



Food and gastronomy research in tourism and hospitality: A bibliometric analysis



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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Food
Gastronomy
Tourism and hospitality journals
Bibliometric analysis

ABSTRACT

This study examines the evolution of food and gastronomy research in hospitality and tourism (H&T) in the 40 years between 1976 and 2016, highlighting emerging research themes; methods; possible national, international, and interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary collaborations; and prolific food and gastronomy researchers and institutes in the H&T field. For this purpose, 16 leading H&T journals from 1976 to 2016 were analyzed using advanced bibliometric analysis, and a total of 5333 food-related published documents, including management, organization, and finance were identified. After further re-analysis and elimination, 462 articles were identified as food and gastronomy research articles. The research findings reveal that popularization of this theme increased after 2000; however, the total number of published articles in H&T journals are still behind the other disciplines. Most studies were empirical and conducted via quantitative methods, but scarcity in the advanced methodological approach still exists. Although international and national collaboration of food-related management, finance, and marketing topics have been growing among different institutions in the H&T field, only a limited number of articles seem to address food and gastronomy themes. This is the first study to offer a bibliometric analysis of food and gastronomy research in the H&T field with specific theoretical and practical implications.

1. Introduction

Eating is perhaps one of the most fundamental human activities (Capaldi, 1996) therefore, research on food has globally increased in many disciplines and recognized as an important tourism attraction (Long 2004; Tsai and Wang, 2017). Since tourists spend nearly half their budget on food and beverage while traveling (Boyne et al., 2002; National Restaurant Association, 2017), food is accepted as an essential tourism product (Lee et al., 2015; McKercher et al., 2008; Okumus et al., 2007; Sims, 2009) and recognized as an important attraction (Long, 2004; Tsai and Wang, 2017). However, despite a growing number of food and gastronomy studies in H&T as seen in many disciplines, there is a need of analysis demonstrating how food and gastronomy research has evolved and become an emerging research area (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016). Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine the progress on food and gastronomy research in the hospitality and tourism (H&T) industry, and offer a research agenda.

Although many bibliometric studies have been conducted in H&T to determine the academic-intellectual structure and knowledge domain

(Benckendorff and Zehrer, 2013; Koseoglu et al., 2016; Ye et al., 2013), and to classify the most productive institutions, scholars, and publications (Mckercher et al., 2006; Park et al., 2011; Page, 2005; Pechlaner et al., 2002; Pechlaner et al., 2004) based on the authors' knowledge, this is the first bibliometric study related to food and gastronomy research in this field. From perspective of bibliometric study literature in H&T, there is a need for a systematic study evaluating the progress, sorting data, research themes, methodologies, and statistical techniques utilized in food and gastronomy in H&T context. With this mind, the main objectives of this study are to:

- Identify the progress on food and gastronomy research in H&T by focusing on leading contributors – authors, institutions, and countries.
- Determine development of research topics and methodologies over the time in articles on food and gastronomy in H&T.
- Suggest a research agenda for scholars and practitioners for food and gastronomy research.

To address these issues, bibliometric analysis as a quantitative

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approach of systematic review procedure was conducted to investigate the volume of research and the knowledge domain of food and gastronomy topics in leading H&T journals. Using this method, evolution in each discipline was measured (Bouyssou and Marchant, 2011), including includes years, predominant themes, specific university contributions to the field, the number of authors of published articles, and the methods used in published scientific work (Koseoglu et al., 2016; De Bakker et al., 2005).

The study organized as follows. First, a literature review is provided on bibliometric methods and research activity on food and gastronomy in general, and in the H&T field in particular. Second, the research methods employed by this study are explained. Next, the findings are presented and discussed. Finally, emerging conclusions are stated and suggestions for future research are provided.

2. Literature review

2.1. Bibliometric analysis on food and gastronomy in different disciplines

Food studies have been on the rise over the past years (Counihan & van Esterik, 2012, p.1) and the reviewed advanced bibliometric research studies show that scholars from different disciplines create diverse agendas and multidisciplinary collaborations on food-related topics. Food and food-related research has appeared in a variety of science and social-science journals, books, conference proceedings, and other publications, and many libraries and web sources archive this scholarly literature. Since food is a multidisciplinary research topic, systematic and chronological studies have been undertaken mostly in science, medical, and engineering disciplines using bibliometric analyses, which assessed the evaluation of food research in the academic literature (Vijay and Raghavan, 2007; Suebsombut et al., 2017). For example, some research has located scientific literature dealing with food-related topics to illustrate the pattern of publications, leading journals, research trends, and clusters in science. Their findings show that the number of food publications is increasing, except regarding specific food and agriculture related topics, along with trend of citations per journals and number of publications over time (Chen, 2012; Monasterolo et al., 2015; Tao et al., 2015; Kasemodel et al., 2016). Several other bibliometric studies provide analysis regarding manuscripts, content, authorship, citations within the journal, and comments on the journals' noted special editions. These research findings reveal that many bibliometric studies emphasize author keywords to examine the latest trends, and provide greater accuracy and details about both the concepts discussed and the methods of research employed (Fu and Ho, 2017; Tan et al., 2014). Bibliometric analyses in science-related research was also employed to characterize the research activity of institutions worldwide by production during certain, specific periods. Results show that interdisciplinary and international collaborations between institutes and researchers have increased (van Raan and van Leeuwen, 2002; Dabirian et al., 2016), and that the greatest numbers of those institutions are in the United States, South Korea, Spain, and China. Many developing and food-exporting countries have produced no significant research on food (Guerrero-Bote et al., 2016). Developed countries, especially the USA and the United Kingdom, appear to be more proactive in global food and food-related research topics (Chen et al., 2017; Vanga et al., 2015; Monasterolo et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2014). Since bibliometric studies have a high research impact on publication outlets (Alfaraz and Calviño, 2004; Sweileh et al., 2014a, 2014b), by revealing the most prevalent themes, scholars can evaluate the contributions of the various disciplines, foundations of science (Koseoglu et al., 2016; Glanzel, 2003), and major clusters and trends on food and food-related topics. Based on the authors' research, no bibliometric study on gastronomy has been found in any discipline.

2.2. Bibliometric analysis on food and gastronomy in the H&T field

Ever since food and dining out have become crucial parts of people's lifestyles, scientists and creative chefs have applied scientific methods using gastronomy to explore tastes in both new and traditional dishes. They use the physical sciences to characterize foodstuffs, cooking, and flavor (Mouritsen, 2015). Although the field of gastronomy is relatively new, researchers have discovered the importance of science in describing characteristics of eating behavior. In this section, several published studies on food, nutrition, food and restaurant selection, and gastronomy in the H&T field have been analyzed, and characteristics of the studies have been shared.

Food and gastronomy are considered a new academic approach (Maberly and Reid, 2014) and a marker of social distinction (Kim et al., 2009); however, this theme is still not equally valued related to other tourism products in many countries, and is criticized as a current issue in tourism (Henderson, 2009). Other studies looked at halal foods, food choices in different religions, new food tendencies, the impact of healthy eating on the restaurant industry, vegetarianism, and local food trends as positive concepts in the tourism industry (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Hall and Sharples, 2004; Wan Hassan and Awang, 2009; Jayawardena et al., 2013; Jones and Jenkins, 2002; Josiam and Monteiro, 2004; Long, 2010; Sims, 2009; Son and Xu, 2013). Although no bibliometric study has been undertaken on food and gastronomy in the H&T field, DiPietro (2017) reviewed the extant food literature, including *management, operations, and finance* in the foodservice business, and stated that the number and quality of foodservice and restaurant management research articles has increased the past 10 years. However, when looking at food and gastronomy research in the H&T literature, neither the progress nor volume have been systematically investigated.

3. Methodology

3.1. Publication outlets

To consolidate the state of the art of food and gastronomy research in the H&T field, only H&T journals with a double-blind review process were selected. Based on the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) published in the Journal of Citation Reports (2017), leading H&T academic journals were determined. Several H&T journals with high reputations, but which were not included in the SSCI, such as the Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management (JHMM) and the Journal of Foodservice Business Research (JFBR), were also included the sample. Food and gastronomy articles and research notes in all issues published by the end of December 2016 in these selected journals were scanned from their websites as a sample of the study, since these journals have a peer review process generating "certified knowledge" (Ramos-Rodríguez and Ruíz-Navarro, 2004). All selected H&T journals for this study are listed in Table 1.

3.2. Data retrieved

Two steps were employed to systematically extract the data. First, a total of 5333 food-related documents were published from January 1st, 1976 to December 31st, 2016 were obtained from the databases of 16 leading H&T journals by searching for food- and food and gastronomy-related keywords including: *food, food science, food availability, food and culture, food safety, food and culinary operations, nutrition, gastronomy/culinary tourism, healthy eating, food and education and food choice*. All selected H&T journals and the number of their food-related documents published by December 2016 are presented in Table 1. The retrieved 5333 articles were systematically analyzed by the authors. Articles focusing directly on food-related management themes, such as *restaurant management, hotel and foodservice management, employee turnovers, marketing, finance and/or other management, and operational concepts*

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