

State and Order of Service Orientation Knowledge in Hospitality and Tourism Research: Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: This article offers a systematic review of research trends and methodology, with a focus on the state and order of knowledge regarding service orientation in hospitality and tourism research. A search algorithm was created through Web of Science and Scopus using search words related to service orientation and criteria regarding hospitality and tourism, yielding 154 articles. Duplicates and articles that did not focus on hospitality and tourism or did not have service orientation as their focus were removed, leaving 50 articles that were reviewed thoroughly and are the bases of the results. The review's main findings are that discussion of service orientation seems to be selective in categorizations and bound mostly to employee hospitableness, therefore leaving out organizational culture, strategy, and process. There is, however, evidence in recent literature that scholars are taking a more holistic view of the phenomena. Most articles contribute to knowledge-building through the third order of knowledge, leaving little room to define concepts or gather mutual understandings through empirical data. Based on our findings, we recommend conscious and continuous building of tools and methods that will contribute to a more in-depth and holistic understanding and measurement of service orientation in hospitality and tourism.

Keywords: service orientation; hospitality and tourism; order of knowledge; systematic literature review; qualitative methods



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1. Introduction

Hospitality and tourism revolve around cocreating value through service, which means that the entire organizational structure must be orientated toward service excellence. Such service orientation (SO) has been recognized as one of the key factors in successfully managing hospitality and tourism organizations, and one which leads to better performance (Ali et al. 2021).

It has been asserted that hospitality and tourism differ somewhat from other service industries. For instance, in the tourism sector, service performance (i.e., the moment of truth) often lasts longer than in other industries, as is the case for a mountain guide, who must be available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week while on a tour, acting not only as a guide but also a morale leader for a group of travelers. Furthermore, hotels become travelers' homes for an extended period, with prolonged and distinctive service instances (Crick and Spencer 2011; Ford and Sturman 2018; Reisinger et al. 2001). Based on that notion, it can be argued that orientation toward service is even more important for hospitality and tourism firms than for other service organizations, and it is imperative that managers within the sector have guidance on, and knowledge of service regarding, what it entails to be service orientated.

Although vigorous orientation toward service leads to improved organizational performance and competitive advantages (Ally et al. 2020; Lai et al. 2018; Lytle and Timmerman 2006; Urban 2009), a vast difference exists between understanding the definitions of this phenomenon and grasping its antecedents and consequences. In hospitality and tourism

research, SO has been categorized using three main definitions: (1) as organizational culture, with customer service as a driving force; (2) as a strategic, systematic, and processual approach to service; and, most commonly, (3) as individual performance and attitude toward service, derived from the degree of employee hospitableness (Teng and Barrows 2009). However, it has been argued by scholars in the field of service marketing and management that to enhance organizational performance, SO should not be taken as only one of these attributes but rather, as an integrated whole of the three. As such, it would combine all actions that employees or customers perform, the entire service process, and the servicescape (i.e., the design of the place of service and all its surroundings). That denotes an interfunctional, philosophical approach to service and value creation throughout an organization, which is rooted in, and measured through the organizational culture (Achroll and Kotler 2014; Grönroos 2015; Grönroos 2020; Lytle and Timmerman 2006; Voon 2006).

In their review of SO in the field of tourism and hospitality Teng and Barrows (2009) called for improved empirical understanding of SO, suggesting that future research should adopt a more holistic approach to define and measure the phenomenon in hospitality and tourism. Furthermore, they indicated that the academic discourse regarding SO in the field is scarce in journals associated with the hospitality and tourism industry, and it therefore seems that scholars are not managing knowledge-building. To the best of the author's knowledge, a systematic review focusing on SO in hospitality and tourism has not been performed since. Meanwhile, the hospitality and tourism sector has continued to grow immensely, and service has gained more attention from scholars and practitioners (Garg and Garg 2018; Hudson and Hudson 2012).

Given the development of both the sector and the service knowledge, we believe it to be imperative to conduct an analysis of knowledge creation through recent research, drawing on previous recommendations, considering possible shifts in the discussion focus, and pointing to avenues for future research. The aim of this article is therefore to map the SO research in hospitality and tourism for the past decade, from 2010–May 2022 (covering the period from the last review of Teng and Barrows (2009)): looking into the methodology on which it is based; identifying trends, shifts in focus, and possible knowledge gaps that require attention; and discerning the state of knowledge produced in hospitality and tourism research regarding SO. We thus seek answers to the following questions:

1. Which trends, categorizations, and methodologies are dominant in the discussion on SO in hospitality and tourism research?
2. What is the state and order of knowledge regarding SO in hospitality and tourism research?

To answer these questions, we present a systematic review of scholarly articles published in Web of Science and Scopus, following PRISMA guidelines of reporting. A content analysis is produced, examining trends in discourse, definitions of SO, and methodologies used. Moreover, we evaluate the state and order of knowledge portrayed in these articles.

This article contributes an update on research on SO within the field of hospitality and tourism since 2010. Moreover, it adds novel insights from its investigation of the state and order of knowledge regarding SO in the field. Thus, the focus of the review is on the underlying conceptualization of SO in the field and the framework through which SO is articulated, as well as research principles evident in the relevant studies, rather than the empirical findings of the studies under review. The article is constructed as follows: First, it presents a theoretical overview of SO. Then it outlines knowledge transfer and knowledge-building processes before describing the research methodology. Finally, it submits the results and discussions, followed by recommendations for future research.

2. Literature Review

Service is a complex phenomenon with no simple solutions (Rosenbaum and Massiah 2011; Grönroos 1990b, 2001, 2006; Parasuraman et al. 1985; Zeithaml et al. 1985). While definitions of service differ slightly, they share the understanding that it must be planned and managed holistically; in other words, service does not occur instrumentally, and its

provision should not be left to chance (Gummesson 1987a; Zeithaml and Brown 2014). For instance, a holistic definition of service is: “all economic activities whose output is not physical product or construction, is generally consumed at the same time it is produced and provides added value in forms that are essentially intangible concerns of its purchaser” (Zeithaml et al. 2006, p. 5). This definition reveals the breadth of service and service management, encompassing all economic activities that increase the added value of a purchase, the moment of truth.

In perhaps simpler and more practical, yet holistic, terms, service is also defined as deed, process, and performance (Lovelock et al. 1999). Deed concerns the strategy of what should be achieved, how it should be achieved, who should achieve it, and for whom, in terms of service. A service promise is formulated based on the customers’ (i.e., target group’s) needs and wants on the one hand and an organization’s ability to fulfill that promise on the other (Berry et al. 1994). Process concerns who it is that performs service and for whom in space and time. Here, service activities are grouped into a holistic process that runs through the organization and is derived from the target group’s needs and wants and from the organization’s ability to perform (Chumpitaz Caceres and Paparoidamis 2007; Grönroos 2001). Performance is then measured against set service goals and standards that aim for increased service quality and value creation (Garg and Garg 2018; Lovelock and Gummesson 2004; Zeithaml et al. 1993).

Managing service revolves around productivity and quality of work (Grönroos 2011; Lovelock et al. 1999), agility through continuous adaptation, and learning throughout the organizational culture (Grönroos 1990a; Tajeddini 2011). This includes managing interactions between all human and nonhuman actors, external and internal customers (namely, employees), and others. “Nonhuman actors” refers to all tools, machines, and technologies used in service interactions, such as online service, self-service, and checkout, whereas “others” may mean bystanders, those next in line, or any other actor that can influence (for better or worse) the service encounter, value creation, and perceived service quality (Wilson et al. 2012). Based on that concept, SO has been defined as “the set of beliefs, behaviors, and cross-functional processes that seriously focuses on continuous and comprehensive understanding, disseminating, as well as satisfying the current and future needs of the target customers, for service excellence” (Voon 2008, p. 219). It is thus an application of the market orientation philosophy to service quality management.

Voon has also stated that to have such prevalent focus on a matter as intangible as service, the concept of service must be embedded in an organization’s culture, led by managers, with involvement by all (Voon 2006, 2008). According to this approach, service must be considered not as a singular act but as a holistic process, from making a promise to enabling that promise and keeping it (Bitner, 1995; Dolnicar and Ring 2014; Grönroos 2006).

2.1. Evolving Service Orientation

Categorization of SO in service literature is far from new (Homburg et al. 2002) and has in fact followed the maturity and history of service research. In the early days of service literature, Fisk et al. (1993) highlighted that service was considered an extension of physical goods and retail; it hardly had managers’ attention, let alone inclusion in the organizational strategy. Essentially, the idea was that all that one needed to be in service was a front-of-house employee who was geared toward customer service and who had a hospitable attitude, which is now generally known as customer orientation (Grönroos 2017).

As service knowledge matured and conceptual understanding progressed, scholars and practitioners alike began to acknowledge that orientation toward service through individual employees was insufficient to sustain or deliver consistent service. A more systematic processual approach (Eiglier and Langeard 1977) with a clear service strategy and vision (Mills et al. 1983) and strong internal focus (George 1990; James and Jones 1974) was needed. At this time, increased attention was devoted to the significance of service, the definition of service, and differentiating service as standalone nonphysical goods as opposed to an extension of physical goods (Fisk et al. 1993; Gummesson and Grönroos

2012). Different methods for addressing service marketing rather than traditional goods were also proposed (Grönroos 1980; Magrath 1986); focus on customers (their expectations and perceptions of service) received more attention, and service quality gained prominence (Parasuraman et al. 1985; Wilson et al. 2020).

Simultaneously, the conscious strategic building of service culture began to receive attention as a piece of the concept of service (Gummesson 1987b). Such a culture includes mutual beliefs and values regarding customer service excellence (Bellou and Andronikidis 2017; Grönroos 2020), pushes for employee engagement (Teimouri et al. 2018) and job satisfaction (Asgeirsson et al. 2020; Gudlaugsson et al. 2022), and formulates service promises based on the ability and strategy of the organization and customer satisfaction (Grönroos 2017; Groth et al. 2019). The importance of service, service provision, and service quality to organizational performance has since been recognized as an axiom in the service marketing literature (George 1977; Grönroos 1978; Groth et al. 2019; Lovelock 1983; Regan 1963).

2.2. Building Knowledge

Different framings and understandings of a research object or phenomenon between disciplines is not uncommon, especially for interdisciplinary fields, in this case hospitality and tourism, where knowledge transfer has often proven to be slow and faltering (Tribe and Liburd 2016). Comprehensive knowledge and the foundations upon which concepts or methods are grounded commonly fail when transferred and applied to a new field of study, with the risk that the use, discussion, and further development of these concepts or methods will be selective or partial in the new context (Belhassen and Caton 2009; Hall and Duval 2006; Tribe and Liburd 2016).

To examine the maturity and order of knowledge and knowledge-building, Rossiter (2001) divided knowledge into three order forms, which he refers to as the nature of knowledge (see Figure 1).

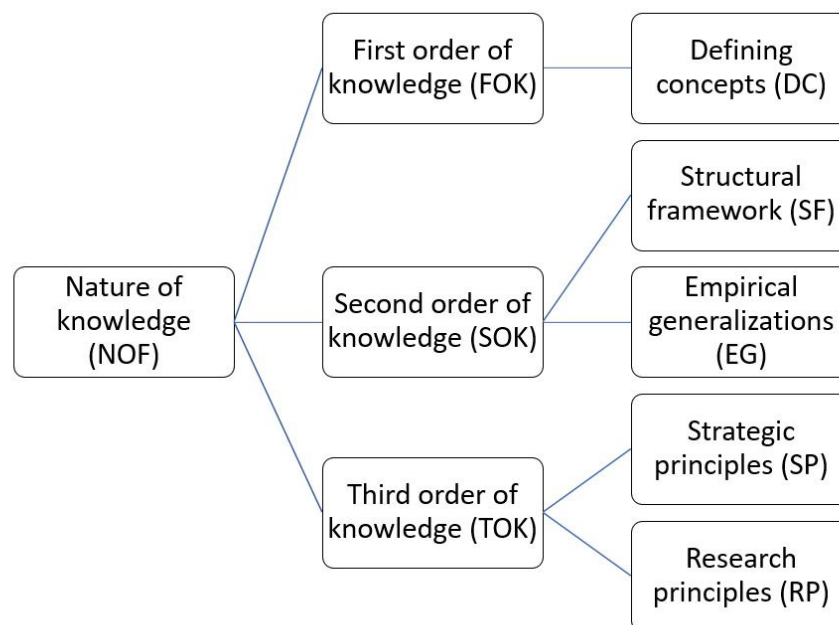


Figure 1. Nature of knowledge, based on Rossiter (2001).

In Figure 1, the nature of knowledge has been categorized into three orders that are built up by different levels of epistemology. The first order of knowledge includes the definition of concepts that instill mutual understanding in the study field and descriptions of independent objects; this knowledge is used as a foundation for further knowledge creation. The second order of knowledge, which builds on the foundation of the first order, comprises structural frameworks and empirical generalizations. Structural frameworks

contextualize the independent concepts for managerial use and help detect problems without establishing what [Rossiter \(2001\)](#) refers to as causal relationships. Moreover, empirical generalizations postulate connections between independent concepts without using causal conclusions ([Rossiter 2002](#)). The third order of knowledge builds on previous knowledge orders (i.e., mutual understanding of the phenomenon and its contexts, both theoretical and practical) and includes the description of causal relationships, aiming to determine the reasons for the associations between constructs and strategic principles, as well as research principles.

Strategic principles are set as a practical guideline for decision makers (i.e., managers), created with experimental design, longitudinal data, or deductive logic; such principles lead to clear “if, do” recommendations for managers as a response to a situation, in order to deliver the best outcome. Research principles are related to epistemology and are necessary for extensive knowledge-building, since they should guide researchers in defining concepts, formulating structural frameworks, observing empirical generalizations, and testing and confirming the theoretical validity of strategic principles. Such principles generally provide “if, use” guidelines for researchers that adhere to an advocacy technique to deliver the best answer to a proposed question. It is suggested that once the research principle is reached, the need for content analysis becomes redundant, as the level of knowledge should contain references to all aspects of content and be built from the previous knowledge orders ([Dolnicar and Ring 2014](#); [Rossiter 2001, 2002, 2012](#)).

3. Methods

This study presents a systematic literature review on SO in hospitality and tourism research, following a rigorous PRISMA research protocol aimed to minimize research bias ([Page et al. 2021](#)). Articles published in peer-reviewed journals (from 2010 to 2022) were gathered from Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus, which are among the most comprehensive abstract and citation databases available for peer-reviewed literature. The inclusion criteria of peer-reviewed articles in English was used, therefore excluding other languages and other types of publications (such as book chapters and conference proceedings), whether peer-reviewed or not. The review search string was created using the standard Boolean terms “AND”, “OR”, and “NOT” to construct a single search algorithm stream, scanning the titles, abstracts, and keywords. The string-search algorithm used in the search included the search words “service orientation”, “customer orientation”, “service culture”, “service climate”, “service strategy”, and the categorizations “hospitality” and “tourism”. The search yielded 154 articles matching the search algorithm (see [Figure 2](#)).

[Figure 2](#) shows the screening process. First, duplicates between databanks were excluded (6), along with articles that did not focus on the hospitality and tourism industry (39). The remaining articles (109) were analyzed in terms of focus area, and those not emphasizing SO were excluded (59), leaving the articles with more in-depth analytics in the sample (50).

These sample articles were then analyzed in terms of content and as to how SO was categorized or defined in their research. Categorization was ranked relative to the findings of [Teng and Barrows \(2009\)](#), who found that SO in tourism research had been analyzed at either the organizational level (i.e., culture or strategic/processual manner) or the individual level (as a degree of employee hospitable behavior). Articles that attributed SO to more than one category were marked accordingly, as an attempt to consider the topic in a more holistic manner. A methodology stock-taking (i.e., qualitative and quantitative) was also performed. Some articles based their findings on mixed methods (used both qualitative and quantitative research) and were marked accordingly. An extensive list was produced (see [Appendix A Table A1](#)) to demonstrate the findings.

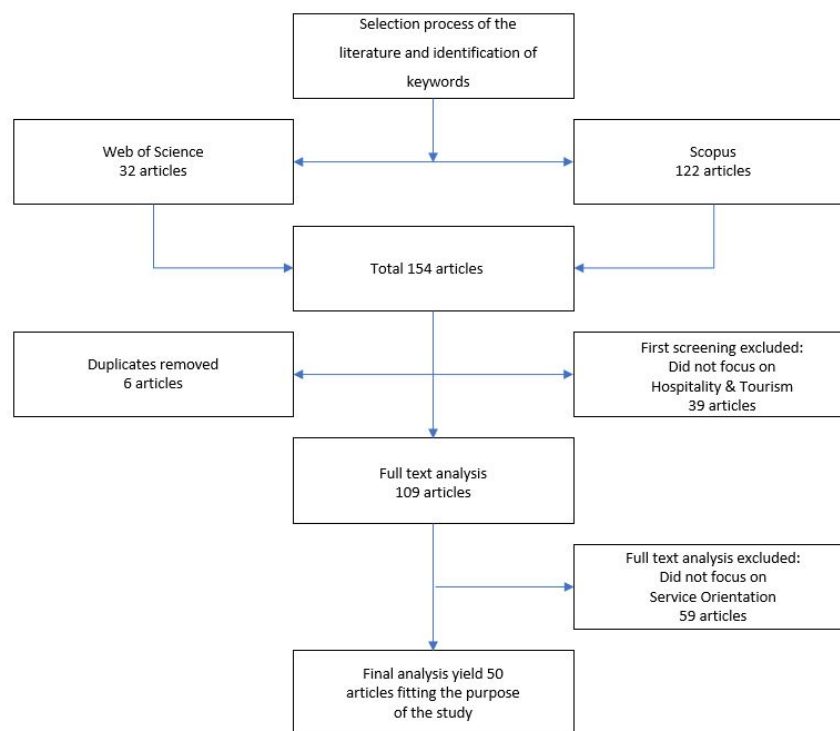


Figure 2. The PRISMA research data gathering and screening flowchart.

Secondly, the review focused on the nature of knowledge. Here, the knowledge-building concept by [Rossiter \(2001\)](#) was used as a determination of knowledge maturity (i.e., defining concepts, structural framework, empirical generalization, strategic principles, and research principles). In most cases, either in the aim of the research or in the discussion and conclusions, the authors of the reviewed articles stated the nature of the knowledge created. However, in some cases where this was not evident, the nature of knowledge was categorized by reviewers. Findings from this knowledge analysis are shown in a hospitality and tourism SO knowledge grid that matches the SO discussion on SO to the relevant order and nature of knowledge. A knowledge grid describes the linear discussion maturity of any given field of study (i.e., the less mature discussions should lean more toward the first and second orders of knowledge, whereas the more mature discussions should lean more toward the third order of knowledge ([Dolnicar and Ring 2014](#); [Rossiter 2002](#))).

Given the relatively recent focus on SO in hospitality and tourism, the division of the concept in prior research, and the recommendation by [Teng and Barrows \(2009\)](#) that a more conceptual and empirical understanding is needed to further SO knowledge in tourism, we expected most of the reviewed literature to be categorized into the first or second (and, to a lesser extent, the third) order of knowledge.

As suggested by [Rossiter \(2001, 2002\)](#) once the nature of knowledge is in the third order—more specifically, when the research principle is reached—the need for content analysis becomes redundant, as this level of knowledge should contain references to all aspects of prior content and be built from the previous knowledge orders. However, in this study, a content analysis was conducted to further scrutinize the research principles section. Abbreviations are used in tables and figures to make the content more readable (please refer to end of the main text for a list of abbreviations).

4. Results

To answer the first research question (“Which trends, categorizations, and methodologies are dominant in the discussion on SO in hospitality and tourism research?”), we performed a content analysis of the 50 selected articles. As expected, the categorization of the articles exceeds the number of articles as some addressed or attempted to intertwine

more than one type of content. Table 1 offers an overview of the analysis, identifying trends and methodologies. An extensive list of the reviewed articles can be found in Appendix A, sorted first by year of publication and then by alphabetical order of authors' names.

Table 1. Categorization of SO and methodology of reviewed articles.

Methodology	EMPL	OC	S&P
Quantitative	26 (5)	5 (4)	3 (1)
Qualitative	1 (1)	4 (1)	2
Mixed methods	2	0	1
Totals	29 (6)	9 (5)	6 (1)

As can be seen in the table, SO is commonly categorized as employee hospitableness (EMPL) (29), followed by organizational culture (OC) (9), and lastly as strategy and process (S&P) (6). A total of six articles categorized SO as a form of interplay of more than one category (see number in brackets). Five of these combined employee hospitableness and organizational culture and one employee hospitableness and strategy and process. Interestingly, five of those six articles were published recently in the last two years, suggesting a shift in focus toward a more holistic view of SO in hospitality and tourism research.

The methodology used is predominantly quantitative, with twenty-six articles studying employee behavior and attitude toward service, five on organizational culture, and three on strategy and process. Quantitative methods were used in five of the articles intertwining categories, four of which focused on employee hospitableness and organizational culture and one on employee hospitableness and strategy and process. Qualitative methods were used in the form of either interviews or desktop analysis, one on employee hospitableness, four addressing organizational culture, and two referring to strategy and process. Qualitative methods were used in one article intertwining employee hospitableness and organizational culture. Mixed methods were employed in three articles, where interviews for deeper understanding of answers were performed. Two of those addressed employee hospitableness and one strategy and process.

For a better grasp of the discussion trends, publications were grouped per year and categorization (see Figure 3). To identify trends in the more holistic manner, articles that dealt with more than one category simultaneously were added to new categorizations: employee hospitableness (EMPL) and organizational culture (OC), and EMPL and strategy and process (S&P).

As mentioned, most articles use the EMPL categorization, but there seems to be an emerging shift in focus in the more recent publications. Firstly, OC is gaining more attention, and seemingly more research is leaning toward a holistic discussion of SO. However, those articles only connect two of three categories deemed to be the foundations of the SO holistic approach. Additionally, little attempt has been made in connecting the two categories, and they are therefore still viewed as separate pillars, although it is stated that both matter in building SO.

To answer our second question (What is the state and order of knowledge regarding SO in hospitality and tourism research?), we revisited the 50 articles under review and matched the previous content analysis to the nature and order of knowledge, and the findings displayed in Table 2. The nature of knowledge was, in most cases, mentioned in the articles, either in the aim or conclusions. However, where this was not clearly stated, the content was analyzed in depth using the nature of knowledge protocol.

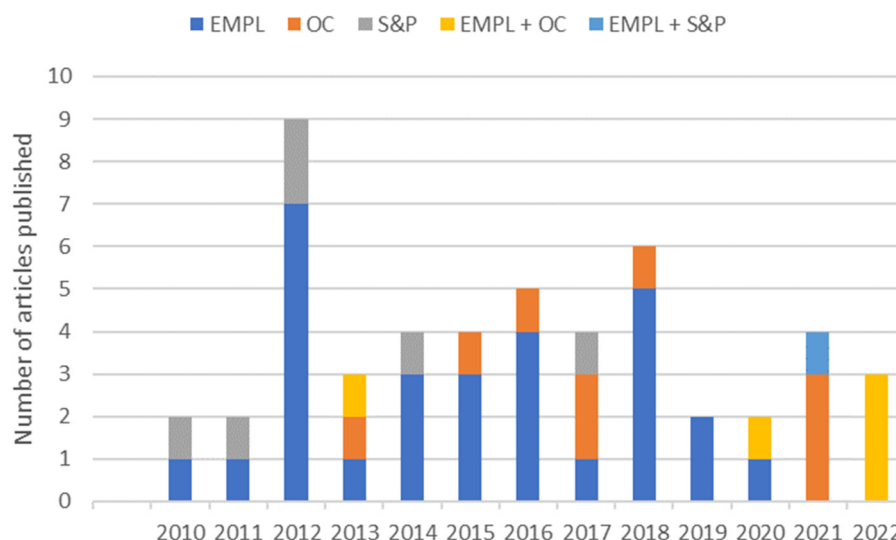


Figure 3. Mapping the categorical discussion.

Table 2. Hospitality and tourism SO knowledge grid.

SO Categorization	EMPL	OC	S&P	EMPL + OC	EMPL + S&P
FOK/DC			1		
SOK/SF		3			
SOK/EG	2	4	1		1
TOK/SP	24	2	2	1	
TOK/RP	3		2	4	
Total	29	9	6	5	1

The table shows the nature of SO knowledge produced in hospitality and tourism research. The idea is, as more research is categorized as the third order of knowledge (TOK), the more mature the knowledge is in any given sector. TOK is based and builds on previous knowledge forms (i.e., first order of knowledge [FOK] and second order of knowledge [SOK]) and therefore should have already undergone the scrutinization of previous knowledge orders.

One article on the FOK addresses defining concepts (DC) as a foundation for further utilization, and is categorized in S&P. Eleven articles fall into SOK: three were classified as using a structural framework (SF) and adhering to organizational culture, eight were categorized as empirical generalizations, one concerned S&P, four were categorized as OC, two dealt with EMPL, and finally, one addressed EMPL and S&P. Most of the articles (thirty-eight of the fifty) adhere to TOK, with twenty-nine of them adhering to strategic principles (SP) as a more practical utilization and guidelines for managers. Moreover, twenty-four of these articles classify SO as EMPL, which is by far the largest group. Two articles examine the phenomenon through the lens of OC, another two consider SO as an organizational strategy, and one as EMPL and OC. Nine articles view the phenomenon in terms of research principles as a causal relationship, seeking the best answers to proposed questions; three identify it as EMPL; two as S&P; and four as EMPL and OC.

Contrary to our expectations, the nature of knowledge of the reviewed articles is categorized more in the third order rather than in the previous two. This contradicts earlier recommendations and findings of the discussion, as the knowledge is more mature. Based on this analysis, it can be argued that although the discourse is mature, the common research focus and methodology of these studies are somewhat selective. The most common way to study SO in hospitality and tourism seems to be through quantitative research, framing it as CO or employees' degree of hospitableness. Most emphasis is on the strategic principles and therefore on practicalities and guidelines for the industry rather than on research principles to determine best practices.

It has been suggested that once the TOK is reached, there is no need for content analysis since the third order builds on previous orders and should therefore intertwine the categorizations found and scrutinized and build on a holistic approach. This, however, is not the case in this study, where only a small portion of the reviewed articles attempt to combine the contents.

5. Discussion

To determine the discourse, methodology, and maturity regarding SO in the hospitality and tourism sector, our objective was to answer the two research questions: Which trends, categorizations, and methodology are dominant in the discussion on SO in hospitality and tourism research? What is the state and order of knowledge regarding SO in hospitality and tourism research?

The systematic literature review on SO in hospitality and tourism revealed that the academic discussion is somewhat narrow and the methodology one-dimensional. Researchers are not unanimous on how to define and categorize SO, but the categorization found in this analysis reiterates previous findings that indicate a focus on employee hospitableness, organizational culture, or strategy persists. The main emphasis is on determining employees' degree of hospitableness, using quantitative methods. These findings suggest that the discourse follows a more product-centered approach since most of the categorization is on EMPL (Fisk et al. 1993; Gummesson and Grönroos 2012). That is not to claim that employee characteristics and performance do not matter; they matter immensely. However, to grow people and nurture their positive behavior and attributes, there must be procedures in place (George 1990; Gummesson and Grönroos 2012) based on rigorous systems and strategy (Garg and Garg 2018) and grounded within the OC (Voon 2008).

Reasons for this focus on employees rather than on organizational behavior or strategy implementation could be of a different nature. Perhaps it is as Pizam (2012) elaborated in his editorial remarks: that one of the reasons for SO research leaning more toward employees' personal traits rather than a holistic organizational level is that the former is to some extent easier to measure, as more tools have been developed to do so. Then again, it could be that the discourse on SO as employee hospitableness has already matured within the industry, prior to this analysis and has undergone conceptual and mutual empirical understandings as the way forward for hospitality and tourism research and best practices. Whatever the reasons might be, this means that both researchers and practitioners alike are missing out on the full potential of a holistic approach that, based on experience and research within service marketing, is likely to be of use for even better organizational performance (Ally et al. 2020; Lai et al. 2018). Such an approach, whereby the whole organization is geared toward customer service (Grönroos 2020), considers all aspects of service, from employee engagement (Teimouri et al. 2018) and job satisfaction (Asgeirsson et al. 2020; Gudlaugsson et al. 2022), through formulating the strategy and service promise, to customer satisfaction and loyalty (Grönroos 2017; Groth et al. 2019).

Regarding the findings on order of knowledge and maturity, most of the articles refer to the TOK, therefore suggesting a maturity in the discussion. Moreover, they focus on strategic principles in a more practical sense, providing guidelines for managers in the field. These findings came as a surprise, as we expected the discourse to be more empirical and conceptual for future knowledge-building, given the recommendations and findings of Teng and Barrows (2009). Instead, it seems that the problem they pointed out persists,

little focus is placed on conceptualizing knowledge in building mutual understanding or empirical and contextual understanding of the phenomenon of SO.

Due to these findings, a slight modification was made in the research principles and to the order of knowledge. As [Rossiter \(2001\)](#) suggested, research principles force the discussion to be fulfilled holistically, building on mutual, conceptual, and empirical understandings. Since we found that the basics to build on were lacking, we wanted to investigate whether the discussions of the articles concerning the research principles were in fact addressing the phenomenon holistically. Although they certainly categorize SO using three categories (EMPL, OC, and S&P), there is evidence of combining these contents, especially in the more recent articles. This might signal that a holistic approach is catching the attention of more scholars in the field. However, as mentioned, little effort was made in the articles reviewed to investigate the connectivity between these themes, which were instead addressed as two important but separate pillars.

Therefore, it can be argued that the knowledge transfer between the field of service marketing and hospitality and tourism seems to be somewhat slow and faltering, which is not uncommon, as argued by [Tribe and Liburd \(2016\)](#). This could be because scholars in the field are not utilizing service literature to the full extent and perhaps not realizing the complexity of service and what SO means in an organizational behavior context. There could also be other reasons, such as researchers being reluctant to associate their research with marketing, which may hinder or slow the maturity of the discussion ([Rossiter 2002](#)). It has been pointed out that there is a tendency to dissect or diminish actions related to marketing in hospitality and tourism research and that marketing is predominantly viewed as a singular act of promotion and sale and not as a holistic process rooted in organizational behavior and culture (see [Grönroos 2006](#); [Dolnicar and Ring 2014](#)). Regardless of the reason, this is a sign of a selective use of knowledge and insight from service marketing in research on SO in the field of hospitality and tourism, which, it can be argued, further limits the development of methods and concepts in studies of SO in the latter field.

Service is a complex phenomenon, with no simple solution, as our findings demonstrate. A vigorous orientation towards service in a philosophical and holistic manner, and through organizational culture can lead to superior organizational performance. This complexity of SO is seemingly not addressed in hospitality and tourism research. As a result, the industry could be missing out on its full performance potential.

Study Limitations

This study is not without its limitations. One is that the review was conducted with qualitative methods; therefore, the understandings and categorizations of the selected articles might be biased. Reviewers might have missed and/or misinterpreted the original meanings of the selected studies, despite their best intentions and efforts. However, this approach was deemed to be superior to a quantitative content analysis, as it allowed an in depth reading of all the articles providing insight into the discussion on SO in hospitality and tourism.

The file drawer problem could exist, since this study is based only on published and reviewed articles, therefore excluding working papers, conference proceedings and book chapters. By following PRISMA protocols in preparation, data gathering and reviewing, we hope to have eliminated that possibility.

Another limiting factor might be the choice of keywords, as the discourse concerning SO in hospitality and tourism research might use different terms and concepts than those selected to create the algorithm string. We selected keywords from prior literature reviews on SO in hospitality and tourism in the attempt to eliminate this factor.

6. Conclusions

This study offers insight into knowledge-building regarding SO in hospitality and tourism research, mapping its discourse and methodology. Given the nature of the tourism industry, which revolves around value creation through service, and considering our findings of monotonous categorizations of SO in hospitality and tourism research, we

believe that scholars and practitioners must recognize the need for investigating a holistic approach to SO as a fundamental strategy for organizations, destinations, and countries to improve their service in tourism. We therefore reiterate previous recommendations by [Teng and Barrows \(2009\)](#) that fellow hospitality and tourism scholars seek ways to deliver more unanimous, empirical understandings of these phenomena, finding ways to intertwine these attributes (how they are connected and supportive of each other). There is also a need to investigate the state of knowledge regarding employee hospitableness, and we recommend that a taking stock, as performed here, of customer orientation in hospitality and tourism research should be conducted.

As a continuation of this article, in the attempt to reduce the gap that appears to be persistent, we plan on developing and verifying an approach to measure SO in hospitality and tourism. Its approach would include service strategy and employee hospitableness, measured through the lens of organizational culture. Recent attempts have been made in this regard, both within the hospitality and tourism sector, and in other service sectors (see [Gudlaugsson et al. 2022](#); [William 2022](#)), and these will be utilized as guidance for our continuing work on SO in hospitality and tourism.

Practical Applications

This study contributes not only to the theoretical understanding of SO, but also to knowledge of the practicalities. Managers of hospitality and tourism firms can benefit from this by viewing the whole organization's participation in service by creating service orientation across the firm. This means having the right people in the right place, and at the right time, in order to satisfy guests' expectations toward service. Also, having a clear service strategy and process in place takes into consideration the guests' needs and wants and the organization's ability to perform. This should then be formulated in the organizational culture, one that nurtures positive behavior and service thinking, led by managers and participated in by all.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Text
EMPL	Employee hospitableness
OC	Organizational culture
S&P	Strategy and process
EMPL + S&P	EMPL and Strategy and process
EMPL + OC	EMPL and Organizational culture
NOF	Nature of knowledge
FOK	First order of knowledge
DC	Defining concepts
SOK	Second order of knowledge
SF	Structural framework
EG	Empirical generalization
TOK	Third order of knowledge
SP	Strategic principles
RP	Research principles

Appendix A

Table A1. Complete list of sample articles and their categorization.

Author (Year)	Title	Journal	Methodology		Service Orientation Categorization:		
			Qualitative	Quantitative	Employee Hospitableness	Organizational Culture	Strategy & Process
Kim and Ok (2010)	Customer Orientation of Service Employees and Rapport: Influences on Service-Outcome Variables in Full-Service Restaurants	Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research		x		x	
Venugopal and Gopakumar (2010)	An Experimental Modeling of a Service Blueprint Based on Inbound Travellers' Point of View—Study at a Three Star Hotel in Calicut	i-Manager's Journal on Management	x	x			x
García et al. (2011)	Organizational Service Systems: Antecedents and Consequences	Tourism and Hospitality Research	x	x		x	
Tajeddini (2011)	Customer Orientation, Learning Orientation, and New Service Development: An Empirical Investigation of the Swiss Hotel Industry	Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	x				x
Camarero and Garrido (2012)	Fostering Innovation in Cultural Contexts: Market Orientation, Service Orientation, and Innovations in Museums	Journal of Service Research		x			x
Gazzoli et al. (2012)	Employee Empowerment and Customer Orientation: Effects on Workers' Attitudes in Restaurant Organizations	International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration		x		x	
Karatepe and Douri (2012)	Does Customer Orientation Mediate the Effect of Job Resourcefulness on Hotel Employee Outcomes? Evidence from Iran	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management		x		x	
Kim et al. (2012)	Frontline service employees' customer-related social stressors, emotional exhaustion, and service recovery performance: customer orientation as a moderator	Service Business		x		x	
Mathe and Scott-Halsell (2012)	The Effects of Perceived External Prestige on Positive Psychological States in Quick Service Restaurants	Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism		x		x	

Table A1. Cont.

Author (Year)	Title	Journal	Methodology		Service Orientation Categorization:		
			Qualitative	Quantitative	Employee Hospitality	Organizational Culture	Strategy & Process
Noor et al. (2012)	The Role of Individual Differences in Promoting Front Liners to Become Customer-Oriented: A Case of the Hotel Industry in Malaysia	Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism		x	x		
Nedeljković et al. (2012)	Organizational changes and job satisfaction in the hospitality industry in Serbia	UTMS Journal of Economics		x	x		
Petrović and Marcović (2012)	Researching Connection between Service Orientation and Work Satisfaction: A Study of Hotel Employees	Turizam		x	x		
Yang (2012)	Identifying the attributes of blue ocean strategies in hospitality	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management		x			x
Mohammad et al. (2013)	Assessing the influence of customer relationship management (CRM) dimensions on organization performance: An empirical study in the hotel industry	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology		x	x	x	
Grissemann et al. (2013)	Enhancing business performance of hotels: The role of innovation and customer orientation	International Journal of Hospitality Management		x	x		
Choi et al. (2014)	Testing the stressor–strain–outcome model of customer-related social stressors in predicting emotional exhaustion, customer orientation and service recovery performance.	International Journal of Hospitality Management		x	x		
Lee (2014)	Attitudinal dimensions of professionalism and service quality efficacy of frontline employees in hotels	International Journal of Hospitality Management		x	x		
Lee et al. (2013)	Developing a competitive international service strategy: a case of international joint venture in the global service industry	The Journal of Services Marketing	x			x	
Qin et al. (2014)	How and when the effect of ethical leadership occurs? A multilevel analysis in the Chinese hospitality industry	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management		x	x		

Table A1. Cont.

Author (Year)	Title	Journal	Methodology		Service Orientation Categorization:		
			Qualitative	Quantitative	Employee Hospitableness	Organizational Culture	Strategy & Process
Saarijärvi et al. (2014)	Disentangling customer orientation–executive perspective	Business Process Management Journal	x				x
Gallarza et al. (2015)	Managers’ Perceptions of Delivered Value in the Hospitality Industry	Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management		x		x	
Lee and Ok (2015)	Examination of Factors Affecting Hotel Employees’ Service Orientation: An Emotional Labor Perspective	Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research		x	x		
Song et al. (2015)	The Role of CSR and Responsible Gambling in Casino Employees’ Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Customer Orientation	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research		x	x		
Walsh et al. (2015)	Understanding Students’ Intentions to Join the Hospitality Industry: The Role of Emotional Intelligence, Service Orientation, and Industry Satisfaction	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly		x	x		
González-Rodríguez et al. (2016)	Post-visit and pre-visit tourist destination image through eWOM sentiment analysis and perceived helpfulness	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	x		x		
Kandampully et al. (2016)	Developing a people-technology hybrids model to unleash innovation and creativity: The new hospitality frontier	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	x			x	
Kang et al. (2016)	The followership of hotel employees and the relationship between occupational burnout, job stress, and customer orientation: Targeting the hotel service providers at luxury hotels	Tourism and Hospitality Research		x	x		
Karatepe et al. (2016)	Investigating the impact of customer orientation on innovativeness: evidence from born-global firms in Turkey	Ekonomiska Istrazivanja		x	x		
Kaynak et al. (2016)	Role of adaptive selling and customer orientation on salesperson performance: Evidence from two distinct markets of Europe and Asia	Journal of Transnational Management		x	x		

Table A1. Cont.

Author (Year)	Title	Journal	Methodology		Service Orientation Categorization:		
			Qualitative	Quantitative	Employee Hospitableness	Organizational Culture	Strategy & Process
Arasli et al. (2017)	Effects of service orientation on job embeddedness in hotel industry	The Service Industries Journal		x	x		
Jalilvand (2017)	The effect of innovativeness and customer-oriented systems on performance in the hotel industry of Iran	Journal of Science and Technology Policy Management		x			x
Michaelides (2017)	Hospitality industry and the service culture in Europe	Tourism and Travelling	x			x	
Ngacha and Onyango (2017)	The role of a Customer-Oriented Service Culture in influencing Customer Retention in the Hotel Industry	African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure		x		x	
Cha and Borchgrevink (2018)	Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) and Frontline Employees’ Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior in the Foodservice Context: Exploring the Moderating Role of Work Status	International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration		x	x		
Johnson et al. (2018)	Perceptions of customer service orientation, training, and employee engagement in Jamaica’s hospitality sector	European Journal of Training and Development		x	x	x	
Lin et al. (2018)	How Hospitality and Tourism Students Choose Careers: Influences of Employer Branding and Applicants’ Customer Orientation	Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education		x	x		
Teimouri et al. (2018)	Service, politics, and engagement: A multi-level analysis	Tourism Management Perspectives		x	x		
Tsaur et al. (2018)	SOCO’s impact on service outcomes of tour guides: the moderating effect of customers’ shopping orientation	Current Issues in Tourism		x	x		
Zhu et al. (2018)	Service quality delivery in a cross-national context. International Business Review	International Business Review	x			x	
Moon et al. (2019)	How Service Employees’ Work Motivations Lead to Job Performance: The Role of Service Employees’ Job Creativity and Customer Orientation	Current Psychology		x	x		

Table A1. Cont.

Author (Year)	Title	Journal	Methodology		Service Orientation Categorization:		
			Qualitative	Quantitative	Employee Hospitableness	Organizational Culture	Strategy & Process
Köşker et al. (2019)	The effect of basic personality traits on service orientation and tendency to work in the hospitality and tourism industry	Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism		x	x		
Domi et al. (2020)	Customer orientation and SME performance in Albania: A case study of the mediating role of innovativeness and innovation behavior	Journal of Vacation Marketing	x	x	x		
Yang et al. (2020)	The Multilevel Mechanism of Multifoci Service Orientation on Emotional Labor: Based on the Chinese Hospitality Industry	International journal of environmental research and public health		x	x	x	
Domi and Domi (2021)	The interplay effects of skill-enhancing human resources practices, customer orientation and tourism SMEs performance	European Journal of Training and Development		x	x		x
Lin et al. (2021)	The effects of service climate and internal service quality on frontline hotel employees' service-oriented behaviors	International Journal of Hospitality Management		x		x	
Pham Thi Phuong and Thi Ahn (2021)	Service Climate and Empowerment for Customer Service Quality among Vietnamese Employees at Restaurants	Sustainability		x	x	x	
Palácios et al. (2021)	A Bibliometric Analysis of Service Climate as a Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Hospitality	Sustainability		x		x	
Deng et al. (2022)	Error Aversion Versus Error Management: Does Organizational Error Culture Affect Employees' Customer Orientation?	Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research		x	x	x	
Kim and Jang (2022)	The Impact of Employees' Perceived Customer Citizenship Behaviors on Organizational Citizenship Behaviors: The Mediating Roles of Employee Customer-orientation Attitude	International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration		x	x	x	
William (2022)	Refining the service orientation scale (SOS-22) from inside the Canadian lodging sector	Tourism and Hospitality Management	x		x	x	

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