

Article

User-Generated Content in Social Media: A Twenty-Year Bibliometric Analysis in Hospitality

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Abstract: This article aims to present a bibliometric analysis regarding social media platforms and User-Generated Content (UGC) in hospitality. One hundred fifty-one peer-reviewed articles were analyzed using Webster's and Watson's (2002) methodology, a concept-driven methodology that helps analyze different concepts and contexts of a research field. Articles classified into five areas and a bibliometric analysis were presented to discuss the publication year, journals and publishers, authors, number of citations, research method implemented, social networking and users' perceived value, user-generated content and travel planning, e-Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) and brand image building, and hotel performance. The findings of this study showed that the number of studies in this field has increased over the last decade. However, exploration of the subject needs to be promoted (particularly experimental) because research in hospitality social media is still in the early phases on the grounds that publications concentrate on explicit subjects, regions, and sources of publication.

Keywords: social media networking; social media marketing; user-generated content; e-Word-of-Mouth; hospitality



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1. Introduction

Social media platforms are utilized by buyers to share data, photographs, and videos. Social networking is a modern medium for clients to interact, convey, and assemble connections with them [1–3]. For the hotel management industry in particular, the rise of social media has provided a significant change in how travelers find, consume, and integrate information about a destination, as well as how they work together to create that content. People who travel read, use, and share information about their destinations online before, during, and after their trips [4,5]. Tourists can benefit greatly from User-Generated Content (UGC) in terms of both information sharing and decision making. Customers enhance the free data by providing potential tourists with new markets, new subjects, and controversial topics through the exchange of data, photographs, and videos gathered during travel. As a form of modern-day word-of-mouth, customer feedback provided through UGC is prompt, current, and accessible from any location [2,6–9].

The following arguments demonstrate why UGC is so important in the tourism sector. To begin with, every person has their own one-of-a-kind travel story. Travelers need to make the best travel decisions to get the most out of the experience, so they look into surveys and reviews from previous customers. In an effort to make a well-informed booking decision, potential customers spend considerable time researching online reviews and chatting with other travelers [10,11]. What is more, the tourism sector is not one that can be tested before use. Travelers believe that by providing detailed accounts of their experiences, they will be able to guide fellow travelers toward the travel service most likely to meet their needs and exceed their expectations. Consequently, consumers rely on reviews written by previous visitors. In conclusion, travelers place a high level of trust in the opinions of other customers and rely on their judgments when making bookings and other travel arrangements [8,9,12,13].

Customer-focused papers concluded that social media platforms are important for the tourist's travel planning stage because they offer the customer with information relating to their travel [9,14]. Despite the significance of this topic, reviews related to UGC adoption in travel planning are limited [15]. Furthermore, research in social media usage in hospitality remains in the early phases, as related publications have only focused on specific topics, regions, and publication sources. As a generally recent trend, it is helpful for academics to consistently review earlier related studies to increase the general perspective on the intellectual structure of this area and to foresee how the area may be expanded [2,3,16]. A bibliometric analysis of the utilization and effect of social media in the travel industry is significant on the grounds that the adoption and broad utilization of these Web2.0 tools will impact the behavior of tourists (data search, decision making, and sharing experiences) and solidify performance and influence the manner in which tourists see their experience, post online reviews, and offer their feelings and assessments about the travel industry suppliers and destinations [13,17].

Hence, the goal of this review is to map studies on social media platforms and UGC in hospitality. This article intends to examine the general theoretical establishment of social media and UGC analysis in hospitality and recognize the research subjects and thematic development of social media research as well as recommendations for potential social media studies in the travel industry. This paper aims to present a "state of the art" by introducing an analysis of research on social media and UGC in hospitality and classifying the articles based on explicit criteria (e.g., publication year, authors, journals and publishers, number of citations, and research method used). This article is a bibliometric analysis that gives a large scale image of an exploration area and its development and associations amongst papers, with the intention to be a starting point for further study.

This paper makes a theoretical contribution by analyzing articles in the current literature through the lens of Webster and Watson's (2002) [18] framework. This concept-driven methodology helps examine the different concepts discussed in this article and better understand the twists and turns of current trends. Academics will have the chance to better appreciate the constraints of momentum research and the tourism research that has already been done. Furthermore, this article is vital material for researchers wishing to conduct a meta-analysis of UGC in hospitality. In contrast with past systematic literature reviews that contribute the sum of narrative information in the territory of social media platforms, this study is a bibliometric analysis that gives a broad view of the subject of study, as well as its advancement and associations amongst articles, so that there may be a starting point for future research. This paper might bear some significance for scholars who are now studying social media platforms and UGC in hospitality or academics who have been introduced to the area and need to investigate more explicit experiences relevant to where the latest research subjects are concerned in the literature and how they may add to them.

The practical contribution of this paper concerns managers providing the opportunity for previous attendees to obtain feedback and share their experience. Traditional web pages include specific and limited information about travel activities, but social media platforms allow managers to handle real-time information by customers. Social media platforms can be considered as an open channel of communication between tourists and tourism managers, since tourism providers have a tool in order to interact with customers and get feedback. Therefore, they can be sure that they are providing a unique experience that will generate positive UGC. When these experiences are shared through social media platforms, they influence travelers to visit these places. Thus, managers using social media help them re-engineer their business models in order to gain value from networking, marketing, and service development.

2. Materials and Methods

As has already been expressed, the goal of this review is to study the present state of social media platforms and UGC in hospitality [19]. Articles have been searched adopting

a literature review methodology involving three stages, which was proposed by Webster and Watson (2002) [18] and has been recently implemented in innovation management research [20–25]. The databases and keywords for the initial search were selected based on a review of the most recent available literature reviews. Then, the forward search was carried out to check the citations of the selected articles, and finally, the backward search was carried out to look at the references of the selected articles. Articles were selected and then categorized according to subject matter.

2.1. Previous Literature Reviews

Articles from 2014 to 2018 are introduced to put momentum into the literature review, followed by current information about the topic of social media platforms in hospitality, and to analyze the past information of this topic in order to investigate the noteworthy research issues based on the outcomes of previous papers. Moreover, earlier studies provide a brief summary of the literature review methodologies utilized by scholars and feature their significance and gaps in their adoption. Table 1 summarizes an overview of the current literature review studies on this research area.

Table 1. Previous literature reviews. The asterisk was used to include all the productions of the word.

Authors	Year	Keywords
Lin and Rasoolimanesh [8]	2022	Searching articles in 3 databases using keywords “shar * or post * or create *” and “tour * or travel or trip” and “experiences or content or knowledge or eWOM” and “social media or social network *
Lu et al. [12]	2018	Searching articles in 3 databases and 7 journals between 2004–2014 using keywords related to social media, hospitality, and social media websites
Ukpabi and Karjaluoto [9]	2018	Searching articles in 10 databases using keywords “social media adoption in tourism”, “e-WOM in tourism and travel”, “Web 2.0 adoption in tourism and travel”, “user-generated content in tourism and travel”, “social networking in tourism and travel”, “blogs in tourism and travel”, “online communities in tourism and travel”, and “virtual communities in tourism and travel”.
Leung et al. [2]	2017	Searching articles in 16 peer-reviewed journals between 2007 and 2016 using keywords “social media”, “social networking”, “SNS”, “Web 2.0”, “UGC”, “user generated content”, “user-generated content”, “tourist-generated content”, “electronic word-of-mouth”, “eWOM”, “blog”, “online community”, “online communities”, “customer review”, “online review”, “co-creation”, “sharing economy”, “big data”, “Internet forum”, “Facebook”, “YouTube”, “Twitter”, “LinkedIn”, “Instagram”, “Pinterest”, “Myspace”, “TripAdvisor”, and “Expedia”.
Sotiriadis [13]	2017	Searching articles in one database between 2009 and 2016 using keywords “social media”, “online social networking”, “web2.0”, “eWOM”, “user-generated content (UGC)”, “consumer-generated content (CGC)”, “online reviews” and “online reputation”, “social networking”, “web2.0”, “tourism”, “tourist”, “travel”, “hotel”, and “hospitality”.
Zeng and Gerritsen [3]	2014	Searching in 3 databases using keywords “social media”, “social networking”, “web 2.0”, “user-generated content *”, “tourism”, “tourist *”, “travel *”, and “hospitality”

Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) [3] implemented a literature review for social media in tourism searching for peer-reviewed articles in three databases. Authors analyzed the existing literature of this area and recommended a future plan for social media research in the hotel sector. Furthermore, they discussed the effect of social media marketing strategy on all aspects of hospitality. In this view, Lin and Rasoolimanesh (2022) [8] reviewed and analyzed 31 papers identified regarding sharing experience content in the tourism sector that were published in peer-reviewed journals between 2009 and 2021. Authors identified influencing factors on the intention of sharing tourism experiences in social media.

Later, Leung et al. (2017) [2] implemented a co-citation analysis in order to conduct a review about social media. The bibliometric analysis identified the development of research topics in both social media and e-WOM research. Authors provided new trends of social networking sites and managerial implications.

Sotiriadis (2017) [13] conducted a literature review on papers published between 2009 and 2016 with respect to changes in tourists' behavior. He implemented a content analysis in 146 papers in order to analyze the antecedents, the impact of online reviews on tourists' behavior, and the effect of these reviews on the travel industry organizations from the viewpoint of customers and tourism providers. These changes have been implemented owing to the utilization of social media. The author suggested strategies for hotels in order to increase competitiveness and deal with challenges.

Lu et al. (2018) [12] conducted a literature review about social media research in hospitality. They searched in 3 databases and 7 peer-reviewed journals for papers published from 2004 to 2014. Authors analyzed 105 papers and used the following criteria in order to classify papers: year of publication, industry, published journals, social media topics, research perspectives, research methodology and design, and authorship trends. They identified research gaps in several sectors and research methods in the field of online reviews. Finally, Ukpabi and Karjaluo (2018) [9] implemented a literature review to analyze the antecedents of UGC use for travel planning and identified theories, models, and frameworks that have been used in previous surveys. They analyzed 54 consumer-based papers and empirical studies published from 2005 to 2016.

2.2. Article Selection Process

The search was carried out in Scopus and Web of Science databases using combinations of the following keywords: 'social media', 'social media marketing', 'social media networking', 'web 2.0', and 'hospitality OR tourism'. These were chosen without restricting them to a particular period. Books, conference proceedings, book chapters, working papers, and technical reports were excluded. The conceded journals had a place with fields of Tourism Management, Hospitality Marketing, and Information Management.

For each article, a set of factors was taken out. The first factor referred to the list of authors of each article. The second factor referred to the title of each paper. The third factor referred to the year of publication of each article. The fourth factor referred to journals' names where articles have been published. The fifth factor referred to the h-index record of each journal. The sixth factor referred to the quantity of citations of each article in Scopus database. The seventh factor unveils the age of the article in years and was determined by subtracting the third factor from the current date. The eighth factor is an indicator that represents the effect of each article, and it was determined by dividing the number of citations in Scopus with the age of the article in years [26,27].

Using a combination of keywords across all databases, a total of 4492 papers were compiled. There was a decline in papers, and 1887 were acceptable due to constraints of language and the source of publication. Nine hundred forty-seven papers, whose titles were screened, were found to be pertinent to this paper's purpose. When we looked at their abstracts, we found that 345 of them were accepted. Both the titles and abstracts were examined to see if they made effective use of search terms. Then, the remaining papers' content was filtered, and only those that were deemed "fit for purpose" in terms of contributing to answering the research questions were included. Due to a lack of access to the full text, certain papers had to be disregarded. Accordingly, 210 articles were reviewed for their full content. Duplicate articles have been deleted, and 125 papers have been included. Twelve papers from the 'backward search' are added to these articles. Additionally, 14 papers from the 'forward search' were added. Therefore, 151 papers were analyzed (Figure 1). The final list was evaluated and approved by all the authors.

2.3. Classification Framework for Analysis

One hundred fifty-one papers were analyzed based on a classification framework. These papers were analyzed on four wide concepts (social networking and users' perceived value, user-generated content and travel planning, e-Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) and brand image building, and hotel performance) that can help scholars understand social media platforms and networking in tourism research and will likewise assist future scholars with

expanding the knowledge in this field. The findings of this review indicate that social media research has three expansive fields of focus: “social networking”, “e-WOM”, and “UGC”. Articles were classified based on publication year, authors, journals and publishers, number of citations, and the research method used. Figure 2 presents the heat map for the main concepts using the VosViewer software.

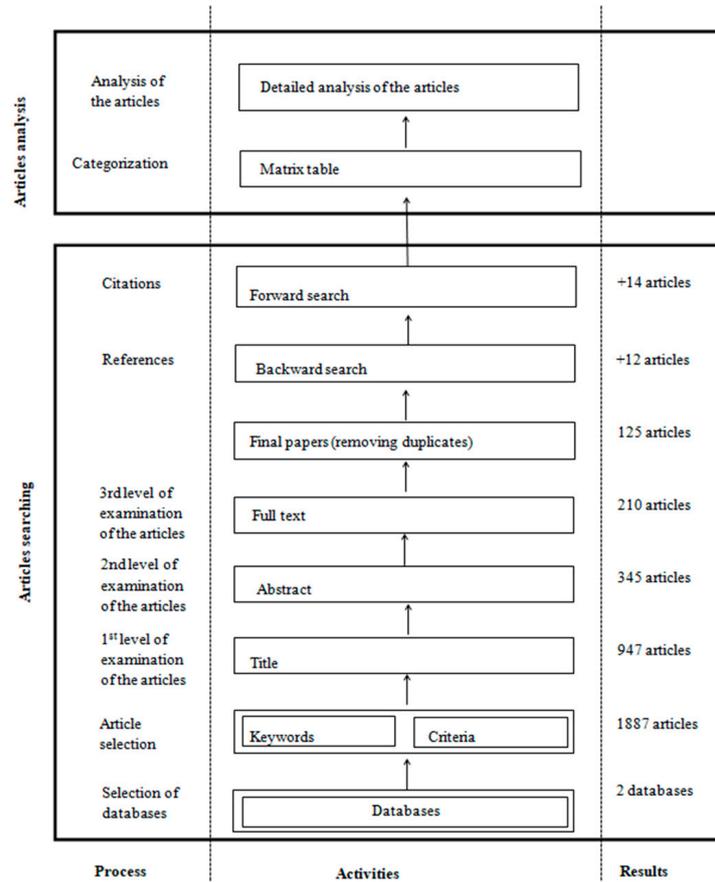


Figure 1. Article selection process.

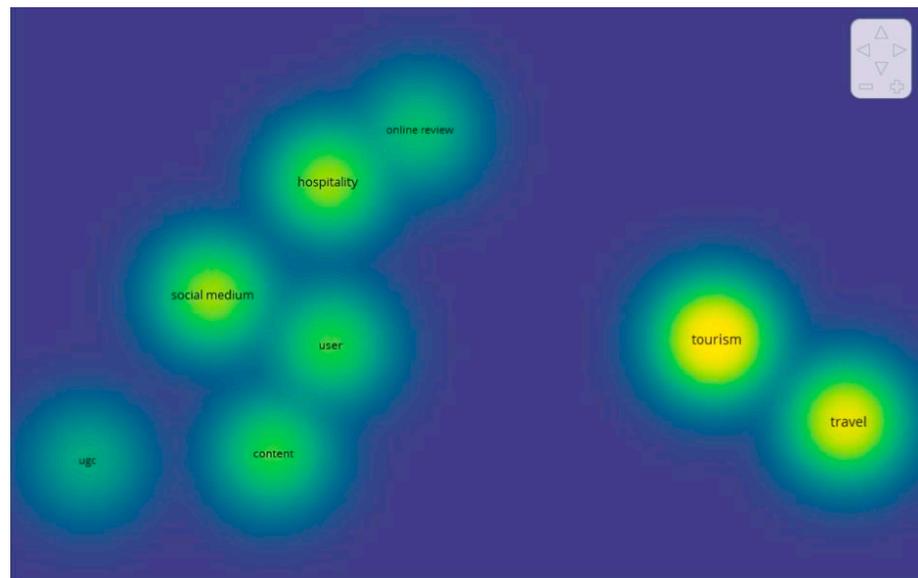


Figure 2. The heat map for the main concepts.

3. Results

3.1. Number of Published Articles per Year

Figure 3 represents the number of articles distributed every year. Particularly, in 2000, the familiarity with social media networking was discovered to be exceptionally low, as most researchers focused on the characteristics of social media platforms, and they overlooked the importance of UGC in hospitality. The strong practice of UGC appeared around 2015, when researchers understood the importance of online reviews and e-WOM and started to examine how online reviews affect tourists' travel planning. Such an outcome features both the significance of the topic and its continuous development. Figure 3 represents a reasonable expansion in the most recent five years.

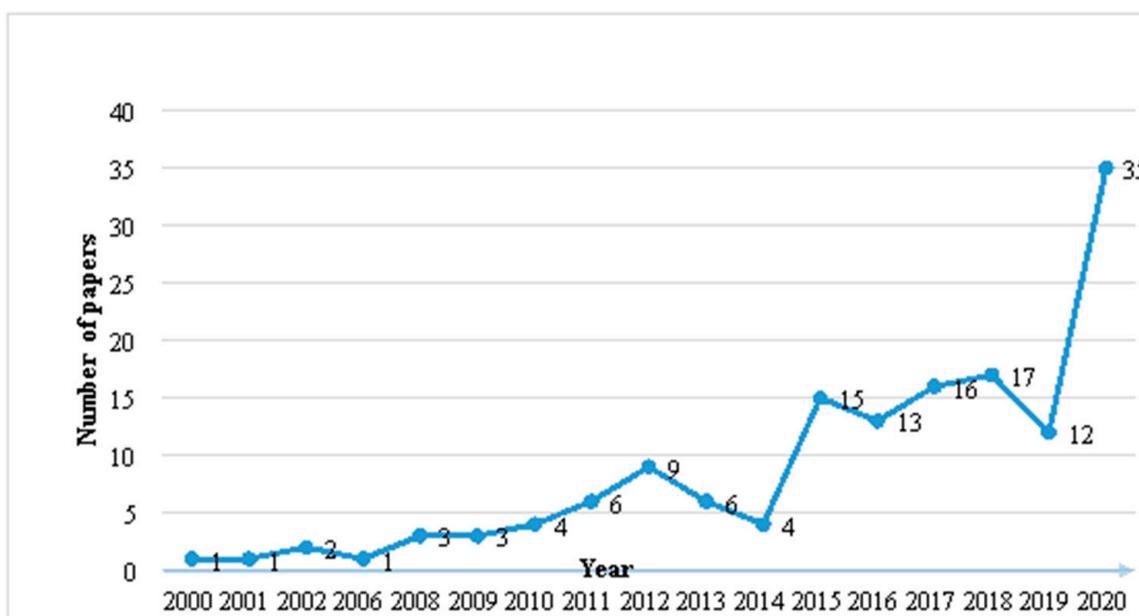


Figure 3. Papers based on the year of publication.

The outcomes of the current research highlight that social media research stays restricted notwithstanding its expanding use by travelers. Most papers were distributed from 2015 to 2020. This research pattern began with the quick development and expansive impact of social media during this period.

The literature review shows that the papers published between 2014 and 2016 have focused on the customer. These papers have explored the role and effect of social media on the travel planning process overall and discovered that online reviews influence tourists' decisions significantly. Papers which were written prior to 2013 defined proposals/suggestions that featured the significance of thinking about this new type of communication but did not determine actions or strategies. The investigated academic studies obviously conclude that social media and online reviews have extensive effects on tourists' behavior, which influences the strategic and operational management and marketing functions and processes—for instance, marketing, customer service, sales, knowledge, distribution, branding, and reputation—of travel industry suppliers. Supplier-related papers focused principally on promotion, management, and research. However, not many researchers analyzed distribution or other marketing and management functions (for example, sales management, strategic marketing, branding, and reputation).

3.2. Number of Articles per Journal

Articles have been published in 57 peer-reviewed journals. The Tourism Management journal has published the majority of the articles analyzed in this literature review. The Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology has published 11 articles. The Journal

of Hospitality Marketing and Management and the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management have published eight papers each. Table 2 represents the distribution of articles based on journals.

Table 2. Distribution of papers based on journals.

	Journal	Publisher	h-Index	No. of Papers
1.	Tourism Management	Elsevier	179	15
2.	Annals of Tourism Research	Elsevier	158	3
3.	Computers in Human Behavior	Elsevier	155	2
4.	Information & Management	Elsevier	153	1
5.	Journal of Travel Research	Sage	122	3
6.	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Elsevier	106	2
7.	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	Elsevier	103	2
8.	International Journal of Information Management	Elsevier	99	1
9.	Industrial Management and Data Systems	Emerald	96	2
10.	Information Processing and Management	Elsevier	94	1
11.	Internet Research	Emerald	80	1
12.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Emerald	76	8
13.	Futures	Elsevier	74	1
14.	TQM Journal	Emerald	64	1
15.	Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	Taylor and Francis	64	1
16.	Current Issues in Tourism	Taylor and Francis	64	6
17.	Journal of Vacation Marketing	Sage	60	4
18.	Journal of Enterprise Information Management	Emerald	56	1
19.	Information Systems Management	Taylor and Francis	55	1
20.	International Journal of Tourism Research	Wiley	51	3
21.	International Journal of Tourism Research	Wiley	51	1
22.	International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	Springer	50	1
23.	Technology in Society	Elsevier	47	2
24.	Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	Taylor and Francis	47	8
25.	Tourist Studies	Sage	45	5
26.	Journal of Marketing Communications	Taylor and Francis	43	1
27.	International Journal of Mobile Communications	Inderscience	41	1
28.	Tourism Recreation Research	Taylor and Francis	41	2
29.	International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering	Blue Eyes Intelligence Engineering and Sciences Publication	40	2
30.	Journal of Global Information Management	IGI Publishing	39	2
31.	Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	Taylor and Francis	39	2
32.	Journal of Computational Science	Elsevier	38	1
33.	Tourism and Hospitality Research	Sage	36	1
34.	International Business Research	Ccse	34	1
35.	Tourism Management Perspectives	Elsevier	33	3

Table 2. Cont.

	Journal	Publisher	h-Index	No. of Papers
36.	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	Taylor and Francis	33	2
37.	Journal of Destination Marketing and Management	Elsevier	31	5
38.	Journal of Global Marketing	Taylor and Francis	31	1
39.	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	Elsevier	28	6
40.	International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research	Emerald	28	2
41.	Service Business	Springer	28	2
42.	International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration	Taylor and Francis	26	3
43.	Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism	Taylor and Francis	26	1
44.	Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	Taylor and Francis	25	1
45.	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology	Emerald	24	11
46.	Information (Switzerland)	MDPI Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute	20	2
47.	Journal of China Tourism Research	Taylor and Francis	18	1
48.	International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering	Blue Eyes Intelligence Engineering and Sciences Publication	17	2
49.	Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes	Emerald	17	3
50.	Tourismos	University of the Aegean	16	2
51.	Tourism, Culture and Communication	Ingeta Connect Publication	14	1
52.	Information Technology and Tourism	Springer	14	6
53.	European Journal of Management and Business Economics	Emerald	11	1
54.	e-Review of Tourism Research	eRTR Editorial	8	4
55.	African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure	Africa Journals	6	1
56.	TEM Journal	UIKTEN—Association for Information Communication Technology Education and Science	5	2
57.	Journal of Content, Community & Communication	Amity University	2	2

The greater part of the papers was published in peer-reviewed hospitality and tourism journals, indicating that social media research was generally of high quality. It is interesting to note that journals in the field of information management have published papers regarding UCG usage in hospitality. Moreover, journals in the areas of sociology and psychology have not published papers on social media usage in tourism and the travel industry. These outcomes indicate the expected outlets that scholars could focus on.

Regarding publishers, the majority of articles were published in Elsevier and Taylor & Francis journals (20%). Furthermore, many articles were published in Emerald peer-reviewed journals (18%). Springer contributed with 12% followed by Sage Journals (8%). Other publishers have published fewer papers. The classification of publications according to publishers is introduced in Figure 4.

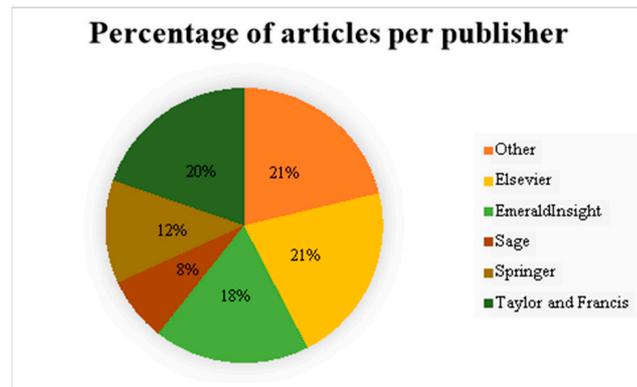


Figure 4. Percentage of articles per publisher.

3.3. Authors Actively Involved in Publishing

A total of 207 authors contributed to the 151 articles. Table 3 represents the principal authors (at least three or more articles per author) of the published papers. Law gives the impression of being the most productive author in the area of social media platforms, having published four articles, followed by Wang with three published articles. In addition, Buhalis, Lee, and Gupta have contributed to the research field with three papers. The majority of social media academics have published social media papers after 2010. These outcomes demonstrate that social media research in hospitality and the travel industry has become a well-known topic.

Table 3. Main authors.

Author	No. of Articles	h-Index (Retrieved from Scopus)
Wang	3	93
Gupta	3	83
Law	4	83
Buhalis	3	81
Lee	3	63

3.4. Research Methods

Figure 5 shows that 47% of the authors used questionnaires in order to collect data, 17% of the researchers collected data from social media, whereas limited studies (13%) were classified as qualitative surveys. Empirical papers have conducted quantitative surveys using Facebook users, tourists, and tourism managers and analyzed data using ANOVA, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, or Structural Equation Modeling.

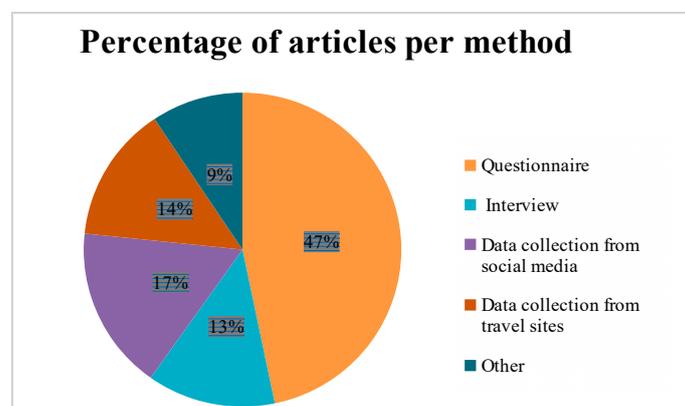


Figure 5. Percentage of articles per method.

3.5. Number of Papers per Concept

In view of the classification of articles, Figure 6 presents the percentage of papers per concept. The majority of articles (31%) refer to social networking and users' perceived value. 17% of papers are related to tourists' travel planning. Only 13% of papers studied the contribution of UGC to travel planning, confirming researchers' claim that despite the significance of this topic, reviews regarding UGC adoption in travel planning are limited, and more research is required in order to predict how the topic might move forward [2,3].

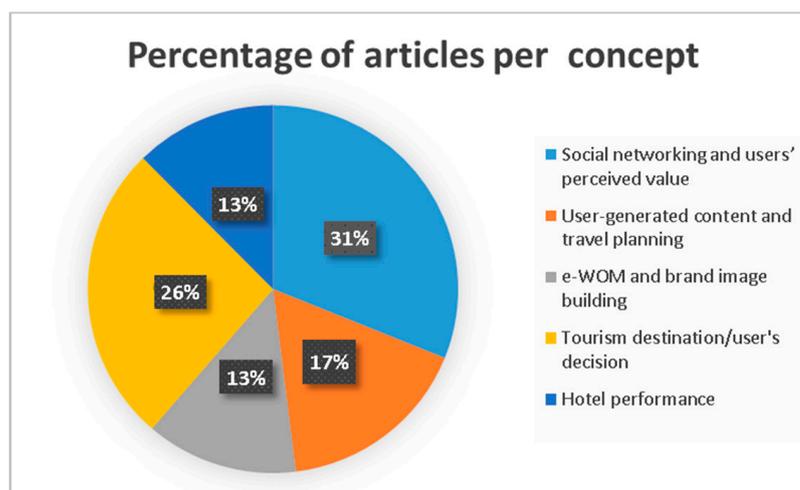


Figure 6. Percentage of articles per concept.

4. Discussion

4.1. Social Networking and Users' Perceived Value in Hospitality

Technological advances and the presentation of new methods of communication have fundamentally modified tourists' behavior [28,29]. The web has become the customer's best option in the quest for data on tourism destinations, and for suppliers it has become a significant instrument for the marketing of hospitality services. These improvements in technology have prompted a shift of the spotlight to businesses' management and marketing strategies, particularly in hospitality. The chances and difficulties for the hospitality industry that emerge from the digital environment are clear in regular business practice [2]. During the previous twenty years, academics and practitioners have indicated an expanding interest in the increasing role of social media in hospitality, and this topic comprises an interesting research theme [2,3]. Existing studies concluded that social media assume a critical role in numerous issues in travel planning, particularly consumer behavior (information search and decision making), marketing, and communication/cooperation with tourists [13].

Social media platforms have created new avenues for communication between tourists and travel service providers, and these platforms offer many opportunities for customer feedback. The establishment of a conduit for interaction and communication which is frequently profitable to the people involved is one of the main functions of social media. It offers a mechanism for tourists to communicate their complaints and needs and offers tourism suppliers a tool to obtain consumer feedback [2,13]. Today, travelers are turning to web-based social networks to search, organize, and share feedback of their experiences. This allows us to understand the opinions of the traveler first-hand. In addition, social networks have gained unmistakable quality as a consequence of the marketing strategy used by Destination Marketing Organizations, particularly in times of high funding cuts [30]. Giglio et al. (2019) [31] concluded that the online sharing of photos could be related to positive or negative experiences and therefore provide decision-making information. The same view seems to be shared by Mariani et al. (2018) [32], who, using a multi-factional regression model, indicated that visual content (i.e., photos) and long posts on social

media had a statistically significant positive impact on the usage of Destination Marketing Organizations by Facebook.

A key issue for SNS is how to extend the life of a platform, and a possible solution is to increase the level of user participation while at the same time urging clients to remain longer on the stage [33]. Facebook's new components, "stories", plan to rouse clients to share their accounts, and their first topic was "remembering". Thus, Facebook has shown its shrewd understanding of one significant inspiration: stories can be posted for capacity. Right now, on the Internet, e-WOM has been more compelling than WOM's relational correspondence, as anybody can disseminate their views on a product or service to a foreigner over the Internet [34].

Many companies have turned to online advertising and especially social media. Social platforms will help build an extraordinary image which separates a particular product from other comparable ones [28]. Online reviews are among the most reliable sources when deciding to implement online shopping activities. Normally, purchasers trust these appraisals and consider them to be reliable [35]. However, regardless of the effect and interest in ratings, a couple of scholars have so far investigated the impact that unknown and non-expert reviewers have on customer purchasing decisions. These reviews are very important for the user to have a weighted arrangement of perspectives, as they assist the user with framing a precise understanding of a hotel, its class, and the awaited experience [36].

User value combined with social sites is a concept that has not been explored on a large scale. However, a number of experts have expressed interest in the topic, since more research needs to be done on how user behavior is linked with value. In an investigation on whether or not estimated value influences customer confidence and the ongoing use of mobile social services, Hsiao et al. (2016) [37] identified a positive and critical relationship between those mentioned previously. The above proposal has also been supported by Stahl et al. (2003) [38], who first indicated that the customer is a key factor in creating and keeping up an unwavering buyer base.

Organizations have adopted social platforms to promote their brand with the intention of gaining more fame and market power [39]. Given that clients are geologically isolated from administration providers and consequently unable to have a total and targeted description of administration quality, social networks used by corporations in sectors such as tourism can serve to assess the changing behavior of their customers after online advertising and how to use it [39].

In particular, in the hotel sector, Kim et al. (2015) [40] point out that professionals and scholars have scrutinized social media's overall impact. For instance, marketers are starting to invest more money and time to guide the behavior of the customers and create more brand recognition. Hotel executives have asked for the adequacy of social media to direct/guide hotel guests' booking behaviors, which leads to interest rates and higher occupancy. However, owners are pushing hotel merchants to justify the growing social media marketing budget. Although investigations show that there are many obstacles, this motivates further research, because while the findings appear to resolve the issue, it remains unresolved. Finally, Mohd Suli and Mohd Suki (2019) [41] propose to examine in the future the personality traits and genetic characteristics of each individual in order to expand the legitimacy of the outcomes of such research.

Leung and Baloglu (2015) [42] highlighted the adequacy of social media marketing in the hotel sector. Lodging directors must follow the progression of online surveys to keep up a decent level of notoriety. Reactions, such as remuneration or remedies, encourage the retrieval of an inn's certain picture to expand consumer loyalty and draw in new clients, prompting improved inn execution [43,44].

In addition, future researchers should explore the particular kinds of reactions of hotel reviews and their distinct relationship with performance. For example, responding to online reviews can be sorted as responding to poor feedback, positive feedback, and responding entirely. In addition, it would be fascinating to consider the limit in the number

of reviews that considerably influence customer behavior. In the event that advertisers know the threshold of the number of ratings that causes shoppers to feel certain about their credibility, they will much more effectively direct the way customers make their purchases to their advantage [40].

The above position is supported by other researchers. Specifically, whether the reviews are confident or uncertain, social media can assist lodgings with making solid image recognition and increase booking odds by expanding web-based promotion [45]. Marketing managers need to use social networking sites as an online information-sharing mechanism in addition to a retrieval tool and an approach to help them build customer interactions and create public trust within online societies [46]. At the same time, Eggert and Ulaga (2002) [47] argue that companies that provide value to the user can gain a competitive advantage. As a consequence, these businesses are more likely to establish relationships with their customers; thus, it is difficult for the latter to leave. Undoubtedly, social worth is considered an essential factor in excluding users who are accustomed to using social networking sites [48,49].

4.2. User-Generated Content and Travel Planning

Born in the era of media saturation, twenty- to thirty-year-olds are almost certain, in contrast to past ages, to depend on peer WOM instead of business promotion when considering buying choices. The effect of the public on social networking sites has been perceived as the strongest asset that the travel industry advertisers can use to get to this specific buyer sector. Liu et al. (2019) [50] stress that tourism marketers could emphasize authentic, creative, and unique experiences and activities published through social media in order to make their products and services more attractive to consumers. This type of media is gaining popularity in contrast with conventional advertising rehearsals through which advertisers and providers give comparative data. Thus, it is also important to point out that such an advancement cannot be foreseen by travel industry traders, and it would be prudent to adjust new practices in accordance with data given by social platforms [51].

Social media is a platform for generating and exchanging information, thoughts, career interests, and other phases of expression across interactive communities and networks [52]. The essential wellspring of information is produced from client-created content as text- and image-based networks. Although Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) [3] argue that UGC should be examined in greater depth, UGC, as shown by the research that has been done, is becoming increasingly comprehensible. Researchers pay more attention to the use of UGC in hospitality, as social networking is one of the most reliable techniques for exchanging information and experiences among travelers [53]. Customers have questions like “How can I find the best hotel?” As consumers want to find responses to these issues, they search online reviews shared by other consumers with similar experience.

Post-experience behavior in hospitality is related to the degree of satisfaction of the tourism level with the holiday trip undertaken, picture and mood development, and repetition and recommendation intentions. In the social networking sense, post-experience activity takes the shape to the degree of participation of tourists in e-WOM, relating to their ability to exchange their tourism experiences on the Internet, thus leading to the creation of online customer travel reviews and suggestions. Online consumer reviews offer user-oriented information about products and services and provide feedback (positive or negative) to other users [13].

Nilashi et al. (2018) [54] attempted to develop a new method using customer reviews of various hotels to recommend accommodation adapted to their tastes. Their method was based on multi-criteria ratings collected by TripAdvisor and evaluated using specific techniques. This method was used to evaluate the precision of the prediction quality of the multi-criteria model with statistical measurements. The results of their investigation confirm that utilizing online reviews leads to accurate recommendations on TripAdvisor. The outcomes additionally indicated that the proposed client database is viable in tackling the issue of multi-criteria asymmetry.

On the other hand, the opinion-mining technique is one of the most productive strategies, as it tends to be joined with NLP and algorithms. Thus, with this technique, the ideas that were adopted would be very useful to tourism companies and hotels in terms of customer reviews. In the future, they propose to conduct a pilot study on the use of statistics and ratings from social sites to improve the business [52].

Chang et al. (2019) [55] make their own contribution to the topic through their study. They find that user ratings are affected by both the emotions and the time the rating is made; thus, they are not so objective. Existing research is limited to specific documents, but a framework is provided for extracting, classifying, and visualizing information from platforms like TripAdvisor. Such data-rating analyses may be used to improve hotel service and to discover marketing opportunities. Additionally, Filieri et al. (2015) [56] express concerns about fake and paid ratings and how they affect the traveler in not choosing a destination. In the future, it is suggested to investigate the profiles of the reviewers, how reviews are written, and travelers' previous reviews in order to establish their validity and not corrupt the brand image of the company.

The information available online has been shown to affect the decisions of travelers to pick explicit destinations. Pallud and Straub (2014) [57] provide an example regarding how the nature of a historical center's site can drive individuals to visit the site. Lee et al. (2019) [58] also examined how a destination management organization's website can reinforce the intention of the site's visitors to travel to a specific place by themselves. In that context, they emphasize that it is not nonsensical to accept that online travel data can support sightseers visits to lesser-known sites who appear to have seen something online.

Available studies investigating the impact of social networks on trip schedule and travel time are limited [59]. Future research should examine factors such as whether evaluators are considered to be similar or not to an expected consumer, how the incorporation of the hotel brand influences the assessment cycle, and whether distinctive age gatherings (or groups that differ from technology) are involved [60].

In conclusion, decision making is no longer solely a process of organizing the journey, but it has also been transposed during the journey, where purchasers settle on powerful choices with the assistance of social and mobile stages about where to visit, from a simple coffee store to a hotel or a whole other travel destination entirely. For that purpose, Varkaris and Neuhofer (2017) [61] also stress the need for future researchers to study websites that publish video and live streaming (e.g., Instagram, Vine) in order to comprehend their impact on consumers in the lodging and travel dynamic process. Utilizing this research as a fundamental element, it is logical to quantitatively record the impact of the specific social networks and their substance levels on the general consumer selection procedure.

In addition, although several researchers have paid attention to the significant influence of social media use, such as online reviews or WoM, on the travel planning process [48], few surveys have examined the impact of social networks tools for destination-related purchase choices. It is critical for cordiality and the travel industry associations to see how buyers look for and collect data at different phases of the movement dynamic procedure [60].

Overall ratings are the most remarkable indicator of an accommodation, followed by broad ratings, and the higher the response rate to negative reviews, the higher the hotel performance, based on Kim et al. (2015) [40]. Therefore, control over social media, especially the overall rating, ought to be treated as a significant part of hotel marketing. As a result, many managers believe that a website should provide content at the community level, and as a result, businesses are encouraging consumers to evaluate and disseminate a reputation for their merchandise or encounters on the web [62]. A hidden conviction behind such techniques is that online client reviews and comments can fundamentally help assemble trust in brands and affect consumer buying intentions [35].

The aforementioned view is also supported by Ye et al. (2009) [63] who, through relevant research, have shown that hotels with the highest ratings on the Internet receive more online bookings. A high score enhances the probability of a purchase as far as the reviews are trustworthy, that is, when endorsed by many reviews. Given the prevalence of

online reviews, there has been restricted research on the influence of criticism on businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and airlines. Thus, more in-depth research is needed [64]. Customer exposure to online surveys increases their consciousness of the products they receive and enhances their appreciation for a hotel [45]. Encouraging reviews are the reason for the increase in the number of bookings emphasized by Ye et al. (2009) [63], generating—as expected—more revenue for businesses. Kim et al. (2015) [40] confirm the positive connection between online reviews and hotel performance. All these outcomes highlight that the general ratings are the most remarkable indicator of hotel performance, followed by reactions to negative remarks. All in all, the better the general ratings and the higher the response rate to negative remarks, the superior the hotel performance. Subsequently, evidence from the reviewed articles suggests that the fundamental point is management of responses to negative online reviews and the treatment of e-complaints [65,66].

In addition to the direct effect of numerical ratings and the number of hotel evaluations, specific consideration should be paid to the impact that these elements have on the hotel's reputation. Potential buyers increase the reputation of a hotel by watching and talking about the assessment of an offer. Online reviews fill in as a medium among consumers and service providers, which can reflect satisfaction with the experience of use as well as provide significant information to enable possible consumers to decide. It is crucial to be aware of the role of online reviews, to adopt strategies to manage this fast-growing medium, and to see how online reviews are utilized by customers, the role they have in looking for data, and their effect on travel behavior [67,68]. Research right now helps to uncover the budgetary component of assessments and surveys in the short, medium, and long term.

Social networks have a key role in influencing hotel visitors as well as improving the services offered, directly influencing user behavior, and therefore the overall image performance of the hotel [69,70]. Executives must understand that they need to increase both consumers' satisfaction and service quality, as well as innovation in service development, to survive and compete in the current increasingly demanding environment [71–74]. Carefully researching customer preferences supports businesses in maintaining a strategic gap between consumers' desires and outcomes of service offering [75–77].

Previous studies have laid the groundwork, and from that can be built a theoretical framework. A thorough understanding of the issues at hand was gained through an open coding technique applied to the bibliometric analysis of the 151 papers for the purpose of dividing the categories to be used in the classification of the papers (Figure 7). These papers show that this area is still in its infancy and calls for additional study. Although many papers have laid the groundwork for UGC in hospitality, few have offered recommendations for how to best incorporate UGC into things like trip planning and decision making. Future researchers can use this lack of information to come up with ways to make travel planning easier and to improve the quality of hospitality services in the digital age.

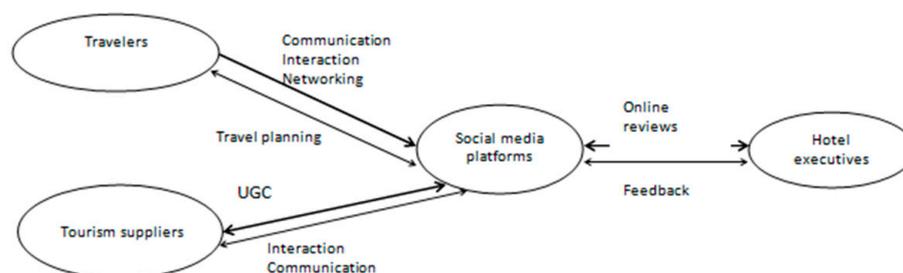


Figure 7. UGC model for travel planning in hospitality sector.

5. Conclusions

Advancements in the area of ICT, all in all, and in the area of Web2.0 and social media specifically, have made another completely intuitive and digital environment. Tourism customers' broad adoption and utilization of Web2.0 considerably affect tourist behavior

and related sectors in the travel industry. The aim of this article was to map papers with respect to social media platforms and UGC in hospitality. The study depends on an analysis of 151 articles derived from databases and classified by the principal topics of this growing research territory. This paper proposes that the topic of social media and customers' activities, including online reviews and experience sharing, establish a fundamental and challenging theme for scholars. By providing an update on the state of this field, it validates the conclusions and recommendations of earlier articles. It also shows that more empirical applications and suggestions are needed to help practitioners carry out their management and marketing duties in a sophisticated environment. The pivotal point for tourism suppliers is to embrace the appropriate perspective and to utilize social media appropriately to tap into the maximum capacity of these communication tools.

The outcomes of this literature review indicate the strategic importance of social media platforms in hospitality. Information sharing, online interaction, and posting reviews can significantly affect customer's perceptions. Tourism providers have the opportunity to understand tourists' needs and expectations and increase the quality of their experience. UGC is a significant tool for the improvement of marketing functions, customer service, branding, and service innovation. If the tourism industry suppliers assemble, investigate, and deal with this information appropriately, they can increase the performance of their marketing and management functions and the value for customers. Otherwise, the hospitality industry's suppliers would be influenced by the negative effect of these reviews on potential consumers. From the industry professionals' viewpoint, the owners and executives of the tourism industry organizations ought to comprehend that this information is fundamental. Without the data produced by customers and the market, business functions and planning are probably going to become a mystery.

The findings also reveal a number of crucial social media topics that have not received enough attention in the literature on hospitality. Future studies in hotel management are likely to address these important and worthwhile themes. To begin with, more research is required in order to study WOM with regard to social theories. As indicated by the paper outcomes, social media research in business has established WOM as the main theoretical concept. Social media research in the tourism sector should give more consideration to WOM and the main social theories such as social influences, social ties, and social interactions. This would reinforce the theoretical establishment of social media examination in hospitality. Second, social media research utilizing big data and text-mining methods should be supported in tourism. Future researchers can examine the effects of social media on tourist number, tourists' behavior, tourist managers' perspectives, destination images, and economic growth in hospitality. Tourists' behavior and characteristics may affect the use of social media before, during, and after a trip. Thus, personal and psychological factors can be examined.

The literature review was limited to a set of criteria. To begin with, an initial restriction was the language of publication. As a result, articles that were not in English were rejected. The review also included only articles that were available in full text, so the information collected may be limited. This weakness resulted in the rejection of relevant articles on the subject of the present study that would contribute to further analysis of the subject. Finally, articles belonging to the fields of Business Management and Computer Science were collected, and articles belonging to another field were rejected. Future researchers could expand the database of papers and include journals from different fields.

Online reviews by tourists have been investigated widely in extant social media literature; in any case, the current paper concluded that much UGC via social media, for example, trip photographs and videos, have not been researched adequately and could be interesting themes for additional investigation. Photos and videos posted by tourists may be a valuable source of information that has not been explored yet. Researchers could investigate what pictures tourists take, when the photos are posted, and what destinations are chosen. Studies using economic analyses are encouraged to be implemented.

From the practitioners' perspective, an interesting direction for future examination is the evaluation of social media platforms as a part of marketing strategy. Professionals encourage customers to use social media platforms and share UGC, but they do not interact with them. It is important for practitioners to share feedback to build trust and strong relationships with travelers in order to increase brand loyalty and tourist reputation. This interaction can significantly contribute to destination management and relationship management. Furthermore, destination marketing organizations can develop social media services and products for tourists in order to suggest the best places for them and share these photos on social media networks.

Another important direction for future researchers is the examination of issues relating to the socio-economic and cultural impacts of local residents or ethical issues affiliated with the use of social media in hospitality. Differences in destinations could have different effects on the usage of social media. In many cases, social media may offer positive opportunities and benefits in tourist marketing and destination management. In other cases, social media platforms may have restricted applicability. Therefore, research in developing countries may have increasing interest for scholars.

Another area that is under-researched in the hospitality literature is the use of data-mining techniques and big data. These methods are new trends in the social media field and will have a significant contribution to tourism literature. Qualitative and quantitative methods are now used. However, this area must be innovative in using more advanced methodologies. For example, data from multiple platforms should be retrieved to increase generalizability and future research in this area. All of the above directions for future research encourage the implementation of interdisciplinary research, integrating data, methods, theories, frameworks, and concepts from different perspectives of knowledge. This will help scholars and practitioners in the hotel sector comprehend the significance of social media and use it to solve problems.

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