

Review

Mapping the Landscape of Restaurant Research: A Bibliometric Analysis of Consumer Behavior, Organizational Behavior, and Finance Studies

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Abstract: Research published about the restaurant industry has experienced consistent growth over the past few decades. Yet, a comprehensive bibliometric review of this research has not been performed. This study aimed to perform such a review by examining peer-reviewed articles ($n = 792$) focused on restaurant business research published in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. Articles related to health or food science were not examined in this study. Articles were categorized as focusing on one of five types of restaurants (i.e., fast food, fast casual, casual dining, fine dining, and general restaurants), and the articles were analyzed within three research fields: consumer behavior, organizational behavior, and finance. The increasing number of research articles focused on the restaurant industry was found to have occurred during the same time as the number of hospitality scholars and the fast food restaurant sector expanded. Fast food restaurants received the most research attention and the fast casual types received the least. Consumer behavior research dominated the restaurant research, reflecting a focus on customer satisfaction and purchase intentions. Organizational behavior topics, such as workforce dynamics and organizational structure, received slightly less attention. Finance research was the least explored research field, likely due to its complexity and perceived indirect connection to consumer-facing outcomes. The study emphasizes the need for integrative research linking consumer behavior, organizational strategies, and financial decisions to provide a holistic understanding of restaurant performance and industry practices.



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1. Introduction

Restaurants in the United States play a crucial role in both the domestic and global economy. According to the National Restaurant Association's 2024 State of the Restaurant Industry Report, restaurant sales are expected to exceed \$1.1 trillion by the end of 2024. Additionally, the restaurant and foodservice industry is projected to generate 200,000 new jobs, bringing total employment in the sector to 15.7 million ([National Restaurant Association, 2024](#)). In 2023, the foodservice industry accounted for approximately 2.5% of the nation's GDP, contributing around \$684 billion ([U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2024](#)).

Parallel with the expansion of the restaurant industry ([Angelini et al., 2024](#)), research published about this industry has experienced consistent growth over the last three decades ([R. DiPietro, 2017](#)) and has become a leading component of the hospitality business field of

inquiry (Rodríguez-López et al., 2020). This increase in publications related to the restaurant industry includes work by academics and industry practitioners (Rejeb et al., 2023). Topics about this industry include subjects such as restaurant brands (Manko, 2022), factors resulting in customer satisfaction (Gupta et al., 2007), restaurant managers' competencies (R. B. DiPietro et al., 2007), and restaurant financial performance (Dogru et al., 2020). While research on restaurant management has grown significantly over time (Rejeb et al., 2023), it seems to lack a cohesive focus, with topics appearing to be chosen randomly. As a result, clear research priorities or niche areas that require more academic attention have not yet been identified.

This study seeks to provide a comprehensive bibliometric examination of restaurant business research. Studies that focus on the business aspects of the restaurant industry are examined and categorized using a framework consisting of the following: consumer behavior, organizational behavior, and finance. The research identified within these research fields is further examined to explore existing themes. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to illuminate the development of restaurant business research and highlight potential areas needing research exploration. The specific objectives are as follows: (1) what are the most published journal outlets for restaurant research; (2) what are the most cited articles; (3) what are the major thematic clusters; and (4) what topics need to be focused on in future research.

The following sections offer a review of pertinent literature that supports the study's framework, a detailed specification of the research design, a discussion of the results, and recommendations for future research directions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Historical Evolution of Business Aspects of Restaurant Research

Research has shown that restaurant-type establishments have existed for centuries (Sitwell, 2020). For example, archaeological research indicates numerous food counters and taverns existed in Pompei before the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD, providing evidence of early Roman foodservice establishments catering to locals and travelers (De Albentiis, 1958). However, research related to the business aspects of restaurants only began to be published in the last century (Hall, 1937).

During the 20th century, the restaurant industry grew rapidly in Western Countries (Carr, 2007). This expansion included the widespread emergence of fast food restaurant chains (Carr, 2007). Also, fast casual restaurants, a hybridization restaurant concept between fast food and casual dining restaurants, originated in the late 1990s and became a pivotal sector at the end of the 2000s (Nichols, n.d.). Research focused on the business of restaurants has risen in parallel to the surge in the size of this industry (R. DiPietro, 2017).

Previous studies have sought to categorize the literature about the restaurant business (Rejeb et al., 2023; Rodríguez-López et al., 2020). Based on the findings of a bibliometric analysis, Rejeb et al. (2023) revealed that "consumer behavior, consumer satisfaction, consumer-brand relationships, corporate social responsibility, and green restaurants" (p. 523) are focused areas of restaurant industry research. Rodríguez-López et al. (2020) reported that customer satisfaction is the central topic of interest in restaurant studies; healthy eating, brand equity, culture, and innovation were themes growing in interest, whereas emotion was the area that was underexplored.

In addition to bibliometric analysis, systematic review studies with meta-analysis have also been used to provide an overview of the business aspects of restaurant research (Angelini et al., 2024). Research concentrations in these studies varied (Angelini et al., 2024; Greene et al., 2023; Lin & Roberts, 2020; Mandracchia et al., 2021). Angelini et al. (2024) conducted a meta-analysis to examine restaurant efficiency, finding significant compet-

itiveness, economic strategies and some heterogeneity in efficiency results. Concerning sustainable purchasing, [Greene et al. \(2023\)](#) reported nudges that are effective in restaurant customers choosing low-emission meals. [Mandrachia et al. \(2021\)](#) elucidated interventions to motivate healthy eating in full-service restaurants and canteens. Another systematic review found that the theory of planned behavior is effective in predicting the food safety behavioral intentions of foodservice workers ([Lin & Roberts, 2020](#)).

2.2. Restaurant Research in Consumer Behavior, Organizational Behavior, and Finance

According to [Bilgin and Danis \(2019\)](#), research in three key areas comprehensively covers the business aspects of operating a restaurant. To be specific, consumer behavior, which examines customer perceptions, attitudes, and decision-making processes ([L. Wang et al., 2024](#)); organizational behavior, which focuses on internal management, employee dynamics, and operational efficiency ([Cavus et al., 2024](#); [R. B. DiPietro et al., 2007](#)); and finance, which explores budgeting, cost management, and profitability strategies ([Gim et al., 2024](#); [Markin et al., 2024](#)).

According to seminal research ([MacInnis & Folkes, 2010](#)), the field of consumer behavior is conceptualized into eight domains: perception and information processing, memory and learning, attitude, affect, judgment and consumer choice, personality, individual difference, self-concept, social influence, and culture influence. Consumer behavior within the restaurant industry often focuses on providing methods to reduce service delivery intangibilities and enhance consumer-perceived quality, satisfaction and customer loyalty ([MacInnis & Folkes, 2010](#); [Senachai et al., 2024](#)). Tangible evidence is operationalized by measuring the physical servicescape, which includes ambient conditions, spatial layout, signs, symbols, and artifacts ([Bitner, 1992](#)). The concept of servicescape has been expanded to include a social dimension. [Line and Hanks \(2020\)](#) discovered that the appearance and similarities of employees and other customers also influence customer satisfaction. Furthermore, with the advent of technology, particularly during the pandemic, consumer responses to various technological innovations were evaluated. For instance, [Y. C. Wang and Papastathopoulos \(2023\)](#) found that consumers' trust in technology increased their acceptance of AI service robots in a range of restaurants, from luxury to quick service. [Zemke et al. \(2023\)](#) identified additional factors, such as perceived benefits, ease of use, social influence, and positive attitudes, that are associated with higher intentions to use service robots.

Organizational behavior ([Business School 101, 2023](#)) is classified into seven domains: individual behavior, group behavior, organizational structure, organizational culture, leadership and management, human resources management, and organizational change and development. The most frequently cited research on organizational behavior at the individual level focuses on employee job satisfaction ([W. G. Kim et al., 2005](#)). [W. G. Kim et al. \(2005\)](#) demonstrated a consistently positive correlation between employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job retention. In contrast, studies on job burnout have found that employees' personalities, particularly the dimension of neuroticism, are major contributing factors. Another set of organizational behavior studies in the restaurant literature examined factors influencing management performance. For instance, [Muller and Dipietro \(2007\)](#) suggested that essential managerial traits include effective leadership, interpersonal skills, and social responsibility. Organizational behavior research has also progressed with the attention of sustainable goals. [Y. Wang et al. \(2013\)](#) established green standards in restaurant management, including green food, eco-friendly environments and equipment, and social responsibility. Technological implementation further supports the realization of these green standards by integrating concepts like "waste-to-fuel" and "lean" management into daily operations ([Abad et al., 2015](#)). Additionally, company-level internal

restructurings, including franchising, acquisitions, and mergers, have also been studied (Ackermann, 2024).

Finance (Schmidgall, 2016) can be segmented into eight domains, including financial statements, basic cost concepts, pricing, forecasting, operations budgeting, cash management, internal control, and capital budgeting. A review of the frequently cited articles revealed that finance topics centered on measuring performance data such as productivity, profitability, and efficiency by leveraging capital structure, expansion, and location selection (Dogru et al., 2020; Parsa et al., 2011; Sveum & Sykuta, 2019). For example, Sveum and Sykuta (2019) found that franchisee ownership significantly impacts the performance of full-service restaurants but has little to no effect on limited-service restaurants. Additionally, Reynolds and Thompson (2007) determined that fewer than 12% of multi-unit restaurants operate inefficiently by assessing the ratio of daily sales to hourly server rates. Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) is a frequently used method to measure performance-level data by including multiple output and input variables simultaneously (Charnes et al., 1978; Reynolds & Thompson, 2007). In addition to performance measurement, finance topics in the restaurant context also encompass cost analysis studies that measure sustainability efforts. For instance, Abad et al. (2015) indicated that collecting separate waste fractions (e.g., used cooking oil and burger fat) by logistics operators can play a crucial role in decarbonizing the supply chain, as well as reducing disposal fees and fuel costs. Similarly, Niu et al. (2021) found that a platform logistics strategy is more environmentally friendly than self-logistics in restaurant operations, according to the sales quantity-based environmental index. Implementing technology also enhances marketing and advertising strategies, which ultimately contribute to increased revenues. Li et al. (2021) demonstrated that marketing efforts through social media significantly reduce advertising costs and boost the performance of casual dining restaurants.

This study will use bibliometric analysis to identify potential areas needing further research exploration. Bibliometric analysis, as a quantitative research method, provides an objective overview of productivity and influence within a particular field by examining a large corpus of academic literature (Donthu et al., 2021). This type of analysis can reveal patterns through the study of intellectual, social, and conceptual structures (Zupic & Čater, 2015). By doing so, it uncovers the emergence and development of specific areas of study through an examination of contributions from scholars, institutions, and journals (Mulet-Forteza et al., 2019). Moreover, bibliometric analysis, combined with science mapping, helps scholars to reveal patterns, trends, and connections in the research literature while analyzing the temporal trends and dynamics of the research area over time (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

3. Methods

3.1. Databases and Search Terms

We extracted data from both Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus, to ensure comprehensive coverage of published literature (Rodríguez-López et al., 2020). WoS is a leading database that contains impactful and high-quality articles in hospitality (Rejeb et al., 2023), tourism (Benckendorff & Zehrer, 2013), and management (Nosella et al., 2012). In contrast, Scopus is widely utilized in bibliometric studies due to its comprehensive coverage of bibliographic data over time (Aria et al., 2020). As such, Scopus data were simultaneously extracted in the current research to ensure all the pertinent and empirical studies concerning the restaurant industry are included (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). Drawing upon the standard bibliometric analysis protocol (Moher et al., 2009), the titles and keywords of publications in both Web of Science and Scopus were searched using the following Boolean search queries: (multi-unit OR chain OR franchise OR “fast food” OR “quick service” OR

“quick serve” OR “fast casual” OR “quick casual” OR “casual dining” OR “fine dining” OR fine-dining OR “upscale dining”) and (restaurant OR foodservice). This restaurant categorization (i.e., fast food, fast casual, casual dining, and fine dining) is an accepted typology from the National Restaurant Association (McMahon et al., 2016). Additional search term alternatives were included to increase output completeness, e.g., “quick service” or “quick serve” can be a substitute for “fast food”. As a result, this search yielded 1403 and 2891 articles in WoS and Scopus, respectively.

3.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria and Data Screening Process

Two steps were used to extract the data from both databases. First, this current study focused solely on peer-reviewed academic articles published in English. Journal articles were examined, but not other types of publications, as they were peer reviewed (Keupp et al., 2012). Upon implementing these criteria, the search yielded 1127 and 2313 articles in WoS and Scopus, respectively. In total, the filtering method generated a list of 3440 articles. After removing duplicates manually within the citation software Zotero (Version 7) (Mueen Ahmed & Dhubaib, 2011), 1995 articles were retained and used for further analysis. Second, each publication’s titles, keywords, and abstracts were scrutinized to evaluate the source’s eligibility during the identification process. Article topics related to health or food science and those with no full text were manually removed (Agapito, 2020). As such, 792 journal articles about the restaurant industry were reviewed and proceeded in bibliometric analysis. Figure 1 displays the PRISMA flowchart of this systematic review search process for restaurant research articles.

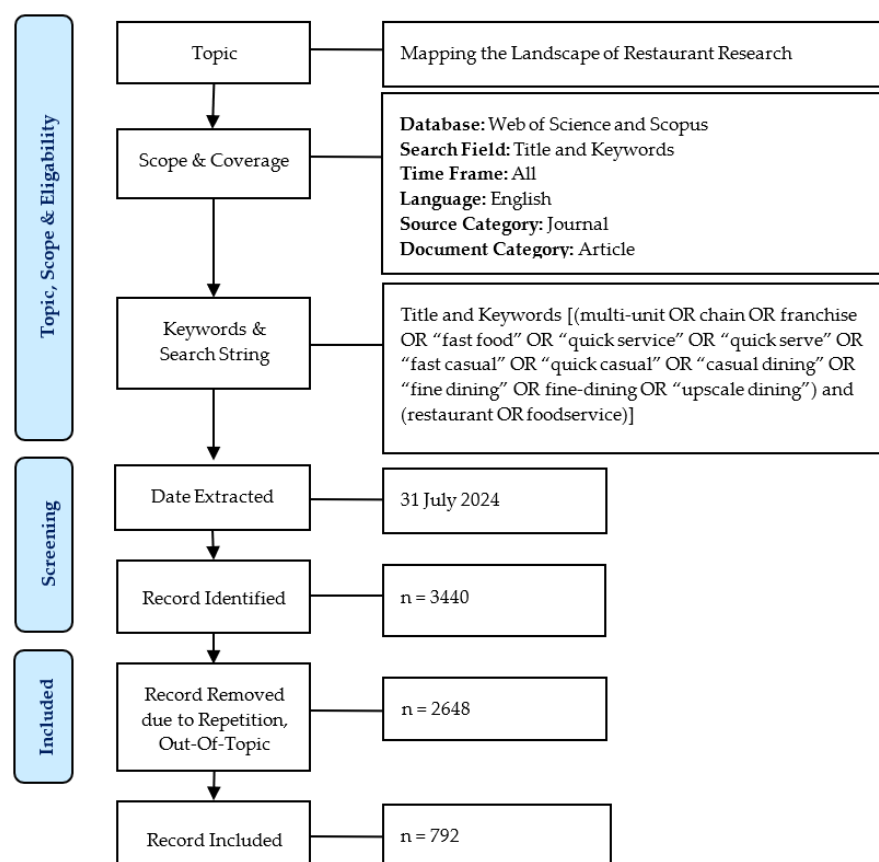


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart for a systematic review of research articles on the restaurant industry.

3.3. Data Analysis

Bibliometric analysis was performed to investigate the evolution and the structure of research on the restaurant industry (Donthu et al., 2021). Specifically, we conducted descriptive performance analysis and keyword co-occurrence analysis. We extracted our final data set (i.e., 792 articles) from WoS and Scopus and imported it into Harzing's Publish or Perish and VOSviewer. Harzing's Publish or Perish is a software (Version 8) application that was used to examine the citation performance of the articles (Fahrudin, 2024). In contrast, VOSviewer was used for scientific mapping of the data (Donthu et al., 2021).

VOSviewer was used to identify key topics, trends, and gaps in the bibliometric data obtained for this study (Donthu et al., 2021). This keyword co-occurrence analysis visualized relationships between keywords based on their frequency and proximity in the research publications (Comerio & Strozzi, 2019). Network visualization maps displaying the co-occurrence of all keywords within the documents were created for the documents that had previously been categorized as consumer behavior ($n = 433$), organizational behavior ($n = 265$), or finance research ($n = 119$). Only keywords that meet the defined threshold ($n = 5$) for this study were included in the visualization maps.

To identify themes in the three areas of the framework (i.e., consumer behavior, organizational behavior, and finance), we reviewed the titles, keywords, and abstracts of each paper to identify the explanatory variables. We refined these lists by combining similar or overlapping terms and collapsing them into broader variable themes. After consolidating the variables, we then counted the titles associated with each theme and ranked them in terms of prominence within each of the framework areas. The top 10 themes are reported.

4. Results

4.1. Article Numbers by Year and Restaurant Category

All the articles identified using the key search terms were examined to determine the annual publication trends in both Scopus and Web of Science databases. Figures 2 and 3 indicate that a similar low annual publication rate existed until about the end of the 1970s. The article in the Scopus database that first reported scholarly research about the restaurant industry was about sanitation, while the first one in the Web of Science database was about market-tested new egg products (R. C. Baker et al., 1966; Hall, 1937). It was not until the end of the 1970s and into the 1980s that the number of scholarly articles related to restaurants began to increase annually (Figures 2 and 3).

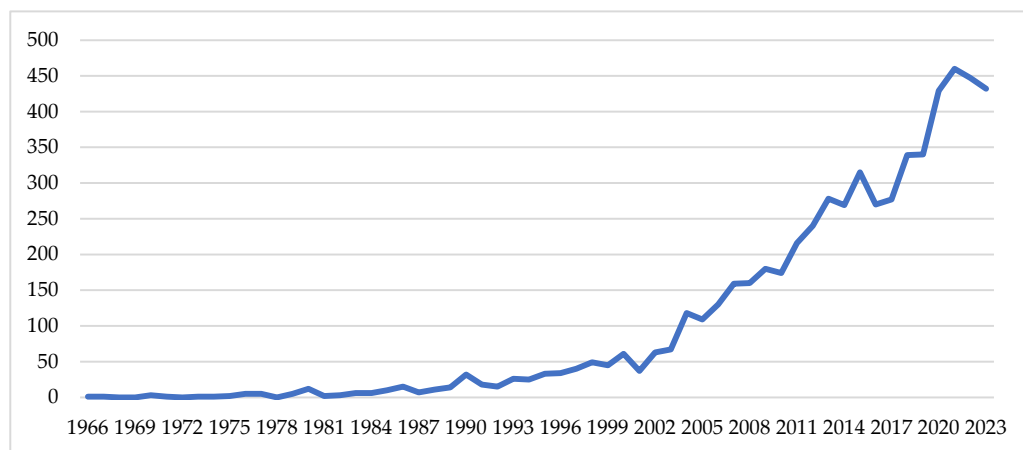


Figure 2. Restaurant research annual publication trends in Scopus.

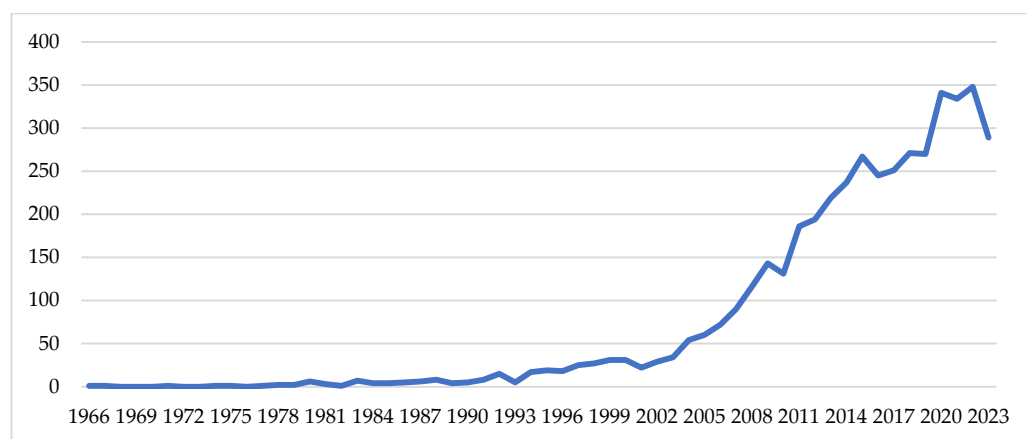


Figure 3. Restaurant research annual publication trends in Web of Science.

All 792 articles that relate to restaurant research were reviewed and manually categorized by restaurant categories and research realm. Table 1 shows the number of publications by the interplay of the restaurant category and research field. According to Table 1, fast food restaurants received more research attention ($n = 404$), followed by restaurants in general ($n = 65$), fine dining restaurants ($n = 60$), casual dining restaurants ($n = 56$), and fast casual restaurants ($n = 19$). Regarding the three research fields, restaurant research in consumer behavior received the greatest research interest ($n = 433$), followed by organizational behavior ($n = 265$) and finance ($n = 119$).

Table 1. Article numbers by restaurant category and research field.

Research Field	Fast Food	Fast Casual	Casual Dining	Fine Dining	Restaurant in General	Total
Consumer behavior	261	19	56	60	65	433 ¹
Organizational behavior	109	1	26	12	125	265 ²
Finance	34	1	8	1	75	119 ³
Total	404	21	89	73	265	792 ⁴

Note 1, 2, and 3. The total number is smaller than the sum of the previous unit numbers because some articles belong to two or three restaurant categories. Note 4. The total number is smaller than the sum of the previous unit numbers because some articles belong to two or three fields.

4.2. Journal Outlets

Figures 4–6 display the journals that published the top 10 number of articles related to consumer behavior, organizational behavior, and finance in the restaurant sector, respectively. Regarding consumer behavior (Figure 4), among the top 10 journals selected, the Journal of Foodservice Business Research ranks the highest, with 34 of the 433 articles analyzed (7.85%), followed by the International Journal of Hospitality Management (23 articles, 5.31%), the British Food Journal (21 articles, 4.85%), the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (17 articles, 3.93%), Sustainability (17 articles, 3.93%), the Cornell Hospitality Quarterly (14 articles, 3.23%), the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research (12 articles, 2.77%), the Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management (12 articles, 2.77%), the African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure (11 articles, 2.54%), and Appetite (10 articles, 2.31%).

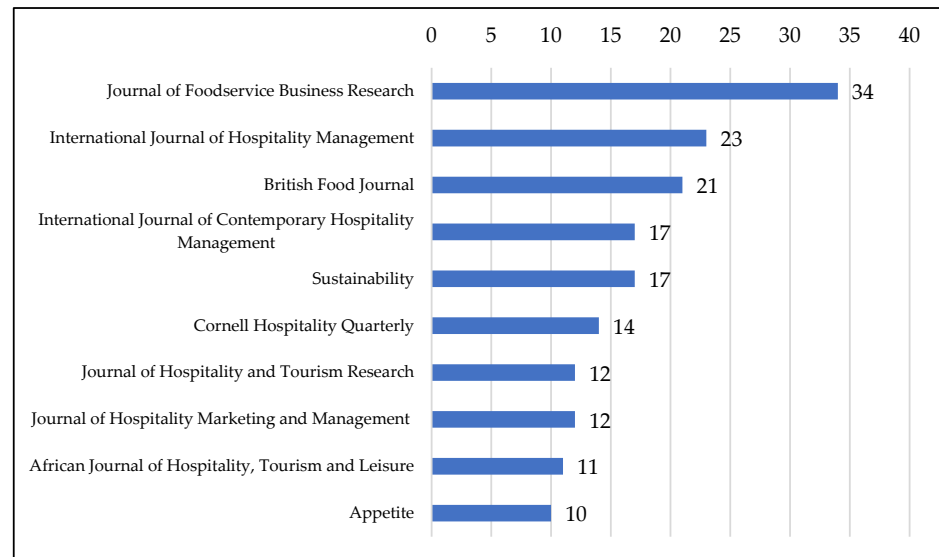


Figure 4. Journals that published the top 10 numbers of articles related to consumer behavior in the restaurant sector.

Figure 5 demonstrates journals that published the top 10 greatest number of articles related to organizational behavior in the restaurant sector. Specifically, among the 265 articles analyzed, the top three journal outlets are the International Journal of Hospitality Management (26 articles, 9.81%), the Journal of Foodservice Business Research (16 articles, 6.04%) and the Cornell Hospitality Quarterly (15 articles, 5.66%), followed by the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (14 articles, 5.28%), the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research (12 articles, 4.53%), and the British Food Journal (10 articles, 3.77%). The next four journals, whose publication scope was more organization and management-focused, included the International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration (six articles, 2.26%), the Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism (six articles, 2.26%), the Hospitality and Tourism Educator (four articles, 1.51%), and the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (four articles, 1.51%).

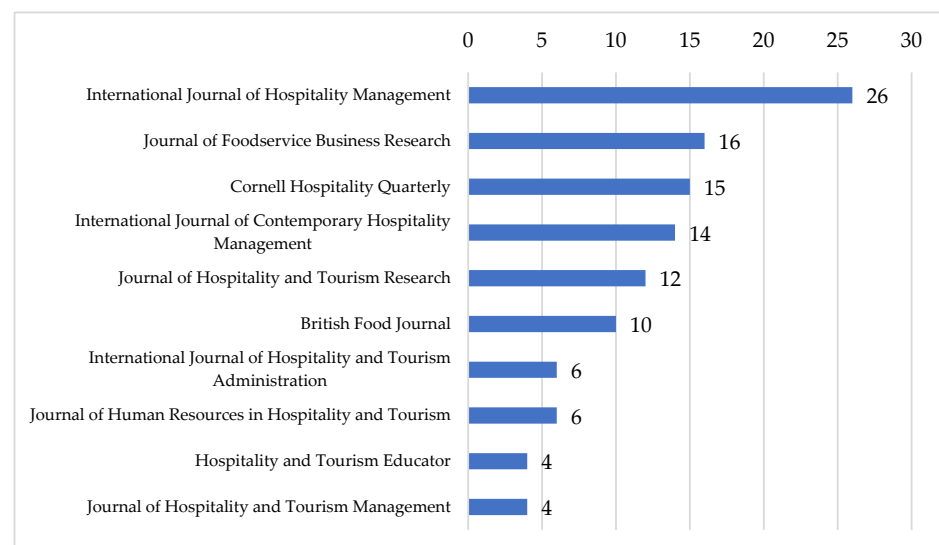


Figure 5. Journals that published the top 10 greatest number of articles related to organizational behavior in the restaurant sector.

Figure 6 depicts journals that published the top 10 greatest number of articles related to finance in the restaurant sector. Specifically, among the 118 articles analyzed, the

International Journal of Hospitality Management ranks the highest (18 articles, 15.25%), followed by the Cornell Hospitality Quarterly (11 articles, 9.32%), the Journal of Foodservice Business Research (8 articles, 6.78%), the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (6 articles, 5.08%), Tourism Economics (6 articles, 5.08%), the Asian Journal of Management Cases (3 articles, 2.54%), the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research (3 articles, 2.54%), the International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research (2 articles, 1.69%), the International Journal of Production Economics (2 articles, 1.69%), and the ASHRAE Journal (2 articles, 1.69%).

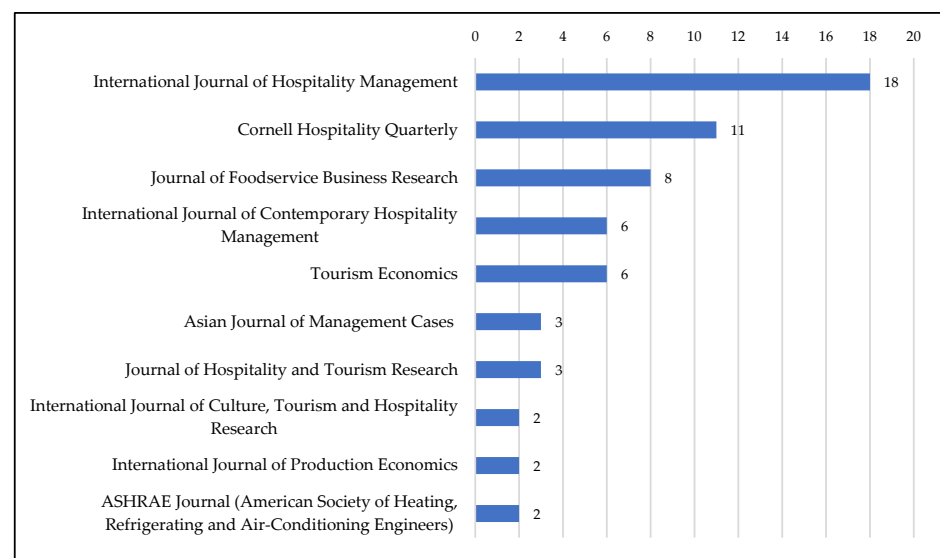


Figure 6. Journals that published the top 10 greatest number of articles related to finance in the restaurant sector.

4.3. Most Cited Articles

For the topic of consumer behavior (Table 2), all 10 articles were related to multi-unit restaurants. Of the ten publications, three articles researched fast casual restaurants; another three investigated fast food restaurants, and the rest of the four articles discussed the category of restaurants in general. Surprisingly, there is a paucity of research on consumer behavior in fast casual restaurants ($n = 19$), and two of those very few articles are top cited (Table 2) (Ryu et al., 2008; Ryu & Han, 2010). Of the ten top-cited articles, four addressed the effects of various independent variables on customer satisfaction. Specifically, restaurant image, perceived value, three dimensions of the DINESERV instrument (i.e., quality of food, quality of service, and quality of physical environment), hedonic value, and utilitarian value were examined as antecedents in relationship with consumer satisfaction, particularly in the context of fast casual restaurants (Ryu et al., 2008; Ryu & Han, 2010; Ryu et al., 2010). In addition, cultural and situational contingencies (i.e., attitude, subjective norm, and past behavior) were independent variables used to predict consumer satisfaction, especially in fast food restaurants (Bagozzi et al., 2000). Behavioral intention was examined in five of the articles (Bagozzi et al., 2000; Chandon & Wansink, 2007; Park, 2004; Ryu et al., 2008; Ryu & Han, 2010). The independent variables were consumer satisfaction, attitude, subjective norms, and past behavior (Bagozzi et al., 2000; Chandon & Wansink, 2007; Park, 2004). There are two articles related to loyalty-related antecedents (Hyun, 2010; H. B. Kim & Kim, 2005). One of them examined customer loyalty in relation to service quality and relationship quality (Hyun, 2010). The other one investigated brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image, and perceived quality's influence on firm's performance (H. B. Kim & Kim, 2005).

Table 2. Top ten most cited articles in consumer behavior.

No.	Citations	Citations per Year	Title	Publication	Restaurant Category
1	1386	86.63	The relationships among overall quick-casual restaurant image, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Fast casual (multi-unit)
2	1289	67.84	The relationship between brand equity and firms' performance in luxury hotels and chain restaurants	Tourism Management	Restaurant in general (multi-unit)
3	1286	91.86	Influence of the quality of food, service, and physical environment on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention in quick-casual restaurants: moderating role of perceived price	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research	Fast casual (multi-unit)
4	1078	63.41	The biasing health halos of fast-food restaurant health claims: Lower calorie estimates and higher side-dish consumption intentions	Journal of Consumer Research	Fast food (multi-unit)
5	985	70.36	Relationships among hedonic and utilitarian values, satisfaction and behavioral intentions in the fast-casual restaurant industry	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Fast casual (multi-unit)
6	736	30.67	Cultural and situational contingencies and the theory of reasoned action: Application to fast food restaurant consumption	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Fast food (multi-unit)
7	581	29.05	Efficient or enjoyable? Consumer values of eating-out and fast food restaurant consumption in Korea	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Fast food (multi-unit)
8	458	32.71	Predictors of relationship quality and loyalty in the chain restaurant industry	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	Restaurant in general (multi-unit)
9	393	43.67	Consumer-based chain restaurant brand equity, brand reputation, and brand trust	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Restaurant in general (multi-unit)
10	389	22.88	Guest satisfaction and restaurant performance	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	Restaurant in general (multi-unit)

The top 10 most cited articles in organizational behavior are presented in Table 3. Of the ten articles, one article discussed fast food restaurants and one article discussed casual dining restaurants. The rest of the articles can be categorized as restaurants in general. Seven out of the ten articles were related to multi-unit restaurants. Of the ten articles, four addressed employee topics (Card & Krueger, 1994; H. J. Kim et al., 2009; W. G. Kim et al., 2005; Tan & Netessine, 2014). Specifically, W. G. Kim et al. (2005) examined the effects of service orientation dimensions (i.e., customer focus, organizational support, and customer service under pressure) on employee job satisfaction. H. J. Kim et al. (2009) investigated the five personality dimensions (i.e., extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness) on employee burnout and engagement. Tan and Netessine (2014) researched the impact of workload on worker productivity. In addition, Card and Krueger (1994) analyzed the effect of minimum wage on establishment-level employee outcomes. Organizational structure was examined in two of the articles (Ahrens & Chapman, 2002; Bradach, 1997). Specific topics were span of control (Bradach, 1997), accounting and accountability, and central performance reports (Ahrens & Chapman, 2002). Two articles examined organizational change and development, including the topics of franchising (Sorenson & Sørensen, 2001) and product innovation (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2009). The remaining two articles were related to supply chain management, i.e., green supply chain management (Y. Wang et al., 2013) and waste management (Wen et al., 2018).

Table 3. Top ten most cited articles in organizational behavior.

No.	Citations	Citations per Year	Title	Publication	Restaurant Category
1	5354	172.71	Minimum wages and employment: A case study of the fast-food industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania	American Economic Review	Fast food (multi-unit)
2	1116	41.33	Using the plural form in the management of restaurant chains	Administrative Science Quarterly	Restaurant in general (multi-unit)
3	871	45.84	Effect of service orientation on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention of leaving in a casual dining chain restaurant	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Casual dining (multi-unit)
4	822	54.80	Burnout and engagement: A comparative analysis using the Big Five personality dimensions	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Restaurant in general
5	643	27.96	Finding the right mix: Franchising, organizational learning, and chain performance	Strategic Management Journal	Restaurant in general (multi-unit)
6	377	34.27	Developing green management standards for restaurants: An application of green supply chain management	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Restaurant in general (multi-unit)
7	357	35.70	When does the devil make work? An empirical study of the impact of workload on worker productivity	Management Science	Restaurant in general
8	313	14.23	The structuration of legitimate performance measures and management: Day-to-day contests of accountability in a U.K. restaurant chain	Management Accounting Research	Restaurant in general (multi-unit)
9	225	15.00	The product innovation process of quick-service restaurant chains	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Fast food (multi-unit)
10	197	32.83	Design, implementation, and evaluation of an Internet of Things (IoT) network system for restaurant food waste management	Waste Management	Restaurant in general

The top 10 most cited articles in finance are displayed in Table 4. Of the ten articles, there were only two articles that analyzed a specific restaurant category, one for fast food restaurants and one for fine dining restaurants. The rest of the eight articles belonged to the restaurants in general category. Two of the ten articles were related to the multi-unit restaurant sector. Of the ten articles, five addressed the effects of various independent variables on restaurant productivity and performance. Specifically, the independent variables include guest satisfaction (Gupta et al., 2007), franchise proportion (Hsu & Jang, 2009), server wage, server count, seats, competitors, training (Gupta et al., 2007), and restaurants' cooperation with online food-delivery platforms (Niu et al., 2021). Productivity and performance, as dependent variables, were also measured by a series of proxy indicators, such as profitability (Niu et al., 2021), revenue (Gupta et al., 2007), sales and tips (Hsu & Jang, 2009; Reynolds & Thompson, 2007), and efficiency (E. Y. Roh & Choi, 2010). Supply chain management was examined in three of the articles from an economics perspective (Charlebois et al., 2015; Francis et al., 2008). One article dealt with determinants of size, growth rate, and risk sharing to the relationship of propensity to franchise (Y. S. Roh, 2002). The last article examined franchises' abilities to improve inventory management and to identify potential sales opportunities by forecasting via time series data mining at both the store level and corporate level (Liu et al., 2001).

Table 4. Top ten most cited articles in finance.

No.	Citations	Citations per Year	Title	Publication	Restaurant Category
1	387	22.76	Guest satisfaction and restaurant performance	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	Restaurant in general
2	194	11.41	Multiunit restaurant productivity assessment using three-phase data envelopment analysis	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Restaurant in general (multi-unit)
3	177	11.80	Effects of restaurant franchising: Does an optimal franchise proportion exist?	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Restaurant in general
4	171	7.77	Size, growth rate and risk sharing as the determinants of propensity to franchise in chain restaurants	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Restaurant in general (multi-unit)
5	134	5.83	Data mining on time series: An illustration using fast-food restaurant franchise data	Computational Statistics & Data Analysis	Fast food
6	127	14.11	"Back of house"—focused study on food waste in fine dining: The case of Delish restaurants	International Journal of Culture Tourism and Hospitality Research	Fine dining
7	107	35.67	Platform logistics or self-logistics? Restaurants' cooperation with online food-delivery platform considering profitability and sustainability	International Journal of Production Economics	Restaurant in general
8	102	6.38	Value chain analysis in the UK beef foodservice sector	Supply Chain Management- An International Journal	Restaurant in general
9	75	9.38	The Impact of restaurants' green supply chain practices on firm performance	Sustainability	Restaurant in general
10	69	4.93	Efficiency comparison of multiple brands within the same franchise: Data envelopment analysis approach	International Journal of Hospitality Management	Restaurant in general (multi-unit)

4.4. Restaurant Research in Consumer Behavior

Figure 7 presents a map of the keywords co-occurrence in the research field of consumer behavior. Out of the 2354 keywords, a co-occurrence analysis revealed 138 main keywords that met the threshold of the minimum number of keyword occurrences ($n = 5$).

Indeed, cultural backgrounds, as one of the significant contextual contingencies, are likely to impact consumer attitudes toward food services and food wastage (Bagozzi et al., 2000). Furthermore, the above examinations were conducted via methods of analysis such as confirmative factor analysis (Uddin, 2019), structural equation modeling (Wu et al., 2023), and theoretical study (Bagozzi et al., 2000).

The purple cluster, as the fifth cluster in consumer behavior, was lexically linked to technology adoption in restaurants (Baba et al., 2023). Those technologies included the implementation of kiosks (Baba et al., 2023; K. H. Seo, 2020), mobile coupon (Baba et al., 2023), mobile banking (Garg, 2022), tablet-based menu (Garg, 2022), facial recognition (Ciftci et al., 2020), mobile food-ordering apps (Dirsehan & Cankat, 2021), smart retailing technologies (Lacap et al., 2024), etc. The theories that were utilized for examinations on technology adoption included UTAUT and UTAUT 2 (K. H. Seo, 2020).

Examination of the explanatory variables identified within the consumer behavior research revealed a strong emphasis on service quality (17%) that was often used to explain response variables such as customer satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived value (Figure 8). Customer characteristics (13%) such as demographics, lifestyle preferences, and dining habits were examined to identify their influences on food products and business choices. Technology (11%) was also a prevalent theme, with studies investigating its impact on things such as ordering efficiency, consumer trust in automation, and adoption of self-service kiosks. Brand strategy (10%) and marketing (5%) explanatory variables collectively accounted for 15% of the literature. This research focused on understanding response variables such as purchase intentions and customer satisfaction. While advertising (3%) received comparatively less focus, these studies explored its role in consumer response to promotional messages and promotions. The physical dining environment (servicescape, 9%), including building design and atmosphere aroma, were examined to determine any associations with topics such as dining duration and willingness to pay premium prices. Research on sustainability related factors (corporate social responsibility, 3%; sustainability, 5%) examined how explanatory variables such as eco-friendly initiatives, ethical sourcing, and sustainability messaging influenced, for example, consumer trust and purchasing decisions. Food quality (4%) was examined to determine its associations with response variables such as purchase intention and repeat patronage. The remaining 20% of the studies examined other explanatory variables such as menu attributes and social media reviews.

In addition to presenting the thematic patterns found in consumer behavior studies (Figure 7), we also examined them to identify the interplay between five restaurant categories and eight consumer behavior domains (Table 5) to show a more nuanced academic scope for restaurant research in the field of consumer behavior. Based on Table 5, the examination of the five restaurant categories in consumer behavior is relatively advanced. However, there are intersections that were scantily touched upon, which in turn, can be potential room for future studies. For example, vertically, fast casual restaurants were less frequently investigated with fewer numbers of publications ($n = 19$). Horizontally, the domain of memory and learning showed a dearth of research. A review of the 433 consumer behavior articles indicated that only 2 articles on fast food restaurants and 3 articles on fine dining restaurants fell into this category (Gebbs et al., 2021; Tsaur & Lo, 2020; Yemsi-Paillissé, 2024). Therefore, research on the domain of memory in contexts of fast casual and casual dining restaurants is lacking. Existing research topics included advertising effectiveness on memory and restaurant selection (Ares et al., 2022) and memorable dining experience (Ehsan, 2012) yet only in the contexts of fast food and casual dining restaurants. In addition, the domain of cultural influences on consumer behavior was extensively discussed across all restaurant categories, except for the category of fast casual restaurants.

Table 5. The interplay between restaurant category and consumer behavior domain.

No.	The Domain of Consumer Behavior	Restaurant Category				
		Fast Food	Fast Casual	Casual Dining	Fine Dining	Restaurants in General
1	Perception and information processing Definition: ☐ The process via which consumers assess, interpret, and provide meaning to a marketing stimulus. For example: ☐ Perceived service quality ☐ Central and peripheral information processing theory	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Memory and learning Definition: ☐ A recording process that allows us to retrieve information related to products, services, and consumption experiences. For example: ☐ Memorable dining experience ☐ Memorable aspects of food advertisements	✓			✓	
3	Attitude Definition: ☐ Our relatively enduring evaluations toward an attitude object. For example: ☐ Attitude in TPB ☐ Implicit and explicit attitude measures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Affect Definition: ☐ Affect is a temporary mental feeling, rather than an enduring cognitive evaluation. For example: ☐ Self-conscious emotions ☐ Positive affect negative affect scale (PANAS)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 5. Cont.

No.	The Domain of Consumer Behavior	Restaurant Category				
		Fast Food	Fast Casual	Casual Dining	Fine Dining	Restaurants in General
5	Judgment and consumer choice Definition: ○ Judgment is an opinion toward an object, whereas decision is the behavior to make selections among alternative choices. For example: ○ Prospect theory ○ Endowment effect	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Personality, individual differences, and self-concept Definition: ○ Self-concept is consumers' self-identity which shapes their perceptions, attitudes, and buying decisions toward a product. For example: ○ Pro-environmental self-identity ○ Consumer personality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Social influences Definition: ○ Social identification is the degree to which individuals believe they belong to a group and how those group dynamics influence their choices. For example: ○ Independent and interdependent self-construal ○ Commensality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Cultural influences Definition: ○ Culture is a shared social value that is abstract and implicitly influences how consumers react to marketing stimuli. For example: ○ Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory ○ Trompenaars' cultural dimensions	✓		✓	✓	✓

Note: Check marks indicate that at least one article focused on consumer behavior and the particular restaurant category.

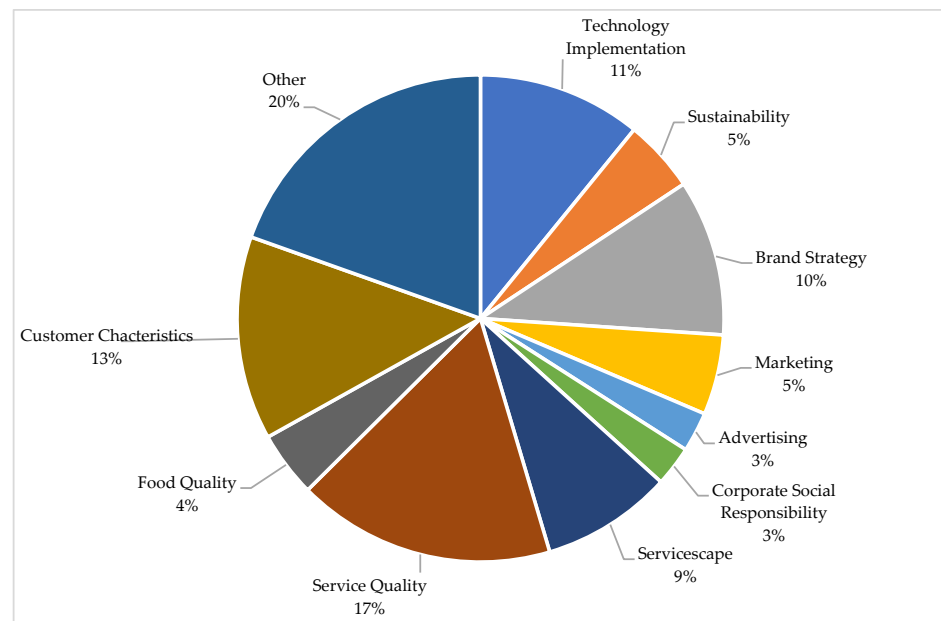


Figure 8. Explanatory variables examined in studies about consumer behavior.

4.5. Restaurant Research in Organizational Behavior

Figure 9 is a map of the keywords co-occurrence in the research field of organizational behavior. Out of 1712 keywords, co-occurrence analysis revealed 62 main keywords that met the threshold for the minimum number of keyword occurrences ($n = 5$). The mapping grouped the keyword network into four clusters, including franchising, supply chain management, employee behavior, and food safety. Specifically, the red cluster included items that are lexically linked to a series of organizational behavior domains, including (1) organizational form (Brizek, 2004), (2) organizational change and development such as internationalization, integration, franchising (Ackermann, 2024) as well as innovation (Charpin et al., 2021), and (3) management and leadership (R. B. DiPietro et al., 2007). Agency Theory (H. S. Kim & Jang, 2021; Moon et al., 2017; Shapiro, 2005) is the theoretical underpinning for this line of research. According to Shapiro (2005), Agency Theory focuses on the most effective way to manage relationships between principals and agents.

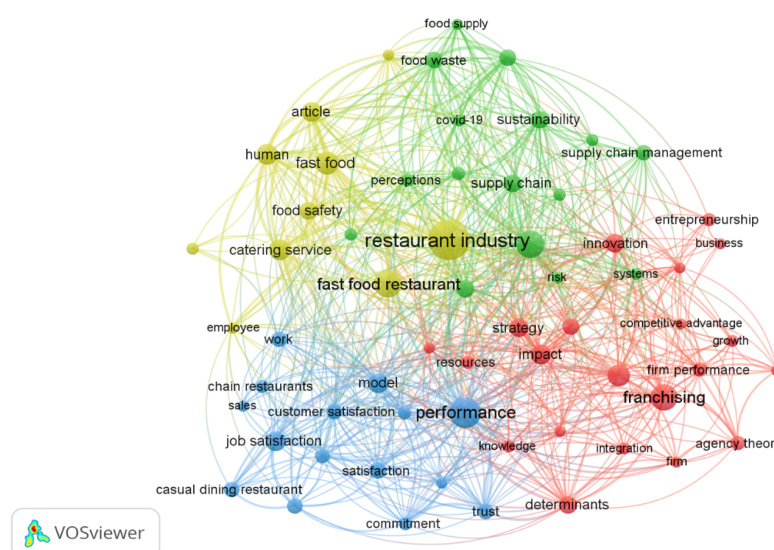


Figure 9. A network visualization map displaying the co-occurrence of all keywords within the documents ($n = 265$) focused on organizational behavior that met the defined threshold for this study.

The green cluster thematically focused on topics related to supply chain management (Ku et al., 2020; Murphy & Smith, 2009) and sustainability (Chiu & Hsieh, 2016; Orynczy et al., 2020), emphasizing the era of COVID-19 (Rezaei et al., 2024; Sha'ari et al., 2023). Relevant items covered are food waste management (Martin-Rios et al., 2020; Sha'ari et al., 2023), waste management in general (Abad et al., 2015) and supply chain management (Ku et al., 2020; Murphy & Smith, 2009).

The blue cluster lexically related to employee behavior in organizations and how their behaviors affect consumer satisfaction and service company performance. Keywords included were employee job satisfaction (Arun et al., 2019; Aziz et al., 2007), organizational commitment (W. G. Kim et al., 2005), trust (J. E. Lee & Lee, 2021; Rezaei et al., 2022), consumer satisfaction (A. M. Susskind et al., 2018), service company performance, and sales (A. M. Susskind et al., 2018). These items were examined primarily in the contexts of casual dining (W. G. Kim et al., 2005) and chain restaurants (A. M. Susskind et al., 2018).

The yellow cluster consisted of keywords that thematically related to human resource management (Dermody, 2002; R. B. DiPietro & Milman, 2004) in fast food restaurants (Card & Krueger, 1994; R. B. DiPietro & Milman, 2004). The examinations of employees (Dermody, 2002; R. B. DiPietro & Milman, 2004) and their food safety handling practices (Asim et al., 2019; Daskin, 2019) were associated with the COVID-19 era (Abughoush et al., 2023) in this cluster.

The top 10 research themes within the Organizational Behavior field are presented in Figure 10. Human resource management (15%) was one of the most studied themes. The topics in this theme included managerial decisions used to understand and improve restaurant operations by impacting employee performance and operational efficiencies. Closely related to this theme was research on employee retention (7%), employee training (5%), and employee characteristics (4%). These topics addressed the effects of workforce skill development and employee traits on operation efficiencies and turnover rates. Other major areas of study included franchising models (15%) and restaurant geographic locations (4%). These studies explored business expansion strategies, market positioning, and the impact of site selection on restaurant success. Other topics of significant interest were supply chain management (6%) and technology implementation (12%). These topics reflected the desire to understand and modify procurement and automation methods to enhance operational efficiency and reduce costs. Ecological concerns were reflected in the studies about environmental sustainability (10%) and food waste reduction (4%). The “other category” (18%) captured various niche or emerging research areas that are underexplored, such as the effects of increased minimum wage requirements, the impact of suggested tips, and influences on service quality.

To take a closer look at the breadth of restaurant research in organizational behavior, Table 6 depicted the interplay between restaurant categories and organizational behavior domains. Individual behaviors (e.g., employee motivation, job satisfaction, and retention) were examined across four restaurant categories, particularly for fast casual restaurants, due to the existence of only one article. Such academic focus showed that by understanding individual behavior and the factors that drive employee engagement, organizations can create a work environment that enhances productivity and well-being. Vertically, fast casual restaurants have been scantily investigated in the research field of organizational behavior. Domains of examinations that are potential niche items include group behavior, organizational structure, organizational culture, organizational change and development. Horizontally, the domain of organizational structure has seldom been investigated across all restaurant categories, except for two articles, in the “restaurant in general” category, that discuss management control systems in such research domains (Ahrens & Chapman, 2002; Sorenson & Sørensen, 2001).

Table 6. The interplay between restaurant category and organizational behavior domain.

No.	The Domain of Organizational Behavior	Restaurant Category				
		Fast Food	Fast Casual	Casual Dining	Fine Dining	Restaurant in General
1	Individual behavior Definition: ○ Individual behavior is the employees’ personal personalities, values, and attitudes that influence their job satisfaction. For example: ○ Employee motivation ○ Employee job satisfaction	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Group behavior Definition: ○ Group behavior is team dynamics within an organization. For example: ○ Communication ○ Collaboration	✓		✓	✓	✓
3	Organizational structure Definition: ○ Organizational structure refers to the hierarchy of communication flow that shapes employee behavior and organizational culture. For example: ○ Hierarchical levels’ span of control, centralization versus decentralization ○ Formal reporting relationships					✓
4	Organizational culture Definition: ○ Organizational culture is shared values, beliefs, and norms within an organization. For example: ○ Innovative culture ○ Employee-centric culture	✓		✓	✓	✓

Table 6. Cont.

No.	The Domain of Organizational Behavior	Restaurant Category				
		Fast Food	Fast Casual	Casual Dining	Fine Dining	Restaurant in General
5	Leadership and management Definition: The role of leaders in an organization influences employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance. For example: Different leadership styles The skills required for effective management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Human resources management Definition: The management process of recruiting, developing, training, and retaining employees. For example: Recruitment training and development Compensation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Organizational change and development Definition: Organizational change and development include the procedures that support change, resolve problems, and implement development programs at the organizational level. For example: Technological advancements Internal restructuring such as mergers, acquisitions, and restructure	✓		✓	✓	✓

Note: Check marks indicate that at least one article focused on organizational behavior and the particular restaurant category.

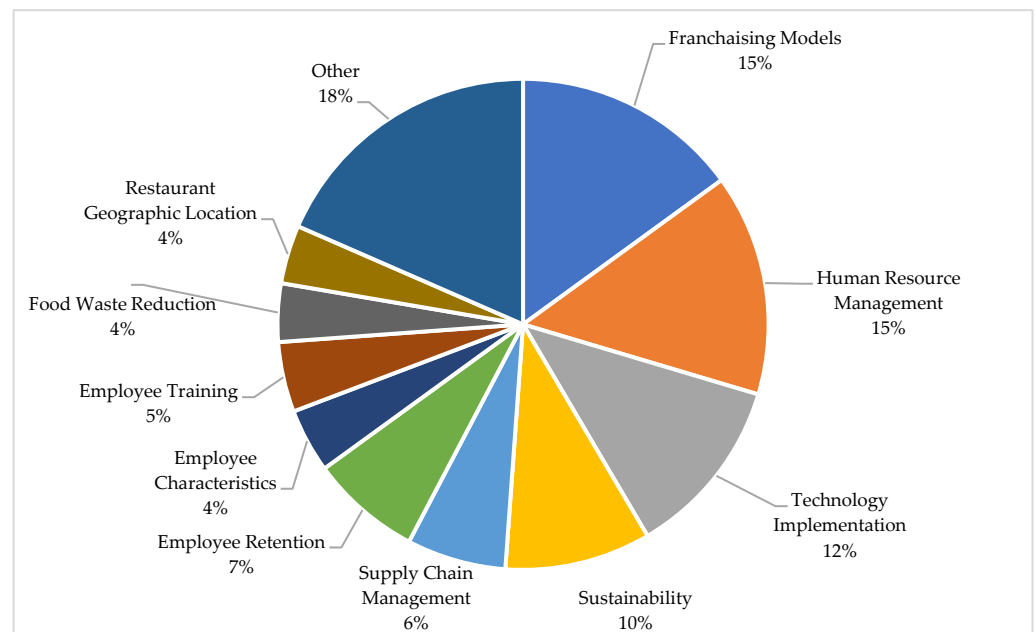


Figure 10. Explanatory variables in studies about organizational behavior.

4.6. Restaurant Research in Finance

Figure 11 displays a map of keywords co-occurrences in the field of finance. Out of 820 keywords, co-occurrence analysis revealed 78 main keywords that met the threshold for the minimum number of keyword occurrences ($n = 3$).

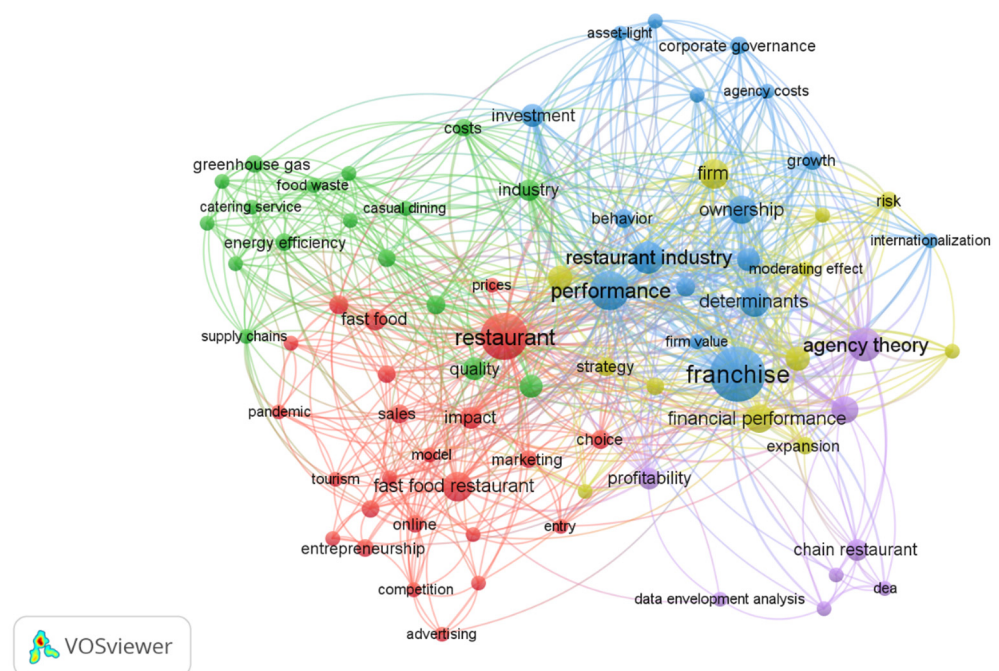


Figure 11. A network visualization map displaying the co-occurrence of all keywords within the documents ($n = 119$) focused on finance that met the defined threshold for this study.

The keyword co-occurrence network contained five clusters. The red cluster includes terms that are lexically linked to the context of fast food restaurants (Arshi et al., 2023; Šrédl & Mikhalkina, 2014) with service companies' performance proxies, i.e., market share (Šrédl & Mikhalkina, 2014), sales (Kamal & Wilcox, 2014), and entrepreneurship (Arshi et al., 2023), as major financial foci, that were examined in this cluster.

The green cluster concerned a series of sustainability issues via cost analysis (Becker et al., 2024; Charlebois et al., 2015) along with managing the supply chain (Chiu & Hsieh, 2016). Specific topics include food waste (de Oliveira Pontes et al., 2022), greenhouse gas and carbon footprint (Özgen et al., 2021), energy conservation and efficiency (Abad et al., 2015). The examination on these sustainability issues was mainly conducted in the context of casual dining restaurants (Brizek, 2002).

The blue cluster included terms that are lexically linked to franchising (Gim et al., 2024; Sveum & Sykuta, 2019). A series of topics emerged around this central theme, including agency cost (Sveum & Sykuta, 2019), cash flow (Gim et al., 2024), investment (Siebert, 2005), assert-light (S. Lee et al., 2023; Madanoglu et al., 2019), firm value (Srinivasan, 2006), and ownership (Markin et al., 2024).

The yellow cluster related to financial performance (Sun & Lee, 2013) via expansion (Sun & Lee, 2013) by examining capital structure (K. Seo, 2016). The strategies (Sun & Lee, 2021) for location selection (Parsa et al., 2011; Sun & Lee, 2013) while considering potential risks (Madanoglu et al., 2008) were also included in this cluster.

Last, the purple cluster lexically linked to productivity (Sveum & Sykuta, 2019) and profitability in chain restaurants (Gupta et al., 2007) by investigating organizational form (Dogru et al., 2020). The Agency Theory is the theoretical underpinning for this cluster of converged themes (S. Choi & Lee, 2018). The Agency Theory is centered on the best practices to manage relationships between a principal and an agent (Shapiro, 2005).

Within the finance field, key research themes were identified (Figure 12). Franchising models (34%) emerged as a major theme, analyzing restaurant performance metrics such as productivity, profitability, and efficiency through cost analysis, pricing, and forecasting. Technology implementation (28%) was another significant area. Studies included how restaurants save costs and boost sales via off-premises channels and social media. Environmental sustainability efforts (9%), food waste reduction methods (3%), and social sustainability efforts (2%) were notable themes related to ecological concerns. Studies in this area explored how sustainability practices such as energy consumption management and green supply chains affect restaurant performance. Other major themes included franchising strategies (5%) and marketing and advertising strategies (3%). These studies explored the impact of a series of strategies on restaurant performance. Other topics of significant interest were COVID-19 effects (3%) and supply chain management (2%). These topics reflected the desire to understand chain restaurants' capital resilience during economic downturns. The "other" category (9%) encompassed diverse niche or emerging research areas that have not been extensively studied, such as cost management, operations and capital budgeting, internal auditing and pricing strategies.

According to Table 7, research to date on five restaurant categories was spread across all eight domains of finance. Domains of basic cost concept and forecasting were discussed more frequently across all restaurant categories than the others. Internal control topics were only studied related to the fast food sector. Out of the eight finance domains, the fast food sector had papers related to all of the finance domains while the fast casual sector has only been examined related to basic cost concepts and forecasting.

Table 7. The interplay between restaurant category and finance domain.

No.	The Domain of Finance	Restaurant Category				
		Fast Food	Fast Casual	Casual Dining	Fine Dining	Restaurant in General
1	Financial statements Definition: ☐ Financial statements detail a company's financial activity and health, and are used for taxation, financing, and investing purposes. For example: ☐ The income statement ☐ The statement of cash flows	√		√		
2	Basic cost concepts Definition: ☐ Cost in relation to sales volume includes fixed, variable, step, or mixed expenses. ☐ Cost in relation to operated department includes direct and indirect expenses. For example: ☐ Mixed cost, fixed cost, and variable cost ☐ Direct and indirect expenses	√	√	√		√
3	Pricing Definition: ☐ A pricing decision-making process is to leverage the cost of a product and position it properly in the marketplace. For example: ☐ Revenue management ☐ Dynamic pricing	√				√
4	Forecasting Definition: ☐ Forecasting is to predict the sales of any future events in the following day, week, or month. For example: ☐ Informal forecasting ☐ Formal forecasting	√	√	√		√

Table 7. Cont.

No.	The Domain of Finance	Restaurant Category				
		Fast Food	Fast Casual	Casual Dining	Fine Dining	Restaurant in General
5	Operations budgeting Definition: ○ Operations budgeting is management's approach for estimating revenue and expenses over a specific time period. For example: ○ Budgets for service centers ○ Planned expenses for depreciation, interest expense, and other fixed charges.	✓		✓		✓
6	Cash management Definition: ○ Cash management is to manage cash balances or cash flow within hospitality operation. For example: ○ Cash flow information ○ Management of working capital	✓		✓		✓
7	Internal Control Definition: ○ Internal control is a process that verifies the correctness of financial data, protects assets, and ensures adherence to managerial policies. For example: ○ Internal auditing control ○ Codes of ethics	✓				
8	Capital budgeting Definition: ○ Capital budgeting is the process of determining how much money to spend on purchasing property, equipment, or a future asset. For example: ○ Replacing existing equipment ○ Expansion to another location	✓			✓	✓

Note: Check marks indicate that at least one article focused on finance and the particular restaurant category.

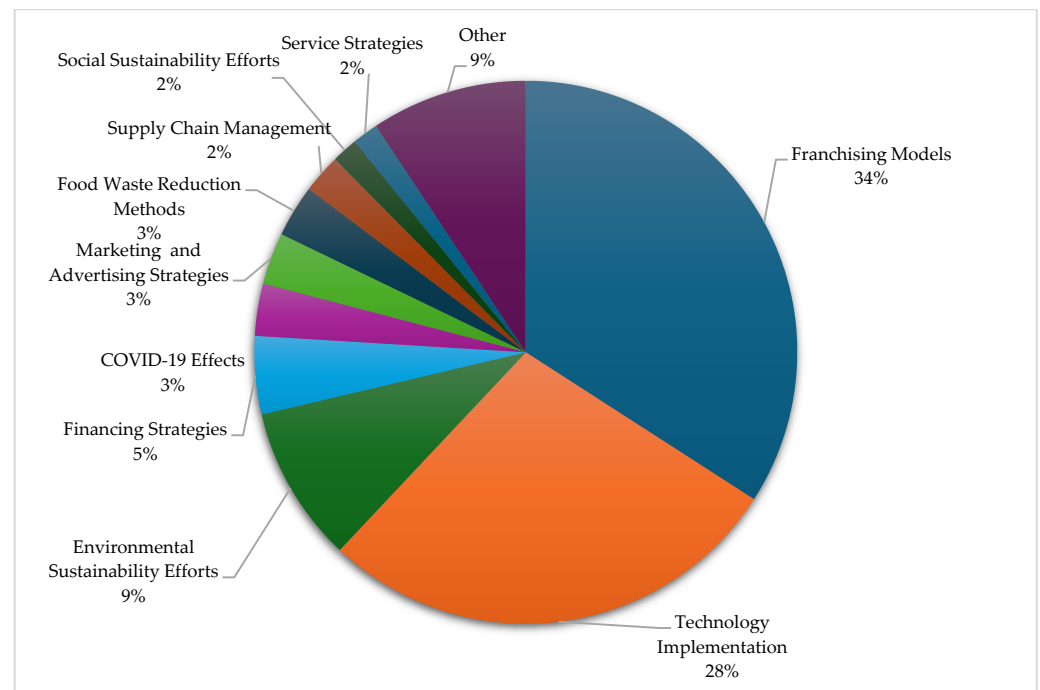


Figure 12. Explanatory variables examined in studies about finance.

5. Discussion

This is the first bibliometric study that investigates restaurant research via the interplay between restaurant categories (i.e., fast food, fast casual, casual dining, fine dining, and restaurants in general) and three research fields (i.e., consumer behavior, organizational behavior, and finance), in a domain-specific way. In order to explore the three research fields in greater detail, the study also identifies subcategories. The increase in research focused on the restaurant sector that occurred in the 1970s is likely associated with the expanding number of hospitality undergraduate programs in the U.S. and U.K. that also started during this time (Catrett, 2018). Consequently, with more educational programs, there were more scholars with research requirements focused on the hospitality industry (Aksoy et al., 2022). Also, during this time period, the restaurant industry expanded via the increase in restaurant franchise properties such as McDonald's, Dairy Queen, and Jack in the Box (Romeo & Weinberg, 2019). Thus, it is likely that the increasing number of research articles focused on the restaurant industry resulted from a growing number of hospitality scholars and restaurants to study (Rejeb et al., 2023).

5.1. Interpretations of the Results

This study's findings indicate that the total number of academic publications were different across the five restaurant categories. The fast food category has received the most research attention which may be due to this restaurant sector attracting a broad demographic of customers, and its influence on global dining patterns and impact on public health (Abdul-Samad et al., 2021; Arsil et al., 2022; A. Susskind et al., 2024; Uddin, 2019). The continuing debate about the health effects of eating at these restaurants and labor practices likely further amplifies academic interest compared to the smaller segments like fast casual or fine dining. Additionally, fast food establishments often implement innovations in service delivery, technology, and marketing, thus providing interesting topics for business studies (Ciftci et al., 2020; K. H. Seo, 2020).

The greater number of articles focused on consumer behavior topics compared to organizational behavior and finance may be due to the industry's close monitoring of consumer satisfaction, preferences, and experiences to drive financial success (Williams,

2012). The restaurant sector's customer-facing nature makes understanding consumer needs and behaviors a priority in order to enhance service quality, customer loyalty, and competitive advantage (Pizam & Ellis, 1999). It should also be noted that it is easier for researchers to obtain consumer-facing research via online survey panels than that which requires engagement with restaurant operators (i.e., organizational behavior and finance topics). The study ascertained trends from the reviewed literature by categorizing each research field. The top three subcategories/trends identified for the "consumer behavior" field were service quality, consumer characteristic and "other." While service quality and consumer characteristics are traditional topics of consumer behavior research, the "other" subcategory also represents opportunities for unexplored areas for future research such as social media application and consumer responses to artificial intelligence.

Research about organizational behavior topics such as workforce dynamics, employee engagement, employee motivation, employee satisfaction, and service delivery has received slightly less attention than consumer behavior. All of these indirectly influence customer outcomes and restaurant profitability (Sohail, 2018).

The top three subcategories/trends that emerged from previous research for the "organizational behavior" field were human resource management, franchising management, and "other". While human resource research topics are established, franchising management is a more recent subject. Previous research points to shortcomings in franchisee's treatment of staff (Butler & Muskwe, 2023). Therefore, the topic merits further exploration. Furthermore, the "other" category provides openings for future niche research investigating hot topics such as employee responses to artificial intelligence and corporate responsibility.

Finance topics are less common, potentially due to their more complex, quantitative nature and the perception that they are less directly tied to consumer-facing outcomes (Pavone et al., 2023; Poretti et al., 2023). One possible explanation for such sporadicity is that, unlike consumer behavior and organizational behavior, the number of researchers that specialize in this field is relatively smaller (Atkinson & Jones, 2008). Furthermore, the readership interested in the topic is rather small, therefore journals are less interested in publishing finance related articles. In addition to the smaller number of academic researchers, the difficulties of accessing first-hand raw data, the potential for secondary data to be flawed, as well as the difficulty of data collection on corporate levels (Pavone et al., 2023; Poretti et al., 2023), all provide possible reasons for the smaller number of restaurant industry research in the field of finance. The top three subcategories/trends identified for the "finance" field were technology, sustainability and franchising topics. Franchising articles were more frequent than the other top finance subcategories because of the profitability potential (Hsu & Jang, 2009).

The top journals found to have published research on consumer behavior, organizational behavior, and finance in the restaurant sector are thematically aligned and have a strong reputation. For example, journals such as the Journal of Foodservice Business Research, International Journal of Hospitality Management, and British Food Journal, provide targeted platforms for hospitality management research (Ryu et al., 2008, 2010; Ryu & Han, 2010). The Cornell Hospitality Quarterly is likely appealing due to its readership by hospitality industry professionals (Law et al., 2012). Additionally, articles published in journals such as Sustainability, published in an open-access format, will receive more readership. Some of the top cited articles were found in business journals, such as the International Journal of Production Economics and Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration (Becker et al., 2024; Charpin et al., 2021; Francis et al., 2008; Niu et al., 2021). These journals offer a platform for research that applies general business concepts such as supply chain management and strategic management frameworks to the restaurant industry (Francis et al., 2008). The broad readership of these journals across the business world and rigorous

standards often lead to high citation rates when studies address universal challenges or have wide business applications.

5.2. *Implications of the Results and Agenda for Future Research*

This study indicates that there is a need for additional integrative studies that link consumer, organizational, and financial dimensions. For example, a more comprehensive view of restaurant performance could be obtained from research that explores how organizational strategies, such as employee engagement and organizational structure, influence consumer satisfaction and financial outcomes. In addition, the topic of internal marketing applied to restaurants should be further explored as it directly links consumer behavior, organizational behavior, and finance (Sohail, 2018). Internal marketing involves adapting the philosophies and practices of marketing to the employees (internal customers) who serve the external customer. This may result in enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty and consequently in an increase in profitability for the company (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000; Varey, 1995). Similarly, understanding how financial decisions, such as cost management and profit optimization, impact both employees and consumer experiences could drive better industry practices.

For future research in consumer behavior, several areas hold potential. Exploring the memory and memorability of dining experiences in different types of restaurants, particularly in the fast casual context, can help us understand how to build customer trust and loyalty programs. These loyalty programs, which include subscription dining models, meal memberships, and app-based loyalty rewards, can transform consumer engagement with restaurant brands and influence their continued intention to purchase (Ganz, 2023). Affects or emotions, while studied across various restaurant categories, remain underexplored compared to other domains, warranting deeper investigation. Considering the post-pandemic shift towards a mood economy, studying emotional connections by communicating contributions to health and environmental sustainability may deepen brand connections. Even though brand equity has been explored, more research is needed in brand management, especially for multi-unit restaurants. As technology and sustainability topics are on the rise, future research should focus on restaurant innovativeness and brand engagement across dining formats (Wiastuti & Rashid, 2024). For example, the format of off-premise, digital-only, and ghost kitchens is shifting toward delivery-first models and virtual restaurant brands (Canter, 2022). This trend may alter consumers' brand perception and restaurant loyalty. For instance, empirical evidence argues that there is decreased concern about carbon emissions but increased concern about hygiene standards toward ghost kitchens (Cai et al., 2022). In addition, research could assess the impact of diversified technology implementations, such as service robot development, the quality of chef service robots (Villian, 2024), self-service kiosks, and social media engagement behaviors, on consumers' willingness to pay. For example, the rise of TikTok-driven, Instagram-worthy food trends has transformed the restaurant industry by creating experiential and immersive dining experiences, making social media a key driver of consumer visits (Petre, 2022). To effectively implement new technologies, consumer segments should be diversified to include various cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, and generations (L. Wang et al., 2024). This diversification allows AI-powered ordering systems and predictive analytics to better reshape guest experiences (Connaghan, 2024). By tailoring these technologies, restaurant operators may be able to more effectively cater to consumers' expectations for personalized menus, promotions, and recommendations, considering their individual preferences, dietary restrictions, and past behaviors (Vicky, 2024). Furthermore, future research can explore the impact of restaurants' engagement in pro-social behaviors on customer and employee satisfaction (Rifkin et al., 2021). From a methodological perspective, consumer

behavior research often lacks generalizability due to cross-sectional methodologies, single-location data collection, and qualitative interviews. To enhance the generalizability of statistical results, future research could incorporate longitudinal studies, cross-cultural studies, meta-analyses, and large-scale surveys.

Organizational behavior studies can be advanced in the following areas. Organizational structure has rarely been explored within a specific restaurant category (e.g., fast casual restaurants). However, exploring organizational structure and the hierarchy of communication flow is particularly relevant across various restaurant types since the effectiveness of an organizational structure can shape employee satisfaction and organizational performance. Topics could include examining the impact of different organizational structures (hierarchical, flat, matrix, and networked) on communication. It is also essential to understand how the chain of command and information flow influence employee behavior, decision making, and efficiency. This exploration is particularly important when applied to franchise restaurants regarding their operational consistency and brand standards with various locations, domestically and internationally. At the employee level, future research is suggested to prioritize employee mental health and well-being. The post-pandemic restaurant workforce advocates for better work-life balance, mental health support, and flexible scheduling to prevent burnout and enhance job satisfaction (M. A. Baker & Kim, 2024). Additionally, studies can further explore how the integration of service robots, AI-powered kitchens, and automated food preparation impacts labor dynamics, job satisfaction, and employee retention (Rasool & Bhat, 2025). At the organizational level, restaurant operators face heightened scrutiny by current and potential future employees of wage fairness, gender and racial equity, and workplace culture inclusivity (Tracey et al., 2023). Along with these concerns, restaurant operators now must contend with a paradoxical dilemma of also having to eliminate their diversity, equity, and inclusion policies. How this paradox will impact restaurants' ability to hire and retain staff will need to be studied. The data collection process for most studies about organizational behavior has been confined to specific geographical areas and time periods, which limits the generalizability of the findings (Rezaei et al., 2024). Therefore, future research employing longitudinal study designs in broader geographic regions, including other countries or cultures, could provide more comprehensive insights into the temporal relationships among job engagement, employee citizenship behavior, and organizational commitment.

The following are research areas needed to advance the finance domain. There is a need for review papers that focus on forecasting research applied to restaurants (J. G. Choi et al., 2022). Topic-wise, a series of franchising performance topics can be assessed. An important area to investigate is the differences in control mechanisms across various restaurant categories beyond the fast food sector. This line of research will help us to understand how ownership structures impact both economic outcomes, like profitability, and non-economic outcomes, such as health code violations, loyalty, and reputation (Markin et al., 2024). Additionally, dynamic pricing and menu engineering strategies remain viable research topics for addressing inflation and supply chain disruptions. Another crucial area for future studies is the application of artificial intelligence and machine learning to better analyze performance and sales. Particularly, future research should measure the impact of artificial intelligence on revenue management practices and outcomes. Methodologically, incorporating multilevel sales data (e.g., spatial sales data) alongside temporal sales trends can further reveal regional demand patterns and business resilience. Additionally, integrating unstructured data with structured data, such as customer reviews, can enhance predictive analytics for franchise sales and customer engagement strategies (C. Lee & Koo, 2023).

5.3. Limitations and Recommendations

Although this study takes a holistic approach with a comprehensive review of the literature, it is not free from limitations. While Scopus and WoS are databases that house a significant portion of all articles published globally, alternative sources, such as ProQuest and Google Scholar, might include additional papers. Additionally, the current study predominantly focused on journal articles; books, dissertations, and conference proceedings were not included. These sources can be explored in future studies. Moreover, the current study only focused on the business aspect of restaurant research, and articles related to public health or food science were not included. While the restaurant industry contributes economically, it also plays a significant societal role beyond the business aspect. Therefore, future review studies could be conducted from other perspectives such as public health or food science.

6. Conclusions

This study, the first bibliometric analysis to examine the interplay between restaurant categories (fast food, fast casual, casual dining, fine dining, and general restaurants) and the research fields of consumer behavior, organizational behavior, and finance, reveals a significant imbalance in research focus. While the growth of hospitality programs and restaurant franchises since the 1970s has spurred increased scholarly attention, fast food establishments dominate the field, with fast casual dining receiving far less attention. This underrepresentation suggests a need for further research to better understand the dynamics, growth potential, and unique challenges within the fast casual sector. Additionally, while consumer behavior has been heavily emphasized in restaurant business research, there is a need to explore organizational behavior and financial aspects in greater depth to provide a comprehensive view of performance. Also, integrative studies that link these dimensions could offer more holistic insights into the restaurant business.

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