dwellings, understanding the relationships within residential household groups in multi-forested areas, and constructing a regional architectural creation system.

Research on the sense of place in Tibetan villages: This research domain's keyword clustering included #3 Jiarong Tibetan and #10 Natural environment. Co-occurring keywords included Jiarong Tibetan, Jiuzhaigou, Village society, Traditional village, Religious, Natural environment, Resource utilization patterns, Jiaju, Architecture, and Household surveys. The primary research topics focused on the preservation of Tibetan traditional settlement heritage, Tibetan area religious beliefs, village culture changes, decorative arts in traditional villages, and public perception of architectural landscapes.

Table 1. Keyword clustering of Tibetan village research based on CNKI database (1998-2023)

| Cluster ID | Cluster Label (Hot Spot) | Size | Mean (Year) | High-Frequency Keywords |
|------------|--------------------------|------|-------------|---|
| #0 | Traditional villages | 57 | 2016 | Traditional village, Traditional settlement, Dwelling house, Protection and Development, Anduo Tibetan |
| #1 | Tibetan dwelling | 43 | 2012 | Tibetan dwelling, Tibetan Buddhism, Vernacular architecture, Residential renewal, Geographical adaptability |
| #2 | Rural tourism | 39 | 2014 | Rural tourism, Jiaju Tibetan village, Ethnic community, Danba county, Development status |
| #3 | Jiarong Tibetan | 38 | 2012 | Jiarong Tibetan, Jiuzhaigou, Village society, Traditional village, Religion |
| #4 | Tibetan | 35 | 2013 | Tibetan, Protect, Inheritance, Preservation and Renewal, Blockhouse dwelling |
| #5 | Vernacular dwelling | 28 | 2013 | Vernacular dwelling, Kangba Tibetan Area, Indoor thermal environment, Lhasa, Tibetan dwelling |
| #6 | Traditional dwelling | 21 | 2012 | Traditional dwelling, Gannan Tibetan Area, Gene map, Architectural space, Regional gene |
| #7 | Sichuan | 18 | 2008 | Sichuan, Tibetan area, Changes, Field survey, Economics |
| #8 | Tibetan village | 15 | 2011 | Tibetan village, Functionality, Identity, Jiarong Tibetan dwelling, Zhagana |
| #9 | Community participation | 15 | 2008 | Community participation, Sustainable development, Danba, Jiarong Tibetan Area, Changping village |
| #10 | Natural environment | 11 | 2003 | Natural environment, Resource utilization patterns, Jiaju, Architecture, Household survey |
| #11 | Western development | 10 | 2002 | Western Development, "Coterie", Breakthrough, Tibetan village, Transformational |

Research on sustainable development in Tibetan regions: This research domain's keyword clustering included #2 Rural tourism, #4 Tibetan, #7 Sichuan, #9 Community participation, #11 Western development. Co-occurring keywords encompassed Rural tourism, Zhagana, Tibetan village, Ethnic communities, Danba County, Development status, Tibetans, Protect, Inheritance, preservation and renewal, blockhouse dwellings, Sichuan, Tibetan Area, changes, field survey, economics, community participation, sustainable development, Danba, Jiarong Tibetan Area, Changping village, Western development, "coterie," Breakthrough, Tibetan village, and Transformation, among others. The main research focuses on the inheritance methods of Tibetan villages, diversified development, ethnic cultural tourism in Danba County of western Sichuan as an example, the inheritance and development of Tibetan

dwelling and culture, the influence of vernacular characteristics of ethnic villages, and rural revitalization in Tibetan areas (Zhang 2022; Shen 2008).

In the keyword clustering analysis of the WOS database (see Figure 9), combined with the keyword co-occurrence graph in the WOS database (see Figure 7), the research on Tibetan villages primarily focused on qualitative studies related to climate-responsive design strategies and thermal environments in Tibetan traditional village residences, as well as building energy retrofitting and numerical simulations in cold regions. This indicates that in the CNKI database, the clustering content covered various aspects of Tibetan villages, ranging from macro to micro perspectives, and included both explicit and implicit components. In contrast, the clustering content in the WOS database placed more emphasis on regional adaptation and building energy efficiency in Tibetan villages.

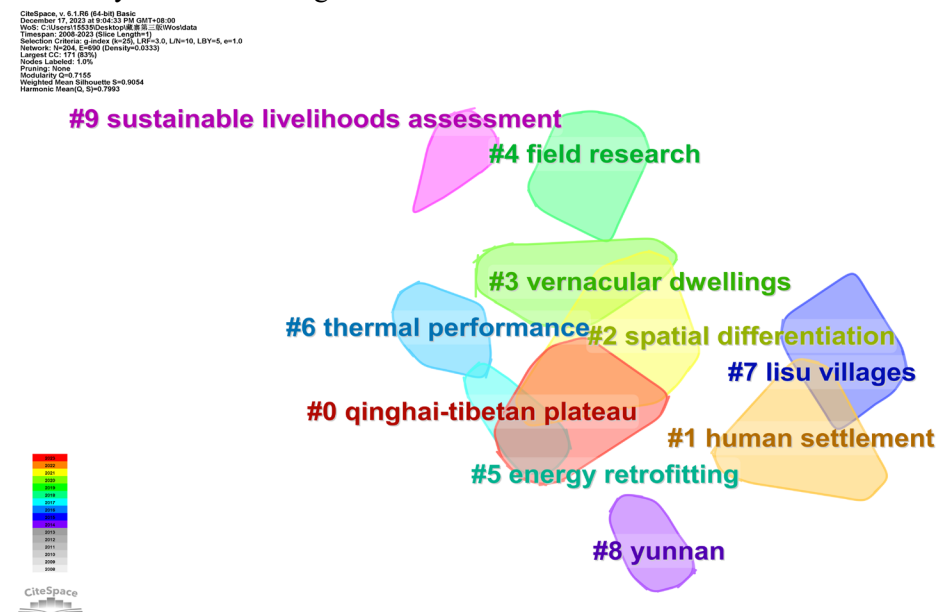


Figure 9. Keyword clustering graph of Tibetan village research based on the WOS database

3.5. Analysis of the Evolutionary Trends in Research

The keyword timeline graph reflects the relationships between various keyword clusters and the publication time span corresponding to each keyword cluster. Based on the co-occurrence keyword analysis in the CNKI database using CiteSpace 6.1.R6 software, keyword clusters ranked #0 to #11 were selected to generate the keyword timeline graph in five-year time segments to analyze the research topics, the start time, and development trends of each keyword cluster (see Figure 10). Based on the start time, duration, and density of nodes on the timeline for each keyword cluster, Tibetan village research themes were categorized into four groups.

Research themes with an early start, long duration, and a high number of generated keywords: This group included #4 Tibetan, #5 Vernacular dwelling, and #6 Traditional dwelling keyword clusters. The primary research topics included the morphological evolution of Tibetan traditional dwellings, the landscape characteristics of Tibetan villages, the inheritance and development of Tibetan traditional dwellings and culture (An et al. 2023), traditional settlement landscapes, and regional genes of traditional dwellings.

Research themes that started relatively late, had a long duration, and generated a

significant number of keywords: This group included #0 Traditional village, #1 Tibetan dwelling, #2 Rural tourism, and #3 Jiarong Tibetan keyword clusters. The primary research topics included symbolic patterns in Tibetan traditional villages, the current development and construction of Tibetan traditional houses, dwelling renovation, the inheritance of regional culture, spatial forms in Tibetan regions, rural governance, rural revitalization, renovation, development, and protection.

Research themes with a relatively late start, short duration, and a low number of generated keywords: This group included #7 Sichuan, #8 Tibetan village, and #9 Community participation keyword clusters. The primary research topics included ecological and cultural tourism, the architectural style of traditional buildings in Tibetan villages, economic development in ethnic regions, and the identity of Tibetan village communities.

Research themes characterized by an early start, a shorter duration, and fewer generated keywords: This group included #10 Natural environment and #11 Western development keyword clusters. The primary research topics included the development and leadership role of Western development in Tibetan areas, Tibetan architecture, ethnic culture, and the diversified development of Tibetan villages.

An overview of the entire graph shows that research on Tibetan villages has been continuously refined and supplemented. Additionally, the emergence of keywords such as spatial distribution, world natural heritage site, blockhouse dwelling, regional gene, and cultural integration indicates that research is increasingly delving into the external characteristics and internal influencing factors of Tibetan villages from a multidisciplinary perspective, thereby promoting the sustainable development of Tibetan villages.

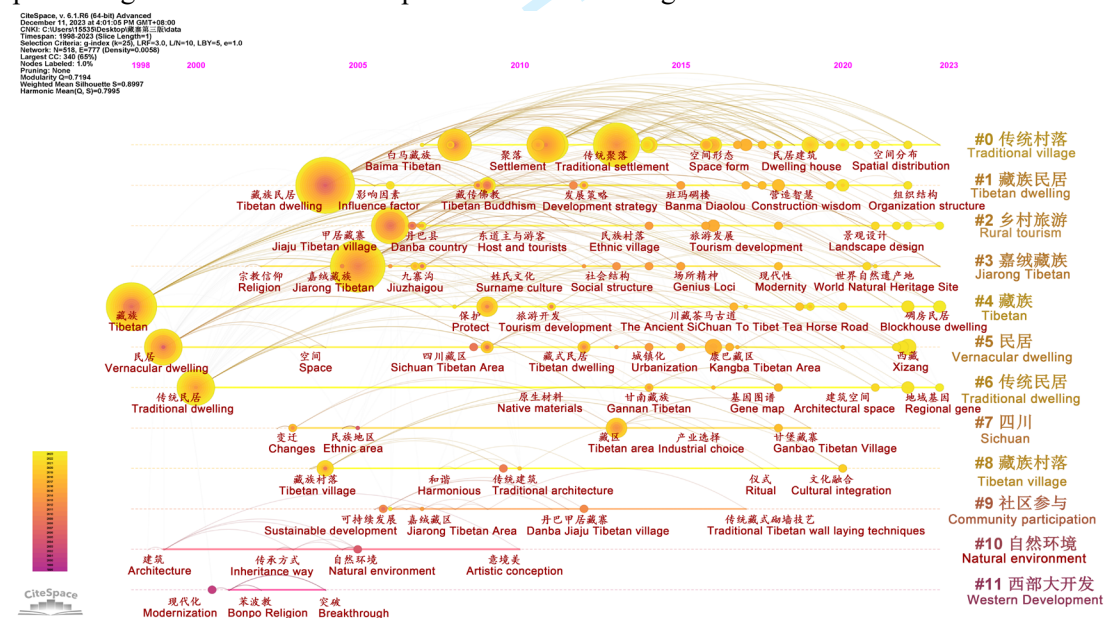


Figure 10. Keyword timeline graph of Tibetan village research in the CNKI database from 1998 to 2023

3.6. Analysis of Research Frontiers

Burst keywords are those keywords that experience a sudden increase in citation frequency during a specific period. These burst keywords reflect the research hotspots in a particular phase and are used to analyze the research development trends in a specific field. To analyze the

development trends in the research on Tibetan villages in China, the filtered CNKI literature data were imported into CiteSpace 6.1.R6 software. The analysis parameters were set to “Burst terms” to obtain a keyword burst graph for Tibetan village research from 1998 to 2023. In the graph, “begin” and “end” represent the start and end times of burst keywords, and “strength” indicates the burst keyword's strength. A higher strength indicates a higher citation frequency and greater influence (Li et al. 2017).

The top 15 burst keywords in Tibetan village research from 1998 to 2023 include Jiaju Tibetan village, Vernacular dwelling, Tibetan dwelling, Dwelling house, Anduo Tibetan Area, Kangba Tibetan Area, Gannan Tibetan Area, Traditional dwelling, Traditional village, Space form, Tibetan, Tibetan area, Public space, Rural revitalization, and Spatial feature (Figure 11). Among them, the earliest burst keywords were Jiaju Tibetan village, Vernacular dwelling, and Tibetan dwelling, with burst periods from 2009 to 2017. This suggests that the initial focus of Tibetan village research was primarily on residential studies, mainly centered around the Jiaju Tibetan village. Subsequently, the research direction began to diversify, with the appearance of burst keywords related to the Anduo Tibetan Area, Kangba Tibetan Area, Gannan Tibetan Area, Dwelling house, Traditional dwelling, and Traditional village. This suggests an extension of research territory beyond the Jiarong Tibetan area, where Jiaju Tibetan village is located, to other Tibetan areas.

Top 15 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

| Keywords | Year | Strength | Begin | End | 1998 - 2023 |
|-------------------------------|------|----------|-------|------|-------------|
| 甲居藏寨 Jiaju Tibetan village | 2006 | 3.31 | 2009 | 2015 | |
| 民居 Vernacular dwelling | 1999 | 2.91 | 2014 | 2017 | |
| 藏族民居 Tibetan dwelling | 2004 | 2.81 | 2014 | 2015 | |
| 民居建筑 Dwelling house | 2016 | 4 | 2016 | 2018 | |
| 安多藏区 Anduo Tibetan Area | 2016 | 3.74 | 2016 | 2018 | |
| 康巴藏区 Kangba Tibetan Area | 2016 | 3.28 | 2016 | 2017 | |
| 甘南藏区 Gannan Tibetan Area | 2016 | 2.99 | 2016 | 2017 | |
| 传统民居 Traditional dwelling | 2000 | 3.37 | 2017 | 2018 | |
| 传统村落 Traditional village | 2011 | 6.44 | 2018 | 2021 | |
| 空间形态 Space form | 2019 | 5.82 | 2019 | 2023 | |
| 藏族 Tibetan | 1998 | 4.44 | 2019 | 2023 | |
| 藏区 Tibetan area | 2013 | 3.03 | 2019 | 2020 | |
| 公共空间 Public space | 2014 | 2.83 | 2020 | 2023 | |
| 乡村振兴 Rural revitalization | 2020 | 2.74 | 2020 | 2023 | |
| 空间特征 Spatial feature | 2020 | 2.65 | 2020 | 2023 | |

Figure 11. Top 15 burst keywords with the most citations in Tibetan village research based on the CNKI database

Keywords such as Space form, Tibetan, Public space, Rural revitalization, and spatial feature have become research hotspots, with a shorter duration in the Tibetan area indicating a shift toward subdividing geographical areas. Combined with the mapping analysis, the current stage of Tibetan village research relies on policy support, orientation, and the high-quality development of human settlements. Therefore, rural revitalization and spatial quality improvement appear to be the two core paths of research (Yao et al. 2023).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Analysis of Funding Sources and Publishing Institutions for Tibetan Village Research

Analyzing the funding situation in a research field reflects the level of attention it receives. This study analyzed 283 academic journal articles labeled as "funded documents" that were retrieved through CNKI. Among them, 143 articles related to Tibetan village research in China were supported by national-level funds (National Natural Science Foundation, National Social Science Fund, National Science and Technology Support Plan, National Key Research and Development Program, National Key Research and Development Program of China, China Postdoctoral Science Foundation, National Scholarship Council), accounting for 50% of the total funded documents (Figure 12). This indicates the significant level of national attention directed toward research in the field of Tibetan villages in China.

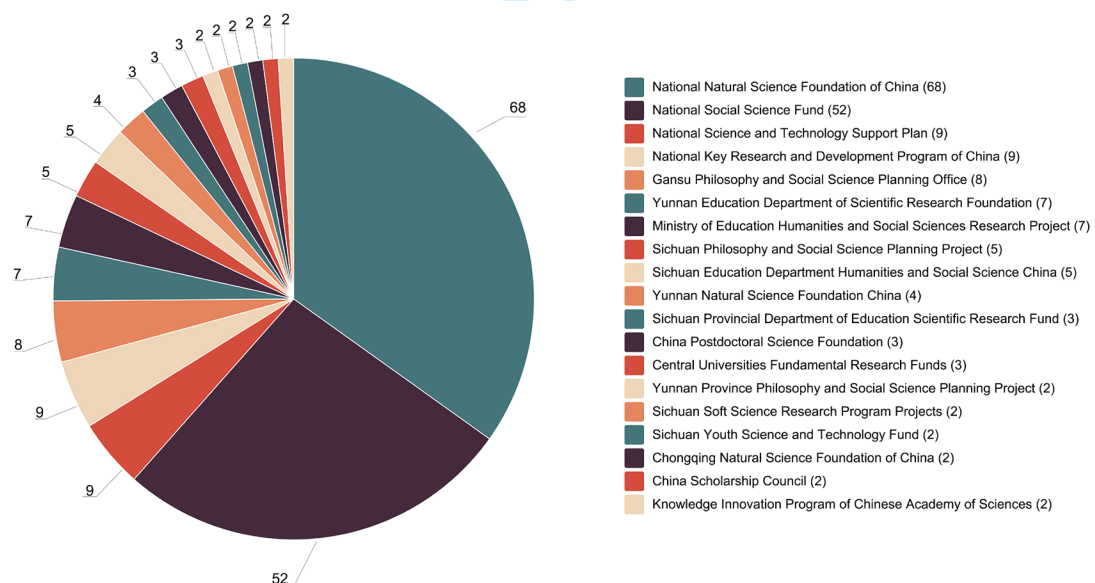


Figure 12. Statistics on the number of research funding sources

Additionally, a significant proportion of funding came from special funds from higher education institutions and local science funds. For instance, documents funded by the Gansu Philosophy and Social Science Planning Office totaled 8, followed by the Yunnan Provincial Department of Education's Scientific Research Foundation and the Ministry of Education Humanities and Social Sciences Research Project, each with 7 published articles. Furthermore,

various funds from Sichuan Province provided strong support for research on Tibetan villages, with as many as 17 articles published with funding from various Sichuan Province funds.

Among funding institutions, Southwest Minzu University leads with 31 articles, followed by Xian University of Architecture and Technology with 23 articles. Sichuan University and Sichuan Minzu University follow closely with 18 and 16 articles, respectively (Figure 13). This geographical concentration of funding organizations aligns with the institutions publishing literature under each foundation. Notably, in the provinces of Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan in China, increased attention has been devoted to examining Tibetan villages, which is directly tied to the substantial number of Tibetan settlements falling under the jurisdiction of these three provinces.

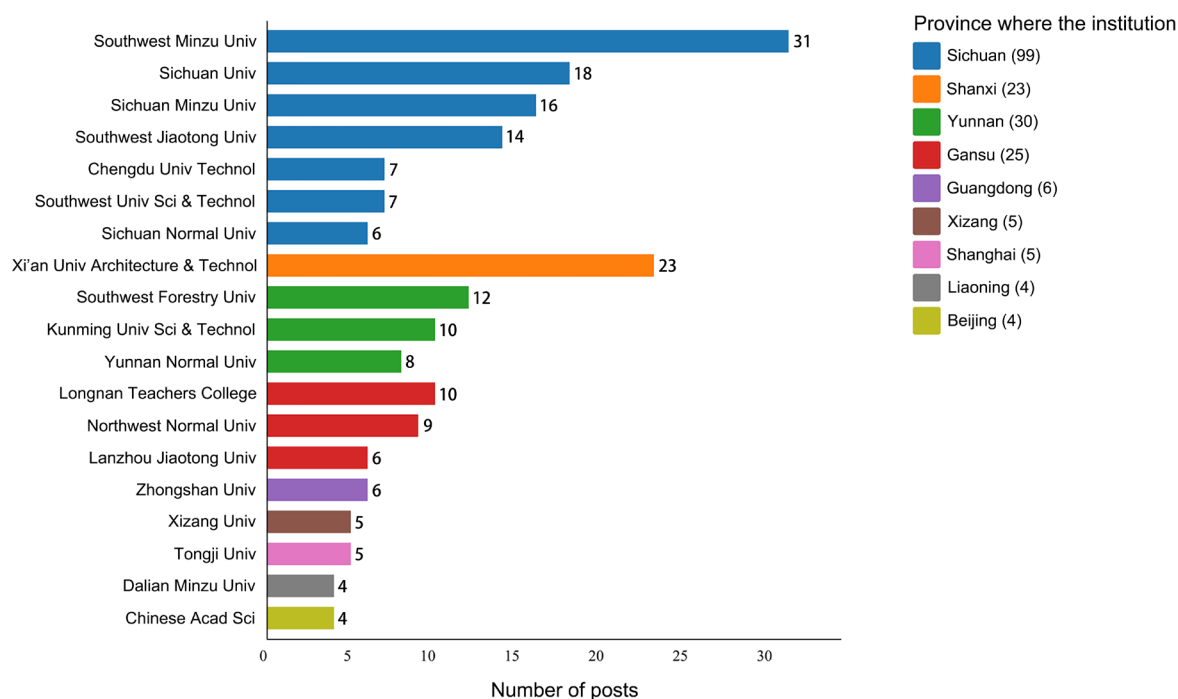


Figure 13. Statistics on institutions publishing papers on Tibetan village research funded by grants, based on the CNKI database

4.2. Guidance on Tibetan Village Research in Chinese Policy

Chinese academics began studying Tibetan villages in the 1990s, with research gaining more depth and breadth following the implementation of the Western Development Strategy proposed during the Fourth Plenary Session of the 15th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in September 1999 (Qin 2011). Significant developments occurred with the explicit mention of the concept of historical and cultural villages and towns in the newly revised Cultural Relics Protection Law in December 2002 (Wang 2013). The amended constitution in 2004 formally included villages with minority characteristics within the scope of protection (Yang 2018), marking a repositioning of Tibetan villages at the national policy level and a deeper research focus.

The No. 1 Document of the Central Committee in 2006 provided a more comprehensive explanation of the construction of a new socialist countryside, introducing new requirements for rural development, including ethnic minority villages. It proposed that "Chinese ancient villages harmonize with the construction of a new socialist countryside" at the International

Seminar on Ancient Village Protection and the "Ancient Village Protection and New Rural Construction Summit Forum" in November of the same year (Hong 2006).

The "Cultural Heritage Protection Law," revised in December 2007, officially incorporated the protection and planning work of ethnic minority characteristic villages into the legal framework (Yang 2018). The 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in the same year proposed effectively utilizing villages and hamlets in the construction of the new countryside (Chen 2022). The Third Plenary Session of the 17th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, through the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Several Major Issues Concerning Promoting the Reform and Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas" in 2008, indicated an acceleration of the construction of a new socialist countryside and the promotion of integrated urban-rural development (China Government Website n.d.), leading to a significant surge in research on Tibetan villages following the introduction of these policies.

Table 2. Representative policies for the protection and development of characteristic villages of ethnic minorities

| Year of publication | Publishing Department | Name of Policy Paper |
|---------------------|---|--|
| 1998 | National Ethnic Affairs Commission, National Cultural Heritage Administration | Opinions on Strengthening Ethnic Minority Cultural Relics (National Ethnic Affairs Commission (PRC) and National Cultural Heritage Administration (PRC) n.d.) |
| 2009 | National Ethnic Affairs Commission, Ministry of Finance PRC | Guidelines for the Pilot Work on the Protection and Development of Characteristic Villages of Ethnic Minorities (Jiang 2020) |
| 2009 | State Council | Opinions on Further Prospering the Development of Ethnic Minority Culture (China Government Website n.d.) |
| 2012 | State Council | "Twelfth Five-Year" Plan for Ethnic Minority Affairs |
| 2012 | National Ethnic Affairs Commission | Outline of the Plan for the Protection and Development of Characteristic Villages of Ethnic Minorities (2011-2015) (National Ethnic Affairs Commission (PRC) n.d.) |
| 2016 | State Council | Thirteenth Five-Year Plan for Promoting the Development of Ethnic Areas and Less-Populated Nationalities (China Government Website n.d.) |
| 2018 | The Central Committee of the CPC, State Council | Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on the Implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy |
| 2018 | The Central Committee of the CPC, State Council | Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022) |
| 2021 | State Council | Circular on the Fourteenth Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development (China Government Website n.d.) |
| 2021 | State Council | Circular on the "14th Five-Year Plan" for Promoting Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Areas (China Government Website n.d.) |
| 2022 | The Central Committee of the CPC, State Council | Rural Building Action Implementation Program (China Government Website n.d.) |
| 2022 | The Central Committee of the CPC, | Outline of Strategic Planning for Expanding Domestic Demand |

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| | State Council | (2022-2035) (China Government Website n.d.) |
| 2023 | The Central Committee of the CPC, State Council | Opinions of the Central Committee (CPC) and the State Council on Doing a Good Job in Comprehensively Promoting the Key Work of Rural Revitalization in 2023 (China Government Website n.d.) |

The Ministry of Finance and the National Ethnic Affairs Commission jointly issued the "Guiding Opinions on Doing a Good Job in the Pilot Work of Protecting and Developing Ethnic Minority Characteristic Villages" on September 8, 2009. This document serves as the action guideline for the pilot work on the protection and development of ethnic minority characteristic villages and the basis for implementing China's policy on ethnic minority villages (Zuo et al. 2023). The "Law on Intangible Cultural Heritage" issued by the state in February 2011 stated that the intangible cultural heritage of ethnic minority villages and the physical objects and spaces constituting intangible cultural heritage were protected under this law (Yang 2018).

In July 2012, the State Council issued the "12th Five-Year Plan for Ethnic Minority Affairs," incorporating the protection and development of ethnic minority villages into the national 12th Five-Year Plan (China Government Website n.d.), greatly promoting Tibetan village research. The Central No.1 Document of 2018 further clarified the need to promote the integrated development of industries in ethnic minority villages (China Government Website n.d.).

The "Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022)" launched in recent years aimed to protect ethnic villages, traditional villages, and buildings and support the inheritance and development of minority cultures (China Government Website n.d.). Along with the "14th Five-Year Plan" and other series of policy outlines, these initiatives have led to the explosive growth of Tibetan village research in the current stage (Wang and He 2022; Wang et al. 2023). Table 2 lists the representative policy documents on the protection and development of ethnic minority villages issued by the state from 1998 to 2023. An analysis of policy interpretations and publication volumes, combined with the historical context, indicates that the release of national policies on rural revitalization and the protection and development of ethnic minority characteristic villages had a significant pull effect on promoting research.

4.3. Focus and Methods of Tibetan Village Research in China

The analysis of 15 highly cited documents retrieved from the CNKI database, of which 9 were doctoral dissertations (Table 3), revealed that current research on Tibetan villages has integrated disciplines such as architecture, anthropology, sociology, geography, and ecology, employing main research methodologies including qualitative research, quantitative research, and a combination of both, as well as diachronic and synchronic studies. Qualitative research methods included participation observation, field research, and ethnographic fieldwork, while quantitative research included content analysis, questionnaires, and case studies. The combination of qualitative and quantitative research primarily referred to studies that integrated field surveys, questionnaire interviews, and literature research within theoretical frameworks across disciplines.

This approach stemmed from qualitative analysis capturing the main characteristics of Tibetan village studies across different disciplines, while disciplinary theories provided precise

measurements of the influencing factors on Tibetan villages from various perspectives. Therefore, the combined qualitative and quantitative research method, based on an interdisciplinary background, emerged as the main approach in Tibetan village research.

Table 3. Analysis of the top 15 highly cited literature in CNKI

| Author | Year | Field | Research methodology | Main findings | Recommendations |
|----------------|------|--|---|---|---|
| Yuzhen Yang | 2003 | Regional Architectural Cultures | Field research, case study | Qionglong, dry bar, and courtyard are the three main building species corresponding within the SW region. | Architectural design must be based on "locality" (Yang 2003). |
| Quan He | 2009 | Tibetan Houses and Culture | Interview, case study | Traditional Tibetan dwellings build an environment that meets people's material and spiritual requirements through local construction techniques and materials. | Integration of solar energy and modern building materials and technologies with residential homes (He 2009). |
| Yuyuan An | 2005 | Tibetan Traditional Settlement | Field research, literature research | The traditional settlements of the Gannan Tibetans have formed economic and rational forms of settlements and dwellings with limited resources and technology. | Tapping into the regional identity of the West, respecting and encouraging the diversity of residential cultures (An 2005). |
| Longzhu Duojie | 2011 | Tibetan Buddhist Monastery Architecture | Interview, case study | Summarize the characteristics of Tibetan Buddhist monastic architecture through the ages, and the historical context in which it developed and matured. | A multidisciplinary combination of Tibetan studies, architecture, art history, and anthropology (Longzhu 2011). |
| Zhinong Li | 2011 | Traditional Village, Public Cultural Space | Content analysis, case study | Revealing the important role of endogenous public cultural space in the construction of village order in villages. | Constructing a village governance model that harmonizes endogeneity and modernity in village governance in ethnic areas (Li and Qiao 2011). |
| Jie Zhong | 2012 | Ethnic Village Tourism Products | Interview, case study | Six common factors of recreation quality exist: scenery, socialization, decompression, flavor, learning, and exercise; and provide product optimization strategies. | Build a spectrum of ethnic village tourism products with rich connotations, diversified forms, and reasonable structure (Zhong 2012). |
| Chang Ding | 2011 | Tibetan Architectural Color System | Field research, literature research, case study | The concept of the "Tibetan architectural color system" was proposed. | Create a regional system of environmental expression (Ding 2011). |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|------|--|--|---|---|
| Wenhe Cui | 2017 | Renewal of Qinghai's Vernacular Dwellings | Field research, analogical analysis, research | Integration of ecological technology, cultural heritage, and appropriate design models to build a theoretical framework and design methodology for residential renewal. | Renewal design of dwellings in accordance with the industrial structure of highland agriculture combined with ecology and ethnology (Cui 2017). |
| Wenfeng Bai | 2011 | Building Envelope Materials, Sustainable Building Construction | Field research, design practice | Strategies and techniques for the structural renewal of dwellings and the sustainable development of natural building materials have practical value for Yunnan dwellings as well as for other regions. | Study the micro-mechanisms of the materials to increase the effectiveness and durability of the materials (Bai 2011). |
| Duanzhi Suo | 2006 | Cultural Symbols | Literature research | At the top of a mountain god system, there can only be one total god. | The mountain gods symbolize the plurality of Tibetan regional societies (Suo 2006). |
| Yuliang Yang | 2016 | Village Cultural Landscape | Field research, literature research, case study | The spatial distribution of industry, settlement, and religion is a complex and gradual law of overall correspondence and local slight differences. | Addressing the realities of village development through research (Yang 2016). |
| Jiao Xie | 2010 | Jiarong Tibetan Residence | Field research, literature research, analogical analysis | Analyze the plan features, construction parts, and conservation measures of the Jiaju Residence. | The preservation of traditional settlements should focus on sustainable development (Xie 2010). |
| Yingzi Zhang | 2009 | Climate Suitability and Habitat Needs | Interview, case study | Total experience by combining three aspects: solar radiation utilization, envelope insulation capacity, and winter wind protection. | Traditional architectural experience applied to modern architecture (Zhang 2009). |
| Desheng Lu | 2008 | Socio-Educational, Educational Mechanisms | Field research, in-depth interview | The mechanisms of socio-educational functioning are described; the idea of constructing schooling in ethnic areas with "historical vitality" is envisaged. | All proposals for education reform and development need to be tested in practice (Lu 2008). |
| Dongyan Yang | 2001 | Tibetan Beliefs and Customs | Literature research, interview | The Baima Tibetans practiced the Bonpo religion and embraced the culture of the Han Chinese. | Faith fulfills psychological and spiritual needs (Yang 2001). |

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study utilized bibliometric statistical methods and CiteSpace for knowledge visualization map analysis to elucidate key characteristics and trends within Tibetan village research in China. The findings demonstrate a growing scholarly interest and an expanding volume of literature in this field, with a notable increase in policy-guided research. Specifically, research within the CNKI database reveals a pronounced policy influence, showcasing a broad array of core nodes and extensive network connections across diverse multidisciplinary attributes, constituting a comprehensive academic framework. Conversely, analysis from the WOS database suggests a predominance of natural science disciplines, indicating a narrower scope of study compared to CNKI.

The findings indicate the formation of a multifaceted institutional collaboration network, characterized by a dominance of intra-institutional collaborations and a relative scarcity of inter-institutional and cross-regional cooperation. Research hotspots identified in the CNKI database encompass a broad range of topics, including public space planning and design, rural revitalization, spatial form and feature analysis, traditional Tibetan residential construction techniques, and Tibetan traditional cultural ecology. Meanwhile, the WOS database highlights research on settlement building energy use and ecological design. A notable gap in international literature underscores the need for enhanced global visibility and impact of Tibetan village studies.

The current phase of Tibetan village research in China presents significant potential for academic advancement. It calls for a deeper interdisciplinary examination of social development trajectories, as well as social, economic, cultural, and environmental development needs across different regions. The establishment of a systematic protection and inheritance system for traditional Tibetan villages is urgently needed, along with comparative analyses of village characteristics across diverse geographic areas. Emphasizing the integration of theoretical and empirical research methods is crucial for fostering the diversity and practical application of Tibetan village studies, thereby enhancing their scholarly relevance and societal impact.

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Exploring Research Progress and Development Trends in Tibetan Villages of China: A Bibliometric Visualization Study

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JAABE2405370AH

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Architectural History and Theory

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AH: History of Architecture/City/Urban Planning

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Tibetan villages, bibliometrics, visualization, CiteSpace

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