

Hospitality as an Approach for Stakeholders in Retail

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Abstract

Begin your copy here. Please replace this with your abstract text. Your abstract should provide a brief, concise, clearly written and easy-to-read summary of your article. It should include the purpose, methods, main findings and conclusions of your research. It should not contain any abbreviations or table numbers, figure numbers, references or equations. It should not be more than 200 words.

This is an exploratory paper that proposes to expand research on hospitality and introduce a new way of understanding the relationships between stakeholders in retail through a hospitality approach when the interaction is positive, or a hostile approach when the relationship is not positive. This is a work-in-process study. An extensive systematic literature review was developed using the terms “Hospitality” and “Retail”. The research was done in the Ebsco database. The authors gathered and summarised relevant theory and empirical research findings that allowed for further theoretical insights to be drawn. Overall, the possibility of a new approach for stakeholders in retail, and how this relationship can be improved by using the hospitality concepts to show the perspectives of how a not-good relationship can terminate in hostility. As an industry, hospitality and service retail are similar because they have characteristics of intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability, which can vary according to the type of service offered. This study considers different dimensions not usually applied to a retail context, as clearly there is little research about it. The application of these concepts and hospitality to a new field of study allows for an important discussion of retail and stakeholder.

Keywords: Hospitality, Stakeholder, Retail

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to use hospitality as an important approach to help understand the social relationships between different stakeholders within retail are built, and how retail can be conducted. This study has as a goal the theoretical discussion of the concept of hospitality and its application to retail stakeholders.

This paper is part of ongoing research on hospitality and retail, where it has already been possible to identify that the perception of hospitableness and the characteristics of the environment (*servicescape*) are related to the perception of the hospitality of a place (Margutti et al., 2020), the approximation of the hospitality concepts and

retail happens, especially when referring to services and intangibility, considering the interactions established between client and host, highlighting the characteristics of the environment, linked to people’s experience of a place (*servicescape*) and employees interaction (hospitableness) (Margutti & Marques, 2022).

Lugosi (2017) brought up the importance of making academic concepts more understandable to business, as demonstrated using hospitality as a corporate practice in relationships, including with stakeholders. This research aims to expand this project, suggesting a new field of application: retail.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Hospitality

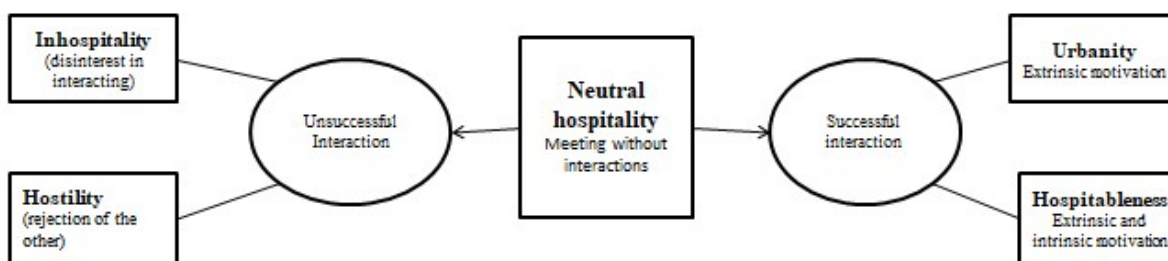
Hospitality is the relationship built between host and guest (Lashley, 2004). It is an interaction that happens from humans to humans in planned times and spaces (Camargo, 2004).

Lashley et al. (2007) present the social lenses of hospitality that allow one to see the situation from different perspectives and adjust to each particularity of the lens; at the larger frontier, there are social and cultural dimensions. The next layer, that of the political layer, is of space, types and places, inclusions and exclusions, laws, and performance. The final layer maintains the domestic and business context and the transactions between host and guest. For Tasci and Semrad (2016), hospitality has layers that vary according to the level of care for the traveler. In the first layer, there are the most basic needs, followed by sustenance, entertainment, service and finally the hospitableness of the space.

Hospitality domains take place in the interstices of daily life and a history marked by inhospitality, if not hostility (Camargo, 2015). The lack of interest in the human contact is considered as inhospitable, if not hostile, which often stems from the inhospitality itself. It can be said that hospitality takes place in the cracks of a dominant experience of inhospitality. Therefore, we are surprised by attitudes charged with human warmth, whether from people who dedicate their lives to recognizing the other, to serving them, or from the stranger who not only gives us information but also wastes a few minutes helping, be it the salesperson in a store or the receptionist in a hotel, who recognize a particular situation and show such kindness that it confuses us, unexpected as it is.

The author suggests the following framework:

Figure 1: Hospitality from Hostility to Hospitableness



Source: Adapted from Camargo (2021, p. 5)

Neutral Hospitality refers to the most common way of (not) receiving and (not) being received, mainly in metropolises. It is everyday life—it could be found in the streets, in the transports, in stores, a multitude of people with whom one does not exchange gestures, looks, or words; it is that of the isolated individual in the crowd. When some relationship is needed, an interaction can be poorly applied or very local, depending on the actors' disposition in the scene. If it is one of natural evil, the interaction leads to inhospitality and, depending on the circumstances, to hostility. If the interaction is successful and on the virtuous side, then the result can appear in a double form: staged (urbanity) and genuine (hospitableness) (Camargo, 2021).

Urbanity is a pleasant encounter that leaves the impression of an efficient professional experience. It encompasses contact in which good positive interaction takes place but with explicit interest on both sides (Camargo, 2021).

Hospitableness emerges as an adjective to identify the service provision in which hospitality occurs. These hospitable features help to identify the level of hospitality of a service being provided (Blain & Lashley, 2014; Marques, 2018; Telfer, 2004; Tasci & Semrad, 2016). Hospitableness has to do with the characteristics of the host, such as personality traits, attitude, and behavior. It shows genuine hospitality and the most memorable encounters of everyday life (Camargo, 2021)

In the case of inhospitality, the interlocutor is not recognized, or he is simply ignored. It reflects a desire not to contact the other. Therefore, it opens the way to the last negative step. Hostility is the result of aggressive actions that lead to the fraying of human relationships. But there is no doubt that the actions registered in interpersonal encounters constitute a large part of the universe of human hostility (Camargo, 2021).

Aristarkhova (2020) believes in the power of welcoming through small gestures (such as smiles and greetings), and it fails to live up to its promise by being hostile to some groups when it creates and maintains exclusions. This discussion is hard to take place in a world that does not feel compatible with the notion of unreserved welcome. However, these times of loud animosity and hostility have also seen a renewed resolve for people to be welcoming.

Hospitality, as an industry, extends beyond the realm of tourism, encompassing a vast array of services and offerings. While tourism is a significant component, the hospitality industry also includes a wide range of sectors that focus on providing personalized services to meet the needs of travelers and the public (Chon & Sparrow, 2003). The adoption of hospitality practices for companies that are outside the hotel industry, results in higher customer satisfaction and better results (Pizam, 2020).

2.2 Retail

Retail is the set of business activities involved in selling goods and services through commercialization to end consumers, both for personal and family use (Kotler, 2000; Levy & Weitz, 2000; Mattar, 2011; Parente, 2000). The most volatile sectors of the Brazilian economy, as it is associated with economic, social, and behavioral changes in society (Varotto, 2018).

Service retailing is a large and growing part of the retail industry. The differentiation of service retail lies in the emphasis placed on the provision of services and not on the merchandise that is sold (Levy & Weitz, 2000). There are different shopping moments and diverse consumer profiles. For this reason, the hospitality bond is carried out in accordance with the customer's expectations, and four levels of service arise: Self-service (to reduce the cost of the operation, the consumer is responsible for going after the information), Self-selection (in order to reduce costs, the customer is responsible for locating the product and, when requested, store employees provide assistance), Limited services (this usually happens in stores where customers need more information or in the

case of some services such as credit cards, product adjustments and home delivery are also offered the employees for this activity) and Complete Service (stores that have a service-oriented positioning. In general, they are specialized stores, where sellers have knowledge of the subject to help consumers who expect to pay more for that level of service) (Parente, 2000).

Zeithaml et al. (1985) argue that there are four characteristics that distinguish service retail:

- Intangibility: the service cannot be stored; difficulty in communicating the service and difficulty in pricing.
- Inseparability: the consumer is involved in the production as are other consumers through the difficult massification of services.
- Heterogeneity: pattern and control of quality are difficult to achieve.
- Be perishable: the service cannot be stored.

Hospitality and retail have traditionally been studied as distinct fields, but recent research has explored the potential for unifying the themes between these two domains (Margutti, Marques & Stefanini, 2020; Margutti & Marques, 2021; Margutti & Marques, 2022). The proposal in this paper is to further integrate stakeholders into these studies, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

2.3 Stakeholder

When we consider all the parts that are in the process, we can define a stakeholder in this way: “A stakeholder in an organization is (by definition) any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46).

In the hospitality field, the study of stakeholders through relationships can be a competitive advantage, involving a variety of products and services in different contexts when such undertakings are professionally managed (Ivanova & Ivanov, 2015; Lombards, 2018).

Barakat and Wada (2021) suggest the following benefits as following from the use of stakeholder theory in hospitality: leads to reflections on the interests and influences of everyone involved in the value creation process, is a holistic approach, integrates economic, social and ethical concerns, takes a relational approach rather than just a transactional approach, and provides a strategic framework that managers can use.

Application of the stakeholders' approach to retail introduces ethical issues and provides benefits for those companies that use this method. The concerns about ethics are favorable given that it offers a framework that offers a broader perspective. It suggests the following stakeholders be considered in retailing: customers, suppliers, competitors, government, financial community, service providers, employees, managers, landlords, owners, community, and activists (Whysall, 2000).

Each group described has inputs contributed, costs incurred and risks. For instance, for a customer, the input contributed is the money that they will expend, the cost is the time that they will take for buying a service or a product, and the risk is their health and safety (Whysall, 2000). All the stakeholders have their particularities, with different costs and risks; for suppliers and service providers, the risk is profitability; for the government, the risk is the national economy; managers risk their career development; employees risk their livelihood.

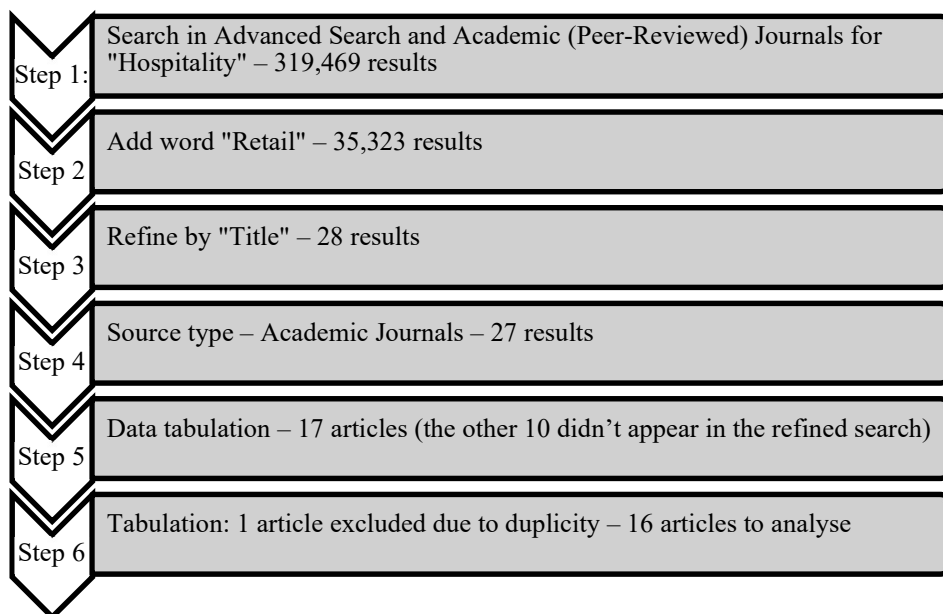
3. Methodology

This study will be conducted through systematic analysis of the literature, which follows specific protocols and seeks to give some logic to a large documentary corpus, verifying what works and what does not in a given data (Galvão & Ricarte, 2019).

In this context, secondary resources are considered according to the methods developed by Galvão and Pereira (2014) and according to the following points: 1- elaboration of the research question; 2- search in the literature; 3- selection of articles; 4- receipt of data; 5- assessment of methodological quality; 6- data synthesis (meta-analysis); 7- evaluation of the quality of the tests; and 8- writing and publishing the results.

The research happened using the Ebsco database on February 20, 2023. All the articles were in English because it is the main language on the platform. After selecting the Basic Search, the word “Hospitality” was added, followed by “Retail.” The filter “title” was selected, and “Academic Paper” was added as well. The results were:

Figure 2: Research Steps



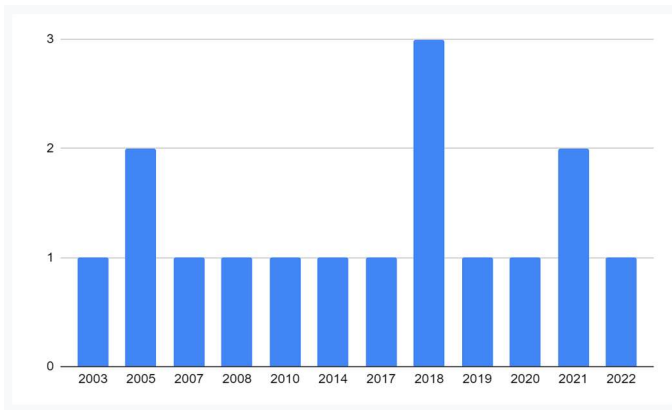
Source: Authors (2024)

When extracting the data, 17 articles were found, which were tabulated for better verification of the material. After tabulation, it was identified that 1 article was duplicated, so it was excluded, and 16 articles remained for analysis. A detailed reading of the abstracts of the articles was conducted for the subsequent categorization and analysis of the materials.

4. Results

The 16 papers analyzed introduced the following information: in 2003, the first article was published addressing these themes, in 2018 there was the highest number of publications, totaling 3. In the last 6 years, there was at least one publication per year on the examined themes.

Figure 3: List of works and year of publication.



Source: Authors (2024)

There was no journal that published twice on this topic; the journals that published are: *International Journal of Employment Studies*, *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, *Industrial Relations, Work, Employment and Society*, *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, *Labor & Industry: a Journal of the Social and Economic Relations of Work*, *Journal of Social Work in Disability & Rehabilitation*, *Sustainability*, *Economic Papers: A Journal of Applied Economics and Policy*, *Food Security*, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *Review of Regional Studies*, *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*, *Journal of Brand Strategy*, and *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.

It was possible to identify 4 different dimensions in the articles: (1) Management Performance, (2) Concern for Employees, (3) Sustainability, and (4) Labor Legislation. Management performance is divided in two sub-topics: Business Strategy: Technology and Brand Strategy (e.g., Cheah et al., 2018; Childs et al., 2021) and Business Performance: New Competitors and Personal Attributes Associated with Successful Management (e.g., Mihaescu & Rudholm, 2020; Ineson & Stone, 2010). Concern for employees has 5 sub-topics: Covid-19: Mental Health and Employee-retention (e.g. McCartney et al., 2022; Rosemberg et al., 201), Disabled workforce: Deaf Workers and Reflections from Employers (e.g. Stokar, 2017; Hernandez et al., 2008), Attitude and Appearance (e.g. Nickson et al., 2005; Warhurst et al., 2007), Young Workers: Trainings and Quality of Working Life (e.g. Roan & Diamond, 2003; Langlois et al., 2005) and Sexual Harassment (e.g., Good & Cooper, 2014). Sustainability has one topic: Generation of Food Waste (e.g., Chalak et al., 2018) and Labor Legislation also has one topic: Impacts of Changes in Australia (e.g., Peetz et al., 2019; O'Brien et al., 2018) (Table 1).

Table 1: Dimensions and main topics of the articles.

Dimension	Topic	Main publications	Stakeholders
Managemen	Business Strategy:	Cheah et al., (2018);	Supplier, Service

t Performance	Technology and Brand Strategy (two publications)	Childs et al., (2021)	Provider, Customers and Owners.
	Business Performance: New Competitors and Personal Attributes Associated with Successful Management (two publications)	Mihaescu & Rudholm (2020); Ineson et al., (2010)	Competitors and Managers
Concern for Employees	Covid-19: Mental Health and Employee-retention (two publications)	McCartney et al., (2022); Rosemberg et al., (2021)	Employees, Financial Community, Service Provider, Managers, Owners, and Government
	Disabled Workforce: Deaf Workers and Reflections from Employers (two publications)	Stokar (2017); Hernandez et al., (2008)	Employees, Managers, Community, Service Providers and Government
	Attitude and Appearance (two publications)	Nickson et al., (2005); Warhurst & Nickson (2007)	Government and Managers
	Young Workers: Trainings and Quality of Working Life (two publications)	Roan & Diamond (2003); Langlois & Lucas (2005)	Employees, Managers and Government
	Sexual Harassment (one publication)	Good & Cooper (2014)	Employees and Customers
Sustainability	Generation of Food Waste (one publication)	Chalak et al., (2018)	Community and Government
Labor Legislation	Impacts of Changes in Australia (two publications)	Peetz et al., (2019); O'Brien et al., (2018)	Employees, Owners, and Government

Source: Authors (2024)

5. Discussions

As the areas of hospitality and retail are closely related to industry, the topics of management, employee concern, sustainability and legal application are common discussions. When viewed from the perspective of stakeholders proposed by Whysall (2000), it is possible to identify distinct groups in each dimension. Integrating stakeholders into the research also help identify opportunities between the two industries, potentially leading to innovative strategies and mutually beneficial collaborations.

In the Management Performance dimension, it was possible to identify as main stakeholders the following groups: suppliers, service providers, customers, and owners in the Business Strategy topic and in the Business Performance topic, competitors, and managers. In the Concern for Employees dimension, it was possible to identify customers, employees, financial community, service providers, managers, owners, and government. Considering the Sustainability dimension, community and government and labor legislation employees, owners and government stood out.

Other characteristics that are common when the sectors of hospitality and service retail are analyzed include intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability (Zeithaml et al., 1985). Once the service happens, these interactions may vary according to the type of service offered, which may be self-service, self-selection, limited services, or complete service (Parente, 2000). Changes in the types of services take place.

When hospitality is seen as a relationship, the contributions it makes are in the paths that these interactions can take. For example, for the disabled workforce (Stokar, 2017; Hernandez et al., 2008), government and business policies need to be adjusted to the group's needs, so that there is no hostile behavior or exclusion from the labor market. Government practices are also fundamental as a mediator in the relationships established with employees, especially when it comes to appearance (Nickson et al., 2005; Warhust & Nickson, 2007), as well as qualifications and training (Roan & Diamond, 2003; Langlois & Lucas, 2005).

Government policies regarding sustainability and labor legislation are also major influencers on how the community, companies, and employees will direct their actions.

The host's relationship with his client can move towards successful relationships, being urbanity or even exceeding expectations and in a genuine way creating a memorable experience of hospitableness (Blain & Lashley, 2014; Camargo, 2021; Marques 2018; Telfer, 2004; Tasci & Semrad 2016). When this interaction with the consumer is unsuccessful, it can cause disinterest in the interaction, inhospitality or even hostility, and one of the ways that this interaction can manifest is as sexual harassment (Good & Cooper, 2014).

The possibility of more successful interactions also helps in Management Performance. For the company's strategy change (Cheah & Li, 2018; Yoon & Lee, 2021), if it occurs cooperatively, interactions, even in more complex moments, can reach the status of urbanity (Camargo, 2021). Likewise, it is possible to analyze Business Performance (Mihaescu & Rudholm, 2020), and the way one deals with one's competitors can be a hospitable or inhospitable interaction (Camargo, 2021).

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

The literature on each individual theme is very robust, the contribution of this research is that the approach of these concepts offers a new vision, contributing to the market and academia through a new perspective of analysis.

5.2 Practical Implications

For suppliers, service providers, and landlords, the more positive the interactions are, when not neutral, the more collaborative the environment tends to be for all stakeholders. The diverse ways that these interactions happen, impact managers and employees, often through the company's culture, in being favorable to all interactions, which will sometimes influence the way employees deal with customers. (Pizam, 2020)

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

The limitation of this study was the database chosen: Ebsco can be accessed from various places, but due to the pandemic, there was restricted access to other bases. It is possible to change the chosen base and be able to expand the research to the different countries and regions where the research takes place.

This article proposed a first systemic analysis of theories and how they could contribute to stakeholder studies with an original approach. Future studies may delve into the different relationships that can happen with different stakeholders in retail and analyze them from a hospitality perspective.

6. Conclusions

Hospitality theory brings a new way of looking at stakeholder relationships in retail. By incorporating the perspectives of various stakeholders, such as customers, employees, and business owners, the research aims to shed light on the intersections between hospitality and retail. This approach could yield valuable insights into consumer behavior, service delivery, and the overall customer experience.

From a systematic review of the literature on the concepts of hospitality and retail, it was found that the research can be divided into four dimensions: management performance, concern for employees, sustainability, and labor legislation.

Among the highlighted dimensions, the following topics were created: (1) Management Performance: (a) Business Strategy: Technology and Brand Strategy and (b) Business Performance: New competitors and Personal attributes associated with successful management), (2) Concern for employees: (a) Covid-19: Mental Health and Employee-retention, (b) Disabled Workforce: Deaf Workers and Reflections from Employers, (c) Attitude and Appearance, (d) Young Workers: trainings and quality of working life, and Sexual Harassment, (3) Sustainability, (a) Generation of Food Waste and (4) Labor Legislation, (a) Impacts of Changes in Australia.

For each of these topics, the stakeholders were highlighted according to Whysall's proposal (2000) so that the relationships could be analyzed from the point of view of hospitality.

Research has shown that there are not many articles that relate hospitality and retail, totaling 16 for this research. As there is not a high number of publications, there was no journal that had more than one publication.

Discussions of hospitality and retail meet as industries, exemplified by the totality of the analyzed articles dealing with both in this way. Still, as an industry, the characteristics that can be highlighted in common are intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability (Zeithaml et al., 1985). The level of interaction will vary according to the type of service chosen, which may be self-service, self-selection, limited services, complete service (Parente, 2000).

Hospitality relations were analyzed according to the framework proposed by Camargo (2021); in many cases, the government appeared with a stakeholder mediator of various actions, such as for the disabled workforce, where through public policies, it is possible to guarantee that they have an environment prepared to receive them and not be excluded, being able to generate a successful relationship of urbanity or hospitableness, or at least, avoiding inhospitality and hostility.

Government policies are also related to how the community understands different actions, such as sustainability. If the government encourages these actions, interactions tend to be more positive. In the case of non-incentives, it is possible to end up with actions that are even hostile, such as activities that want to draw attention to the environment and may interfere with heritage.

Hospitality social lenses (Lashley et al. 2007) can be a tool for analyzing possible relationships between stakeholders. They point out the importance of the social and private context, and through these, the lenses adjust according to the perspective one wishes to study.

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