

# Wage gap in the tourism sector: A bibliometric analysis

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**Keywords** | Bibliometric analysis, wage gap, gender, tourism

**Objectives** | The main objective of this paper is discerning, through means of a bibliometric analysis, the evolution and current standing of the wage gap in the tourism sector. Variables such as research methods, main authors, type of journals, country of origin of the studies and selected countries for the fieldwork, among others, are analyzed in the existing studies.

**Methodology** | The bibliometric study constitutes a well-established methodology, which seeks to evaluate productivity levels in a specific field of research for a given timeframe. The selected time period ranges from 1985, up to 2014. Scopus was the selected database, as advised by the studies carried out by Hall (2011) and Figueroa-Domecq et al. (2015), which highly emphasize the relevance of the aforesaid database at the international level. Thus, following multiple contributions provided by various studies (Bordons et al., 2003; Palmer et al., 2005; Ramos et al., 2002; Selva et al., 2011; Villacé-Molinero, Pritchard & Morgan, 2014; and Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015), the variables used in this research were defined and coded, and the methodologies and topics adopted were subsequently classified. Finally, authors and journals were effectively identified.

In that regard, the main keywords utilized when searching for suitable articles (excluding books, presentations and literary overviews) were the following: 'gender', 'women', 'tourism', 'labor' and, finally, 'hotel'. A grand total of 703 published articles was identified, distributed among 343 different indexed journals.

One of the major research themes singled out was 'Gender and Labor'. Within this field, the sub-topic of 'Wage Gap Based on Gender' was further selected, and it became the main focus of the present research.

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**Main Results and Contributions** | The bibliometric analysis shows that out of the 703 documents that were retrieved, 51 revolve around 'Gender and the Working Environment', and that only 9 out of these 51 articles are specifically focused on 'Wage Gap' (Thrane, 2008; Tugores, 2008; Muñoz-Bullón, 2009; García-Pozo et al., 2012; Coppin, 1998; Santos & Varejão, 2007; Skalpe, 2007; Campos et al., 2009; Bujisic et al., 2013). Publications on these matters were scarce and sporadic up until 2006. This said, a remarkable increment has occurred between the years 2007 and 2009.

The above-mentioned studies have been published in five major journals, the one placing a major emphasis on this topic being *Tourism Economics* (4), followed by *Tourism Management* (2). As for the rest of the journals, only one related publication has been featured in each of them: *The International Journal of Hospitality Management* (1), the *Journal of Culinary Science and Technology* (1), and the *Journal of Developing Areas* (1).

An exhaustive analysis of the nations leading the research on 'Wage Gap' in the Tourism Sector, reveals that the majority of investigations (5) are carried out in countries belonging to Mediterranean Europe, headed by Spain, which agglomerates 4 articles carried out on this matter. It is also worth mentioning the United States, which follows suit with 2 articles, succeeded by Norway and Portugal with just 1. Moreover, it can be observed that when carrying out field studies, the nations chosen primarily belong to the Mediterranean Europe (55.6%).

Finally, there is limited institutional cooperation found on these topics. Only a 14.9% over the total number of publications on 'Gender and Working Environment' has been carried out through various institutions (usually universities).

On a different note, several authors, such as Campos-Soria, García-Pozo, Muñoz-Bullon, or Santos, are identified as having carried out major research on the field of 'Wage Gap' in the tourism sector. It is necessary to highlight that most of the articles on the topic, (up to 55.5%) have been written by a single author, and are rarely quoted in other studies. More specifically, 22.2% of the articles on the 'Wage Gap' have never been quoted, while 66.6% have only sporadically been cited (among 1 -10 quotes per article).

Finally, the various research techniques implemented throughout the different investigations are subject to analysis. In the very few research studies on the topic of the 'Wage Gap', all methods used were quantitative, as opposed to other investigations on the working environment, which tend to incorporate qualitative analysis, as well. However, while the articles devoted to the working environment operated through basic research techniques, such as descriptive statistics, those articles focused on the 'Wage Gap' favored a rather sophisticated approach, which contemplated other models, such as: linear regression models (44%), econometric models (22.2%) or even factorial analysis and main-components' approach (11.1%).

**Limitations** | The main limitation to this study lied on the fact that not every single article on the matter of tourism and gender was incorporated, but solely those that were published in the most reputed research journals around the globe and included in Scopus, due to the overall high-quality publication standards of these publications. On the other hand, keyword accuracy vastly limits any bibliometric analysis, as it may be prone to discriminate against those studies that do not make use of concise and defined keywords.

**Conclusions** | While current research efforts on the topic of the 'Wage Gap' are common and aplenty, there is a noticeable lack of a scientific corpus devoted to the tourism sector, both from a theoretical

and an empirical approach. Most of the existing studies are being historically confined to tourism journals. Alternative publications, such as those devoted to human resources, or gender studies would barely display any of the findings on the subject.

Main studies are being primarily implemented in the Mediterranean region (countries with high tourism expertise). This implies that nations are being selectively chosen by researchers, depending on their own nationality. So increased efforts of international cooperation will translate into an increase of scholarly research on the phenomenon, and, most importantly, into an increase in the number of citations, essential to the process of scientific dissemination.

While quantitative techniques have been employed for data analysis, it is imperative to remark that the optimal approach to this issue falls within the scope of combined methodologies, which incorporate advantages of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

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