

# Strategic Management Research in Hospitality and Tourism

## Abstract:

**Purpose:** This article critically reviews current strategic management (SM) research and discusses future directions for SM research in the hospitality and tourism (HT) field.

**Methodology:** The article reviews and synthesizes current SM research.

**Findings:** The findings suggest that SM research in the HT field has made good progress over the last three decades; however, there is still a gap between the SM research in the generic and HT fields.

**Implications:** This article offers specific theoretical and practical implications for SM in the HT field.

**Originality:** This article provides a clear perspective on future developments of SM research in the HT field.

## Introduction

Strategic Management (SM) research focuses overall on why an organization exists, where the organization is now versus where it should be, why some organizations succeed while others fail, what owners and senior managers can do to gain a competitive advantage, and what drives the organizational performance (Makadok, Burton, & Barney, 2018). In tourism, however, unlike other fields, research questions may also incorporate visitors, organizations, destinations, NGOs, and other stakeholders (Tribe, 2016). Researchers, both from the generic SM field and the HT field, have addressed these questions by focusing on some dualities such as the source of competitive advantage (e.g. internal versus external), targeted population (e.g. micro versus macro), relational view (e.g. collaboration or competition), strategy-structure linkage (e.g. first

structure or first strategy), modes of growth (e.g. related versus unrelated), SM process (e.g. intended versus realized), and nature of resource (e.g. tangible versus intangible) (Hoskisson, Hitt, Wan, & Yui, 1999; Köseoglu, Okumus, Dogan, & Law, 2019). This article aims to critically review the current stage of SM research and to offer suggestions for the future of SM research in the HT field. First, the evolution of SM research in the generic SM field as well as in the HT field are discussed. Second, a fresh perspective on future developments of SM research in the HT field is proposed. Finally, conclusions are provided.

### **Past perspective: 75 years of developments 1946-2020**

According to Okumus (2002), in the beginning of the new millennium, SM research in the HT field was embryonic, and there was a major gap between the mainstream and the HT research on SM. There are several studies that discussed SM in HT considering the boundaries of SM according to intellectual, conceptual, and social structure (e.g., Okumus, Köseoglu, Morvillo, & Altin, 2017, Olsen, Ching-Yick, & West, 1998; Okumus, 2002; Stokes, 2008; Moutinho & Vargas-Sanchez, 2018). These studies not only discussed SM related topics, but also showed that there is still a significant lag in SM research in the HT field in comparison with mainstream SM research. The first reason for this lag is a lack of studies related to SM topics, such as corporate strategy, corporate governance, cooperative strategies, innovation management, organizational behavior, and entrepreneurship. The second reason for this lag is that SM research in HT mainly uses marketing perspectives as an intellectual domain, rather than economy, sociology, or psychology (Ramos-Rodríguez & Ruíz-Navarro, 2004), and as strategic and corporate entrepreneurship and strategic behavior (Ferreira, Fernandes, & Ratten, 2016). Since tourism involves economical (e.g., tourism spending, employment, investment), sociological (e.g., relationships, impact on traveler and society, cultural exchange), and psychological (e.g., behaviors, attitudes) aspects, researchers

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3 should approach tourism studies with more complex approaches while incorporating all  
4 stakeholders and their environment.  
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8 **Future perspective: 75 years 2020-2095**  
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10 For the next 75 years, SM research within the HT field should have a research agenda that  
11 can advance the scientific progress in the field. The following points are offered to challenge HT  
12 researchers in the SM field, and each point should be developed further:  
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- 15 • Big data, artificial intelligence, and strategy making
  - 16 • Technological advances, business formation, and competition
  - 17 • Internal environment and competitive advantage in HT businesses
  - 18 • Business networks and sustainable, competitive advantage.
  - 19 • Business ethics and corporate social responsibility.
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29 More specifically, future research in SM with a HT focus should focus on the intersection  
30 between SM research and innovation and technology (Buhalis & Law, 2008), including some  
31 terms such as smart tourism, smart hospitality, smart destination, and co-creation (Boes, Buhalis,  
32 & Inversini, 2016; Buhalis, 2000; Buhalis, Harwood, Bogicevic, Viglia, Beldona, & Hofacker,  
33 2019; Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019; Gretzel, Sigala, Xiang, & Koo, 2015) from both the macro-level  
34 and micro-level perspectives (Guerras-Martín, Madhok, & Montoro-Sánchez, 2014) by addressing  
35 the following research questions: (1) How do big data, artificial intelligence, and other  
36 technological advances impact and shape the strategy process? (2) Considering the uncertainty and  
37 rapid changes in the environment, how can HT firms develop dynamic capabilities with the help  
38 of technological advances to gain and sustain their competitive advantage? (3) What are the links  
39 between strategy and ethical and corporate social responsibility practices? (4) How can technology  
40 better help networking strategies among firms?  
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## Conclusions

This article critically reviewed the current SM research in the HT field and offered possible directions for SM research in the HT field. The social structure of SM research with a HT focus is still weak. There are few leading scholars in the field, which has slowed down the scientific advancement in the field. Hence, leading HT schools and institutions should pay more attention to form a strong SM community with a HT focus since SM will continue to be a popular research area in the business and management fields (Durand, Grant, & Madsen, 2017). Finally, researchers from the HT field should publish in leading academic journals both in the mainstream and HT fields.

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