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Quality management and hospitality: A bibliometric study

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Abstract

This bibliometric study explores the evolving landscape of quality management within the context of the hospitality industry. Leveraging an extensive dataset of scholarly articles and publications, the analysis examines the trends, patterns, and key themes that have emerged in the intersection of quality management and hospitality over a specified time period. By employing bibliometric techniques such as co-citation analysis, keyword co-occurrence, and citation network mapping, this study provides insights into the most influential authors, publications, and research clusters within this field. The findings offer a comprehensive overview of the evolution of quality management practices in the hospitality sector, shedding light on the critical factors, emerging paradigms, and future directions for research and practice in this dynamic and vital domain.

Keywords: Quality management, hospitality industry, bibliometric analysis, scholarly articles, citation network mapping, co-citation analysis

Introduction

During last century, quality management had the ability to update and to evolve to respond to the context and the changes of organizations and to respond to their needs (Fundin *et al.*, 2020) ^[9]. From 1997 to 2015 a lot of researchers talked about quality management and its evolution, in 1997 Hermel described the evolution of quality management from inspection in the 1920's until total quality management in the 1980's (Hermel, 1997) ^[11]. Dahlgaard in 1999 ^[1] described the development of Quality Management in three important phases from the mid-1940s to the early 1990s (Dahlgaard, 1999) ^[7], finally 16 years later (2015) Deleryd and Fundin proposed the concept of Quality 5.0, asserting that after four major generations of Quality Management is a new paradigm and a fifth generation of QM with a predominant focus on sustainability (Deleryd & Fundin, 2015) ^[8]

In the hospitality industry, quality management plays an important role such as insuring guest's satisfaction, maintaining a competitive edge, and the achievement of long-term success. It is a comprehensive approach that encompasses every aspect of the guest experience, from reservations and check-in to the quality of services, amenities, and overall ambiance.

Quality management in hospitality industry refers to the systematic processes and practices that establishments in this industry such as hotels, restaurants and others uses or apply to consistently deliver good experiences to their guests. It includes a lot of activities, such as deliveries, customer interactions, facility maintenance, and employee training, all aimed at meeting or exceeding guest expectations.

Quality management is a significant factor in hospitality, because it improves guest's loyalty so they can return if they are satisfied, it also gives a competitive advantages to the organizations it attracts more guests and gives a positive reputation about the organization, and it also saves costs to the companies because it can help to identify and rectify inefficiencies of the companies.

The article is structured as follows. Section 2, consists on giving a short literature review about our subject, while Section 3 consists of the explanation of the methodological approaches. In Section 4, we report the insights collected, while in Section 5, we attempt to summarize the main findings and a discussion about the results, and we give some suggestions about future researches and the limitations we found during our research.

Literature Review

Over the past century, quality management has evolved significantly to meet the changing needs of organizations and the business environment. Initially, in the early 20th century, it focused mainly on inspection and identifying defects. However, as competition intensified, the approach expanded into more comprehensive systems like Total Quality Management (TQM), which emphasizes continuous improvement, customer satisfaction, and a holistic view of organizational processes.

Hermel (1997) ^[11] outlines this journey from simple inspection methods in the 1920s to the widespread adoption of TQM in the 1980s, noting how these changes were driven by broader economic and industrial shifts. Dahlgard (1999) ^[7] further breaks down this evolution into three key phases: the introduction of statistical quality control in the mid-1940s, the development of quality assurance systems in the 1970s, and the rise of TQM in the late 1980s and early 1990s. More recently, Deleryd and Fundin (2015) ^[8] introduced the idea of Quality 5.0, which integrates sustainability into quality management, reflecting the growing importance of environmental and social factors in today's business practices.

In the hospitality industry, quality management is essential for ensuring guest satisfaction, staying competitive, and achieving long-term success. This approach covers every aspect of the guest experience, from making reservations to checking in, as well as the quality of services, amenities, and the overall atmosphere. Implementing TQM in hospitality has been shown to significantly boost guest satisfaction and loyalty, leading to repeat business and better financial performance (Knežević *et al.*, 2017) ^[15].

Research by Avelini Holjevac *et al.* (2012) ^[3] found that adopting certified quality management systems can positively impact various areas of hotel performance, including operations, employee engagement, and customer satisfaction. Llach *et al.* (2016) ^[16] support this, showing that consistently applying quality management practices across different parts of the hospitality industry improves organizational performance and competitiveness. Additionally, Benavides-Chicón and Ortega (2014) ^[5] highlighted that quality management directly and significantly boosts labor productivity in the hospitality sector, underscoring its strategic importance.

Recent studies have explored different aspects of quality management in the hospitality sector, such as the role of advanced technologies, the integration of sustainability practices, and the influence of quality management on employee engagement and organizational culture. For instance, Spoerr (2021) ^[18] emphasized the growing importance of sentiment analysis and other data-driven methods for understanding and managing customer expectations. These emerging trends suggest a shift toward more sophisticated and flexible quality management systems that are better suited to the complexities of the modern hospitality industry.

Additionally, the literature shows a strong focus on social and environmental responsibility within quality management frameworks. Tari *et al.* (2014) ^[19] pointed out that hotels adopting ISO 9001 standards often do so to gain competitive advantages, such as improved quality, stronger customer focus, and cost reductions. This aligns with the broader trend toward sustainability in the hospitality industry, where quality management is increasingly seen as

a way to achieve not only operational excellence but also social and environmental objectives.

Methodology

In this study, a bibliometric analysis was conducted to quantify and assess the impact of research findings. Bibliometrics involves a quantitative examination of scholarly publications, including articles, books, and conference proceedings, with the aim of evaluating research influence (Morandi, 2014) ^[17]. It employs statistical methods to dissect patterns and trends within the scientific literature, including citation analysis, co-citation analysis, and bibliographic coupling (Gimpl, 2017) ^[10]. Furthermore, bibliometrics serves as a tool for evaluating individual researchers, research groups, institutions, and countries in terms of productivity and impact (Morandi, 2014) ^[17], while also identifying emerging research areas and collaboration networks (Gimpl, 2017) ^[10]. The use of bibliometric mapping, increasingly applied across all disciplines, has gained significance (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017) ^[2], possibly due to its compatibility with scientific mapping (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017) ^[2]. The comprehensive bibliometric mapping analysis undertaken in this study encompassed data collection, filtering, extraction, analysis, and processing.

To identify relevant articles, we utilized the globally recognized Scopus database for evaluating scientific production (Baier-Fuentes *et al.*, 2019) ^[4]. Data extraction was performed on August 30, 2023. The search query "quality management AND hospitality OR hotel" was executed across all indexers within the Scopus collection. Articles that were peer-reviewed, written in English, and published in indexed scientific journals were selected based on eligibility criteria. The initial query yielded 347 documentary results. These results were subsequently filtered to eliminate irrelevant items in accordance with the eligibility criteria.

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("quality management" AND "hospitality" OR "hotel") AND (Limit-TO (Language , "English")).

Following a meticulous application of inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 328 relevant data points were collected. The analysis focused on articles containing the keywords "quality management" AND "hospitality" OR "hotel" in their titles, abstracts, or keywords.

In the context of quantitative bibliometric research, this study employed the open-source bibliometrix R-package software. Developed in the R programming language by Aria and Cuccurullo (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017) ^[2], this package offers a suite of tools for bibliometric analysis, including statistical and scientific mapping algorithms. In recent versions (starting from version 2.0), a web-based interface program (Biblioshiny) has been incorporated into the bibliometrix R-package to cater to users who lack coding expertise when conducting bibliometric analyses. Biblioshiny simplifies data input from sources like Scopus or Web of Science in formats such as BibTex, CSV, or Plain Text. Importing Web of Science data in BibTex format is necessary for bibliometrix.

Table 1 provides an overview of the dataset, detailing the various types of documents included. Author Keywords (DE) refer to a specific list of keywords, often fewer than ten, provided by article authors to define the focus of their study. Conversely, Author Keywords Plus (ID) denote long-tail keywords and expressions generated by the Web of

Science system, compiled from referenced publications mentioned by the authors.

Table 1: overview of the dataset

Description	Results
Main Information About Data	
Timespan	1992:2023
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	198
Documents	325
Annual Growth Rate %	4,84
Document Average Age	10,3
Average citations per doc	17,73
References	1
Document Contents	
Keywords Plus (ID)	941
Author's Keywords (DE)	761
Authors	
Authors	704
Authors of single-authored docs	76
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	82
Co-Authors per Doc	2,66
International co-authorships %	16,62
Document Types	
article	240
article article	1
book	7
book chapter	15
conference paper	41
conference paper article	1
conference review	2
editorial	1
review	16
review conference paper	1

Results

Main statistics

The analysis shows that the first contribution on the literature about quality management in the hospitality sector

was published in 1992. There were 3 first articles made about our subject that are (Johns, 1992) [13] and (Johns, 1992) [13]. Otherwise, in total there were 325 articles published in 198 different sources with an average growth rate of 4.84%, and the average of citations by articles is 17.73.

In the figure below (Figure 1), we see that the pace of publications has reached the peak respectively in 2016 by 21 articles, 2018 by 29 articles and in 2021 by 30 articles. The last 5 years have been characterized by a lot of interest from the journals of quality management and also hospitality journals which treats more about the relationship between quality management and hospitality.

The bibliometric analysis conducted in this study provides a comprehensive overview of the scholarly contributions to the field of quality management in the hospitality sector. The first significant contributions to this literature were made in 1992, with foundational works by Saunders and Johns, which laid the groundwork for subsequent research. Over the years, the volume of publications in this area has grown steadily, with notable peaks in 2016, 2018, and 2021. These peaks correspond to periods of heightened interest in the intersection of quality management and hospitality, driven by both academic curiosity and practical needs in the industry.

The dataset analyzed in this study comprises 325 articles published across 198 sources, with an average annual growth rate of 4.84%. This steady growth indicates a sustained interest in the topic, reflecting its ongoing relevance in both academic and industry circles. The average citation count per article stands at 17.73, suggesting that these publications have had a moderate impact on the field.

In addition, we have integrated our survey into an overview of the main results concerning: sources, countries of origin and articles.

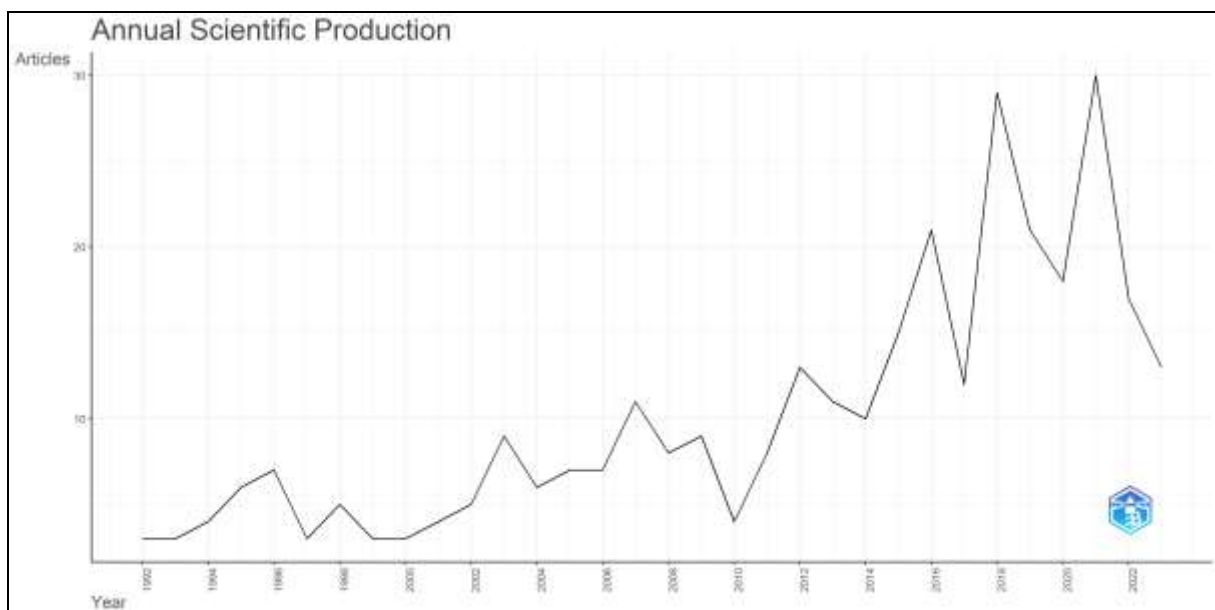


Fig 1: Annual scientific production

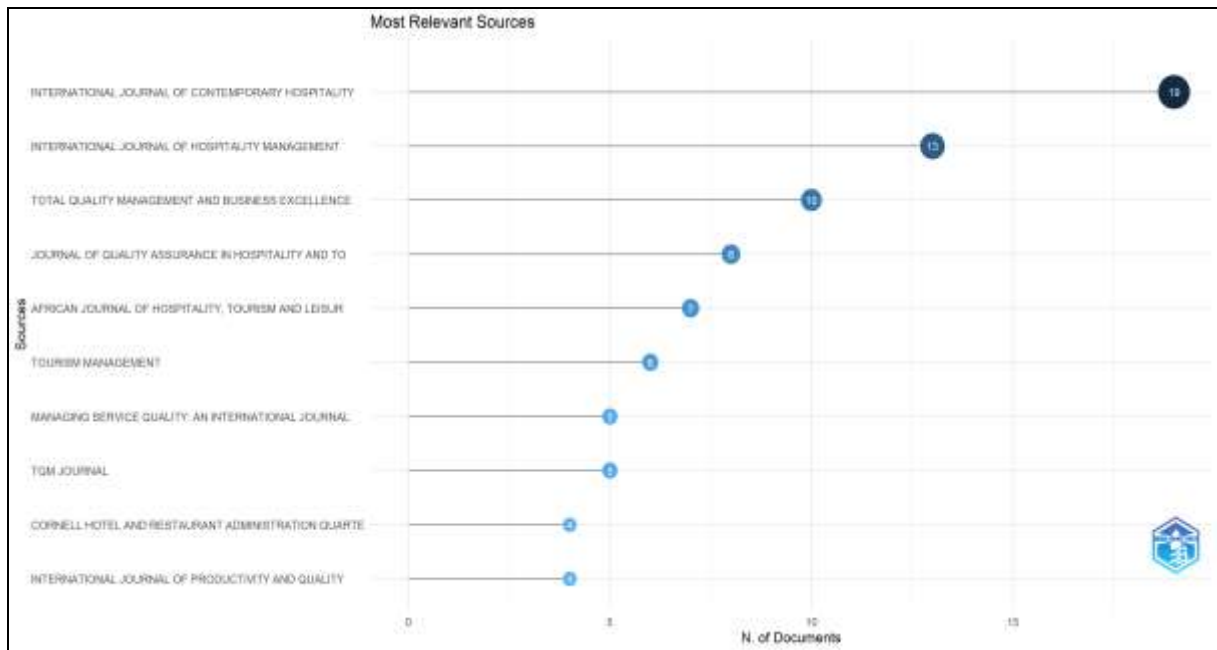


Fig 2: Most relevant sources.

Table 2: Most relevant country

Region	Freq
Spain	78
Usa	73
Uk	55
China	34
Malaysia	33
India	23
Australia	22
Greece	16
South Korea	13
Canada	11
Croatia	10
Turkey	10

The most relevant source is the international journal of contemporary hospitality (19), followed by international journal of hospitality management (13), followed by total quality management and business excellence (10). Followed by Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism (7), and other journals that has 5 publications or less such as TQM Journal, or Managing Service quality An International Journal.

The analysis reveals that the most prolific contributors to this literature are based in Spain (78), the United States (73), and the United Kingdom (55). This geographic distribution highlights the global nature of research in this area, with significant contributions from both developed and emerging economies. The prominence of Spain and the United States in particular may be attributed to their robust hospitality industries and the strong academic traditions in business and management studies in these countries.

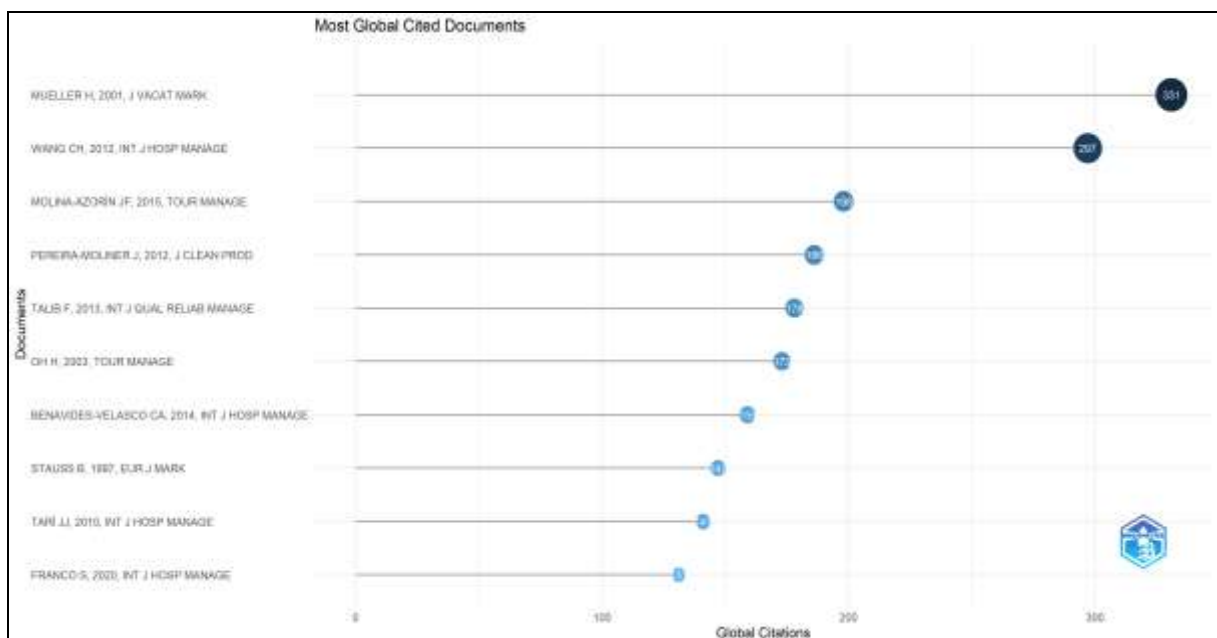


Fig 3: Most cited documents.

Among the most cited articles in the dataset are Mueller's 2001 paper on the application of TQM in the hospitality industry, published in the Journal of Vacation Marketing, and Wang's 2012 study on quality management practices, published in the International Journal of Hospitality Management. These works have been cited 331 and 297 times, respectively, underscoring their influence on subsequent research.

Conceptual structure

The keyword analysis reveals that "quality management," "total quality management," and "hotels" are the most frequently occurring terms, reflecting the core focus of the literature. Emerging themes identified in the thematic map include "quality management system," "hospitality management," "service quality management," and "sentiment analysis." These themes indicate areas of growing interest among researchers and suggest directions for future studies.

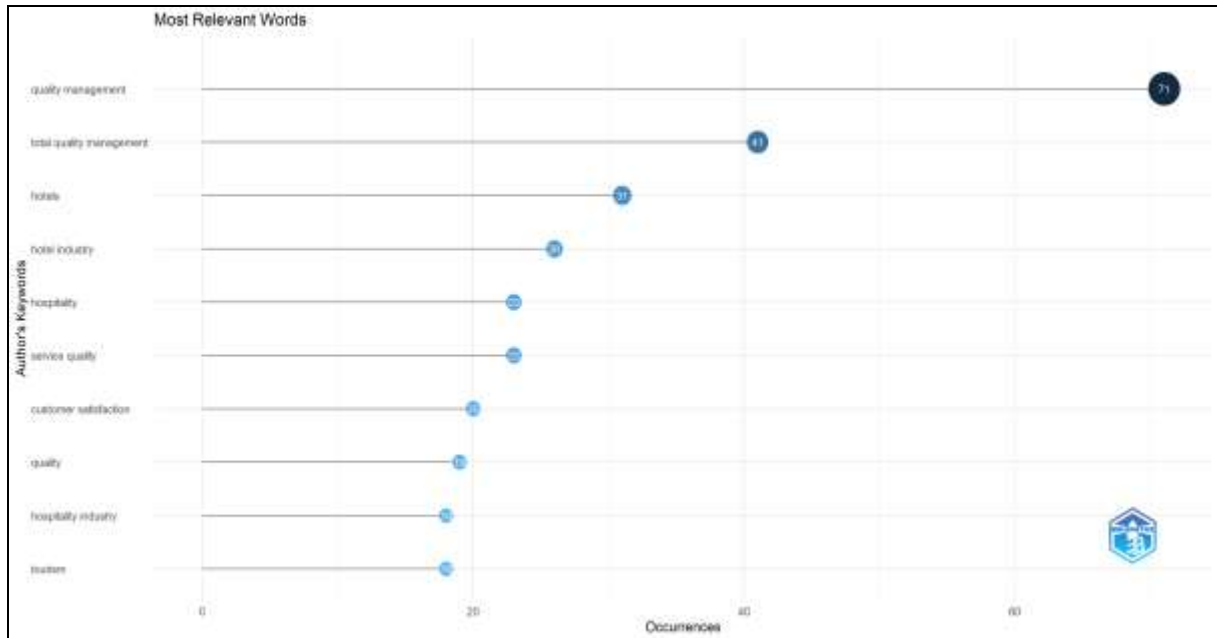


Fig 4: Most relevant words.

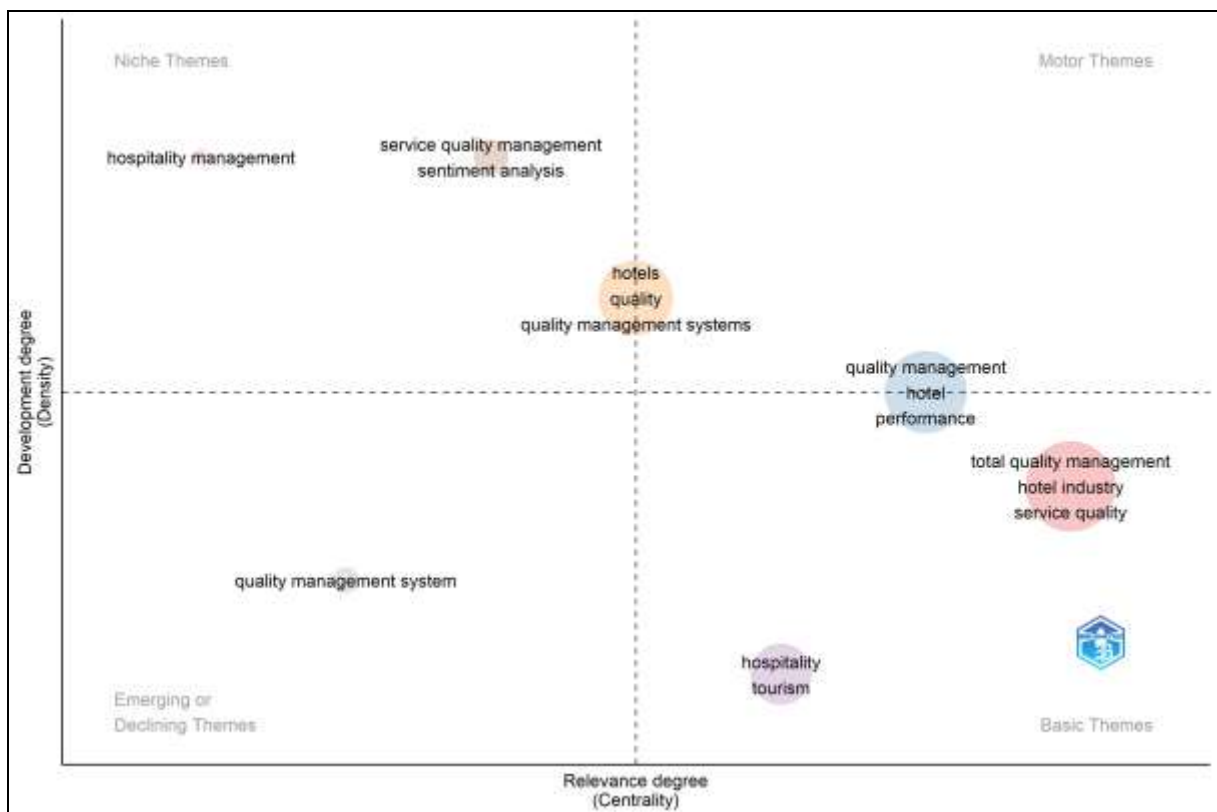


Fig 5: thematic map.

This figure shows how different research themes in quality management within the hospitality sector are categorized based on their importance and development.

- **Motor Themes:** The most important and well-developed themes, like "quality management," "total quality management," and "hotel industry," are key drivers in the field.
- **Niche Themes:** Themes like "hospitality management" and "service quality management" are well-developed but not as central, meaning they are important in specific areas but not widely applied across the field.

- **Basic themes:** Themes like "hospitality" and "tourism" are fundamental but less complex, meaning they are important starting points in research but may not be as deeply explored.
- **Emerging or declining Themes:** The "quality management system" theme is less developed and less central, possibly indicating it's either new and growing or becoming less relevant in the field (last 3 years it was cited in 24 articles).

This map helps identify which areas are core to the research and which are more specialized or emerging.

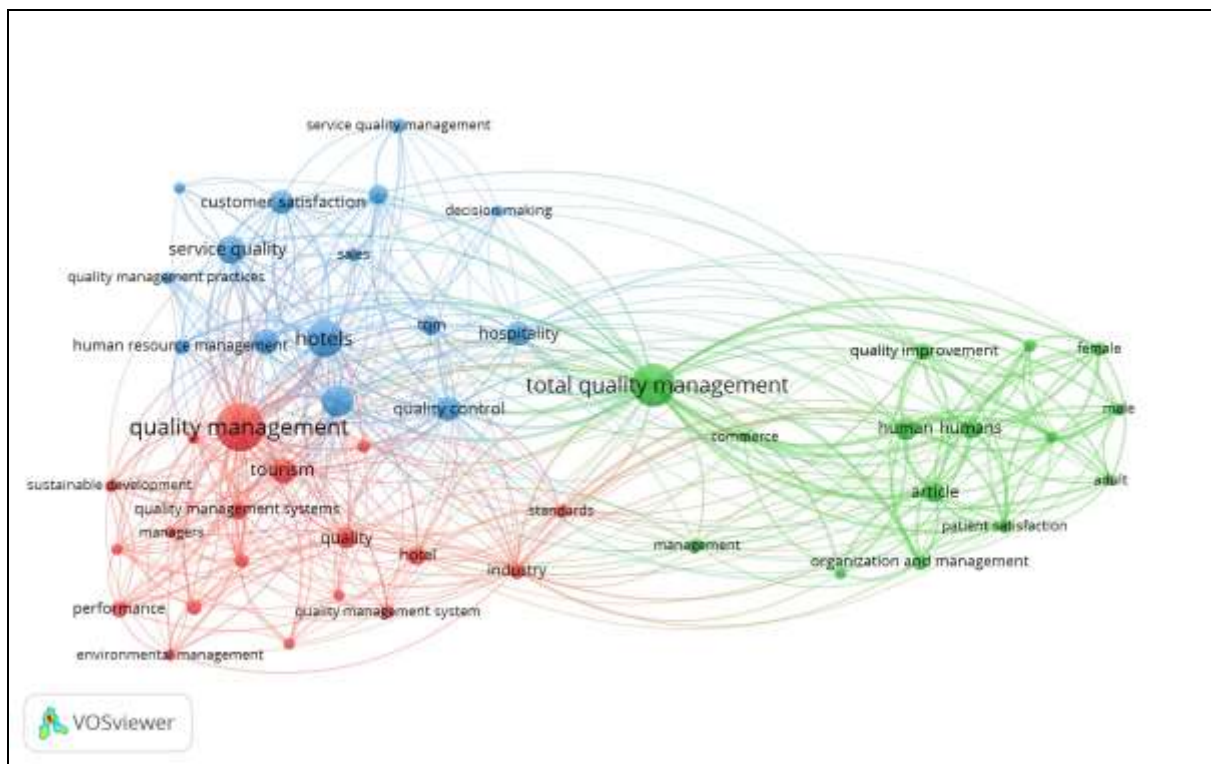


Fig 6: Co-occurrence analysis.

This co-occurrence map visualizes the relationships between various keywords and themes in the research on quality management within the hospitality sector. Each node (circle) represents a keyword, and the size of the node indicates the frequency of its occurrence in the literature. The lines connecting the nodes represent the co-occurrence or how often these keywords appear together in the same studies.

- **Green Cluster:** Keywords like "total quality management," "quality improvement," "human," and "management" are closely related. This cluster seems to focus on the broader and more strategic aspects of quality management, including organizational and human factors. This cluster is characterized about studies made in management practices, it means the different types of studies and the use of total quality management and on which categories of people were used for this study. Nonetheless, the hotel industry has recognized superior performance in hotels that are dedicated to Total Quality Management (TQM) (Claver-Cortés *et al.*, 2008) ^[6] and it is evident that TQM has the potential to enhance customer satisfaction and, consequently, bolster financial performance (Agus *et al.*, 2000; Claver-Cortés *et al.*, 2008) ^[1, 6].

- **Blue Cluster:** This cluster includes keywords such as "service quality," "customer satisfaction," and "hotels." It is focused on aspects directly related to customer experience and service quality in the hospitality industry. This cluster area is about social environment and responsibilities of the hotels and places. It sheds the light on the implication of the different hotels services in the use of the total quality management, in the services sector hotel industry has become one of the main drivers of growth and dominance. When it comes to the ISO 9001 standard, companies dedicated to gaining a competitive advantages might view enhancements in quality, customer focus, cost reduction, and more as significant motivations for its implementation.
- **Red Cluster:** Keywords like "quality management," "tourism," "sustainable development," and "performance" are connected here. This cluster appears to deal with quality management practices in the context of tourism and sustainability. This cluster is about the performance and the help of quality management in hospitality sector. Within the hospitality sector, fostering the involvement of every employee is essential for implementing quality management

practices, aiming to enhance service delivery and fulfill customer expectations. (Hughes & Rog, 2008; Kapiki, 2012) ^[12 14]. We can see that the quality management is connected to a lot of terms which means that it's used in almost every subject that has a relation with the hospitality sector.

- **Total Quality Management (TQM):** As one of the central and largest nodes, "total quality management" has strong connections with many other keywords, indicating its pivotal role in the research field. It connects with both operational (e.g., quality control, standards) and strategic aspects (e.g., management, human resource management).
- **Quality Management:** Similarly, "quality management" is a significant node with strong ties to themes like "tourism," "sustainable development," and "performance," showing its importance in tourism and environmental management contexts.
- **Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction:** These two are strongly connected, indicating their frequent co-occurrence in studies focused on improving customer experiences in the hospitality industry.

The map shows that research in quality management within hospitality is multi-dimensional, with interconnected themes related to management practices, customer satisfaction, and broader strategic considerations like sustainability.

The strong connections between nodes suggest that researchers often study these themes together, reflecting an integrated approach to quality management that considers both the customer experience and organizational practices.

Overall, this map provides a visual representation of how various aspects of quality management are interrelated in the literature, highlighting key areas of focus and the interconnectedness of different themes.

Finally, co-occurrence analysis provides specific insights into the main research area identified by management scholars in the last few years, this analysis measures the frequency with which keywords or some other theme shows with each others in the publications. This analysis reveals the existence of three distinct research clusters characterized by specific research topics. The figure on top displays the presence of the following research areas: the quality management shown in the red area, the green area presents the use of total quality management, and the blue area presents the social environment and responsibility

Discussion

This comprehensive bibliometric analysis sheds light on the evolution of quality management within the hospitality sector. The study highlights that the inaugural contributions to this field appeared in 1992, marked by seminal articles such as "Total Quality Management In The Hospitality Industry," "Quality Management In The Hospitality Industry: Part 1. Definition and Specification," And "Quality Management In The Hospitality Industry: Part 2. Applications, Systems and Techniques."

Over the years, a total of 325 articles were published across 198 diverse sources, demonstrating an impressive average growth rate of 4.84%. Remarkably, the average number of citations per article stands at 17.73.

Figure 1 illustrates three notable peaks in publication activity, occurring in 2016 (21 articles), 2018 (29 articles), and 2021 (30 articles). The last five years have witnessed

heightened interest from both quality management and hospitality journals, emphasizing the growing convergence of these fields.

Furthermore, this study delves into key characteristics of authors, revealing that Spain, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom are the leading contributors in terms of academic output. These findings underscore the global engagement of researchers in quality management within the hospitality sector.

The study also identifies highly cited articles, with Mueller H. (2001) ^[20] being standout contributors in journals such as the Journal of Vacation Marketing and International Journal of Hospitality Management.

Keyword analysis reveals that "quality management," "total quality management," and "hotels" are central themes, reflecting their interconnectedness. Emerging themes include "quality management system," "hospitality management," "service quality management," and "sentiment analysis," indicating the evolving landscape of research in this domain.

Co-occurrence analysis reveals three distinct research clusters:

The red cluster focuses on quality management practices, the green cluster emphasizes the use of total quality management, and the blue cluster centers on social and environmental responsibilities within the hospitality industry. These clusters represent critical avenues of research and development in the field.

In sum, this bibliometric study provides valuable insights into the evolution, trends, and key themes surrounding quality management in the hospitality sector, highlighting its growing significance and interdisciplinary nature.

Limitations and suggestions for future researches

Inherent limitations within the research stem from its methodological aspects. Specifically, the choice of data and the utilization of quantitative metrics may be susceptible to bias associated with the researchers' backgrounds. To address this gap, future studies could mitigate such biases by replicating the analysis using qualitative methodologies. Using different methods can help us understand complicated things in a simple way.

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