Mapping Customer Engagement Research: A Bibliometric Analysis

Lutfiyanah Tanjung, Dhea Ajeng Damayanti, Adi Setiawan[*]

Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Swadaya Gunung Jati, Indonesia

Corresponding author Email: a.setiawan28@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to map research development on customer engagement (CE) comprehensively. This qualitative research conducts historical and bibliometric analysis of quality-standard scholarly articles published in leading international journals. CE has experienced significant growth in the last decade, especially in 2021. Bibliometric analysis was used to analyze articles from Elsevier, Emerald, Springer, Taylor & Francis, and IEE databases. A search using Publish or Perish from 2007 to 2025 resulted in 621 articles. Co-occurrence analysis found 1,352 keywords derived from titles and abstracts. The occurrence of keywords is limited to 5; from the limitation of the occurrence, 69 keywords are divided into 8 clusters. Through visualization of research trends and author collaboration networks, bibliometric analysis is essential for developing CE research. This analysis resulted in various suggestions for additional research projects. The analysis results also help map the scientific landscape and determine the direction of future research on customer engagement. This study also emphasizes the shift of CE research from traditional marketing methods to digital engagement strategies. Highly cited works and influential authors were also identified, demonstrating an essential role in developing theory. In addition, new topics such as disengagement and problems in implementing CE strategies still need to be researched. Visualizations of overlay and density reveal how research priorities have changed over time and how specific key keywords dominate the literature. This study provides practical insights for academics and practitioners and offers a reference to identify research gaps, recent subjects, and development opportunities in customer engagement.

Keywords: *Customer Engagement, Social Media, Bibliometric Analysis.*

1. Introduction

Customer engagement (CE) research has gained increasing attention in the past decade in the marketing literature [1]. Issues related to customer engagement have always been an essential concern for marketing researchers and academics[2]. CE refers to customer interaction, emotional involvement, and participation in various brand activities in digital and traditional contexts[3]. The emergence of internet-based technologies and platforms has significantly impacted marketing[4]. CE significantly enhances customer loyalty, strengthens long-term relationships, and increases company business value [5].

Social media has become one of the key factors in increasing customer engagement, as it allows for more dynamic two-way communication between customers and brands. The growing popularity of social media makes it easier for customers to interact with businesses and brands [6] [7].

CE is studied from various theoretical viewpoints, such as co-creation theory, relational marketing, and service-dominant logic. This is because of its multidimensional nature. These perspectives emphasize that CE is an ever-changing and reciprocal process where customers are not just passive recipients; they also actively contribute to creating value. Therefore, having a good understanding of CE helps companies create customer-centric plans to increase customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

However, despite increasing CE-related studies, research in this area remains fragmented and widespread. A thorough mapping of the literature is required to understand the evolution of this idea, what themes are most frequently researched, and the open research spaces.

This mapping is essential to provide direction for further research and ensure that academics and practitioners can maximize customer engagement in achieving strategic goals.

2. Literature Review

Customer engagement (CE) reflects their psychological and emotional interaction with a product or company[8]. Hollebeek et al. [8] classify CE into three dimensions: customers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement with a brand or service. Hollebeek et al. [9] highlight that technological developments influence the dynamics of CE, with automation playing an essential role in customer interactions. Other research also shows high CE increases brand loyalty and repurchase intentions [10].

According to Do et al. [11], CE can be in the form of interactions through comments, likes, and shares on social media. The study also showed that emotional aspects impact customer loyalty the most. In today's digital age, social networks have evolved into one of the leading platforms for CE. Rietveld et al. [12]showed that the type of message a brand posts influences CE on Instagram. Messages that contain emotional aspects tend to be more effective than informative messages.

The scope of CE and its conceptualization ranges from customer behavior at a specific point in time to long-term relationships [13]. The concept is often associated with companies' efforts to improve customer experience, strengthen loyalty, and create sustainable shared value. One of the most well-known customer loyalty concepts focuses on behavioral aspects[14]. Several studies have empirically analyzed the impact of customer engagement in social commerce [15] [16]. Other studies have shown that engagement is not an isolated concept relating to a single customer but refers to ongoing and interconnected interactions between group actors within a network[17]. Previous studies have shown that social media strongly influences how customers interact with brands and other customers [18] [19] [20].

In an analysis of CE research trends, Hollebeek et al. [21] conducted a bibliometric analysis of 15 years of CE research, finding that the focus of this research is increasingly evolving towards data-driven service automation and personalization. Monferrer et al. [22] found that high levels of CE in digital services can strengthen their loyalty.

Table 1. Search keywords

Keywords	Description	Resource
Customer experience	Customer perceptions and feelings are formed through interactions with the product or service. These experiences influence customer engagement.	[23][24]
Social media	Social media is a strategic tool for companies to establish deeper customer relationships and expand customer engagement.	[25][26]
Business Marketing	Business marketing builds mutually beneficial relationships through strategic engagement to increase customer loyalty and satisfaction.	[27][28][29]
Personalization	Personalization is customizing products, services, or content according to preferences. It improves customer experience, loyalty, and engagement.	[30][31][32]
Word of mouth	Dissemination of information about the brand that impacts consumer loyalty, customer engagement, and brand image.	[33][34]
Brand loyalty	Social media, consumer experience, and brand community participation influence customer proximity to the brand.	[35][36][37]

In addition, cognitive response becomes one of the essential aspects of keywords in bibliometric analysis. Researchers often express cognitive responses through various factors, including barriers, drivers, opportunities, challenges, and benefits.

Table 2. Cognitive Response Factors

Factor	Description	Resource
Obstacle	Barriers to customer engagement include challenges in interaction, value measurement, and management that affect revenue.	[38][38]
Mover	Mover in customer engagement is the factor that drives the customer's interaction with the brand, which can be digital or emotional.	[39][40]
Opportunity	Opportunities for customer engagement come from the right business strategy, freedom of choice in interactions, and innovative technology.	[41][42]
Challenge	Customer engagement challenges include companies' difficulties in building strong relationships and adjusting strategies to changing customer preferences.	[43][44][45]
Benefit	Customer engagement includes benefits to both the customer and the company through interactions with the brand.	[46]

3. Research Methods

This research utilizes a qualitative method with a historical approach and bibliometric analysis to explore the development of concepts, theories, and methodologies in customer engagement studies. This study was conducted in two stages. First, data was collected using Publish or Perish (PoP) software, which can extract articles from leading international journals.

Second, data analysis was conducted using VOSviewer with bibliometric analysis to visualize the relationship between key terms and identify major research clusters. The results of this analysis help develop, trend, or map research related to customer engagement so that the research findings can also provide suggestions regarding research topics or variables for researchers in the future period.

3.1. Data Collection Methods

Scientific articles were collected from five leading publishers (Elsevier, Emerald, Springer, Taylor & Francis, and IEE). Articles were retrieved from a database available through the five groups of journal publishers.

Search for articles by utilizing Publish or Perish (PoP) software. This application helps to find articles on relevant research topics. The stages for data collection are as follows:

1. The search is limited to the years 2007-2025
2. The keyword used for the search criteria is "Customer engagement."
3. The search criteria used a combination of two keywords. The first combination (is customer experience, social media, business marketing, personalization, word of mouth, brand loyalty) The second is obstacle, mover, opportunity, challenge, and benefit).
4. Furthermore, the research collected by this application has been reduced to English-language journals, with articles sourced from reputable journals.
5. The articles analyzed were checked to ensure the completeness of the research, for completeness in the form of "title," "abstract," and "keywords."
6. Completeness of metadata: Available DOI, publisher, GS rank, author, Publication, and Number of citations.

The results of pulling articles using Publish or Perish from 2007-2025 totaled 621 articles. The combination of search titles and keywords can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Search combinations and number of articles

Title	Keywords.	Journal
Customer engagement	Customer experience, social media, business marketing, personalization, word of mouth, brand loyalty	321 Articles
Customer engagement	Obstacle, mover, opportunity, challenge, benefit	300 Articles

3.2. Bibliometric Data Analysis Methods

This bibliometric analysis uses the VOSviewers application to display the results as mapping data. Similarity visualization (VOSviewers) leverages text mining capabilities to identify related combinations of component concepts/phrases with an integrated mapping and clustering approach, citing and analyzing data to explore networks. It is an analysis application that compiles various events. The results of the analysis will be used to map the field and develop bibliographies. VOSviewer can provide up-to-date information and research reports on this field.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Number of Years Published

The publication's development results show that CE-related research has grown significantly since 2015, with the highest spike occurring in 2024. The rapid increase in 2018-2021 indicates the growing importance of customer engagement in digital marketing strategies, primarily through social media, personalization, and its impact on brand loyalty and word of mouth

Table 4. Publication of Customer Engagement Articles per year

Year	Publication	Year	Publication
2007	1	2017	38
2008	1	2018	42
2009	5	2019	65
2010	1	2020	65
2011	4	2021	72
2012	10	2022	71
2013	13	2023	69
2014	12	2024	74
2015	27	2025	14
2016	37	**Total**	**621**

However, a mild decline in 2022-2023 indicates a shift in research focus to newer issues. Nevertheless, the number of publications remains high, indicating that CE-based continues to grow and become a strategic topic in business marketing. Mapping CE research not only focuses on the benefits and opportunities offered by customer engagement but also considers the challenges and barriers to implementing CE strategies. Thus, these results confirm that CE research continues to evolve by considering various aspects, including emerging technologies, challenges, and opportunities in the current era.

4.2. Author Analysis

This analysis explores authors using Google Scholar (GS) to measure rankings. GS has free access to articles, which helps with its ranking. Free access to articles allows researchers to use them as reference material.

Table 5. Author Analysis

Authors	Title	GSRank
SD Vivek, SE Beatty, V Dalela & Robert M. Morgan (2014)	A generalized multidimensional scale for measuring customer engagement	228
J Kandampully, TC Zhang, A Bilgihan (2015)	Customer Loyalty: a review and future directions with a special focus on the hospitality industry	550
N Xi, J Hamari (2020)	Does gamification affect brand engagement and equity? A study in online brand communities	553
J. Wirtz, A. Den Ambtman, J. Bloemer, C. Horváth, B. R. J. Gürhan-Canli, J. Kandampully (2013)	Managing brands and customer engagement in online brand communities	103
RA Rather (2021)	Demystifying the effects of perceived risk and fear on customer engagement, co-creation and revisit intention during COVID-19: A protection motivation theory ...	162
M Zhang, L Guo, M Hu, W Liu (2017)	Influence of customer engagement with company social networks on stickiness: Mediating effect of customer value creation	132
B Jahn, W Kunz (2012)	How to transform consumers into fans of your brand	534
R Hapsari, MD Clemes, D Dean (2017)	The impact of service quality, customer engagement, and selected marketing constructs on airline passenger loyalty	185
A Niedermeier, L Albrecht, B Jahn (2019)	"Happy Together": Effects of brand community engagement on customer happiness	218
C Koetz (2019)	Managing the customer experience: a beauty retailer deploys all tactics	215
W Messner (2022)	Understanding the influence of culture on customer engagement and recommendation intentions	325
K Naumann, J Lay-Hwa Bowden, Mark Gabbott (2017)	Exploring customer engagement valences in the social services space	54
L Vacas de Carvalho, SL Azar & Joana Cesar Machado (2020)	Bridging the gap between brand gender and brand loyalty on social media: Exploring the mediating effects	166
EG Salgado, MR Vela (2019)	Brand fan page experience and strength as antecedents to engagement and intensity of use to achieve HEIS' brand loyalty	171
EG Salgado, MR Vela (2019)	Understanding customer brand engagement in user-initiated online brand communities: antecedents and consequences	574
D Gligor, S Bozkurt, E Welch & Nichole Gligor (2023)	An exploration of the impact of gender on customer engagement	189
P Gálvez-Ruiz, F Calabuig, Moises Grimaldi-Puyana, Maria Huertas Gonzalez-Serrano, Jeronimo Garcia-Fernandez (2023)	The effect of perceived quality and customer engagement on the loyalty of users of Spanish fitness centers	433
Z Wang (2021)	Social media brand posts and customer engagement	27
JL Hayes, BC Britt, J Applequist, Artemio Ramirez Jr. & Jayme Hill (2020)	Leveraging textual paralanguage and consumer-brand relationships for more relatable online brand communication: A social presence approach	813
J Carlson, NJ de Vries, MM Rahman & Alex Taylor (2017)	Go with the flow: Engineering flow experiences for customer engagement value creation in branded social media environments.	440

GS rankings can determine an author's contribution to annual article production. Based on the data collected, there are about 20 active authors. The following table lists the authors who contributed articles yearly based on GS rank.

4.3. Citation Analysis

Citation analysis shows that several articles have had a significant influence on CE research during the period 2007-2025. Customer engagement continues to evolve, focusing on social media, customer experience, and digital marketing. This study shows that personalization and active customer engagement can turn challenges into opportunities and create long-term brand benefits.

This shows which articles are most frequently referenced by other researchers in customer engagement research. Articles with the most citations reflect their significant influence in developing theory and practice in this field.

Table 6. Citation Analysis

Authors	Title	Cites
RJ Brodie, A Ilic, B Juric, L Hollebeek (2013).	Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: An exploratory analysis	5197
SD Vivek, SE Beatty, RM Morgan (2012)	Customer engagement: Exploring customer relationships beyond purchase	3526
CM Sashi (2012)	Customer engagement, buyer-seller relationships, and social media	2626
JLH Bowden (2009)	The process of customer engagement: A conceptual framework	2564
A Pansari, V Kumar (2017)	Customer engagement: the construct, antecedents, and consequences	2480
LD Hollebeek (2011)	Demystifying customer brand engagement: Exploring the loyalty nexus	2305
L Hollebeek (2011)	Exploring customer brand engagement: definitions and themes	2258
L Dessart, C Veloutsou, Anna Morgan-Thomas (2015)	Consumer engagement in online brand communities: a social media perspective	1867
J Gummerus, V Liljander, E Weman, Minna Pihlstrom (2012)	Customer engagement in a Facebook brand community	1732
C Heller Baird, G Parasnis (2011)	From social media to social customer relationship management	1455
CM Harmeling, JW Moffett, MJ Arnold & Brad D. Carlson (2017)	Toward a theory of customer engagement marketing	1453
W He, S Zha, L Li (2013)	Social media competitive analysis and text mining: A case study in the pizza industry	1348
I Pletikosa Cvijikj, F Michahelles (2013)	Online engagement factors on Facebook brand pages	1301
LD Hollebeek, RK Srivastava, T Chen (2019)	SD logic-informed customer engagement: integrative framework, revised fundamental propositions, and application to CRM	1283
B Jahn, W Kunz (2012)	How to transform consumers into fans of your brand	1196
R Dolan, J Conduit, J Fahy & Steve Goodman (2016)	Social media engagement behavior: a uses and gratifications perspective	1195
J Wirtz, A Den Ambtman, J Bloemer, C Horvath, B. R Joris van de Klundert, Zeynep Gurhan Canli, J Kandampully (2013).	Managing brands and customer engagement in online brand communities	1157
SD Vivek, SE Beatty, V Dalela & Robert M. Morgan (2014)	A generalized multidimensional scale for measuring customer engagement	1099

4.4. Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis helps map and assess the development of research on customer engagement. The results of this analysis reveal trending and relevant research themes or variables. In addition, this analysis helps researchers find unexplored research gaps.

4.4.1. Authorship Analysis

In the Co-authorship analysis, there is a link between the author and the other author's name. This analysis reveals that these authors work together on research related to customer engagement. Linda D. Hollebeek is a highly influential author in customer engagement. Hollebeek has a close relationship with Roderick J. Brodie and Jodie Conduit, which indicates a significant collaboration in this research. Raouf Ahmad Rather, Zillur Rahman, and Jamid Ul Islam also show research relationships in the same field. Although this cluster interacts with Hollebeek, the relationship between the two is not as strong as within the central cluster.
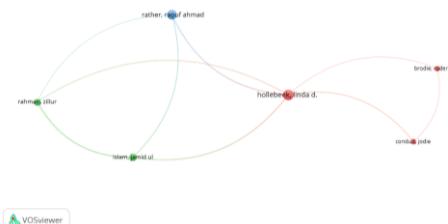
Fig 1. Network Analysis of Most Cited Authors

The authors demonstrate a strong commitment to researching customer engagement through their collaboration. The table below lists the authors' names and the titles of the research they have conducted.

Table 7. Author Collaboration

Author	Title
LD Hollebeek, J Conduit, RJ Brodie (2016)	Strategic drivers anticipated and unanticipated outcomes of customer engagement.
JU Islam, Z Rahman, LD Hollebeek (2018).	Consumer engagement in online brand communities: A solicitation of congruity theory
RA Rather, LD Hollebeek, JU Islam (2019).	Tourism-based customer engagement: The construct, antecedents, and consequences
RA Rather, LD Hollebeek (2019)	Exploring and validating social identification and social exchange-based drivers of hospitality customer loyalty
JU Islam, Z Rahman (2016)	Linking Customer Engagement to Trust and word-of-mouth on Facebook Brand communities: An empirical study

4.4.2. Bibliometrik Network Visualization Analysis

The results of the analysis with VOSviewer, which performs co-occurrence analysis, found 1,352 keywords related to customer engagement. To produce more specific keywords in the title and abstract keywords analysis, the occurrence of keywords is limited to 5. From the limitation of these occurrences, 69 keywords were obtained and divided into 8 clusters.

Table 8. Bibliometric Network Visualization Analysis

Cluster	Keywords.
Cluster 1	Brand advocacy, brand communities, brand experience, brand identification, brand image, brand love, brand loyalty, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, customer trust, online brand communities, online customer engagement
Cluster 2	Artificial intelligence, customer engagement, customer experience, e-commerce, engagement, fashion, India, Instagram, marketing, perceived value, purchase intention, social media
Cluster 3	Brand, brand community, brand trust, consumer engagement, customer engagement behavior, gamification, interactivity, ethnography, online community, word-of-mouth
Cluster 4	Commitment, consumer brand engagement, corporate social responsibility, customer engagement (ce), ghana, loyalty, satisfaction, social exchange theory, trust, value co-creation
Cluster 5	Brand equity, brand management, consumer behavior, consumer behavior Facebook, online brand community, social media marketing, social networking sites, social network
Cluster 6	Bibliometric analysis, brand engagement, co-creation, customer engagement behavior, hospitality, online engagement, tourism
Cluster 7	Customer brand engagement, customer citizenship behavior, customer relationship management, relationship marketing, retailing
Cluster 8	Disengagement, emerging markets, negative customer engagement

Network visualization results from VOSviewer and network visualization analysis of customer engagement are central concepts connected with various keywords. This visualization also indicates that research gaps can still be explored further. For example, small nodes do not yet have a strong connection to the central concept, such as disengagement, which indicates the need for further research to understand the factors that cause customers to lose engagement. This suggests that more research is needed to explain the causality between factors influencing customer engagement. Future research can provide more comprehensive insights by deepening the understanding of these causal relationships.
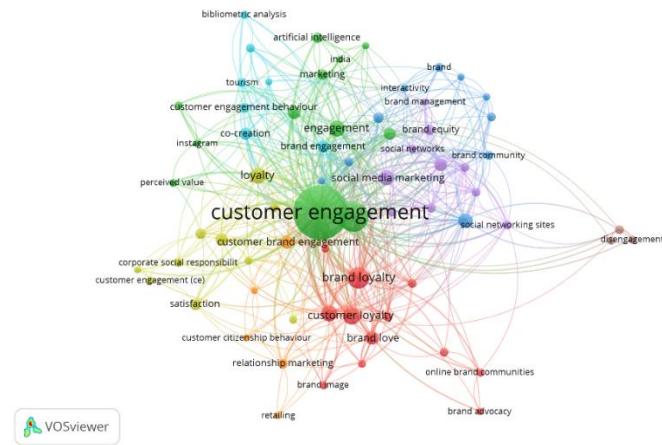
Fig 2. Network Visualization Customer engagement

4.4.3. Overlay Visualization Analysis
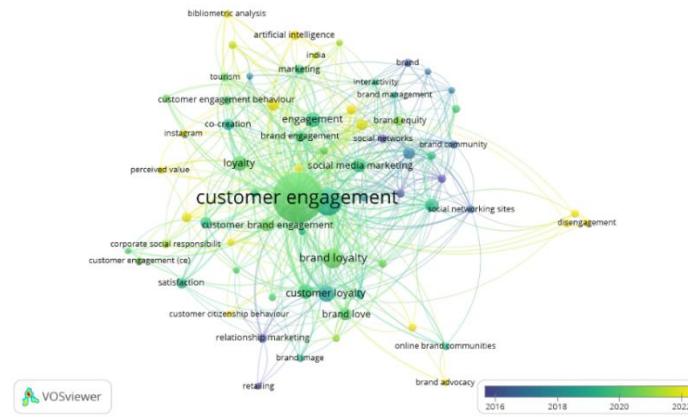
Fig 3. Overlay Visualization Analysis

Most themes have bright yellow nodes, indicating that most published articles are from 2022 to 2025. This analysis suggests that topics related to customer engagement fall into recent research.

Based on the Overlay Visualization, the mapping of customer engagement research shows the development of topics over time. Research in 2016-2018 highlighted more fundamental aspects, such as brand equity and relationship marketing, while 2020-2022 began to focus on bibliometric analysis and challenges, such as disengagement and obstacles in customer engagement.

4.4.4. Density Visualization Analysis
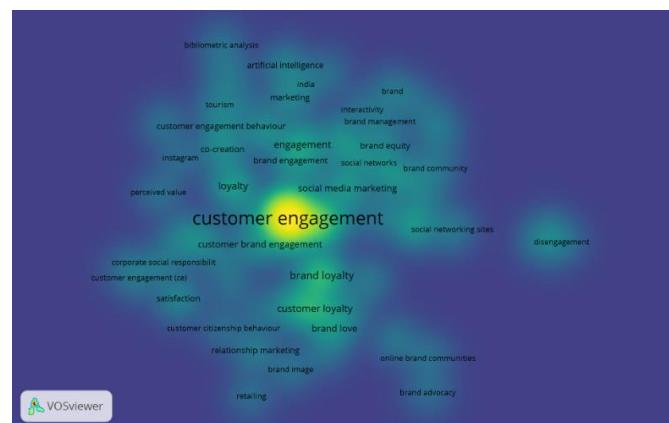
Fig 4. Density Visualization Analysis

Density analysis of bibliometric visualizations using VOSviewer shows that the density of keywords in customer engagement research varies, with the most studied keywords marked in light yellow, while keywords with lower research intensity appear darker. Primary keywords such as customer engagement, brand loyalty, customer loyalty, and social media marketing are firmly linked, reflecting the

direction of research that highlights the relationship between customer engagement, brand loyalty, and social media-based marketing strategies. This visualization also indicates that specific topics, such as disengagement and brand advocacy, still have room for further exploration. As such, research in this area continues to evolve towards a deeper understanding of the factors influencing customer engagement in digital marketing and brand interactions with customers.

5. Conclusion

This study maps the development of customer engagement (CE) research using bibliometric analysis. The results show rapid growth in the last decade, especially in 2021. The analysis identified 69 keywords in 8 clusters, with the primary focus on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and the role of social media. Digitalization and personalization are increasingly crucial in CE, especially in social media and e-commerce. Co-authorship and citation analysis revealed influential authors and articles in CE development. In addition, the themes of disengagement and CE challenges still need further exploration. This study provides insights for academics and practitioners on CE trends, key themes, and research gaps. It may serve as a reference for future research to develop more efficient methods.

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