STAKEHOLDER VALUE CREATION: A CASE OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to understand whether the current literature deals with the general issue of stakeholder value creation and of specific marketing activities for human resources and if they can generate value for different stakeholders. In order to achieve this goal, the paper uses a bibliometric analysis that determines the conceptual structure of the topic, highlighting its evolution over time. Accordingly, this study uses the precise context of the hospitality industry since human resources are of strategic importance in the world of hospitality. This paper opens up a series of considerations, extremely useful within the context of stakeholder value creation in orienting marketing research in the future. In particular, the main findings reveal that with regard to stakeholder value creation only open-to-society marketing can be useful and successful, in contexts of a win-win situation for the sustainable shared advantage.

Keywords: Stakeholder Value Creation, Human Resources, Hospitality Industry, Marketing

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1. INTRODUCTION

The strategic importance of human resources is a central topic in the era of digitalization. This is because the human touch still remains a relevant variable in many industries and contexts, especially in those where both social impact and sustainability are the most relevant (Ivanov, 2019; Sarkki et al., 2019; Jawaad, Amir, Bashir, & Hasan, 2019). Considering how marketing can foster a better living and, in particular, what is the role of marketing towards employees in the value creation process is a connected, very important issue. Value creation and value appropriation are two topics of extreme interest that still need a more systematic analysis. In this paper, however, we just underly that instead of considering the impact of marketing activities on performance (both financial and in terms of customer satisfaction), we take into account the value created for the people working in the organization, for the firm itself and its main stakeholders. Considering the definition of Lepak, Smith, and Taylor (2007, p. 182), we can state "value creation depends on the relative amount of value that is subjectively realized by a target user who is the focus of value creation — whether an individual, organization, or society — and that this subjective value realization must at least translate into the user's willingness to exchange a monetary amount for the value received".

This definition, belonging to the strategic management literature, highlights two aspects. The first is hidden inside the "target user" which can be the expression of different levels of human resources since literature considers them as the bidding agent for value creation (Felin & Hesterly, 2007). The second refers to "value realization" and hence to the following question of who appropriates the realized value, which can differ from human resources and can be appropriated by customers, consumers, organizations, society, etc. (Lepack et al., 2007).

This approach of course opens the horizons of competitive advantage, no longer strictly financial or economic.

Some conceptualizations have been developed on the topic (Mizik & Jacobson, 2003; Seifi Salmi, Benar, & Honari, 2019) in a general framework. However, our idea is that, for real development of the topic, in its emergent phase and still lacking a rigorous, scientific approach, the analyses conducted on specific industries can help add some hints to future research, starting from both theoretical and empirical observations. For this reason, we decided to take part in the overall discussion on this theme, with a specific focus on the hospitality industry, in order to check if the results can be useful to further research on the topic and with interesting social implications.

We decided to focus our study with reference to a specific sector — the hospitality industry — for two main reasons. First of all, this industry is strictly bound to the territory, to the local community, with consequent high benefits for the local economy and society (employment, well-being). Besides, the strategic relevance of human resources in the hospitality industry is widely recognized by both academic scholars (Wang & Tseng, 2019; Kong, Bu, Yuan, Wang, & Ro, 2019; Frash, Antun, Kline, & Almanza, 2010) and the operators of the tourism industry (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018).

Although much attention has been devoted to understanding how human resources can contribute to the improvement of service quality (Lin, Huang, Yang, & Chiang, 2014; Lee & Ok, 2016; Boshoff & Allen, 2000), organizational change (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008), service innovation (Huang & Liu, 2019; Zhang, Xi, & Xu, 2021) customer engagement (Bayighomog & Araslı, 2019) and other forms of value creation at process/service level, relatively little research examines whether and to what extent internal marketing activities dedicated to human resources working in the hospitality industry can contribute to a better world.

In fact, human resources are conceived as a key concept in service marketing since their created value is materialized during the service provision (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). More and more companies are recognizing that the adoption of specific marketing activities can contribute to increase both job satisfaction (Ahmed, Rafiq, & Saad, 2003) and work motivation (Bell, Mengüç, & Stefani, 2004; Shah, 2014), to "green" the hospitality industry (Pham, Tučková, & Jabbour, 2019) as well as to improve the conditions of local communities (Blackie, 2019), just to cite some examples.

The contribution of this study is to understand whether the current literature deals with the issue of specific marketing activities for human resources and if these can generate value for different stakeholders. In order to achieve this goal, we use a bibliometric analysis that monitors the scientific field of management as well as delimiting research areas to determine its conceptual structure and its evolution (Zha, Melewar, Foroudi, & Jin, 2020).

The paper starts with a bibliometric analysis on the topic of marketing activities dedicated to human resources of the hospitality industry and its interconnection with the creation of value at different levels. Within this analysis, Section 2 related to the literature review explores whether there are studies analyzing the evolution of the contributions on marketing and its relative perspective in favor of a new, different approach that considers the whole ecosystem of the firms, for a better world (i.e., local communities, environment, social implications). Section 3 deals with the research methodology presenting the study design, data collection and data analysis. Next, the findings and discussions of the results are presented in Sections 4 and 5. The paper concludes with the research limitations and the main implications for both scholars and managers in Section 6.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of bibliometric analysis is spreading very much in business and management (Akmal, Podgorodnichenko, Greatbanks, & Everett, 2018; Zupic & Čater, 2015; Ramos- Rodríguez & Ruíz-Navarro, 2004), in marketing (Baumgartner & Pieters, 2003; Samiee & Chabowski, 2012), and tourism (García-Lillo, Úbeda-García, & Marco-Lajara, 2016; Köseoglu, Sehitoglu, Ross, & Parnell, 2016) because it allows to synthetize past research findings which is one of the most important tasks in advancing a line of research (Cuccurullo, Aria, & Sarto, 2016). Various methods exist to summarize the amount of scientific activity in a domain but bibliometrics has the potential to introduce a systematic, transparent and reproducible review process. This is very relevant in an age when the number of academic publications is rising at a very fast pace and it is increasingly unfeasible to keep track of everything that is being published, and when the emphasis on empirical contributions is resulting in voluminous and fragmented research streams, and a contested field.

Numerous software tools partly support bibliometric analysis. However, many of these do not assist scholars in a complete recommended workflow and are mainly focused on visualization paying low attention to statistical reporting about accuracy and completeness of findings. For example, CitNetExplorer (van Eck & Waltman, 2014) implements only citation analysis, VOSviewer (van Eck & Waltman, 2010) and CiteSpace (Chen, 2006) produce very elegant maps but it does not provide any descriptive analysis, SciMAT (Cobo, López-Herrera, Herrera-Viedma & Herrera, 2011a) implements mainly co-word analysis, and finally, BibExcel (Persson, Danell, & Wiborg Schneider, 2009) does not provide any graphical interface and need external tools to plot results.

In the last two years, bibliometrics is spreading very much as a standard tool for science mapping analysis in many fields such as in business and finance (Merediz- Solà & Bariviera, 2019), marketing (Lara-Rodríguez, Rojas-Contreras, & Oliva, 2019), management (Cirillo, Mussolino, Saggese, & Sarto, 2018) and economics (Ballandonne, 2018).

Through bibliometric approaches, it is possible to provide more objective analyses based on statistical methods (Diodato & Gellatly, 2013). In fact, the overwhelming volume of new information, conceptual developments, and data is the milieu in which bibliometrics becomes useful, by providing a structured analysis to a large body of information, to infer trends over time, themes researched, identify shifts in the boundaries of

the disciplines, to detect most the prolific scholars and institutions, and to show the "big picture" of extant research (Nerur, Rasheed, & Natarajan, 2008).

In this study, we focus on the science mapping analysis, a bibliometric approach that aims to describe, through a spatial representation, how disciplines, fields, scholars, and scientific papers are related to one another (Small, 1999; Morris & Van der Veer Martens, 2008; van Eck & Waltman, 2010). In other words, science mapping allows to "plot in a map" the knowledge structure of scientific research (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Börner, Chen, & Boyack, 2003; Morris & Van der Veer Martens, 2008; Noyons, Moed, & Luwel, 1999). Science mapping offers suitable tools, mainly based on network analysis, to build up the conceptual, intellectual, and social structure of a field.

This research follows the recommended workflow (Börner et al., 2003; Zupic & Čater, 2015) consisting of 5 main steps (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017): 1. Study design; 2. Data collection; 3. Data analysis; 4. Data visualization; 5. Interpretation.

The analysis has been performed by using the open-source R-package *bibliometrix* (version 2.2.1) developed by Aria and Cuccurullo (2017). *Bibliometrix* uses computing and graphic R language, allowing to use statistical algorithms and to perform data visualization tools (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Moreover, this is an open-access software that provides many functions to perform quantitative analysis both in bibliometrics and scientometrics research (Hall, 2017). Other advantages include avoiding the use of additional software since it also provides a set of tools for data visualization and ensures statistical correctness and completeness of results (Derviş, 2019). *Bibliometrix* is spreading in many domains of academic research such as economics (Almeida & de Paula, 2019), business and management (Jasmin Rose, Biju, & Akhil, 2019), tourism and hospitality (Palácios, de Almeida, & Sousa, 2021; Kim, Liu, & Williams, 2021; Della Corte, Del Gaudio, Sepe, & Luongo, 2021), open innovation (Della Corte et al., 2021; Quesado & Silva, 2021), politics (Demiroz & Haase, 2021), and psychiatry (Akintunde et al., 2021).

These reasons are at the base of the choice of Bibliometrix instead of other software.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Study design

Our bibliometric analysis is the first effort of systematic literature review on the specific topic, aimed to point out the key actors (authors, universities, countries, schools), the main works that influenced the successive production, the key journals, and the most relevant topics connected with the issue.

For limiting the scope, according to our purpose, we first searched for selected keywords in the database. We used these different groups of keywords:
- human resource/employee + hospitality/ hotel + marketing;
- hospitality/hotel + internal marketing;
- job satisfaction + hospitality/hotel + marketing.

These precise keywords have been chosen for delimiting our research field. Indeed, the word "marketing" has been selected in order to define our research stream while the words "internal marketing" better set our field of action since, according to the original definition this "is concerned with making available internal products (jobs) that satisfy the needs of a vital internal market (employees) while satisfying the objectives of the organization" (Berry, Hensel, & Burke, 1976, p. 11).

With reference to the words "human resource/s" and "employee/s", we clearly declared the intention to verify whether and how literature studies the issue of marketing activities devoted to human resources can create value at more levels, such as individual level, firm's level, and social level.

As regards the word "job satisfaction", several works (Ahmed et al., 2003) underline that this represents the output of specific marketing activities. Our focus is to go beyond the classical vision and to understand if the satisfied human resources can determine a value for different stakeholders, apart from themselves and the customers. By embracing a service lens, executives can do a better job by asking the right questions in a quest to achieve strategic advantage. These questions challenge long and firmly held assumptions about the source of value creation, the role of the different stakeholders in value creation, the role of the company in value creation, and how companies should approach marketing, innovation, and a host of related topics. In so doing, a service lens becomes a catalyst for both practitioners and scholars alike to ask questions that open up new value creation possibilities (Bettencourt, Lusch, & Vargo, 2014).

Taking into account the way of thinking of J. Willard Marriott, founder of the Marriott Corporation who states, *"Motivate them, train them, care about them, and make winners out of them … they'll treat the customers right. And if customers are treated right, they'll come back"*, we can state that the traditional vision remains anchored to the connection of job satisfaction and customer satisfaction. In our case, the issue is by far more open with that of value. That has also represented the main boundaries for scholars. In our case, the issue is by far more open, more connected with the concepts of value, in more cause-related marketing.

The words "hospitality" and "hotel/s" define our referring area. Sharing the idea of Köseoglu, Okumus, Putra, Yildiz, and Dogan (2019), that "articles related to strategy, marketing, and human resource management are relatively mature and well developed" (p. 573). However, some areas more linked to social and cultural sustainability, to cause commitment and well-being approach for all stakeholders as co-partners still remain "undeveloped and immature". Indeed, the area of hospitality connected with the marketing stream of research seems to be rather traditional in studying the effect of marketing activities on human resources.

3.2. Data collection

Data collection happened through peer-reviewed scholarly articles in English in Web of Science (WoS) databases (e.g., Social Science Citation Index for Social Science) that is one of the two main databases, the other one is Scopus, allowing to explore the literature of several scientific domains. Scholars agree on the similarities of the two databases and they also find out that WoS is of higher quality (Harzing & Alakangas, 2016; Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016; Vieira & Gomes, 2009).

We set a search period between 1985 (i.e., the year in which WoS starts to store bibliographic meta-data) and 2018. All the documents fitting the following query: ((TS = ("internal marketing" AND ("hospitalit*"" OR "hotel*"))) OR (TS = ("marketing" AND ("hospitalit*" OR "hotel*") AND ("human resourc*" OR "employe*"))) OR (TS = ("marketing" AND ("hospitalit*" OR "hotel*") AND ("job satisfaction")))) AND (SC = ("business" OR "economics" OR "management" OR "operations research & management science") were recovered in June 2019. Terms were searched in the title, keywords, and abstract (TS) and only peer-reviewed articles published in journals belonging to the subject categories "business", "economics", "management" and "operations research & management science" were selected. The final collection was composed of 138 documents.

3.3. Data analysis

Bibliometrix provides to map the three knowledge structures of the field:

a) Conceptual structure: It consists of a word co-occurrence network analysis to define what academics have written on the theme, the related topic, and the trends.

b) Intellectual structure: It consists of the article co-citation relationships to identify whether and to what extent some papers have influenced the scientific community.

c) Social structure: It shows the author collaboration relationships at different levels (i.e., involved authors, organizations, institutions, countries, etc.).

This paper is based on the conceptual structure which delineates how the topic has evolved over time, what are the most recurring keywords, what are the most important issues connected with the topic (Ronda-Pupo & Guerras-Martin, 2012), etc.

The use of community detection algorithms identifies groups of textual information that can be understood as semantic or conceptual groups of different topics within the research field.

These topics can be plotted in a bi-dimensional matrix where axes are a function of the Callon centrality and density, respectively. Callon centrality can be read as the importance of the theme in the entire research field while Callon density can be read as a measure of the theme's development. This map is known as the strategic or thematic map (Cobo et al., 2011b) and allows to define of four typologies of themes (Cahlik, 2000) according to the quadrant in which they are placed (see Figure 1):

• Themes in the upper-right quadrant are known as the *motor themes*. They are characterized by both high centrality and density. This means that are developed and important for the research field.

• The upper-left quadrant shows *high developed and isolated themes or niche themes*. They have well-developed internal links (high density) but unimportant external links and so are of only limited importance for the field (low centrality).

• Themes in the lower-left quadrant are known as *emerging or declining themes*. They have both low centrality and density meaning that are weakly developed and marginal.

• Finally, the lower-right quadrant shows *basic and transversal themes* with low density and high centrality.

Figure 1. Quadrant characterization of the thematic map
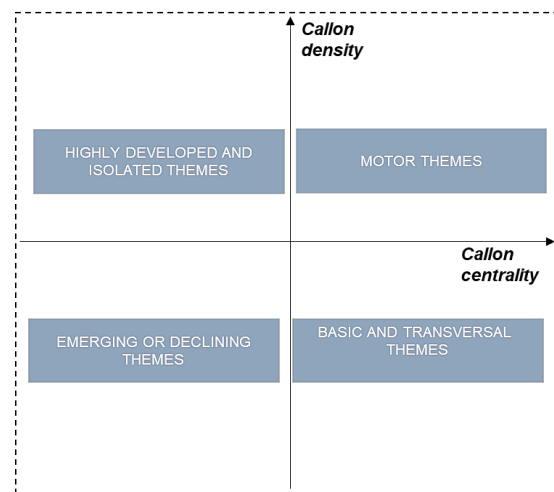
In building up the co-occurrence network, we considered the eigenvector centrality (Bonacich, 2007) as a score of vertex importance and we choose the Louvain algorithm for community detection to perform word clustering (De Meo, Ferrara, Fiumara, & Provetti, 2011). The co-occurrences among words were normalized by the association index as proposed by van Eck and Waltman (2009).

4. RESULTS

In Table 1, we report the main information about the collection. Despite the period considered starting from 1985, the earliest specific article appears only in 1999. The 138 documents are published in 53 different journals and have an average citation value equal to 21.26. The average number of co-authors per document is 2.4, a value that highlights a good level of collaboration among authors. In fact, most articles are multi-authored (110 documents out of 138) and only 7.7% of authors wrote a single-authored article.

Figure 2 shows the annual number of published articles. From 1999 to 2006, the trend is quite flat with almost 2 articles per year while from 2007 started an exponential growth that reached the maximum in 2015, 2018 (18 articles per year), and 2020 (28 articles per year).

For the first period 1999–2007, where the scientific production is relatively scarce, the articles are mainly based on how service quality in its declination of service excellence produced by trained human resources, can determine

the attraction of new customers as well as the enhancement of brand awareness (Mattila, 1999), some contributions study the connection between skilled employees and both service guarantees (Levy, 2010) and the guests' satisfaction (Kuo, 2007).

In these years, the first case studies appear (i.e., the Accor multinational hotel chain case — Aung, 2000) and the focus is on the core competencies that, in the functions of marketing and human resources, can generate new and important ideas for the company development.

During the second lapse of time (2008–2015), the scientific production increases, and scholars start wondering about the importance of internal marketing (Gounaris, 2008; Lin & Wu, 2008), stating that it allows employees who lack openness and customer approach to be more customer-oriented.

Although the prevailing traditional link between marketing strategies, human resources, and customer orientation, some works start analysing new topics such as emotional exhaustion (Karatepe, 2015) and cross-cultural aspects (Levy, 2010), with a different, more social, and cultural approach. For example, among the most interesting, there are those that focus on the role of employees in cause-related marketing initiatives (Boenigk & Schuchardt, 2015) and on environmental and social sustainability (Bowen & Aragon-Correa, 2014).

During the last period (2016–2021), the number of works dealing with social (Ivanov & Stavrinoudis, 2018) and environmental sustainability (Cvelbar, Grün, & Dolnicar, 2017; Wells, Taheri, Gregory-Smith, & Manika, 2016) increases steadily. This demonstrates that, even in a specific sector like the tourism industry, there is a deep evolution of the internal marketing view and all the connected activities with human resource management and with human resources' contribution to value creation.

Table 1. The main information on the collection

Group	Complements
Documents	138
Period	1999-2021
Journals	53
Keywords plus*	533
Author's keywords	506
Authors	312
Authors of single-authored documents	24
Authors of multi-authored documents	288
Co-authors per documents	2.4
Average citation per document	21.26
Annual % growth rate	10.35

*Note: * Keywords plus are the keywords assigned by WoS through a semi-automatic algorithm.*

Figure 2. Annual scientific production
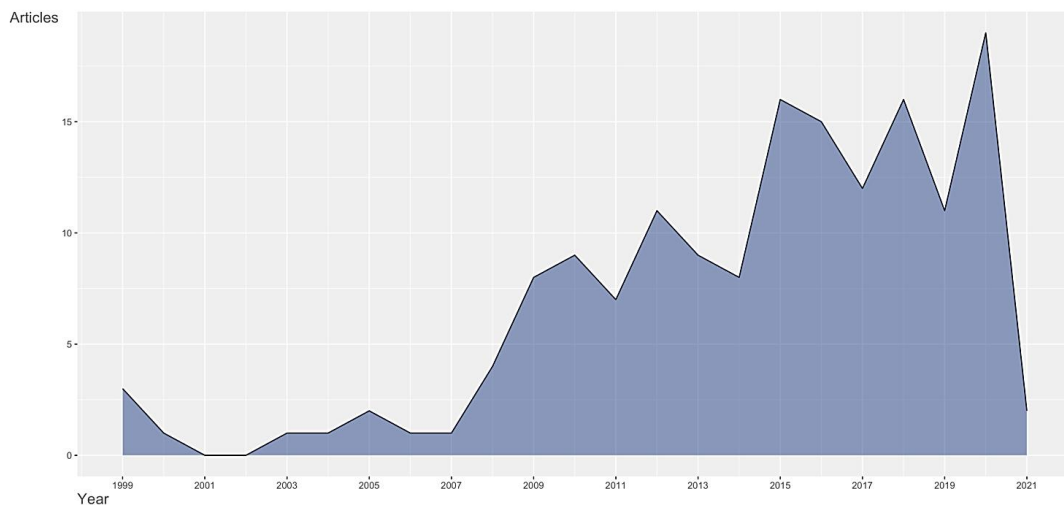
Looking at the sources, as reported in Table 2, the first 10 journals count more or less than 63% of the entire collection.

This list shows a total nearly prevalence of sector-based journals (tourism and hospitality), except Service Industries Journal and Journal of Services Marketing as more generalist.

Firstly, the journals on tourism and hospitality management are included in the Journal Citation Report© (JCR). This is also in line with the current literature and other studies on bibliometric analysis (García-Lillo et al., 2018). For example, García-Lillo et al. (2018) use Tourism Management, Cornell Hospitality Quarterly, and International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management as the main journals, in terms of impact factors in the domains of tourism and hospitality management, for their research on human resources in the tourism and hospitality management.

This table shows an important result: papers dealing with marketing for human resources in the hospitality industry have not yet been fully explored in journals of business, management, and marketing. This points out a big issue in marketing research, which is a huge separation between journals in specific sectors and general journals. As underlined by relevant scholars, industry-specific and empirical papers could and should foster theoretical and general concepts in the field. It is also due to the fact that authors who write in general journals often neglect reading articles in more specific but likewise important top journals.
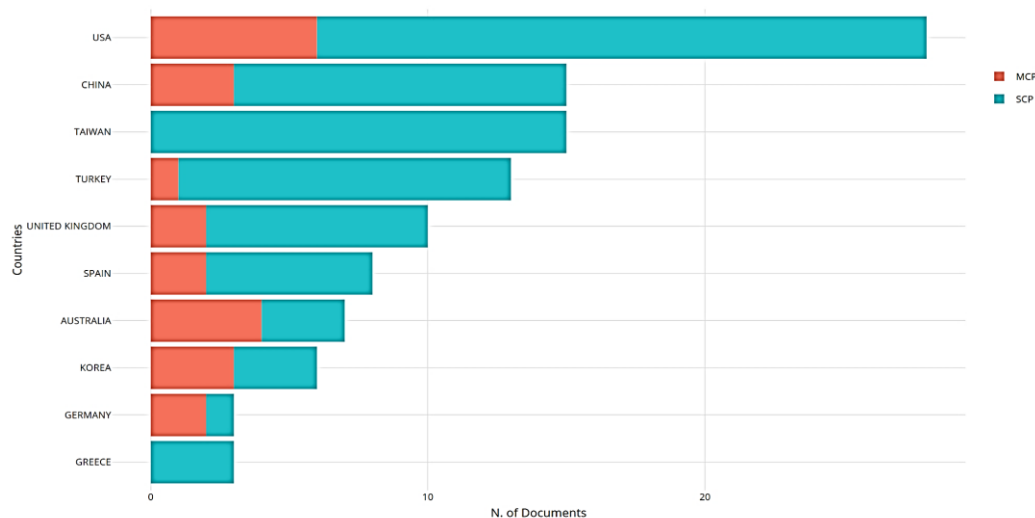
Table 2. Top ten relevant journals

Journal	No. of articles
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	36
International Journal of Hospitality Management	17
Service Industries Journal	6
Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	5
Journal of Services Marketing	5
Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management	4
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	4
Tourism Management	4
International Journal of Service Industry Management	3
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	3

Furthermore, the bibliometric analysis performs the list of top eight cited journals (see Table 3) where the base of knowledge is represented not only by sector-based journals (i.e., International Journal of Hospitality Management, Tourism Management, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly) but also by journals of specific domains (i.e., Journal of Marketing, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Applied Psychology). This is a good result since it shows that general journals are starting considering the sector-based studies to get some eventual possible generalizations that can favour advances in the theory.

Besides, it is interesting to notice that most of the publications are by multiple authors, revealing the development of specific research groups on the issue. The majority of the articles, however, are mainly developed in non-European countries, as if such topics were of major interest outside Europe. This may even lead to thinking that probably the Old Continent is still behind the rest of the world in this specific topic. There could be some explanations for that. The tourism industry, including mainly hospitality firms, is characterized by small and medium enterprises or small groups, generally owned and managed by families of the country, not very open to private funds' support or equity market. This makes the sector very traditional, with difficulties in applying new challenges, even if the cases of excellence prove the opposite.

Figure 3. Ten most productive author's affiliation countries

Table 3. Top eight cited journals

Journal	No. of citations
International Journal of Hospitality Management	599
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	425
Journal of Marketing	351
Tourism Management	339
Journal of Business Research	168
Journal of Applied Psychology	160
Journal of Services Marketing	131
Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly	130

As for the most productive authors, Osman M. Karatepe (Eastern Mediterranean University, Cyprus) is at the top of the list and his topics of research are strictly connected with internal marketing in the hospitality industry. His works study the link between internal marketing and career satisfaction, customer orientation, job performance, and organizational support. He mainly connects marketing to strategy but still in the more traditional way.

With reference to the top five manuscripts per citation (see Table 4), the most cited is the work of

Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilhan, and Buyruk (2010) since it highlights a clear vision on antecedents, processes, outcomes regarding human resource management in the hospitality industry. The strength of this work as well as the success factor can be identified in its nature of literature review. Furthermore, this work arrives at a precise conclusion that the hospitality industry needs taylor made practices for human resources "and even to different employees within the same organization" (Kusluvan et al., 2010, p. 203). The following three papers (Wu & Liang, 2009; Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, 2011; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012) emphasize the aspects of customer satisfaction, customer experience, and the role of word of mouth in this sector.

In the same direction as Kusluvan et al. (2010) and Line and Runyan (2012) proceed with a systematic review on the topic of hospitality marketing research. A clear conclusion coming from this work is that "the dearth of domain-specific hospitality marketing theory is both evidence and cause of an increasing disconnect between marketing research and the overall framework of hospitality marketing research" (Line & Runyan, 2012, p. 9). After seven years, we can also claim, thanks to this bibliometric analysis, that hospitality marketing theory is not updated in the light of marketing research.

Table 4. Top five manuscripts per citation

Title	Author(s)	WoS citations	The average no. of citations per year
The human dimension: A review of human resources management issues in the tourism and hospitality industry	Kusluvan et al. (2010)	170	17.0
Effect of experiential value on customer satisfaction with service encounters in luxury-hotel restaurants	Wu and Liang (2009)	150	16.7
An epistemological view of consumer experiences	Walls et al. (2011)	125	15.6
The impact of electronic word of mouth on a tourism destination choice: Testing the theory of planned behavior (TPB)	Jalilvand and Samiei (2012)	108	15.4
Hospitality marketing research: Recent trends and future directions	Line and Runyan (2012)	99	14.1

Table 5, considering the main keywords used in the literature, still confirms the prevailing traditional approach, based on performance, on the relationship between performance and new models of human resource management, its connections with the quality of services, and their impact on customer satisfaction and firm performance.

Table 5. Top ten relevant keywords plus

Keywords plus	Frequency	%
Performance	28	20.3
Model	20	14.5
Impact	19	13.8
Management	19	13.8
Customer satisfaction	18	13.0
Behavior	17	12.3
Quality	17	12.3
Tourism	17	12.3
Satisfaction	16	11.6
Job satisfaction	13	9.4

5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

As for the discussion of the results, we based our study on both knowledge structure analyses and thematic map.

In Figure 4, each vertex represents a keyword plus. The size of a vertex is proportional to the frequency of its keyword while the edges represent the existence of co-occurrence between two keywords and their thickness is the strength of co-presence. In order to identify the most important keywords in the whole network, there is the need to consider their "centrality" with respect to the network itself. According to the computed eigenvector values, the most "central" words are quality, model, performance, behavior, and tourism.

The vertex colours represent the clusters obtained by the community detection Louvain algorithm. To increase the readability of the network in Figure 4, we plotted the top thirty keywords while the full network, including all keywords, has been used to build up the thematic map reported in Figure 4.

Figure 4 shows the keyword co-occurrence and clusterizes the main concepts coming from the papers. Indeed, the concepts are the most treated by scholars writing on marketing activities for human resources in the hospitality industry. This constitutes the conceptual structure of our research field.

The first cluster views "performance" as the main recurring word (20.3%). This word is connected with the topics of customer service performance, hotel performance, and job performance. Indeed, the topic of hotel performance (Sainaghi, 2010; Amin, Aldakhil, Wu, Rezaei, & Cobanoglu, 2017) is one of the most complex within the literature in the hospitality field. Works on this issue suggest using the balanced scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) is the most adequate tool to understand what is the weight of different strategies, also in terms of marketing, on firm's performance. The balanced scorecard encloses different perspectives (financial perspective, customer perspective, internal business perspective, innovation and learning perspective, strategy). The true gap of these works is the lack of a social perspective as one of the other facets of hotel performance.

Figure 4. Keyword plus co-occurrence network

Other works analyze the process generating customer service performance and job performance and the mediator effect of marketing activities for human resources regarding the assumption that "if hotel companies take care of their employees, the employees will serve the hotel customers accordingly" (Amin et al., 2017, p. 1265).

With reference to the word "model", it sometimes results in generic terms, while in other cases specific models that concern marketing or technology are proposed. For example, some scholars (Backer, 2016) claim the necessity to create a marketing model enclosing different dimensions that contemplate external marketing, interactional marketing, and internal marketing. Although the works are rather recent, the proposed models include marketing activities for market segments, management, and frontline providers, that is with a still only customer-based perspective.

While the word "impact" (13,8%) is usually used to study the influence of internal marketing/ marketing on business performance and job performance, the word management appears in this list because it is associated with the locution hospitality management.

The word "customer satisfaction" emphasizes the fact that the main influences of marketing for human resources relapse on customer satisfaction. This is due to the fact that the hospitality industry is characterized by the phase of service encounters where customer satisfaction is realized. In this process, human resources play a key role (Wu & Liang, 2009).

The words "behavior", "quality" and "tourism" show the same percentage (12,3%) in terms of frequency. The term behavior does not have a precise connotation since sometimes it is connected with employees' innovative behaviors (Li & Hsu, 2018) while others with customers' behaviors (Cheng, 2016). The word quality is linked with service quality that is positively influenced by skilled human resources (Taylan Dortyol, Varinli, & Kitapci, 2014; Ekinci & Dawes, 2009). The word tourism indicates the sector of this research.

Finally, the word "satisfaction" refers to both customer satisfaction (that appears as the top five words) and job satisfaction (that appears as the top ten words).

Figure 5. Thematic map

Analyzing the above-described clusters' (see Figure 5) positioning in the matrix according to the centrality and density variable, the network produced eight clusters that can be considered as eight "topics" or "themes" of the research field. Among the "motor themes", that are the more developed in the literature, the main concern is in the management antecedents of organizational performance. Most of the works are in fact developed within the resource-based theory, even if mainly concentrated on the most traditional concepts of the relationship between strategic human resource management and organizational performance. Another significantly growing stream of research is mainly concerned with the issue of the relationship between internal marketing, job satisfaction, and firm performance. In this wake, studies on internal marketing and human resources behaviour as well as their impact on performance are interestingly produced. Well-developed but still isolated are the links with digitalization on a side and with corporate social responsibility on the other, while the traditional link between customer satisfaction and service quality, after a huge production in previous years, is in a more declining phase. This shows that the topic shows an increasingly more conceptually founder development, within both strategy and marketing on a side and human resource management on the other. And yet contributions that relate such topics to sustainable social and cultural implications are still very limited and mostly connected with corporate social responsibility. Therefore, this shows that a huge revolution is needed in the field, thus confirming that, unfortunately, the theory continues to follow the real world and seldom manages to anticipate processes.

6. CONCLUSION

Our analysis was explicitly referred to the internal marketing evolution with reference to a specific industry. We did not look for more focused keywords, like social or ethical marketing, since we first decided to build an overall framework of the literature, through bibliometrics, aimed to see where the evolution of the process is actually bringing today's scholars. In the following step of our research analysis, we will proceed with a deeper study of the more specific literature. However, the first step of our research already conducts interesting results.

This study, in spite of the fact that it is strictly related to one specific sector, opens up a series of considerations, extremely useful in orienting marketing research in the future.

First of all, we decided to concentrate on the tourism industry since it is strictly linked to local territories and communities, has high impacts from different points of view, and is a sector where the human touch, in spite of the digitalization of many marketing activities, is still very important. In the literature, in fact (Della Corte, 2013), it is underlined that marketing in services and in particular in tourism is partly linked to the traditional phase, aimed to attract visitors but also to the phase when the services are provided. With digital tools, like social media, the process has become even more determining, since the classical

word of mouth has transformed into a Facebook or Instagram post in real-time. Therefore, the social sharing of customer perception is impressive. In such context, marketing theory appears still bound to a traditional approach, considering single aspects as separate and showing low attention to a new view which, especially in this case, is based on the fact that "we can not lie" and the more genuine and true the message is the more efficacious it is.

Even in the map, the studies developed up to now do not show a significant role of the new necessary perspective, being bound to the traditional view of marketing: internal marketing is considered in terms of advantage over the customer in a customer-based approach which is no longer satisfactory.

In particular, in this analysis a clear idea comes out: only open-to-society marketing can be useful and successful, in contexts of a win-win situation for the sustainable shared advantage. No more marketing for the firm but marketing for the whole firm's ecosystem, which in turn fosters the firm's role and its consequent competitive advantage. The same concept of competitive advantage loses its original value and meaning since it is no longer the simply strategic and economic advantage on other competitors and in front of the owners' expectations: it is in front of different expectations of several stakeholders in a more ethical approach. Someone may argue that this is nothing different from the stakeholders' theory perspective and corporate social responsibility but it is not. The aim is not to find an equilibrium between different actors with different objectives: this is a more social and ethical application of a resource-based approach, in building a shared managerial approach, with the key role of human resources. This implies new tools, new approaches, and a new philosophy behind human resource management and internal marketing. Some firms, especially the most innovative ones, are already applying these key concepts, with the idea that systemic cooperation even among competitors is important in a tourist destination, in an experience-based view. But theory cannot keep up with the real world's changes. This is the real problem of nowadays marketing: most of the articles are based on topics and concepts often written by others but far away from what firms really need. That's what we as scholars should ask ourselves: are we on the right path in researching and teaching on this topic?

At last, this work presents some limitations. First of all, we conducted our study using certain tools of bibliometric analysis, so we suggest for future research to deeply investigate the social and intellectual structure, through other bibliometric instruments. The second limitation concerns the type of documents included in this paper. We gathered only in WoS database topic-related papers written in English, excluding conference proceedings, book chapters, and doctoral theses. Furthermore, future studies should select additional keywords properly connected to stakeholder value creation in management and hospitality subjects. Finally, we advise the complementary use of other research techniques (i.e., content analysis) for a better understanding of examined issues and to improve the quality and relevance of the bibliometric outcomes.

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