



# Versatile Hospitality Industry around the Globe a Case Study on Trends and Skills in Hospitality Service Sector Switzerland

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**Abstract:** *Based on tradition and high standards, Swiss higher education in tourism and hospitality is ranked among the best in the world. Although scientific research is the foundation of a country's higher education system, the Swiss Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Management Scientific Research (Swiss TL&HM-SR) has not yet been subject to a systematic analysis. This paper aims to fill this gap by assessing the Swiss TL&HM-SR performance, as well as identifying and discussing its most prominent topics. To this end, bibliometric data were gathered from the Scopus database and analyzed through a bibliometric mixed-method approach. Results provide a new performance indicator for the Swiss TL&HM-SR in this field of research, and show that innovation and sustainable destination management are particularly prominent topics within Swiss TL&HM-SR. In this context, contributions to these topics in particular are discussed in more detail. The findings provide useful insights for stakeholders aiming to improve sustainability performance through strategic management of destinations, as well as for researchers aiming to follow the latest trends, identify emerging topics and formulate more attractive projects for financing institutions. The study also provides a new and innovative methodological contribution, as it combines different methods of scientific research performance assessment, which can be further employed in other countries or knowledge areas.*



**Keywords:** Methodology, Sustainability, Trends, Performance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

As argued by Foris et al., tourism is one of the biggest industries in the world and has developed at a record pace in recent years. In this context, many countries pay special attention to tourism research and professional training. The excellence of tourism and hospitality (T&H) higher education in Switzerland has long been recognized worldwide [2] For instance, the ETH Zurich is positioned in 20th place in the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities



2020. As evidence of Swiss pioneer spirit in tourism and hospitality, the country hosts the worlds' first hospitality school, the École Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL). Regarding tourism higher education, the first course was opened in 1941, at the University of Berne, where, in the following year Walter Hunziker & Kurt Krapf developed a "kind of general doctrine of tourism" This was the starting point of a long tradition in tourism theoretical development in Switzerland.

The country is also known as a leader in technological development, as it hosts the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), a prime example of an international research network. This orientation to knowledge creation and application is also noticeable in the Swiss T&H higher education. Indeed, the concept of integrating education, training, and practice in the hotel industry, now adopted all over the world, was created in Switzerland, where mandatory internships were first included as part of students' training back in the 20th century.

This long tradition in T&H higher education has attracted several international study programs, especially within the hospitality sector. As of 2006, these programs had to go through some changes, as Switzerland started implementing the Bologna process. Consequently, new quality indicators for higher education courses were adopted, including quality of research. In this context, Chen et al. argued that it is difficult to assess the performance of hospitality research, particularly in the case of the École Hôtelière de Lausanne, due to the diversity of scientific fields related to tourism and hospitality.[3] As a solution, these authors measured the research performance of the École Hôtelière de Lausanne in terms of the number of publications weighted according to journal ranking. Many bibliometric studies have characterized the research performance of countries, institutions, authors or research topics. Country research performance analysis provides academic administrators with vital information on the efficiency and productivity of their institutions. More specifically, as argued by Huang and Chen, this type of analysis conveys a clear picture of institutions' positioning in performance rankings, providing notoriety and enabling them to attract students and research collaborations.



Airey suggested that the current challenge for tourism researchers is to ensure that T&H scientific research remains relevant in this post-industrial world. Naturally, this includes maintaining competitiveness in an ever-changing environment, which requires not only excellence in service delivery, but a consistent sustainability perspective, as no destination can be competitive in the long run if it is not sustainable. To this end, businesses and destinations need to rely on updated and high-quality knowledge on the market and on the broader tourism phenomenon, which is achieved through consistent scientific research. The research findings comprise a general characterization of the Swiss TL&HM-SR global performance, as well as the performance of its top 10 institutions and authors. In this context, the study contributes to filling the identified knowledge gap, being the first to critically analyze the Swiss TL&HM-SR performance, a relevant contribution for practitioners and researchers interested in following the latest trends in this area and achieving competitive and sustainability goals. The results show that the best performing Swiss researchers focus their research on innovation and sustainable destination management. In this context, contributions on these



topics are further addressed, providing a collection of good practices for tourism stakeholders, particularly destination managers, aiming to improve their destinations' competitiveness and sustainability performance through innovative strategic management techniques. Moreover, the study provides a methodological contribution, as it combines a set of indicators and analysis methods not previously employed by bibliometric studies, especially in the area of tourism and hospitality, i.e., analysis of traditional bibliometric indicators, network analysis and mind maps. This set of methods can be further employed to assess productivity in other areas of knowledge and in other countries or regions.



The present paper comprises five sections. In the following section, the literature on bibliometric analysis is addressed, with emphasis on bibliographic studies on tourism and hospitality. The next section addresses the methodological steps carried out throughout the investigation, including the data collection, systematization and analysis procedures. Next, the results are minutely described. In this section, the metrics of Swiss country performance in tourism and hospitality scientific research are highlighted. Finally, the results are discussed, considering the extant literature. In this context, convergences with previous studies are pointed out, and the investigation's theoretical and practical contributions are addressed in more detail.

## II. SUMMARY

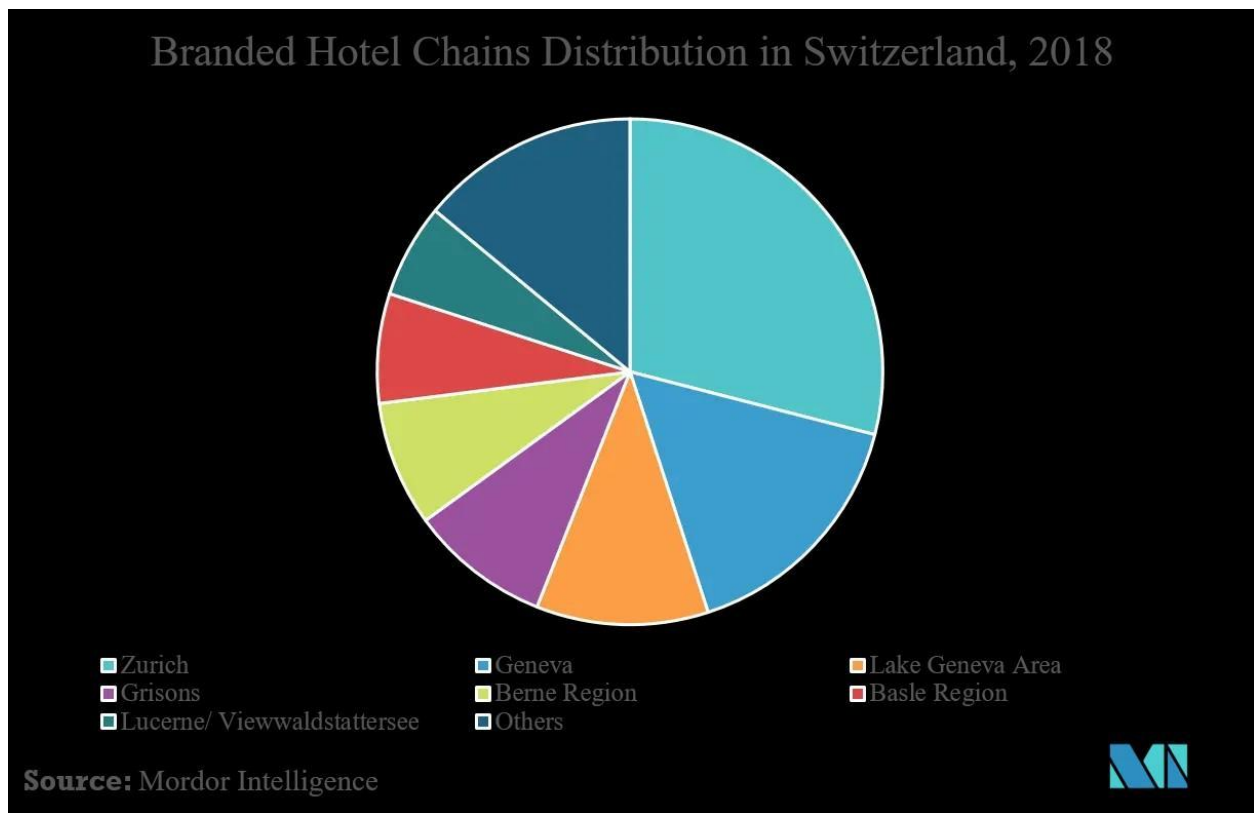
### Market Overview

The hospitality industry in Switzerland is growing though the number of visitors to the country is stagnating. [3]The visitors from the US are on the rise whereas it recorded a drop in visitors from Gulf countries. According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, the US visitors recorded a 7.7% growth in 2019 compared to 2018, followed by visitors from China with a 2.4% increase. The visitors from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan also registered growth rates whereas there was a sudden drop in the total number of visitors from Arabian countries with more than 8%. Switzerland also registered a decline in the number of visitors from Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, and France. The rise in domestic travel helped the country to recover the loss caused by these drop rates. The domestic travel rate has been increasing in Switzerland and it registered more than 24,000 overnight stays in 2018. The hospitality industry is on the rise, especially the international brands. The chain penetration rate of international brands and their chains is increasing. There are around 64 international brands that are offering their services in Switzerland which recorded a growth rate of 8.2% in 2018 when compared with 2017.



**Growing Number of Overnight Stays are Driving the Market**

[4]According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, Switzerland's hospitality industry in 2018, recorded a total of 38.8 million overnight stays, which is the best result to that date. This represented a growth of 3.8% compared with the previous year. Swiss demand amounted to a record value of 17.4 million overnight stays, which corresponds to an increase of 2.9% compared with 2017. Foreign guests generated 21.4 million overnight stays, which was the best performance in 10 years. Germany accounted for the strongest foreign demand with 3.9 million overnight stays which was 3.9% growth compared with 2017, followed by the United States with 2.3 million overnight stays (10.1% growth) and the United Kingdom with 1.7 million (2.3% growth). In terms of tourist regions, the Zurich Region recorded the highest number of overnight stays in 2018 with 6.3 million units followed by the Bern Region with 5.3 million overnight stays and Graubünden with 5.1 million overnight stays. In 2018, visitors stayed an average of 2.0 nights in Switzerland. For guests from within Switzerland, the average length of stay was 1.9 nights while for those from abroad it was 2.1 nights. Among the tourist regions, Graubünden recorded the longest average stay with 2.7 nights.



**Swiss FoodTech: Reshaping Food & Nutrition**

The report finds that Switzerland is at the forefront of many emerging trends within the food & nutrition sector, and that the use of Big Data and blockchain technology in farming constitutes a growing focus area for many Swiss FoodTech startups. In AgTech, fresh trends include the adoption of precision agriculture to minimize resource consumption, the deployment of blockchains to strengthen the traceability of food ingredients, and the trialing of cell-based proteins whereby meat can be grown in a lab in a sustainable and ethical manner.

In food retail, there is a clear move towards zero waste, with shops offering bulk unpackaged wholefoods and the normalization of wonky produce. Moreover, as ever more consumers demand transparency of ingredients and insight into the ethicality of food sourcing, technological enhancements to supply chain management are becoming increasingly sought after.

Swiss actors, for their part, have been especially active. In recent months, two big-brand Swiss corporates collaborated to launch the first Plant-Based Protein Innovation Center in Singapore, while a dizzying array of startups – Essento, Planted Foods & xFarm, to name just a few – have achieved global acclaim for their contributions to pushing the



boundaries in areas such as agricultural biotech, alternative protein, ingredient traceability, food upcycling, and sustainable packaging.

**A fully fledged supporting ecosystem**

[5]Our research finds that Switzerland boasts a well-rounded enabling ecosystem comprising more than 19 big-brand food and nutrition corporates that are either Swiss or headquartered in Switzerland, and more than 160+ domestic FoodTech startups founded between 2017 and 2020. In addition Switzerland is also home to a dedicated R&D landscape. To date, the report identified 30+ incubators, accelerators, research centers, and universities or schools empowering and boosting food innovation in Switzerland.

Testament to this world-class nurturing environment is Switzerland’s remarkable propensity for international patent filings. In 2020 alone, the country managed to file an impressive 8,112 patent applications, the highest per capita of any nation. Out of that, FoodTech came in as the 2nd most patented domain after pharma and, while the world has yet to see the first Swiss FoodTech unicorn, the in-country fundraising climate continues to grow. More than the 26 homegrown VC outfits are currently investing in FoodTech innovation start-ups.



**III. CONCLUSION**

The present study aimed to assess Switzerland’s performance in tourism, leisure and hospitality management scientific research and identify the most prominent Swiss researchers’ topics. [6]To this end, bibliographical data from five decades of research in the area were gathered from Elsevier’s Scopus database. Although for methodological reasons, the older records (before 1983) were not included in the analysis, they deserve a special mention, as they include two seminal publications in the field of TL&HM-SR, namely: the first research paper published by the International Union of Official Travel Organization , and an article from the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism, both published in *Annals of Tourism Research* hospitality and the stages of hospitality industry development from traditional to advanced stage and learnt that hospitality management means how to cater for people in a friendly and cheerful manner to enable the guest appreciate in services. ]7]Besides that, we have learnt about the meaning and the importance of housekeeping Department in hotel, motel, guest how we have learn about the interdepartmental co-operations among various departments of the hotel and the importance of hotel industry in our society. Furthermore, we also learnt the meaning and types of non-commercial hospitality management and the type of organization that is available. Lastly we have learnt and understood the meaning of the layout in hospitality industry and the necessary and important factors to consider when plan to establish this industry.



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