

## Tourism and Hospitality Research in the Peripheries: Thematic Focus and a Research Agenda from Ghana

Emmanuel Akwasi Adu-Ampong\*

*Cultural Geography Chair Group, Wageningen University and Research, Droevendaalsesteeg 3, Wageningen, The Netherlands. School of Tourism and Hospitality, College of Business and Economics, University of Johannesburg, South Africa, Email, [emmanuel.adu-ampong@wur.nl](mailto:emmanuel.adu-ampong@wur.nl)*

Christopher Mensah

*Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Ho Technical University, Ho, Ghana, Email, [cmensah@htu.edu.gh](mailto:cmensah@htu.edu.gh)*

*\*Corresponding Author*

**How to cite this article:** Adu-Ampong, E.A. & Mensah, C. (2021). Tourism and Hospitality Research in the Peripheries: Thematic Focus and a Research Agenda from Ghana. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 10(3):1092-1109. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720-151>

### Abstract

Increasing debates on decolonising tourism and hospitality knowledge production have emerged in the context of a largely Western-dominated canon of the research production and dissemination system. This paper contributes to these debates by highlighting and centring the research in and on Ghana. This is accomplished by reviewing and synthesising 238 tourism and hospitality articles authored by 520 authors over 31 years through content analysis. The sample shows a trend toward increased use of quantitative methodology, multiple authorship and underrepresentation of hospitality research. By outlining current thematic convergence, divergence and omissions, we set out a future research agenda. Our findings demonstrate that while research productivity has been increasing consistently, there is a very limited representation of Ghanaian (African) tourism and hospitality research scholarship in the top-tier tourism and hospitality journals. This raises concerns about the need and challenge of increasing the representation and visibility of tourism and hospitality research from the peripheries.

**Keywords:** Content analysis; Ghana; hospitality research; tourism research; research productivity

### Introduction

International tourism, before the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, was expanding rapidly with Africa and Asia-Pacific being the fastest-growing regions in 2018 when international tourist arrivals and receipts reached 1.4 billion and USD 1.4 billion, respectively (UNWTO, 2019). This expansion reflects the increasing importance of tourism for national and local economic development in these regions. The increasing importance of tourism as an economic activity has motivated many higher education institutions to offer undergraduate and postgraduate tourism and hospitality management degree programmes culminating in an exponentially growing number of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research. However, the existing canon of knowledge in tourism and hospitality studies is largely Western-dominated in terms of knowledge production and dissemination through journal publications (Yankholmes, 2014). Even though tourism as an economic activity has expanded in Africa, the continent's contribution to global tourism and hospitality scholarship remains limited. Shen et al. (2018) exploring the spatial distribution of tourism, hospitality and leisure research, found that tourism research is disproportionately over-represented by Asia, Europe, Oceania and North America. They found that for both Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) journals and non-SSCI, African research in tourism and hospitality domain represented only 5.22% of their

sample of 4,654 articles. Such limited representation of African research has fed into the debates around decolonising tourism education and knowledge production in a bid to dismantle core-periphery relations in academic knowledge production (Hollinshead, 2004; Hall & Tucker, 2004; Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Academic scholarly journals play an important role in these ongoing debates as sites for showcasing, (re)producing and consuming research in the tourism discipline (Xiao & Smith, 2006). To this end, a review and synthesis of country-specific tourism and hospitality knowledge production across time offers a significant opportunity for highlighting and centring the contributions of scholars from such regions.

In this paper, we take stock of scholarly knowledge production on tourism and hospitality on Ghana – i.e., tourism and hospitality research conducted in the context of Ghana irrespective of the nationality of authors. In so doing, we make a unique contribution to the academic literature by highlighting the important research being carried out on and in Ghana and how these intersect with wider development in tourism academia. There are three main objectives we seek to achieve in this paper. Firstly, we identify the changes in research productivity and journal outlets. We also assess the author and institutional contributions to Ghanaian tourism and hospitality research. Finally, we evaluate current research themes and then outline thematic directions for future research. From its nascent beginnings in the 1980s, Ghana's hospitality and tourism industry has seen tremendous growth and substantial investment in infrastructure for tourism and hospitality management research and training. Consequently, the country's cumulative tourism research output in the Scopus indexed scholarly journals has seen a huge increase from 1 in 2000 to 115 documents in 2018. Ghana is also ranked 48<sup>th</sup> out of 168 countries worldwide and 3<sup>rd</sup> on the continent after South Africa and Nigeria for tourism research (SC Imago, 2020). This is a considerable feat given the relative size of the country and so warrant critical scrutiny of the volume and visibility of the country's research output on tourism and hospitality.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: following the introduction, we review the existing literature on bibliometric studies at the cross-country level. Section 3 provides a brief overview of the study context of Ghana before the methods are outlined in Section 4. Section 5 presents the results while Section 6 discusses the result. Finally, conclusions and future research directions are outlined in Section 7.

### **Cross-country bibliometric studies in tourism and hospitality studies**

The worldwide growth of tourism and hospitality studies has aroused the general curiosity of scholars into bibliometric research (Kim et al., 2018). According to Hall (2011:16), the main reasons for this are the need for “reflection on the growth of tourism and hospitality studies”, “interest in the contribution of individuals, publishing outlets and institutions to tourism literature,” and “evaluation of research performance.” Critics argue that there is no connection between quantity and quality and the uncanny tendency of bibliometric indicators for various assessment and resources allocation purposes. Traditionally, bibliometric studies have focused on research productivity in tourism for higher education institutions (Jogaratnam et al., 2005), the evolution of tourism journals (Cheng, Li, Petrick & O’Leary, 2011; Hall, 2011), the rankings of journals (Ryan, 2005; McKercher et al., 2006; Jamal et al., 2008) and individual productivity and citation scores of tourism scholars (McKercher, 2005, 2008) and the relationship between author gender and citation of tourism journal articles (Nunkoo et al., 2019). Other bibliometric studies have focused on specific research themes and/or niche forms of tourism such as psychology in tourism studies (Vada, Prentice, Scott & Hsiao, 2020; Barrios, Borrego, Vilagine’s, Olle´ & Somoza, 2008), strategic management (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2011), wine tourism (Sanchez, Del Río & Garcia, 2017) and, mobile technology

and smart tourism (Mehraliyev, Chan, Choi, Koseoglu & Law, 2020; Law, Chan & Wang, 2018), among others.

Increasingly, there is a renewed focus on assessing country-level research productivity. This stems from the growing policy interest in research dissemination itself and the increasing role of universities in knowledge production and dissemination. Such analysis also permits comparisons of the international standing of a country's publications and demonstrates how often scholars in the said countries publish in flagship or influential journals in the field. More importantly, since the 1990s, there has been a marked shift in the balance of global research output and visibility from North America and Western Europe to Asia. In particular, China displaced the United States as the top research publisher of peer-reviewed science and engineering articles and conference papers in 2018 (National Science Foundation, 2019). Within the tourism arena, publication patterns analysis reveals increased authorship contributions in the last 30 years from the Chinese mainland and the two Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau.

Generally, cross-country comparison of research productivity is based on measuring both the discipline-specific publication performance and the discipline-normalized citation impact of such performance. Depending on the purpose of the comparison, some researchers control for cross-country differences in research and development funding, country size and reward system across disciplines or fields. King (2004) analysed the publication count of research papers and reviews, and their citations across 31 countries based on their population and GDP. The study found that the 31 countries produced 97.5% of the world's most cited papers. Interestingly, South Africa, the only African country placed 29<sup>th</sup> on the list even though previous report by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics [UIS] (2005) indicated that the scientific production output of Sub-Saharan Africa was below one percent. In the peculiar case of Africa, there has been a lack of comprehensive, reliable, up-to-date and truly comparative data on African science at the international level. This current study, therefore, contributes to filling this gap by assessing the tourism and hospitality research scholarship in Ghana.

Tourism researchers have examined the country-level English-language publishing productivity of Spain (López-Bonilla & López-Bonilla, 2020), China (Zhong, Wu & Morrison, 2013; Tsang & Hsu, 2011; Huang & Chen, 2016; Bao, Chen, & Jin, 2018), India (Singh, 2016), Iran (Seyfi, Hall & Kuhzady, 2018), Turkey (Evren & Kozak, 2014; Koseoglu, Sehitoglu & Parnell, 2015) and Australia and New Zealand (Benckendorff, 2009). In these studies, authorship patterns, methods of data analysis and publication outlets have been assessed. According to Strandberg et al. (2016), double authorship has become the norm for writing papers and this pattern dominates papers published in hospitality and tourism. In a review of tourism scholarship in Australia and New Zealand, Benckendorff (2009) reports that the incidence of co-authorship increased in both absolute and relative terms from 54.4% of papers in 1999 to 73.8% in 2009 (over a 10-year period from 1999-2008). The increasing popularity of co-authorship in tourism and hospitality scholarship is also reported in the study of Turkey (Evren & Kozak, 2014) and Iran (Seyfi, Hall & Kuhzady, 2018). Quantitative design is the dominant mode of research methodology in hospitality and tourism scholarship (Strangberg et al., 2016). For instance, Koseoglu, Sehitoglu, and Parnell (2015) found that 82.2% of the reviewed articles of Turkish hospitality and tourism scholarship were quantitative in design and that the use of questionnaire was the main method of data collection.

While there is currently an uptake in country-level bibliometric studies in English language, there is still little work on African countries. Previous bibliometric studies on African tourism scholarship used publication counts in international top-tier journals (Yankholmes, 2014) and the number of contributions emanating from regional journals (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019). Recently, Senbeto, Köseoglu & King (2021) provided a 35-year

comprehensive review of Africa-related tourism and hospitality literature while Rogerson and Rogerson (2021) examined the state of tourism research conducted on Africa's national capital cities. This study adds to the growing body of bibliometric research on African tourism and hospitality management studies by examining the research productivity in Ghana.

### **Tourism and hospitality industry and education in Ghana**

Ghana gained political independence in 1957 as the first sub-Saharan African country to have achieved this feat (Dickson & Benneh, 1970). With a current population of close to 30 million, 50.9% of whom live in urban areas and 49.1% in rural areas, the country is considered as one of the most stable in the African sub-region. The services sector has the largest share of GDP (51.9%) although agriculture, including forestry and fishing, represents the largest economic activity with 16.8% of nominal GDP and employing about 41.5% of the economically active population aged above 15 years (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2012, 2015). Tourism is currently fourth-highest forex earner after gold, cocoa and remittances (Adu-Ampong, 2017) after the country has witnessed a relatively stable expansion of the hospitality and tourism sector since the late 1980s (see for example Adu-Ampong, 2019 for a historical overview of the evolution and development of Ghana's tourism sector). The country's tourism products largely depend on heritage, ecological and cultural tourism, with an increasing role for MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and events) tourism. The historical tourism products are highly dependent on forts and castles relating to the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade. Consequently, the African diaspora in the Americas, especially the USA are the major source markets for the heritage/historical tourism product of the country. Other source markets include Europe and the African continent, particularly from the West-African sub-region. The country is reported to have recorded about 1,130,307 tourist arrivals generating about \$3, 312, 93 million in 2019 (Ghana Tourism Authority [GTA], 2020). Given the growing significance of the tourism and hospitality industry in the country, internationally acclaimed chain accommodation facilities such as Holiday Inn, Best Western, Ibis hotels, Movenpick, Gold Coast Radisson are currently operating in the country's capital city, Accra and other parts of the country.

Tourism and hospitality education and training in Ghana follows a three-layered structure that builds on students having completed secondary (senior high school) education. At the base is hospitality training provided at vocational training institutes dating back to the post-independence era, where professional certification in catering, housekeeping and general hospitality is awarded. At the intermediate level, hospitality education has been provided by technical universities (formerly known as polytechnics) where the training has been technical and vocational in orientation and geared towards the acquisition of practical workplace skills in preparing students for the world of work. At this level, students are awarded higher national diploma certificates. However, since 2016 polytechnics have transitioned to become technical universities with full degree awarding powers. Tourism and hospitality education at the university level sits at the pinnacle of the three-layered structure. At this level, the training is less vocational in orientation with a focus on theoretical and conceptual exploration leading to the award of bachelor, master and doctoral degrees. The provision of such educational training began in the 1996/1997 academic year when a tourism programme was developed at the Department of Geography at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana (UCC) which subsequently became the Department of Geography and Tourism. It was out of this department that in 2008, the Department of Hospitality and Tourism was established with revised programmes with an emphasis on practical aspects of tourism and hospitality service delivery. Moreover, in the 2005/2006 academic year, a BA Culture and Tourism programme was introduced at the Department of Geography and Rural Development at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. Since then, there has been a massive expansion in tourism and



hospitality programmes at the undergraduate level across the main traditional universities and, particularly in newly established public and private universities. However, postgraduate level programmes remain very limited with doctoral-level hospitality and tourism education and training available only at the University of Cape Coast.

### Approach and methods

The methodological question of how to compile the database for this research was extensively debated among the authors for several reasons. The primary issue we contended with was how to appropriately explore the enormous body of Ghanaian tourism and hospitality research that is being published in a variety of outlets both in Ghana and outside of the country. For instance, as far back as the early 1970s, the *Ghana Tourist* was a well-renowned journal focusing on the then emerging tourism sector. Moreover, the 1970s and 1980s was a period of intensive research focus on Ghana's tourism sector with several tourism development, resource inventory and impact studies undertaken (Adu-Ampong, 2019). Outputs from these studies were in the form of reports and sometimes book chapters rather than journal articles. Due to the limited access to these publications, it was impossible to include these research outputs in the analysis for this current paper.

Furthermore, research on tourism and hospitality in Ghana has taken the form of thesis and dissertations written by both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian students at both the masters and doctoral levels and in universities around the world. An exploratory search was carried out to provide an overview of such doctoral theses. After much difficulty and lack of success in locating a comprehensive source and copies of theses, we decided to exclude theses from the analysis. Nonetheless, it is worth pointing out what we tentatively believe to be the first doctoral thesis on Ghana's tourism sector was written by the late Victor Teye (Timothy & Paris, 2017) in 1982 at the University of Manitoba, Canada. The dissertation was titled, "*Examination of some factors influencing the development of international tourism in Africa: A comparative study of Zambia and Ghana*". We do acknowledge that there may be other doctoral theses completed before this one which we have not been able to find due to these being held as physical copies in university libraries inside and outside of Ghana.

Given the difficulty of access to other research outputs, the authors agreed to focus on articles journal published in English-language journals. We debated issues of where to draw the dateline and which search strategy to adopt. There was the awareness and acceptance that whichever strategy we adopt will come with limitations and challenges. This is because there are several past and current journals based in Ghana that cover content on tourism and hospitality research. Examples include the *Oguaa Journal of Social Sciences*, the *Ghana Social Sciences Journal*, the *Journal of Development Studies*, the *Journal of Science and Technology*, the *Legon Journal of Humanities*, the *Legon Journal of Sociology*, among others. However, not all the back issues nor current issues in these journals are available online so it was decided to leave out a search in these journals from the compilation process. This was partly to ensure a more systematic methodological process that is replicable and partly to cater for articles in journals indexed in major research databases.

While aware of the potential limitations, we chose to limit our search to the following English-language academic databases: Scopus and Thomson Reuters' Web of Science (WoS) which were further supplemented by searching on, Sciencedirect.com, Sage Journals Online, Taylor and Francis Online (Routledge), Emerald Insight, Springer Online and Wiley Online – these being the big global journal publishers. The search on these databases was therefore to ensure that a comprehensive (although not exhaustive) compilation was made.

In order to find relevant articles in these databases different keyword combinations were first tried. In the end, the combination search term "Ghana AND (tourism OR hospitality

OR travel)” was used consistently across all databases. Initial scoping data searches were carried out over the period from March - November 2018, and in May 2019. The final search took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019 which also served as the cut-off point for the compilation of the database. The initial search using this term combination on Scopus yielded 501 document results while WoS yielded 637 results. These results were subsequently refined based on language (English only), Document type (Articles only), Publication Stage (Final). At this stage of refinement, the Scopus results came to 388 articles while the WoS yielded 587 articles.

The Scopus results of 388 at this stage were downloaded in a Microsoft Excel file that captured the essential details of authors, article title, journal name, year of publication, abstract author affiliation amongst others. The WoS results were first screened to delete all articles that were not focused on tourism, hospitality or travel. Many of the initial results from WoS were papers on medicine and health that were unrelated to the research focus. Once this deletion process was done, the remaining results were combined with the Scopus Excel file to form a comprehensive master database. At this stage, all double entries were deleted as well as entries that on later inspection were found not to be focused on tourism and hospitality in Ghana. A number of entries were spurious results that found their way into the database because they had ‘Ghana’ in their article title and/or as a keyword. Examples of such spurious results which tended to be from the medical sciences include a 2019 paper published in the journal PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases titled, “*Emergence of phylogenetically diverse and fluoroquinolone resistant Salmonella Enteritidis as a cause of invasive nontyphoidal Salmonella disease in Ghana*” and a 2015 paper titled, “*Cross-cultural perspectives on the patient-provider relationship: A qualitative study exploring reflections from Ghanaian medical students following a clinical rotation in the United States*” published in BMC Medical Education journal.

In the end, a total of 238 research articles published between 1988 and 2019 met all the criteria for inclusion in the database. For this study, only peer-reviewed full-length English-language journal articles were considered for inclusion in the final database. Other publications such as research notes, book reviews, short communications, conference papers and proceedings were excluded. The inclusion/exclusion criteria used in this study followed those adopted by Seyfi et al. (2018) Singh (2016). Both instances and weighted instances were used to measure research contribution. Instances denote the number of times an author either solely or jointly contributes to a research article while the weighted instance allocates fractional credit to authors of multi-authored articles. For example, an author earns half for a co-authored article and one-third for a tri-authored article (Lindsey, 1980). Additionally, a detailed content analysis of the final 238 articles was also carried out. Each article was content analysed individually with a focus on the research theme, authorship information, institutional contribution, geographical research setting, and research methods adopted. Moreover, articles were categorised as belonging to either the domain of tourism or hospitality. We used the Excel spreadsheet to record the details and findings from the content analysis of the articles.

## Results

### *Overview of published articles*

A total of 238 articles were found which were published in 145 different journals. Figure 1 provides a visual overview of the frequency of published papers from 1988 to 2019. Over the 31-year period, a significant increase can be seen in terms of published articles with a second peak of 28 publications in 2013 and the third peak in 2018 with 33 articles published. There are a number of plausible reasons for this increase since 2010. For instance, in this period, Ghanaian universities and polytechnics had begun to establish tourism and hospitality departments in the late 1990s and early 2000s with increasing student enrolment numbers. This

pipeline of staff and students then went on to complete masters and doctoral degrees at the University of Cape Coast and abroad and started publishing from their dissertations.

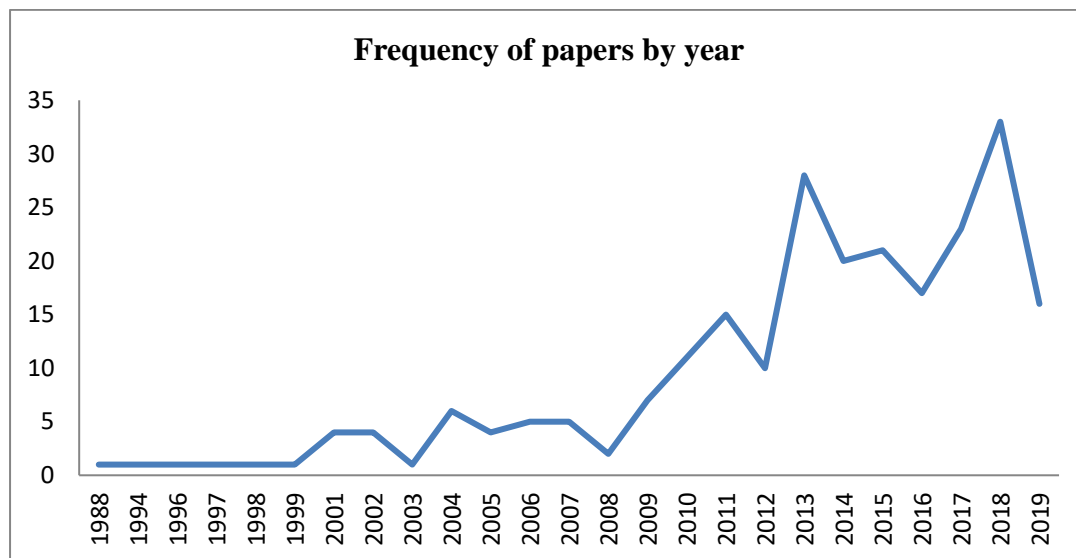


Figure 1 – Frequency of published papers, 1988 – 2019

Table 1 presents a list of the top journals with at least 3 articles. The most popular outlet was the *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure (AJHTL)* with 6.3% of all published articles followed by *Tourism Management Perspectives (TMP)* with 4.2%.

Table 1: Number of publications by journal (with at least 3 articles)

Journal	Number of articles	Percent
African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure	15	6.3
Tourism Management Perspectives	10	4.2
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	7	2.9
Tourism Planning and Development	7	2.9
Annals of Tourism Research	6	2.5
Anatolia	5	2.1
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	5	2.1
International Journal of Tourism Research	4	1.7
Journal of Heritage Tourism	4	1.7
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	4	1.7
Tourism Geographies	4	1.7
Tourism Management	4	1.7
Tourism Review International	4	1.7
Current Issues in Tourism	3	1.3
Food Control	3	1.3
GeoJournal	3	1.3
Journal of African Business	3	1.3
Journal of Contemporary African Studies	3	1.3
Tourism Analysis	3	1.3

In our analysis, we also found that there is a limited representation of published articles in the top tourism and hospitality journals. For instance, over the 31 years period, there have only been 5 authors who have published 2 or more articles in the top journals with the late Victor Teye having published twice in *Annals of Tourism Research* (ATR) and once in *Journal of Travel Research* (JTR). The remaining top journal publishing authors with two articles are Francis Amuquandoh (ATR and *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* [JOST]), Issahaku Adam (*Tourism Management* [TM] and *International Journal of Hospitality Management* [IJHM]), Kwaku Boakye (ATR and TM) and, Christina Koutra (JOST and JTR). It is worth pointing out that most of these articles have been published before 2012. Thus, over the last 10 years, there has been a very limited representation of repeat authors publishing on Ghanaian tourism and hospitality research in the top journals.

### **Contributing authors**

A total of 520 authors contributed to the 238 articles published over the 31-year period in terms of the combined number of authors on all articles. This consists of 324 individuals out of which only 81 persons have more than one appearance. Most authors (75%) appear only once while only 4% of the authors with 5 or more contributions to their name. The data showed that publications in top tier journals were almost exclusively made by one-time authors. For example, all JOST and 76.4% of TMP contributing authors appeared one time. By contrast, the AJTL had a high concentration of repeat authors. The larger percentage of AJTL repeat authors reflects in part its youth and part the relatively low acceptance rates of most top tier journals in the field. Interestingly, the data showed that most repeat authors in AJTL are likely to submit their work to top tier journals. While this could be attributed to diversification beyond the journals in Table 1, it clearly shows the emergence of prolific authors through co-authored collaborations.

Those authors appearing frequently in tourism and hospitality journals are listed in Table 2 according to the number of instances and weighted instances for multi-authorships. The weighted instances consider multi-authorships and are less than equal to total instances. Weighted instances cause a change in rankings to the extent that authors differ in their propensity to co-author their work. Amuquandoh F.E. leads the list of most frequent contributors during the study period with 14 instances followed by Adam, I (13), and Mensah I. (10) Boakye K.A.A. (10) and Adongo, C.A (10). However, the weighted process causes changes in the rankings and Mensah, I. moves from fifth to the first position with 8.83 weighted instances; Amuquandoh, F.E moves from first to the second position (7.91), Adam, I. moves from second to the third position (7.82); followed by Yankholmes, A. (5.66) and Boakye K.A.A (5.23). Another observation worth pointing out from Table 2 is that most contributing authors are males (85%) although there are some female (15%) contributors. All frequent contributors hold a PhD with most appointed at either assistant professor/lecturer or associate professional/senior lecturer level, with a small number having achieved full professor rank.

The most frequent contributors differ for each journal in Table 1, although Amuquandoh, F.E. Boakye K.A.A and Adam I. had to their credit single-authored publications in top tier journals such as JOST, TM, IJHM and ATR. As will be discussed later, the diversity of journal appearance is due in part to co-authorship and collaborative patterns at the university institutional level and the international level. On average, an article was written by 2.184 authors. There were 91 single-authored papers accounting for 38.2% of the sample with the remaining 147 articles being co-authored and representing 61.7% of the sample. Out of the co-authored articles, 60 articles were written by two co-authors, 58 articles by three co-authors, 25 articles by four co-authors, 2 articles by four co-authors and 1 article each for 7 co-authors and 8 co-authors.



Table 2: Top 20 contributing authors by instances and weighted instances

Total instances			Weighted instances		
1.	Amuquandoh F.E.	14	1.	Mensah I.	8.08
2.	Adam I.	13	2.	Amuquandoh F.E.	7.91
3.	Adongo C.A	10	3.	Adam I.	7.82
4.	Boakye K.A.A.	10	4.	Yankholmes A	5.66
5.	Mensah I.	10	5.	Boakye K.A.A.	5.23
6.	Dayour F.	9	6.	Asiedu, A.B.	5
7.	Yankholmes A.	9	7.	Akyeampong O.A.	4.91
8.	Akyeampong O.A.	8	8.	Dayour F.	4.4
9.	Otoo F.E.	7	9.	Teye V	4.32
10.	Teye V	7	10.	Otoo F.E.	3.91
11.	Agyeiwaah E.	6	11.	Adongo C.A	3.56
12.	Amenumey E.K.	6	12.	Adu-Ampong E.A	3
13.	Asiedu, A.B.	5	13.	Agyeiwaah E.	2.49
14.	Afenyo E.A.	4	14.	Hiamey, S. E	2.33
15.	Cobbinah P.B.	4	15.	Amenumey E.K.	2.32
16.	Hiamey, S. E	4	16.	Afenyo E.A.	2.08
17.	Sönmez S.	4	17.	Cobbinah P.B.	2.08
18.	Adu-Ampong E.A	3	18.	Frempong F.	2
19.	Frempong F.	3	19.	Mensah C.	1.66
20.	Mensah C.	3	20.	Yeboah T.	1.45

Ties in total instances are ranked by alphabetical order

### Contributing institutions

Scholars and practitioners widely acknowledge that published research leads to the intellectual development of a discipline. Though it is debatable whether research and quality teaching go hand in hand in higher education, it is believed that a researcher/teacher can share insights from their research with students and research can inform teaching and learning. Thus, the pecking order among academic institutions rests heavily on published research. The order of institutions whose authors solely or in collaboration with others published at least 8 articles is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Institutional research productivity and levels of collaboration

University <sup>a</sup>	I	WI	# of authors	Mean productivity	Collaboration ratio
University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana	131	68.38	158	0.829	1.915
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana	42	15.23	56	0.75	2.757
University of Ghana, Ghana	36	17.97	53	0.679	2.003
Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Kowloon, Hong Kong	12	2.747	25	0.48	4.368
Sunyani (Polytechnic) Technical University, Ghana	15	5.5	16	0.937	2.727
Ho (Polytechnic) Technical University, Ghana	12	6	12	1	2
University of Professional Studies, Ghana	11	4.234	27	0.407	2.598
Arizona State University, USA	10	5.83	13	0.769	1.715
University for Development Studies, Ghana	9	3.91	18	0.5	2.301
University of Johannesburg, South Africa	8	4.75	12	0.5	1.263
Charles Sturt University, Australia	8	3.25	10	0.8	2.461
Takoradi (Polytechnic) Technical University, Ghana	8	4.33	13	0.615	1.847

<sup>a</sup> Ranked by number of instances

Mean productivity per author (instance divided by the number of contributing authors at an institution)

Collaboration ratio (instances divided by the weighted instances)

Seven universities were in the focus country while the rest are in Hong Kong, South Africa, Australia and USA. The leaders, by far, in terms of instances and weighted instances are the University of Cape Coast and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, followed by the University of Ghana in that order.

Despite 131 articles credited to the University of Cape Coast, the mean productivity per author was 0.83. This seemingly low mean productivity is explained in part by the weighted instances (the critical mass of the publications was by few prolific authors) and collaboration ratio (mostly two authors collaborating on an article). There are other trends worthy of note in Table 3. Most importantly, authors with affiliations outside the focus country appear to make substantial contribution to Ghana's tourism and hospitality scholarship. There are at least three reasons for this. First, several Ghanaian doctoral students publish with their supervisors in these countries (especially in the case of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University). Second, multiple institutional affiliations where Ghanaian authors were tapped as 'frontline' researchers to increase the visibility, prestige and rankings of the institutions involved (in the specific case of University of Johannesburg for instance). Lastly, the institutional affiliations outside the focus country shed light on the research productivity of pioneer Ghanaian tourism scholars. For instance, the articles credited to Arizona State University are from the independent and collaborative scholarship of Victor Teye who passed away in 2015 (Timothy & Paris, 2017) while those credited to Charles Stuart University is the result of the research and collaborative work of Patrick Cobbinah who completed his PhD at that institution.

### **Research domain and themes**

A content analysis of all 238 articles was conducted in order to identify the main research domain and thematic focus of each article.

Table 4 - Changes in research themes over the years

Research themes	Year period				Total	Percent
	1988 – 1999	2000 – 2006	2007 – 2012	2013 – 2019		
Tourism development and resident perceptions		7	17	19	43	18.06
Heritage/roots/diaspora tourism		10	12	14	36	15.12
Tourist perceptions and behaviour			2	33	35	14.70
Hospitality management			5	28	33	13.86
Conservation and environmental issues		2	4	16	22	9.24
Tourism planning	4	2	2	6	14	5.88
Human resource and organisational effectiveness			3	7	10	4.20
Destination marketing and management			2	6	8	3.36
Economic impact and econometrics	1	2		3	6	2.52
Service quality				6	6	2.52
Tourism education	1	1	1	3	6	2.52
ICT in hospitality			1	4	5	2.10
ICT in tourism			1	4	5	2.10
Marketing and finance management				4	4	1.68
Special interest tourism				4	4	1.68
Geography of tourism development				1	1	.42
Total	6	24	50	158	238	100

We sought to map out the changes, continuities and omission of research themes across the years and to attempt an explanation of these. In coding the thematic contents of each article, we used a set of 16 themes which builds on the work of Yankholmes (2014). Given the interdisciplinary nature of tourism, there was the potential of coding some articles into more than a single theme. However, we looked at the overarching aim of each article as a basis for classification into the assigned thematic area.

The results indicated a convergence of research on the ‘tourism development and resident perceptions’ thematic focus, accounting for 18.06% of the sample under review. This is consistent with other studies conducted even at the global level such as Ballantyne et al. (2009). The rapid expansion of tourism and its intersection with community resident issues makes this a fertile area of continued research. As can be seen in Table 4, the second most studied thematic focus is that of ‘heritage/roots/diaspora tourism’ making up 15.12% of the sample. This is not surprising given that cultural tourism remains at the heart of Ghana’s tourism and hospitality industry. It is also clear from Table 4 that some key thematic areas have not received adequate attention such as ‘service quality’, ‘ICT in tourism and hospitality’ and ‘tourism education’. Given the increasing digitisation of the tourism and hospitality sector, more research activity in these areas is expected in the coming years.

Table 5 – Distribution of articles across hospitality and tourism domains

Research domain	Year period				Total	Percent
	1988 – 1999	2000 – 2006	2007 – 2012	2013 – 2019		
Hospitality		1	10	59	70	29.41
Tourism	6	23	40	99	168	70.58
Total	6	24	50	158	238	100.0

In terms of research domain, our analysis shows that majority of the articles in our sample are in the tourism domain compared to the hospitality domain. Almost two-thirds (70.58%) of the sample are in tourism while 29.41% are in hospitality. This finding is surprising because practical hospitality training started in 1957 with the opening of the Ambassador Hotel which was ostensibly built to accommodate dignitaries to the Independence Day festivities (Akyeampong, 2007). Moreover, catering and hospitality courses have since time immemorial being offered first at the four pioneer polytechnics (Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi and Ho) and later at polytechnics established in the former ten regional capitals. The country’s first university-level programme in tourism was started at the Department of Geography and Tourism, University of Cape Coast in 1996. Perhaps the slow uptake of research in the hospitality domain can be attributed to the fact that the primary focus of the former polytechnics (now technical universities) was on teaching rather than research. This situation is gradually changing, as many higher education institutions have research-active teachers.

### **Methodology**

Irrespective of the research theme, quantitative methods dominate. A majority (53.78%) of the articles in the sample are based on quantitative research methods compared to qualitative methods (34.03%). Mixed methods account for 12.18% with the majority of these published from 2013 onward. As shown in Table 6, the period of 2013 to 2019 is significant in terms of the steep rise in quantitative and mixed methods approaches compared to previous periods when the qualitative method was dominant. This shift in methodological approach reflects the increased productivity of researchers from that point. In addition, this diversification in



methodological approach is a reflection of the global shift to more quantitative methods which tends to be considered as more robust (Mura and Sharif, 2015).

Table 6: Methodology used in published research over the years

Methodology	Year period				Total
	1988 – 1999	2000 – 2006	2007 - 2012	2013 – 2019	
Quantitative	1	8	21	98	128
Qualitative	5	15	22	39	81
Mixed methods		1	7	21	29
Total	6	24	50	158	238

## Discussion

It is well known that research publications are important for disciplinary development and improving teaching quality at national and international levels (Xiao & Smith, 2006). The research productivity at the country level indicates the growth and development of a particular discipline such as tourism and hospitality. Through a systematic review of 238 articles on tourism and hospitality in Ghana published in 145 different journals, this paper has mapped out the authorship strategies, journal outlets, methodological and thematic focus in this corpus. There are several important findings and insights gained from this systematic review and analysis. Some of the insights are pertinent to the specific context of Ghana’s tourism and hospitality sector but a number of these insights reflect similar research trends in another context, particularly in terms of African scholarship to global tourism and hospitality research. The findings provide clear evidence of the overall progression of Ghanaian tourism and hospitality research and a distinctive increase in research productivity since 2009. In this section, we provide a discussion of some key insights from the findings.

**Authorship patterns.** Consistent with findings from earlier studies (Singh, 2016; Seyfi et al., 2018), our analysis shows that co-authorship is the predominant form of authorship in our sample with two-authors and three-authors being the most common. This notwithstanding, our sample is dominated by one-time authors with only a single article to their name. The low number of ‘intensely contributing’ authors (i.e., those with 5 or more papers) raises important questions regarding the development and maturity of the tourism and hospitality field in Ghana. Many of the top contributors are publishing across multiple research areas leading to low levels of consistent author-niche areas of research productivity. This is reflected in the low uptake of research and publications on areas such as tourism education, tourism planning, ICT in tourism and hospitality, among others. It is worth noting the dominance of authors from the University of Cape Coast with 15 of the top 20 contributing authors affiliated to the institution as staff, former students and/or current students. It is out of these connections that most of the co-authorship patterns emerge with a majority of these involving male authors with only 3 of the 20 top contributing others being female. Co-authorship and collaborations have resulted in the emergence of increasingly prolific and productive authors in terms of the number of publications.

**Research themes – dominance of heritage/roots/diaspora tourism.** The research themes that are covered in our sample is similar to those from other country studies with a focus on tourism development, resident perceptions, tourist perceptions, and environmental concerns (Singh, 2016; Seyfi et al., 2018). Nonetheless, our findings indicate a consistently strong thematic research focus on heritage, roots and diaspora tourism in Ghana. Indeed, as Addo (2011:405) has argued, “European heritage, and traditional institutions and festivities constitute the bricks and mortar of Ghana’s tourism industry”. Thus, the abundance of slavery-related and colonial heritage sites formed and continue to constitute the nucleus of all tourism

development and marketing efforts. Researchers, both based in Ghana and outside the country, have researched, the marketing of colonial heritage for tourism (Agyei-Mensah, 2006), residents' perceptions of the use of slavery-related sites for heritage tourism development (Yankholmes et al., 2009), understanding the roots tourism experience of African visitors to Ghana (Mensah, 2015; Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015). This thematic focus is set to continue to dominate research in Ghana given increasing visits from African-Americans in search of their roots in the context of the ongoing global Black Lives Matter movement (Dillette, 2020).

***Tourism versus hospitality education and output.*** The analysis identified a clear difference in productivity in terms of tourism and hospitality research. The consistency and diversity of themes in tourism research have not been reflected in the hospitality domain. This is partly attributed to the bias created in the inception phase of the tourism and hospitality sectors in Ghana. There has been the support and emphasis placed on tourism development at both governmental and educational institutional levels (Adu-Ampong, 2019). While hospitality training was officially started in 1991 with the establishment of HOTCATT, there has been a neglect in stimulating academic research in this area although this is gradually changing. This neglect of the hospitality aspects of tourism development in part explains the perceived reputation of Ghana being a destination with low to poor levels of customer service relative to the cost of these services. There used to be a strong academic divide in terms of tourism education at bachelor to doctorate levels available mainly at state universities while hospitality educational programmes were offered mainly through technical universities (formerly polytechnics). This situation is changing with a number of hospitality programmes being set up in state universities and an increase in research-active teachers in the hospitality domain.

***Choice of journal outlets.*** The AJHTL has been the most popular choice of journal outlet for authors. The AJHTL is a relatively young journal established in 2011 originally focused on and publishing research on South Africa (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019). The findings show that not only was the AJHTL the journal of choice but it also houses the majority of repeat authors. This high frequency of articles and repeat authors appearing in AJHTL is a partial reflection of the opportunity it provides for authors to refine their article writing skills as well as a reflection of the high rejection rates in top tier journals. In a few cases articles initially published by AJHTL were subsequently revised and published in other higher-ranked established journals. Overall, there is a very limited representation of Ghanaian tourism and hospitality research in the top journals as shown in Table 1. This is not a reflection of only Ghanaian research but also African tourism and hospitality research in general. Africa's research productivity and visibility in international journals remain low (Tijssen, 2007). This raises two key questions, following Singh (2016), for future studies: 1) which selection criteria are used by Ghanaian tourism and hospitality researchers in choosing journals for their work? and 2) how can tourism and hospitality research on and from Ghana be made attractive for publications in top tier journals? There is an ongoing need for representation and visibility of African tourism and hospitality research in the top journals in the field.

## **Conclusion**

This study aimed to assess the research productivity and journal outlet changes, the author and institutional contributions to Ghanaian tourism and hospitality research. We have evaluated current research themes and then outlined thematic directions for future research. Our findings demonstrate a consistently increasing trend in tourism and hospitality research in Ghana. There are, however, many thematic areas that are under-researched with untapped research potentials for current and future researchers. Such thematic areas include sustainable tourism and hospitality development focusing on economic, social, cultural, natural and built resources, the



rise of domestic tourism, local government capacity in tourism development and tourism revenue sharing at destination level among other topics. In terms of hospitality research areas, key thematic areas for future research include the use of ICT for innovation and service design, topics dealing with AI, robots, and automation, the effect on the hospitality industry from natural/human-induced disasters, health issues/pandemics, and political disruptions. There is a need for future research to study the evolution of specific thematic focus of tourism and hospitality research in Ghana. The trend in multiple authorship offers a positive outlook for the future as it signifies knowledge sharing and the passing on of the baton between established academics and junior scholars. This study shows emerging evidence of a ‘new generation’ of scholars showing its influence on tourism and hospitality publishing.

Notwithstanding the insights from this study, some limitations need to be highlighted to inform future research. The data used for this study does not include articles in local and regional journals that have not been indexed in Scopus or WoS. Neither did we include indexed articles in other languages besides English. Conference proceedings, research notes, dissertations and theses, books, magazine articles and other forms of publication have also not been included. This is partly a limitation of the current study but also the result of the practical need to make the research manageable. Future studies may investigate research from these other publication outlets in order to assess the thematic focus found there in comparison with the themes identified in this current study.. A further limitation is in the representativeness of these findings in terms of the wider context of tourism and hospitality research in Africa. While the current paper provides a good illustration of the case of Ghana care must be taken in making extrapolation and generalisation. This is especially important given the wide diversity in academic research in the 55 countries on the African continent. There is an opportunity here for researching cross-country differences in individual publishing productivity in both English and non-English language outlets. The extant African bibliometric literature has tended to concentrate on English-language publishing channels.

This current study offers a first stocktaking of the state of tourism and hospitality research which reflect the general state of the field across many African countries. These insights reported here can inform ongoing and future research in providing a comprehensive understanding of the tourism and hospitality knowledge production system in Ghana and across the African continent. There is the need to understand and contextualise the research capacity in the form of manpower, funding and infrastructure available across the continent. This is particularly important in the context of the ongoing discussion around the decolonisation of tourism and hospitality knowledge systems and efforts at centring African scholarships.

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