

ANALYSIS OF MEDIA COVERAGE AND ACTIVATION STRATEGIES FOR THE SUWON HWASEONG CULTURAL FESTIVAL

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ABSTRACT

This study examines media coverage of the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival through a semantic network-based discourse analysis framework grounded in cultural agenda-setting theory. While prior festival studies have primarily focused on economic impacts and visitor satisfaction, this research analyzes how media narratives structure public understanding of the festival over time. Using the BIGKinds news platform, 81 news articles published between 2014 and 2023 were collected and examined through keyword frequency analysis, co-occurrence network modeling, TopicRank-based weighted keyword extraction, and longitudinal trend analysis. Rather than constructing a formal knowledge graph infrastructure, this study interprets keyword networks as discursive structures that reveal relational patterns among dominant themes such as “Suwon City,” “King Jeongjo,” and “Citizen-led Festival.” The findings indicate fluctuating media attention, with a peak in 2017, a significant decline during the COVID-19 pandemic, and partial recovery thereafter. The network structure highlights the dominance of historical identity and regional branding themes, while participatory governance and economic sustainability appear as secondary but structurally meaningful clusters. Methodologically, the study demonstrates how semantic network analysis of news data can support cultural policy interpretation and agenda-setting evaluation. By integrating co-occurrence modeling and weighted keyword ranking, the research provides a structured approach to understanding media discourse surrounding regional cultural events.

KEYWORDS

Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival; BIGKinds, media articles; activation strategies; Cultural agenda-setting theory; semantic network analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

Local cultural festivals play a significant role in preserving regional heritage, reinforcing community identity, and revitalizing local economies. Beyond their function as celebratory events, festivals operate as cultural mechanisms through which historical memory, symbolic capital, and regional narratives are reproduced and reinterpreted. By offering residents a sense of belonging and providing visitors with distinctive cultural experiences, festivals shape both internal community cohesion and external regional perception [1–3].

The Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival represents a prominent example of such dynamics. Centered on Suwon Hwaseong, a UNESCO World Heritage site, the festival integrates historical reenactments, civic participation programs, and cultural performances to reinterpret the legacy of King Jeongjo and late Joseon-era urban planning [4, 5]. The architectural and spatial landscape of Hwaseong Fortress—its pavilion structures, stone ramparts, and surrounding pond scenery—visually encapsulates the historical identity and aesthetic continuity of the region (Figure 1). This built heritage environment functions not merely as a physical venue but as a symbolic framework that reinforces regional branding and cultural authenticity. Held annually in Suwon City,

Gyeonggi Province, the festival attracts domestic and international visitors while generating economic spillover effects for small businesses and tourism-related industries [6].

Historically, festivals originated in religious rituals and communal ceremonies designed to secure prosperity and social harmony [8–11]. In Korea, early ritualistic traditions such as Dongmaeng and Yeonggo exemplify the integrative social functions of festivals in ancient societies. Although many traditional practices declined during the Japanese colonial period, post-liberation cultural revival movements and regional development policies since the 1990s have repositioned festivals as strategic instruments for tourism promotion and urban regeneration [12]. In contemporary society, festivals are no longer confined to sacred or ritual contexts; instead, they operate as hybrid cultural platforms combining heritage preservation, leisure consumption, and economic development [13–15].

Scholarly discussions have emphasized various dimensions of festival impact, including visitor satisfaction, international tourism potential, and economic ripple effects [21–24]. Studies on events such as the Icheon Ceramic Festival and the Jeju World Island Cultural Festival demonstrate measurable contributions to local economies and brand visibility [24, 28]. At the same time, researchers have identified structural challenges such as insufficient resident participation, limited symbolic differentiation, and inadequate marketing strategies [29, 30]. These findings suggest that sustainable festival development requires strategic integration of cultural identity, institutional continuity, economic viability, and participatory governance.

In addition to economic and experiential dimensions, media representation plays a decisive role in shaping public understanding of festivals. Agenda-Setting Theory posits that media influence public perception by emphasizing specific topics and framing them within particular interpretative structures [32–34]. Media coverage does not merely report festival events; it constructs discursive hierarchies that determine which aspects—heritage value, tourism appeal, civic engagement, or economic impact—become central in public consciousness. In the case of the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival, media narratives highlighting historical authenticity and regional symbolism may significantly influence policy priorities and audience engagement [32, 35].

Despite the importance of media discourse, research examining the longitudinal structure of media coverage surrounding the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival remains limited. Previous studies have primarily relied on surveys, case studies, and economic impact analyses [4–7], methodologies that are insufficient for capturing large-scale discursive patterns across extended time frames. As digital news repositories expand, the need arises for analytical frameworks capable of processing media texts as structured semantic data rather than isolated content units.

To address this gap, this study applies semantic network-based media analysis using the BIGKinds news platform [37, 38]. Rather than constructing a formal semantic web infrastructure, the research interprets co-occurring keywords as relational indicators within media discourse. Through keyword frequency analysis, co-occurrence modeling, TopicRank-based weighting, and temporal trend analysis, the study identifies dominant thematic clusters—such as “Suwon City,” “King Jeongjo,” and “Citizen-led Festival”—and examines how their prominence evolves over time.

This approach allows systematic investigation of longitudinal media patterns, thematic structures, and strategic implications for cultural sustainability. By treating keyword networks as discursive representations rather than formal ontological graphs, the study situates itself within semantic network analysis and agenda-setting research rather than technical semantic web engineering.



Figure 1. Hwaseong Fortress pavilion and pond landscape representing historical identity and regional branding of the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Subjects and data collection

This study utilized the BIGKinds platform, provided by the Korea Press Foundation, to examine domestic news articles related to the 'Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival.' The BIGKinds platform is a news analysis service developed by applying big data analysis technology to a database that integrates news collected from various media outlets [37]. Originally evolved from the KINDS service provided since 1990, BIGKinds incorporates a vast collection of news content from major daily newspapers and broadcasts, offering an advanced search service [38]. The system, which was launched on April 19, 2016, integrates big data analysis technology with an accumulated wealth of news articles to build the new 'BIGKinds' platform. Unlike simple article searches, the BIGKinds service enables in-depth analysis. As of 2024, the system automatically collects and classifies news content daily from 104 media outlets (originally 54), allowing users to easily analyze the networks between figures or institutions in the news and identify trends in news issues. Moreover, all news collected and analyzed through BIGKinds is stored in a database accessible to media organizations, academia, startups, and anyone interested in news [39]. This study collected data on articles reported over a 10-year period from 2014 to 2023 by 54 national media outlets using 'Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival' as the search keyword under the conditions presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Search criteria for Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival Big Kinds

Category	Keywords	Media	Period
Input conditions	Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival	54 media outlets nationwide	2014-2023

2.2. Data analysis

The collected news articles were analyzed using a multi-stage semantic analytics procedure consisting of text preprocessing and keyword extraction, co-occurrence modeling, and weighted topic extraction based on the TopicRank algorithm. All analytical processes were conducted within the BIGKinds platform, and the resulting semantic structures were interpreted through network-based analytical reasoning. First, text preprocessing and keyword extraction were performed to ensure semantic consistency and analytical reliability. The 81 news articles were tokenized using the Korean morphological analysis system embedded in BIGKinds. Stopwords, including particles, auxiliary verbs, and function words with limited semantic value, were removed to reduce noise. Only nouns and compound noun phrases were retained because they represent core thematic entities in media discourse. Proper nouns referring to historical figures, institutions, administrative bodies, and geographic locations were preserved to maintain contextual specificity. In addition, synonymous or lexically variant expressions referring to identical concepts were manually normalized to prevent fragmentation of semantically equivalent keywords. To ensure analytical stability, a minimum frequency threshold of three occurrences across the corpus was applied, filtering out extremely rare terms that could distort network density and ranking outcomes. Second, co-occurrence modeling was conducted to identify relational structures among extracted keywords. A document-level co-occurrence window was applied, meaning that two keywords were considered related if they appeared within the same news article. This approach was selected because the relatively small corpus size could have produced excessive sparsity under narrower sentence-level windows. A symmetric co-occurrence matrix was constructed in which nodes represented keywords and edge weights reflected the number of documents in which keyword pairs co-appeared. To eliminate incidental or weak associations, only keyword pairs with at least two co-occurrences were retained for network construction. The resulting adjacency matrix was visualized as a semantic network in which node size corresponded to degree centrality and edge thickness represented co-occurrence strength. Network interpretation focused on identifying structurally central nodes, dense relational clusters, and thematic substructures within the discourse. Third, weighted topic extraction was conducted using the TopicRank algorithm to identify structurally important keywords beyond simple frequency counts. TopicRank is a graph-based ranking model derived from PageRank principles that evaluates the importance of candidate topics based on both frequency and relational centrality. Candidate keywords were first grouped into topic clusters according to lexical similarity and co-occurrence proximity. A topic graph was then constructed in which nodes represented topic clusters and edges represented weighted semantic relationships derived from co-occurrence frequencies. Iterative ranking was performed using a damping factor of 0.85, and convergence was achieved when score variation fell below a threshold of 0.001. The resulting TopicRank weights reflect not only how often keywords appear but also how centrally they are positioned within the semantic network. This approach enables identification of keywords that function as structural bridges or thematic anchors even if their raw frequency is relatively modest.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Keyword relationship

By analyzing the changes in the number of articles by year, this study identified shifts in media attention toward the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival. Additionally, it compared reporting trends across major media outlets to determine which organizations focused more consistently on the festival. A search for the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival was conducted across 54 national newspapers, specialty journals, and broadcasters from 2014 to 2023, yielding a total of 81 articles over the past 10 years. The results of the keyword relationship analysis are shown in

Figure 2. The keyword most closely associated with the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival was Suwon City.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the network visualization displays nodes of varying sizes and connection strengths, indicating the relative frequency and co-occurrence intensity of related terms. Central nodes such as “Suwon City,” “Suwon,” and “Hwaseong” form dense relational clusters, while peripheral actors—including local government institutions and cultural organizations—appear as secondary yet structurally linked entities within the semantic network.

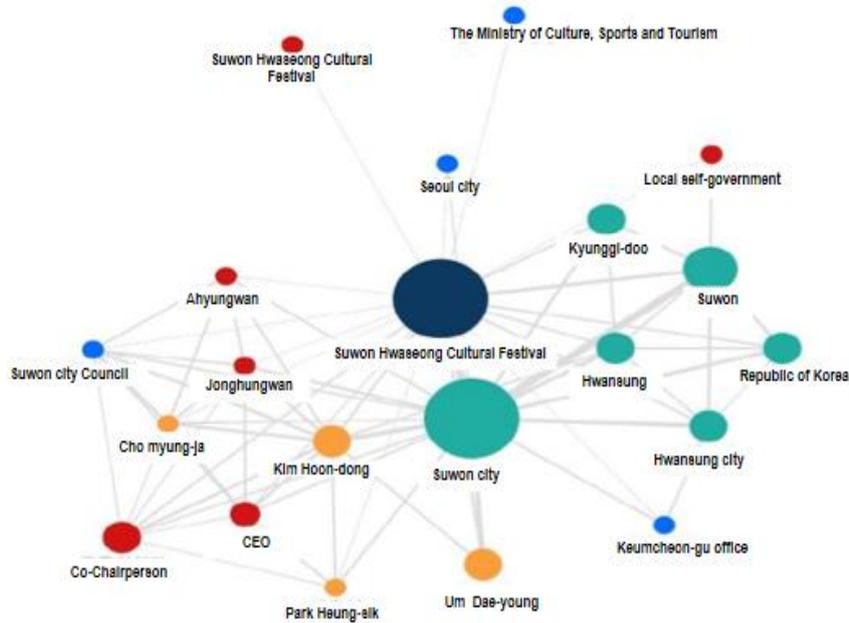


Figure 2. Keyword relationship. The keyword "Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival" is shown to be closely associated with terms such as "Suwon City," "Suwon," and "Hwaseong," indicating strong connections with the local area and historical significance of the region.

3.2. Keyword trend

Figure 3 illustrates the longitudinal trend in keyword frequency related to the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival from 2014 to 2023, based on a total of 81 news articles collected through the BIGKinds platform. The visualization demonstrates a gradual increase in media mentions from 2014 onward, culminating in a significant peak in 2017 with 24 recorded occurrences. This surge likely corresponds to intensified promotional campaigns, expanded programming, or heightened national recognition of the festival during that period. Following 2017, a downward trend becomes evident. Mentions declined noticeably in 2018 and 2019, suggesting either normalization of media interest after the peak year or a shift in public and journalistic priorities. Although a moderate rebound appears in 2020, the dramatic decrease to a single mention in 2021 clearly reflects the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cultural events and media agendas. Restrictions on public gatherings and reduced festival operations likely contributed to diminished coverage. From 2022 to 2023, the graph indicates a modest recovery in keyword frequency. While not returning to pre-2017 levels, this rebound signals gradual restoration of media visibility and public engagement. Overall, Figure 3 reveals the cyclical and externally influenced nature of media attention, highlighting the importance of adaptive communication strategies and sustained branding efforts to stabilize long-term discourse presence.

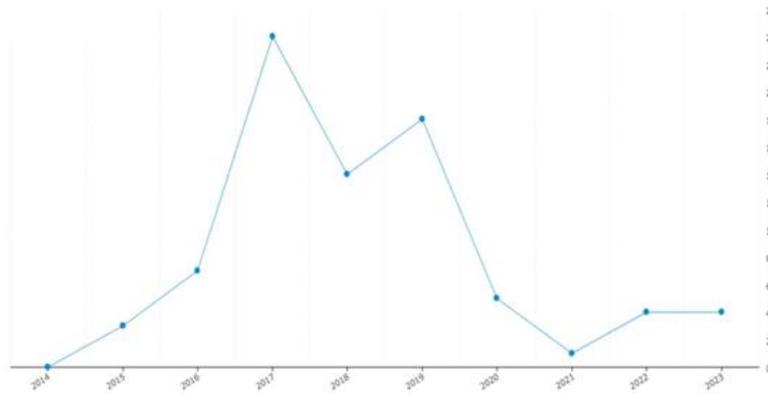


Figure 3. Keyword trend and relationship. The keyword "Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival" saw an increase in mentions starting in 2014, reaching a peak of 24 mentions in 2017. Afterward, it significantly decreased to just 1 mention in 2021, but has since shown signs of recovery.

3.3. Keyword-related word clouding

The results of the related keyword analysis for the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival are presented in Figure 4, while the weighted ranking of the most significant keywords is summarized in Table 2. Together, these two visual and tabular representations provide a comprehensive understanding of the semantic structure underlying media discourse on the festival. Figure 4 displays a word cloud generated from keywords that frequently co-occurred with "Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival" in the collected news articles. In this visualization, the size of each word reflects its relative prominence within the dataset. Larger terms indicate higher frequency and stronger semantic association. The most visually dominant keyword is "Suwon City," followed by "King Jeongjo," "King Jeongjo's Royal Procession," and "Citizen-led Festival." The prominence of "Suwon City" suggests that media discourse frames the festival primarily within the context of municipal identity and local governance. Rather than being treated solely as a cultural event, the festival is discursively constructed as an extension of the city's branding strategy and administrative initiatives. The strong visibility of "King Jeongjo" and "King Jeongjo's Royal Procession" highlights the historical foundation of the festival narrative. King Jeongjo, a central historical figure associated with the construction of Hwaseong Fortress, functions as a symbolic anchor linking contemporary celebrations to late Joseon-era political and cultural heritage. The repeated reference to the royal procession reenactment indicates that this program operates as a core representational element, reinforcing authenticity and historical continuity in media portrayals. The presence of "Citizen-led Festival" as a key term reflects another important discursive dimension: participatory governance and community engagement. Although its raw frequency is lower than that of historically oriented keywords, its semantic weight suggests structural importance in shaping the festival's identity. Media narratives thus emphasize not only historical symbolism but also civic participation, framing the event as a collaborative cultural project rather than a purely government-driven spectacle.

Table 2 further refines this analysis by presenting the top five keywords ranked according to weights calculated using the TopicRank algorithm. Unlike simple frequency counts, TopicRank considers both occurrence and relational centrality within the semantic network. The keyword "Suwon City" ranks first with a weight of 37.48 and a frequency of 305, significantly exceeding other terms. This confirms its dominant structural position in the discourse network. "King Jeongjo's Royal Procession" ranks second (weight 11.33, frequency 119), followed by "King Jeongjo" (weight 9.33, frequency 257). Although "King Jeongjo" appears more frequently than

the royal procession, its lower weight suggests that the procession functions as a more distinctive thematic node within co-occurrence patterns.

“Citizen-led Festival” (weight 8.84) and “Donation” (weight 8.57) complete the top five list. The inclusion of “Donation” indicates that economic participation and funding mechanisms are also part of the media agenda, linking cultural celebration with financial sustainability.

Overall, Figure 4 and Table 2 reveal that media discourse surrounding the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival is structured around three interrelated axes: regional identity (“Suwon City”), historical legitimacy (“King Jeongjo” and the royal procession), and participatory-economic governance (“Citizen-led Festival” and “Donation”). These findings demonstrate how semantic network analysis can uncover the layered narrative architecture embedded within media representations of cultural events.



Figure 4. The word cloud emphasizes the key associations with the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival, including "Suwon city," "King Jeongjo," and "Citizen-led Festival," highlighting historical events, local involvement, and cultural significance.

Table 2. Top 5 keywords with applied weights

Rank	Keywords	Weight	Frequency
1	Suwon City	37.48	305
2	King Jeongjo's Royal Procession	11.33	119
3	King Jeongjo	9.33	257
4	Citizen-led Festival	8.84	6
5	Donation	8.57	50

4. DISCUSSION

This study adopts a semantic big data approach to examine how media discourse constructs and reshapes public understanding of the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival over time, how thematic clusters emerge within that discourse, and how these findings can inform strategic directions for sustainability and public engagement. By analyzing longitudinal news data through the BIGKinds platform and interpreting the results, this study systematically addresses three interconnected dimensions, namely temporal patterns of media coverage, structural characteristics of keyword networks, and policy-relevant implications for the festival’s future development. First, with

respect to longitudinal patterns, the analysis of yearly article frequencies demonstrates that media coverage of the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival is neither stable nor linearly progressive. Instead, it follows a fluctuating trajectory marked by a significant peak in 2017, gradual decline afterward, and a sharp drop during the COVID-19 pandemic period, particularly in 2021, followed by modest recovery in 2022 and 2023. This temporal pattern indicates that media visibility is closely tied to broader socio-political and public health contexts, as well as to the festival's own promotional cycles. In agenda-setting terms, heightened coverage in 2017 suggests a moment when the festival successfully occupied a central position within media discourse, potentially due to intensified marketing efforts, anniversary events, or strengthened institutional support. Conversely, the dramatic decline during the pandemic underscores the vulnerability of cultural events to external disruptions and reveals how quickly public attention can shift when face-to-face gatherings are restricted. This longitudinal volatility supports the theoretical proposition that media attention functions as a limited resource subject to competition and crisis-induced displacement, consistent with broader agenda-setting research [32, 34]. Unlike earlier festival studies that primarily assessed economic outcomes or visitor satisfaction at single time points [1, 6], this study demonstrates that media discourse itself evolves as a dynamic temporal process. The observed decline in the 2020s may be interpreted not only as reduced event activity but also as a weakening of discursive reinforcement mechanisms that sustain public awareness. Therefore, the first research question concerning longitudinal patterns can be answered by concluding that media coverage exhibits cyclical amplification, crisis-driven contraction, and partial recovery, rather than steady growth. Sustained visibility requires deliberate narrative renewal rather than reliance on historical reputation alone. Second, regarding the core themes and issue clusters emerging from associated keyword analysis, the semantic network visualized in Figure 2 and the weighted keyword hierarchy in Figure 4 and Table 2 reveal a highly structured discourse centered on a limited number of dominant nodes. "Suwon City" emerges as the most central and heavily weighted keyword, indicating that media framing positions the festival within the context of municipal governance and regional identity. Closely associated terms such as "Hwaseong," "local government," and administrative actors further reinforce the governance-oriented nature of coverage. This suggests that the festival is discursively constructed as a city-led initiative embedded in urban policy rather than solely as a grassroots cultural celebration. The prominence of "King Jeongjo" and "King Jeongjo's Royal Procession" forms a second thematic cluster emphasizing historical legitimacy and cultural identity. These keywords link the contemporary festival to the Joseon Dynasty heritage associated with Hwaseong Fortress, thereby reinforcing symbolic continuity between past and present. Such historical anchoring aligns with Jaeger and Mykletun's [41] argument that festivals function as sites of identity production and belonging. However, the semantic evidence goes further by demonstrating that historical figures are not peripheral references but structurally central nodes within the discourse network. The reenactment of the Royal Procession, in particular, appears as both a narrative anchor and an experiential symbol of playfulness, linking cultural authenticity with performative spectacle. A third thematic cluster emerges around institutionalization and economic viability, reflected in the keywords "Citizen-led Festival" and "Donation." Although these terms appear less frequently than "Suwon City" or "King Jeongjo," their TopicRank weights indicate structural significance. "Citizen-led Festival" signals participatory governance and institutional continuity, resonating with Baek's emphasis on institutionalization as a key factor in sustainable urban festivals [2]. At the same time, the presence of "Donation" reflects discourse concerning financial sustainability and hybrid funding models, highlighting that economic considerations are not confined to backstage planning but enter public narrative space. In this sense, the second research question can be answered by identifying three dominant issue clusters within media discourse, namely regional governance, historical-cultural identity, and participatory-economic sustainability. These clusters interact to form a coherent but hierarchically structured semantic network. The comparative dimension further clarifies the contribution of these findings. Prior research on the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival emphasized economic ripple effects, tourism impacts, and

community cohesion [1, 4, 6], yet it did not systematically analyze how media discourse organizes these elements into structured meaning systems. By contrast, this study shows that regionality and cultural identity are not merely outcomes but discursive anchors that shape the way other themes are interpreted. Moreover, in comparison with Chen and Tao's [42] analysis of institutional transformation in the Qiqiao Festival, the present findings suggest that the Suwon case maintains symbolic coherence through strong historical referencing rather than experiencing fragmentation due to over-bureaucratization. Nevertheless, the governance-centered framing observed in Figure 2 raises questions about whether excessive administrative emphasis could eventually overshadow grassroots authenticity, an issue requiring careful balance.

The methodological comparison with Nam and Bai [45] and Hitzler et al. [46] also illuminates the study's distinctive orientation. Nam and Bai apply media discourse analysis to examine ethical tensions surrounding AI in higher education, demonstrating how big data news analysis reveals institutional anxieties and governance debates. Similarly, this research employs media big data, yet its thematic focus lies in cultural agenda-setting and regional identity formation rather than academic ethics. Hitzler et al., in contrast, emphasize Semantic Web infrastructures, ontology engineering, and Linked Open Data frameworks to ensure interoperability in cultural heritage contexts [46]. While their work operates at the level of data modeling architecture, this study applies semantic analytics at the level of discursive interpretation, treating news articles as interconnected nodes in a dynamic cultural knowledge graph. Thus, this study bridges infrastructure-oriented semantic methodologies and policy-oriented discourse analysis. Third, in addressing the strategic implications for sustainability and public engagement, the integration of temporal and thematic findings yields several insights. The decline in media attention after 2017 indicates that reliance on historical symbolism alone may not guarantee sustained visibility. Although "King Jeongjo" and the Royal Procession remain central to the festival's identity, overdependence on a limited set of iconic motifs risks narrative saturation. Therefore, strategic innovation should involve expanding interpretive frameworks while preserving historical continuity. For example, new storytelling formats, digital reinterpretations, and youth-oriented participatory programs could diversify discourse without undermining authenticity.

In terms of temporality, extending the spatial and temporal scope of festival programming could counteract coverage volatility. Baek [2] emphasizes that temporality involves overcoming spatial and temporal constraints to enhance participation. Given that most programs are concentrated around Haenggung Square, spatial diversification toward adjacent heritage sites or collaborative regional circuits may amplify media narratives and broaden symbolic reach.

Regarding regionality, the overwhelming centrality of "Suwon City" suggests strong municipal branding but also reveals the need to reinforce bottom-up engagement. Encouraging visible community co-creation and highlighting citizen narratives in media communication could strengthen participatory legitimacy. Institutionalization should therefore focus on sustainable governance structures that avoid excessive bureaucratic dominance, consistent with Chen and Tao's cautionary findings [42]. Economic viability, as reflected in the "Donation" keyword, calls for diversified revenue models integrating sponsorship, community fundraising, and cultural entrepreneurship. Linking festival discourse to local commercial zones such as traditional markets and cultural districts may reinforce economic ripple effects highlighted by Ryu and Kim [6]. Finally, playfulness must be maintained as a central experiential dimension. The Royal Procession exemplifies this element, yet creative expansion into interactive and multimedia formats could enhance generational appeal while maintaining cultural depth. As Biaett notes, festivity provides communal well-being and liberation from routine [43], but it should be responsibly managed within social norms, as Lim et al. caution regarding festival environments and youth behavior [44].

However, several methodological considerations must be acknowledged. The relatively small dataset of 81 articles may influence network density and ranking stability, and the reliance on document-level co-occurrence may overestimate associations compared to finer-grained contextual analysis. In addition, BIGKinds applies proprietary preprocessing algorithms, which may limit full methodological reproducibility outside the platform. Despite these constraints, the integration of preprocessing, co-occurrence modeling, and TopicRank-based weighting provides a structurally informed framework for interpreting media discourse and constructing a dynamic cultural knowledge network. As a result, the integrated analysis of longitudinal coverage patterns, semantic network structures, and weighted keyword hierarchies demonstrates that the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival is discursively organized around three dominant axes, namely regional governance, historical-cultural legitimacy, and participatory-economic sustainability. Media attention fluctuates over time, thematic clusters exhibit hierarchical structuring, and strategic renewal is necessary to maintain long-term agenda visibility. By combining semantic network analysis with cultural policy evaluation, this study provides empirical validation of Baek's six strategic elements [2] and extends prior festival research [1, 6, 30] through a discourse-centered, data-driven framework. Ultimately, the findings suggest that sustainable cultural development requires not only economic planning and program diversification but also continuous discursive reinvention within evolving media ecosystems.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed media coverage of the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival through the combined framework of cultural agenda-setting theory and semantic network-based news analysis. By examining 81 news articles published between 2014 and 2023 using the BIGKinds platform, the research identified dominant thematic entities, relational keyword structures, and longitudinal shifts in media attention. The findings demonstrate that media discourse surrounding the festival is structured around three principal axes: regional governance centered on "Suwon City," historical-cultural legitimacy anchored in "King Jeongjo" and the Royal Procession, and participatory-economic sustainability reflected in "Citizen-led Festival" and "Donation." Temporal analysis further revealed that media visibility peaked in 2017, declined markedly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and showed only partial recovery thereafter, underscoring the volatility of cultural attention within digitally mediated public spheres.

These results provide several implications for cultural governance and regional festival strategy. First, the structural centrality of "Suwon City" indicates that municipal branding and local government visibility are deeply intertwined with the festival's representation in media discourse. Strategic alignment between heritage preservation, tourism development, and urban identity positioning is therefore essential. Second, the prominence of historical figures and reenactment programs confirms that historical narrative remains the festival's core symbolic resource. Sustainable revitalization requires not the abandonment of tradition, but its reinterpretation through innovative programming, digital storytelling, and intergenerational engagement. Third, the emergence of participatory and economic keywords highlights the growing importance of citizen involvement and diversified revenue models. Institutional mechanisms that strengthen transparency, collaborative planning, and hybrid funding structures can enhance both legitimacy and resilience in the face of external shocks.

Methodologically, this study demonstrates that structured keyword frequency analysis, co-occurrence network modeling, and TopicRank-based weighting can serve as practical tools for evaluating media discourse surrounding cultural events. Rather than constructing a formal semantic web infrastructure, the research interprets keyword networks as discursive structures that reveal how media prioritize and frame cultural narratives. Monitoring changes in keyword centrality and thematic clustering provides policymakers with a data-informed mechanism for

assessing whether governance strategies and branding initiatives are reflected in public discourse. In this sense, semantic network analysis functions as an interpretive bridge between media studies and cultural policy evaluation.

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The dataset consists of 81 news articles, which, although systematically collected from 54 national media outlets, remains relatively small for large-scale network generalization. The reliance on keyword-based extraction may overlook contextual subtleties, narrative tone, and multimodal elements that influence audience perception. The single-case design also restricts broader comparative generalization. Moreover, the study does not incorporate quantitative economic indicators or audience survey data, limiting the ability to empirically correlate media discourse with measurable social or economic outcomes.

Future research should expand the temporal and cross-regional scope of analysis to compare multiple cultural festivals and identify broader patterns in media agenda construction. Incorporating sentiment analysis, contextual semantic modeling, and machine learning–based discourse classification could enhance analytical depth and capture evaluative dimensions of coverage. Integrating media network data with visitor surveys, economic impact metrics, and social media analytics would allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of how discourse, perception, and material outcomes interact within cultural governance systems.

Despite its limitations, this study contributes to the understanding of how media discourse shapes the symbolic positioning and strategic development of regional cultural festivals. By linking agenda-setting dynamics with semantic network analysis, the research offers an evidence-based framework for interpreting media visibility, evaluating governance communication, and supporting adaptive cultural policy in evolving digital environments.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

FUNDING

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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