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The intellectual structure of research in hospitality management: A literature review using bibliometric methods of the journal *International Journal of Hospitality Management*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the existing literature on hospitality management from all the research papers published in *The International Journal of Hospitality Management* (IJHM) between 2008 and 2014. The authors apply bibliometric methods – in particular, author citation and co-citation analyses (ACA) – to identify the main research lines within this scientific field; in other words, its 'intellectual structure'. Social network analysis (SNA) is also used to perform a visualization of this structure. The results of the analysis allow us to define the different research lines or fronts which shape the intellectual structure of research on hospitality management.

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1. Introduction

The literature has recently seen a proliferation of works aimed at finding the intellectual structure of scientific fields other than the actual field devoted to the study of science or Scientometrics.[1] These works use some of the bibliometric methods and techniques most frequently utilized in the discipline – authorship analysis, author co-citation analysis (ACA), journal analysis (JCA) and social networks analysis (SNA). The following purposes can be highlighted: the possibility of analyzing and visualizing the aforementioned 'intellectual structure' or 'knowledge base' (White and Griffith, 1981); identifying potential 'research fronts' (de Solla Price, 1965); detecting the existence of scientific schools and/or academic networks (the so-called 'invisible colleges') (Crane, 1972; de Solla Price, 1965) or carrying out studies on production, authorship, citation and/or co-citation with regard to a specific discipline, thematic field or scientific sub-discipline.[2]

The aim of the present paper is to identify the 'intellectual structure' or 'knowledge base' of the hospitality management (HM) scientific domain from all the research papers published in *The International Journal of Hospitality Management* (IJHM) – amongst the journals included on SSCI, *Annals of Tourism Research* (ATR), *Tourism Management* (TM), *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (JST), and *The International Journal of Hospitality Management* (IJHM) are arguably the most influential journals publishing hospitality-management-related papers – during the period between 2008 and 2014. To this end we apply author citation and co-citation analyses (ACA), social networks analysis (SNA) and different multivariate analysis techniques, chiefly cluster analysis.

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[1] This group includes works applied to the widest variety of scientific knowledge fields or domains: economy, psychology, sociology, management, communication, marketing, medicine, geography, etc. In the specific case of management, these methods have been implemented, to quote but a few fields, in strategic management (Acedo et al., 2006; Di Stefano et al., 2010; Nerur et al., 2008; Peteraf et al., 2013; Ramos-Rodríguez and Ruíz-Navarro, 2004; Ronda-Pupo and Guerras-Martín, 2012), entrepreneurship (Gartner et al., 2006; Landström et al., 2012; Schildt et al., 2006), international business (Acedo and Casillas, 2005; Kraus, 2011), innovation (Fagerberg and Vespargen, 2009; Fagerberg et al., 2012), business ethics (Calabretta et al., 2011; Ma, 2009; Uysal, 2010), family business (Benavides-Velasco et al., 2013; Casillas and Acedo, 2007), strategic alliances (Di Guardo and Harrigan, 2012) supply chain management (Charvet et al., 2008), hospitality management (Köseoglu et al., 2015), corporate governance (Durisin and Puzone, 2009), and operation management (Pilkington and Meredith, 2009).

[2] It is generally estimated that, of all the bibliographic references appearing in a scientific paper, approximately 50% are non-systematically distributed across the whole literature mentioned above; another 50% is concentrated in a very small number of works: according to de Solla Price (1965), this percentage of references constitutes the "research front" of this discipline, and their authors form part of what has come to be known as 'invisible colleges'.

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Generally, as a discipline progresses and reaches a higher degree of maturity, an interest in knowing the 'state of the art' of the literature tends to grow amongst its researchers (Portugal-Ferreira, 2011, p. 357) and they analyze large numbers of papers to identify which of them have had the greatest impact.

The literature includes a large number of studies devoted to identifying and analyzing the main strands of research within a particular scientific field. However, most of the studies mentioned above, characterized by their essentially qualitative nature, are usually written by researchers specialized in the same field and are based on their own accumulated knowledge of the development of the discipline. Consequently, there is a possibility of a high degree of subjectivity – as far as method is concerned, qualitative reviews tend to reflect the idiosyncrasies of reviewers, who are deeply involved in the topic (Vogel and Güttel, 2013) – and of a lack of scientific rigor in the interpretations (Tranfield et al., 2003).

Although our paper focuses on this same line of research (i.e., identifying the existence of different strands of research within a specific discipline), unlike most of the studies described so far it adopts a quantitative method to achieve its aims (Eom, 2008; White and McCain, 1998), thus introducing an objectivity measure into the scientific literature evaluation process, namely (Garfield, 1979): author co-citation analysis (ACA).

The main advantage of co-citation analysis lies in the fact that it has a 'non-intrusive' nature, using the literature generated in a scientific field to identify and visualize knowledge structures. One of the most important applications of co-citation analysis is to reveal and represent different aspects of the intellectual structure and composition of scientific fields through maps and identify the specialty areas, research fronts and links between scientific disciplines and specialties over time as well as the changes in their intellectual structures (Miguel et al., 2007). Another of the advantages of this method stems from the fact that the results obtained reflect a joint view expressed by hundreds of thousands of citing authors, and not the personal opinions that each author may have.

For White and McCain (1997), this type of study provides the elements needed to thoroughly visualize the scientific literature on a specific thematic field, thus revealing its intellectual structure.

Joint citation or co-citation analysis, introduced by Small (1973), starts from the assumption that between two or more documents which are co-cited, that is, cited jointly in a third work, there will be – at least from the perspective of the citing author (McCain, 1990, p. 443) – a certain thematic similarity as well as a certain intellectual connection within the field analyzed. The higher the co-citation frequency, the greater the affinity between them (Cawkell, 1976; Garfield et al., 1978; Marshakova, 1973; Small, 1973), and it is possible to regard them as belonging to the same 'research front' (Culnan, 1986; de Solla Price, 1965). The intensity of this relationship will be determined by the number of citing documents which contain the same pair of documents amongst their references. If it is assumed that highly cited documents represent the key concepts, methods or experiments developed in a scientific field, such co-citation patterns can be used to identify and visualize the links between such key ideas (Small, 1973). White and Griffith (1981) proposed author co-citation analysis (ACA) as a new technique that could help find the intellectual structure of scientific disciplines, understanding as 'author' the set of works written by a single person. Co-citation occurs when an author cites a pair of documents of any other two authors. This assumption indisputably has its weaknesses but, with an appropriate selection and a sufficiently large sample, the method can provide useful insights into the field's view of itself.

Fig. 1 shows the different stages of the analysis method from a general perspective, rather than being exclusively focused on author co-citation analysis (ACA).

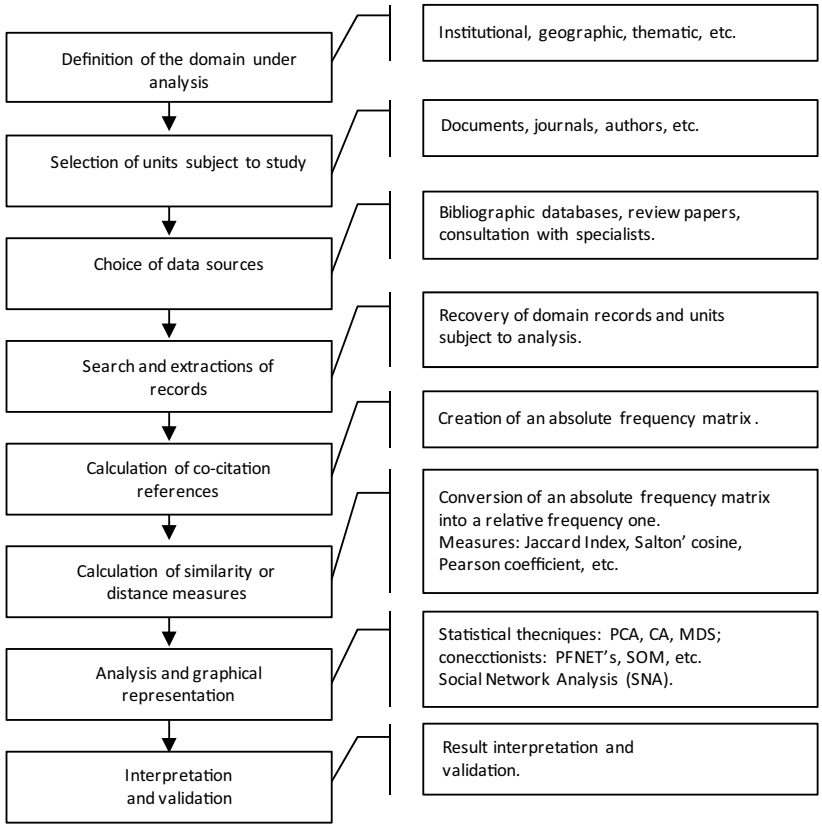

Fig. 1. Co-citation or joint citation analysis: phases or stages in the development of this method.

Source: Miguel et al. (2007, p. 147).

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