UNIVERSIDADE CATOLICA PORTUGUESA

Development of Marketing Automation - Next Steps and Future Avenues

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Development of Marketing Automation - Next Steps and Future Avenues

Master's Final Work in the modality of Dissertation presented to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to fulfill the requirements for the degree of Master in Marketing

by

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under the supervision of
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In loving memory of Avelino Lage da Silva

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Resumo

A automatização das operações de marketing tornou-se uma estratégia predominante para as empresas que procuram melhorar a aquisição, os percursos, o envolvimento e a retenção de clientes. Esta análise sistemática da literatura pretende explorar o impacto da automatização do marketing (AM) nos aspectos críticos da gestão da relação com o cliente através de uma análise exaustiva das revistas mais reputadas e revistas pelos pares. Os principais temas, abordagens teóricas, padrões e perspectivas sobre a eficácia da AM na melhoria das operações de marketing e no complemento das operações de vendas. Globalmente, este inquérito tem como objetivo sintetizar as conclusões, proporcionando uma compreensão holística do AM e uma base para futuras correntes teóricas e práticas. A otimização contínua da experiência e da facilidade de utilização dos clientes, a integração de novas tecnologias, a garantia de colaboração entre as partes interessadas e a manutenção de sistemas de informação precisos são imperativos para uma adoção bem sucedida da AM.

Palavras-chave: automatização do marketing, estratégia de marketing, revisão sistemática da literatura, bibliometria

Abstract

Automating marketing operations has become a prevalent strategy for businesses seeking to enhance customer acquisition, journeys, engagement, and retention. This systematic literature review intends to explore the impact of marketing automation (MA) on the critical aspects of customer relationship management through a comprehensive review of the most reputable and peer-reviewed journals. The major themes, theoretical approaches, patterns, and insights into the effectiveness of MA in improving marketing operations and complementing sales operations. Overall, this inquiry aims to synthesise the findings, providing a holistic understanding of MA and a basis for future theoretical and practical streams. Continuously optimising customers' experience and usability, integrating new technologies, ensuring collaboration among stakeholders, and maintaining accurate reporting systems are imperative to successful adoption of MA.

Keywords: marketing automation, marketing strategy, systematic literature review, bibliometrics

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1. Introduction

Marketing automation (MA) and its influence on all facets of life, and business have indicated influential developments in prior decades – revolutionising consumer behaviour. Consumers are increasingly preferring autonomy when deciding to purchase a product - creating an ever-greater demand for marketing automation (Wertenbroch et al., 2020). MA software facilitates an opportunity to reduce the time spent on repetitive tasks (eg. segmenting and nurturing customers on purchase intention, generating leads from website traffic, tracking marketing campaign performance), and customer services (eg. Coffee baristas, AI bots). The marketing mix is changing and in the next years it is expected to observe a further increase in automation (hyper-targeting and robotics) while human touch and feel are expected to persist (Wichmann et al., 2022).

Accordingly MA has been studied under varying perspectives, including consumers' product preferences (Schroll et al., 2018; Clegg et al., 2023), chatbots (Hildebrand & Bergner, 2021; Castelo et al., 2023), user-generated content (Roelen-Blasberg et al., 2023; Carlson et al., 2023), data collection of questionnaire responses (Savage et al., 2020), managerial metric (Mintz et al., 2021), and post-purchase outcomes (Smith et al., 2023) with contemporary works aiming at analysing the influence of artificial intelligence in marketing and more precisely its influence on AI. AI positively influences firms' gross and net operating efficiency (Mishra et al., 2022), but automation technologies have increased volatility and factors to consider when managing changes especially when creating one-voice strategies (Singh et al., 2021). Next, when studying consumers' interactions, when connecting digital and physical IoT products and services, with smart objects in different social settings, Novak and Hoffman (2023) found that consumers are continuously adopting automation practices, adopting an 'if-this-then-that' when integrating technologies. However, it was found that car drivers who strongly identify with a certain social category resist automated features (automatic transmissions) as they

are seen to hinder their identities (Leung et al., 2018), and consumers who derive meaning from manual labour, have less favouring to autonomous products (de Bellis et al., 2023). The material nature of 'legacy technology' for vinyl collectors indicate that the physicality of vinyl facilitates a strong relationship with music, indicating that some products have a limit to their automation (Fernandez & Beverland, 2019).

The rise and rapid transformation of today's digital consumer markets and industrial competition have led to a massive technological innovation boom, with a wide range of innovative products and services deployed as competitive tools in the marketplace. The increase in processing power of computers, developments in the field of machine learning, increased demand for personalisation, availability of consumer data, and greater emphasis on economies of scale have led to significant developments of MA technologies. Digital business capabilities (DBC) significantly contribute to the firm's performance; however, while a large majority of companies use MA, there is a paucity of knowledge on which metrics firms should employ, evaluate, and execute when using these platforms (Mintz et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2022). Moreover intransitivity of consumers' privacy valuations emerges from the increased compatibility of representing the value of private data in monetary terms rather than in tangible goods, making direct comparisons between private data and goods challenging (Tomaino et al., 2023). The relevancy of data is the pinnacle to the success of these technologies due to customer preferences changing, adequate infrastructure, advancements in microchips, and secure production are all vital for the entire ecosystem to exist, with correct measurement, correlation to understanding consumer preferences, and correct training and understanding of the entirety of these technologies.

Automation of marketing activities is backed by information technology developments. It is imperative for academics to focus on the comprehensive approach and not specific aspects of marketing followed by companies (Stone, 2021). The adoption

of AI-based systems differs from the adoption of older technologies (Davenport et al., 2020) thus previous theories do not apply to studying the functioning within the marketing discipline. Further, authors have studied enhancing the effectiveness and decision-making of businesses through AI-based marketing automation (Anayat & Rasool, 2022). However, studies directly mentioning 'marketing automation' reveal 14 relevant studies from 2001 until 2023. As a result, this work aims to provide a synopsis of the literature on marketing automation and automation in the context of marketing. This systematic review of the literature from 2001 - 2023 highlights the history of applications of MA in relevant journal articles, summarising the findings and analysing the sample of 320 manuscripts published in peer-reviewed journals through a bibliometrics analysis. In addition, citation, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and co-word analysis will synthesize, conceptualise, and understand the scope of the research on MA. The paper aims to answer how the implementation of MA software impacts the return on marketing investment and what are the strategic and operational factors that influence the effectiveness of MA.

Results from the analysis reveal that earlier scholarly attention, being grounded in theoretical models to understand the human and technological confluence, focused on sales force automation adoption. With the rise in popularity of personal selling for enhanced relationship building and technology development, businesses capitalised on the opportunity to shorten lead times, enhance customer journeys, and customise offerings. MA specifically transgressed from CRM software, which contained a plethora of customer information, and marketers soon adapted the fundamental architecture as a method of enhancing value. MA tools were used for translating this information to better understand their customers as they interact with the business - ultimately aiding their decision-making capabilities. Understanding customer journeys across multiple touchpoints is critical to achieving Integrated Marketing Communications. Moreover, MA is continually being adopted at an increasing rate, with contemporary applications

being seen across operational and strategic marketing. Automation is a fundamental theory in Industry 4.0 and AI, IoT, Blockchain, Big Data Analytics, 3D Printing, and Cloud Computing (CC) are all accelerating automation (Chae & Olson, 2022). Results from bibliometric analysis are interpreted, future research streams are recommended, and theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

This thesis begins by mapping out the emergence of the research field on marketing automation and highlighting notable prior reviews, followed by a detailed breakdown of the methodological approach used. In doing so, this thesis aims to answer the following questions: RQ1 - What are the underlying theoretical approaches, major research themes, and methodological approaches in the marketing automation research field?; RQ2 - What are the future research streams for marketing automation, in terms of theoretical and practical approaches? Analyses of the results from descriptive statistics, keyword co-occurrence, citation analysis, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and co-word are presented. Co-citation analysis reveals four clusters of themes based on the sample of articles: user behaviour in the context of technology adoption, technology advancements, global adoption and applications of marketing automation, and impact on business performance and strategies. A comprehensive discussion is presented and future research avenues are alluded to before conclusions are illustrated.

2. Research on Marketing Automation: Emergence of the field and prior review

2.1. From Automate to Marketing Automation

Automation has been around for centuries, the most notable being the invention of the water wheel – a semi-automated solution that utilised the falling water of a windmill. The term 'automation' was popularised in the 1940s because of the industrial revolution which led to the increased usage of automatic devices and controls in mechanised

production lines. In the seminal work 'Automation in Marketing' Goeldner (1962) predicted that '… the future of shopping may become less socially attractive.' – referring to purchasing staple items (food, drugs, variety items) as customers prefer to optimise the entire customer journey. Stone and Shaw in 1987 then went on to investigate the concept of marketing a database to achieve a competitive advantage. With technology developing at a rapid pace, users' acceptance of information technology was soon investigated on its perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use - usefulness has the greatest correlation with usage behaviour in information technology adoption, and perceived ease of use impacts perceived usefulness (Davis, 1989).

John D.C. Little described Marketing Automation (MA) in 2001 as "automated marketing decision support on the Internet" (Little, 2001). The benefits of administrative and clinical computerisation of a large transplant centre revealed that integrating information is vital for maximised performance, profitability, and accuracy while decreasing time and costs (Tietjen et al., 2002). Additionally, scholars in the industrial marketing domain would soon reveal the increased efficiency and effectiveness achieved by sales force automation (Cho & Chang, 2008) and their usage to support customer relationship management strategies (Speier & Venkatesh, 2002; Park et al., 2010) and usage on both job function and relationship quality (Holloway et al., 2013). The social influence of coworkers and superiors on sales force automation adoption (Homburg et al., 2010; Cascio et al, 2010). MA is the use of technology and software to automate simple marketing processes and tasks. MA is used for marketing operations, forecasting, predictive analytics, and campaign tracking and execution (Chintalapati & Pandey, 2022). The definition has grown to include software, as technological advancements have complemented the desire to speed up the processes of fulfilment and reduce fixed costs thus leading to greater margins.

2.2. Prior Reviews on Marketing Automation

The current topography of literature on MA is fragmented and perspectives lack common classification. Prior reviews have focused on the applications of MA, digital marketing usage in higher education (Harbi & Maqsood, 2022), and platforms (Bartelheimer et al., 2022), while others have focused on novel extensions of the scope of MA such as cognitive automation (Engel et al., 2022), robotic process automation (RPA) (Hofmann et al., 2020).

Harbi & Maqsood (2022) concluded that digital marketing usage in higher education studies portrayed the relationships with the usage of websites and social media, however, marketing automation, email marketing, search engine marketing, content marketing, and affiliated marketing are areas that lack attention by scholars.
'Robotic Process Automation' by Hoffmann et al. (2020) studied the major traits that characterise robotic process automation (RPA) positing that this technology is guided by the paradigm shift, digital transformation.

Engel et al (2022) describe the key topics around cognitive automation highlighting the significant strategic opportunities to gain value. Cognitive automation, enabled by AI, extends the traditional deterministic business process automation (BPA) by integrating probabilistic automation of knowledge and service. This review focuses on the strategic opportunities to acquire business value, overviewing the approaches in 'workflow management', ' robotic process automation', and 'machine learning BPA'. The authors then emphasise how this technological phenomenon is represented by machine learning-facilitated BPA systems within lightweight and heavyweight IT implementation in larger IS ecosystems.

Bartelheimer et al. (2022) focused on the 'platform' concept through semantic analyses, providing a lexicon on platform concepts and identifying six research streams on platforms each with its unique platform terms. The paper uses automated textual

mining and unsupervised machine learning to collect, analyse, and interpret the information systems discipline use of the term 'platforms'.

Based on the analysis of prior reviews, it is evident that this paper provides a novel approach to classifying automation, employs a methodological approach to gain insight into the broader discipline of marketing that has not been utilised by other authors, and, analyses citations and co-citations within the providing a unique understanding of theoretical approaches used to understand the concept. Furthermore, this paper focuses on papers from 2001 to 2023, mainly drawing attention to recent studies, and providing a basis for future research directions.

3. Methodology

3.1. Typology of reviews and methods

A literature review can broadly be defined as a systematic method of gathering and merging prior research (Baumeister & Leary, 1997; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003), at the same time, determining whether an effect is constant across studies and discovering what future studies are required to be conducted to demonstrate the effect (Snyder, 2019). A systematic literature review targets to logically find and synthesize research that conveys a particular question, using structured, visible, and replicable procedures at each step in the process (Littell et al. 2008, p.1). The degree to which each measure is emphasized varies by paper. Topic review, study design, sampling, data collection, data analysis, and reporting. This is like (Snyder, 2019) who suggested the process of conducting the literature review must be broken down into designing the review, conducting the review, analysing, and writing up the review. According to the editorial by Palmatier et al. (2018), the structure of systematic review papers must have depth and rigour, replicability, usability, and helpful format. This method of analysis trumps

theoretical literature reviews that often lack thoroughness and rigour and are conducted ad hoc, rather than following a specific methodology, therefore, questions can be raised about the quality and trustworthiness of these types of reviews (Snyder, 2019). While systematic reviews have strict requirements for search strategy and selecting articles for inclusion in the review, they are effective in synthesizing what the collection of studies is showing in a particular question and can provide evidence of effect that can inform policy and practice. (Snyder, 2019).

Systematic literature reviews help provide an overview of areas in which the research is disparate and interdisciplinary, much is the case with MA literature. Additionally, a literature review is an exceptional method for uncovering topics in which more research is needed and producing research findings to show evidence on a meta-level, a critical component of creating theoretical frameworks and building conceptual models. (Snyder, 2019). The study aims to further investigate the development of MA by highlighting the usage of the technology, antecedents that may influence the decision to adopt the technology, the impact that this novel technology has on return on marketing investment and what are the strategic and operational factors that influence the effectiveness of MA. Notable reviews from other authors are indicated below providing insights into how this paper is unique, no reviews have been done in the previous two years and the methodology chosen with the sample gives a novel approach.

Based on this, the current paper seeks to systematically refine the intellectual domain based on the exclusion criteria. The selected sample of papers is then represented and illustrated using Bibliometric analysis – citation, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and co-word. Bibliometric analysis was chosen as the most suitable to comprehensively analyse the literature based on the number of empirical contributions producing vast, fragmented, and belligerent research streams (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Author	Measurement	Sample	Database	Method of Analysis	Findings or Outcomes
(Vlačić et al., 2021)	Marketing and AI	164	Web of Science & Scopus	Systematic literature review, sample analysed using Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA)	Outlines several research avenues related to the adoption, use, and acceptance of AI technology in marketing, the role of data protection and ethics, the role of institutional support for marketing AI, as well as the revolution of the labour market and marketers' competencies
(Saura et al., 2021)	AI-based CRMs in B2B digital marketing	30	ACM Digital Library, AIS Electronic Library, IEEE Explore, Science Direct, and Web of Sciences	Systematic literature review, selected articles analysed using Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA)	Main applications of AI-based CRMs in B2B Digital Marketing strategies and future guidelines and propositions to develop strategies based on AI-based CRMs in B2B digital marketing
(Anayat & Rasool, 2022)	Artificial Intelligence in Marketing	328	Scopus	Systematic literature review with bibliometric analysis - performance analysis and science mapping	Analysis categorised topics in the field found through science mapping is AI for data analytics; AI for decision-making; AI for digital behaviour; AI for consumer service; AI for predictive analysis; AI for design thinking; Value Co-creation through AI; AI for marketing automation, and managing negative side of AI.

(Mariani et al., 2022)	AI and marketing, consumer research, and psychology	4 488	Scopus	Systematic literature review with bibliometric analysis - performance analysis and science mapping	• Overview identified eight topical clusters: (1) memory and computational logic; (2) decision-making and cognitive processes; (3) neural networks; (4) machine learning and linguistic analysis; (5) social media and text mining; (6) social media content analytics; (7) technology acceptance and adoption; and (8) big data and robots. • 412 theoretical lenses used in these studies with the most frequently used being: (1) the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology; (2) game theory; (3) the theory of mind; (4) theory of planned behaviour; (5) computational theories; (6) behavioural reasoning theory; (7) decision theories; and (8) evolutionary theory
(Chintalapati & Pandey, 2022)	digital transformation encouraged by the increasing influence of artificial intelligence (AI)	57	Scopus, Google Scholar, Sage, Springer, and Emerald	Systematic Literature Review, with quantitative and qualitative ranking	Ranks articles based on their coverage, impact, relevance, and contributed guidance, and elucidates the findings across various sectors, research contexts, and scenarios

Table of Notable Reviews in marketing

3.2. Data Collection

The research began by performing a database search, limited to peer-reviewed journal articles in academic journals across the databases of Scopus for the keywords "marketing automat*". A secondary search was done for "automat*" across Marketing Journals (see appendix), to broaden the query and gain a better understanding of the academia. Furthermore, The study is limited to papers published between 2001 and 2023, excluding any papers published outside these years, and restricted to peer-reviewed papers that have been empirically tested. A forward and backward sampling was performed and included in the literature. Figure 1 presents the methodological approach performed. Both searches revealed 655 journal articles, after deleting the duplicates, filtering out papers not focusing on Marketing, non-empirical, not English, and one retracted paper, the preliminary sample of papers is 300. Backward and forward sampling was employed. Backward sampling was done by analysing references in the most reputable journals, revealing 7 manuscripts. Forward sampling was performed by searching for the term 'marketing automation" filtering for the years 2019 – 2023 and journals rated 3, 4, and 4* according to the AJG score, across the databases of Web of Science, EBSCO Discovery Services (EDS), JSTOR, Taylor & Francis, and Emerald. Adding the papers from forward and backward sampling, the total number of articles analysed is 320.

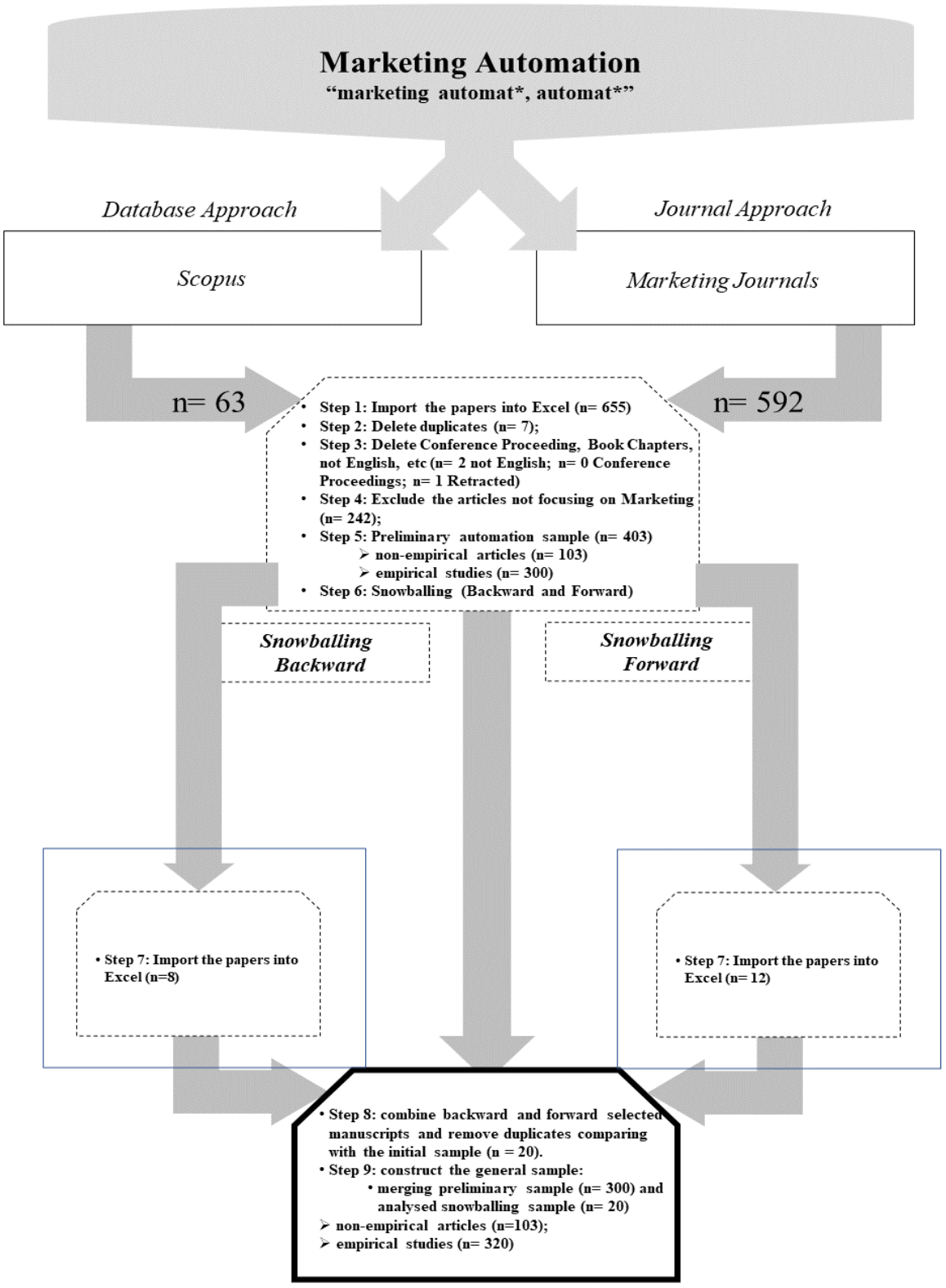

Figure 1: Methodological protocol

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

The graph of publications by year indicates that in 2023 there were 43 articles, 2022 (35), 2021 (30), and 2020 (32). However further analysis of the keywords directly mentioning 'marketing automation' reveals 14 studies. Overall, there is evidence to conclude that there is a growth in the literature of MA. The abrupt increase in publications between the years 2018 and 2019 may be due to numerous factors, by analysing the sample, it becomes clear that some journals are referenced substantially more than others and essential works were analysed to predict the increase seen below.

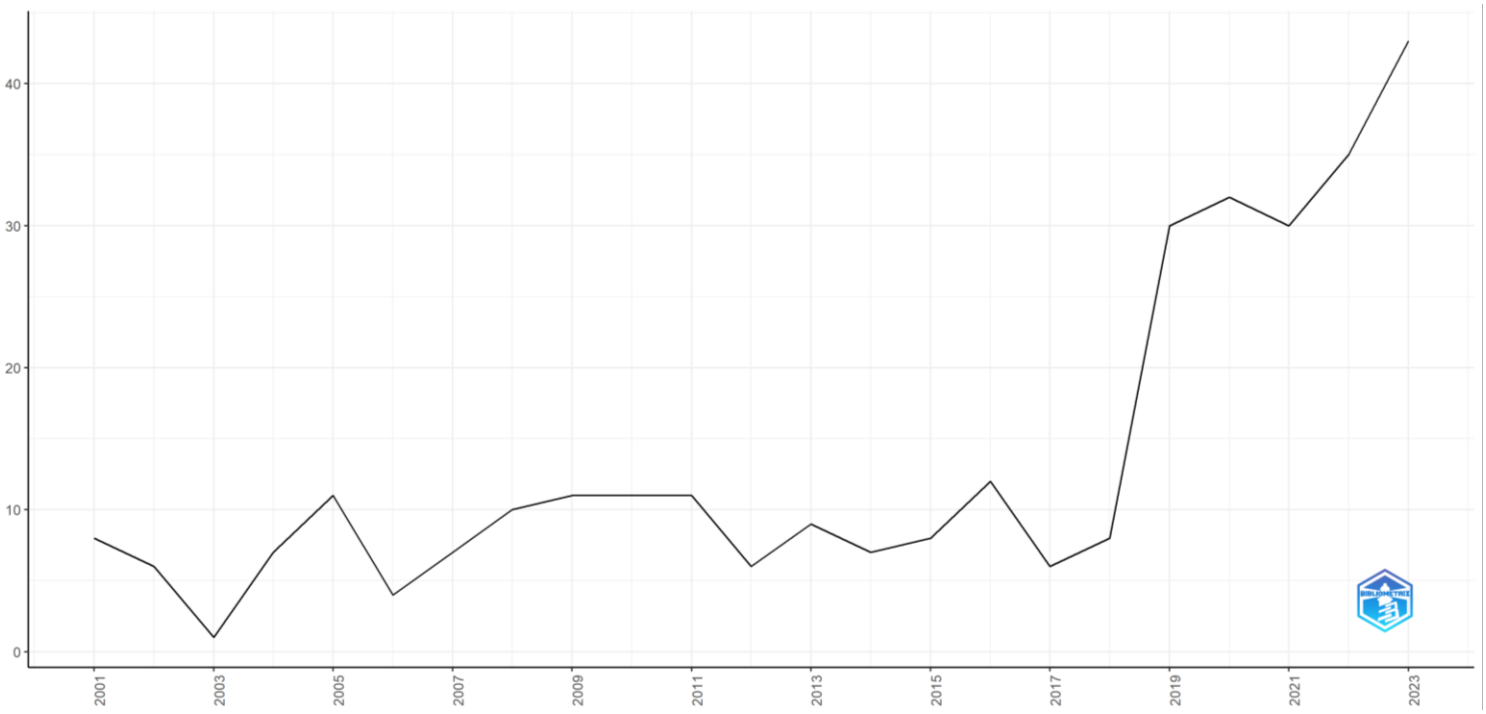

Figure 2: Publications by Year

In 2016 the most influential paper based of number of citations is "Harnessing marketing automation for B2B content marketing" which stressed the growing importance internet to B2B customer purchase journeys. Other works employing automated content analysis have high citation counts. Notable works from 2019 include European Journal of Marketing volume 53. In this volume, Taiminen & Ranaweera (2019) and Fernandez & Beverland (2019) published "Fostering brand engagement and value-laden trusted B2B relationships through digital content marketing: The role of brand's helpfulness" and "As the record spins: materialising connections" respectively. Other notable volumes include International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management 47 where "Exploring trends, implications and challenges for logistics information systems in omni-channels" (Kembro & Norrman, 2019) and "Buy online collect in-store: exploring grocery click&collect using a national case study" (Davies et al., 2019). At a combined total citations of 623 , the articles with the most citation are both studying automated text analysis, comparing classification methods (Hartmann et al., 2019) and usage in consumer research (Humphreys & Wang, 2018). This indicates that both papers were adapted many times by other authors and thus strongly influencing the research domain. It is not enough evidence to conclude whether this relationship exists or not, however, it is reasonable to assume that these works were crucial in marketing automation domain development.

In the sample, Industrial Marketing Management has the highest amount of publications with 27, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services (21), Electronic Markets (15), Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing (13), International Journal of Consumer Studies (12), Journal of Interactive Marketing (12), International Journal of Bank Marketing (10), Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management (10), Marketing Science (10), and Psychology & Marketing (10).

4.2. Keyword co-occurrence

Figure 2 demonstrates the co-occurrence of keywords from the selected articles, it studies the current of future relations between different themes and provides a thematic view of the study area (Donthu et al., 2021). with strong weightings for 'artificial intelligence", 'machine learning", "consumption behaviour", "consumer behaviour", "marketing", "retailing", and "automation".

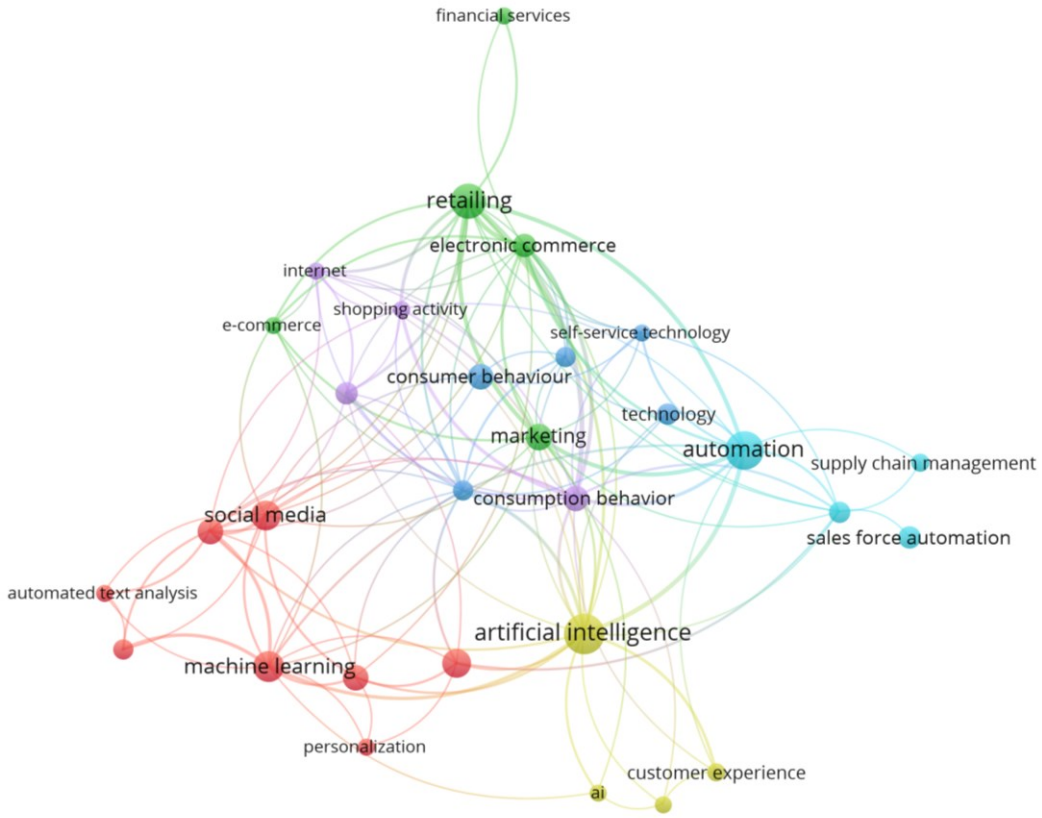

Figure 3. Keyword co-occurrence

Further analysis of figure 3 reveals several distinct themes all with different connections thus forming a cluster of similar words. The size of the circle determines the weighting based on occurrence, the distance between the words indicate their relative relationship to one another.

Cluster 1 the link between AI and operations. For instance AI and robotics in restaurant sector across Europe (Blöcher & Alt, 2021), the interplay between service quality and automation (Rust & Huang, 2012), customer satisfaction and service quality, such as matching banner advertisements to cognitive-style sections (Urban et al., 2014). While more recent studies use machine learning to analyse online shopping cart abandonment across e-commerce companies (Rausch et al., 2022). Further, the intersection of customer experience and AI to automate systems was studied by analysing AI-driven banking services for a personalised experience in developing countries (Sheth et al., 2022). Furthermore, Wilson-Nash et al. (2020) studied AI along the customer journey, more precisely in customer service by measuring customer responses to automated relationship management, on social media channels (Facebook).

Demonstrated in cluster 2 is the interplay of technological adoption and relationship management. Studies have focused on the link between automation and supply chain management, airlines ability to share and learn information are more likely to automate processes in the supply chain when adopting a, e-procurement tool (Zahay & Handfield, 2004). Consumer behaviour in retail settings with automated Other authors would also look at salesforce adutomation adoption (Gohmann et al., 2005; Bush et al., 2005; Buehrer et al., 2005; (Holloway et al., 2013). The relationship between content marketing, as a means to be perceived as helpful, and relationship marketing (Taiminen & Ranaweera, 2019).

Cluster 3, the main themes are centred around technology and customer behaviour. Consumer perceptions about self-service technology, particularly automated parcel stations in Taiwan (Chen et al., 2020), role of empathy in service failure (Chen et al., 2021), smart lockers in delivery service (Tsai & Tiwasing, 2021), self checkout systems at retailers (Lee, 2017), and automated banking services (Mohammed & Ward, 2006). Within the cluster, trust is a central theme that extends to chatbots which is also linked to consumer behaviour. Whether to trust chatbots, in the context of e-commerce, by studying

consumers' emotianl interactions with chatbots (Wang et al., 2023). Consumers' sentiments towards chatbots and the impact that these chatbots have on their sentiments and expectaitions towards future interactions with online human representatives (Tran et al., 2021).

Within cluster 4 reveals the themes around big data and personalisation. Adaptive personalisation and digital audio players (Chung et al., 2009), triggered email marketing and browse abandonments (Goic et al., 2021), features of entertainment products (Toubia et al., 2019), fake news' emotional appeal (Paschen, 2020).

Cluster 5 reveals the themes of social media and marketing research. Sentiment analysis of YouTube streaming data in the hospitality industry (Kim et al., 2022), extracting brand image using big data (Liu et al., 2020).

Cluster 6 indicates the themes of online advertising and digital marketing. Hypertargeting influences from computer estimation of customer similarities (Semeradova & Weinlich, 2019), social marketing influence on behavioural change, electricity consumption (Harries et al., 2013), B2B content marketing (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016).

Lastly, cluster 7 shows the themes of data-driven marketing. Identifying influencers using natural language processing (Fang & Wang, 2022), brand perceptions on social media (Liu et al., 2020), deep learning for personalised feedback on creative appeals (Hong & Hoban, 2021) and customer engagement using adaptive selling on e-retailers websites (Kaptein et al., 2018).

4.3. Citation Analysis

Citation analysis was performed to uncover the research field and analyse the scientific connections between authors - providing reliable knowledge to the field (Anderson & Lemken, 2023). Citation analysis counts the citations as a measure of similarity between documents, journals, and authors (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The

results of the citation analysis, are presented in Figures 3 and 4.

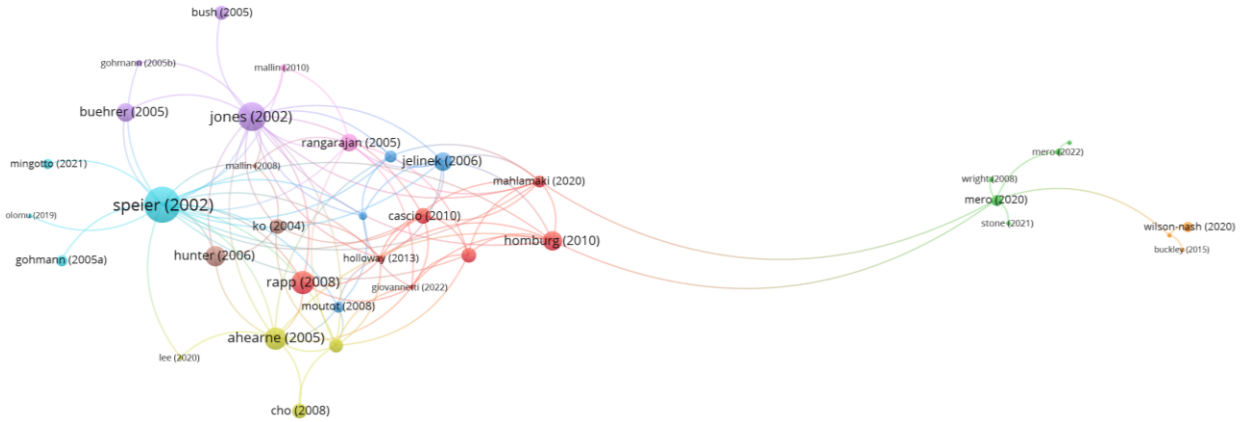

Figure 4: Citation analysis illustration – authors' network

The number of global citations per paper: "Resistance to Medical Artificial Intelligence" (Longoni et al., 2019) (572), "Fostering consumer-brand relationships in social media environments: The role of parasocial interaction" (Labrecque, 2014) (514), "Automated text analysis for consumer research" (Humphreys & Wang, 2018) (370), "The Hidden Minefields in the Adoption of Sales Force Automation Technologies" (Speier & Venkatesh, 2002b) (341), "Automated marketing research using online customer reviews" (T. Y. Lee & Bradlow, 2011) (337).

Longoni (2019) is the most cited article in the sample. This article extensively and thoroughly explores the psychology of automation and medical decision-making, thus making it a critical study on the adoption of AI in healthcare. The study investigates consumers' perceptions of healthcare services provided by AI - testing the relationship between the medical provider (human vs AI), moderated by a sense of uniqueness, and its influences on uniqueness neglect. Thus, uniqueness neglect, while being moderated by personalisation and recipient of care, is tested on its relationship with resistance to AI. The effect of medical providers on resistance to AI, moderated by AI role, stakes, and

other domains is also tested. This work provides significant insights into human and AI interplay and the findings apply to understanding consumer behaviour and the different influences that go into accepting technology-driven change.

Labrecque (2014) proposed a theoretical approach to designing social media strategies from the parasocial intervention (PSI) theory (a concept used to explain the relationship between consumers and mass media). PSI showed positive applications for relationship-building but is mediated by direct interaction with the brand.

Three studies, using a multi-method approach, provide evidence of PSl's role in the development of positive relationship outcomes. Mediation analysis reveals that this sense of feeling connected with the brand goes beyond the interaction itself and drives increased feelings of loyalty intentions and willingness to provide information to the brand. Evidence from this research suggests that these effects may not hold when consumers are aware of the possibility that the brand's social media response may be automated

Early studies aimed to analyse the adoption of sales force automation (SFA) technologies by salespeople: perceptions of technology rejection (Speier & Venkatesh, 2002a), attitudes impact on intention to use new sales force automation systems (Jones et al., 2002), orientation, information effectiveness, and sales performance (Hunter & Perreault, 2006), moderating the role of support and training (Ahearne et al., 2005), sales representative performance (Rapp et al., 2008), and how product knowledge influences performance indirectly, moderated by SFA use (Mariadoss et al., 2014). As the research surrounding sales force automation began to grow out of its continuous adoption. Management commitment alignment on salespersons' adoption (Cascio et al., 2010), managerial reasoning during the adoption of MA technology (Mero et al., 2020)

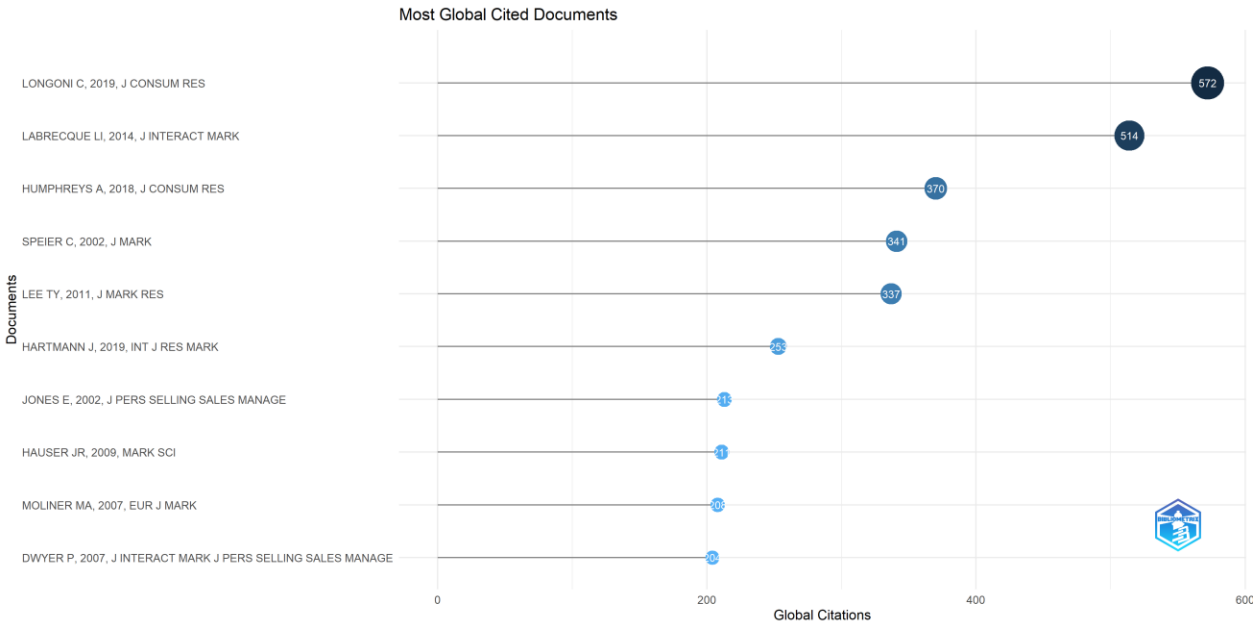

Figure 5. Number of global citations per paper

4.4. Co-citation

Co-citation consists of measuring the connection between publications through bibliographic background and when examined over time, shifts in paradigms and schools of thought are uncovered (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Illustrated in Figure 6, the automation co-citation network depicts 4 clusters. The diameter of the circle represents the number of citations obtained, the thickness of the lines indicates the strength of co-citation ties, the cluster of the circle identifies the thematic group with which the article is associated, and the link and proximity between two articles pick out the co-citation correlation between two articles

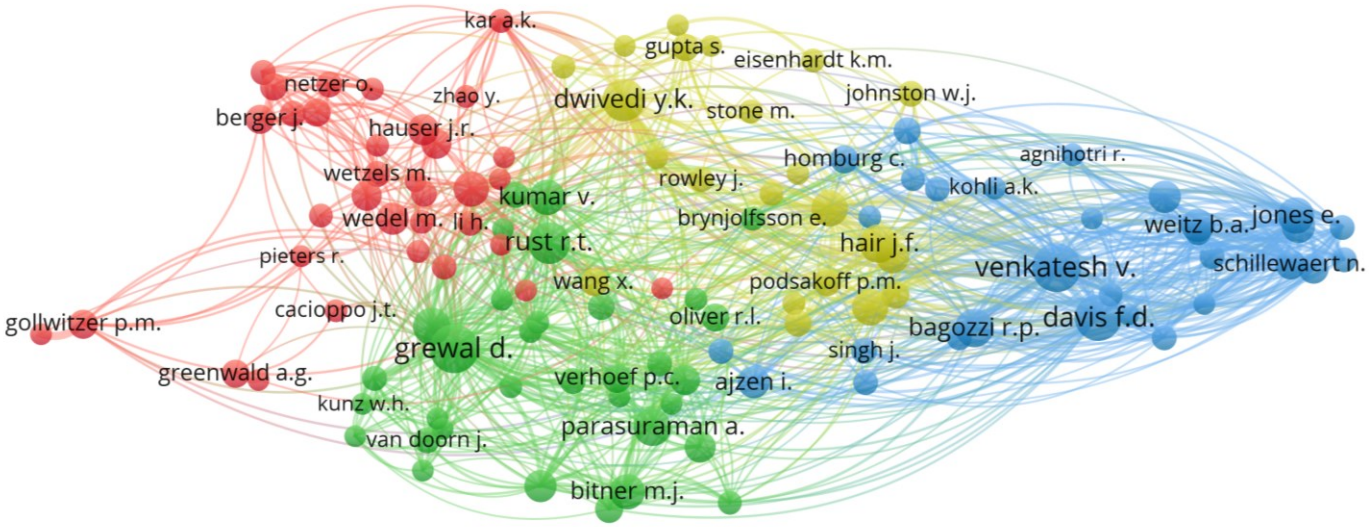

Figure 6. Co-citation network

4.4.1. *User Behaviour in the Context of Technology Adoption (blue cluster)*

The first cluster from the analysis indicates the relation between user behaviour in the context of technology adoption, these works have been fundamental in advancing consumer behaviour. Davis et al. (1989) performed a longitudinal study on users' acceptance of computers and their ability to explain their interests related to attitudes, subjective norms, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and others. Perceived usefulness strongly impacted users' intentions to accept computers, furthermore, perceived ease of use to a lesser extent, attitudes partially mediated the effects. Marketers began to focus more on relationship marketing and Morgan & Hunt (1994) laid the conceptual groundwork for relationship marketing positing the significance of relationship commitment and trust as mediators. Rogers (1995) proposed the idea of a model for the diffusion of innovations, he would later go on to test the model whereby he studied new telecommunications adoptions namely fax, email, mobile telephones, internet, and others (Rogers, 1995). The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) was proposed by Venkatesh et al. (2003) which is a proposed model

based on 8 models (the theory of reasoned action, the technology acceptance model, the motivational model, the theory of planned behaviour, a model combining the technology acceptance model and the theory of planned behaviour, the model of PC utilisation, the innovation diffusion model, and social cognitive theory). Perceptions about SFA technology were not adopted with ease, immediately after training, salespeople had positive perceptions of technology, however, six months after implementation, MA technology had been widely rejected with effects seen in decreased volunteerism and increased salesperson absenteeism, while also influencing perceptions of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, person-organisation fit, and person-job fit (Speier & Venkatesh, 2002a). Sales force automation tools only enhance salespeople's effectiveness and efficiency when sufficient support and training are provided (Ahearne et al., 2005; Rapp et al., 2008).

4.4.2. Technological Advancements (green cluster)

MA software grew out of email systems that provided automated segmented campaigns triggered by customer behaviour but not always based on the single customer view that a CRM system could provide, based on diverse data sets from across the business. Dynamic pricing and promotions based on exclusivity and volume discounts in retailers' targeting activities (mobile applications, online personal shopping assistants, and kiosks) have improved through the use of loyalty program data and clickstream history leading to improved targeting activities for retailers (Grewal et al., 2011). They go on to mention technology enablers and mention radio frequency identification (RFID), in-store digital messaging and eye-tracking equipment and electronic price tags as aids to their online and offline promotions and assessments of consumer responses (Grewal et al., 2011). In T. Y. Lee & Bradlow (2011), the authors laid out a method to analyse online customer reviews, thus supporting the visualisation and evaluation of market structures. This automated method of analysis has revolutionised research With the rise in the adoption of social media sites, consumers' expectations increase, prompting the

development of technologies to aid in successfully engaging users (Labrecque, 2014).. Studies such as Culotta & Cutler (2016) investigated a fully automated method for assuming brand perception ratings using Twitter data to mine the brand's social connections. X. Liu et al. (2017) would then go on to use a combination of text mining with latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) and sentiment analysis whereby they used 1,7 million tweets in their analysis. Automated textual analysis is a tool for examining patterns in text and can be used to examine psychological and sociological constructs (Humphreys & Wang, 2018b)

Adaptive personalisation of news feeds on mobile devices has various properties: an algorithm automatically recommends content, requires no proactive effort by the user, and the product adapts over time based on customer behaviour (Chung et al., 2016). Early adopters of this technology understood that this approach would produce better outcomes as time went on – as it learns about the customer, also, adaptive personalisation is superior to self-customisation (Chung et al., 2016). In service research, four types of AI are found: mechanical (automation), analytical, intuitive, and empathetic (Huang & Rust, 2018). Mechanical AI relies on mimicking human automation and is designed to have limited learning and adaptive ability.

By analysing customer assistance in online retailing patent information for conversational agents based on natural language, findings revealed that advancements were focusing on improving chatbot capabilities to automatically infer on users beginning with multiple data sources and utilising users' knowledge with the versatility to enhance customisability (Pantano & Pizzi, 2020). Social media websites pose major obstacles for marketers, particularly how the collection of personal information is performed, thus having a crucial impact on how users react to personalised advertising (Aguirre et al., 2015).

4.4.3. Global Adoption and Applications of Marketing Automation (red cluster)

MA generates high-quality sales leads through behavioural targeting and content personalisation (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016) increasing customer adoption and service relevance (Aguirre et al., 2015). Authors have studied how the success of marketing automation investments relies on information technology (IT) delivery possibilities (Buckley, 2015) while others have studied the potential of business transformation utilising MA technologies for salespeople (Redding, 2015). It was found that there was a 93% rebook rating increase after implementing a personalised digital print solution by a brand of mobile home holidays (Mylan, 2016). The continual adoption of these technologies was inevitable as a means to gain a competitive advantage. To meet omni-channle retailing demands, Swedish retailers are adopting new IS, requiring flexible platforms for real-time decision-making, efficient material handling, reducing network complexity and stricter lead-time requirements (Kembro & Norrman, 2019). A smart factory is an "intelligent factory" that promptly reflects customer needs using production automation and big data utilisation, producing at optimum efficiency and data analysis aids in increased productivity (H. Kim, 2022). However, these effects are lessened by product complexity.

The continuous adoption of MA was apparent across the world. MA technologies have developed, and their focus moved away from solely examining the influence on sales but instead on its influence on creating business value. Contrasting international new ventures from Italy and Poland showed that combining specialised marketing capabilities through architectural marketing capabilities contributes significantly to early international expansion (Kowalik et al., 2023). The emergence of the Internet of Things (IoT) has been studied extensively and influenced MA adoption and application with dynamic pricing has been demonstrated with online trading of agricultural produce (Julka & Singh, 2019). Fully automated retail stores are transforming physical retail (Pillai et al., 2020) thus providing consumers with a unique retail experience. Other applications

have been shown to increase organisations' performance such as AI-CRM which leverages intelligent systems to automate B2B relationship activities (Chatterjee et al., 2021). The overall adoption experience is based on the value addition of AI with investments done to build internal capability and how it is built and used by employees (Kar & Kushwaha, 2023).

4.4.4. Impact on Business Performance and Strategies (yellow cluster)

A common consensus was beginning to form among authors and practitioners that the optimal use of MA was for sales-related activities in both B2B and B2C models (Vaid et al., 2020). Studying the importance of marketing practices (managing customer equity, assets, and relationships) more precisely the relationship between MA innovation and customer retention performance, sales force automation was reported to have more influence (Olomu, 2019). Authors focused on MA's impact on business performance, focusing on its influence on sales and customer experience (Mahmoud et al., 2020). The antecedents of accepting sales structures in a supply chain, from a buyer perspective, found that ease of use and system adaptability influenced perceived effectiveness, ultimately influencing perceived usefulness, most surprisingly, perceived enjoyment had the highest significant effect on perceived usefulness (Mahlamäki et al., 2020). Coworkers have a significant influence on the adoption of knowledge management system technology, mainly through social influence – identification (individuals emulate others they identify with) and internalising (individuals adopt others' behaviour as their own) (Y. Wang et al., 2013). These effects are seen across different social groups: strong support for bottom-up social influence (across hierarchical levels), limited support for peer-level influence (within levels) and no support for top-down influence.

The fact remains that 'automation' extends to other areas of the business, more particularly, internal stakeholders of these technologies may be decision-makers on whether or not to implement such technologies but may not be in the marketing department, however, the decision areas which MA tools have the greatest influence is

on sales forecasting and demand planning, segmenting and targeting, promotion campaigns, direct marketing, and communication (Guercini, 2022). Furthermore, MA enables firms to map customers' journeys, acquire customer knowledge, and generate significant content for customer journeys in both B2B and B2C environments (Syam & Sharma, 2018; Mero et al., 2020). Customers who engage in hedonic mobile behaviours, such as using social networking, browsing videos, and playing games, have higher purchase intentions (Feng et al., 2020).

Firms can capitalise on MA software by using it for sales lead management, content marketing, and customer intelligence (Mero et al., 2022), resulting in a cohesive, precise, temporal, and robust set of marketing activities and processes. The relationship between the time personalisation of email marketing and financial consumers' responses was positively associated (Rizzo, 2020), this is similar to the findings of Deligiannis et al. (2020) that found the same correlation between personalisation of instant messages for repeat buyers of consumer-packaged goods. Using principles of big data analytics, Yang et al. (2020) empirically analysed data from emails concluding that emails are a valuable identification and monitoring of product demand trends. Notably, social media and email marketing tactics should focus their endeavours and resources on motivating purchase intent to increase repeat purchases (Barros et al., 2022). Consumers are living in an attention economy, with increased time spent on digital platforms, consumers are distracted, MA is attractive to businesses because it is effective at gaining attention (Yin, 2023)

4.5. Bibliographic Coupling

This study analyses the oeuvre of MA through bibliometrics for science mapping which can answer three general types of research questions: (1) identifying the knowledge base of a topic or research field and its intellectual structure, (2) examining the research field or conceptual structure, and (3) producing a social network structure of a scientific

community. An assessment of the relationship between citing publications through shared references is carried out. Bibliographic coupling (see Figure 7) analyses the established connections between authors in the current sample of papers, thus, allowing for niche articles to potentially be more conspicuous (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). The strength of coupling between articles is determined by the number of shared references (Chang et al., 2015).

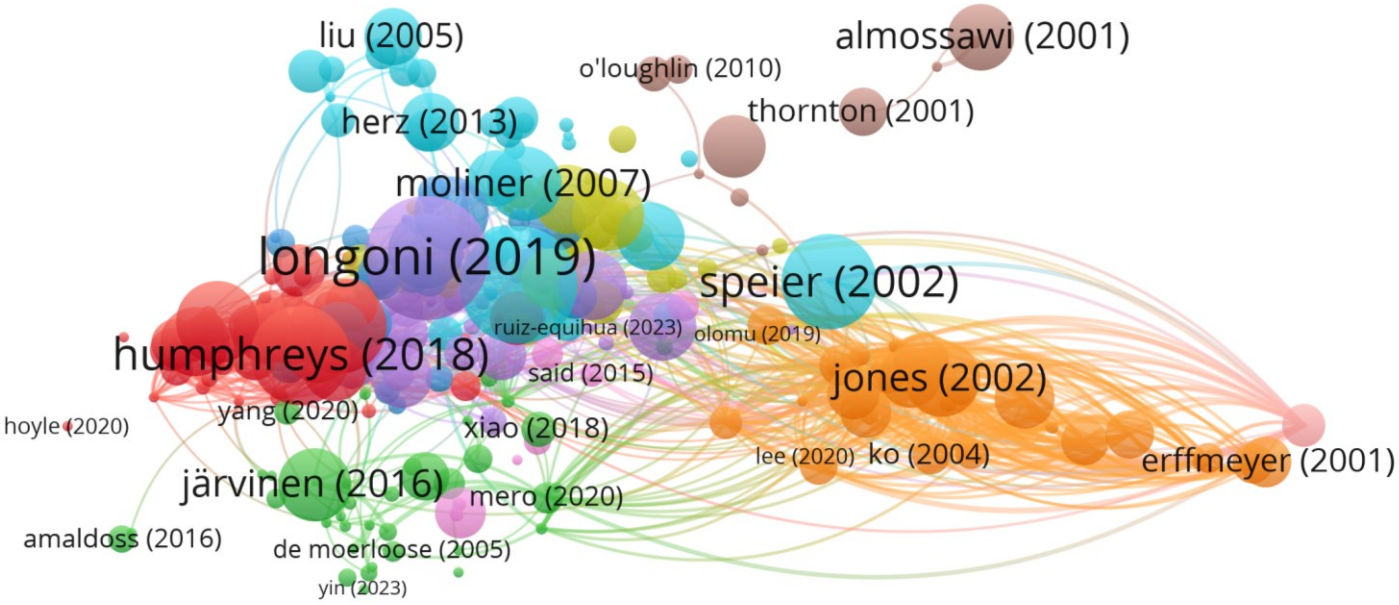

Figure 7. Bibliographic coupling network

Marketing research has benefitted from automated text classification as a useful tool for detecting trends in the text that consumers or researchers cannot detect, thus uncovering psychological and sociological constructs in consumer-generated digital text (Humphreys & Wang, 2018; Hartmann et al., 2019). This is based on Lee & Bradlow (2011) method for processing text from online customer reviews Achievements in natural

language using textual data, such as product reviews, is an effective way to automate content generation and review synthesis (Carlson et al., 2023).

Consumers interact with brands on multiple devices, browsers, and machines (Lin et al., 2021) Digital content marketing (DCM) as defined by Hollebeek & Macky (2019) is the creation and dissemination of relevant, valuable brand-related content that facilitates the development of favourable brand engagement." DCM has been associated with the theory of customer engagement as a way to build relationship value perceptions and brand trust, but cognitive-emotional brand engagement is crucial for inducing these actions into relationship value perceptions (Taiminen & Ranaweera, 2019). Combining behavioural data with the data collected from marketing content is a valuable way to evaluate and improve the content marketing efforts of B2B sellers (Upreti et al., 2021). Research on firm-generated imagery (FGI) on social media claims that there is an inverted U-shape relationship between feature complexity and consumer liking and a regular U-shape relationship between design complexity and consumer liking (Overgoor et al., 2022). The importance of the Internet to B2B customer purchasing decisions motivated B2B sellers to create digital content (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016) that assists customers along their customer journey – their primary focus must be on social media sites (Karampela et al., 2020) as a means of creating engagement and further on, value-laden trusted brand relationships (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). The overall adoption experience is based on the value addition of AI with investments done to build internal capability and how it is built and used by employees (Kar & Kushwaha, 2023). These technologies are adopted primarily due to technological and market uncertainty (Mero et al., 2020) but instead of being agile and experimental.

Applications of MA such as digital sales technologies for buyers in a supply chain can be used by customers for improved effectiveness and perceived value (Mahlamäki et al., 2020). They are seen in partner relationship management (PRM) with AI reflecting customised partner services and partner engagement, leading to business value

(Chatterjee et al., 2023). Research and development for technology advancements mainly focus on improving chatbots' ability to draw inferences on users based on multiple data sources and utilising users' knowledge adaptively to enhance customisation (Pantano & Pizzi, 2020). In online fashion retailing, it was found by Rese et al. (2020) that users prefer utilitarian factors and hedonic factors which positively influenced the adoption of chatbots, which are software programs that interact with users using natural language. Voice assistants, such as Siri and Alexa, are continuously being adopted by consumers as part of their shopping experience on e-commerce platforms - an effective way to enhance customer engagement and loyalty (Moriuchi, 2019). Customers prefer chatbots over live chats or telephonic conversations (Balakrishnan & Dwivedi, 2021), however, there is a need to anthropomorphise chatbots (Dwivedi et al., 2023, Holthöwer & van Doorn, 2023) - empathy and friendliness are effective at building trust, while task complexity negatively moderates this relationship (Cheng et al., 2022).

4.6. Co-Word

Co-word analysis generates semantic maps of the discipline - facilitating the understanding of the cognitive structure around MA research (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). It consists of a content analysis technique that analyses research papers, identifying frequent keywords as a basis for mapping out connections between the words – and narrowing down the conceptual structure of the research domain (Zupic & Čater, 2015). Co-word analysis can be performed on authors' keywords, article titles, full texts, or abstracts (Aria, 2017; Baker et al., 2022).

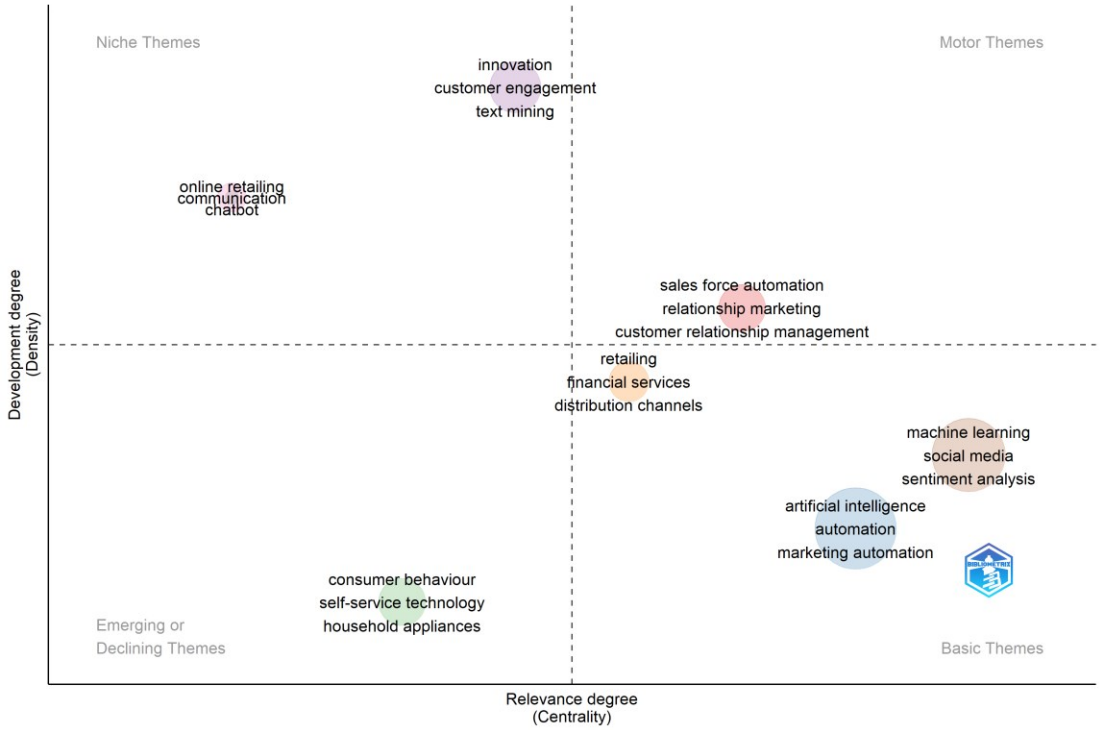

Figure 8. Marketing automation research field Thematic Map

The thematic map of author keywords, represented in Figure 8, identifies and groups the major themes and trends in keywords used in the literature sample under scrutiny. Niche themes are classified as highly developed with low relevance - online retailing, communication, chatbot, innovation, customer engagement, and text mining. Emerging or declining themes, classified as low relevancy and low development – customer behaviour, self-service technology, household appliances. Motor themes are highly relevant and highly developed – sales force automation, relationship marketing, and customer relationship marketing. Lastly, the basic themes - high relevancy and low development: retailing, financial services, and distribution channels.

5. Discussion and Future Research Avenues

Automation is a fundamental underpinning in Industry 4.0 and AI, IoT, Blockchain, Big Data Analytics, 3D Printing, and Cloud Computing (CC) (Chae & Olson, 2022). Managers can use emotion, managerial and technical support, and experiential learning to engage employees to adopt MA at increased rates, however, scepticism around the failure of MA will decrease adoption rates.

Analysing the impact that COVID-19 had on customer need shifts revealed that there is an increase in technology usage, increased integration of marketing and sales, and sales processes and organisations have shifted (Giovannetti et al., 2022). Achieving independent knowledge development by ML in human resources solutions needs to be accompanied by the guidance of experts (van den Broek et al., 2021). This further stresses the need for B2B businesses to prepare for such adversaries by creating and operating adaptive and hybrid sales forces (Rangarajan et al., 2021).

Retargeting is a method of directing advertising efforts to consumers who have previously interacted with the brand (Jiang et al., 2020). However, this requires detailed user data which is sensitive to cookie restrictions, changing the effectiveness of automatic retargeting in advertising (Semerádová & Weinlich, 2023). Targeted ads through the collection of personal data without the user's consent showed decreased click-through rates (Aguirre et al., 2015). Data on customers has always been a firm’s greatest tool in its arsenal, but it has now increasingly become the most influential aspect of a firm’s marketing strategy. Studies on anonymous information (GPS data, diary entry, hygiene routines, and home information) are considered by US consumers to be the most sensitive information (Markos et al., 2018). In some of the biggest markets worldwide, we have seen a tightening of data collection policies – a trend we expect to see in the future. For instance, The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe is the world's strictest privacy and security law and impacts which customer data can be tracked. In the

USA, The Privacy Act of 1974 governs how federal agencies can collect and use data about individuals in their systems of records. The California Anti-Spam law limits how businesses can obtain consumer email addresses by prohibiting businesses from collecting email addresses that have previously been posted online or from generating email addresses by combining numbers, names, and letters. The Personal Information Law (PIPL) was introduced in China in 2021 which applies to the processing of personal information by both public and private entities. However, it poses immense challenges for public policy, where regulators need standardised criteria to assess the need for intervention (Shultz et al., 2022).

Future studies could focus their research on the main bodies of research: online retailing, communication, chatbots, innovation, customer engagement, and text mining, customer behaviour, self-service technology, household appliances, sales force automation, relationship marketing, and customer relationship marketing. Lastly, the basic themes (high relevancy and low development) have the most potential for future analysis, subject matter surrounding the intersection of MA and retailing, financial services, and distribution channels.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed digital adoption and understanding these effects are key to understanding the rapid adoption of these technologies. For instance new digital marketing and advertising professionals must be trained by managers in both soft and hard skills due to the impacts of COVID-19 (Ferreira et al., 2023). Less attention has been attributed to the influence of the pandemic and could stand to be an area for exploration. The intersection of AI and MA would be highly relevant as there is a surge in interest in AI technology

6. Conclusion

Reviewing the available literature to reveal the underlying theoretical approaches, major research themes, and methodological approaches in the marketing automation research field to synthesize future recommendations for authors and practitioners. Continuously optimising customers' experience and usability, integrating new technologies, ensuring collaboration among stakeholders, and maintaining accurate reporting systems are imperative to successful adoption of MA. As businesses aim to achieve an integrated marketing communications plan, various data sources of customer information lead to different advertising performances (Semeradova & Weinlich, 2019). Social media impacts brand relationship strength (Karampela et al., 2020) and digital content is an effective way of building engagement, trust, and value (Hollebeek, & Macky, 2019). Managers need to be aware that consumers change their preferences and although MA provides more autonomy, or perceived autonomy to customers, MA may gradually diminish consumers' actual and perceived autonomy (Wertenbroch et al., 2020). Marketers adopting new MA tools use heuristics, or rules of thumb, from traditional methods in their decision-making and must change what and where they focus their efforts - they help them define the inputs, interpret outputs and control (Guercini, 2023). Furthermore, teams must configure collaborative and resource allocation capabilities for implementing agile strategies (Mero et al., 2020) whereas Malik & Orr (2022) maintained that a blend of sociotechnical agile methodologies increases successful business outcomes.

The limitations of the study are provided as guidance for future authors. There is a lack of keyword diversity, for instance, MA is associated with 'Intelligent Systems', 'Digital ecosystems', and 'Artificial Intelligence'. Using these keywords in the search query will yield a more holistic representation of MA thus increasing the accuracy of the literature topography. This study employed the findings from one database, it is

recommended to include articles from other databases that will improve the coverage of available literature.

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Appendix:

Journal Academic Journal Guide (AJG)

Journal of Marketing Research	4*
Marketing Science	4*
Journal of Marketing	4*
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	4*
Journal of Consumer Research	4*
Journal of Consumer Psychology	4*
Journal of Retailing	4
International Journal of Research in Marketing	4
Journal of International Marketing	3
Journal of Public Policy and Marketing	3
Industrial Marketing Management	3
Journal of Interactive Marketing	3
European Journal of Marketing	3
International Marketing Review	3
Marketing Theory	3
Marketing Letters	3
Quantitative Marketing and Economics	3
Journal of Advertising	3
Journal of Advertising Research	3
Psychology and Marketing	3
Academy of Marketing Science Review	2
Advances in Consumer Research	2
Consumption Markets and Culture	2
Electronic Markets	2
International Journal of Advertising	2
International Journal of Consumer Studies	2

International Journal of Market Research	2
International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management	2
Journal of Brand Management	2
Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing	2
Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing	2
Journal of Consumer Affairs	2
Journal of Consumer Behaviour	2
Journal of Macromarketing	2
Journal of Marketing Management	2
Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice	2
Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management	2
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	2
Journal of Services Marketing	2
Journal of Strategic Marketing	2
Qualitative Market Research	2
Advances in International Marketing	1
Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics	1
Australasian Marketing Journal	1
Corporate Communications	1
Corporate Reputation Review	1
Health Marketing Quarterly	1
International Journal of Bank Marketing	1

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