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Review

A Bibliometric Analysis of Service Quality in the Hospitality Industry (2014–2024)

Olakunle Shakur Olawuyi * and Carina Kleynhans

Department of Hospitality Management, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria 0183, South Africa; kleynhansic@tut.ac.za

* Correspondence: olawuyios@tut.ac.za

Abstract: Service quality is important for the survival of all businesses, including the hospitality business. Service quality can be measured by a model referred to as SERVQUAL, which comprises five parameters, namely, tangibility, reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness. It is very important to examine publications to ascertain trends in service quality in the hospitality industry during the previous decade (2014–2024). Data were collected from the Scopus database, the article search having yielded 876 documents. The eligibility criteria were as follows: papers had to be published between 2014 and 2024, had to be written in English, and were restricted to articles, conference papers, book chapters, and review papers. The collected data were analyzed with the biblioshiny package in RStudio. The results revealed that the journal with the highest number of articles published during the period under study was *Sustainability* (Switzerland). Hong Kong Polytechnic was the institution with the highest number of publications vis-à-vis service quality in the hospitality industry, followed by Bina Nusantara University and Eastern Mediterranean University. It is notable that customer satisfaction featured prominently in different clusters, which emphasizes the fact that service quality is targeted at satisfying customers.

Keywords: service quality; SERVQUAL; hospitality industry and bibliometric

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1. Introduction

Prabhu et al. (2020) noted that the hospitality sector, especially hotels, can be regarded as a very important component of the tourism sector, premised on the fact that hotels are established to meet the lodging needs of guests. The hospitality sector is sine qua non to the development and sustenance of tourism. Boora and Dhankar (2017) noted that the hospitality sector in India has witnessed significant growth in recent times, and it is the third-biggest subsector of the service industry with a contribution of 12.5% to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in 2014–2015. There is no gainsaying that the hospitality industry has contributed substantially to the growth and development of many nations. B. Ali et al. (2021) opined that in contemporary times the hospitality and tourism sector are highly important because they essentially generate substantial income for the country. The viability of the hospitality industry has consistently attracted investors from different quarters and has consequently become highly competitive. It is anticipated that there will be increased rivalry among companies in the hospitality sector in the years to come owing to the high level of competition (N. Abdullah & Othman, 2019).

The hospitality industry is a service-driven industry. Hence, it is important that the services rendered in the hospitality industry should be of the highest quality possible. Asgeirsson et al. (2024) noted that the hospitality sector shares a characteristic with sundry

service sectors—it depends on rendering high-quality services that must outshine those of competitors in this highly competitive segment of the market. It is notable that guests will repeatedly patronize a hospitality business when they are availed with quality service. Srivastava and Dubey (2024) noted that clients tend to continue transacting with organizations that meet their expectations. Therefore, it is expected that companies in the hospitality industry must emphasize rendering quality services to their customers at all times for their survival. In a bid to achieve success or survive in contemporary times, the hospitality sector is certainly focused on customers' perceptions of services vis-à-vis their diverse expectations, which is the hallmark of businesses with good patronage (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Service quality is one of the main thrusts of customer satisfaction and their continued patronage. Song et al. (2022) asserted that with respect to hotels, service quality could only be determined by customer satisfaction. Hence, any component of the hospitality industry that does not prioritize service quality has the potential to cause dissatisfaction among its customers. B. Ali et al. (2021) opined that hotels that provide poor services lead to dissatisfied customers, resulting in decreased demand and such a hotel's consequent reduced performance. A dissatisfied guest may never request the services of a hotel again, whereas a satisfied guest may pay a return visit. Sharma and Bhat (2022) suggested that customers' revisit intentions are usually underscored by satisfaction. The trends in the hospitality industry underscore the different trajectories embraced by the major stakeholders or players in the industry. Wang and Wang (2009) asserted that the trends in the hospitality sector show enhanced development in the ownership of vacation, globalization, and integration. Chatterjee (2022) opined that the trends in hospitality management include chatbot assistance, mobile applications, digitized room keys, self-check-in, voice activated virtual assistants, instant messages, social media, smart hotels, sustainable hotels, and robot staff. These trends exist mostly to serve customers better and gain customers' loyalty. In the same vein, there are challenges that accompany these trends and the hospitality sector as a whole. Wang and Wang (2009) posited that the challenges bedeviling the hospitality sector are operational (shortage in the supply of labor, difficulties of reducing cost, competition), marketing (market segmentation, brand overlap, enhanced customer sophistication), technological (data mining, interactive reservation system, guest room innovation, yield management), and economic (globalization, reliance on the country's economy). B. Ali et al. (2021) noted that guests in the hospitality sector in contemporary times are basically time-strapped, demanding, and have a high level of sophistication. Olowoyo et al. (2021) asserted that irrespective of the transformation and development in the hospitality industry, it is still challenged by management control, ownership issues, supplier as well as enterprise development, socio-economic development, stakeholder partnerships, and collaboration. Chatterjee (2022) opined that the major challenges associated with the hospitality industry are the shortage of a skilled workforce, increased attrition rate, increased rivalry, manual back-end tasks, and human resource management. However, different reviews have been conducted on the hospitality industry; for instance, Bore et al. (2017) explored systematic research on electronic word of mouth in the hotel industry, Rhou and Singal (2020) carried out a review of the business case for corporate social responsibility in the hospitality industry, Naldi et al. (2022) carried out a systematic review on hospitality and tourism innovation, Subying and Yoopetch (2023) studied the management of revenue in the tourism and hospitality industry using a bibliometric review, and Makoondlall-Chadee and Bokhoree (2024) explored a review of environmental sustainability in hotels. However, this study fills the gap in the literature that exists vis-à-vis bibliometric analysis of service quality in the hospitality industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Service Quality

Asgeirsson et al. (2024) noted that there are various definitions associated with service, but it is generally considered a procedure that involves connections and cocreation between the people that render services and the recipients of such services. Service quality depicts the result of consumers' examination of specific services to determine whether those services meet or surpass their expectations (Dörtyol et al., 2014). Variations in clients' expectations of services to be provided by service providers and clients' perception of those services provided define service quality (J. Ali et al., 2021; V. Zeithaml, 2000). Simply put, it is the difference between what customers expect and what the organization delivers. Customers usually expect certain standards from an organization. Wilson et al. (2021) noted that perceptions of service quality vary among individuals, but it could be described as services that meet the demands and aspirations of clients depending on how good the services are in the minds of such clients. It behooves customers to critically examine services rendered to them by organizations to determine if the rendered services meet or surpass their expectations. Hence, an organization succeeds at providing service quality once the standards expected by customers are met. As quality is defined by clients' perspectives of the services provided, service quality equates to clients' perceptions of a high standard (N. Abdullah & Rahman, 2015). While organizations must have set quality standards ab initio, it is very important to obtain feedback from customers to know when and how to improve existing quality standards. Feedback can be obtained via electronic platforms, questionnaires, etc. (González-Rodríguez et al., 2016; Uslu-Cibere et al., 2020). Hence, service quality can be considered a tool used to measure the behavioral tendencies of customers in relation to the organization's service offering. A standard indicator that defines behavioral dispositions is service quality (F. Chen & Chen, 2010). The feedback from customers will reveal whether their aspirations were fully or partially met and will also reflect specifics they prefer the organization to improve upon. Therefore, it is important for different sections of companies in the hospitality industry that prioritize quality and high standards to establish a feedback mechanism to periodically measure service quality. Asgeirsson et al. (2024) noted that the measurement of the quality of service involves getting feedback from clients regarding their experiences during or instantly after encountering services while also comparing their expectations with the service rendered.

2.2. Service Quality and the Hospitality Sector

The hospitality industry, similar to other service-based sectors, is expected to prioritize service quality in attending to its guests. Othman et al. (2019) asserted that the hospitality sector is expected to create a specific degree of standards capable of meeting the expectations and desires of customers and to be practical in the implementation of such standards. The service quality of hotels is evident in the services provided to guests, especially regarding meeting guests' expectations, and most hotels have been able to satisfy their guests via enhanced quality of service (Top & Ali, 2021). Customers' satisfaction is anchored in their perception of whether the service they receive complies with their desires and expectations (Aminudin et al., 2021).

Tourism and hospitality destinations should draw people to their venues; hence, they must be well organized and structured to meet customers' expectations. Olawuyi and Babawale (2024) posited that hospitality and tourism industries such as casinos, hotels, and theme parks can attract customers from various areas. Hence, the anticipated expectations and needs of guests are key indicators that could prepare the hospitality industry to ensure service quality. Usually, the standards set by the hospitality industry aim to ensure that quality services are rendered to their guests while generating the required profit.

These standards usually are achieved and maintained through significant investment in physical facilities and human development. This is premised on the fact that it is both physical facilities and human resources in the hospitality industry that will help translate organizational standards into a service quality framework that customers can experience and enjoy.

The hospitality industry's standards being essentially underpinned by service quality provides the industry with the challenge of being highly competitive and staying ahead of competitors. Typically, a model of service quality should increase a hotel's flexibility, competitiveness, and effectiveness (J. Ali et al., 2021). The pursuit of service quality fosters hospitality business owners' and managers' ingenuity and innovation in raising their standards to meet their guests' requests and expectations. The essence of measuring and improving the quality of service is prioritization—developing ideas* and focusing on characteristics that matter to both clients and the organization (Jou & Day, 2021; Shah et al., 2018).

J. Chen (2011) stated that the concept of service innovation is germane to the hospitality sector in three ways: first, service quality is important in the hospitality industry, based on the fact that customers' experiences of service form the main way of measuring the quality of hotels' service; second, the intense competition in the hospitality sector pushes organizations to sustain competitive advantages in regard to standards, especially the ease of replicating such service; and third, guests' preferences for individualized, flexible, and creative service is growing (Victorino et al., 2005), service creativity having become a substantive indicator of guests' satisfaction or loyalty. It will, therefore, be easy for a hospitality business to gain the loyalty and confidence of guests once it has raised its standards appropriately. Srivastava and Dubey (2024) noted that there is a strong tendency of clients becoming loyal to an organization when they feel that the organization cares about customers' welfare. It is important to understand the antecedence of general quality of service and its impact on guests' attitudes and behavioral loyalty based on the strong competition associated with the leisure and hospitality industry (Chikazhe et al., 2021). Customers that enjoy satisfactory services tend to repeat their visits to that destination (Saputra & Djumarno, 2021). This can, therefore, translate into making such hospitality business highly competitive and profitable. Generally, quality service is an impressive reference point of competitive advantage in the services sector, such as in hotels (Rahman et al., 2020; Woratschek et al., 2020).

2.3. Service Quality Model

The main established model for service quality is the SERVQUAL model. Parasuraman et al. (1985) established the gap-based model for measuring the difference between the expectations of guests in terms of rendered service and anticipated real service and named it the SERVQUAL framework. The SERVQUAL framework is underscored by five pillars: tangibility, assurance, reliability, empathy, and responsiveness, and as such, it provides a basis for the evaluation of service quality (Luo & Qu, 2016). It is notable that on the premise of the SERVQUAL model, other models that are task- or discipline-specific have been developed, such as, for instance, DINESERV and LODGESERV. Olawuyi et al. (2024) noted that researchers use various models to measure service quality.

Blesic et al. (2011) recorded noted that many researchers in the hospitality and tourism sector have modified and adopted the SERVQUAL model for diverse service quality studies. Kalnaovakul et al. (2024) noted that there have been proposals of different service quality frameworks such as SERVQUAL, DINESERV, and HOLSERV. Different instruments, such as HOTLSERV, LODGEQUAL, LODGESERV, and SERVINN, were amended for enhanced usage in hospitality studies, specifically in the hotel industry (O. Abdullah et al., 2022; Getty & Getty, 2003). Rajeswari et al. (2017) noted that the SERVQUAL

model was used as the basic template for certain sectors, as were SELEB, DINESERV, SITEQUAL, and LODGSERV; they have each been used for different studies. Researchers have modified SERVQUAL to different models customized for use in specific areas or scopes. Perdomo-Verdecia et al. (2024) remarked that irrespective of the criticism associated with the SERVQUAL framework, it was initially employed as a template in the service industry and was subsequently modified to improve its application and value in different contexts. During the process of applying the tools used in the measurement of the quality of service, such as with SERVQUAL, various modifications are available to achieve better usage for different organizations or research targets (A. Zeithaml et al., 2024). These instruments are based on SERVQUAL but have been modified for specific methods and quality trajectories (Asgeirsson et al., 2024).

The SERVQUAL model was adopted and operationalized for this study because it is broad enough to capture different sections and areas of an organization.

1. Reliability: Srivastava and Dubey (2024) noted that this aspect concerns the ability and reliability of a business entity for the provision of services capable of meeting the expectations of customers. Asgeirsson et al. (2024) noted that the capacity to provide dependable and accurate services reflects reliability. Mijatov et al. (2018) asserted that reliability is very important because it aids in building trust between the organizations that provide the services and the clients that are recipients of the services offered. Shameem and Pretha (2012) opined that reliability relates to the capacity of organizations to deliver the services that had been promised to customers, doing so with accuracy and dependability.
2. Responsiveness: Ahmad et al. (2018) pointed out that the ability of the hospitality sector to promptly resolve complaints and render exceptionally rapid services to customers is termed responsiveness. Assistance rendered to clients and prompt delivery of services are underscored by the concept of responsiveness (Srivastava & Dubey, 2024).
3. Tangibility: This dimension of service quality is defined by physical characteristics such as construction, machinery, communication equipment, and technology (Srivastava & Dubey, 2024). Asgeirsson et al. (2024) noted that tangibility encompasses all that can be seen, touched, or felt, ranging from solid structures through to equipment used for the provision of services and outfits of employees.
4. Empathy: Srivastava and Dubey (2024) suggested that the mode with which a business entity renders services to ensure that the company appears empathetic to its clients' needs is rooted in the concept of empathy. Shameem and Pretha (2012) stated that empathy encompasses easy access, being approachable, and various efforts to identify and meet guests' demands and expectations.
5. Assurance: Employees' knowledge, courtesy, competence, and ability to instill trust and confidence in customers is collectively known as assurance. Shameem and Pretha (2012) opined that the competence with which the service is provided and it being credible, courteous, and secure ensure that such service provides assurance to the client.

It is notable that the SERVQUAL model has been engaged for some components of the hospitality industry in the past. Luk and Layton (2004) used the SERVQUAL template to measure service quality regarding hotels' room service—the research targeted the improvement of information received from customers and revealed that various quality models influence guests' perceptions of the general service quality. Shafiq et al. (2019) noted that SERVQUAL had been employed by the hospitality sector to identify service quality parameters that focus on increasing the competitiveness of hotels and improving services to customers.

3. Materials and Methods

Data for this study were collected from the Scopus database during 2014–2015. The collected data were analyzed using bibliometric analysis because it can yield a profound and lucid analytical breakdown of collected data. Bibliometric analysis is a very effective tool for providing a detailed review of scientific contributions (Sweileh, 2020). Bibliometric analysis has been used in different research disciplines to quantitatively analyze and explain research (Zhang et al., 2020). Bibliometric packages have been very helpful with understanding research scopes and establishing research depth. The bibliometric analysis for this study was conducted using "biblioshiny" package in Rstudio (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Different software packages can be used for analyzing bibliometric analysis data, such as VOSviewer (Mehmood et al., 2022), SciMAT (Cobo et al., 2012), CitNetExplorer (Van Eck & Waltman, 2014), BibExcel (Persson et al., 2009), Sci2Tool (Light et al., 2014), and R program (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Biblioshiny is user friendly and produces outputs that are easy to understand. Zulfiqar et al. (2024) employed R scientific mapping software to display maps, particularly to find scientific maps, and used a bibliometric package for bibliometric analysis via references. Bibliometric analysis was also used by Firdaus et al. (2019) and Linnenluecke et al. (2019) with the generally acceptable R, as it also allows researchers to define the characterization of published articles.

The following research questions were examined for this study:

Q1: What was the citation overview of the publications in 2014–2024?
Q2: What were the sources of the publications in 2014–2024?
Q3: What was the information about the authors of publications in 2014–2024?
Q4: What was the conceptual structure of the publications in 2014–2024?
Q5: What was the social structure of the publications in 2014–2024?

Blanco-Moreno et al. (2025) asserted that the first step for bibliometric analysis involves downloading and segregating specified research publications about hotels, restaurants, and sustainable development from an appropriate database. Uddin et al. (2023) collected data from Scopus because publication numbers are title-based and because of the numbers of publications connected to COVID-19. For this study, the inclusion criteria were as follows: papers published between 2014 and 2024, published in English, and restricted to articles, conference papers, book chapters, and reviews. Raynaud et al. (2021) asserted that the criteria for inclusion are inclusive of research outputs in English language with authentic data, comprising authentic publications, research letters (and synonyms that correspond), and case reports. Search words used were "service" AND "quality", "hospitality", AND "industry", and OR "hospitality".

4. Results

The article search yielded 876 documents: 664 articles, 101 conference papers, 88 book chapters, and 23 review articles. The distribution of the keywords was as follows: 251 on "service quality", 208 on "hospitality industry", 125 on "hospitality", 113 on "tourism", and 89 on "customer satisfaction".

Q1: What was the citation overview of the publications in 2014–2024?

The annual scientific production shows that the largest number of publications took place in 2024 with a total of 153 publications (Figure 1). It is notable that there was a gradual increase in the number of publications from 2014 to 2022. There was a sharp decline in publications in 2023, with 113 publications. In terms of differences in numbers of articles published per year, 2024 had the highest number—40 publications (153) more than 2023, while 2019 and 2020 recorded the smallest difference because 2020 had only 1 more publication than the preceding year.

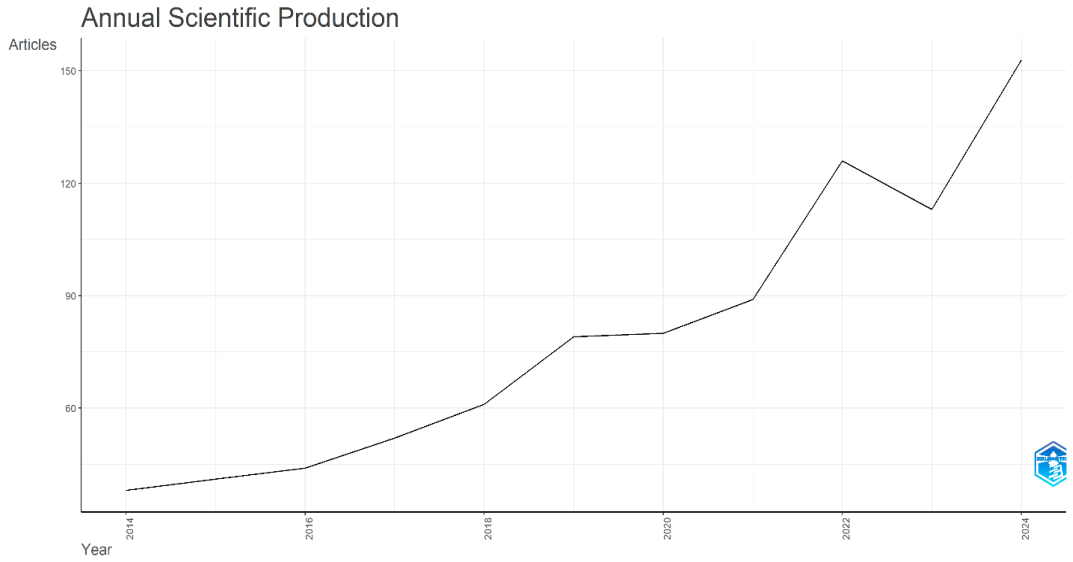

Figure 1. Annual production of scientific articles. Source: authors' creation (2025).

The year 2021 had the highest figure of average citations per year (5.6), whereas 2015 had the lowest figure of average citations per year (1.31), as evident in Figure 2.

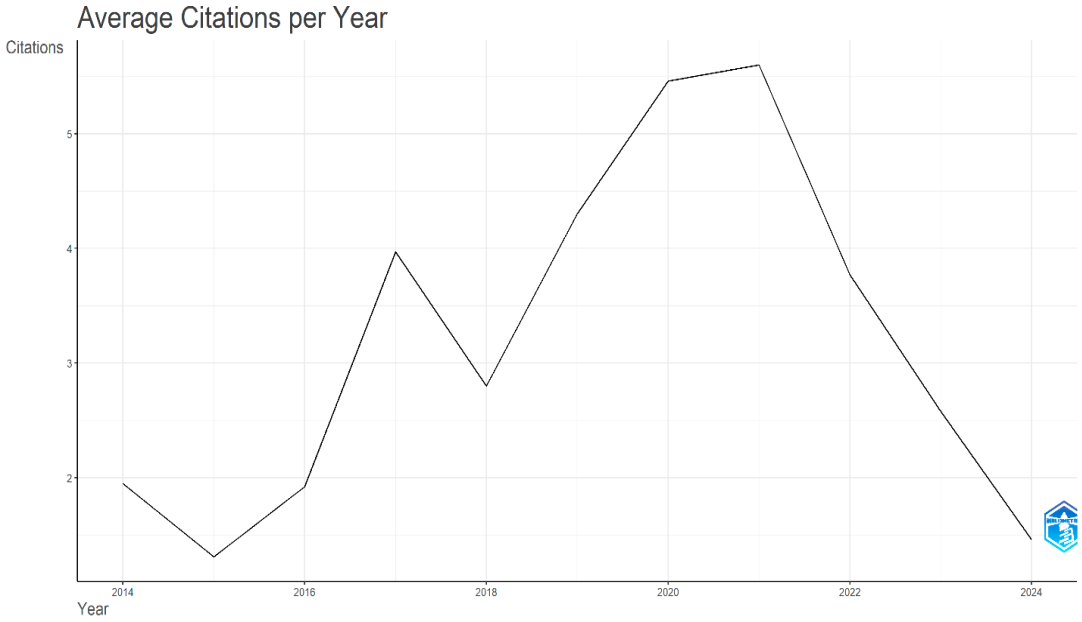

Figure 2. Average citations per year. Source: authors' creation (2025).

Figure 3 depicts the relationship and flow of research themes or keywords between abstract/title keywords (AB_TM), authors (AU), and descriptors/keywords (DE). The abstract/title keywords were service, quality, customers, satisfaction, relationship, hospitality, tourism, study, findings, and services. The keywords under "authors" were Singh R., Wang C. J., Jhamb D., Law R., Koc E., Avi mar and Liu Y., Hu F., Arasli H., and others. The keywords under "descriptors" included service quality, hospitality, satisfaction, artificial intelligence, and hotels. The overlapping content shows the types of abstract/title keywords and descriptors/keywords that authors used in their papers. These abstract/title keywords and descriptors/keywords underscore the citation figures of the authors.

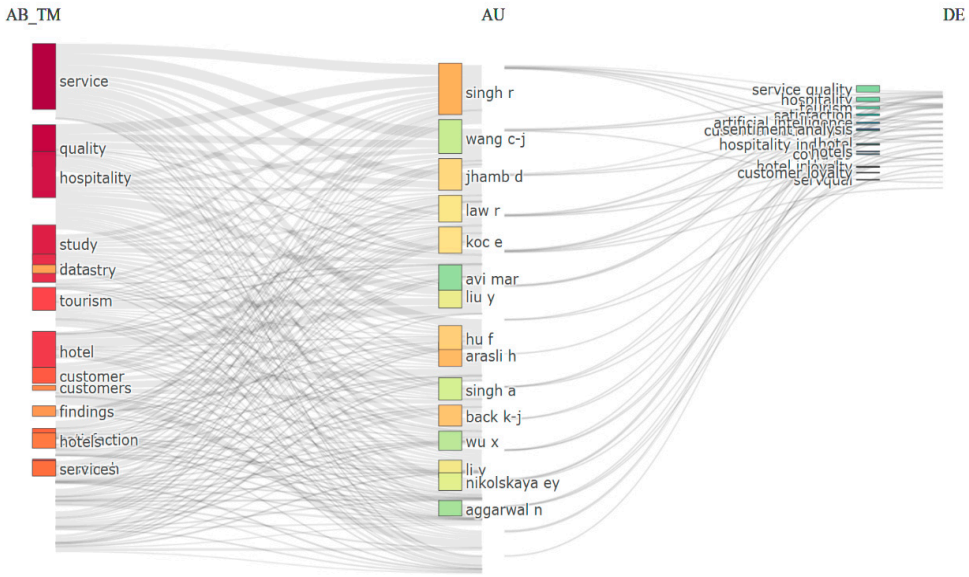

Figure 3. Sankey diagram. Source: authors' creation (2025).

Q2: What were the sources of the publications in 2014–2024?

The most relevant sources evident in Figure 4, in descending order, were *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, with 37 published articles; the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, with 34 published articles; the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, with 30 published articles; *Tourism Management*, with 27 published articles; and the *African Journal of Hospitality*, *Tourism and Leisure*, with 26 articles.

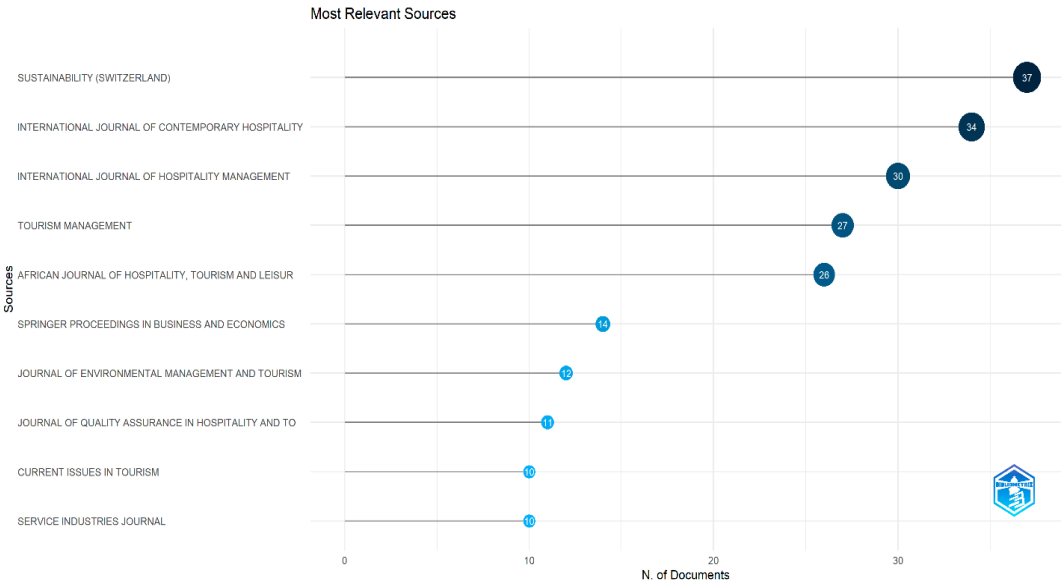

Figure 4. Most relevant sources. Source: authors' creation (2025).

The core sources of the publications according to Bradford's law, in descending order, were *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, with 37 publications; the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality*, with 34 publications; the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, with 30 publications; and *Tourism Management*, with 27 publications (Figure 5).

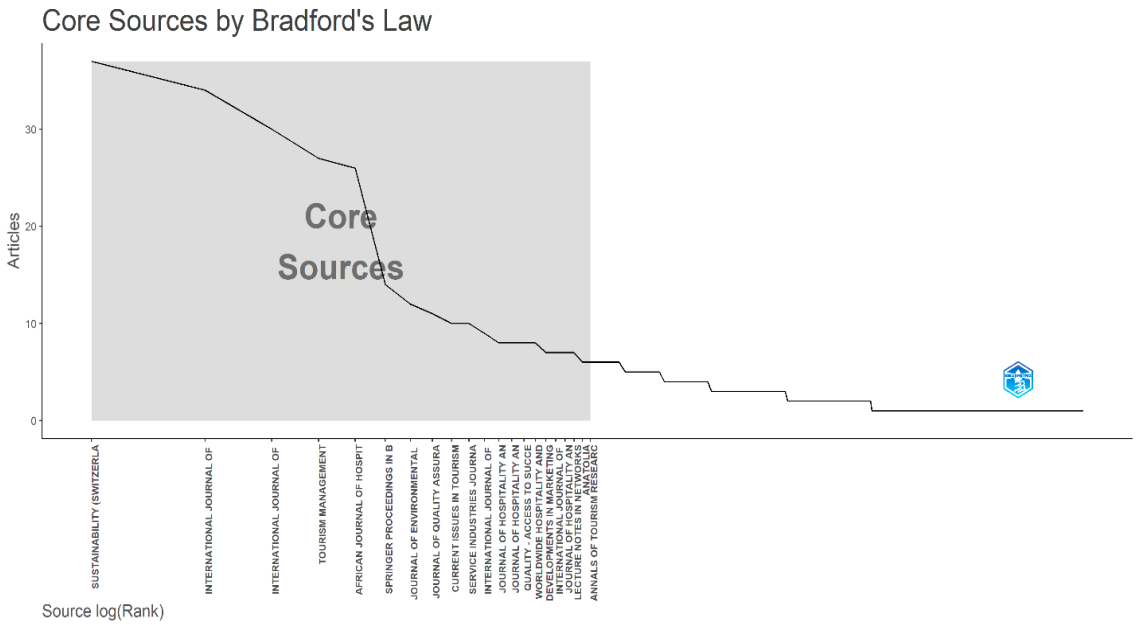

Figure 5. Core sources by Bradford's law. Source: authors' creation (2025).

It is notable that the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* and *Tourism Management* had more articles and the highest H-index of 20 each, while the *International Journal of Hospitality Management* had an H-index of 19 (Figure 6).

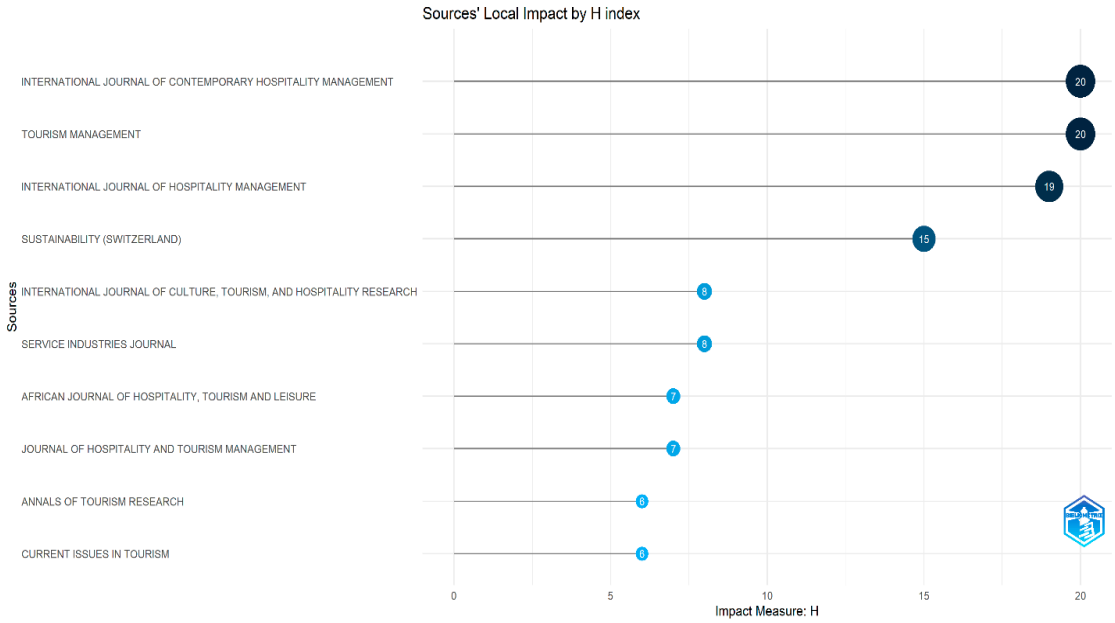

Figure 6. Source's local impact by H-Index. Source: authors' creation (2025).

Figure 7 shows that the following journals recorded continual increases in the number of articles published from 2014 through 2024: *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *Tourism Management*, and the *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*. It is notable that *Sustainability (Switzerland)* and the *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* did not publish any articles in 2014.

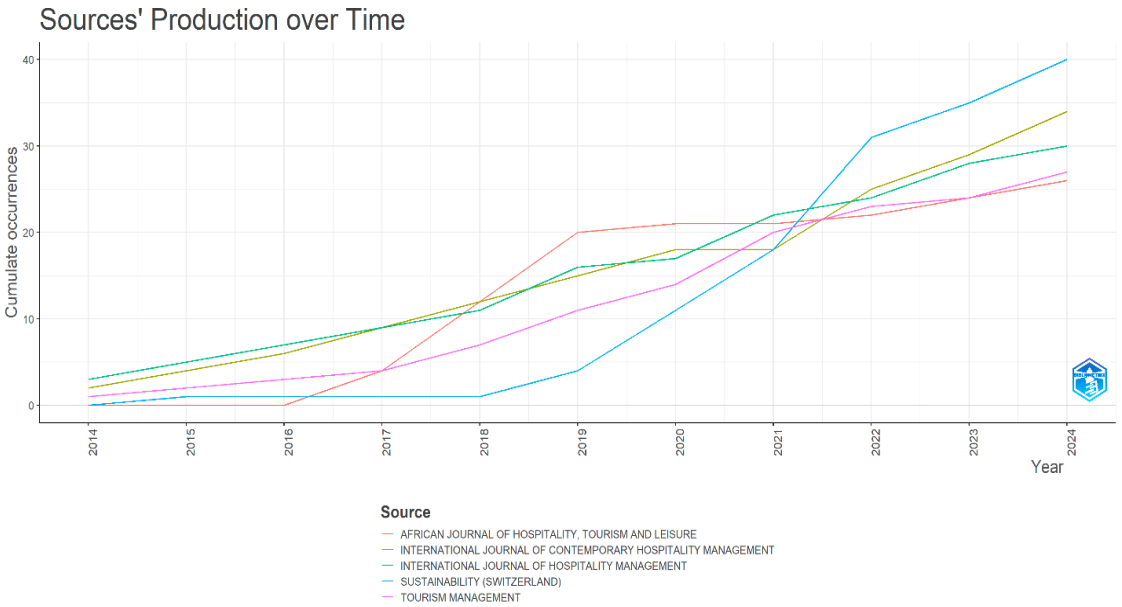

Figure 7. Sources' production over time. Source: authors' creation (2025).

Q3: What was the information about the authors of the publications in 2014–2024?

Singh R had the most publications between 2014 and 2024, with a total of six publications in 2014, 2015, 2019, 2022 and 2023. Arasli H had one publication in 2017, one publication in 2020, and two publications in 2023. Back K. J. also had four (4) publications: one in 2017, one in 2019, and two in 2020, as evident in Figure 8.

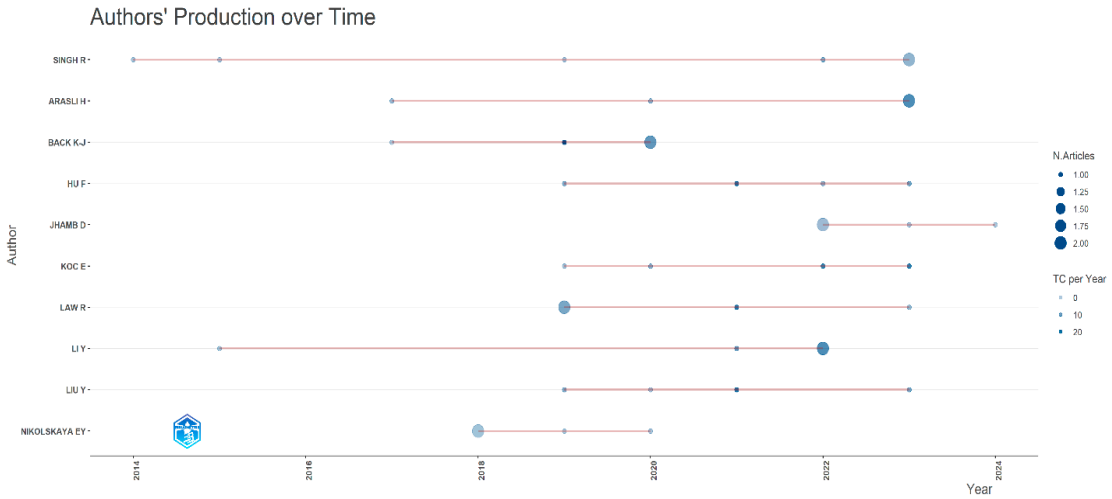

Figure 8. Authors' production over time. Source: authors' creation (2025).

The most relevant affiliations of the researchers during the period under review, in descending order, were Hong Kong Polytechnic University (the most relevant institution, with 19 published articles), Bina Nusantara University (15 published articles), Eastern Mediterranean University (15 published articles), and the University of Houston (14 published articles), as evident in Figure 9.

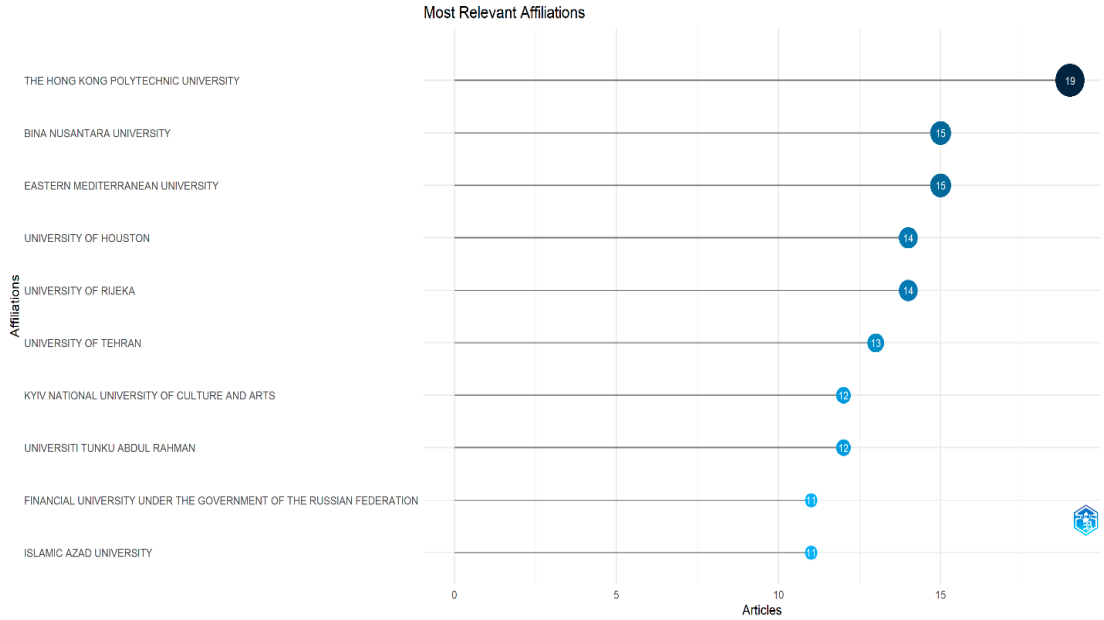

Figure 9. Most relevant affiliations. Source: authors' creation (2025).

Q4: What was the conceptual structure of the publications in 2014–2024?

The co-occurrence word network shows that "service quality" and "hospitality" were very prominent (Figure 10). It is also obvious that "hospitality industry" and "tourism" were also prominent, which depicts that service quality was at the front burner of the scientific outputs associated with tourism and hospitality industry.



Figure 10. Co-occurrence network. Source: authors' creation (2025).

Figure 11 displays the thematic trends in 2014–2019, 2020–2022, and 2023–2024. It can be inferred that 2014–2019's themes were foundational and traditional, 2020–2022's were related to technology and pandemic impact, and 2023–2024's were refined and related to post-pandemic adaptation. The keywords under the foundational and traditional themes included brand loyalty, consumer, trust, sustainability, hotel, service quality, and SERVQUAL. The keywords under the technology and pandemic impact themes included artificial intelligence, hospitality, service quality, text mining, robots, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction. The keywords under the themes of refinement and post-pandemic adaptation were service quality, emotional labor, Tripadvisor, anthropomorphism, hos-

pitality, and service failure. The overlapping content essentially shows the evolution of keywords that underpin service quality and hospitality researches. This is important in deciphering the trends of keywords used for scientific publications and understanding between 2014 and 2024 vis-à-vis service quality and hospitality researches.

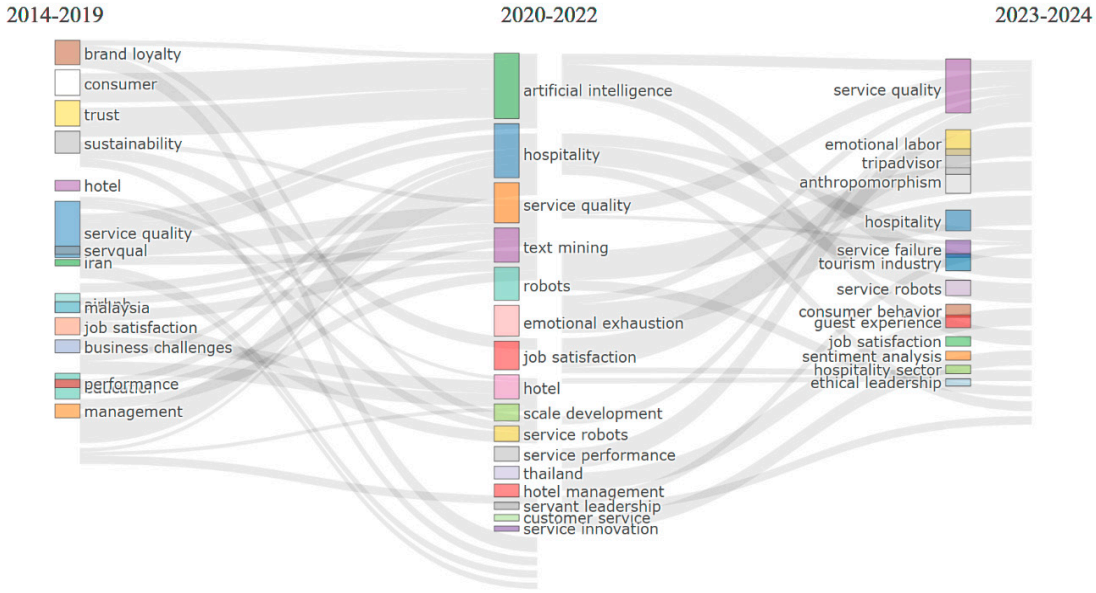

Figure 11. Thematic trends. Source: authors' creation (2025).

Figure 12 presents a two-dimensional map plot. The first dimension was captured in red (left side), while the second dimension was captured in blue (right side). The red dimension essentially represents experimental/human-centered research, and the blue dimension represents industry/technology/application-focused research. The keywords that underpinned the red dimension were male, female, adult, human, humans, article, questionnaire, human experiment, and catering service. The keywords that underpinned the blue dimension were tourism, hospitality industry, service industry, sustainable development, artificial intelligence, data mining, COVID-19, marketing, psychology, social media, leadership, performance assessment, decision making, quality control, customer satisfaction, tourism management, tourism economics, innovation, robotics, and resources.

Figure 13 exhibits a quadrant that is theme-based. Each of the quadrants is labelled differently with variants of keywords. The motor themes are presented in the upper right side of the quadrant (high centrality, high density). The motor themes are densely populated with keywords such as customer service, employee age, robots, frontline service employees, human–computer interaction, hotel, artificial intelligence, job satisfaction, service quality, text mining, hospitality industry, online review, and COVID-19. The niche themes are in the upper left quadrant (low centrality, high density). The niche themes are fairly well populated, comprising specialized keywords such as service innovation, business performance, knowledge management, utilitarian value, restaurant management, relationship management, service performance, innovation, and service design. The basic themes are in the lower right the quadrant (high centrality, low density). The basic themes are sparsely populated and less connected. The quadrant contains keywords such as servant leadership, customer orientation, scale development, emotional stability, and industry. The emerging or declining themes are located in the lower left quadrant (low centrality, low density). It is essentially underdeveloped, containing keywords such as travel, information leadership, financial technologies, China, emotional exhaustion, and technological readiness. The overlapping content clearly shows the scientific evolution

of the themes engaged and it fostered a lucid understanding of the trajectories of the researches conducted between 2014 and 2024.

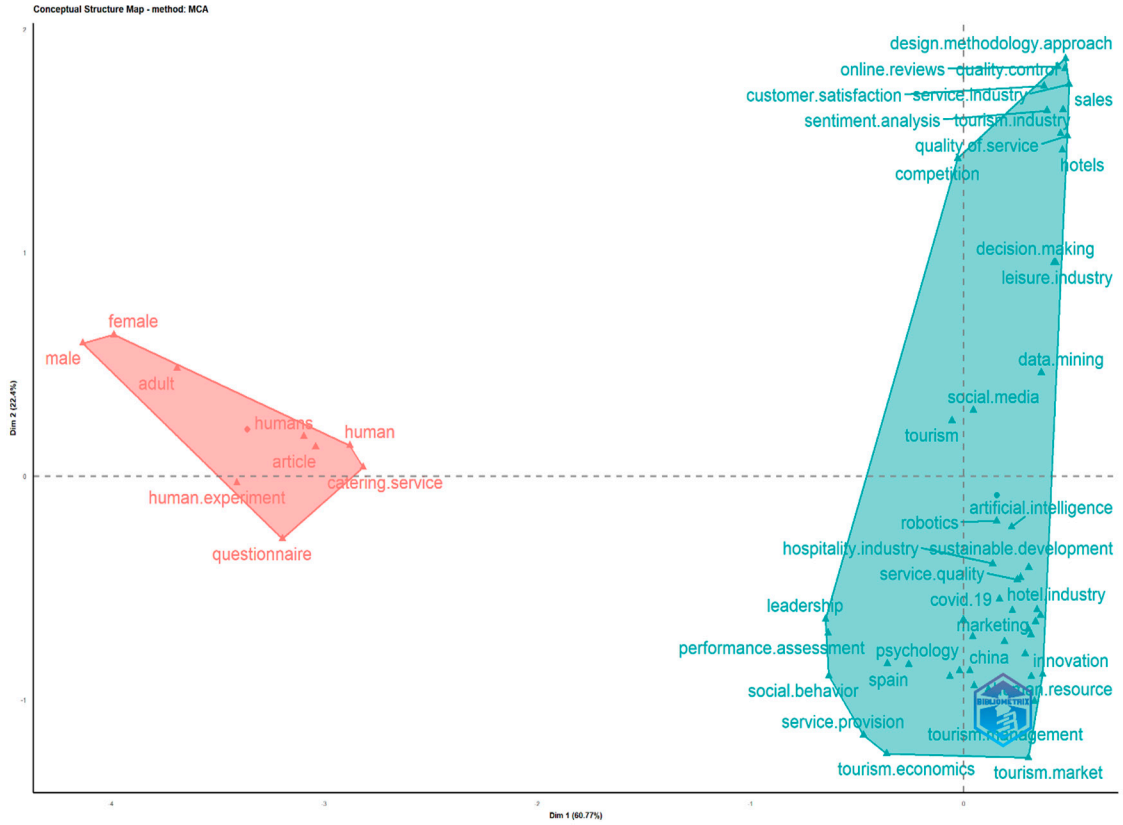

Figure 12. Factorial map. Source: authors' creation (2025).

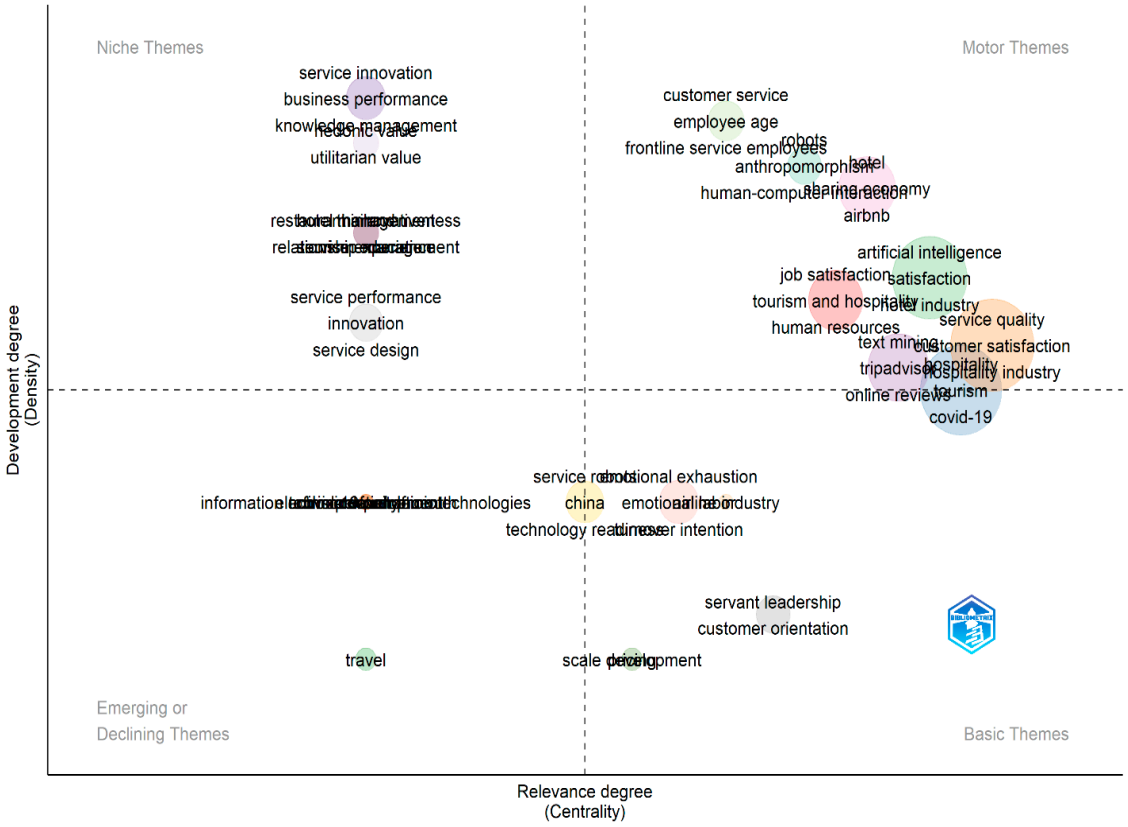

Figure 13. Thematic evolution. Source: authors' creation (2025).

Q5: What was the social structure of the publications in 2014–2024?

Figure 14 shows the collaboration network, listing single-author articles and authors that jointly published articles. For instance, it indicates that Singh R published a sole-authored article, whereas Liu Y. and Hu F. published a co-authored article.

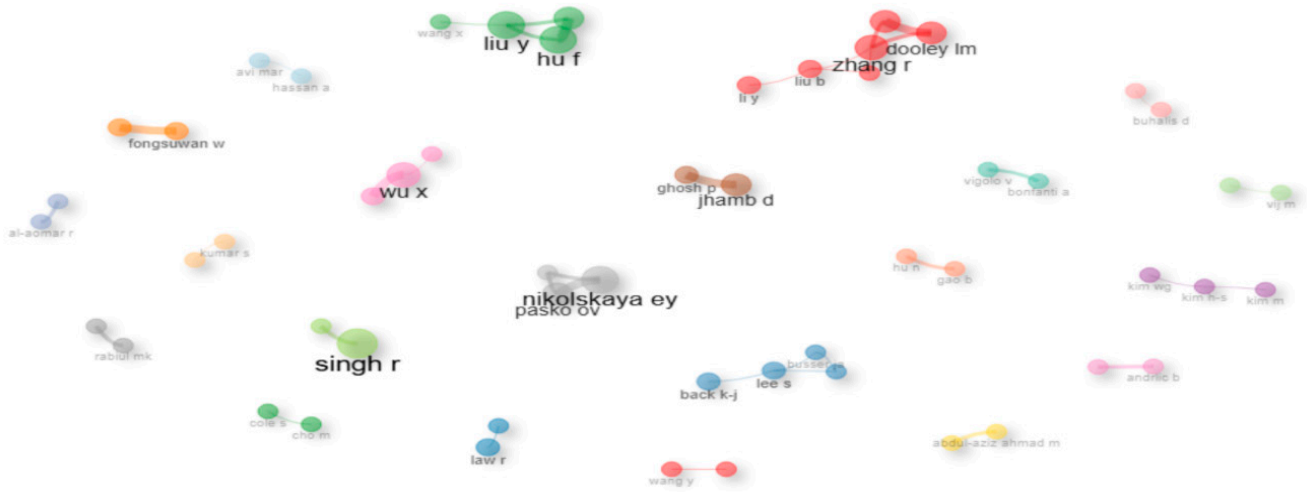

Figure 14. Collaboration network I. Source: authors' creation (2025).

Figures 14 and 15 depict the collaboration network regarding research collaborations between different countries. For instance, it shows that researchers in Cyprus had published a jointly authored article with researcher(s) in Greece, researchers in Romania had co-published an article with researcher(s) in Poland, researcher(s) in Italy had collaborated to publish an article together with researcher(s) in Spain, etc.

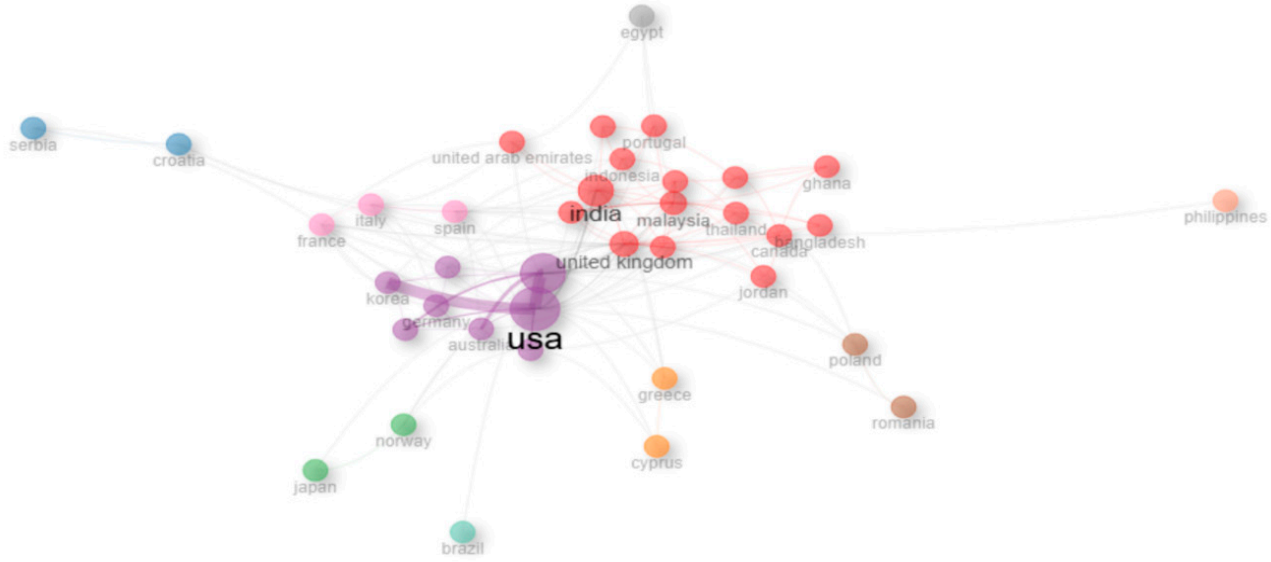

Figure 15. Collaboration network II. Source: authors' creation (2025).

The vertical axis in Figure 16 depicts "impact", which is underscored by citation indices or strength of themes, and the horizontal axis portrays "centrality", which is underscored by the theme's centrality with respect to the study's focus. The keywords captured under high centrality were hospitality (conf 55.1%), tourism (66.7%), and hotel sector (85.7%), which reflect a basic academic focus capable of yielding topical outputs. It is noteworthy that "conf" indicates confidence level and that the average confidence level in this centrality aspect implies medium coherence amongst the clusters. The keywords in the upper left

side of Figure 17 that depict high impact and low centrality are hospitality industry (71%), Tanzania (100%), and blockchain (57.1%). Blockchain and Tanzania suggest that the articles explored technological innovation and invention and that there is a focus on geographical location. The keywords on the lower right side of the chart that depict high centrality and low impact are service quality (65.9%), hospitality (40.8%), and hotel (66.7%). This implies that service and hotels have been well explored by different authors during the period under review. It is notable that no keyword has been captured in the lower left side of the chart.

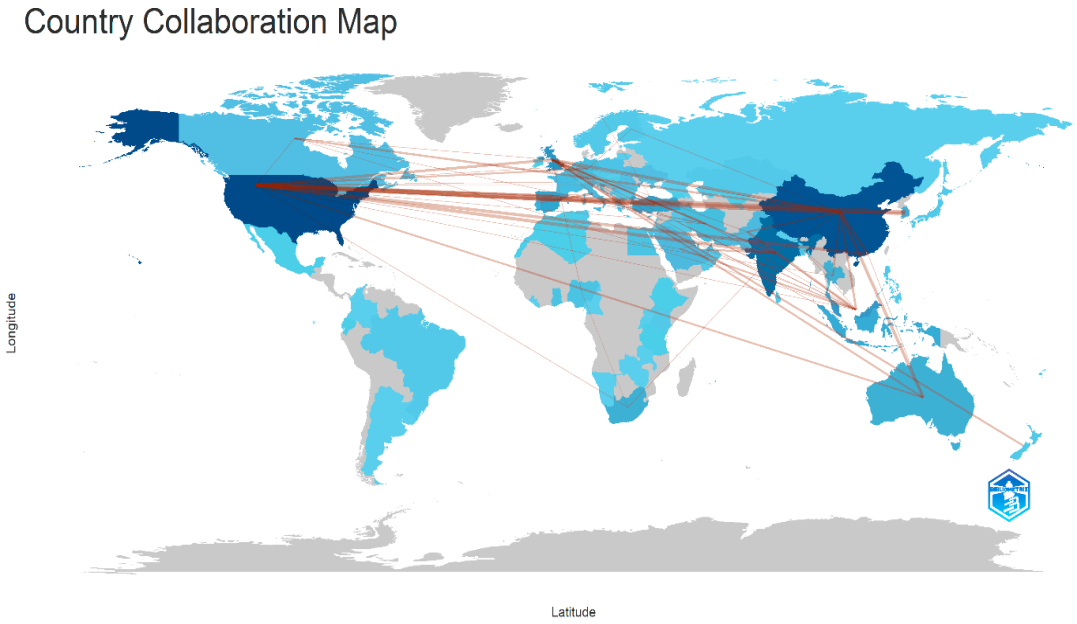

Figure 16. Country collaboration map. Source: authors' creation (2025).

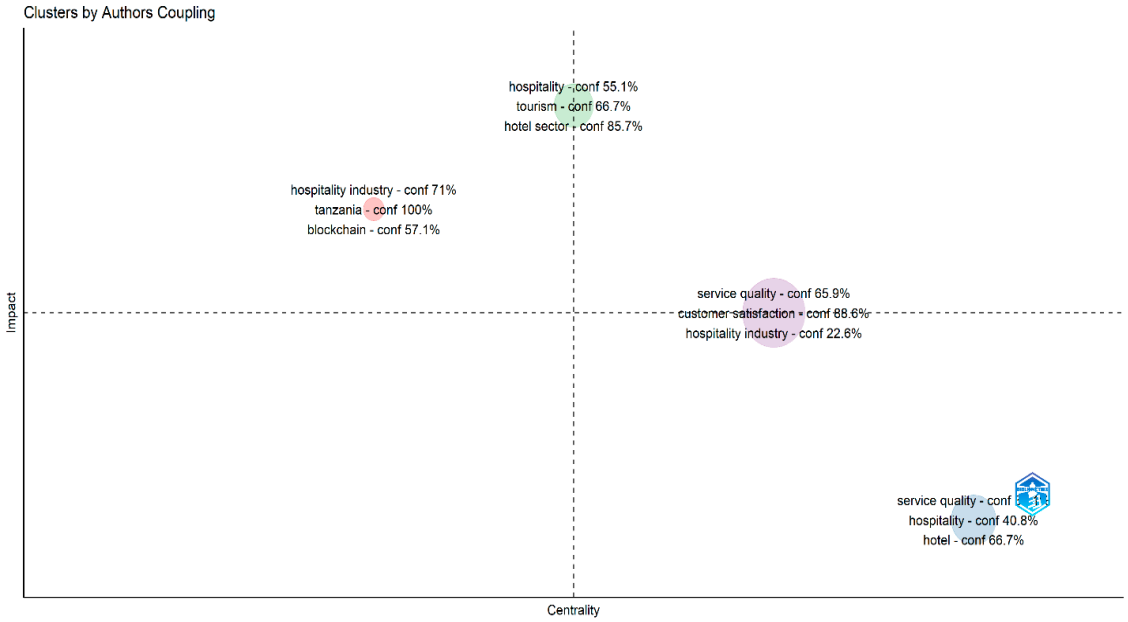

Figure 17. Clusters by authors coupling. Source: authors' creation (2025).

5. Discussion

5.1. Citation Overview of the Publications in 2014–2024

It is evident that the largest number of publications took place in 2024, with a total of 153 publications. A sharp decline in the number of publications in 2023 was recorded, with only 113 publications. Regarding differences in the number of articles published from one year to another, 2024 had the highest number—it had 40 publications (153) more than 2023, whereas 2019 and 2020 had the smallest difference owing to 2020 having had only 1 publication more than the preceding year. This sharp decline in the number of publications between 2019 and 2020 can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. The year 2021 had the highest figure of average citations per year (5.6), possibly because many articles written during the lockdown period were published in 2021. Recent studies revealed that the coronavirus outbreak might have resulted in a reduction in published academic outputs and a concomitant reduction in financial incentives for medical research (Raynaud et al., 2021; Kourie et al., 2020).

This study's results revealed that the keywords under "abstract/title" were service, quality, customers, satisfaction, relationship, hospitality, tourism, study, findings, and services. The keywords under "authors" were Singh R., Wang C. J., Jhamb D., Law R., Koc E., Avi mar and Liu Y., Hu F., and Arasli H., amongst others. The keywords that underpinned "descriptors" were service quality, hospitality, satisfaction, artificial intelligence, hotels, and others. "Customer satisfaction" being a keyword under "abstract/title" and "descriptors" implies that service quality established by the hospitality industry is expected to drive customer satisfaction. Service quality parameters that are not driving customer satisfaction are not effective enough. It is also important to note that artificial intelligence could be deployed to better operationalize the parameters of service quality in the hospitality industry.

5.2. Sources of the Publications in 2014–2024

It noteworthy that the most relevant sources, in descending order, were *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, with 37 published articles; the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality*, with 34 published articles; and the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, with 30 published articles. *Sustainability (Switzerland)* received recognition for producing an impressive number of articles with respect to the hospitality industry. This solidifies the finding that the highest core source of the publication according to Bradford's law was *Sustainability (Switzerland)*. The *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* and *Tourism Management* had more articles and the highest H-index of 20 each. Journals that recorded sustained increases in the number of articles published on service quality in the hospitality industry in 2014–2024 were *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *Tourism Management*, and the *African Journal of Hospitality*, *Tourism and Leisure*. These journals are known for their high standards in reviewing articles and selecting only the best articles for publication. There is no doubt that these journals are high-impact journals that are popular among researchers across the world. Uddin et al. (2023) asserted that high-impact journals are generally considered more prestigious and may be more likely to reach a wider audience of readers and researchers.

5.3. Information About the Authors of the Publications in 2014–2024

The researcher Singh R. had most publications between 2014 and 2024—six publications accumulated in the years 2014, 2015, 2019, 2022, and 2023—that were all publications of high quality. With respect to the most relevant affiliations of the researchers during the period under review, Hong Kong Polytechnic University proved the most relevant

institution, with 19 published articles, followed by Bina Nusantara University and Eastern Mediterranean University, with 15 published articles each. These institutions are highly ranked institutions in the world. Uddin et al. (2023) asserted that a journal's impact and reputation depended on the quality of the publication, authors' reputations, their affiliation, the topics covered, and so on.

5.4. Conceptual Structure of the Publications in 2014–2024

The co-occurrence word network disclosed that service quality and hospitality were very prominent words. The keywords under the foundational and traditional themes included brand loyalty, consumer, trust, sustainability, hotel, service quality, and SERVQUAL. The keywords under the technology and pandemic impact themes were artificial intelligence, hospitality, service quality, text mining, robots, and job satisfaction. The keywords under the themes of refinement and post-pandemic adaptation were service quality, emotional labor, Tripadvisor, anthropomorphism, hospitality, and service failure. The clusters' algorithm revealed the network of co-occurrence words created for specific time periods to identify words with high significance in each of the clusters (Blanco-Moreno et al., 2023). For the factorial map, the red dimension essentially indicates experimental/human-centered research, and the blue dimension represents industry-/technology-/application-focused research. The keywords underpinning the red dimensions were male, female, adult, human, humans, article, questionnaire, human experiment, and catering service. The keywords that underpinned the blue dimension were tourism, hospitality industry, service industry, sustainable development, artificial intelligence, data mining, COVID-19, marketing, psychology, and social media.

The thematic quadrants incorporated motor, niche, basic, and emerging themes. The motor themes were densely populated with keywords such as customer service and employee age. The niche themes were fairly well packed with specialized keywords such as service innovation and business performance. The basic themes were sparsely populated with keywords such as servant leadership, customer orientation, scale development, emotional stability, and industry. The emerging or declining themes were underdeveloped and contained travel, information leadership, financial technologies, China, emotional exhaustion, and technology readiness. Blanco-Moreno et al. (2025) noted that emerging or declining themes are themes that are underdeveloped and have the capacity to emerge based on the anticipation that they will be developed after an analysis of the previous year or otherwise in succeeding years.

5.5. Social Structure of the Publications in 2014–2024

The results revealed that researcher(s) in Cyprus had published jointly authored articles with researcher(s) in Greece, that Romanian researcher(s) had jointly published articles with Polish researcher(s), and researcher(s) in Italy had co-authored articles with researcher(s) in Spain. The keywords captured under high centrality were hospitality (confidence 55.1%), tourism (66.7%), and hotel sector (85.7%), which depict the basic academic focus capable of yielding topical outputs. Blanco-Moreno et al. (2025) conclusively averred that co-word or co-citation analysis generates sets of clusters that are rare and discipline-specific. The cluster-by-authors coupling revealed that hospitality industry (71%), Tanzania (100%), and blockchain (57.1%) are high-impact, low-centrality keywords. Blockchain and Tanzania suggest that the articles explored technological innovations and inventions with a focus on geographical location. Service quality (65.9%), hospitality (40.8%), and hotel (66.7%) were high-centrality, low-impact keywords. This implies that service and hotels have been well explored by different authors during the period under review. No keyword was captured in the lower left side of the chart. It is notable that the hospitality industry

features in different clusters, which suggests various contextual trajectories, particularly those which are technology-, strategy-, and region-based. Customer satisfaction and service quality are evident in both the peripheral and central zones. Blockchain implies that information technology is being explored for the hospitality industry, perhaps in the area of service quality.

Further to the discussion on the research questions above, it is evident that topical studies have focused on service quality in the hospitality sector. It cannot be overemphasized that service quality must be the watchword of business entities in this sector because service quality drives customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction fosters customer loyalty. In the same vein, service quality usually underscores impressive customer experience and delighted customers may easily share their experience with other prospective customers. The fact that service quality can neither be jettisoned nor overemphasized by business entities possibly reveals the burgeoning number of publications that underpins service quality in the hospitality industry.

6. Conclusions

Table 1 provides a summary of the results for each of the research questions. It is noteworthy that the decline in the number of publications on service quality in the hospitality industry between 2019 and 2020 can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic that effectively shut the globe down, as is evidenced by the significant increase in the number of publications afterwards. The journal with the highest number of publications under this study's review period was *Sustainability (Switzerland)*. This finding is corroborated by the fact that highest core source of publications premised on Bradford's law was *Sustainability (Switzerland)* as well—with 37 publications. Hong Kong Polytechnic University was the leading institution with the highest number of publications vis-à-vis service quality in the hospitality industry, followed by Bina Nusantara University and Eastern Mediterranean University. Researchers in different spatial locations of the world collaborated to publish articles that focused on service quality in the hospitality industry. For instance, Cyprian researcher(s) had jointly published an article with Greek researcher(s), researchers in Romania had collaborated with researcher(s) in Poland to produce an article together, and researcher(s) in Italy had published a jointly authored article with researcher(s) in Spain. It should be noted that customer satisfaction is prominent in different clusters, which highlights the fact that service quality is focused on satisfying customers. Hence, the hospitality industry must establish a feedback mechanism to ensure that its service quality is achieving the desired level of customer satisfaction.

Table 1. Summary of results.

S/N	Research Questions	Results	Examples of Key Publications
1.	What was the citation overview of the publications in 2014–2024?	The citation overview of the articles revealed that the highest number of publications took place in 2024, with a total of 153 publications. The year 2021 had the highest figure of average citations per year (5.6). Prominent keywords in the articles were service quality, hospitality, satisfaction, artificial intelligence, and hotels.	Anas (2024), Asgeirsson et al. (2024), and Legendre et al. (2024)

Table 1. *Cont.*

S/N	Research Questions	Results	Examples of Key Publications
2.	What were the sources of the publications in 2014–2024?	The most relevant sources, in descending order, were *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, with 37 published articles and the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality*, with 34 published articles. *Sustainability (Switzerland)* produced the highest number of articles on the hospitality industry. Bradford's law revealed that the highest publication core source was *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, with 37 publications. The *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* and *Tourism Management* both had more articles and the highest H-index of 20 each.	Pilelienė et al. (2024), Oliveras-Villanueva et al. (2020), and Sigala et al. (2021)
3.	What was the information about the authors of the publications in 2014–2024?	The researcher Singh R. had the highest number of publications between 2014 and 2024, with a total of six publications accumulated in the years 2014, 2015, 2019, 2022, and 2023. Hong Kong Polytechnic University was the most relevant institution, with 19 published articles, followed by Bina Nusantara University, with 15 published articles, and Eastern Mediterranean University, with 15 published articles.	Shyju et al. (2021), Arasli et al. (2020), Hu et al. (2019), And Singh and Nika (2019)
4.	What was the conceptual structure of the publications in 2014–2024?	Service quality and hospitality were words that featured very prominently in terms of co-occurrence. The keywords under the foundational and traditional themes were brand loyalty, consumer, trust, sustainability, hotel, service quality, and SERVQUAL. The keywords under the technology and pandemic impact themes were artificial intelligence, hospitality, service quality, text mining, robots, and job satisfaction. The keywords under the themes of refinement and post-pandemic adaptation were service quality, emotional labor, Tripadvisor, anthropomorphism, hospitality, and service failure. As regards the thematic quadrants, the motor themes were densely populated with keywords such as customer service and employee age. The niche themes were fairly well populated with specialized keywords such as service innovation and business performance.	Singh and Nika (2019), Oliveras-Villanueva et al. (2020), and Arasli et al. (2020).
5.	What was the social structure of the publications in 2014–2024?	Researcher(s) in Cyprus had published jointly authored articles with researcher(s) in Greece, and researchers in Romania had jointly authored articles with researcher(s) in Poland. The keywords captured under high centrality were hospitality (conf 55.1%), tourism (66.7%), and hotel sector (85.7%). The cluster-by-authors coupling revealed that hospitality industry (71%), Tanzania (100%), and blockchain (57.1%) were high-impact and low-centrality keywords.	Santos et al. (2020), Pilelienė et al. (2024), Shyju et al. (2021), Perdomo-Verdecia et al. (2024), and others.

Source: Authors' creation (2025).

6.1. Practical Implications

This research output is important for ascertaining the research trends with respect to service quality in the hospitality industry. The continual increase in the research output indicates that the consideration of service quality in the hospitality industry has received increased scholarly attention in recent times. This study has helped the researchers to substantively contribute to the pool of scholarly output on contemporary trends in the hospitality industry. Meanwhile, in the future, an analytical review of modified service quality models in the hospitality industry, such as HOLSERV, should be examined to ensure specificity.

This study also has significant implications for industry practices and research development. The fact that innovation, technology, and artificial intelligence are parts of the keywords in the thematic evolution components of the results of this study implies that the hospitality industry must always be willing and ready to engage technology in service delivery. The specific engagement of artificial intelligence in service delivery will result in less physical interaction between staff members and guests. This simply implies that the hospitality industry will focus more on smart tourism and hospitality. This could also motivate software application experts to create new software applications that could make service delivery in the hospitality industry better. With respect to the implication for research development, this study emphasizes the need for the consistent interdisciplinarity of research. For instance, there should be constant scholarly probing into the field of tourism and hospitality and the field of information technology/systems to establish different nexuses between them.

6.2. Research Limitations

Some of the authors' names were ambiguously stated and retrieving their articles proved very onerous to. It was difficult to identify authors in different parts of the world who had collaborated to publish articles because neither the country collaboration map nor the collaboration network map clearly revealed this information. It is also notable that the data retrieved from Scopus included neither a research focus nor a methodology for any of the articles.

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