

Contribution of Middle-Income Economies in Literature Pertaining to Customer Loyalty : A Critical Appraisal

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Abstract

Purpose : A retrospective investigation was carried out to critically appraise the research inputs of middle-income economies in the extant literature on the theme of customer loyalty in the marketing domain.

Methodology : This review article objectively, systematically, rigorously, and critically appraised the knowledge paradigms that existed in 495 documents extracted using the Scopus database. The breadth and depth of the past literature were examined through bibliometric analysis by structuring the diverse research constituents using the Bibliometrix R package and VOSviewer.

Findings : The results logically exhibited the publication trend and citation structure, country collaboration pattern, keyword co-occurrence analysis, co-citation of references analysis, and many other descriptive bibliometric indicators, including leading journals, prolific authors, and influential documents.

Practical Implications : The study functions as a stimulus that contributes significantly to theory and practice by offering a globally inclusive research outlook for the said theme and an idiosyncratic assessment to practitioners in emerging markets.

Originality : Besides serving to elucidate, map, and visualize the stated research premise, this first kind of bibliometric review through the lens of middle-income economies on customer loyalty strengthens the value in terms of subject-matter quantification.

Keywords : bibliometrics, customer loyalty, marketing, middle-income economies

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Customer loyalty has long been believed to be the “holy grail” for every marketer and in every marketing activity (Srivastava & Rai, 2018). Past research exposes that a 5% surge in customer loyalty could swell 25%–85% of profits. Likewise, a 2% rise in customer retention has nearly the same impact as a 10% cost diminution (Kandampully et al., 2015), because it doesn’t involve any acquisition costs. And so it is no wonder that customer loyalty is one of the most extensively researched areas in the marketing domain by academicians, one of the most typically used marketing actions by practitioners, and one of the most largely discussed topics in boardroom meetings, making the concept of customer loyalty ubiquitous (Kumar & Shah, 2004). Predominantly for developing nations whose marketing practices have observed rapid revolutions in recent eras because of legal, governing, and institutional transformations over time (Amoako et al., 2017).

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With the ever-expanding research landscape of customer loyalty and to logically structure such a profound topic, an intellectual, methodical, and quantitative review is vital (Paul & Criado, 2020). Keeping in mind this aforementioned notion, a bibliometric review was undertaken that explored the breadth and depth of published literature for the concerned domain and imparted retrospective learnings for future researchers. As bibliometric exploration is valuable for interpreting, mapping, and visualizing the growing scientific know-how and embryonic traces of well-established fields, it has achieved massive recognition in contemporary times due to the pervasiveness and expediency of its tools and techniques. The usage of bibliometrics has been embraced by almost all streams and disciplines (Dabić et al., 2020; Goyal & Kumar, 2021; Paul et al., 2017; Randhawa et al., 2016), even in the field of customer loyalty and marketing (Donthu et al., 2021; Dubina et al., 2020; Jiddi & Ibenrissoul, 2020; Mahadevan & Joshi, 2021; Sobrinho & Gonçalves, 2019; Tartaglione et al., 2019). However, no study has yet been found in the literature on the concerned theme that explores it from the stance of middle-income economies (including both upper-middle-income and lower-middle-income economies), making it indispensable for inclusive global research expansion. Thus, this kind of first bibliometric review on customer loyalty in the scope of marketing through the lens of middle-income countries will serve as the groundwork for offering reflective insights required to further develop and expand this research arena by empowering potential researchers to : (a) have a one-stop glimpse, (b) discover knowledge gaps, (c) draw novel thoughts for future research, and (d) arrange their anticipated contributions to the domain.

Aligned with this setting, this study does the following two activities: (a) performance analysis (appraises the impacts of research elements), and (b) science mapping (draws the connections between research elements). Specifically, we seek to accomplish the following objectives through this study:

- (1)** To identify and present the publication trend and citation structure prevailing in the literature on customer loyalty in middle-income economies.
- (2)** To ascertain and rank the leading journals publishing the work of middle-income economies on customer loyalty.
- (3)** To disclose the most prolific authors, influential articles, pronounced keywords, and cited references in customer loyalty publications through the lens of middle-income economies.
- (4)** To identify the research collaboration pattern that exists among middle-income economies for the literature on customer loyalty.
- (5)** To critically review the major trends and developments emerging from customer loyalty literature in middle-income economies.

Review of Literature

As a general rule, the more loyal a customer is to a corporation, the more worthwhile that customer is. As loyal customers eventually bring generous revenues by purchasing more, they require relatively less time and effort from the companies they patronize. Additionally, many customers forgive and forget the company's blunders, expose less sensitivity to their fluctuating prices, and propagate productive word-of-mouth about the establishment to other prospective customers (Yang & Peterson, 2004). It has been exclaimed many times in research writings that the outlay for pulling in new customers is always higher than to prompt the present ones to make repeat purchases because of the transforming roles of customers and their capacity to turn out to be a company's honest advocate and emotionally connected brand ambassador (Kandampully et al., 2015). As a result, the marketing efforts of marketers were often more observed en route to customer loyalty (Dick & Basu, 1994), as

they realized the fact that a business's competitive advantage is entwined with its proficiency to maintain and foster its customer base (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

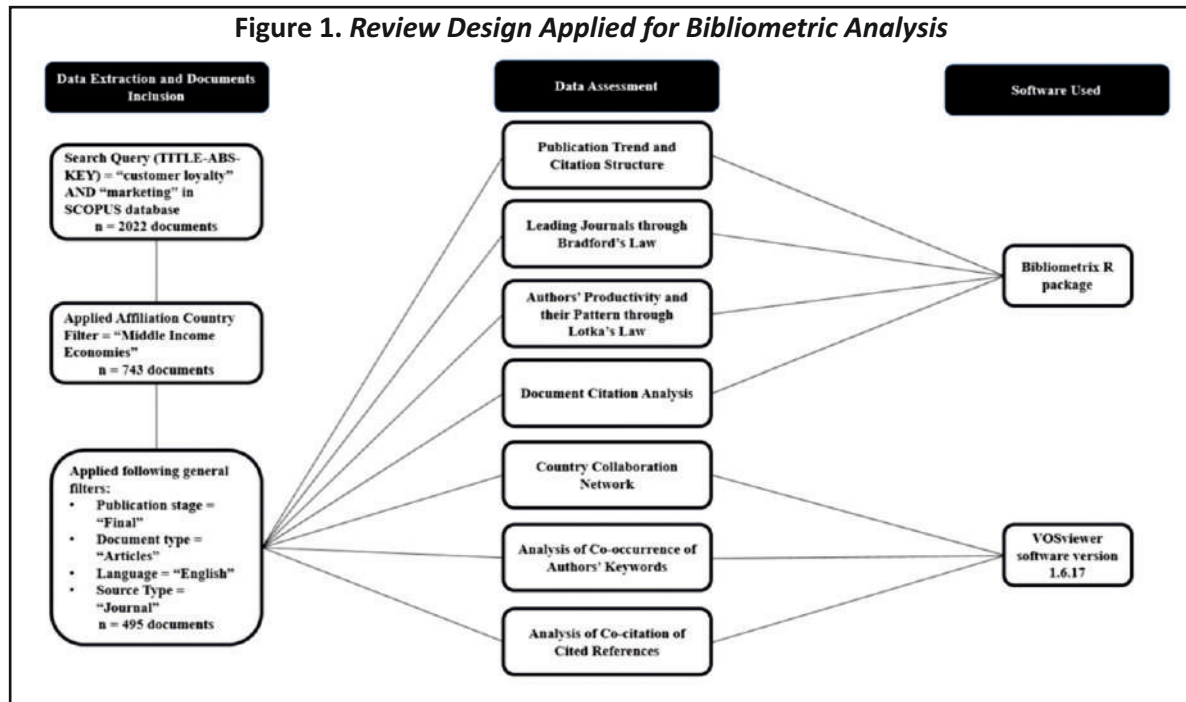
However, loyalty has been a complicated phenomenon regarding its conceptualization (Dick & Basu, 1994). Even the term customer has been a challenge to describe. Traditionally, loyalty denotes the subjective likelihood that a buyer will keep on buying an offering from one supplier perpetually (Chiu et al., 2014). In simpler words, it stresses customers' repeat purchases that were sparked by marketers' activities (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). Nonetheless, there was something more to customer loyalty than re-buys and revisits (Srivastava & Rai, 2018). Even literature reflected multiple facets of it. Närvänen et al. (2020) and Keller (1993) portrayed loyalty as a positive attitude toward a brand that had been expressed in customers' repeated buying behavior. Oliver (1999) pronounced this construct as an unfailing obligation to patronize a particular product or service in the future, notwithstanding situational stimulus and selling endeavors that can instigate switching actions. Uncles et al. (2003) articulated loyalty predominantly as an attitude that builds a connection with the brand. Srivastava and Rai (2018) described loyalty as being made up of customers' cognition mirrored in their preferences and patronage, sometimes even at a premium.

Hence, to appreciate the exuberant dynamics of customers, a comprehensible comprehension of the concept of attitudinal and behavioral components was crucial for getting pearls of wisdom for fostering customer loyalty. Attitudinal loyalty interacts with a psychological (absolutely cognitive) sense of connection (Hallowell, 1996; Närvänen et al., 2020), whereas behavioral loyalty indicates few indicators such as the behavior of repeat purchases, the fraction of purchases or the share-of-wallet, possibility of purchases, purchase prolonged existence, purchase series, and incidences (Yoo & Bai, 2013). On a more functional level, it entails that the marketer should not only be apprehensive about the frequency of repeat purchases but also about the whys of such behavior (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973), for instance, the effects of service quality (Bhardwaj, 2015), relationship marketing (Suar & Mishra, 2020), brand image (Jana & Chandra, 2016), product innovation (Panigrahi et al., 2021), customer engagement (Srivastava, 2019), brand experience (Sumbly & Siraj, 2019), marketing communication (Banerjee & Mandal, 2018), and many more. Though the vicious circle remained in the fact that cognitive intent may not lead to an act, and repeat purchase acts may not reveal such intents (Yang & Peterson, 2004). But to attain "real" loyalty, corporations should synchronously emphasize crafting both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (Kumar & Shah, 2004). All these multidimensional conceptualizations underline a holistic interpretation of customer loyalty. Additionally, any tactic that assures customer loyalty would be a successful formula for corporate headway on a pragmatically sustainable foundation (Amoako et al., 2017).

Cutting a long story short, substantial consideration has been bestowed on the concept of customer loyalty in marketing theory and practice. Hitherto, this concept has remained comparatively unmapped through the lens of developing lands (Akman & Yörür, 2012; Makanyeza, 2015). Even emerging markets have incredible prospects, notwithstanding that such countries often remain uncultivated and underexplored from a research angle (Diallo et al., 2018). Given the disproportions in the literature, a review has been needed to absorb the conceptual tensions through the lens of middle-income economies and let distinctive standpoints and stresses thrive.

Research Methodology

A bibliometric study exhibits a "big picture" of previous research studies for a definite research ambit by structuring and shaping a large body of knowledge, streamlining movements and trends over time, and extracting the themes to be explored (Storer, 1974). Based on a similar notion, the retrospective research design of this study applies a systematic, objective, crystal-clear, and comprehensive style of methodology (as shown in Figure 1).



Data Extraction and Document Inclusion

Primarily, Scopus, the biggest citation database, was used to collect the data samples because it houses a larger number of sources than the Web of Science. The search query had been formulated as TITLE-ABS-KEY ("customer loyalty" AND "marketing"). Afterward, the ultimate search criterion was filtered to refine it to those publications that were associated with upper-middle-income and lower-middle-income economies by applying the limits of the affiliation country filter "China," "India," "Indonesia," "Malaysia," "Iran," "South Africa," "Turkey," "Russian Federation," "Brazil," "Romania," "Thailand," "Pakistan," "Jordan," "Ghana," "Vietnam," "Nigeria," "Bangladesh," "Serbia," "Egypt," "Iraq," "Tunisia," "Algeria," "Mexico," "Philippines," "Lebanon," "Morocco," "Peru," "Ukraine," "Zimbabwe," "Argentina," "Bosnia and Herzegovina," "Colombia," "Ecuador," "Fiji," "Georgia," "Kazakhstan," "Benin," "Bulgaria," "Kenya," "Montenegro," "Namibia," "Sri Lanka," and "Tanzania." Along with other usual filters such as publication stage "Final," document type "Articles," language "English," and source type "Journals." This search was accomplished in the second week of May 2022. The absolute number of papers (1998–2022) gathered in the dataset was 495. Then the ultimate data record (CSV file format) was exported, which was subsequently analyzed for bibliometrics.

Data Assessment Using Bibliometric Indicators

Several quality, quantity, and structural bibliometric indicators have been used for performance analysis and science mapping. Designed for performance analysis, this research unveiled the publication and citation trend and uncovered the productive and pertinent research elements in the said research arena, including journals, authors, articles, and countries. Intended for science mapping, intellectual structures have been constructed illustrating the networks between research elements, comprising an analysis of co-occurrences of the author's keywords and co-citation networks of cited references.

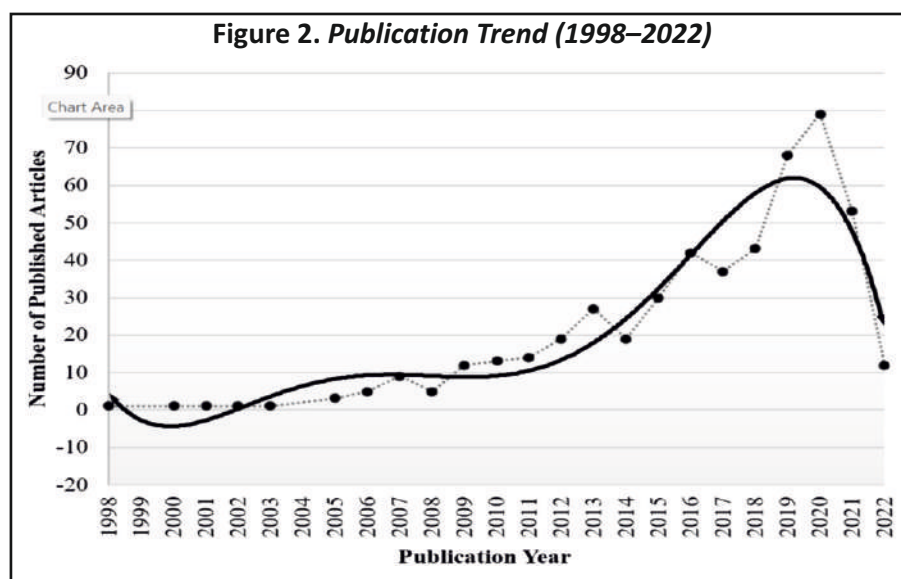
Software Used for Bibliometric Analysis

For the scientific representation of data, various software enables this kind of analysis. The researchers employed the Bibliometrix R package (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017) for enumerating the informative segment of bibliometrics and VOSviewer (visualization of similarities) version 1.6.17 (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010) for visualizing the complex bibliometric networks.

Findings of Bibliometric Analysis

Publication Trend and Citation Structure

The trend regarding the number of publications (from 1998–2022) for the substance on customer loyalty in the sphere of marketing from the outlook of middle-income countries has been exhibited by the polynomial trend line, as shown in Figure 2.



From a chronological standpoint, the trend line reveals that only a few publications characterized the initial years, but a radical rise in the count of publications, particularly after the mid-2010s, can be seen, where the study crowned 2020 as the most productive year (published articles = 79 and percentage of total records = 15.96%) on the said theme. However, the following year observes a dip in the count, perhaps owing to the COVID-19 crisis. Thus, it remains yet to be discovered what the uncertain market settings will hold for its further progress.

Table 1 summarizes the publication's development along with the citation structure, where the citations of the articles grew significantly (aggregate citation count = 7,548 by the midpoint of 2022). Thus, on the whole, the past 24 years validated the middle-income countries' acceptance of the subject matter of "customer loyalty" as an imperative academic instrument for marketing research. In terms of citations, the study identifies 2010 as the most instrumental year, as apparent from the total citations and average article citations of the period (TC = 1,162; C/A = 89.38). Additionally, total citations per article have also been analyzed, keeping in mind the number of citable years, where the year 2010 again has been one of the highest after the year 2006.

Table 1. Publication and Citation Structure

Publication Year	TA	Percentage of TP (n = 495)	TC	C/A	CY	(C/A)/CY
1998	1	0.20 %	0	0	24	0
1999	0	0	0	0	0	0
2000	1	0.20%	6	6	22	0.272727273
2001	1	0.20%	138	138	21	6.571428571
2002	1	0.20%	51	51	20	2.55
2003	1	0.20%	113	113	19	5.947368421
2004	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005	3	0.61%	177	59	17	3.470588235
2006	5	1.01%	848	169.6	16	10.6
2007	9	1.82%	682	75.77777778	15	5.051851852
2008	5	1.01%	19	3.8	14	0.271428571
2009	12	2.42%	173	14.41666667	13	1.108974359
2010	13	2.63%	1,162	89.38461538	12	7.448717949
2011	14	2.83%	168	12	11	1.090909091
2012	19	3.84%	202	10.63157895	10	1.063157895
2013	27	5.45%	389	14.40740741	9	1.600823045
2014	19	3.84%	409	21.52631579	8	2.690789474
2015	30	6.06%	283	9.433333333	7	1.347619048
2016	42	8.48%	525	12.5	6	2.083333333
2017	37	7.47%	607	16.40540541	5	3.281081081
2018	43	8.69%	385	8.953488372	4	2.238372093
2019	68	13.74%	644	9.470588235	3	3.156862745
2020	79	15.96%	471	5.962025316	2	2.981012658
2021	53	10.71%	82	1.547169811	1	1.547169811
2022	12	2.42%	14	1.166666667	0	–

Abbreviations: TA = total articles; TP = total publications; TC = total citations; C/A = citations per article; CY = citable years; (C/A)/CY = average article citations per citable year.

Leading Journals Through Bradford's Law

To provide a more holistic view as far as the sources are concerned, the most productive journals for the said theme have been assessed. The 485 documents existed in a total of 281 journals. Table 2 presents the list of the leading sources arranged by the number of publication outputs by middle-income countries computed through Bradford's Law (a principle describing that only a few core sources contribute the nucleus of research papers on a particular theme, which accounts for a significant proportion, i.e., 1/3 of the total articles), where *International Journal of Bank Marketing* had the maximum number of publications with a count of 16, followed by *Journal of Islamic Marketing* with nine published articles, and so on.

The list of these 28 core journals, following Bradford's law, publishes around one-third of the total documents (count = 485) in the entire collection of journals (count = 281). The "core zone" includes 28 journals, the "middle zone" includes 90 journal sources, and the "minor zone" includes 163 journals.

Table 2. Leading Journals Existing in the Core Zone as per Bradford's Law

Sources	Frequency of Publications	Cumulative Frequency
<i>International Journal of Bank Marketing</i>	16	16
<i>Journal of Islamic Marketing</i>	9	25
<i>Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics</i>	7	32
<i>Innovative Marketing</i>	7	39
<i>International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research</i>	7	46
<i>International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research</i>	7	53
<i>Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies</i>	6	59
<i>Indian Journal of Marketing</i>	6	65
<i>International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change</i>	6	71
<i>International Journal of Supply Chain Management</i>	6	77
<i>Journal of Relationship Marketing</i>	6	83
<i>Journal of Services Marketing</i>	6	89
<i>Marketing Intelligence and Planning</i>	6	95
<i>Quality - Access to Success</i>	6	101
<i>Sustainability (Switzerland)</i>	6	107
<i>International Business Management</i>	5	112
<i>International Journal of Electronic Marketing and Retailing</i>	5	117
<i>Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business</i>	5	122
<i>Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services</i>	5	127
<i>TQM Journal</i>	5	132
<i>Advanced Science Letters</i>	4	136
<i>International Journal of Business Innovation and Research</i>	4	140
<i>International Journal of Economic Research</i>	4	144
<i>International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences</i>	4	148
<i>International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering</i>	4	152
<i>Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing</i>	4	156
<i>Sage Open</i>	4	160
<i>World Applied Sciences Journal</i>	4	164

Besides the number, another striking fact that can be spotted from the list of journals is that the premise of the study is well-associated with varied branches of marketing such as services marketing, relationship marketing, innovative marketing, industrial marketing, electronic marketing, internet marketing, business-to-business marketing, consumer marketing, hospitality marketing, international marketing, social marketing, and many more, indicating the multidisciplinary yet integrative picture of the theme.

Authors' Productivity and Their Pattern Through Lotka's Law

Table 3 lists the most prolific contributors with the number of articles published and total citations. Recognition of the researchers who are instrumental in this discipline is crucial because they may gear up the show for

Table 3. Most Prolific Authors Based on Articles Published and Total Citations

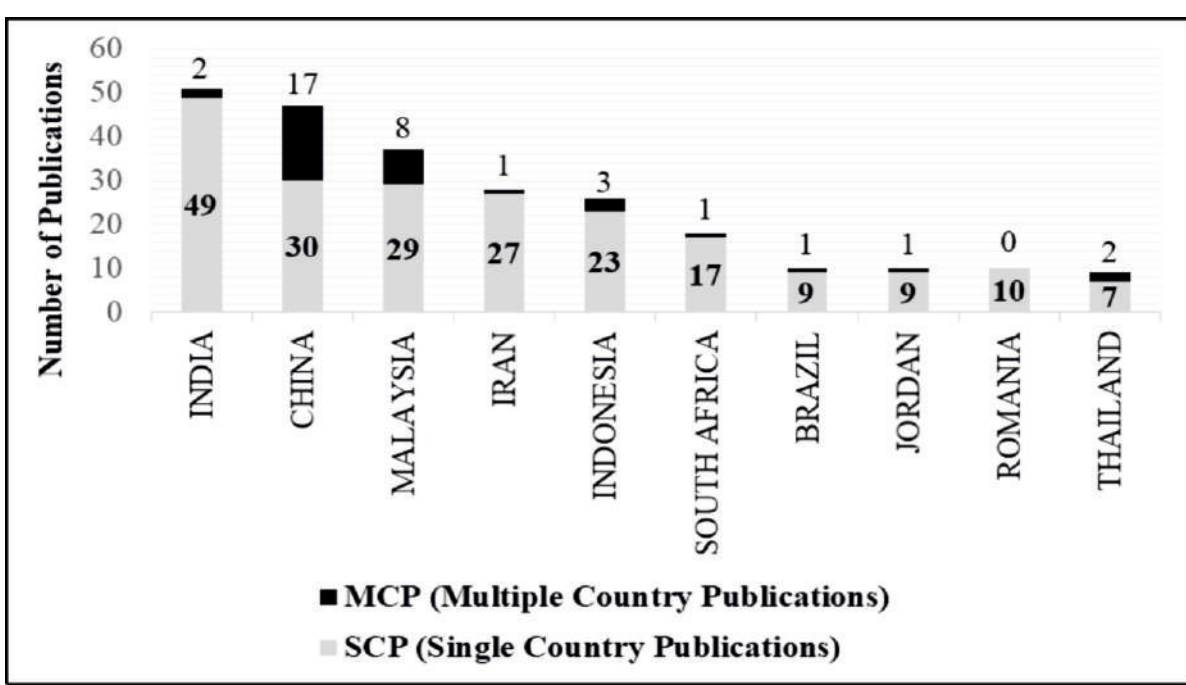
Top Authors	Articles Published	Top Authors	Total Citations
Nelson Oly Ndubisi (Malaysia)	6	Yaobin Lu (China)	560
Mamoun N. Akroush (Jordan)	4	Zhaohua Deng (China)	548
Nur Atikah A. Rahman (Malaysia)	4	Kwok Kee Wei (Singapore)	548
Xiao Yan Wang (China)	4	Jinlong Zhang (China)	548
Zhenjie Wang (China)	4	Nelson Oly Ndubisi (Malaysia)	530

Table 4. Authors' Productivity Pattern Through Lotka's Law

Number of Papers Written	Number of Contributors	Proportion of Contributors (n = 1,246)
1	1,130	90.7%
2	96	7.7%
3	15	1.2%
4	4	0.32%
6	1	0.08%

forthcoming advancements. In general, there were a total of 1,176 (94.38%) multi-authored publications and 70 (5.62%) single-authored publications.

Fulfilling both parameters, that is, the number of articles published and total citations, Nelson Oly Ndubisi of Malaysia, with six publications and 530 citations, has been one of the most prolific contributors in the given

Figure 3. Most Productive Countries (Including Both SCP and MCP) by Corresponding Author

discipline from the perspective of middle-income countries. Moreover, in Table 4, when the authors' productivity pattern through Lotka's Law (i.e., a standard that specifies the frequency of publication by authors in a particular domain) has been evaluated, the same author excelled others.

As per Lotka's law, the scientific productivity scores state that out of 1,246 authors, over 90% were "occasional authors," who have written only one document on the concerned theme, and less than 2% of total authors were "core authors," who have written at least three documents. Another astonishing fact that can be understood is that neither based on the number of publications nor the count of citations, any Indian author has emerged in the top rankings, despite being in the peak position in the list of top productive countries. The underlying cause behind this may be a lack of inter-country author collaboration among Indian researchers, as shown in Figure 3.

Taking the corresponding author as the unit of analysis for the geographical division of the research outcomes, in the case of a single-country publication (SCP) or intra-country publication, India (SCP = 49) ranked first, followed by China, Malaysia, Iran, and Indonesia. However, in terms of multiple-country publication (MCP) or inter-country collaboration that measures the intensity of international collaboration in a country, China (MCP = 17) tops the list, followed by Malaysia, whereas India doesn't.

Document Citation Analysis

Earlier, the researchers merely considered the number of publications as a measure of their research eminence. However, nowadays, the spotlight has been shifting from whether a paper has been published to where it has been published and what effect that piece of work has on the research community and the world at large. Article-level citation analysis offers a factual appraisal of the quality and impact of a specific piece of writing. Here, "local citation" represents the number of times an article has been mentioned by other articles within the network of 495 articles, and "global citation" means the inclusive Scopus citations for the article.

For those looking to do exploration in this space and for academic as well as applied rationales, the acknowledged "core" papers may prove an upright starting point. Table 5 discloses the list of most cited documents published on customer loyalty in the marketing sphere through the lens of middle-income economies, listing only those articles with at least 100 global citations.

Table 5. Most Cited Articles in the Literature

Titles	References	Sources	Global Citations (GC)	Local Citations (LC)	LC/GC Ratio (%)
"Understanding Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty: An Empirical Study of Mobile Instant Messages in China"	Deng et al. (2010)	<i>International Journal of Information Management</i>	548	16	2.92%
"Consumer Trust, Perceived Security and Privacy Policy: Three Basic Elements of Loyalty to a Website"	Flavián & Guinalíu (2006)	<i>Industrial Management & Data Systems</i>	459	2	0.44%
"A Longitudinal Analysis of Customer Satisfaction and Share of Wallet: Investigating the Moderating Effect of Customer Characteristics"	Cooil et al. (2007)	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	398	7	1.76%
"The Effect of Perceived Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction, Trust, and Loyalty in E-Commerce Settings: A Cross-Cultural Analysis"	Kassim & Asiah Abdullah (2010)	<i>Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics</i>	344	10	2.91%
"Relationship Marketing and Customer Loyalty"	Oly Ndubisi (2007)	<i>Marketing Intelligence and Planning</i>	173	28	16.18%

"Cluster Analysis Using Data Mining Approach to Develop CRM Methodology to Assess the Customer Loyalty"	Hosseini et al. (2010)	<i>Expert Systems with Applications</i>	147	1	0.68%
"The Impact of Service Quality, Customer Engagement and Selected Marketing Constructs on Airline Passenger Loyalty"	Hapsari et al. (2017)	<i>International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences</i>	139	9	6.47%
"Relationship Benefits in Service Industries: A Replication in a Southeast Asian Context"	Patterson & Smith (2001)	<i>Journal of Services Marketing</i>	138	3	2.17%
"Factorial and Discriminant Analyses of the Underpinnings of Relationship Marketing and Customer Satisfaction"	Oly Ndubisi & Kok Wah (2005)	<i>International Journal of Bank Marketing</i>	136	18	13.24%
"Correlates of Customer Loyalty to their Bank: A Case Study in Nigeria"	Osayawe Ehigie (2006)	<i>International Journal of Bank Marketing</i>	123	11	8.94%
"Effect of Gender on Customer Loyalty: A Relationship Marketing Approach"	Oly Ndubisi (2006)	<i>Marketing Intelligence and Planning</i>	120	9	7.50%
"The Role of Customer Satisfaction and Image in Gaining Customer Loyalty in the Hotel Industry"	Kandampully & Suhartanto (2003)	<i>Journal of Hospitality and Leisure Marketing</i>	113	2	1.77%

Based on global citations (measuring the impact of documents in the entire Scopus database) with 548 total citations, the most cited document was by Deng et al. (2010) entitled "Understanding customer satisfaction and loyalty: An empirical study of mobile instant messages in China," which studies the dynamics of customer satisfaction and loyalty by taking into consideration the nomological connections among perceived value, service quality, customer satisfaction, trust, switching outlay, and customer loyalty.

Whereas, based on local citations (measuring the impact of documents in the analyzed database), with a count of 28, the article entitled "Relationship marketing and customer loyalty" by Oly Ndubisi (2007) exceeds others on the local citation count. This article strengthens the concept of customer loyalty by evaluating the effect of paradigms of relationship marketing (trust, commitment, communication, and conflict handling) in one of the sectors of the service industry in Malaysia, that is, the banking industry. However, the evident gap between the values of local citations and global citations specifies that customer loyalty has been taken into consideration by the researchers of other countries as well (i.e., these papers have also been mentioned in articles that have not emerged in this dataset).

Country Collaboration Network

Coauthorship is one of the most palpable modes of research collaboration. To evaluate the global co-authorship based on countries, the country collaboration network for the extracted articles has been visualized. In addition to the recognition of countries with effective research associations (through the mapping technique), as shown in Figure 4, one can also observe diverse collaboration arrangements (through the clustering technique), as shown in Table 6.

Many clusters have been fabricated in countries' collaboration structures. All the clusters except cluster 1 showed more research engagement with developed lands. And, once again, high-income countries like the United States, Australia, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and South Korea present the maximum research partnerships with the middle-income countries present in other clusters (excluding cluster 1).

Figure 4. Network Visualization of Country Collaboration Pattern

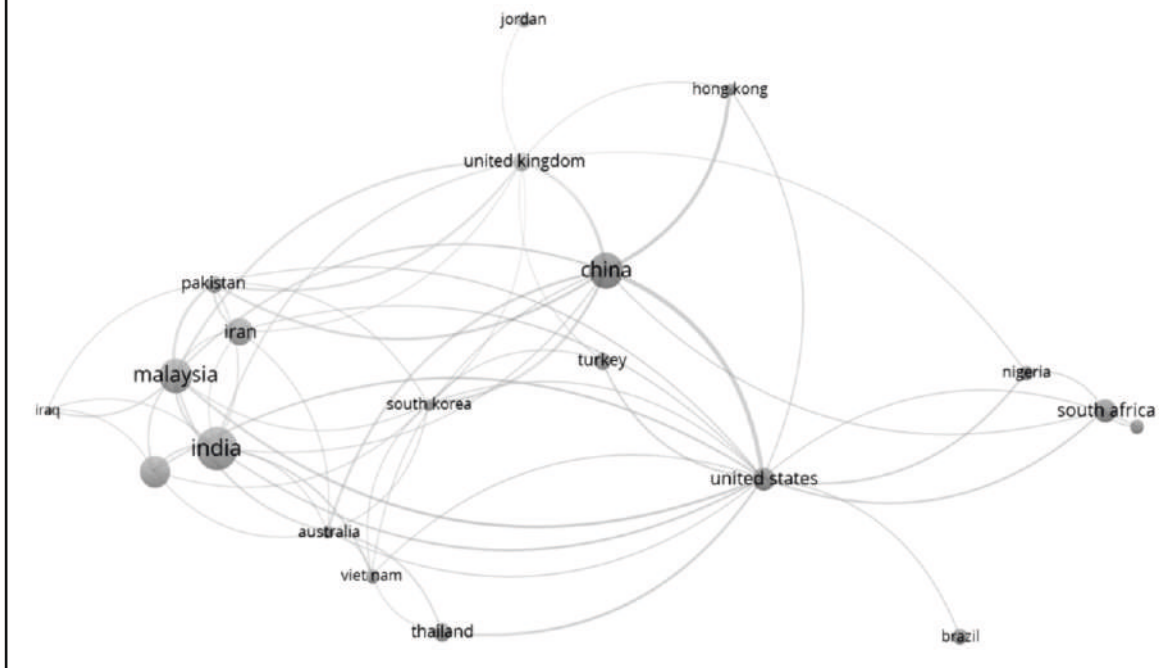
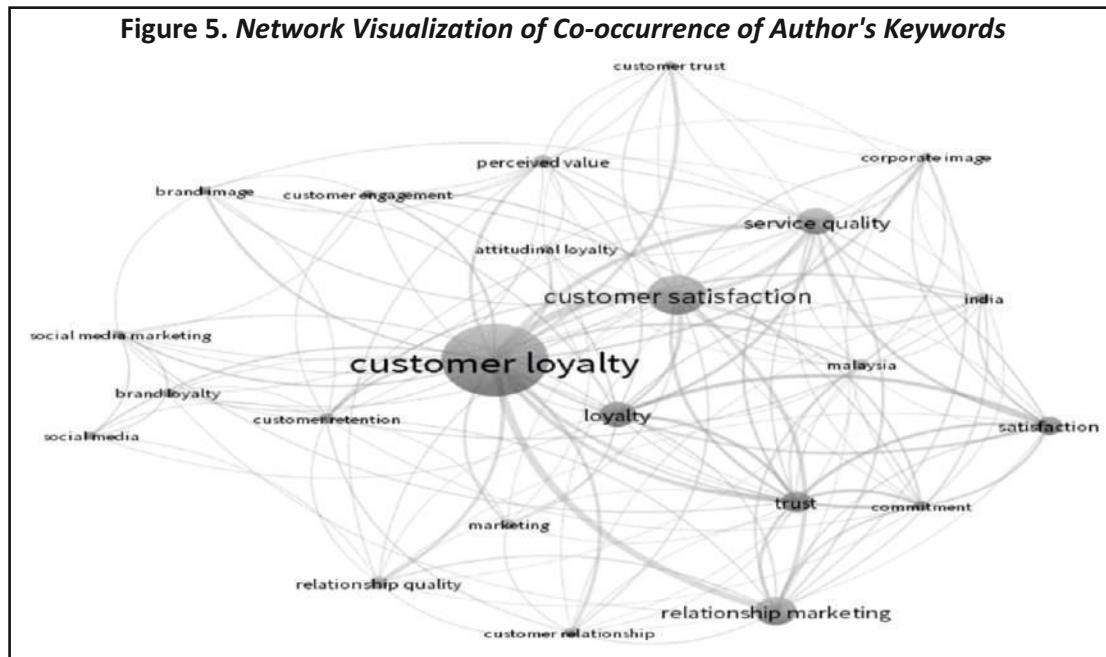


Table 6. Country-Wise Collaboration Pattern

Cluster	Country	Documents	Total Citations
Cluster 1	India	97	782
	Malaysia	64	1,537
	Indonesia	53	534
	Iran	39	343
	Pakistan	17	238
	Iraq	5	36
Cluster 2	United States	29	1,033
	South Africa	28	177
	Brazil	14	199
	Ghana	11	171
	Nigeria	11	256
Cluster 3	Thailand	18	336
	Vietnam	12	103
	Australia	10	410
Cluster 4	China	66	1,583
	Hong Kong	7	572
Cluster 5	United Kingdom	18	267
	Jordan	11	44
Cluster 6	Turkey	16	661
	South Korea	8	121



Analysis of the Co-occurrence of Keywords

Using the VOSviewer software, a conceptual structure of keyword co-occurrences has been visualized to discover the prominent sub-themes where the node size reflects how frequently they appear, whereas their arrangement (distant or closer) suggests their co-occurrence in a specified set of collections. Of the total of 1,348 author keywords, only 23 words meet the cap of the chosen minimum occurrence (10). The network in Figure 5 illustrates the 23 most pronounced sub-themes in the structure.

The first cluster comprised manifested yet diverse sub-themes of marketing research purview concerning middle-income economies, such as attitudinal loyalty, corporate image, customer satisfaction, customer trust, India, Malaysia, perceived value, and service quality. The second cluster discusses the concepts of brand retention and digital media, including keywords like brand image, brand loyalty, customer engagement, customer retention, social media, and social media marketing. The third cluster was aligned with the theory of customer relationship management, embracing the following five concepts: customer loyalty, customer relationship management, marketing, relationship marketing, and relationship quality. The fourth cluster presents the following prominent formative constructs of consumer behavior: commitment, loyalty, satisfaction, and trust.

Analysis of Co-citation of Cited References

Again using the VOSviewer software, an intellectual structure of co-citation of cited references has been prepared, as shown in Figure 6, based on the number of times they were cited together in the same publication because references reflect the source for a publication to a certain level.

Primarily, three clusters had been formed showing the references that were more frequently cited with each other, along with the count of citations and total link strength as shown in Table 7.

Of the total 25,841 total cited references, the minimum number of citations for a cited reference was determined to be 15, and only 11 met the threshold. Accordingly, the highly cited reference with the maximum link

Figure 6. Network Visualization of Co-citation of Cited References

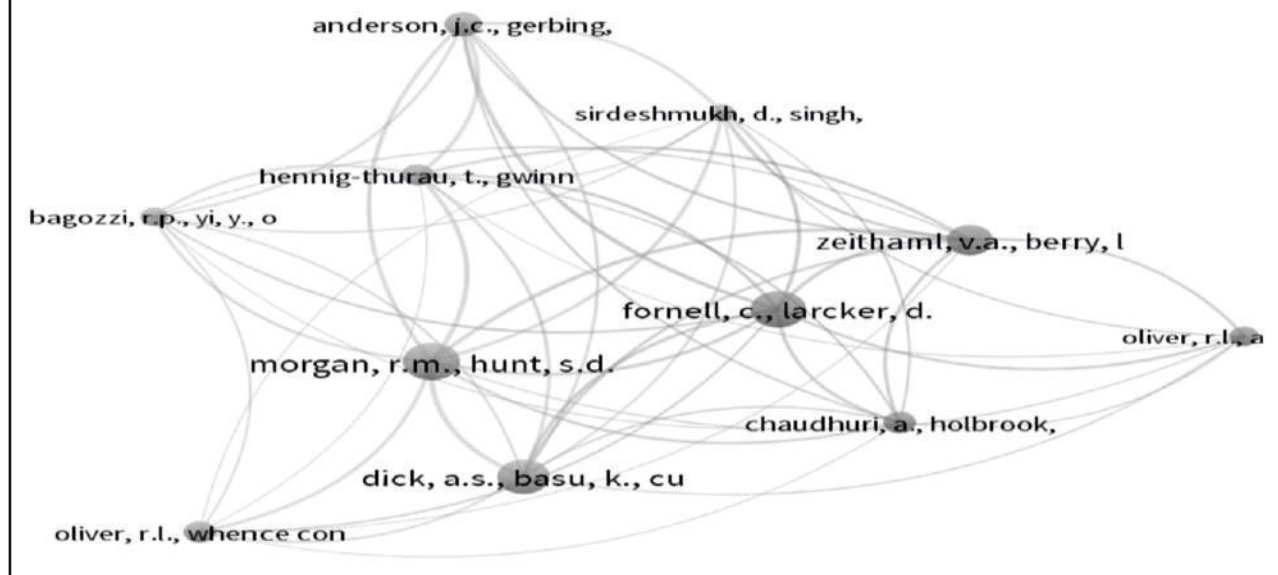


Table 7. Clusters for Co-citation of Cited References

Cluster	Paper	Author	Year	Journal	Citations	Total Link Strength
Cluster 1	"Structural Equation Modeling in Practice: A Review and Recommended Two-Step Approach"	James C. Anderson & David W. Gerbing	1988	<i>Psychological Bulletin</i>	24	46
	"On the Evaluation of Structural Equation Models"	Richard P. Bagozzi & Youjae Yi	1988	<i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>	16	30
	"Understanding Relationship Marketing Outcomes: An Integration of Relational Benefits and Relationship Quality"	Thorsten Hennig-Thurau, Kevin P. Gwinner, and Dwayne D. Gremler	2002	<i>Journal of Service Research</i>	19	46
	"Consumer Trust, Value, and Loyalty in Relational Exchanges"	Deepak Sirdeshmukh, Jagdip Singh, & Barry Sabol	2002	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	15	38
Cluster 2	"The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty"	Arjun Chaudhuri & Morris B. Holbrook	2001	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	20	31
	"Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error"	Claes Fornell & David F. Larcker	1981	<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	41	63
	"A Cognitive Model of the Antecedents and Consequences of Satisfaction Decisions"	Richard L. Oliver	1980	<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	17	20
	"The Behavioral Consequences of Service Quality"	Valarie A. Zeithaml, Leonard L. Berry, & A. Parasuraman	1996	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	33	51
Cluster 3	"Customer Loyalty: Toward an Integrated Conceptual Framework"	Alan S. Dick & Kunal Basu	1994	<i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>	39	47

"The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing"	Robert M. Morgan & Shelby D. Hunt	1994	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	43	67
"Whence Consumer Loyalty?"	Richard L. Oliver	1999	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	20	19

strength was by Morgan and Hunt (1994), titled "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing," with 43 citations and 67 links. The vital insight that one could get was that the highly cited articles were published before 2002 (the majority preceding 2000), although the field matures and evolves in terms of publication output after the said years.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

Customer loyalty is an enormously emerging theme of marketing research, and the increasing number of articles can be seen as supplementary proof of this fact. Through this review article, we attempted to retrospectively examine the work done in middle-income economies on the theme of customer loyalty in the marketing sphere. Theoretically, this research study strengthens past research and its constituents like sources, contributors, articles, keywords, and references by way of a critical appraisal of the contribution of middle-income economies to customer loyalty in the domain of marketing. Because if deprived of the voices of developing economies and their input for the research, it would deny a globally pertinent viewpoint on the said theme. Practically, customer loyalty is an issue of immense interest for marketers, given their gains for corporations. Through this bibliometric review, one could get a quantitative interpretation of customer loyalty through the lens of middle-income economies. This will help the marketing practitioners of said lands undertake an idiosyncratic observation while creating policies for such provinces and other theoretical foundations for the advancement of their loyalty agendas.

Conclusion

The scientific elucidation, mapping, and visualization of previous understandings of customer loyalty in marketing have been lucidly synthesized and logically systematized through the lens of middle-income economies by using various qualitative, quantitative, and structural bibliometric indicators to function as a podium for forthcoming research work. This research study provides a critical research review of the developments on the said theme using various pointers such as the publication's analysis over time, citation structure, the core sources as per Bradford's Law, the most prolific authors, and their productivity pattern under Lotka's Law, country-wise research collaboration arrangements, the most globally and locally cited articles, the most co-occurring keywords, and the most co-cited references. The turnaround momentum that it received from academia in developing lands in the last few years has been remarkable, which has been verified by this review study as well. Moreover, this bibliometric analysis from the position of such economies was well-harmonized with the previous explanations regarding loyalty altogether, thus fueling the need for more future research exploration in this sphere. The findings drawn from this review, in turn, provide a pathway to move the discipline forward. In this regard, there are high prospects that this retrospection will generate revitalized robustness and consideration in further exploring the focal phenomenon of customer loyalty from the perspective of middle-income economies.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The research takes along the scholarly inputs made by existing studies relating to customer loyalty in the marketing sphere, with a specific emphasis on middle-income economies. Undoubtedly, there were also certain

limitations in how the data were organized and the outcomes exhibited. Magnifying the scope of keywords to include other facets of loyalty, such as customer retention, satisfaction, trust, and an extensive collection of other words, could have helped develop a more comprehensive dataset for the field. In addition, there were also prospects for the manual content analysis of a few instrumental papers to ascertain more research gaps. Furthermore, the most noteworthy limitation was that different techniques were exercised earlier to measure the impact of a paper. The most customary one was to calculate the citation count. Although, in addition to the status of an article determined by the citation count, standing is another pointer, which is the number of instances an article is cited by extremely cited articles. Such measures that consider both status and standing were overlooked in this research.

However, besides these limitations to be considered for future research, budding researchers can pick upper-income or lower-income economies and contrast their findings with the present study. A gap analysis can then provide rational insights into variations in the quantum and quality of the developed, developing, and underdeveloped regions. As developed nations' investigations have already aligned the research track for many years, an engaging academic lens of integrated embeddedness could advance the research route.

Future research necessitates investigating customer loyalty at the sub-national stage as well, like within big developing markets such as China, India, and South Africa. Researchers must study sub-national attributes to comprehend how these sub-national features, such as regional marketing philosophies, varied cultural settings, and diverse market arrangements, shape customer loyalty. It would further be interesting to analyze the relevant institutions and establishments where more work on customer loyalty has been done and observe the reflection of such work on their global standing.

Moreover, the theme of customer loyalty revolves around numerous branches of learning apart from the exploration within the marketing sphere. Therefore, deriving concepts from other specialties would generate advantages and possible fears, such as abnormalities, prejudiced understandings, and misconceptions. Potential researchers can accomplish meticulous unification from disciplines such as sociology, psychology, economics, and other management fields. In addition, customer loyalty and churn are two opposite philosophies, yet the real strength of an organization can only be assessed if the position on these two concepts is studied in totality. The research work taking these two facets together is highly warranted in the future and could give tremendous impetus to practice.

Authors' Contribution

Twinkle Gulati and Dr. Siddharatha Shankar both envisioned the idea and developed the research design harmoniously to undertake this retrospective review study. Twinkle Gulati extracted the research papers from the Scopus database, filtered them, and ran the bibliometric analysis on the Bibliometrix R package and VOSviewer. Both the authors, Twinkle Gulati and Dr. Siddharatha Shankar, prepared the manuscript, including the interpretations of the findings. Both authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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