



# Knowledge mapping of hospitality research – A visual analysis using CiteSpace



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## ABSTRACT

Hospitality literature constitutes a considerable accumulation of data for follow-up studies. This study used CiteSpace to analyze investigations published in three top journals of hospitality research: *International Journal of Hospitality Management* (2008–2014), *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* (2008–2014), and *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* (2009–2014). This application resulted in comprehensive knowledge maps of hospitality research. The study identified major disciplines that provide knowledge and theories for the hospitality discipline as well as contemporary research topics and most influential researchers.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Why knowledge map the literature?

The rapid growth of the hospitality industry has drawn great interest from researchers. A quick search using the keyword “hospitality” returned 2781 articles from the Web of Science database. Of these articles, 1572 were published in three leading hospitality journals – *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management* and *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* – within the last decade (Fig. 1). These three journals are also listed in the Social Science Citation Index and therefore are often referred to as “top hospitality journals” (Top 3 hereafter). Notably, the total publication numbers have increased dramatically since 2007.

Review and examination of previous research efforts are considered valuable activities in the academic world (Webster and Watson, 2002; Hart, 1998) because the advancement of knowl-

edge and theories of academic disciplines relies on theoretical and empirical contributions made by individual studies. Researchers also have suggested that topics of journal articles are indicators of research directions (e.g. Ma and Law, 2009; Crawford-Welch and McCleary, 1992) and periodical analysis is necessary as knowledge accumulates. As a relatively young discipline of study, efforts made in reviewing and analyzing articles in hospitality disciplines are even more important in tracking the evolution process within the field.

### 1.2. Knowledge mapping and CiteSpace

Previous review works on hospitality and tourism research were either quantitative (e.g. Ma and Law, 2009) or qualitative in nature (e.g. Xiao and Smith, 2006) while no attempt has been made to visualize knowledge maps. Knowledge mapping is defined as processes, methods and tools for analyzing knowledge areas to discover features or meanings and to visualize them in a comprehensive and transparent format (Speel et al., 1999). It is one of the most important steps in knowledge management and can present concepts, knowledge and links in visual/graphic formats. Various techniques could be used in creating knowledge maps, such as Yellow Paging, Social Network Analysis and Knowledge Domain Visualization

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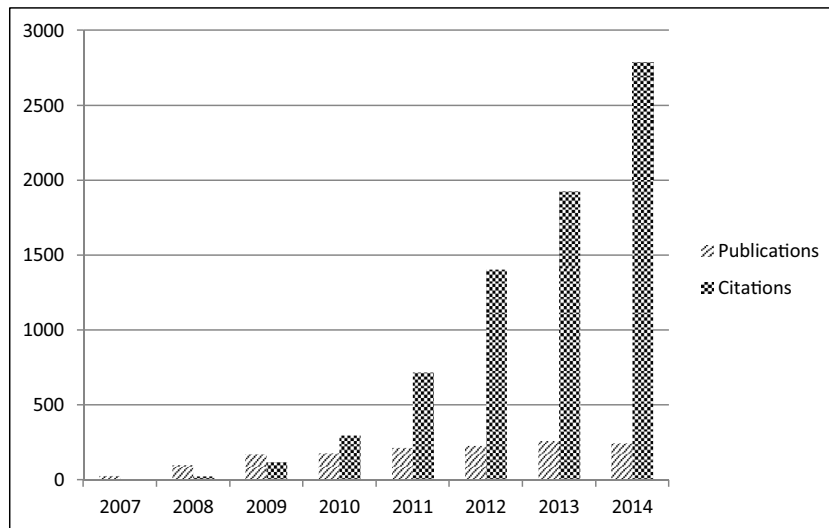


Fig. 1. Publications and Citations of Top Hospitality Journals 2007–2014.

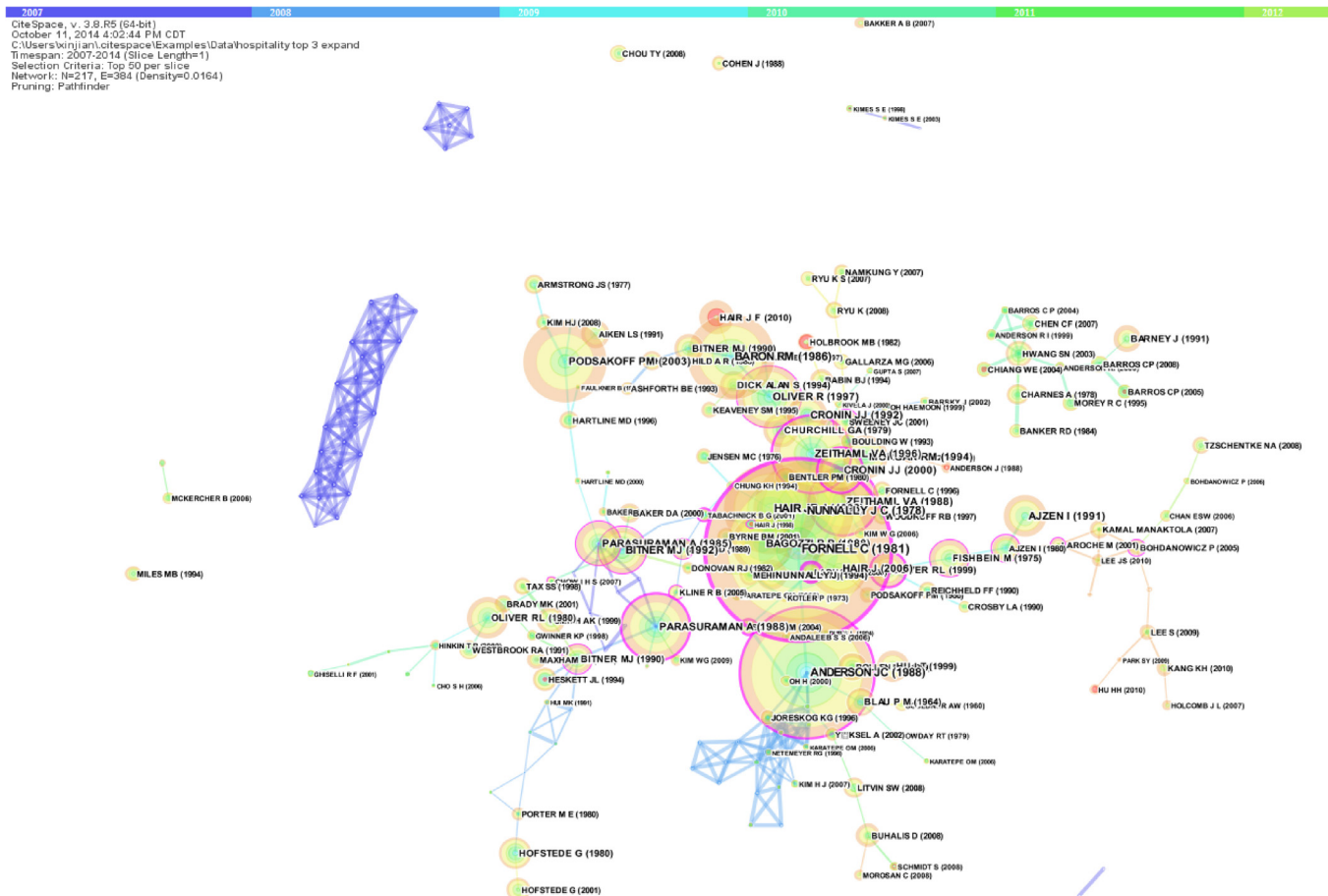


Fig. 2. Mapping of cited reference.

(using CiteSpace). CiteSpace is one of the most popular tools for knowledge mapping (e.g., [Chen, 2006](#); [Chen et al., 2010](#)). It is particularly designed to support the analytic process of visualizing and it can produce co-citation networks based on article citations to reveal the structure of a particular research field ([Chen et al., 2010](#)).

Despite the popularity of CiteSpace (e.g. [Chen et al., 2014](#); [Lu and Shu, 2015](#)), to our best knowledge, no attempt has been made to use CiteSpace analyzing hospitality literature. Using CiteSpace to analyze existing hospitality literature would help provide a

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