

# **Transformative Service Research: a systematic literature review**

*Ungaro Veronica, Di Pietro Laura, Renzi Maria Francesca, Guglielmetti Mugion Roberta,*

*Pasca Maria Giovina*

**Purpose** – The present study aims to investigate what has been gathered under the Transformative Service Research (TSR) umbrella in the last years, analysing the articles published so far. Services dominate the economies of the most advanced nations, and consumers interact with various service providers every day (e.g., financial, healthcare, restaurant, retailer). Hence, services influence our economic and social world, and questions arose about their impacts on human beings' quality of life and well-being. The new research field, named TSR, studies the relationship between services and well-being. "Improving well-being through transformative service" was identified as a research priority by Ostrom et al. in 2010, it was designated as the most important priority in 2015 (Ostrom et al.), and over the years, there has been increasing interest in this topic between the research community.

**Design/Methodology/approach** – A systematic literature review method is applied to address the study objective; specifically, the research adopts a systematic quantitative approach (Pickering & Byrne, 2014; Pickering et al., 2015). The keyword "Transformative Service Research" was input in two research databases Scopus and Web of Science, and 155 articles published between 2011 and 2020 were analysed.

**Findings** – The authors summarised each paper's bibliometric characteristics, then they detected the major investigated themes in TSR and classified the analysed articles. The principal contexts in which the TSR was applied were identified; specifically, the authors found that healthcare is the largest investigated sector. Then based on the authors' country of origin, the areas of the world where there is more interest in the TSR field were determined. Moreover, the authors observed that there are not only conceptual studies but also a strong contribution of empirical research, concluding that this new research stream has not remained on a purely conceptual plane but efforts were made to put practical projects in place. Finally, the authors analysed the contribution of each paper to TSR and the research gaps.

**Practical implications (if applicable)** – It has emerged from the present research that not only the service providers have a role in contributing to improve well-being but also the policymakers that have the power to issue regulations and the researchers who have the task to continue to develop studies that investigate the relationship between well-being and services to grow this new and complex field.

**Originality/value** – The current paper is the first to perform a systematic quantitative literature review on TSR, identifying the major themes and synthesising the principal articles' characteristics.

**Key words** (max 5) – transformative service research; systematic literature review; well-being; service system; transformative service

**Paper type** – Literature review