

Mapping the Intellectual Structure of Retail Service Quality Research: A Bibliometric Analysis and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract - Despite the significant increase in the corpus of RSQ literature, a unified conception of its intellectual structure, evolution in its themes, and the emergent patterns is still disjointed. In this regard, this study aims to map out the history of RSQ research and uncover future research interests by conducting a systematic bibliometric enquiry. The RSQ publications (127) are downloaded from the Scopus database. The analysis of annual point of publication, top authors, academic institutions, and countries, collaboration patterns of researchers, and thematic clusters is analyzed by using citation analysis, co-authorship analysis, and mapping of keyword co-occurrence. The visualization and theme evolution techniques are used to identify the prevailing and new research. The results indicate that the bibliometric analysis reveals a significant increase in publications on retail service quality over time. More than 50% of the total publications were produced after 2015, indicating rapid growth in the last decade and highlighting the increasing academic interest in RSQ research. The document-type analysis shows that journal articles account for approximately 87% of the total publications, while conference papers contribute around 9%, and other formats such as book chapters, reviews, and errata collectively represent less than 4%, indicating that peer-reviewed journals remain the primary channel for RSQ knowledge dissemination. This paper suggests an organized future research plan, which centers on the topic of technology-mediated innovation in service, a sustainable model of retail services, and cross-contextual testing of RSQ constructs. The insights offer strategic directions to the retail managers through establishing new dimensions of service quality that are critical in driving the excellence of customer experience, loyalty, and sustainable competitive advantage.

Keywords: Retail Service Quality, Bibliometric Analysis, Customer Experience, Retailing, Science Mapping, Research Trends, Omnichannel Retailing, Service Quality

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last twenty years, retailing has undergone a radical change, which has been exhibited by globalization, high-level technological advancement, and consumer expectations. The product mix and price strategy no longer suffice as retailers evolve in a competitive market structure requiring the quality of service to become an important factor that determines customer satisfaction, loyalty, and competitive advantage in the long run. High-quality service leads to a better customer experience, which builds trust and causes customers to buy it again, making the service quality one of the central constructs of scholarly enquiry and managerial practice (Slack & Singh, 2020). The realization of the multidimensional character of the quality of retail services is increasingly becoming necessary as the retail settings are transformed into various types of omnichannel platform that combines the physical stores, mobile apps, and online service offerings.

The high salience of service performance has emerged with the rapid growth of the concept of digital retailing. Customers now review retailers based solely on in-store relations as well as web-based usability, ability to offer reliable delivery, quality online communication, and after-sales care. Therefore, the understanding of the service quality has shifted

from interpersonal assessment to a more technology-enriched system of customer experience. The shaping of such an evolution has produced a burgeoning interdisciplinary literature on marketing, information systems, operations management, and consumer behaviour that has led to a surge in the academic literature on the subject of retail service quality in different contexts and across geographical regions (Bakır et al., 2025; Samanta & Aithal, 2024).

Although the scholarly body of research on retail service quality (RSQ) has been very thorough in the research of its association with customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, it has been very disjointed, as it has been mainly a conceptual or empirical research question within the context of highly limited areas (Burke, 2002). There is a glaring absence of a synthesis that will trace the intellectual structure and its intellectual contributors and their thematic development. Current research has the tendency to still focus on the classical models of service quality without taking into consideration the newly emerging phenomena, including omnichannel retailing, artificial intelligence, sustainability, and cross-cultural comparisons. Furthermore, the generalisability of the results in other economies of the world is constrained by the preponderance of developed ones. This, in turn, necessitates a methodical bibliometric review, which would be crucial in boiling down knowledge, defining clusters in studies, and creating a framework for an accurate agenda of subsequent research.

Though these methodologies based on bibliometrics have gradually gained prominence in the context of marketing and service studies to map intellectual frames and future lines of action, the RSQ area has not been subjected to a syntactic, unified synthesis (Kittur et al., 2022). Current bibliometric analyses have, to a great extent, overlooked the topic in the focus of RSQ due to the lack of research that is specifically identified and is undergoing development as a separate study line. At the same time, the research of retail has shifted to omnichannel retailing, digital transformation, and technology-mediated customer experiences. These developments have not, however, been logically related to the pioneer RSQ literature, which is still rooted in SERVQUAL and RSQS models (Siu & Tak-Hing Cheung, 2001). The intellectual formations, the network of cooperation and collaboration, the development of themes, and the dispersal of world research of RSQ scholarship are therefore disjointed and under-researched. Also, more mature reviews do not incorporate performance analyses with more sophisticated science-mapping approaches to shed light not only on historical underpinnings but also on new clusters (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). This gap needs to be addressed to focus on dispersant knowledge, together with promoting an orderly, futurist-oriented research agenda on service quality in retail (Vargo & Lusch, 2016).

To tackle these shortcomings, the present research is expected to present a discussion in the form of a bibliometric study of the literature on retail service quality. The bibliometric techniques provide an unbiased, numerical

evaluation of scientific works, which allows a researcher to monitor the dynamics of publications, prominent scholars, prominent institutions, geographical diversity of literature outcomes, and changing thematic groups within a certain field. Bibliometric analysis provides very useful information about the evolution of a research field over time and the opportunities for future research because such dimensions are systematically analyzed. This is particularly relevant to the research of retail service quality that has quickened down the line in various fields of study and international markets.

Despite the growth of the amount of literature concerning the retail service quality, the literature presently studied is divided in terms of geographical implementations, theoretical viewpoints, and methodological tools (Singh et al., 2023). The majority of the previous studies have focused on the classical dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction, with less focus on comprehensive frameworks that include digital retailing, artificial intelligence-based service experiences, sustainability actions, and cultural consumer dissimilarities. Also, the past bibliometric literature has not presented any such mapping that takes the development of publications, institutional participation, funding dynamics, and thematic development in the realm of retail service quality in their entirety. This, therefore, necessitates a systematic bibliometric synthesis in the identification of the intellectual framework, new themes, and future research possibilities that define this area.

The main point of the present investigation is to perform a systematic bibliometric review of the studies concerning retail service quality to trace the patterns of publications, contributors to the direction, developments in the topic, and following research efforts, and provide a systematic insight into the development of the discipline and its future course.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 is a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on the subject of retail service quality. Section 3 describes the research methodology adopted in this paper. Section 4 is an analysis of the bibliometric results. Section 5 is a discussion of the research findings in relation to the existing literature and the research objectives. Section 6 is an elaboration of the theoretical implications of the research, and Section 7 is an elaboration of the managerial implications. Section 8 is an overview of the future research direction, Section 9 is an overview of the limitation of the research, and Section 10 is an overview of the conclusion of the research.

1.1 Research Questions

RQ1: How do the publication trends and the growth patterns of the retail service quality research change with time?

RQ2: What are the most impactful nations, organizations, contributors, and publishers of literature in the development of the retail service quality?

RQ3: To what extent are the area of themes, keywords, and subject disciplines dominating the intellectual structure of research on retail service quality?

RQ4: What are the growing research areas and gaps that could be used in the future to conduct further research on retail service quality?

The research has a number of significant contributions to the literature. First, it provides a systematic and vast mapping of these studies on retail service quality, as it gives the scholars a clear picture of how the field has evolved, who contributed towards its historical evolution, and the structure of knowledge. Second, through establishing the prevailing themes and future directions of research, the study contributes to the literature by indicating areas that need further conceptual and empirical research, mainly in digital retailing, artificial intelligence, and sustainability, and cross-cultural consumer behavior. Third, the evidence offers practical benefits to the researchers, policymakers, and retail practice by availing the world research trends and collaboration patterns to develop strategic research collaborations and evidence-based decision-making issues in the field of retail management. Lastly, this research provides a baseline for future efforts to conduct a bibliometric and systematic review research oriented on the investigation of special subdomains in the retail service quality studies.

The research questions are addressed through a series of bibliometric analyses supported by tables and graphical visualizations. RQ1 is answered using the annual publication trend graph, which illustrates the temporal growth of retail service quality research and highlights the sharp rise in publications in recent years. RQ2 is analyzed in the form of tables of ‘country’, ‘author’, ‘institution’, and ‘source level contribution’, i.e., determining the most productive and influential stakeholders. RQ3 is addressed using keyword co-occurrence maps and subject area distribution charts, which reveal dominant themes such as customer satisfaction, loyalty, and SERVQUAL within the intellectual structure of the field. RQ4 is explored through thematic cluster diagrams and keyword evolution analysis, which identify emerging topics including digital retailing, omnichannel strategies, artificial intelligence, and sustainability. Collectively, these tables and visualizations provide empirical evidence to answer the research questions and map the development of retail service quality scholarship.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Retail service quality refers to the practices and guidelines that are aimed at satisfying the customers and enhancing their shopping experience, or developing a long-term relationship between businesses and consumers (Dawra et al., 2024). This strategy is accepted by the competitive retail industry, given that exceptional services improve customer satisfaction levels significantly, customer loyalty, and impressions. Physical environment, the quality of customer service, assortment of products, and pricing perceptions are all important aspects of the quality of retail services that

determine the relations of customers with the shops and their purchase decision-making (Leandro et al., 2023). The quality of retail service is very important, as seen through the studies that show the existence of a direct correlation between customer satisfaction and retention. Service quality models like SERVQUAL have been used to measure the service quality in various situations, especially emerging markets, and determine in which instances the actual delivery of services fails compared to customer expectations (Srivastava & Kaul, 2016).

The reliability, responsiveness, and problem-solving people skills are needed to design a positive shopping experience and create loyal customers according to the growing body of empirical studies (Leandro et al., 2023). There is a growing focus in the research on the relationship between retail service quality and customer shopping, and it has become a primary concern due to the increased vocalization and demands that customers have placed on what they expect. Integration of technology, emotional involvement, and convenience helps to improve the buying experience, and businesses can create more customized and interactive experiences (Arguello et al., 2020). With e-commerce and customer preference within the digital sector, various companies focus more and more on service quality improvement to meet the increasing demand level. It can be assumed that bibliometric analysis will be beneficial in terms of analyzing the body of research regarding retail service quality and consumer buying experience. By examining academic output and citation patterns, the researchers will be able to identify the significant themes and areas of interest in the field and grow (Patel & Siddiqui, 2023; Cabezas-Clavijo & Torres-Salina, 2021). Researchers and practitioners in the retail industry are putting emphasis on the nexus of service quality, consumer experience, and technological development (Bakir & Sak, 2025).

To comprehend the theoretical foundation of the retail service quality, one should determine the part it plays in the shopping process of the customers. Numerous service quality paradigms have been created as well, such as SERVQUAL and Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS) to assess service dimensions and find discrepancies in the expectations and reality in service delivery (Vaidyanathan & Henningson, 2023). These models highlight the most crucial elements, which determine the understanding of service quality by consumers in a retail setting: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Mao, 2021; Musasa & Tlapana, 2023). The cultural background of customers significantly affects their point of view and their ranking of such areas of service quality. As an example, interpersonal relations and interaction in American culture can be rated higher in a collectivist society like India as opposed to an individualistic one, where convenience and efficiency are the driving factors. These cultural lenses affect how customers perceive the retail spaces, which affects the loyalty and satisfaction (Seock & Lin, 2011). The ambience, layout, and service interplay are the areas of critical importance in retail services quality, which explains the perception customers

have of their shopping experiences. When these are matched with the expectations, customer satisfaction and loyalty increase (Siu & Tak-Hing Cheung, 2001); these interactions can help to study the impacts of the quality of retail service on the consumer experience (Beneke et al., 2012; Rita et al., 2019). An analysis of the role in the consumer purchase behaviour under the condition of the quality of the services provided will help to better understand what the customers want and how to create appropriate retail service.

The later studies were redirected at considering the chain RSQ -satisfaction -loyalty as an antecedent of customer behavioural consequences (Slack & Singh, 2020). Much as this causal chain has wide audience appeal, critics argue that it is too simplistic in its view of retail experience because it views service quality as an unchanging construct instead of a multi-touch and dynamic experience. On the contrary, the literature on customer experience places emphasis on multi-dimensional, journey-based evaluation, incorporating cognitive, poignant, and social aspects. In comparison with the traditional RSQ models, the service evaluation in this perspective is broadened in the conceptualization of the service evaluation beyond the discrete interaction of the transactions.

The sustainability-oriented retail service research, in comparison, presents the ethical and environmental aspects to the quality evaluation and enlarges the scope of the evaluation to include the functional and relational aspects. However, sustainability is loosely correlated with developed measurement frameworks of RSQ, which signify theoretical silos in the sphere. Altogether, the literature shows that there are three key tensions, including: (1) old paradigms of measurement and new experiential frameworks, (2) physical store and omnichannel ecosystem, and (3) functional efficiency and ethical and sustainability. The reality is that integrative syntheses, so as to straddle these streams, do not exist, marking the exigency of systematic mapping and diagnostic consolidation of RSQ erudition and scholarship.

III.METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The proposed study will use a bibliometric research design to thoroughly examine the development, structure, and thematic development of literature on the quality of retail services. Bibliometric analysis allows evaluating the scholarly publications quantitatively by assessing their trends, citation patterns, productivity in authors, the contribution of institutions, and the connections between keywords, thus leading to an objective representation of a research area. The method is especially appropriate in revealing the forces behind emerging themes and gaps in the research in the fast-growing academic fields. The bibliometric technique provides a methodic map of the intellectual landscape, productivity of the research, mode of collaboration, and thematic development that any professional discipline is made up of. Unlike traditional narrative reviews, it provides quantitative, objective evidence, which is useful in

identifying seminal literature, emerging trends, and research gaps that researchers have yet to understand. This is a synthesis of the literature that is more comprehensive and based on this fact.

3.2 Data Source and Search Strategy

In the current study, bibliographic information was retrieved in Scopus database that is a comprehensive library that includes peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, and international research material (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). There was a systematic search of the keywords with the help of information search by the terms like retail service quality, retail service, and service quality in retail, and similar variations. Only those publications that were in the English language were searched, and those were journal articles, conference articles, book chapters, and review articles, so as to cover the research area extensively. The search query used in the Scopus database was ((“Retail” or “Outlet”) And (“Service Quality” or “Retail Service Quality”)).

3.3 Data Screening and Selection

Following the preliminary retrieval, duplicate records and irrelevant publications have been eliminated by manually screening on the basis of titles, abstracts, and keywords. The final dataset in this study only contained documents that dealt directly with the quality of retail services and their service rating in relation to the consumers. The systematic review in the screening process promoted the transparency, consistency, and replicability in the selection of the dataset (Tranfield et al., 2003). The total number of documents is 127, and the time period was 1996 to 2026.

3.4 Methods of Analysis of Data

The end-product of the analysis was examined with methods of bibliometrics performance and science-mapping. The analysis of performance was made to analyze the annual publication patterns, top countries, influential organizations, productive authors, funding sources, areas covered by the documents, and the type of documents. Besides that, an analysis of the co-occurrence of keywords was conducted to outline leading research topics and thematic groups that characterize intellectual organization in the area. Bibliometrics software and visualization tools were used to produce the graphical images, i.e., a publication trend chart, country-specific distribution maps, author-based production maps, and a network of keywords, which enabled easier interpretation of patterns in the research (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The software tool used for bibliometric analysis was VOS viewer.

3.5 Workflow/Process

The bibliometric process follows a strict, step-wise guideline that ensures transparency as well as reproducibility. First, the relevant papers are accessed through the Scopus database on pre-established keywords associated with the quality of retail service. Then, the dataset is narrowed down with inclusion and exclusion criteria, which include English language,

peer-reviewed status, and a given temporal window. Third, bibliographic information was used and exported to carefully process to remove duplicate records and data inconsistencies. Fourth: Performance analysis: used to analyze the trend of publications, prolific authors, institutions, and contributions of the country. Fifth, science-mapping methods such as citation analysis, co-authorship network analysis, and keyword co-occurrence mapping are implemented. Lastly, the findings are deduced to outline the thematic formations and map directions of prospective literatures.

3.6 Reliability and Validity Concerns

In order to increase reliability, similar search terms and uniform inclusion criteria were implemented across the entire data collection. Methodological rigor and relevance to the former bibliometric research in the field of marketing and retail are guaranteed because of the use of a well-known international database and well-established bibliometric techniques. Moreover, a synthesis of performance analysis and thematic mapping enhances the validity of the results by ensuring that the quantitative patterns of productivity distribution and qualitative knowledge structure of the retail service quality domain are captured.

IV. BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Annual Production of Documents on the Retail Service Quality Research Domain

The graph in fig. 1 signifies the number of documents per year from 1996 to 2026. The trend in annual publications shows that there was a slow yet evident increase in studies on retail service quality over time, having three different phases. The following are the main findings: Early stage (1996-2007): The output of research was incredibly low and disorderly, with an average of 0.2 publications per year, which shows that the quality of retail services was a fairly understudied field at that time. Growth phase (2008-2015): Publications started growing steadily, with moderate peaks (around 6-11 articles), which show the growing academic interest and the wider understanding of the quality of service being one of the most significant aspects of retail competitiveness. Peak of expansion and fluctuations (2016-2024): The sphere was characterized by increased productivity, with definite fluctuations, the maximum of which fell approximately in 2019 (approximately 12 publications), and then increased slightly and returned. Although there were changes in the number of publications per year, the levels were still consistently high compared to previous years, which shows that there was continuous interest in research.

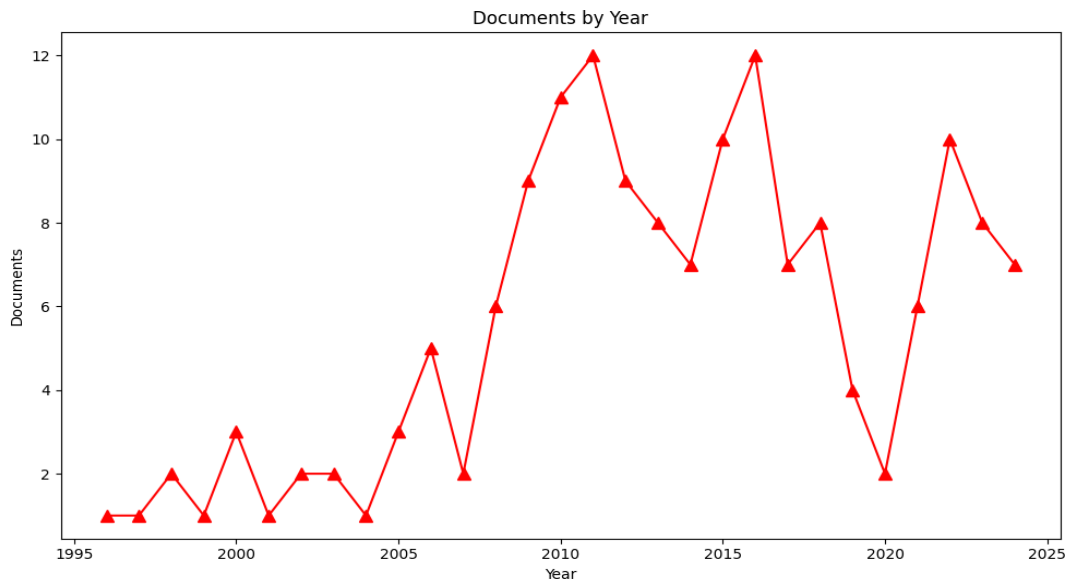


Fig. 1 Documents Per Year

4.2 Document per Source of the Retail Service Quality Research Domain

The chart in fig. 2 shows that from 2002 to 2024, the number of publications in different journals has increased. Such areas of focus include:

Journals Represented: Besides, a myriad of periodicals are included in the chart and separated by various colour codes and typologies of markers. The featured journals include the

Journal of Services Marketing, Asian Social Science, FIIB Business Review, and a number of other journals.

General Trends: The Journal of Services Marketing (blue line) had two peaks of two papers at approximately 2004, and thus a short decline and then stabilization occurred. The total quality management and business excellence line (light green) illustrates a gradual increase up to 2015, and then it levels off. Other outlets, such as Asian Social Science and the International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management,

make a consistent contribution, which is, however, low, but remains steady.

Diversity of Sources: The corpus of scholarship has, over time, spread throughout a range of journals, but these few journals continue their existence over several years.

Some journals have a solitary or scattered contribution of a few numbers during fringe years and thereafter disappear. In recent years (2020–2024), it seems that the counts of documents are concentrated, and there are no significant peaks. Although both the frequency and general number of publications have decreased, they continue in some of the venues.

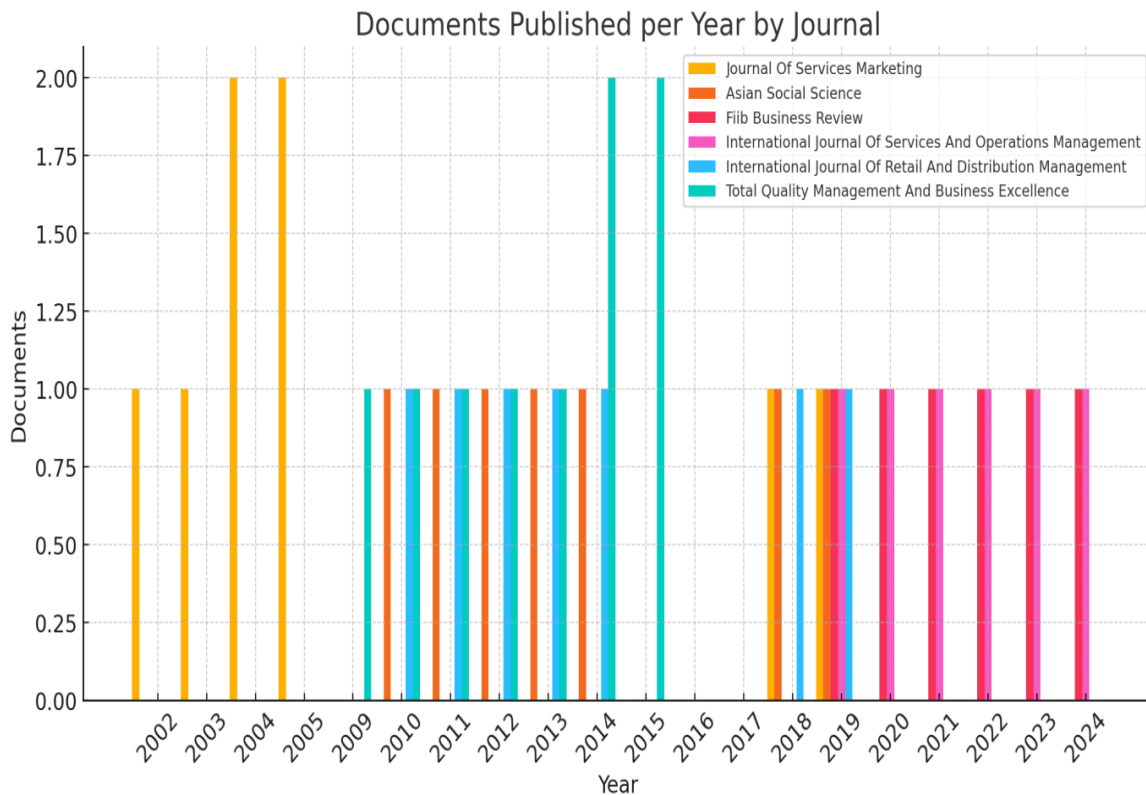


Fig. 2 Document Per Source

4.3 Documents Per Author

The visualisation in fig. 3 summarises the publications by the given scholars. Its main observations are:

Top Contributors: Gopalan, R.; McKenzie, B.; and Satpathy, B., as a group, are the most prolific contributors, with all making over three publications. Ai, C. follows right after, having about two papers in the corpus.

Other Authors: Han, J.H.; Janda, S.; Lalwani, A.K.; Mehta, S.C.; Najib, M.F.; and Osakwe, C.N. each report about two papers.

Even Distribution: The other authors show a similar trend of contribution ratios, indicating a rather even distribution of authors beyond the top three, which is an indicator of a fairly level authorial environment. As a result, the author productivity dispersion implies that the discipline is dominated by a few researchers, yet the discipline as a whole represents an indication of collaborative and moderately dispersed authorship.

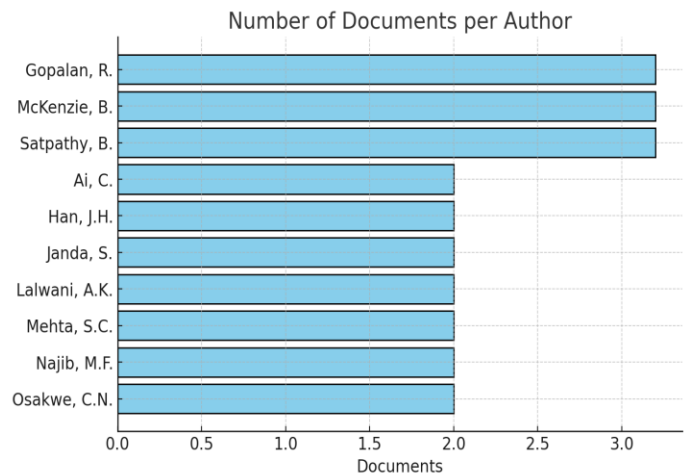


Fig. 3 Documents Per Author

4.4 Documents by Affiliation on the Research of Retail Service Quality

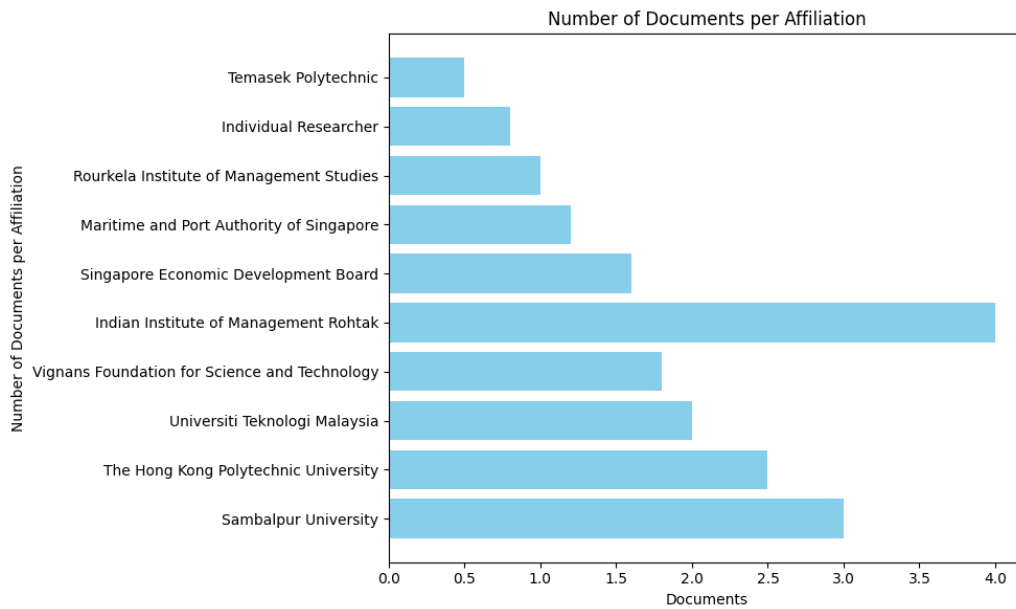


Fig. 4 Documents by Affiliation

In the chart of fig. 4, the publication output will be determined per institutional affiliation, such as universities, research bodies, and professional organisations. Key findings are as follows:

Top Affiliation: The Indian Institute of Management Rohtak is the most active, having a small majority, and therefore traversing three records, which makes it the dominant participant in the sample set.

Other Leading Institutions: Similar outputs are reported by Sambalpur University, The Hong Kong Polytechnic

University, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and Vignan Foundation of Science, Technology, and Research, with each of them having around 2.5 publications.

Lower - Contributing Institutions: Other affiliates like the Singapore Economic Development Board, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, the Rourkela Institute of Management Studies, and individual researchers, as well as the Temasek Polytechnic, have smaller contributions, approximating two papers apiece. These are humble points, still to be noticed.

4.5 Documents by Territory in the Research Domain of Retail Service Quality

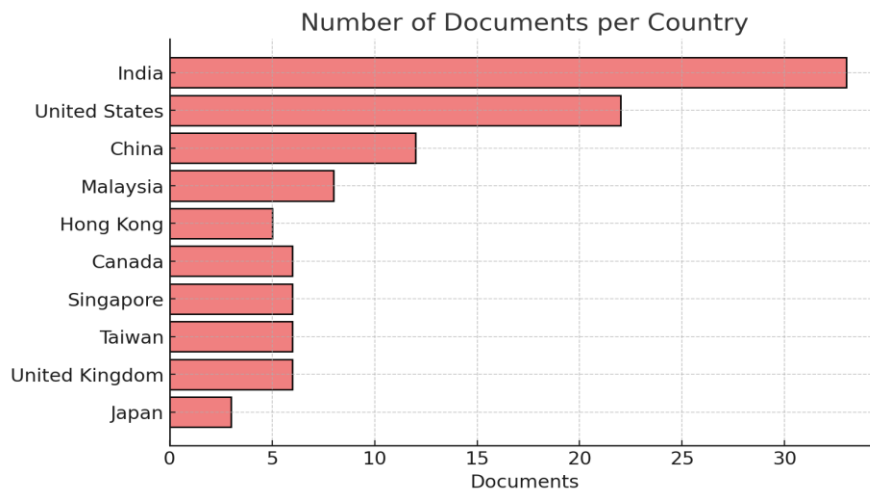


Fig. 5 Documents by Country/Territory

The bar chart in fig. 5 explains the volume of scientific articles published by specific countries and regions, thus gaining a quantitative representation of the research activity

around the world in the field of retail service quality. The factors that contributed most are as follows: India is at the top of the list, having released a great number of over thirty-three

documents. The second position is occupied by the United States, whose contribution is hardly more than twenty documents. China is next with about twelve academic publications. All of this research highlights the strong dominance across Asian nations, specifically India, as well as confirming the substantial involvement of the developed economies, which marks the expansion of the global discussions of retail service quality.

4.6 Types of Documents in Retail Service Quality Research

The following donut chart in fig. 6 shows the distribution by type of the documents, and this is my interpretation:

Key Observations: To start with, it is important to note that articles make up 87.4 % of the corpus, and other types are significantly underrepresented. Second, conference papers

have 9.4 % accounting, which places them at the second most common type, but significantly lower than articles. Third, book chapters add a small contribution of 1.6 % to the overall. Last but not least, the errata and reviews have 0.8 and 0.8 % share respectively, which is very little.

The distribution of literature by document type shows that journal articles are prevalent, accounting for the majority of publications (around 87%). There is a modest utilisation of chapters in the book, reviews, and errata, indicating that they are not used to a great extent. It is the piece of evidence that the mainstream of articles is written, which highlights the development and scholarly nature of the discipline. In general, the trend shows that journal publications are still the major stream of development of knowledge in studies of retail service quality.

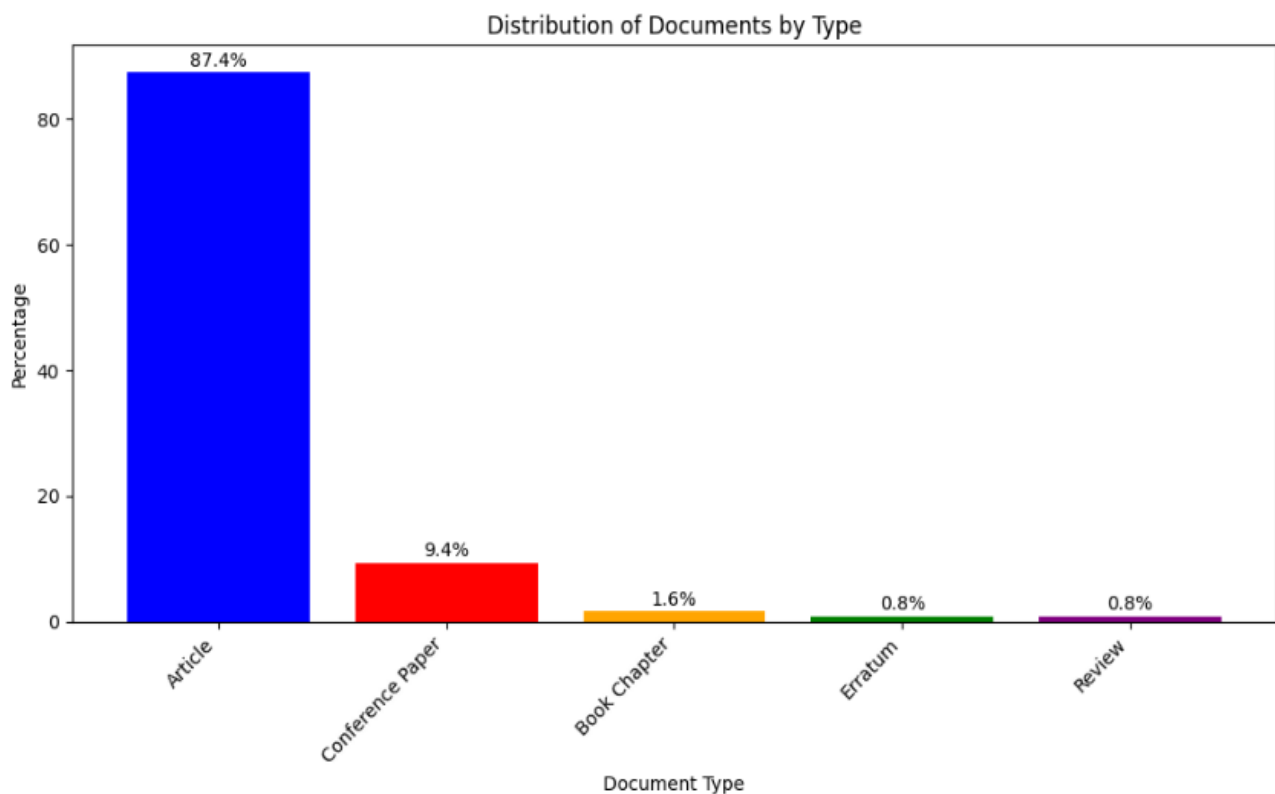


Fig. 6 Documents by Type

4.7 Documents by Subject Area in the Domain of Retail Service Quality Research

The bar chart in fig. 7 shows the distribution of the documents by subject areas. Key Observations: The largest shares are occupied by Business, Management, and Accounting; they comprise 44.0 % of the corpus, and this means that there is much interest in these fields. The second place, with 14.4 %, goes to Economics, Econometrics, and Finance, indicating much research done in the financial and economic dimension of service quality. Another field that has contributed significantly is engineering, which comprises 9.1 %.

Intermediate representation of 7.7 to 6.7 % each is received by Decision Sciences, Computer Science, and Social Sciences, respectively. Other fields (less than 5 %), including Environmental Science (2.4 %), Arts and Humanities (1.9 %), Mathematics (1.9 %), and Energy (1.4 %), provide small amounts of document volumes. The category of Other makes up 3.3 %, which consists of other subjects that are not listed separately. To conclude, the field is still primarily business-oriented, but it is becoming increasingly backed by a wide range of scholarly fields.

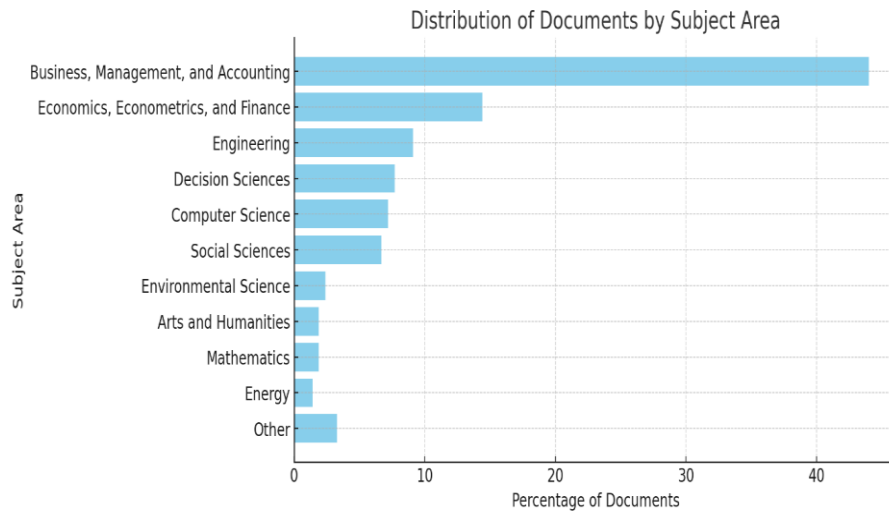


Fig. 7 Documents by Subject Area

4.8 Documents by Funding Sponsor in the Retail Service Quality Research

Documents by Funding Sponsor (Pie Chart)

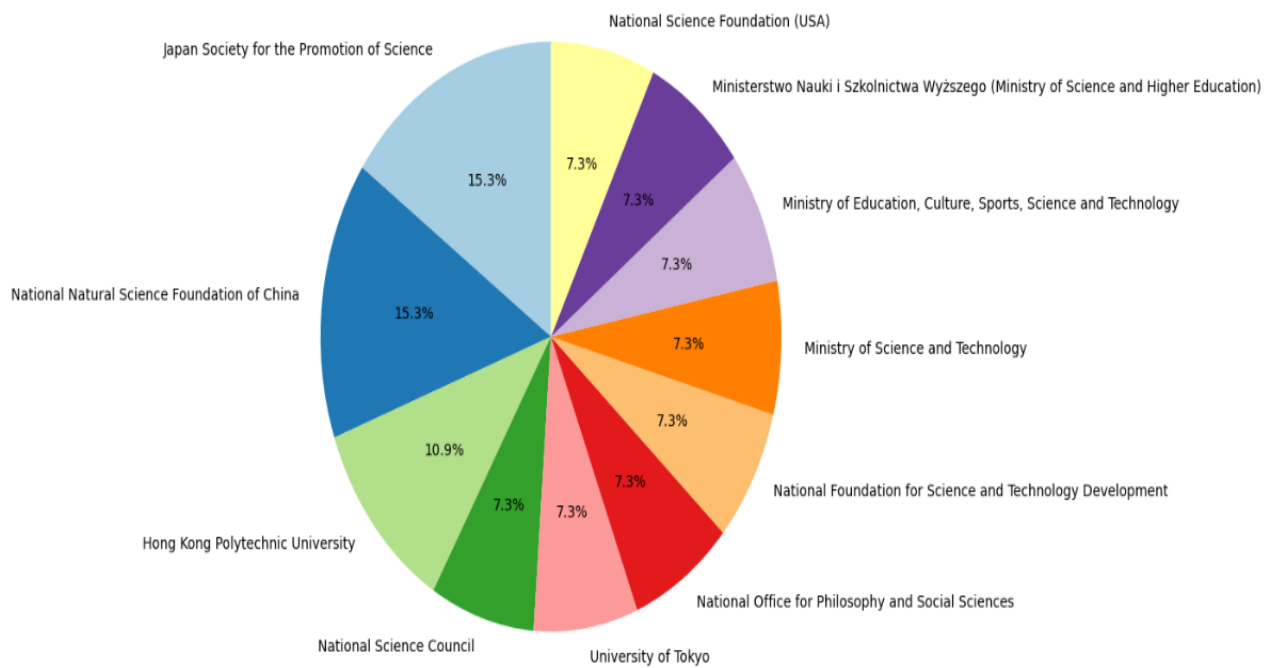


Fig. 8 Documents by Finding Source

Graph in fig. 8 Interpretation: Top Funding Sponsors: Japan Society of the Promotion of Science and National Natural Science Foundation have the greatest contribution to funded documents 2.2 around each. Hong Kong Polytechnic University comes in right behind with a relatively small number of funded documents.

Other Contributors: Non-governmental funding is done on a smaller scale, with documents funded by different institutions, such as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and sometimes by the

Ministry of Science and Technology and the National Foundation of Science and Technology Development, approximately one document each.

Observation: The three leading sponsors are way ahead in funding research, as compared to the other bodies that fund research in significantly lower amounts. The sources of funding are quite different, as they include government agencies and institutions, as well as academic and scientific organizations. It is the presence of a collaborative approach between the national agencies and the academic institutions

knowledge centres, controlling investigative agendas as well as research methodologies. At the same time, the proliferation of collaborative organizations demonstrates a growing interdisciplinary involvement integrating the perspectives of marketing, consumer psychology, supply-chain stewardship, and information systems in the view of retail service quality studies. The retail service research is mostly funded by national science foundations, governmental research councils, and institutions of higher learning, which are the sources of the initial support. It is important to note that involvement of the public funding bodies suggests that the evolution of the retail sphere is increasingly viewed as an economic need that is combined with the creation of jobs, digitalization, and as a consumer welfare initiative (Pantano et al., 2020). On the other hand, the small input of industry sponsorship signifies an untapped potential of strengthening the relationship between academia and industry, which would help in energising applied innovation and real-time analytics scholarship.

The whole of the bibliometric evidence suggests three big changes that happened to the retail service quality study. To begin with, the research orientation is moving geographically to emerging economies, which are in the process of retail modernization and an increased pace of digital commerce. Second, the thematic architecture is now refining itself out of antecedent service-measurement models to multidimensional frameworks, which integrate digital experience, consumer trust, and quality of relationships. Third, expanding the institutional collaboration is driven primarily by the public financing, which enhances the interdisciplinary inquiry that integrates the marketing, technology, and consumer behaviour perspectives. However, potential research opportunities are also put into the spotlight with the analysis. The next generation of researchers is encouraged to examine cross-cultural comparisons of perceptions of retail service quality, re-examine how artificial intelligence and robots dictate the type of service experience, and explore sustainability-oriented retail service provision that can influence consumers in making choices. Further increase of industry-supported collaborative research would contribute to the increased practicality of scholarly discoveries and promote evidence-based retail strategy formulation.

Overall, the bibliometric findings confirm that the quality of retail service remains a pivotal concept in the research on marketing and retailing, but the discipline is quickly transitioning to digital-tumbism-based, consumer-facing, and experience-based research paradigms. The long-term partnership on the international level and cross-disciplinary scholarship will be invaluable in terms of developing theoretical rigour and addressing the intricate issues that the modern retail settings are posing.

VI. THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The results provide integrated theoretical and managerial insights into retail service quality (RSQ). The continued pre-eminence of service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty underscores the relevance of relationship marketing

and service-dominant logic. The emergence of digital retailing, trust, and customer experience, on the other hand, points to the need to expand existing service quality and customer satisfaction models to an omnichannel and technology-mediated perspective. This is particularly so in the context of the increasing contribution of emerging economies like India and China. From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest the need for retailers to develop a customer-centric approach through the integration of omnichannel retailing, the use of artificial intelligence analytics, and the need to improve service experiences.

But in the case of businesses that are operating in different markets, the service model should be adjusted to the cultural and technological environment. In addition, an enhanced industry-academia partnership would also aid in making innovation and data-based decisions to achieve excellence in the services. Therefore, the solution to the competitiveness of the retail industry is the combination of service quality management with digital transformation and experience innovation in a global connected research and practice ecosystem.

VII. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

7.1 Omnichannel and Digital Retailing

The focus of the future research should also include the integration of physical and digital retail spaces and its consequences for perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. With the increasing significance of electronic commerce, mobile retailing, and smart retail technologies, the research should also examine the consequences of seamless omnichannel retailing and the efficiency of the last-mile delivery for customer perceptions. Furthermore, the contribution of digital retail elements such as mobile apps, self-checkout technologies, and virtual interfaces for the development of the holistic customer experience also needs more research attention.

7.2 Artificial Intelligence and Technology-Driven Service Innovation

Applications of AI technologies, including machine learning, chatbots, service automation, will probably provide a chance to redefine service quality in the future. The research should be carried out in the future to investigate how AI-driven interactions influence the principle of trust, service efficiency, and relationship quality. In this respect, the comparative studies can contribute to the realization of the best use of human or AI-driven service interaction. Moreover, the value of AI-based personalization in the quality of the services is a promising field of research in the future.

7.3 Sustainability and Cross-Cultural Perspectives

The newly developed research needs to incorporate the dimensions of sustainability and culture in the retail service quality framework. Examining the effects of ethical

practices, green logistics, and sustainable service initiatives on customer perceptions and willingness to pay is vital. At the same time, cross-cultural studies in developed and emerging countries could broaden the applicability of service quality models by exploring differences in customer expectations, trust, and loyalty drivers in varied socio-economic and technology-driven environments.

VIII.LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The abundance of limitations to the study, even though minor as a whole, is also to be approached with some apprehension. The analysis also relies on only one bibliographic database and may exclude relevant studies that are not stored in the same database, but rather held in other repositories, local periodical titles, or even non-indexed conference papers, thus potentially damaging the completeness of the dataset. Furthermore, the research uses more quantitative bibliometric measures, including the number of publications, the number of citations, and the frequency of keywords, that might not fully reflect the conceptual thoroughness, methodological soundness, or even the relevance of particular studies to the context. Thirdly, selecting a set of search terms on the subject of the quality of services provided to retailers can rule out the possibility of research based on synonymous or similar terms. Lastly, and most obviously, the highly dynamic aspect of digital retailing and service technologies means that the digital publications might not have received the due acknowledgement in citing works as of now. To overcome the limitations in this study, the research should be conducted in the future by using a variety of databases, increasing the number of keywords, using qualitative content analysis, and longitudinally updating data to provide more information on the research topic.

IX. CONCLUSION

Finally, the study is able to answer all the research questions. The general trend of publication shows a high growth upward, with more than half of all publications being published after 2015, hence depicting an increase in growth rate in the last decade. Such a tendency is an unambiguous indicator of the growing strategic topicality of retail service quality in modern research on retail. The top ten authors and institutions have a substantial presence in the corpus, and a comparatively small group of popular articles is the supplier of a disproportionate number of total citations. The calculated h-index is a testament to a consistent academic influence with the focus on the intellectual concentration on foundational frameworks of RSQ. Customer satisfaction, loyalty, and SERVQUAL are the most salient central themes using the method of the keyword co-occurrence analysis. Omnichannel retailing related clusters, artificial intelligence, and sustainability have risen to a higher theme in recent years, indicating a thematic direction of change. At the national scale, the statistics have shown that the number of major economies giving over half of the entire scholarly work is in the hands of few. Co-author networks imply the moderate level of cross-national collaboration, despite the fact that regional partners are the most common.

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