The dynamics and evolution of the service marketing literature: 1993–2003

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Abstract This article analyzes service research published in marketing journals between 1993 and 2003. Two levels of analysis of the dynamics and evolution of the service marketing literature are distinguished: first, the dynamics of specific themes of the service marketing literature, and second, the structural evolution of these themes. Through a content analysis, we study the dynamics of individual themes in the service marketing literature as well as the relationships between these themes. Multiple correspondence analysis provides maps of themes and of the most frequent contributors, and a framework to track the structural dynamics and structural evolution of this literature over time. An evaluation of past predictions about the dynamics and evolution of service research is also provided with a discussion of its future.

Keywords Service marketing research · Content analysis · Evolution · Themes · Literature review

1 Introduction

A tsunami is—a long, low wave whose power becomes clear only when it reaches the shore and breaks-is unnoticeable in the open ocean. Revolutions in academic research literature travel with the same stealth. Spotting the wave

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while it is still crossing the ocean is therefore tricky. Service marketing, as an academic field, has been around for several decades, but the first wave is only now beginning to break and spill over the entire marketing field. It is likely to affect all the different domains of marketing from consumer behavior to business-to-business (B2B) relationship marketing.

Over the past two and a half decades service marketing has emerged as a well-established field of research in the marketing discipline. In many ways, its growth and acceptance in the academic arena are indeed noteworthy. A question arises, however, concerning the direction that it should take in the future (see Grove et al. 2003). In a recent article, Lovelock and Gummesson (2004, p. 20) asked: ''Is the academic field of services marketing in danger of losing its broad and in many respects coherent perspective?'' Steve Vargo and Bob Lusch echoed this interrogation (2004a) to call for a new dominant logic for marketing, one in which service provision rather than goods is fundamental to economic exchange. Moreover, in a 1998 editorial, Roland Rust stressed that service research should not be: ''a niche field characterized by arcane points of difference with the dominant goods management field. Rather service, as the overwhelming majority of the economy, is now the dominant and defining part of the business environment'' (p. 107). For Grove et al. (2003), service marketing now faces a challenge that confronts many maturing fields of study; as the domain of services marketing has expanded, the boundaries that define it have become more obscure. These different quotes are signs that the tsunami wave is ready to break.

Recently, Fisk et al. (2000) and Grove et al. (2003) reviewed the past, present, and future of services marketing research through the eyes of experts. However, the last large scales studies of the evolution of services marketing research date back to the early 1990s. In 1992 and 1993, Swartz, Bowen and Brown, Fisk, Brown and Bitner, and Berry and Parasuraman published three seminal articles on the early developments of a new academic field: services marketing. In these papers, the authors described how services marketing emerged and developed to become an autonomous academic field, independent from general marketing. They also speculated about the future of services marketing research, predicting a broadening, deepening, and sharpening of the field and identified key research topics for the future. About 10 years later, Fisk et al. (2000) and Grov et al. (2003) asked ten service experts: ''What directions would you like to see the services marketing field take in the future?''

Have the 1993 predictions been realized? How likely will the 2000 wishes of the experts be realized? The purpose of the present paper is to study the trends over the past 11 years of research published in ten of the top academic journals from 1993 to 2003 for a better understanding of the structure of the field and the direction it is likely to take in the future.

The services marketing literature has now reached its maturity stage (Grove et al. 2003), it is time to assess the breadth and diversity of its content as well as the main directions and magnitude of progress in order to identify desirable directions for future research. The objectives and contributions of

this paper are therefore: (1) to map the structure of the services marketing field to identify the interconnections between its subfields; (2) to examine the research current trends in order to better understand and foresee their impact on the development of the field; (3) to test the predictions made about this development; and (4), based on the analysis of past research, to provide some clues about the future developments of this literature.

To achieve these objectives, the paper is structured as follows. First, we present a brief overview of the development of service marketing before 1993 based on the reviews from Fisk et al. (1993) and Swartz et al. (1992). Second, we describe the method used in the study. Third, we present the results of the analysis of the content of the service marketing literature published between 1993 and 2003 and its evolution over time. Next, we examine the most published authors and their position in the service marketing field as well as the most influential papers. We conclude the paper with a discussion of the directions for future research in service marketing.

2 Development of service marketing: an overview

Using an evolutionary metaphor as a framework, Fisk et al. (1993) traced the evolution of the service marketing literature from its embryonic beginnings in 1953 to its maturity in 1993. They identified three stages in this evolution: *Crawling Out* (1953–1979), *Scurrying About* (1980–1985), and *Walking Erect* (1986–1993).

During the *Crawling Out* stage (1953–1979), scholars in the service marketing field first fought to assert the discipline's right to exist (Swartz et al. 1992; Fisk et al. 1993). This stage began in 1953 with the first service marketing scholars struggling to publish their work and culminated in the debate of how and why services were different from goods (e.g. Shostack 1977). This differentiated positioning contributed to the success of its fast development (Schneider 2000). From this early work came the identification of some of the distinctive characteristics of services, such as intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability, which eventually became the IHIP dominant paradigm of service marketing (see the papers by Lovelock and Gummesson 2004; Vargo and Lusch 2004b for a review of its development and recent critics).

The *Scurrying About* stage (1980–1985) was a bridging period where the services versus the goods debate began to wane (Fisk et al. 1993). The attention of service scholars then shifted from "*Are* services different from goods?" to "*What* are the implications of these differences?" (Swartz et al. 1992) Lovelock (1983, p. 115) noticed that services marketing research puts "too much emphasis on drawing distinctions between goods marketing and services marketing and not enough on developing good insights for marketing practices in the service sector." To solve this issue, he proposed several classifications of services with each type of services needing a different marketing treatment. Another important contribution to this issue was made by

the study of Zeithaml et al. (1985) which provided a comprehensive conclusion on the effect of the four distinguishing services characteristics on marketing practices, problems, and strategies encountered by service firms. This stage also saw the first papers in new areas of investigation, such as service design and service mapping (Shostack 1984) and service encounter (Czepiel et al. 1985), which flourished in the next period.

In the *Walking Erect* stage (1986–1993), scholars achieved a respected stance as service marketing became an established field within the marketing discipline (Fisk et al. 1993). The publications on many of the primary topics matured considerably. These topics include managing quality given the heterogeneity of the service experience, designing and controlling intangible processes, managing supply and demand in capacity constrained services, and organizational issues resulting from the overlap in marketing and operations functions (Swartz et al. 1992; Fisk et al. 1993). This is also during this period that the debate about the pros and cons of alternative methodologies to measure service quality, which took so much importance in the field in the next time period, started (e.g. Parasuraman et al. 1988, 1991, 1993; Cronin and Taylor 1992; Brown et al. 1993).

In their review, Fisk et al. (1993) also asked: ''What will the literature of the future be like?'' and tried to answer this question using the documentation of the past and their positions as active researchers and participants in the field. In their speculations, they predicted a broadening, deepening, and sharpening of the field and identified key research topics for the future. These topics were: service design and delivery, service encounters and service experience, service quality and customer satisfaction, as well as service recovery, reverse marketing, internal marketing and support services, modeling and measurement, and technology infusion.

As already mentioned, Fisk et al. (2000) and Brown et al. (2003) asked ten service experts, Len Berry, Mary Jo Bitner, David Bowen, Steve Brown, Christian Grönroos, Evert Gummesson, Christopher Lovelock, Parsu Parasuraman, Ben Schneider, and Valarie Zeithaml: ''What directions would you like to see the services marketing field take in the future?'' The wishes of these experts can be organized around five major research directions: (1) the role of technology in changing services marketing, (2) cultural differences in customers' expectations for service and service marketing, (3) the importance of services in manufacturing industries, (4) the financial quantification of the impact of services marketing, and (5) services pricing (Furrer 2004).

Most of the experts identified the role of technology in changing marketing as a direction that the service marketing field should take in the future. Len Berry, Ben Schneider, and Valarie Zeithaml see the implications of the Internet in particular and technology in general for services marketing and service quality as a fertile ground for future research. Steve Brown stresses that technology is the biggest factor that has and will affect the future of services marketing. More specifically, Mary Jo Bitner, Christopher Lovelock, and Parsu Parasuraman also identify the study of service in the context of Internet-delivered services and related implication issues as an underresearched topic as

well as the study of the role of technology in changing how services are delivered, communicated, sold, and supported. David Bowen and Christopher Lovelock acknowledge that e-commerce and virtual service encounter need to be better understood. Evert Gummesson would like to see more research on the high-tech high-touch concept.

Global services marketing and the impact of cultural differences in customers' expectations for service is the second research direction to be investigated in the future. Len Berry acknowledges that global marketing of services is underresearched and that cultural differences in customers' expectations for service and service performance are not well understood. Among the underresearched topics, Mary Jo Bitner identifies the different issues related to the design and delivering of international services. David Bowen also identifies the area of cross-country, cross-cultural differences in service quality expectations and perceptions as a topic that needs more attention. Steve Brown calls for more cross-cultural research, especially due to the fall of the trade barriers within the European Union and the emergence of global service firms. How are services defined and how can they best be delivered in different cultures throughout the world is one of the questions that, according to Ben Schneider, should usefully be asked to bring a new twist to the international issue of services marketing.

A third area that needs more research is services in manufacturing industries. Mary Jo Bitner calls for more research on the importance of services and customer service in the manufacturing context. David Bowen would like to better understand how firms move from defining themselves as manufacturing organizations deriving most of their revenues from goods to defining themselves as service organizations deriving most of their revenues from services. Steve Brown and Ben Schneider would like to see scholars pay more attention to the transformation occurring, especially in business markets, with goods-dominant firms becoming solutions' providers. Christian Grönroos argues that physical goods marketing and services marketing will converge and predicts that service-oriented principles will dominate. Valarie Zeithaml would like to see the services marketing field address the question of the role that different technologies will play in dealing with the various aspects of customer service on the Web.

A fourth domain for future research is the financial quantification of the impact of services marketing. Mary Jo Bitner identifies the quantification of the impact of service initiatives on performance outcomes of organizations as a fertile ground for further research. In the same register, Steve Brown asks: what are the bottom-line implications of services marketing implementations? Recognizing that businesses are now demanding to know the outcomes of services initiatives, Parsu Parasuraman suggests that more scholarly research is needed to provide guidance to managers and researchers on the assessment of the financial benefits of investing in high-technology delivery systems. Valarie Zeithaml also asks for more research to show that service marketing is financially accountable. She also acknowledge that if some progress has been made in the past 10 years in investigating service quality, profitability, and the

economic worth of customers, much research remains to be done to validate this early evidence and to build a coherent and integrated body of knowledge.

Finally, services pricing is a fifth area needing more research. Mary Jo Bitner expresses the opinion that services pricing, particularly pricing of complex high-end services, is still underresearched. Christopher Lovelock also recognizes that pricing and auctions are areas that deserve more emphasis.

3 Method

To evaluate the predictions made by Fisk et al.'s (1993) and to estimate the likelihood of the service marketing field moving into the direction wished by the expert interviewed by Brown et al. (2003), we analyze the content of the service marketing literature, trace its dynamics and evolution, and identify the main streams of research.

To achieve these objectives, we performed a content analysis of the articles published in the top journals for service marketing research over the period 1993–2003. Such a content analysis provides a means for the objective, systematic, and quantitative consideration of the published articles.

To provide a more precise representation of these dynamics and evolution, we used both an evolutional approach and a structural approach (Malerba and Orsenigo 1996). First, the evolutional approach focuses on the changes in the number of appearances of a given theme over a fixed period of time and helps us to better understand the dynamics of each individual research theme within the service marketing literature. Second, the structural approach focuses on the relationships (interconnections) between the themes and the evolution of these relationships over time.

3.1 Journals and papers selection

Between 1993 and 2003, the number of articles on service marketing topics has exploded. Consequently, it was impossible for us to include in this study all the papers published since 1993, therefore we decided to limit our investigation to the articles published in top service journals and the top general marketing journals. Three top service-oriented journals were selected for their impact on service marketing researchers: the *Journal of Services Marketing* (JSM), the *Journal of Service Research* (JSR), and the *International Journal of Service Industry Management* (IJSIM). Both IJSIM and JSR are referenced in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) database to which we have added JSM because it is a well-established publication in service marketing since the end of the 1980s. Using Hult and Neese's (1997) ranking of leading general marketing journals, we further selected: the *Journal of Marketing* (JM), the *Journal of Marketing Research* (JMR), the *Journal of Consumer Research* (JCR), the *Journal of Retailing* (JR), the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (JAMS), and *Marketing Science* (MS). Because the service marketing field originated simultaneously in several European countries and the United

States (Lovelock and Gummesson 2004), we added to this list the *International Journal of Research in Marketing* (IJRM) for its international perspective.

The next step was to select the articles to be analyzed. Every article published in the service-oriented journals (JSM, JSR, and IJSIM) was selected. For the general marketing journals, we only retained articles on service marketing topics. Using the search engine of the ABI/Informs database, we selected the articles including the keywords ''service'' or ''services'' in their titles, abstracts, or keywords. From this selection, we excluded the articles whose content was not specifically on service marketing. We also chose to focus on those articles that were primarily involved with research issues. Therefore, the next step was to ensure that all the articles selected had a research focus, leading to the elimination of a small number of articles written by editors and introductions to special issues. This process resulted in the final selection of a total of 939 articles.

3.2 Themes selection

In order to code and analyze the content of the selected articles, we built a list of major research themes or categories of keywords. Following Jackson (2000), we define a theme as a topical schema that categorizes words into statistically related groups that reflect common ideas. For instance, 'consumer evaluation,' 'expectations,' 'SERVQUAL,' and 'SERVPERF' could define a theme labeled 'service quality' (see Table 1). The creation of a list of themes was made necessary by the large number of keywords issued by authors and found in the ABI/Informs database. To identify these major themes, we started with the list of key research topics developed by Swartz et al. (1992) and Fisk et al. (1993). Then we allocated the keywords issued by authors and the ABI/Informs database into these major categories. Every time a keyword could not be allocated into one of these initial themes, a new one was created. This resulted in a list of more than 30 major themes. This list was then reviewed by independent service experts. After several rounds of discussion with these experts, a final list of 27 major themes was obtained (Table 1).

3.3 Coding procedure

Previous studies of journal content have generally classified articles in only one primary category (e.g. Inkpen and Beamish 1994). But, as noted by Inkpen and Beamish (1994) using only one category fails to acknowledge the cross-functional and interdisciplinary nature of an academic field such as service marketing; consequently, following the methodology used by Furrer et al. (2005), we decided to allocate articles across one or more themes.

Each article was examined by two judges who reviewed all the 939 articles. To insure that each article was properly allocated, a two-step procedure was followed. First, the articles were allocated independently by both judges into the themes based on a detailed examination of the abstracts. Second, the two

Table 1 Service marketing literature major themes and keywords

Themes	Keywords
Customer and after-sale services	After-sale services, customer service, call centers, support services, warranties, guaranties
Business-to-business (B2B)	Industrial buyers, outsourcing
Consumer behaviors/ behavioral intentions	Word-of-mouth, loyalty, customer referrals, switching behaviors, complaint, consumer search behaviors
Service encounters	Experience, customer contact, face-to-face, interaction, customer comfort, critical incidents
Technology and self-service	Information technology, technology-based self-service, ATM, self-service bias, electronic distribution channels, Internet, online services, e-commerce, cyberservices, Interactive, Interactive marketing, Telemarketing, eCRM
Typology (types of services)	Classification, classifying, search services, experience services, credence services, types of services, typology good versus services
Innovation	Pioneer advantages, technological innovation, new service development, time-to-market, new product adoption, new product diffusion
Internationalization and cross-cultural	Cross-cultural management, culture, ethnocentrism, country of origin, cross national, global, export, national regulations, privatization, foreign market entry
Methodology	Critical incident, statistical analysis, case studies methodology, experiment, scale assessment, scale development, measurement issues, questionnaire
Operation/service design	Waiting time, business process management, service mapping, service design, service delivery systems, blueprinting, facility, capacity, demand, queuing, logistics, order processing, capacity management, process re-engineering
Performance	Profitability, efficiency, productivity, cost, long term performance, service effectiveness, customer equity
Price/value	Capacity management, yield management, tipping, optimal pricing, subscription-based services, service value, value, price, pricing, tipping
Service quality	Consumer evaluations, expectancy, expectations, perceptions, quality, SERVPERF, SERVQUAL scale
Service failure and recovery	Justice (procedural, distributive, interactional), complaint management, service failure, apology, compensation, perceived fairness
Relationship marketing and customer retention	Relationship, customer retention, relationship management, long term relationship, commitment, trust, CRM, account management, switching costs

Table 1 continued

Themes	Keywords
Customer satisfaction	Satisfaction, disconfirmation, dissatisfaction, pleasure, arousal, consumer comfort; delight
Strategy	Segmentation, customer profiling, marketing planning, strategic planning, growth strategy, market strategy, customer retention strategies, differentiation strategy, market entry
Tangible/servicescape	Tangibles clues, servicescape, physical surroundings, surroundings, infrastructures, location, layout, atmospherics
Communication/ promotion/advertising	Advertising, sales promotion, messages cues, media exposure, coupon, free samples, communication, image
Service offering	Service level, loyalty programs, brand, customer requirement, tailoring, product's service attributes
Ethics	Social responsibility, legality, fairness, bribery, privacy concerns, ecology, environment, stakeholders, code of practice
Internal marketing and employees	Front-line employees, job autonomy, job satisfaction, customer orientation, internal marketing, internal marketing orientation, work organization, work stress, customer contact
Competition	Pioneering advantage, competitive advantage, rivalry; benchmark; positioning
Non-profit services	Public services, voluntary service
Distribution/delivery	Franchising, e-tailing, retailing; service delivery system, supply chain
Usage/purchase	Consumption, preference, decision, adoption
Environmental context	Service context, environment

judges solved their disagreements through discussion. If disagreement persisted between the judges, a detailed examination of the full-text of the article was made. The reliability of the coding procedure was assessed using Perreault and Leigh's (1989) index. We obtained a value of 0.91, which is satisfactory. For each of the 27 themes, we coded a dichotomous variable: 1 if the paper was allocated into the theme and 0 otherwise.

Among the 939 articles, 107 (11.4%) were allocated into only one theme, 342 (36.4%) into two, 318 (33.9%) into three, 126 (13.4%) into four, 35 (3.7%) into five, 8 (0.9%) into six, and 3 (0.3%) into seven. The overall mean is 2.7 themes per articles, which is significantly larger than 1 and thus a multivariate approach to data analysis will be robust.

Service quality is the most frequent theme with 231 papers. This is not surprising as service quality was already identified by Fisk et al. (1993) as the single most researched area in service marketing in the previous period. Most of the work on service quality is still based on the pioneering articles by A. Parasuraman, Leonard Berry, and Valarie Zeithaml published in the 1980s. Service quality is followed by consumer behaviors (203) and customer satisfaction (195). These two themes are both closely related to service quality. The structural relationships between these three concepts have been the focus

of several important papers during the 1990s (e.g. Anderson and Sullivan 1993). The next most important themes are performance (152) and strategy (123). These two related themes have emerged as important topics in the mid-1990s. Research on service performance and profitability has strongly been influenced by the work of Roland Rust on return on quality (e.g. Rust et al. 1995). The next important themes are relationship marketing and customer retention (109) and internal marketing and service employees (102). These themes were already identified as important by Fisk et al. (1993), but only took off after 1995.

4 Results

To analyze the content of the articles, we first computed a cluster analysis to identify the themes, which ''hang together,'' and conversely, to determine where the gaps and clear break points were. Second, we computed a multiple correspondence analysis to complement the cluster analysis and obtained a richer representation of the relationships between themes. Third, we studied the evolution over time of the relationships between themes. This analysis gives us the idea of future directions in service marketing research. Finally, we studied the authors who had published the most during our period of study and the articles that have had the most influence on the evolution of the field.

4.1 Connections among themes

To study the connections among themes, we ran a cluster analysis of the matrix of proximities between themes. We focus our analysis on six clusters that are interpretable and substantively coherent and two isolated themes. The first cluster consists of themes concerned with *service quality and customer satisfaction*. It contains the following themes: service quality, customer satisfaction, service employees, customer and after-sales services, consumer behavior and behavioral intentions, service failure and recovery, service encounter, distribution and delivery, methodology. This cluster regroups topics studied from the customer perspective at the encounter level. The themes in the second cluster are concerned with the *strategic aspects of service marketing*—strategy, competition, performance, international, innovation and operations. The third cluster consists of themes concerned with *relationship marketing and customer retention*. It contains the following themes: relationship marketing and customer retention, B2B, and environment. Research in this cluster focuses on the long-term relationships and interactions between customers and their service providers. The themes in the fourth cluster are concerned with *technology and value*—technology/self-service, usage/purchase, price/value. This cluster regroups research on the impact of technology in service marketing. The role of the Internet and the emergence of e-services are important topics within the cluster. The fifth cluster includes themes that focus on *communication and advertising*—communication/promotion/advertising, tangible. This cluster

regroups the relatively few studies on advertising and communication in service industries. The sixth cluster is concerned with the *service offering* and contains such themes as, service offering and service typology. Research in this cluster focuses on the characteristics of services. Two themes are isolated, ethics and non-profit services. Even if they have recently emerged as important research topics, they only regroup for a few studies and have not yet found their positions within the service marketing literature.

A richer representation of the relationships between themes may be obtained using a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). MCA is an exploratory data analysis technique for the graphical display of multivariate categorical data, which is similar to the principal component analysis (Hoffman and Franke 1986; Hoffman et al. 1994). MCA integrates techniques from multidimensional scaling and classical multivariate analysis to emphasize relationships between variables and at the same time to reduce the number of dimension, without losing information.

The results of the MCA are graphically presented in Fig. 1. The size of the point for each of the themes is proportional to its weight (i.e. the number of articles regrouped within the theme). The proximity between the themes represents shared content.

The first, horizontal dimension of the map separates themes emphasizing the management-side of service marketing (on the right-hand side) from those concerned with the customer-side (on the left-hand side). The second, vertical dimension separates themes, which are at a higher, more strategic level and that are less specific to the service marketing field (at the top) from those focusing on a lower, more operational level and which are more specific to the service marketing field (at the bottom). In short, the dimensions of the map reflect characteristic ''poles'' of topical orientation within the service marketing literature.

On the upper left-hand side of the map, we find themes, which are focused on customers from a broader perspective such as 'customer behavior' and 'relationships.' These themes contain papers with studies which have been applied to services but which could have as well been applied to non-service activities. On the lower left-hand side of the map, we find themes, which also have a customer perspective but with a more focused approach such as 'customer satisfaction' and 'service quality' as well as 'service recovery' and 'service encounter.' These themes contain papers, which originate from the service marketing field and are specific to it. On the upper right-hand side we find themes, which are firmer, or management oriented with a strategic perspective (strategy, competition, internationalization, innovation, etc.). The papers contained in these themes are also mainly applications to services of concepts that may be applicable to other marketing fields. Finally, the lower right-hand side is dominated by themes which have a firm or management approach and which are focused on a more operational approach such as 'performance,' 'operations,' and 'service delivery.' They are also more specifically service oriented with themes such as 'service employees' and 'customer service.'
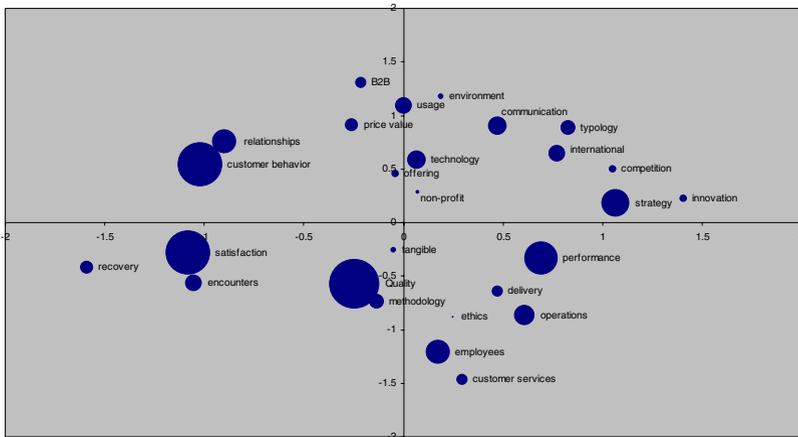
Fig. 1 The service marketing fields: multiple correspondence analysis results

4.2 Evolution over time

To provide a dynamic view of the evolution of the service marketing literature and to be able to speculate about its future developments, we divided the 11 years of publication into two periods. The first period runs from 1993 to 1998 and the second one from 1999 to 2003.

During the first period 395 papers had been published with an average of 65.8 papers per year. In the second period 544 papers had been published with an average of 108.8 papers per year. This is an increase in the number of papers published per year of about 65.27% between the two periods. This increase is partly due the arrival of a new publication devoted to service in 1997: JSR. When the 141 papers published in JSR are not taken into account, the increase in the number of service articles published is still significant with a rate of 40.2% between the two periods. The average annual growth rate is 5.30% without taking into account the articles published in JSR and 8.02% with these papers. The field is therefore growing at a healthy rate (see Fig. 2).

The growth of the field is however not homogeneous, some themes have seen their number of papers growing, when others have seen it stagnate or even decreasing. Based on the percentage of papers published per theme across the two time periods (see Table 2), we can identify an evolution in service marketing research. The relative number of papers published on technology/self-service (+402.0%), ethics (+296.1%), environmental context (97.2%), service usage/purchase (+88.2%), internationalization and cross-cultural research (+80.1%), relationships marketing and customer retention (+76.4%), service failure and recovery (+73.25%), service encounter (+43.0%), consumer behavior and behavioral intentions (+36.1%), customer satisfaction (+26.8%), and innovation (+22.8%) is strongly increasing, when the relative number papers published on service distribution/delivery

(–37.0%), competition (–31.0%), typology (–29.2%), service quality (–28.0%), operations and service design (–27.4%), internal marketing and service employee management (–17.1%), service offerings (–13.4%), and B2B (–10.64%) is strongly decreasing. Finally, the relative number of papers published in communication/promotion/advertising (–5.6%), methodology (–5.4%), strategy (–3.2%), non-profit (–1.6%), performance (–1.5%) customer service (–1.1%), tangible (+4.0%), and price/value (+6.4%) is more stable across the two time periods. This evolution shows an increased interest for a customer-focused approach to service marketing as opposed to a producer's approach (see Vargo and Lusch 2004b).

Using a life-cycle metaphor (see Fig. 3 for a schematic representation), we can interpret the past evolution of a key theme independently and make some forecasts about its likely evolution in the near future. 'Service quality,' 'customer behavior and behavioral intentions,' and 'customer satisfaction' have reached their maturity stage. A lot of research has been done on these themes and the number of articles published every year has started to decrease and is

**Table 2** Number of papers per keywords and per time period

Categories	1993–1998		1999–2003		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Customer and after-sale services	22	5.57%	30	5.51%	52	5.54%
Business-to-business (B2B)	26	6.58%	32	5.88%	58	6.18%
Consumer behaviors/behavioral intentions	79	20.00%	148	27.21%	227	24.17%
Service encounters	30	7.59%	59	10.85%	89	9.48%
e-Service/technology	12	3.04%	83	15.26%	95	10.12%
Typology (types of services)	39	9.87%	38	6.99%	77	8.20%
Innovation	13	3.29%	22	4.04%	35	3.73%
International	23	5.82%	57	10.48%	80	8.52%
Methodology	33	8.35%	43	7.90%	76	8.09%
Operation/service design	54	13.67%	54	9.93%	108	11.50%
Performance	73	18.48%	99	18.20%	172	18.32%
Price/value	28	7.09%	41	7.54%	69	7.35%
Service quality	130	32.91%	129	23.71%	259	27.58%
Service failure and recovery	18	4.56%	43	7.90%	61	6.50%
Relationship marketing and customer retention	35	8.86%	85	15.63%	120	12.78%
Customer satisfaction	83	21.01%	145	26.65%	228	24.28%
Strategy	63	15.95%	84	15.44%	147	15.65%
Tangible/servicescape	14	3.54%	20	3.68%	34	3.62%
Communication/promotion/advertising	40	10.13%	52	9.56%	92	9.80%
Service offering	18	4.56%	21	3.86%	39	4.15%
Ethics	2	0.51%	11	2.02%	13	1.38%
Employees	56	14.18%	64	11.76%	120	12.78%
Competition	20	5.06%	19	3.49%	39	4.15%
Non-profit services	17	4.30%	23	4.23%	40	4.26%
Distribution/delivery	30	7.59%	26	4.78%	56	5.96%
Usage/purchase	22	5.57%	57	10.48%	79	8.41%
Environmental context	7	1.77%	19	3.49%	26	2.77%
Total	395		544		939	

The sum of percentages is not equal to 100% because the papers could contain several themes

likely to continue to further decrease in the future. In the same time, 'relationship marketing and customer retention' and 'technology and self-service' are the two themes with recent popularity and a healthy growth rate. Finally, a promising theme at its take-off stage is "internationalization and cross-cultural research." This is supported by a recent review of the cross-cultural service literature by Zhang et al. (2005), who identified 32 studies published between 1997 and 2005, among which 15 (46.9%) were published in 2004 or 2005 (Fig. 3).

The evolution of the different themes is consistent with some of Fisk et al.'s (1993) predictions and the wishes of the ten experts interviewed by Fisk et al. (2000) and Brown et al. (2003), but not all. As predicted, 'service quality' and 'customer satisfaction' were the two major themes during the first time period. Then, during the second period, 'service failure and recovery' and 'technology and self-service' appear as the two fast growing themes. Furthermore, 'international and cross-cultural,' a theme forecast by Fisk et al. (1993) and advocated by the ten experts, is just starting to emerge as an important research topic at the end of the study period (see Zhang et al. 2005). 'Servicization' is another theme, which was predicted and advocated but which is taking more time to emerge. The success of the papers by Vargo and Lusch (2004a, b) is likely to accelerate the development of this theme in the future. On the other hands, themes such as 'reverse marketing,' 'internal marketing,' and 'service design and delivery' did not develop to become dominant research topics. Furthermore, 'relationship marketing and customer retention,' which was not called for exploded as an important research theme. One reason, maybe why the growth of this theme was not predicted is that building relationships with the customer is inherent in service in general and so is an implicit aspect of any service research (Grove et al. 2003).

For each of the two periods, we also computed the position of each theme in the perceptual map. This allowed us to estimate the direction of the evolution of the interrelationships among the themes. This evolution is presented in Fig. 4, in which arrows represent the direction of evolution. Diamonds
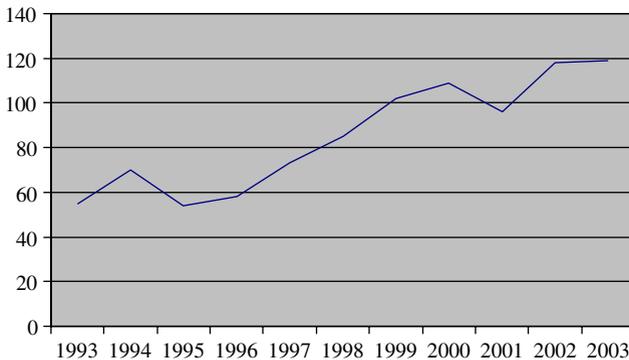
Fig. 2 Number of service marketing article per year
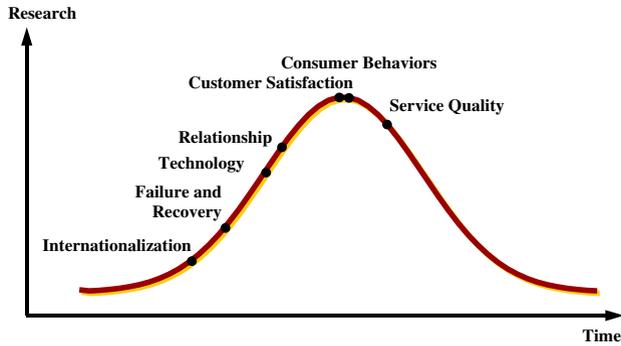
Fig. 3 Maturity cycle of the themes

correspond to the position of the theme during the first period (1993–1998) and the squares correspond to their position during the second period (1999–2003).

The results show that most themes evolve toward the upper left corner of the map, which is toward more strategic customer-side research. This evolution denotes a movement of the service marketing literature departing from an encounter level of analysis toward a more strategic perspective and from a management-side toward a more customer-side approach. This movement is consistent with the changes in the number of papers published for each theme. A small number of themes, such as customer service, operations, and tangible, are moving in a second direction toward the management-side of the map, and innovation is moving up toward a more strategic approach. Overall, the main dynamics and direction of the evolution of service marketing research, toward a customer and a strategic side is consistent with Fisk et al. (1993) predictions and the wishes of the ten experts interviewed by Fisk et al. (2000) and Brown et al. (2003).

4.3 Contributing authors

In their account of the early developments of the service marketing field, Berry and Parasuraman (1993) identified key individuals as one of the important factors, which contributed to the field structure and growth. Fisk et al. (1993) identified the 56 most prolific contributors to the service marketing field during the period 1953–1993. These individuals had a strong impact on the themes studied during the following period. It is therefore useful in identifying and positioning the most prolific authors from 1993 to 2003 and in helping us in identifying the future directions of the evolution of the field.

The 939 articles published in the selected journals have been written by 1,187 different authors. Among these authors 1 (0.08%) published 16 articles, 2 (0.17%) published 13 articles, 1 (0.08%) published 12 articles, 1 (0.08%) published 11 articles, 2 (0.17%) published 10 articles, 5 (0.42%) published 9
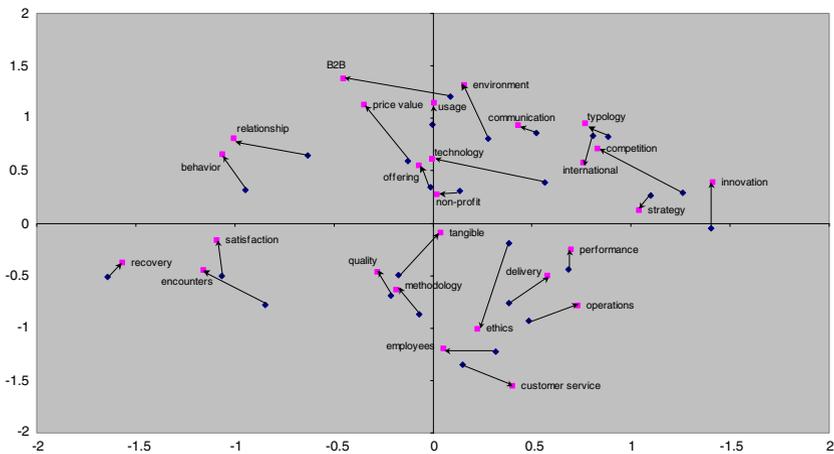
Fig. 4 Theme evolution over time

articles, 5 (0.42%) published 8; 2 (0.17%) published 7; 13 (1.10%) published 6; 13 (1.10%) published 5; 30 (2.53%) published 4; 61 (5.14%) published 3; 199 (16.76%) published 2; and 852 (71.78%) published only one article. These proportions are comparable to those found by Heck and Cooley (1988) in the financial literature and by Furrer et al. (2005) in the strategic management literature.

Authors can be ranked based on the total number of appearances or on adjusted appearances. We based our ranking on the adjusted appearances rather than the total appearances used by Fisk et al. (1993), because it takes into account the number of co-authors and it is also the most frequently used. The adjustment method is similar to the one used by Morrison and Inkpen (1991), Inkpen and Beamish (1994), and Furrer et al. (2005). The number of adjusted appearances reflects multiple authored articles. If an article was published by two authors, each received one half of a credit; in the case of three authors, one third of a credit and so on; 211 (22.5%) papers are single-authored, 420 (44.7%) have two authors; 251 (26.7%) have three authors; 43 (4.6%) have four authors; 11 (1.2%) have five authors; 2 (0.2%) have six authors, and 1 (0.1%) has seven authors.

Based on the adjusted appearance, the most frequent contributors to the service marketing literature during the period 1993–2003 are Anna Mattila with 9.66 adjusted appearances and 13 total appearances, Jochen Wirtz with 6.50 adjusted appearances and 13 total appearances, Peter Danaher with 6.16 adjusted appearances and 10 total appearances, Robert Johnston with 6.03 adjusted appearances and 9 total appearances, Ko de Ruyter with 5.53 adjusted appearances and 16 total appearances, and Len Berry with 5.17 adjusted appearances and 10 total appearances. Because the adjusted appearance favors single authorship, we could also add two authors with more than ten papers published during the period: Roland Rust with a total appearance of 12 and an adjusted appearance of 3.95 and Parsu Parasuraman

with a total appearance of 11 and an adjusted appearance of 4.75 (see Table 3).

Among the 56 most prolific authors of the 1953–1993 period, nine are still in the top list of the next period of 1993–2003, they are: Len Berry, Valarie Zeithaml, Mary Jo Bitner, Steve Brown, Christian Grönroos, Parsu Parasuraman, Ray Fisk, Ben Schneider, and Steve Grove. This longevity is partly due to the relatively short history of the field but also denotes certain stability. The new authors of the last decade are Anna Mattila, Peter Danaher, Jochen Wirtz, Ko de Ruyter, Paul Patterson, Roland Rust, and Martin Wetzels. They are likely to continue publishing in the next time period, and therefore influencing the dynamics and future evolution of the field.

A representation of the positions of these authors on a perceptual map may be compared to the position of the themes presented on the map of Fig. 1. This analysis gives us some clues in interpreting the contributions of the most frequently published authors to the different subfields of services marketing (Fig. 5). An author's position is represented as the average position of his published articles contained in the database. For example, on the map of Fig. 5, the positions of Valarie Zeithaml, Parsu Parasuraman, and Len Berry are closely related to the position of the theme 'service quality.' On the map, we can clearly distinguish between authors whose research focuses on the management side of service marketing (on the right-hand side) from those more concerned with the customer side (on the left-hand side) and distinguish between those with more strategic focus (at the top) from those focusing on a more operational level (at the bottom).

4.4 Most influential papers

Berry and Parasuraman (1993) contend that certain publications assumed seminal roles in the early growth of the service marketing field. These publications were accelerating factors to the development of the field. It is therefore important to identify the most influential papers published between 1993 and 2003 to understand the directions of the future development of the service marketing field.

The most influential papers have been identified based on their number of appearances in the social science citation index (SSCI), citation data files between 1993 and 2006 (Table 4). Because the number of citations is time dependent, we rank the papers by the average number of citations per year. Among the 33 most cited articles presented in Table 4, 16 (48.5%) were published in the *Journal of Marketing* and 6 (18.2%) in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, the other journals sharing the remaining 11 papers (33.3%). These figures show the importance and influence of these two general marketing journals on the service marketing field.

Among these 33 most influential papers, 11 (33.3%) have their main focus on service quality; 9 (27.3%) on relationship; 4 (12.1%) on satisfaction and technology, and 2 (6.1%) on service failure and recovery. When we examined as to when these papers had been published, we observed that the most

Rank	Authors	Adjusted appearances	Total appearances
1	Mattila AS	9.66	13
2	Wirtz J	6.50	13
3	Danaher PJ	6.17	10
4	Johnston R	6.03	9
5	de Ruyter K	5.53	16
6	Berry LL	5.17	10
7	Patterson PG	5.00	9
8	Boshoff C	4.83	7
9	Parasuraman A	4.75	11
10	Andreassen TW	4.50	6
11	Bolton RN	4.42	9
12	Mattsson J	4.03	8
13	Rust RT	3.95	12
14	Gwinner KP	3.83	8
15	Stauss B	3.75	6
16	Brown SW	3.67	9
17	Bitner MJ	3.33	8
18	Zeithaml VA	3.33	8
19	Wetzels M	3.17	9
20	Dabholkar PA	3.17	6
21	Kumar P	3.00	5
22	Mittal B	3.00	4
23	Roos I	3.00	4
24	Singh J	2.92	6
25	Anderson EW	2.87	6
26	McColl-Kennedy JR	2.83	6
27	Grewal D	2.83	8
28	Stafford MR	2.83	4
29	Iacobucci D	2.75	5
30	Brady MK	2.53	6
31	Grove SJ	2.50	7
32	Blodgett JG	2.50	6
33	Shugan SM	2.50	5
34	Taylor SA	2.50	4
35	Bettencourt LA	2.50	4
36	Taylor S	2.50	3
37	Winsted KF	2.50	3
38	Clow KE	2.42	6
39	Schneider B	2.33	4
40	Gremler DD	2.33	6
41	Kelley SW	2.33	6
42	Wakefield KL	2.33	5
43	Grönroos C	2.33	3
44	Voss GB	2.17	6
45	Fisk RP	2.17	4
46	Lemmink J	2.08	6

Table 3 Authors appearances (1993–2003)

cited papers published in the first period essentially had 'service quality' and 'satisfaction' as their main themes. The most influential papers focusing on 'relationship marketing and customer retention' have been published along the entire time period and those with a main theme on 'technology and

Fig. 5 The most frequent contributors to the service marketing literature between 1993 and 2003

self-service' and 'service failure and recovery' have been published more recently.

These results support the previous life-cycle analysis, showing that the 'service quality,' and 'satisfaction' themes have reached or are close to their maturity stage, and that 'relationship marketing and customer retention' is still likely to grow rapidly. Moreover, according to the accelerator effect of influential papers (Berry and Parasuraman 1993), we may expect more publications on 'technology and self-service' and 'service failure and recovery' in the near future.

5 Discussion

Our analysis adopted a past-present orientation. To the extent that these papers reflect the dynamics and evolution of the service marketing field as a whole, the trends we observed raise an important question about the future of the service marketing field: "Is the field likely to further concentrate toward a dominant paradigm or to fragment itself into a myriad of subfields?" The results of our analysis show that most of the themes are moving in the same direction, rather than moving toward the center of the map or exploding into a myriad of directions. This dominant move is therefore neither supporting the fragmentation hypothesis, nor the concentration hypothesis. This trend into one dominant direction could signify that the service marketing literature has not yet reached its full maturity and is still evolving. Further research is however needed to support this interpretation of the results.

The predictions made by Fisk et al. (1993) were only partly supported. Service quality and customer satisfaction were two of the most studied themes

Table 4 The most influential papers

Rank	References	# Citations	# Citations per year
1	Zeithaml et al. (1996)	239	23.90
2	Boulding et al. (1993)	246	18.92
3	Anderson and Sullivan (1993)	218	16.77
4	Parasuraman et al. (1994a)	180	15.00
5	Cronin and Taylor (1994)	158	13.17
6	Rust et al. (1995)	144	13.09
7	Meuter et al. (2000)	72	12.00
8	Bolton (1998)	93	11.63
9	Berry (1995)	126	11.45
10	Teas (1993)	141	10.85
11	Kalwani and Narayandas (1995)	119	10.82
12	Dick and Basu (1994)	127	12.58
13	Arnould and Price (1993)	131	10.08
14	Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002)	40	10.00
15	Keaveney (1995)	104	9.45
16	Zeithaml (2000)	56	9.33
17	Bolton and Lemon (1999)	65	9.29
18	Zeithaml et al. (2002)	37	9.25
19	Hartline and Ferrell (1996)	92	9.20
20	Tax et al. (1998)	73	9.13
21	Smith et al. (1999)	62	8.86
22	Bitner and Brown (2000)	50	8.33
23	Cronin et al. (2000)	50	8.33
24	Bitner et al. (1998)	65	8.13
25	Bitner et al. (1994)	95	7.92
26	Mittal et al. (1998)	62	7.75
27	Teas (1994)	81	6.75
28	Price and Arnould (1999)	47	6.71
29	Taylor (1994)	80	6.67
30	Oliver et al. (1997)	60	6.67
31	Bendapudi and Berry (1997)	60	6.67
32	Parasuraman (2000)	40	6.67
33	Anderson and Mittal (2000)	40	6.67

Number of citations between 1993 and 2006 (source: SSCI)

between 1993 and 2003. Even if they have started to decline, these themes can be considered as the main centers of interest of the service marketing field in the 1990s. Some themes such as 'design and delivery,' 'modeling and measurement,' and 'service recovery' never really stood up as main research streams. Other predictions are verified: themes such as 'service encounters,' 'relationship,' and 'technology infusion' are appearing. These themes are still emerging and with the expansion of information and communication technology, they will not reach their maturity stage before several years. According to Brown et al. (2003), we can pretend that a more strategic theme such as 'value creation' or 'customer equity' will come out and become one of the more prolific themes in service marketing research. We suggest also that the aspect of 'internationalization' and therefore cross-cultural researches and 'service dominant logic' (or 'servicization') are certainly two other promising themes for further developments of the field.

5.1 Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of our study was the necessary limit of the number of selected journals. We only selected ten of the top journals for service marketing research, but other outlets also publish service marketing papers. Conferences proceedings, books, and dissertations are also important sources of service marketing research. The actual profusion of service marketing publications made it virtually impossible to include all the publications in the analysis. We are, however, confident that our selection of the top journals makes our results valid and reliable.

Due to constraint of space we also limited the number of analyses we presented. The positioning of the different journals on a map issued from the MCA may have provided some interesting information about the field as well as the positioning of the most influential papers. On the other hand, these supplementary analyses may have diverted the focus of the paper from the dynamics and evolution of the field. We therefore decided not to present them in the paper but they are available from the authors.

An important question that the scope of this paper did not allow us answer is: "What are the major theoretical and methodological developments that have occurred in the field?" From a theoretical point of view, it would have been interesting to investigate as to what kind of theories have been generated and if these are the most likely to advance the knowledge base. To assess the methodological state of the service marketing literature, it would have also been interesting to study the relative importance of conceptual and empirical papers and the relative importance of qualitative and quantitative studies and their evolution over time. Due to scope and space limitations, we should reserve the answer to these questions for further research.

5.2 Future research in service marketing

In order to conjecture about the future of service marketing research, it is important to reflect on the origins of the observed dynamics and evolutions. Berry and Parasuraman (1993) analyzed a number of factors that influenced and accelerated the early developments of the service marketing field. Some of these factors are endogenous to the academic community, others are exogenous.

Among the exogenous factors, Berry and Parasuraman (1993) identified two demand factors, which supported the development of the field: the rapid growth of the service sector and deregulation in several service industries. Both factors contributed to a heightened competitive pressure, which played an important role in the demand for knowledge in service marketing. The field of service marketing has also been influenced by endogenous factors. Berry and Parasuraman (1993) documented the important roles of institutions and individuals. The Marketing Science Institute (MSI), the American Marketing Association (AMA), and the First Interstate Center for Services Marketing at Arizona State University shaped service marketing research agenda through their funding, conferences, and publications. Through, their risk-taking behavior and leader-

ship, early service marketing scholars also shaped the structure service marketing field and strongly influenced its dynamics and the direction of its evolution. Berry and Parasuraman (1993) also identified key influencing papers as accelerating factors of the service marketing field's development.

The growth of the Internet sector and self-service technologies is one important exogenous factor, which is likely to further influence the evolution of the service marketing field. Another exogenous factor is the progress made in service trade liberalization under the rules of the Doha Round and the World Trade Organization leadership, which calls for more international and cross-cultural service research (Zhang et al. 2005). Furthermore, despite all the progress made in service research, consumers perceived that the overall the quality of service is declining and the American Customer Satisfaction Index shows an overall decline (Brady 2000; Barta and Chaker 2001; Fishman 2001), which will necessitate more research on how to recover from service failures. These demand factors are likely to influence service research in the direction of the themes of 'technology and self-services,' 'service failure and recovery,' and 'internationalization and cross-cultural' service research.

Recently, the MSI published its research priorities for 2006–2008 with an overarching theme focused ''The Connected Customer,'' evolving in an environment in which rapid changes in communications technology as well as globalization of markets is creating communities of customers and prospects rather than a multitude of isolated customers, which will also influence the work of service marketing researchers on 'relationship marketing and customer retention,' 'technology and self-service,' and 'international and cross-cultural service research.' The Service Special Interest Group of the AMA is also likely to influence future research direction through its conferences, publications, and awards. The authors who entered the list of the most frequent contributors of the service marketing field during the last decade, such as Anna Mattila, Peter Danaher, Jochen Wirtz, Ko de Ruyter, Paul Patterson, Roland Rust, and Martin Wetzels, are likely to continue actively publishing in the next time period and influencing the dynamics and future evolution of the field by their research agenda. Moreover, based on the analysis of the most cited service marketing articles published between 1993 and 2003, we have identified several papers on 'relationship marketing and customer retention,' 'technology and self-service,' and 'service failure and recovery,' which are likely to have an accelerating effect on future research in service marketing on these themes. 'Servicization' a research theme, which was expected to develop but which is taking more time to emerge. The success of the papers by Steve Vargo and Bob Lusch (2004a, b), just outside the range of our study is likely to accelerate the development of this theme in the future.

6 Conclusion

In our analysis of the last decade of research in service marketing, we have identified the main research directions in the field as reflected in the articles

published in ten leading journals. Through a content analysis, we also studied the dynamics between the subfields of service marketing and the evolution of research themes over time. Our findings pinpoint certain conjectures about the future development of the field, particularly in the direction of the themes of 'technology and self-service,' 'failure and recovery,' and 'internationalization and cross-cultural service marketing.' These questions deserve a much broader discussion.

We have also analyzed the contributions made by authors to the field and the influence of the published articles. This allowed us to identify the most prolific contributors and to assess the impact of their work on the field's future development. Furthermore, a multiple correspondence analysis was used to map keywords and authors in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the research published in ten leading journals between 1993 and 2003. The maps document the significant influence of the authors and key papers on the development of specific themes of the service marketing field. The challenge to the service marketing field on retaining its position as a major subfield of the general marketing field, and to contribute to address some of the key challenges we discussed in the paper and to stimulate even more innovative and integrative frameworks for conducting high quality research in the field.

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