

Customer Journey: A Bibliometric Review and Future Research Agenda

Purpose

Customer journey (CJ) concerns both real and virtual contexts and includes a sequence of phases, several relationships, multiple touchpoints, and multiple channels (Norton and Pine, 2013; De Keyser *et al.*, 2015; Halvorsrud *et al.*, 2016; Mele *et al.*, 2021). An understanding of the customer journey is useful for the further conceptualization of consumer buying behavior. Close to the studies on customer experience (CX) (Lemon and Verhoef, 2015), the recent focus on CJ is an outcome of a transitory shift “from relationship marketing (the 1990s to 2000s) to customer engagement (2010s) and customer engagement to CX” (Sindhu and Barti, 2020, p.2)”. CJ literature has grown more than sevenfold over the last decade (Tueanrat *et al.*, 2021) but based on authors’ knowledge and extant review of CJ literature, no studies have used bibliometric analysis to figure out the development of the field. This kind of analysis allows us to identify the meaningful patterns and trends of the published studies. Thus, the main purpose of this research is to critically analyze Customer Journey literature, to identify the research gaps and to set future research agenda.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This work is based on a bibliometric analysis. To retrieve all publications of Customer Journey, we queried the *Web of Science* (WoS) indexing database on August 3rd, 2021. A total of 399 publications published between 2001 and 2020 were retrieved from the WoS to investigate the genesis and development of themes within the literature. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) was used for the selection process of the publications (Liberati *et al.*, 2009).

We choose bibliometric analysis to uncover main customer journey-publishing journals, authors, and influential CJ articles (2001-2020). Finally, using network analysis, prominent Customer Journey themes are also unveiled.

Findings: The results provide an instructive perspective on the current research and future directions in the study of Customer Journey, which may help researchers choose suitable cooperators or journals, and promote their research. In addition, to see how keywords are related as well as their importance, we also conduct a keywords co-occurrence network, and to identify both the clusters as well as their density and centrality, we developed a thematic diagram. We map the identified research themes based on their anticipated centrality and

density. Finally, to inform the future research agenda this research provides research questions that remain currently unanswered in the field.

Originality/Value: To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study aimed at evaluating the evolving trends of CJ from a quantitative viewpoint applying a bibliometric analysis. maps out the gradual advancement of the field over the years. Furthermore, important avenues for further Customer Journey research are also revealed.

Keywords: *customer journey, consumer journey, bibliometric analysis, network analysis*

Paper type: Review paper