

# Chapter 88

## What We (Do Not) Know About Research on Innovation in Hotels: A Bibliometric Analysis

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter performs a bibliometric analysis on innovation in hotels field. More specifically, it maps the current research front on innovation in hotels field based on 287 papers published in refereed journals indexed to the Scopus database. Using the VOSviewer software and the bibliographic coupling method, it was possible to identify and systematize the main research streams of this field: 1) technological innovation, 2) sustainable innovation, 3) innovative work behavior, 4) market orientation' role in promoting innovation, 5) knowledge-based resources as a driver of innovation and performance as an outcome of innovation, 6) service innovation, 7) knowledge sharing and management as a key factor for innovation, 8) innovation ambidexterity, 9) innovation in time of crisis, and 10) learning approach as a source of innovation. The findings presented in this chapter will enable future authors studying innovation in hotels to focus their studies more effectively.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Innovation, although not being a new phenomenon, has not always received the required attention. However, in recent years the research on the role of innovation is proliferating, since it is increasingly regarded as crucial for competitiveness and performance. In fact, “innovation has been widely accepted as a critical factor for hospitality and tourism enterprises, organizations and destinations, and is recognized as a strategic issue to achieve growth and long-term oriented success” (Pikkemaat, Peters, & Bichler, 2019, p. 184).

Tourism firms, namely hotels, are pressured to innovate continually because of the speed and ease with which their competitors can copy successful ideas (Gomezelj, 2016; Vila, Enz, & Costa, 2012). Thus, hospitality firms, such as hotels, are shown as an ideal example of a market which could benefit from the implementation of service innovation (Victorino, Verma, Plaschka, & Dev, 2005). From a customer’s perspective, the hospitality market is continually inundated by many similar, often easily substitutable service offerings, which makes it more difficult to differentiate a hotel from its competitors (Reid & Sandler, 1992). One solution to this challenge may be to offer innovative features to customers, with focus on quality, customization, and technological interfaces. Service innovation does matter when customers are selecting a hotel (Victorino et al., 2005).

For Orfila-Sintes, Crespí-Cladera, and Martínez-Ros (2005), there are three main characteristics of the hotel industry that make different from other service activities and justify a separate analysis. Hotel-specific characteristics are category, governance, and chain structure. “The ownership structure and the degree of dependence on other organizational structures influence the framework of management innovation decisions” (p. 854). Some hotels are independently managed while others belong to a hotel chain or to a more diversified company conglomerate. “The hotel category classification indicates the level and complexity of services provided. Their influence over the innovation propensity is simultaneously an endogenous and exogenous outcome” (p. 854).

The main purpose of this study is to map the current research front on innovation in hotels field by performing a bibliometric analysis. This approach aims to study the research on the field (Gutiérrez-Salcedo, Martínez, Moral-Munoz, Herrera-Viedma, & Cobo, 2018) and its use has growing in tourism research in recent years (e.g., Durán-Sánchez, Álvarez-García, del Río-Rama, & Rosado-Cebrián, 2019; Okumus, Köseoglu, Putra, Dogan, & Yildiz, 2019). Although Durán-Sánchez et al. (2019) and Okumus et al. (2019) carry out bibliometric analyses on tourism innovation and lodging-context research, respectively, to best of the authors’ knowledge, until this moment, no bibliometric analysis on innovation in hotels field was performed. Moreover, Okumus et al. (2019) suggest the use of advanced bibliometric analyses in the lodging-context research. In this sense, this study contributes to deepen knowledge on the field and helps future researchers studying innovation in hotels to focus their studies more effectively. Furthermore, it helps hotels’ managers and employees to know the main types and features of innovation in hotels, their determinants and outcomes, and the role of customers, managers, and employees in this process.

Innovation is not only a driver of hotels’ value creation and long term success but also a source of tourism destinations economic development and growth and the role of the local community cannot be ignored.

The remainder of the chapter is structured as follows. Section 2 presents an overview on innovativeness and innovation, namely in tourism and hotel industries. Section 3 describes the methodological procedures followed. Section 4 presents a brief sample description and performance analysis, specifically

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