Review of reviews: A systematic analysis of review papers in the hospitality and tourism literature

Abstract

This study provides a systematic analysis of review studies in selected hospitality and tourism journals published to date. Although a number of review studies published within the hospitality and tourism literature have examined a diverse/wide range of topics, no systematic overview of the trends and impacts of such review studies has been provided. This study, hence, presents a comprehensive classification of 171 review studies published in the leading hospitality and tourism journals listed in the *Web of Science*, and examines the impacts that the review studies have made in the literature. Based on its constructive overview of the review studies published to date, this study contributes to the hospitality and tourism literature by providing a table of reference for future researchers. Taking a look at the past and how far we have come as a discipline should reveal unexplored research avenues for the future.

Keywords

Hospitality and tourism; review studies; Web of Science journals; citation analysis

Introduction

This study aims to provide scholars with an overview of the trends and impacts of review studies published in the hospitality and tourism literature. The sustained progression of a field of study largely depends on the continuity and growth of research scholarship. For a field to progress, it must be conscious of its historical patterns to obtain insights into possible future developments and implications that contribute to the accumulation of knowledge (Dwivedi, Venkitachalam, Sharif, Al-Karaghouli, & Weerakkody, 2011). In general, the main purpose of review studies is to analyze what has already been done in the field. Review studies, despite contributing significantly to the development of knowledge, vary in their scope and comprehensiveness, as some may provide a thorough history but in doing so miss more recent developments (Law, Leung, & Cheung, 2012). This study identifies this gap in the literature and aims to provide a glimpse of the totality of our disciplines through the lens of a review of studies from past to present. It also seeks to mark the historical development of the review studies conducted in our disciplines and classify the process to uncover possible directions for future research.

More specifically, the current study has three objectives: 1) to provide an overview of how review studies have been conducted in the disciplines of hospitality and tourism, 2) to identify the research trends in review studies and 3) to explore the impacts of review studies in the literature. The remainder of this study is organized as follows. First, a brief review of the hospitality and tourism research, roles of review studies and roles of citation analysis is presented. Second, detailed explanations of the methods are provided, along with a presentation of the results outlined in terms of the overall status quo of review studies, research trends and their research influence. Third, a discussion is presented based on the results of the study and its limitations and implications for future studies.

Literature review

Hospitality and tourism literature

The fields of hospitality and tourism have seen dramatic changes in the past 40 years, with exponential growth in journals, publication opportunities, papers and collaborations (Gursoy & Sandstrom, 2016; McKercher & Tung, 2015). The *Encyclopedia of Tourism* records an increase in the number of journals from fewer than 10 titles before 1980 to approximately 290 today, with about 150 published in English (McKercher & Tung, 2015). Hospitality is still a fairly young discipline within academia, and its short history has resulted in a lack of consensus on its scope and exposure (Kandampully, Keating, Kim, Mattila, & Solnet, 2014; Ottenbacher, Harrington, & Parsa, 2009). Hospitality studies have responded to the lack of a general overview with a conceptual classification of the hospitality literature (Ottenbacher et al., 2009). In the case of tourism, studies have provided pattern data to review research activities to determine whether they are becoming more standardized or diversified (Scandura & Williams, 2000). In more recent years, the fields of hospitality and tourism have been identified as independent academic categories in the *Web of Science*, reflecting the progression of the disciplines (Min, Park, & Kim, 2016). Hence, this study comes at an opportune moment, as the hospitality and tourism fields are growing to academic maturity.

Review studies have illustrated a broad view of the tourism academia, examining publishing trends within the tourism literature (R. Leung, Au, & Law, 2015; McKercher & Tung, 2015; Wu, Xiao, Dong, Wang, & Xue, 2012; Yuan, Gretzel, & Tseng, 2015) and comparing these trends with other disciplines and fields (McKercher & Tung, 2015). In the hospitality literature, many researchers have conducted systematic reviews of research subjects and publication trends in scholarly journals (Crawford-Welch & McCleary, 1992; Kandampully et al., 2014; Svensson, Svaeri, & Einarsen, 2009). However, we have yet to see a

comprehensive overview that is mindful of the historical patterns of the review studies that have sustained the progression of research scholarship in the fields of hospitality and tourism.

Roles of review studies

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a review article as 'a paper in a journal that summarizes recent literature on or developments in a particular subject'. Starting with this broad definition, we can apply specific criteria to classify the selection of review studies to meet the purposes of this study.

A systematic review study provides a thorough review of topic-specific research along with managerial implications for industry practitioners and future research directions in a discipline (Wang, Wang, Tai, Okumus, & Okumus, 2016). Review studies have also been defined as a type of research, one that systematically reviews the literature of a field using a certain set of research techniques and methods (Feldman, 1971). Based on the review typologies (Grant & Booth, 2009), this study classifies reviews into five types as follows.

1. A *critical/narrative review* aims to demonstrate extensively researched literature and conduct a critical evaluation of its quality. The main purpose of a critical/narrative review is to identify significant items in the field; no formal quality assessment for each study is required, and the review is typically conducted in a conceptual or chronological way (Crouch, 1995). The critical/narrative review is a traditional and frequently used way of reviewing and integrating studies to provide an overarching theory to reconcile the findings of each study (Crouch, 1995), and results are commonly presented in a hypothesis or a model (Grant & Booth, 2009). In this study, the term 'narrative review' is used to represent both critical and narrative reviews.

2. A *qualitative thematic review* integrates or compares the findings from sample studies. 'Themes' or 'constructs' found in or across the individual studies are selected for thematic analysis. In this study, this type of review is referred to as a 'thematic review'.

3. A *quantitative systematic review* attempts to categorize the literature and aims to support future research by identifying gaps in the literature. There is evidence of completeness in the search phase, which involves time/scope constraints (Grant & Booth, 2009). The results are usually presented in graphics and tables. The systematic review approach involves a comprehensive search for relevant research works, followed by an appraisal and a synthesis of those works according to a predetermined framework (Klassen, Jadad, & Moher, 1998). In this study, we use the term 'systematic review' to represent this type of review.

4. A *meta-analysis review* is an analytical process that combines the results of quantitative studies statistically to provide a more accurate result of the effect (Grant & Booth, 2009). This type of review study can reveal the status of research and suggestions for future study in an area (Franke, 2001).

5. A *mixed methods review* refers to any combination of review approaches with a quantitative and qualitative method of research or outcome, usually including a systematic literature review.

Review studies are often conducted with the aim of telling a story that can illustrate the broader picture of a particular topic or focus within a discipline (Kandampully et al., 2014). Review studies are conducted with the primary purpose of examining the changes and evolution of a discipline to provide scholars with a better understanding of the development of a field and discover any trends (Cheng, Li, Petrick, & O'Leary, 2011). The main objective of this study is to trace the history and development of the disciplines of hospitality and tourism through a systematic review of the review studies that have been conducted.

Roles of citation analysis

Citation is a critical standard used to evaluate a journal or paper (Benckendorff, 2009), and there is a growing research trend of using citation analysis to examine a journal's influence (Law & van der Veen, 2008), influential scholars (McKercher, 2008; Schmidgall, Woods, & Hardigree, 2007), and/or the influence of an individual article (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007) in the hospitality and tourism literature. Citation analyses have commonly been conducted in academia to evaluate influence, measured typically through citation counts to generate various bibliometric impact scores (McKercher, 2012). For example, statistical information relating to citations is one type of metric used to produce journal rankings in academic journal quality guides (Hall, 2011). Citation counts are often made through engines like *Google Scholar*. In their study analyzing the most influential publications in tourism journals from 2000 to 2007, Law, Ye, Chen, and Leung (2009) also suggested the use of alternative databases such as the *Social Science Citation Index* (SSCI) or *Elsevier* to generate citation reports.

Citation count has been noted as one of the most important indicators in evaluating the quality of academic research and considered as an indication of the influence of a study. Studies by McKercher (2008) and Schmidgall et al. (2007) found a positive relationship between citation counts and quality of publications. Hence, citation analyses are conducted in this study with the aim of comprehending the influence of review studies that have been published within our fields thus far.

Bollen, Van de Sompel, Hagberg, and Chute (2009) classified three performance metric groups to measure scientific impacts: productivity, impact and hybrid metrics. Productivity metrics refer to the frequency of publications per year or per author, or total citation counts. Impact metrics measure the citation-relevant metrics of a study, such as citations per year and

per journal. The third performance metric group, hybrid metrics, comprises indicators that represent both productivity and impact in the same figure, such as the h index. In our study, productivity metrics are used to analyze the review article trend by calculating the total number of review studies per year, journal, subject, etc. Impact metrics, such as citations per year, subject and research method are also used to explore the scientific impact that review studies have made in the field.

Methodology

Data collection

We applied a systematic literature review approach to ensure the rigor and transparency of our review process (Okoli & Schabram, 2010). Our data collection process involved the following three stages. The first stage was a keyword search for relevant review studies in *Hospitality and Tourism Complete* from the *EBSCOhost* database. The second stage was a manual search of all 32 volumes of the hospitality and tourism journals listed in the *Web of Science*, including 17 SSCI journals and 15 *Emerging Sources Citation Index* (ESCI) journals, respectively. Our manual search showed that only 21 of the *Web of Science* journals had review type articles. The third stage was an advanced keyword search of the 21 journals via a manual search in *Google Scholar*.

The first stage involved a keyword search for review studies using terms such as 'review', 'future trends' or 'meta' in the largest hospitality and tourism journal database, *EBSCOhost*. This basic search process resulted in a retrieval of 114 relevant review studies in hospitality and tourism, excluding conference papers and research notes.

The second stage involved a manual check of all volumes for the selected journals. Hall (2011) suggested it is necessary to have standards for journal selection to ensure that studies extracted from various channels and journals are of comparable quality. Multiple researchers (Law et al., 2009; Schmidgall et al., 2007) have stated the importance of journal ranking, and a highly ranked research journal is an indicator of research performance. In the current study, we referred to the SSCI and ESCI to select hospitality and tourism journals for a manual search. The SSCI covers the top-tier journals in social science, which we evaluated according to the sophisticated selection criterion of the *Web of Science Core Collection Journal Selection Process* (Gursoy & Sandstrom, 2016). We selected 32 leading hospitality-and tourism-related journals for this study, excluding 2 travel-medicine-themed journals. All of

the volumes of the selected journals, from the very first on-line volume to the latest 'on-line first' (i.e., forthcoming articles not yet published in the journals), were searched (stage two of the manual search process was completed in July 2016). By screening the tables of contents of all of the on-line journal issues, an additional 84 review studies found in 21 different journals were added to our initial sample, retrieved from the first phase of data collection. The manual search process uncovered any review studies that had been neglected in the first keyword search, ensuring the comprehensiveness and rigor of the study.

The final stage of data collection involved an advanced search in the targeted journals, applying additional keywords in *Google Scholar*, with keywords including 'review', 'meta', 'years of study' and 'future'. This advanced search was repeated with the 32 *Web of Science* listed journals. An additional 37 articles were retrieved from this final phase of data collection, resulting in a total sample size of 228. After the three-step data collection process, a weekly alert was set in *Google Scholar* to notify the authors of the latest review studies. The data collection was completed by 17 July 2016, and 228 review studies were collected for coding. We reviewed the sample articles and applied coding criteria to each. Articles that failed to meet the criteria were deleted, and the final sample size retained for data analysis was 171.

Coding criteria

Exclusion criteria were applied to further refine the collected data. Research notes, dissertations, editorial articles, trend reports, book reviews and articles in non-*Web of Science* listed journals were excluded from the sample. The articles in question were further reviewed by two academic experts. In the case of review studies lacking the necessary elements/content for coding and classification, further discussions were held until agreements were reached between all of the researchers.

After the exclusion process, a set of criteria drawn from previous review studies was applied to code the collected review studies. The coding criteria included journal title, journal focus (i.e., hospitality- or tourism-focused journals), article titles, author, year, research subjects, key concepts/topics, chosen period (i.e., review timeframe), journal outlet (i.e., reviewed journals), data collection method, research method (i.e., qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods), sample size (i.e., number of reviewed articles), criteria applied (i.e., criteria used to code articles) and citation counts (i.e., citation number extracted from *Google Scholar*). The following section discusses the details of the classification and standards for the main coding criteria applied in this study.

Subjects: Fourteen subject items of the review studies were identified based on the classification of hospitality and tourism research subjects by K. Park, Phillips, Canter, and Abbott (2011) (see Table 1). The initial subject list was revised according to the requirements of this research, new items from other previous research and an analysis of sample articles were added. For example, five new categories, including research trend reviews (TREND), methodology reviews (METH), theory and framework reviews (THEO) (Manganari, Dimara, & Theotokis, 2016), regional specific reviews (REGN) and tourism sector reviews (TOUR_SEC), were created based on our analysis of the content and the nature of the review studies in our samples.

<INSERT TABLE 1 HERE: LIST OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS>

The procedure for classifying articles into the corresponding research subject involved two steps. The first step was to identify the key concepts and related subjects of the sample articles. The second step was to further identify the major subject by assessing the study purpose and research findings. For articles addressing more than one subject, the primary subject was recorded (X. Y. Leung, Xue, & Bai, 2015). All of the studies were reviewed and

assigned into subject groups by two authors separately and were then crosschecked to ensure the objectivity and reliability of the grouping process. For cases where a single study was assigned in different groups by the two authors, further review and discussions were sought with the other authors until a consensus was reached. Similar classification and crosschecking approaches were applied to code other criteria, such as the data collection and research methods.

Research methods: Research methods can be categorized into qualitative and quantitative groups in general. Jang and Park (2011) suggested that quantitative studies could be differentiated from qualitative studies in their use of numerical data. However, it would be problematic to judge qualitative and quantitative studies based only on their use of numbers (Jang & Ha, 2014; Olsen, 2004). For instance, some studies are qualitative in nature, despite their application of quantitative data-analysis techniques such as frequency or percentage analysis. As mentioned in the literature review section, five types of reviews were identified in the current study. We broadly coded these five review types into three categories of research method: qualitative review (including narrative and thematic reviews), quantitative review (including systematic and meta-analysis reviews) and mixed method (including mixed methods reviews).

Citation: In this study, citation counts refer to the total number of times one article was cited up to 15 October 2016 via the *Google Scholar* search engine. The citation counts were measured to reveal the overall impact of the individual review studies. Meanwhile, by contrasting the number of citations with other criteria such as review types (research methods), research subjects and published journals, the results revealed the features of the review studies and their influence on future researchers.

The number of citations for each study was extracted from *Google Scholar* using *Zotero* software. *Google Scholar*, a component of Google, is a leading search engine that comprehensively indexes scholarly articles (Law et al., 2009). The total citations for each review article were extracted on 15 October 2016, and thus any further citations after the extraction date were not taken into account. As recently published review studies were naturally limited in their total citations, to further explore and compare the impact of the review article, a new criterion was created: citations per year, calculated as follows.

$$Citation/year = \frac{Total\ citation\ counts * 12}{Total\ months\ since\ published}$$

The *total months since published* in the equation was calculated from the article's publication date to October 2016. For some articles republished on a more recent date, the initial publication date was used; for example, one article published in September 2014 had a total of 22 months of history until the referred date. Journals that provided only an issue number and a publication year (e.g., *2015, Issue 2*) without a publication month were changed into the format of publication year and month before performing the equation. The total number of journal issues published per year was checked (e.g., four issues per year), and the estimated publication month for each issue was determined (e.g., March [Issue 1], June [Issue 2], September [Issue 3] and December [Issue 4]). Therefore, the publication year and month for the preceding example (i.e., *2015, Issue 2*) would have been June 2015.

Results

Overview of review studies in hospitality and tourism

Publication by journals: Overall, 171 review studies were retained after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. All of these studies were published in SSCI journals (including four hospitality-focused journals, thirteen tourism-focused journals and three hospitality-and tourism-focused journals; see Table 2). The three journals with the largest numbers of review studies were *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* ($N = 23$, 13.5%), *International Journal of Hospitality Management* ($N = 21$, 12.3%) and *Tourism Management* ($N = 20$, 11.7%). Almost twice as many review studies were published in tourism-focused journals ($N = 105$, 61%) than in hospitality-focused journals ($N = 56$, 33%); furthermore, more tourism journals were selected than hospitality journals, as listed by the SSCI.

<INSERT TABLE 2 HERE: PUBLICATION BY JOURNALS>

Publication by year: The earliest review study included in this research was Calantone, Benedetto, and Bojanic (1987), published in 1987 in *Journal of Travel Research*. **Figure 1** shows the number of publications in five-year intervals from 1987 to 2016. Overall, 42 (25%) review studies were published from 2007 to 2011, and 107 (63%) were published from 2012 until recently. In 2015 alone, 31 review studies were published. In the first half of 2016, 26 review studies were published or in the process of being published. As shown in the figure, the number of review studies has grown rapidly since 2011 and is likely to continue increasing in the next five-year interval. The publication trend of review studies evidences the increasing importance of review type studies in hospitality and tourism research and reflects the maturity of the disciplines.

<INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE: PUBLICATION BY YEAR>

Subjects: **Figure 2** presents the distribution of review studies in terms of research subjects. The most popular subject was economics and finance (E&F); a total of 29 review studies were conducted under this subject, such as reviews of tourism demand forecast (Peng, Song, & Crouch, 2014) and hospitality finance research (Jang & Park, 2011). The second most popular subject was customer behavior ($N = 24$, 14%), followed by marketing ($N = 22$, 13%). There was a noticeable trend in region-specific reviews (REGN) ($N = 18$, 11%); these studies reviewed publications related to a specific nation or area, such as Chinese tourism research from 2001 to 2012 (Sun, Wei, & Zhang, 2016). Twelve review studies were identified as trend reviews (TREND), which synthesized research trends in the hospitality and tourism fields and offered direction for future studies, such as publishing trends in hospitality and tourism journals for 40 years (McKercher & Tung, 2015). Subjects such as theory development and application (Manganari et al., 2016) were relatively less reviewed ($N = 3$, 2%). Compared with theory review, methodology and analysis technique (METH) reviews have grown rapidly since 2012 ($N = 12$, 7%), with examples including reviews of experimental design in hospitality and tourism (Fong et al., 2016) and reviews of structural equation modelling (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2007).

Research methods: Table 3 presents an overview of the research method/nature of the sample studies. These papers included 96 qualitative reviews, including 36 narrative and 60 thematic reviews, and 73 quantitative reviews, including 58 systematic reviews, 15 of which were meta-analysis reviews. Overall, more qualitative reviews were conducted than quantitative reviews in the disciplines of hospitality and tourism. Thematic and systematic reviews were similar in number. The number of meta-analytical reviews was relatively low due to their more complex review approach and analysis technique. Twelve of the meta-analysis reviews

were published after 2013, and five of them were published in 2016, showing that meta-analysis reviews increased in the hospitality and tourism fields.

<INSERT TABLE 3 HERE: RESEARCH METHOD AND REVIEW TYPES>

Data collection method: Table 4 shows that keyword searching ($N = 94$, 54%) has been the most commonly applied data collection method for review papers. The keyword searching process is usually carried out in the main academic databases (e.g., *EBSCO*, *Science Direct*, and *Google Scholar*) via search engines. Sixteen review studies (10%) applied specific journal reviews to collect data, which means that the researchers retrieved data from chosen journals instead of searching the whole database (Svensson et al., 2009). The purpose of such specific journal reviews is usually to synthesize research trends or subjects from the chosen journals, such as the systematic review of research articles in the *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* from 2008 to 2011 (Law et al., 2012). Other data collection methods such as manual searches and JAVA retrieved data were less applied in review studies. Fifty-six (33%) studies did not specify their data collection methods.

<INSERT TABLE 4 HERE: DATA COLLECTION METHODS>

Sample size: The sample sizes varied from study to study, ranging from less than 10 to more than 10,000, with an average sample size of 496. Overall, 29 review studies (17%) had fewer than 50 samples, 35 (20%) had sample sizes ranging from 50 to 100 and 25 (15%) reviewed 150-200 samples. Table 5 shows the average sample size for five types of review studies. The systematic reviews have the highest sample size ($M = 731$), followed by the thematic reviews ($M = 433$) and narrative reviews ($M = 124$).

<INSERT TABLE 5 HERE: SAMPLE SIZE BY REVIEW TYPE>

Chosen period: Most of the review papers specified their timeframes for the research they reviewed (see Table 6). Overall, 53 studies reviewed 1-9 years of research, 46 studies reviewed a 20-year research period and 32 studies reviewed a 30-year research period. The longest review timeframe covered 1960-2012: a review of suitable tourism over a period of 52 years of research (Borges, Eusébio, & Carvalho, 2014). Sixty-seven (39.4%) studies reviewed research published after 2000, the most reviewed chosen period.

<INSERT TABLE 6 HERE: CHOSEN PERIOD FOR REVIEWS>

Journal outlets: Ninety-two review studies specified the journal outlet/chosen journals reviewed in the studies. *Tourism Management* ($N = 37$) was the most reviewed journal, followed by *Journal of Travel Research* ($N = 35$) and *Annals of Tourism Research* ($N = 32$). In hospitality-focused journals, *International Journal of Hospitality Management* ($N = 28$) was the most reviewed, followed by *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* ($N = 27$) and *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* ($N = 20$), *International Journal of Tourism Research* ($N = 18$), *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* ($N = 17$) and *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* ($N = 16$). In addition to the major tourism and hospitality journals, some of the review studies involved journals from other disciplines, such as *Journal of Business Research* and *The Service Industry Journal*. Forty review studies identified their main databases for data collection, such as *EBSCO*, *Science Direct* and *Scopus*, but without specifying the journal outlet.

Coding criteria: The number and types of coding criteria applied in the review studies varied significantly based on the nature of the review studies (see Table 7). Overall, the qualitative reviews ($M = 3$) had fewer coding criteria than the quantitative reviews ($M = 7.5$). The narrative reviews applied two criteria for coding on average, as the main purpose of a narrative review is to critically evaluate and identify the main concept in the field rather than

provide descriptive analysis. The commonly applied criteria for quantitative reviews included publication details (i.e., author, year and journal), subject, nature of research, research context/industry, data analysis techniques, research results and citations. Meta-analysis ($N =$ 15) reviews had an average of 10 coding criteria. The most common criteria in meta-analysis reviews included publication details, sample sizes, mean scores, standard deviations, correlations, coefficients, significance values, Cronbach's alpha and fail-safe numbers. Regardless of the research type, publication details, research subjects, industry contexts and the nature of the study were the most commonly applied criteria in the review studies conducted in the hospitality and tourism fields.

<INSERT TABLE 7 HERE: CODING CRITERIA BY REVIEW TYPE>

Review study trends

Performing cross-tabulation between publication year and other criteria (e.g., research subjects, research method and citation) provided some insights into the development of review studies in the hospitality and tourism literature. We grouped articles in five-year intervals so that any significant changes would show us the development and progression in the review type research over the past 16 years.

Table 8 shows the research subjects of review studies from 1987 to 2016. Overall, the number of review studies on all subjects has grown in the last five years compared with the publications from 2007 to 2011. Twenty-one consumer behavior studies have been published from 2012 to the present. Customer satisfaction, customer/destination loyalty, on-line purchase behavior and electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) are recently reviewed topics under consumer behavior. The most popular review subject is economic and finance (E&F) ($N = 29$), and the tourism demand model is the most frequently reviewed topic.

<INSERT TABLE 8 HERE: RESEARCH SUBJECTS BY FIVE-YEAR INTERVALS>

Table 9 presents the research methodologies of the review studies by five-year intervals. The number of quantitative review studies published between 2012 and 2016 increased to 53, almost 4 times the amount from 2007 to 2012 ($N = 13$). As mentioned in the overview of research methods (see Table 3), 15 out of 73 quantitative reviews were meta-analysis reviews. The majority of these reviews were conducted from 2012 to 2016, and three earlier meta-analysis reviews were conducted before 2000. Narrative reviews grew steadily over the last four intervals, while thematic reviews ($N = 36$) doubled in the last five years.

<INSERT TABLE 9 HERE: REVIEW TYPES BY FIVE-YEAR INTERVALS>

Review study impacts

Performing cross-tabulation between citation counts and other criteria (e.g., research method and research subjects) provided some insights into the study impacts of different types of review studies based on the criteria applied. Table 10 shows the impact of reviews of different subjects. Information and technology reviews (MIS/IT) had the highest number of citations at 264 and were cited most frequently (citation/year = 38) compared with other subjects. Operation and management (ORM) ranked second in number of citation of 131 per article as well as in average citation per year of 23. Marketing (MKT) and environment (ENV) reviews shared similar average citation counts (Cites_$_{MKT}$ = 127 vs. Cites_$_{ENV}$ = 125) and citations per year (Cites/year_$_{MKT}$ = 18 vs. Cites/year_$_{ENV}$ = 15).

<INSERT TABLE 10 HERE: RESEARCH SUBJECTS BY CITATION>

With regard to review types by citation, Table 11 shows that narrative reviews had more citations ($M = 149$) than other review types. Thematic reviews had the second highest number of citations ($M = 02$). In general, qualitative reviews had higher citation counts and citation frequency than quantitative reviews. The results were consistent with Jang and Park (2011) review of hospitality finance studies, which found that qualitative finance studies had more

citations than quantitative studies. Among the quantitative reviews, meta-analytical reviews had an average citation frequency of 60 and a yearly citation frequency of 9.

<INSERT TABLE 11 HERE: REVIEW TYPES BY CITATION>

As shown in Table 12, the total number of citations has risen at every five-year interval, indicating that the impact of review studies is increasing and will become greater in the future. Forty-two reviews published from 2007 to 2011 showed the largest total citations ($N =$ 42, $M = 166$).

<INSERT TABLE 12 HERE: CITATION BY FIVE-YEAR INTERVALS>

The average citation count for the study sample totaled 85. The most cited review article in the hospitality journals (based on the referred data of 15 October 2016) is a study by O'Connor and Murphy (2004), "Research on information technology in the hospitality industry", which was cited 177 times, 15 times per year. In the tourism journals, the article written by Buhalis and Law (2008) , "*Progress in information technology and tourism management: 20 years on and 10 years after the Internet—the state of eTourism research*" was cited 1,748 times, equivalent to 214 citations per year. As shown in Table 13, of the 15 most cited articles in the hospitality journals, eight review studies were published in International Journal of Hospitality Management, while six of the most cited review studies in tourism journals were published in Tourism Management (see Table 14). In general, tourism journals had a higher citation count and average citation count than those published in hospitality journals.

<INSERT TABLE 13 HERE: MOST CITED INDIVISUAL REVIEW STUDIES IN HOSPITALITY JOURNALS>

<INSERT TABLE 14 HERE: MOST CITED INDIVIDUAL REVIEW STUDIES IN TOURISM JOURNALS>

Discussion

The results of this systematic analysis of review studies provide a better understanding of the way review studies have been conducted whilst identifying the trends within hospitality and tourism literature thus far. Given that this study is exploratory in nature, no predictions are made; however, implications and suggestions for future research avenues are discussed as an outcome.

Through the assessment of review studies, this study yields three fundamental results: (1) a contribution to the advancement of research within the disciplines of hospitality and tourism via a reflection on previous review studies, (2) an insight into the scope, history and trends of review studies within the fields and (3) an exploratory view of the impact of review studies and future implications. Being the first of its type, this examination of review studies may be useful for research scholars, especially as a comprehensive reference of review studies conducted within the fields. The results of this study, such as the coding criteria implicated in the review process, could be replicated for future review studies, thus providing scholars with an additional research tool. Through an overview of the review studies completed within the hospitality and tourism disciplines, researchers can see the subjects and types of reviews that have already been conducted and which topics remain under-reviewed.

Research implications of review trends

Research summarizing the overall development, history and patterns of review studies conducted within the fields of hospitality and tourism has been absent, and this study proposes to fill the gap. First, its overview of hospitality and tourism review studies shows that of the five journals that published the most studies, three were tourism-focused journals. This generally indicates that more review studies have had a tourism focus. However, hospitality-focused journals have seen an increase in recent years – 107 (63%) reviews were

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published after 2012 (see Figure 1), reflecting the trend/development of review studies in general and indicating the increasing relevance and/or popularity of this type of study.

Second, it is evident that the subjects covered by review studies have become diverse in recent years (see Table 8), which is specifically reflected in the emergency of new review subjects (e.g., region-specific reviews, theory and model reviews and tourism sector reviews) in the last decade. This may illustrate that the hospitality and tourism disciplines are becoming more comprehensive as a body of knowledge (D. Leung, Law, Van Hoof, & Buhalis, 2013).

Third, our findings reveal that the most heavily examined subjects for review studies (see Figure 2) have come from the fields of economics and finance. Economics and finance subject reviews have seen a steady increase since 2010, reaching their peak in 2015. This finding may be a response to the diverse challenges faced by the industry today, such as 'economic instability, recession and stagnation, social instability, war/terrorism, information technology and social media, environmental and sustainability issues, distribution of tourism benefits, and non-economic value of tourism' (Uysal, Sirgy, Woo, & Kim, 2016). This heavy focus on economics and finance is in line with previous hospitality studies that found many researchers and practitioners examining the accounting, financial and revenue aspects of hospitality organizations.

Review studies focusing on the subject of marketing also experienced a sudden increase from 2007 onwards, perhaps due to the rise of on-line marketing platforms, with most studies from recent years reviewing topics such as website evaluation, smartphones and social media. As Yoo, Lee, and Bai (2011) suggested, the change in topical trends of hospitality journals seem to be in line with the realities and needs of the industry. Our findings also suggest that theoretical frameworks and research methods could be a subject for future scholars, as they

have been included in the least number of review studies. Overall, future research endeavors could address the gap created by the uneven distribution of subjects covered by review studies in our disciplines.

Fourth, in terms of review type, the increase of meta-analysis studies in recent years may signal the development of hospitality and tourism as academic disciplines, as a substantial number of empirical studies on a particular subject/focus is required to implement a meta-analysis. However, compared with other disciplines such as business and marketing, there remains a lack of meta-analysis review studies in the hospitality and tourism fields. This could be a future avenue for scholars to consider in their research methods.

Fifth, from our cross-tabulation of research methods by subjects, we found that meta-analysis was applied merely to economics and finance subjects in earlier years, especially tourism demands (Crouch, 1994a, 1995; Lim, 1999). However, recent meta-analytical reviews were conducted across a range of subjects and topics, including consumers' green behavioral intentions (Gao, Mattila, & Lee, 2016), hospitality and tourism satisfaction (Ladeira, santini, Araujo, & Sampaio, 2016) and customer loyalty (Tanford, 2016; Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014).

Research implications of study impacts

This study used citation counts and average citations per year to explore the most influential features of review studies (Tables 10, 11 and 12) and indicate the impacts of individual review studies (see Table 13). The most cited subjects for review studies were economics and finance, followed by marketing (see Table 10), and the most common topic in the top 30 most cited articles was the tourism demand model. The second most cited topics focused on on-line marketing, such as examinations of website evaluation, social media and eWOM. This may be evidence of a topical trend that has occurred in our fields to meet the reality and

needs of the industry (Yoo et al., 2011), as the changes brought on by the advent of social media have created new questions and challenges for both researchers and practitioners (D. Leung et al., 2013).

It is also interesting that review studies on the subject of methodology had a significantly high number of citations, such as reviews of structural equation modelling (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2007). Such subjects may provide useful background or tools for researchers, informing them of trends or developments in research methods.

In terms of the impacts of research methods, qualitative review studies had a higher average number of citations than quantitative studies (see Table 11). The 10 articles with the highest citations were all qualitative reviews, 4 of which were narrative and 6 were thematic reviews. Within the top 30 most cited articles, there were 7 quantitative review studies, 3 of which were meta-analysis studies. This could be an avenue for future researchers, as there remains opportunity for much more to be done in quantitative and meta-analysis review studies.

Limitations and future research

Like all research, this study is subject to imperfections. First, some review studies were not included in our study based on the inclusion/exclusion criteria (e.g., *Web of Science* indexed journals only) in the literature search process. However, a comprehensive search was conducted for the journals selected for this study, with all on-line issues manually checked with rigor.

Although the coding criteria were drawn from the guidelines of a systematic review and citation analysis approach, they could not perfectly represent all of the review studies. Consensus was reached through discussions between the authors. Although the citation calculations might not have been perfect, they served the scope and purpose of this study. The systematic search method was deliberate in its approach, especially in relation to scope.

During the coding process, 106 articles were deleted for not meeting the coding criteria specific to the context of this study; establishing certain boundaries was necessary due to the plethora of types of review studies. For example, review studies that did not complete a systematic data collection process and bore an absence of statistical results in relation to their research topics were excluded from the sample.

The journal list retrieved from the *Web of Science* mainly comprised tourism-focused journals. Therefore, when it came to comparing the results between hospitality and tourism research, the results were skewed towards tourism-focused research. A natural extension of this study would be to consider other journal indexes when retrieving review studies for the sample.

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Table 1: List of research subjects

Subjects	Descriptions: Studies relate to…
CB	Customer attitude, satisfaction and behavior in tourism and hospitality
EDU	Teaching and education issues in tourism and hospitality
E&F	Economic and finance aspects of tourism and hospitality
EVN	Environmental strategies and management in tourism and hospitality
HRM	Human resource practices and issues in the tourism and hospitality
METH	Methodologies and statistics techniques in tourism and hospitality research
MIS/IT	Information technology management in tourism and hospitality
MKT	Marketing strategies and practices in tourism and hospitality
ORM	Business operations and management in tourism and hospitality
REGN	Tourism and hospitality research in specific regions, e.g., China tourism research
STM	Strategic management of business in hospitality and tourism, e.g., internationalization, diversification etc.
THEO	Development of theories and models in tourism and hospitality research
TOUR_SEC	Specific sectors of tourism, e.g., rural tourism, outdoor recreation, cruises
TREND	Main research trends and themes in the tourism and hospitality literature

Table 2: Publication by journal

Journal Title	Journal focus	*N*	%
Annals of Tourism Research	T	5	2.9
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	T	5	2.9
Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	H	6	3.5
Current Issues in Tourism	T	13	7.6
European Journal of Tourism Research	T	2	1.2
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	H	23	13.5
International Journal of Hospitality Management	H	21	12.3
International Journal of Tourism Research	T	5	2.9
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research	H&T	4	2.3
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	H&T	3	1.8
Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	H	6	3.5
Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism	T	1	0.6
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	T	8	4.7
Journal of Tourism Studies	T	1	0.6
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	T	17	9.9
Journal of Travel Research	T	17	9.9
Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	H&T	3	1.8
Tourism Economics	T	2	1.2
Tourism Geographies	T	5	2.9
Tourism Management	T	20	11.7
Tourism Review International	T	4	2.3

Note: H = hospitality-focused journals; T = tourism-focused journals; H&T= hospitality-and-tourism-focused journals

Table 3: Research method and review type

Research method	*N*	%
Quantitative	**73**	**42.7%**
Meta-analysis	15	8.8%
Systematic review	58	33.9%
Qualitative	**96**	**56.1**
Narrative review	36	21.1%
Thematic review	60	35.1%
Mixed methods	**2**	**1.2%**
Mixed methods	2	1.2%

Table 4: Data collection methods

Data collection methods	N	%
Keyword search	94	54.4
Not specified	56	32.8
Specific journal review	16	10
Manual search	3	1.8
Others	2	1.2

Table 5: Sample size by review type

Research method	N	Avg. sample size
Meta-analysis	15	68
Systematic review	58	731
Narrative review	36	124
Thematic review	60	433
Mixed methods	2	56

Table 6: Chosen period for reviews

Chosen period	N	%
1-9 years	53	31%
10-19 years	46	27%
20-29 years	32	19%
30-39 years	18	11%
40-49 years	6	4%
50-59 years	4	2%
Not specified	12	7%

Table 7: Coding criteria by review type

Review type	*N*	Avg. Criterion
Meta-analysis	15	10
Systematic review	58	5
Narrative review	36	2
Thematic review	60	4
Mixed methods	2	3

Table 8: Research subjects by five-year intervals

Subject	1987-1991	1992-1996	1997-2001	2002-2006	2007-2011	2012-2016
CB			1	1	1	21
E&F	1	3	2	2	7	14
ENV			1		2	7
HRM					4	5
METH				2	2	8
MIS/IT				1	3	5
MKT			1	3	7	11
ORM					2	4
REGN			1		6	11
STM				1		4
THEO					1	2
TOUR_SEC					4	8
TREND		1	1		3	7

Note: CB = Customer behavior; E&F = Economics and finance; ENV = Environment; HRM = Human resource management; METH = Methodology; MIS/IT = Information system; MKT = Marketing; ORM = Operation and management; REGN = Region specific; STM = Strategic management; THEO = Theoretical frame; TOUR_SEC = Tourism section; TREND = General trends.

Table 9: Review types by five-year intervals

Methods	1987-1991	1992-1996	1997-2001	2002-2006	2007-2011	2012-2016
Narrative	1		3	5	11	16
Thematic		1	2	3	18	36
Systematic		1	1	2	13	41
Meta-analysis		2	1			12
Mixed methods						2

Table 10: Research subjects by citation

Subjects	*N*	Citation		
		Total	**Mean**	**Cite/year**
CB	24	1,046	44	15
E&F	29	3,633	125	15
ENV	10	993	99	12
HRM	9	538	60	11
METH	12	776	65	10
MIS/IT	9	2,377	264	38
MKT	22	2,788	127	18
ORM	6	788	131	23
REGN	18	393	22	6
STM	5	194	39	10
THEO	3	69	23	6
TOUR_SEC	12	517	43	10
TREND	12	445	37	5

Note: CB = Customer behavior; E&F = Economics and finance; ENV = Environment; HRM = Human resource management; METH = Methodology; MIS/IT = Information system; MKT = Marketing; ORM = Operation and management; REGN = Region specific; STM = Strategic management; THEO = Theoretical frame; TOUR_SEC = Tourism section; TREND = General trends.

Table 11: Review types by citation

Review types	_N_	Citation		
		Total	**Mean**	**Cite/year**
Meta-analysis	15	905	60	9
Descriptive	58	2,149	37	9
Narrative	36	5,368	149	21
Thematic	60	6,130	102	16
Mixed methods	2	5	3	5

Table 12: Citations by five-year interval

Year	*N*	Total	Mean	Cite/year
		Citation		
1987-1991	**1**	**130**	**130**	**4**
1987	1	130	130	4
1992-1996	**4**	**948**	**237**	**11**
1992	1	116	116	5
1994	2	498	249	11
1995	1	334	334	15
1997-2001	**7**	**1,825**	**261**	**14**
1997	2	635	318	17
1998	1	65	65	4
1999	3	1,060	353	20
2001	1	65	65	4
2002-2006	**10**	**2,266**	**227**	**17**
2002	3	1411	470	33
2003	1	337	337	26
2004	4	330	83	7
2005	2	188	94	8
2007-2011	**42**	**6,983**	**166**	**22**
2007	5	1,096	219	24
2008	8	2,924	366	44
2009	9	808	90	12
2010	8	1,421	178	28
2011	12	734	61	11
2012-2016	**107**	**2,405**	**22**	**10**
2012	11	461	42	10
2013	18	855	48	14
2014	21	703	33	14
2015	31	261	8	7
2016	26	125	5	8

Table 13: Most cited individual review studies in the hospitality journals

No.	Author(s)	Journal	Subject	Review types	Cites	Cites/ year
1	O'Connor and Murphy (2004)	IJHM	MIS/IT	narrative	177	15
2	Johns and Pine (2002)	IJHM	CB	narrative	156	11
3	Stepchenkova and Mills (2010)	JHMM	MKT	Thematic	134	21
4	Crawford-Welch and McCleary (1992)	IJHM	TREND	Systematic	116	5
5	Serra Cantallops and Salvi (2014)	IJHM	CB	Thematic	112	41
6	Line and Runyan (2012)	IJHM	MKT	Systematic	111	26
7	Oh, Kim, and Shin (2004)	IJHM	MKT	Systematic	103	9
8	Law, Buhalis, and Cobanoglu (2014)	IJCHM	MIS/IT	narrative	98	47
9	Jae Lee and Back (2005)	IJCHM	E&F	Thematic	90	8
10	Ip, Leung, and Law (2011)	IJCHM	MIS/IT	Thematic	89	17
11	Brent Ritchie, Tung, and Ritchie (2011)	IJCHM	CB	Systematic	84	15
12	Yoo et al. (2011)	IJCHM	MKT	Systematic	78	14
13	Bowen and Sparks (1998)	IJHM	MKT	Thematic	65	4
14	Kong and Cheung (2009)	IJCHM	REGN	Systematic	63	8
15	Tsang and Hsu (2011)	IJHM	REGN	Systematic	60	12

Note: IJCHM = International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management; IJHM = International; Journal of Hospitality Management; JHMM = Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management.

Table 14: Most cited individual review studies in the tourism journals

No.	Author(s)	Journal	Subject	Review types	Cites	Cites/ year
1	Buhalis and Law (2008)	TM	MIS/IT	narrative	1748	214
2	Pike (2002)	TM	MKT	Thematic	1078	77
3	Song and Li (2008)	TM	E&F	Thematic	772	91
4	Hjalager (2010)	TM	ORM	narrative	715	107
5	Butler (1999)	TG	ENV	narrative	679	38
6	Lim (1997)	ATR	E&F	Thematic	623	33
7	Crouch (1994b)	JTR	E&F	Thematic	397	18
8	Reisinger and Mavondo (2007)	JTTM	METH	Thematic	380	41
9	Law, Qi, and Buhalis (2010)	TM	MKT	Thematic	372	59
10	Kasimati (2003)	IJTR	E&F	narrative	337	26
11	Crouch (1995)	ATR	E&F	Meta-analysis	334	15
12	Baum (2007)	TM	HRM	narrative	328	37
13	Y. A. Park and Gretzel (2007)	JTR	MKT	Thematic	315	34
14	D. Leung et al. (2013)	JTTM	MKT	Thematic	245	65
15	Lim (1999)	JTR	E&F	Meta-analysis	241	14

Note: ATR = Annals of Tourism Research; IJTR = International Journal of Tourism Research; JTR = Journal of Travel Research; JTTM = Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing; TM = Tourism Management; TG = Tourism Geography.
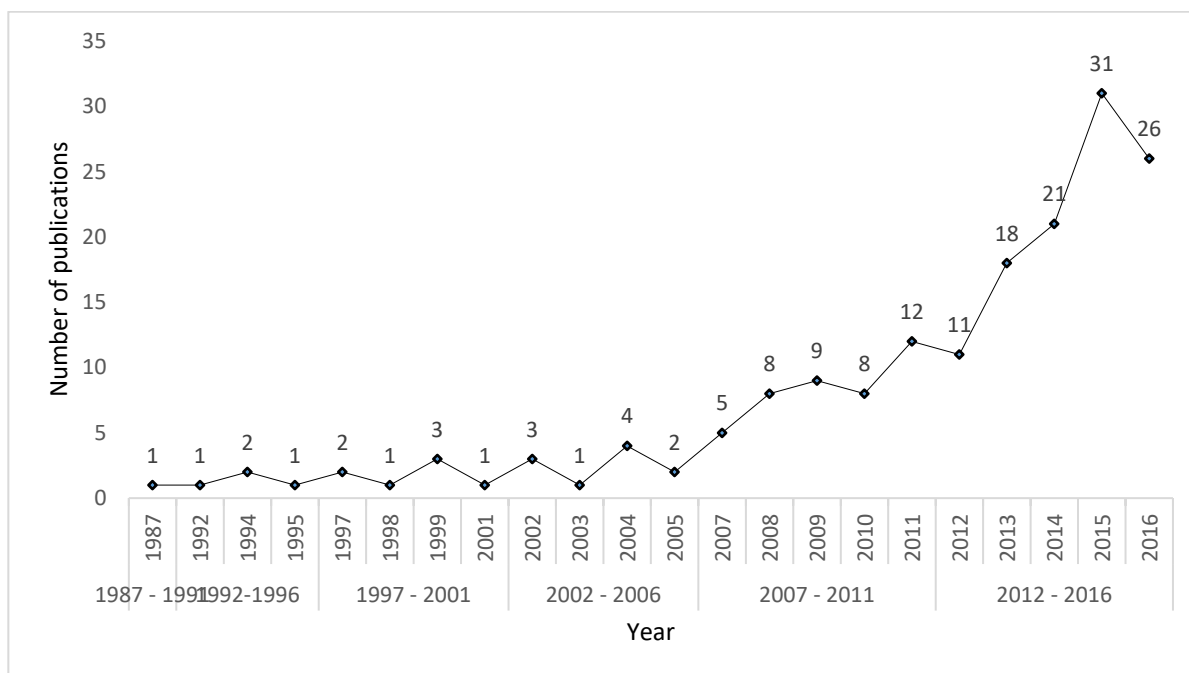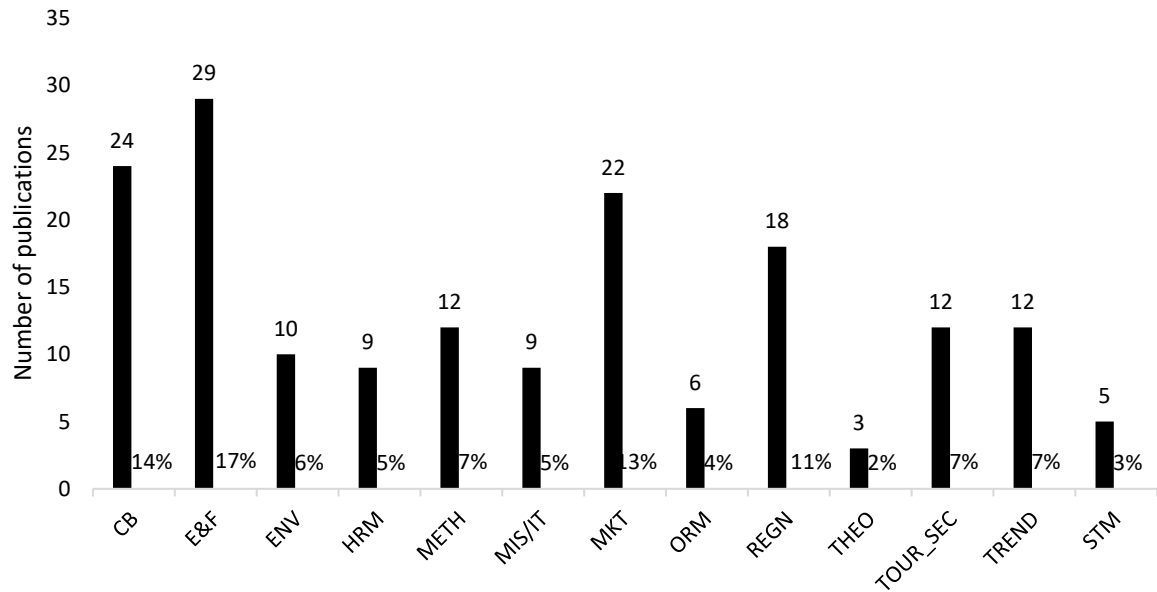
Figure 1: Publications by year

Figure 2. Publications by subject

Note: CB = Customer behavior; E&F = Economics and finance; ENV = Environment; HRM = Human resource management; METH = Methodology; MIS/IT = Information system; MKT = Marketing; ORM = Operation and management; REGN = Region specific; THEO = Theoretical frame; STM = Strategic management; TOUR_SEC = Tourism section; TREND = General trends.