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Evolution of digital marketing communication: Bibliometric analysis and network visualization from key articles

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ABSTRACT

Digital marketing is leading the way in offering new features to reach, inform, engage, offer, and sell products and services to customers, and is expected to continue to be at the forefront of the technological revolution. The purpose of this study is to identify influential cited works in digital marketing communication (DMC) research, to determine the current status of the research on DMC, and to indicate the extent to which influential works have shaped it. This bibliometric study assesses articles published over a 12-year period in core DMC-related journals. The analysis examines 5865 citations of 141 digital-related articles in the targeted journals in the given publications using both citation and co-citation analyses. After a broad disciplinary review of key cited DMC works, this study suggests thematic insights and implications for academics and practitioners that are promising avenues for creating effective DMC.

1. Introduction

Digital marketing offers new ways to reach, inform, and engage customers and to offer and sell them products and services. It does this very successfully and thus, digital marketing is expected to remain at the forefront of the technological revolution (Ko, 2019; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Martín-Consuegra, Faraoni, Díaz, & Ranfagni, 2018). Digital marketing via social and mobile media has rapidly become part of the daily life of millions of people, expanding into common social media activities, and often leading to the creation of customer relationships (Fujita, Harrigan, & Soutar, 2017; Han, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2016; Kim, 2018; Woodside & Mir, 2019). Social engagement, diffusion, and interaction are keys to the digital marketing evolution, and have enhanced firms' ability to engage customers by reaching out, informing them about products and services, and ultimately selling these products and services to customers (Ko, 2019; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Martín-Consuegra et al., 2018).

Increasing numbers of marketing academics and practitioners have studied the rapid evolution of digital technology, social media, and mobile marketing, and the technological innovations this evolution has inspired. Digital marketing has evolved from marketing specific products and services to using digital channels for activities, institutions, and processes facilitated by digital technologies. Digital marketing refers to an adaptive, technology-enabled process by which firms

collaborate with customers and partners to create, communicate, deliver, and sustain value for all stakeholders jointly (Guercini, Bernal, & Prentice, 2018; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). Digital technologies allow for new adaptive processes and institutions in marketing communication. Institutions build foundational capabilities to create such value jointly for their customers and themselves, while processes create value through new customer experiences and interactions among customers in new digital environments.

Having been in existence for more than a decade, social media now integrates new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video sharing, which cater to the various interests of users (Fujita et al., 2017; Han et al., 2016; Kim, 2018). Social media has developed from limited technology developed for a few users to a tool that has become an integral part of everyday life for millions of consumers across the globe. Following social media, digital technology-driven marketing communication, such as artificial intelligence (AI) services, multi-channel networks, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR), now seem to shape the digital marketing communication (DMC) landscape, providing new directions for future research (Brodie & Juric, 2017; Guercini et al., 2018; Kim, Kang, & Taylor, 2018; Kim & Yang, 2018; Taylor, Cho, Anthony, & Smith, 2018; Zhang & Dholakia, 2018).

This study presents a broad disciplinary review of the contribution of academic work to this revolution. It tracks the changes in key works

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on DMC research cited by scholarly researchers over a 12-year period (2004–2016). In 2004, when Facebook was launched, businesses and consumers began to use social media on a massive scale, providing the impetus for the exponential growth of social media across the globe. Currently, the social media environment has become a communal channel for users around the world, who access it for multiple recreational and commercial purposes. Thus, citation and co-citation analysis on DMC from 2004 to the present as a social media-oriented age has a remarkable ability to update how social media has shaped and continues to shape the domain of DMC. Such analysis can also examine the effectiveness of various evaluation approaches, including new directions designed to capture meaningful insights and communication value in DMC. This study aims to establish the current status of research on DMC and to show how digital technology has shaped marketing communication assessments.

Evaluating DMC research from a historical perspective is important for measuring its current and future impacts (Cleveland, 2018; Johnson, 2019; Kim, Sun, Kim, & Kang, 2019; Sirgy, 2017; Taylor & Costello, 2017). Between 2004 and 2016, DMC research developed critical theoretical and methodological perspectives on the subject. By inspecting key articles, this study potentially defines a locus for the emerging DMC field that will enable scholars to evaluate its impact and address future research directions.

This exploration provides a conceptual and scholarly context for articles in the DMC domain, and reviews the latest scholarship on DMC to contextualize and highlight key works. The three main topics are addressed via the following research questions.

1. What are the influential cited works in DMC research? Who are the most cited authors? What are the most cited DMC articles?
2. What is the current status of DMC research? What are the emergent themes among the most cited works in DMC?
3. How have influential works shaped DMC? What are the co-citation networks that exist among influential cited works in DMC? What schools of thought exist among co-citation networks?

Based on the research questions, this bibliometric study contributes to the discovery that the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), interactivity, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) marketing as a theoretical underpinning have shaped the domain of DMC in the social media era between 2004 and 2016. The assessments indicate three key findings and implications for DMC—eWOM, interactivity, and DMC effectiveness—which suggest thematic insights and implications for academics and practitioners who are pursuing ways for generating effective DMC. In particular, bibliometric visualization analysis enables the visualization of social networks among scholarly communications in the DMC as a discipline. Such visualization, which includes co-citation analysis, suggests that eWOM and interactivity provide the means for an “invisible college” or community of researchers to strongly influence DMC research as a school of thought. This potentially sets a baseline for the emerging field of DMC, which will enable scholars to evaluate its impact on brand experiences and DMC value.

2. Literature

Bibliometric analyses, including citation and co-citation analyses, are beneficial for delving into the patterns and characteristics of what has been published, thereby facilitating the exploration, organization, and articulation of work that has been undertaken in a specific discipline (Diodato, 1994; Ferreira, Santos, Almeida, & Reis, 2014). Bibliometric analyses have the potential to inform collection progress, describe institutional scholarship strengths and citation/co-citation patterns, and propose potential schools of thoughts in a discipline (Lewis & Alpi, 2017).

Bibliometrics are fully relevant to academic means of scholarly communication and the written record of scholarship (Ferreira et al.,

2014). Bibliometric analysis relies on citation and co-citation analyses for a quantitative investigation of written source documentation (e.g., academic journal articles and books) as an objective method for inspecting part or the entirety of a scholarly discipline (Diodato, 1994; Ferreira et al., 2014; Nerur, Rasheed, & Natarajan, 2008; Ramos-Rodriguez & Ruiz-Navarro, 2004; Shafique, 2013).

Bibliometric research reflecting citation and co-citation analyses contributes to discovering emerging themes and recent progress in a field (Shafique, 2013), the influence of leading scholars (Ferreira, 2011; Willett, 2007), and the impact of different journals (Baumgartner & Pieters, 2003) and schools of thought. It also reflects the intellectual structure of a field (Kim & McMillan, 2008; Ramos-Rodriguez & Ruiz-Navarro, 2004) in various research domains, such as the sociology of science (Crane, 1972), the humanities (Wiberley, 2003), marketing (Ferreira et al., 2014; Merigó, Mas-Tur, Roig-Tierno, & Ribeiro-Soriano, 2015), Internet marketing research (Bar-Ilan & Peritz, 2002), and marketing communications (Kim & McMillan, 2008; Lievrow, 1989; Pasadeos, Phelps, & Kim, 1998; Pasadeos, Renfro, & Hanily, 1999). Previous studies using bibliometric methods have highlighted the nature and course of development of a discipline, going beyond the merely counting and collating citations, to evaluating which authors and cited works represent value to other researchers (Bar-Ilan & Peritz, 2002; Crane, 1972; Ferreira et al., 2014; Kim & McMillan, 2008; Merigó et al., 2015; Pasadeos et al., 1998, 1999; Wiberley, 2003).

Citation analysis is a bibliometric method that reflects citations as the basic units of analysis (Kim & McMillan, 2008). Citations identify prior scholars, ideas, theories, methods, or findings presented when conducting the focal research (Ferreira et al., 2014). Citations indicate the use of a specific work by a citing scholar and reveal the value, importance, and influence of that work. Furthermore, citations in academic works can be specified based on assumptions (Smith, 1981). Researchers cite the greatest possible works, and a cited work is associated with the contents of the citing work.

In citation analysis, the most cited works can clarify key concepts, theoretical underpinnings, and critical emerging themes that drive a discipline. Furthermore, the most cited authors can inform research on who is shaping the field.

Co-citation analysis involves calculating the frequency of a selected pair of works that are cited together in published articles (White & McCain, 1998). Co-citation analysis identifies influential works and their interrelationships, and thus, enhances insight into the evolution of a domain of research (Kim & McMillan, 2008). Such analysis goes further than simply subjecting publications to an analysis of which authors and publications have value for other scholars (Pasadeos et al., 1998).

Co-citation interconnects articles if they have been cited together by a number of other works. The strength of co-citation relationships can be calculated according to how many researchers have cited two documents together (Ferreira et al., 2014; Tankard, Chang, & Tsang, 1984). Co-citation analysis delivers an overview of the intellectual structure of a domain of research as a discipline (Shafique, 2013), thereby leading to a better understanding of the most influential works, scholars, themes, and schools of thought (Nerur et al., 2008).

3. Methods

The authors obtained the data for this bibliometric analysis from citations in articles about DMC published in three core marketing communication journals: the *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Advertising Research*, and *International Journal of Advertising*.

This study focused on these three publications for several reasons. First, the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) indicates that the *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Advertising Research*, and *International Journal of Advertising* are the core journals in the marketing communication discipline. According to the Journal Citation Reports (2016), these journals have high impact factors that allow researchers to evaluate the

Table 1
Most-cited authors.

	Author	Score of citation received	Number of citation	Author	Score of citation received	Number of citation	
1	Petty, R.E.	150	56	21	Sundar, S.S.	56	20
2	Hoffman, D.L.	120	44	22	Rogers, E.M.	55	21
3	Mackenzie, S.B.	102	38	23	Fishbein, M.	54	20
4	Cho, C.H.	100	36	24	Kozinets, R.V.	53	18
5	Cacioppo, J.T.	92	42	25	Rust, R.T.	52	18
6	McMillan, S.J.	92	37	26	Danaher, P.J.	51	18
7	Li, H.	88	36	27	Shrum, L.J.	51	23
8	Novak, T.P.	86	41	28	Coyle, J.R.	49	18
9	Lutz, R.J.	82	41	29	Deighton, J.	49	19
10	Liu, Y.	74	25	30	Edwards, S.M.	49	19
11	Ha, L.	65	22	31	Hennig-Thurau, T.	48	16
12	Nelson, M.R.	64	22	32	Stewart, D.W.	48	19
13	Rodgers, S.	64	23	33	Zaichkowsky, J.L.	48	16
14	Bagozzi, R.P.	63	25	34	Ducoffe, R.H.	47	17
15	Lee, M.R.	63	23	35	Thorson, E.	47	23
16	Meyers-Levy, J.	61	21	36	Chaiken, S.	45	19
17	Leckenby, J.D.	60	25	37	Dou, W.	45	19
18	Okazaki, S.	57	19	38	Holbrook, M.B.	45	17
19	Ajzen, I.	56	22	39	Park, C.W.	45	17
20	Batra, R.	56	22				

most frequently cited journals, those with high impact, and leading journals in a field. Second, most previous bibliometric studies have concentrated on the core journals in a field (Kim & McMillan, 2008; Pasadeos et al., 1998). It can be argued that these journals are leading U.S.-based academic journals devoted primarily to marketing communication (Barry & Howard, 1990; Kim & McMillan, 2008).

This bibliometric study searched for articles related to DMC that were published in any of these core journals over a 12-year period (2004–2016). The analysis includes all digital-related articles from these sources. The search returned 141 articles for the analysis: 26 in the *Journal of Advertising*, 81 in the *Journal of Advertising Research*, and 34 in the *International Journal of Advertising*. For each article, the authors coded information about all the items that appeared in the 5865 citations. A coefficient of reliability is not appropriate for a bibliometric study such as this, because the data collection did not require judgment coding (Kim & McMillan, 2008). However, accurate data collection is crucial owing to the huge volume of the dataset. The authors classified and recorded the dataset and double-checked the entire set of 5865 citations.

In 2004, with the launch of Facebook, social media exploded into the public consciousness. As many businesses and consumers began to use social media, advertising academics and practitioners began to examine its potential as an advertising medium. Having been in operation for more than a decade, social media has now integrated new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video sharing, which allow users to express a broad range of interests in their ongoing communications. Social media has developed from a relatively limited technology with a few users to a communication tool used by consumers worldwide.

Thus, over a 12-year period (2004–2016), this study aimed to provide a broad disciplinary review of key works in digital advertising research and examined the effectiveness of various evaluation approaches, including new metrics designed to capture meaningful brand experiences and advertising value. The review establishes the current status of research evaluating digital technology and shows how digital technology has shaped advertising evaluations.

The authors analyzed all citations in each publication using both citation and co-citation analyses. Citation analysis is a method of tracing publishing patterns under the assumption that many scholars in a discipline consider a comprehensively cited author, article, or book as relevant and important. To address research questions 1 and 2, citation analysis sought to clarify the most cited authors and works in the field of DMC. Specifically, citations were coded as recoding all the authors'

names in the cited works, the order of multiple authors, the title of the cited works, year of the cited works, and all citations. Citation analysis was coded for first, second, and third authorship too. First authors received a score of three for that citation, second authors received a score of two, and third authors received a score of one. The system coding for first, second, and third authorship was used in the analysis of most cited authors and the analysis of the most cited works to suggest more clearly the impact the authors and works had on other researchers (Kim & McMillan, 2008).

Co-citation analysis offers data visualization of document pairing that measures the number of documents citing any given pair of documents using Gephi software. Co-citation visualization enabled us to determine the frequency of co-citations and their networks in addressing research question 3.

Co-citation analysis is a critical method for identifying the structure and evolution path of a specific domain. Co-citation analysis, as a kind of citation network analysis technique, selects the most cited works as the object of analysis, and employs the network analysis method to dissect these most cited articles into several clusters that illustrate the research themes. In this way, the co-citation analysis of this study was able to obtain the structure and traits of the DMC domain.

For the co-citation analysis, the study used Gephi, an open-source software for graph and network analysis (Bastian, Heymann, & Jacomy, 2009). Gephi's flexible and multi-task design can be employed to exhibit large networks in real time and to expedite the assessment, bringing new opportunities to use multifaceted big datasets and create invaluable visual outcomes (Bastian et al., 2009; Liao et al., 2018). Key features of Gephi allow comprehensive access to network data and enable spatializing, filtering, navigating, clustering, and highlighting of crucial aspects of dynamic network visualization (Bastian et al., 2009; Liao et al., 2018). Visualization is beneficial for leveraging perceptual aptitudes to find features in the co-citation network structure (Liao et al., 2018).

4. Most cited authors and works

To address research question 1, we analyzed the most cited authors and the most cited works identified in articles about DMC in the target publications (see Tables 1 and 2). The most cited authors and most cited works evidently present some overlaps between the two lists of most cited authors and most cited works. For example, Petty is the most cited author in Table 1, and his 1983 article with Cacioppo and Schumann (1983) work, is ranked fifth in Table 2. Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann (1983) work,

Table 2
Most-cited works in digital marketing communication articles.

	Citations received	Authors	Year	Title
1	20	Hoffman, D.L. & Novak, T.P.	1996	Marketing in hypermedia computer mediated environments: conceptual foundations.
2	14	Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K.P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D.D.	2004	Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: what motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the internet?
3	14	MacKenzie, S.B. & Lutz, R.J.	1989	An empirical examination of the structural antecedents of attitude toward the ad in an advertising pretest context.
4	14	Steuer, J.	1992	Defining virtual reality: Dimensions determining telepresence
5	13	Petty, R.E., Cacioppo, J.T., & Schumann, D.	1983	Central and peripheral routes to advertising effectiveness: the moderating role of involvement.
6	12	Liu, Y. & Shrum, L.J.	2002	What is interactivity and is it always such a good thing? Implications of definition, person, and situation for the influence of interactivity on advertising effectiveness.
7	11	Coyle, J.R. & Thorson, E.	2001	The Effects of progressive levels of interactivity and vividness in Web marketing sites
8	11	McMillan, S.J. & Hwang, J.S.	2002	Measures of perceived interactivity: An exploration of the role of direction of communication, user control, and time in shaping perceptions of interactivity
9	11	Rogers, E.M.	1983	Diffusion of innovations, 3th ed.
10	10	Brown, J.J. & Reingen, P.H.	1987	Social ties and word-of-mouth referral behavior
11	10	Ducoffe, R.H.	1996	Advertising value and advertising on the Web
12	10	Friestad, M. & Wright, P.	1994	The persuasion knowledge model: how people cope with persuasion attempts
13	10	MacKenzie, S.B., Lutz, R.J., & Belch, G.E.	1986	The role of attitude toward the ad as a mediator of advertising effectiveness: A test of competing explanations
14	9	Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I.	1975	Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research
15	9	Ghose, S. & Dou, W.	1998	Interactive functions and their impacts on the appeal of internet presence sites.
16	8	Chen, Q. & Wells, W.D.	1999	Attitude Toward the Site
17	8	Edwards, S.M., Li, H., & Lee, J.H.	2002	Forced exposure and psychological reactance: antecedents and consequences of the perceived intrusiveness of pop-up ads
18	8	Granovetter, M.S.	1973	The strength of weak ties
19	8	Phelps, J.E., Lewis, R., Mobilio, L., Perry, D., & Raman, N.	2004	Viral marketing or electronic word of mouth advertising: examining consumer responses and motivations to pass along e-mail
20	8	Rodgers, S. & Thorson, E.	2000	The interactive advertising model: how people perceive and process interactive ads.
21	8	Zaichkowsky, J.L.	1985	Measuring the involvement construct
22	8	Zaichkowsky, J.L.	1994	The personal involvement inventory: Reduction, revision and application to advertising
23	7	Ariely, D.	2000	Controlling the information flow: effects on consumers' decision making and preferences.
24	7	Barwise, P. & Strong, C.	2002	Permission-based mobile advertising.
25	7	Bezjian-Avery, A., Calder, B., & Iacobucci, D.	1998	New media interactive advertising Vs. Traditional advertising
26	7	Chandon, J.L., Chtourou, M.S., & Fortin, D.R.	2003	Effects of configuration and exposure levels on response to web advertisements
27	7	Godes, D. & Mayzlin, D.	2004	Using online conversations to study word-of-mouth communication
28	7	Ha, L. & James, E.L.	1998	Interactivity reexamined: A baseline analysis of early business web sites
29	7	Ha, L. & McCann, K.	2008	An integrated model of advertising clutter in offline and online media.
30	7	Herr, P.M., Kardes, F.R., & Kim, J.	1991	Effects of Word of Mouth and Product-Attribute Information on Persuasion: An accessibility-diagnostics perspective
31	7	Holbrook, M.B. & Batra, R.	1987	Assessing the role of emotions as mediators of consumer response to advertising
32	7	Katz, E. & Lazarsfeld, P.F.	1955	Personal influence: The part played by people in the flow of mass communication.
33	7	Lang, A.	2000	The limited capacity model of mediated message processing.
34	7	Lee, M.R. & Youn, S.M.	2009	Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) – how eWOM platforms influence consumer product judgment.
35	7	Li, H., Edwards, S.M., & Lee, J.H.	2002	Measuring the intrusiveness of advertisements: scale development and validation.
36	7	MacInnis, D.J. & Jaworski, B.J.	1989	Information processing from advertisements: toward an integrative framework
37	7	Moore, R.S., Stammerjohan, C.A., & Coulter, R.A.	2005	Banner advertiser - web site context congruity and color effects on attention and attitudes.
38	7	Nelson, M.R., Yaros, R.A., & Keum, H.J.	2006	Examining the influence of telepresence in spectator and player processing of real and fictitious brands in a computer game
39	7	Robinson, H., Wysocka, A., & Hand, C.	2007	Internet advertising effectiveness – the effect of design on click-through rates for banner ads.
40	7	Sicilia, M., Ruiz, S., & Munuera, J.L.	2005	Effects of interactivity in a website: the moderating effect of need for cognition
41	7	Trusov, M., Bucklin, R.E., & Pauwels, K.	2009	Effects of word-of-mouth versus traditional marketing: findings from an internet social networking site
42	7	Trappey, R.J. & Woodside, A.G.	2005	Consumer responses to interactive advertising campaigns coupling short-message-service direct marketing and TV commercials
43	6	Batra, R. & Ray, M.L.	1986	Situational effects of advertising repetition: the moderating influence of motivation, ability, and opportunity to respond.
44	6	Cho, C.H.	1999	How advertising works on the World Wide Web: modified elaboration likelihood model.
45	6	Cho, C.H., Lee, J.G., & Tharp, M.	2001	Different forced exposure levels to banner advertisements.
46	6	Chu, S.C. & Kim, Y. J.	2011	Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in social networking sites.
47	6	De Bruyn, A. & Lilien, G.L.	2008	A multi-stage model of word-of-mouth influence through viral marketing.
48	6	Dholakia, U.M., Bagozzi, R.P., & Pearo, L.K.	2004	A social influence model of consumer participation in network- and small-group-based virtual communities.
49	6	Drèze, X. & Husscherr, F.X.	2003	Internet Advertising: Is Anybody Watching?
50	6	Eighmey, J. & McCord, L.	1998	Adding value in the information age: uses and gratifications of sites on the World Wide Web.
51	6	Korgaonkar, P.K. & Wolin, L.D.	1999	A multivariate analysis of web usage
52	6	Lohtia, R., Donthu, N., & Hershberger, E.K.	2003	The impact of content and design elements on banner ad click-through rates
53	6	Novak, T.P., Hoffman, D.L., & Yung, Y.F.	2000	Measuring the customer experience in online environments: a structural modeling approach
54	6	Petty, R.E. & Cacioppo, J.T.	1986	Communication and persuasion: central and peripheral routes to attitude change.
55	6	Riegner, C.	2007	Word of mouth on the web: the impact of Web 2.0 on consumer purchase decisions.
56	6	Schlosser, A.E., Shavitt, S., & Kanfer, A.	1999	Survey of Internet users' attitude toward internet advertising

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Citations received	Authors	Year	Title	
57	6	Song, J.H. & Zinkhan, G.M.	2008	Determinants of perceived website interactivity.

Note: Numbers of citation received are for the single article identified. Self-citation has been excluded.

which reflects the ELM, still influences the DMC domain as a theoretical underpinning. Hoffman is the second most cited author in Table 1, and her 1996 article with Novak tops Table 2. Hoffman and Novak's initial work (Hoffman & Novak, 1996) on online marketing still seems to influence the DMC field. These two lists in Tables 1 and 2 deliver constant discernment regarding how the most cited authors and research works are shaping the DMC field.

MacKenzie is the third most cited author in Table 1, and his 1989 article with Lutz (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989) is ranked as the third most cited work; his 1986 article with Lutz and Belch (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986) is ranked as the 13th most cited work. Consequently, Lutz is the ninth most cited author in Table 1.

McMillan appears as a vital influencer. Her work on perceived interactivity has contributed to this influential role. Cho has contributed to multiple articles in the areas of interactivity and DMC. Hennig-Thurau emerges as a key influencer on eWOM research. Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, and Gremler (2004) work on eWOM is ranked the second most cited work. Li is the seventh most cited author in Table 1, with multiple articles. Liu is the tenth most cited author in Table 1. Her 2002 article with Liu and Shrum (2002), which focuses on interactivity, appears as the sixth most cited work. Overall, most of the authors who appear in both Tables 1 and 2 have strongly shaped the field of DMC as a discipline.

The most cited works in Table 2 reveal 57 articles that were cited six or more times. Those most cited articles appeared in influential journals. The most frequently cited journal was the *Journal of Advertising Research*, with 11 articles listed in Table 2. The *Journal of Advertising Research* addresses mainly key topics, such as eWOM (Phelps, Lewis, Mobilio, Perry, & Raman, 2004; Riegner, 2007), interactivity (Bezjian-Avery, Calder, & Iacobucci, 1998; Ghose & Dou, 1998), attitude (Chen & Wells, 1999) and the effectiveness of DMC (Chandon, Chtourou, & Fortin, 2003; Cho, Lee, & Tharp, 2001; Ducoffe, 1996; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999; Lohtia, Donthu, & Hershberger, 2003; Trappey & Woodside, 2005).

The second most frequently cited journals are the *Journal of Advertising* and the *Journal of Consumer Research*, with eight articles listed in Table 2. The *Journal of Advertising* articles primarily cover interactivity issues (Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Liu & Shrum, 2002; McMillan & Hwang, 2002; Sicilia, Ruiz, & Munuera, 2005) and effectiveness of DMC (Edwards, Li, & Lee, 2002; Moore, Stammerjohan, & Coulter, 2005; Nelson, Yaros, & Keum, 2006; Zaichkowsky, 1994). Eight articles are listed as appearing in the *Journal of Advertising*, showing that it has played an important role in influencing the DMC domain.

The articles in the *Journal of Consumer Research* show a different pattern to those in the *Journal of Advertising Research* and the *Journal of Advertising*. The *Journal of Consumer Research* addresses relatively early works and theoretical underpinnings of DMC research. For example, Petty et al. (1983) clarified the ELM. Brown and Reingen (1987) and Herr, Kardes, and Kim (1991) addressed the theoretical underpinnings of word of mouth. Other articles have investigated persuasion theory (Friestad & Wright, 1994), involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1985), and advertising responses (Batra & Ray, 1986; Holbrook & Batra, 1987).

The third most frequently cited journal is the *Journal of Marketing*, with six separate articles listed in Table 2. The *Journal of Marketing* shows one early article that focuses on digital marketing (Hoffman & Novak, 1996) and one that deals with eWOM (Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009), one with extensive coverage of information processing (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989), one that includes attitude (MacKenzie &

Lutz, 1989), one that covers intrusiveness (Li, Edwards, & Lee, 2009), and one that investigates interactivity (Song & Zinkhan, 2008).

The fourth most frequently cited journals are the *International Journal of Advertising* and the *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, with four separate articles listed in Table 2. The *International Journal of Advertising* addresses influential eWOM-related works (Chu & Kim, 2011; Lee & Youn, 2009) and effectiveness (Ha & McCann, 2008; Robinson, Wysocka, & Hand, 2007). The *Journal of Interactive Marketing* also deals with the influential work of eWOM (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) and effectiveness of DMC (Barwise & Strong, 2002; Drèze & Hussherr, 2003; Schlosser, Shavitt, & Kanfer, 1999).

Three additional journals appear twice in Table 2. *Marketing Science* has one article specific to eWOM (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004) and one that focuses on customer expertise (Novak & Hoffman, 2000). The *International Journal of Research in Marketing* has articles that focus on eWOM (De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008; Dholakia, Bagozzi, & Pearo, 2004). The *Journal of Communication* has one article with dimensions of interactivity (Steuer, 1992) and one specific to information processing (Lang, 2000).

Finally, additional journals, such as the *Journal of Business Research* (Eighmey & McCord, 1998), the *American Journal of Sociology* (Granovetter, 1973), *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* (Ha & James, 1998), *Journal of Marketing Research* (MacKenzie et al., 1986), *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising* (Cho, 1999), and *Journal of Interactive Advertising* (Rogers & Thorson, 2000) appear once in Table 2.

5. Themes in the most cited works

While grouping the most cited articles by journals provides some information on citation patterns, it is also useful to examine thematic patterns in the 141 articles, particularly within those that specifically address DMC. In answer to research question 2, this study evaluated emergent themes among the most cited works on DMC. Five primary themes emerged: eWOM, interactivity, DMC effectiveness, how marketing communication works, and attitudes.

As the first theme identified in the co-citation analysis, eWOM is a key element of DMC investigated by marketing communication scholars. While many articles discuss word of mouth (WOM), some specifically address eWOM in DMC (Chu & Kim, 2011; De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008; Godes & Mayzlin, 2004; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Lee & Youn, 2009; Phelps et al., 2004; Riegner, 2007; Trusov et al., 2009) and WOM (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Granovetter, 1973; Herr et al., 1991).

eWOM refers to any positive or negative statement a customer makes about a company's products that is visible to any number of people and institutions via online channels (e.g., blogs, emails, consumer review websites, and forums), virtual consumer communities, and social networking services (Chu & Kim, 2011; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Phelps et al., 2004; Trusov et al., 2009). Most of the cited works on eWOM (Chu & Kim, 2011; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Phelps et al., 2004; Trusov et al., 2009) indicate different types of eWOM and point to different types of marketing performance that can be differentiated from WOM in traditional marketing. For example, Trusov et al. (2009) concentrated on online WOM that occurs when referring a friend, and found the acquisition of potential new customers as eWOM outcomes. Trusov et al. (2009) compared online WOM with traditional marketing, including media, PR, and offline events, such as non-WOM drivers of customer acquisition. Trusov et al. (2009) showed that the long-term

effects of online WOM referrals on customer acquisition are greater than those of traditional marketing activities.

Interactivity is the second main element of DMC explored by marketing communication scholars. Many of the most cited articles focus on interactivity, either from a theoretical perspective or as a critical variable in the context of DMC (Bezjian-Avery, Calder, & Iacobucci, 1998; Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Ghose & Dou, 1998; Ha & James, 1998; Liu & Shrum, 2002; McMillan & Hwang, 2002; Sicilia et al., 2005; Song & Zinkhan, 2008; Steuer, 1992; Trappey & Woodside, 2005).

Interactivity refers to the degree to which communication parties can act on each other, the medium, and the messages, as well as the extent to which such influences are synchronized. Interactivity has been defined in multiple ways, such as functional features, actions, and/or processes, and perceptions of interactivity (Kim, Spielmann, & McMillan, 2012). First, research on interactivity as a function focuses on clarifying manifest features (Bezjian-Avery, Calder, & Iacobucci, 1998; Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Ghose & Dou, 1998). Second, interactive processes focus on the real actions that go into making something interactive, such as two-way communication, exchange of information, and responsiveness (Sicilia et al., 2005). The third research stream focuses on what individuals perceive to be interactive (Liu & Shrum, 2002; McMillan & Hwang, 2002; Song & Zinkhan, 2008).

The third theme is DMC effectiveness. While many articles consider effectiveness, few specifically address DMC effectiveness (Cho et al., 2001; Eighmey & McCord, 1998; Robinson et al., 2007). These articles also cover a range of negative effectiveness issues in DMC, such as intrusiveness, avoidance, and clutter (Drèze & Husscherr, 2003; Ha & McCann, 2008; Li, Edwards, & Lee, 2002).

The fourth theme addresses issues of how marketing communication works, and focuses on the persuasion process (Batra & Ray, 1986; Cho, 1999; Friestad & Wright, 1995; Holbrook & Batra, 1987; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Nelson et al., 2006; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty et al., 1983; Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1994). Among the articles that feature this theme, some focus on how DMC works directly in the online environment and computer game context (Nelson et al., 2006).

The fifth theme focuses on the key concept of attitude. While many articles at least tangentially address attitude, a few focus specifically on this construct. Most are classical works that discuss attitudes toward advertisements and the brand (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; MacKenzie et al., 1986). The other articles on this theme relate directly to DMC, such as attitudes toward a website (Chen & Wells, 1999; Schlosser et al., 1999).

6. Co-citation network analysis

This study analyzed co-citation pairs among the most cited works, with four or more citations from the 141 research articles on DMC. In answer to research question 3, this study evaluated co-citation networks among the influential cited works in DMC and the schools of thought that exist among these networks. To obtain the co-citation frequencies and co-citation networks, this study analyzed all works that cited any given pair of documents. In the co-citation network, this study constructed a co-citation connection by drawing a line between two documents if several other works cite them together. Co-citation networks help to examine cumulative practice and reference disciplines and to gain an understanding of various schools of thought, in this case, on DMC.

This study shows 24 articles from the most cited works in the examination set cited together in four or more of the examined articles. The co-citations were sorted into those with four, five, six, and seven or more co-citation pairs in the targeted journals (Table 3, Fig. 1). The analysis excludes co-citation pairs that occur fewer than four times, because such co-citations are not meaningful (Kim & McMillan, 2008; Pasadeos et al., 1998). The co-citation networks suggest visual representations of schools of thought, disciplinary paradigms, and/or research streams (Kim & McMillan, 2008; Pasadeos et al., 1998).

Table 3
Link Weights of Co-Citation Networks.

Weight	Paper1	Paper2
7	Brown & Reingen, 1987	Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004
7	Coyle & Thorson, 2001	Hoffman & Novak, 1996
7	Coyle & Thorson, 2001	Steuer, 1992
7	McMillan & Hwang, 2002	Steuer, 1992
6	Bezjian-Avery et al., 1998	Liu & Shrum, 2002
6	Brown & Reingen, 1987	Granovetter, 1973
6	Hoffman & Novak, 1996	Liu & Shrum, 2002
6	Hoffman & Novak, 1996	McMillan & Hwang, 2002
6	Hoffman & Novak, 1996	Steuer, 1992
6	Liu & Shrum, 2002	McMillan & Hwang, 2002
5	Chen & Wells, 1999	Hoffman & Novak, 1996
5	Coyle & Thorson, 2001	Liu & Shrum, 2002
5	Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975	Mackenzie & Lutz, 1989
5	Granovetter, 1973	Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004
5	Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004	Lee & Youn, 2009
5	Hoffman & Novak, 1996	MacKenzie et al., 1986
5	Liu & Shrum, 2002	Steuer, 1992
4	Brown & Reingen, 1987	Lee & Youn, 2009
4	Brown & Reingen, 1987	Phelps et al., 2004
4	Coyle & Thorson, 2001	McMillan & Hwang, 2002
4	Granovetter, 1973	Rogers, 1983
4	Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004	Phelps et al., 2004
4	Hoffman & Novak, 1996	Rogers & Thorson, 2000
4	Liu & Shrum, 2002	Liu & Shrum, 2009
4	McMillan & Hwang, 2002	Rogers, 1983
4	McMillan & Hwang, 2002	Song & Zinkhan, 2008

In the prominent body of the co-citation network, a sub-cluster addresses eWOM issues in DMC (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Lee & Youn, 2009; Phelps et al., 2004; Trusov et al., 2009) and WOM (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Granovetter, 1973). This cluster also has strong interconnections with Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), as well as Brown and Reingen (1987), who examined effectiveness by discussing WOM in terms of social ties and referent behavior, with seven co-citation pairs. Granovetter (1973), who discussed weak social ties, is related to Brown and Reingen (1987), who examined six co-citation pairs. Granovetter (1973) work is also related to that of Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) and Lee and Youn (2009).

After social media appeared in the public consciousness, eWOM became a key research area in DMC. The co-citation network among these works (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Lee & Youn, 2009; Phelps et al., 2004; Trusov et al., 2009) shows inter-connections and highlights the centrality of eWOM research as a main school of thought in DMC.

Many of the articles in this interactivity cluster also link directly to McMillan and Hwang (2002), who offered perceived interactivity research that is both the most cited work in Table 1 and a central cluster in the co-citation network. McMillan and Hwang (2002) are interconnected with Coyle and Thorson (2001), Liu and Shrum (2002), and Song and Zinkhan (2008), who focused on interactivity as a central research stream. Co-citation networks present another set of a strong interconnection between McMillan and Hwang (2002) and Steuer (1992) who discussed dimensions of interactivity. Then, Steuer (1992) is interconnected with Hoffman and Novak (1996) who offer a baseline of interactivity research. Hoffman and Novak (1996) are linked to Rogers and Thorson (2000), and Chen and Wells (1999). The co-citation network among those works (Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Liu & Shrum, 2002; McMillan & Hwang, 2002; Song & Zinkhan, 2008) shows inter-connections and highlights the centrality of interactivity research as one school of thought in the field of DMC.

Overall, the main cluster in the co-citation network shows interactivity with eWOM as the main research stream in the DMC discipline. The main co-citation network among Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), Lee and Youn (2009), Phelps et al. (2004), and Trusov et al. (2009) focuses on eWOM in DMC. This co-citation network suggests that these authors and articles are influential in the domain of eWOM. The network

brand (MacKenzie et al., 1986; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989) and attitude in the DMC context (e.g., attitudes toward a website) (Chen & Wells, 1999).

Hoffman and Novak (1996) work represents a highly influential central node bridge between interactivity, DMC effectiveness, and attitude in co-citation networks. The work plays a crucial brokering role in Gephi-driven co-citation networks generated in key marketing communication journals.

Rogers (1983) exhibits a high degree of centrality with scores of 0.7129, thereby indicating the presence of a strongly interconnected cluster of contributions. Rogers (1983) facilitates the vital bridging contribution positioned between Hoffman and Novak (1996) and Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004).

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), who show high degree of centrality with scores of 0.5747, play a key role in forming a cluster of eWOM as a body of knowledge. eWOM is a main facet of DMC as a scholarly discipline. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) strongly interconnect to eWOM in DMC (Lee & Youn, 2009; Phelps et al., 2004; Trusov et al., 2009) and WOM (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Granovetter, 1973).

8. Discussion

8.1. New insights for the DMC domain by comparison with the bibliometric literature

This study analyzed citations and co-citation analysis of current research on DMC and showed how digital technology shaped digital marketing evaluations between 2004 and 2016. Bibliometric studies of DMC between 1994 and 2003 (Kim & McMillan, 2008) focused on the online context. Similarities and differences between previous and current bibliometric studies can offer new insights for the domain of DMC. Although the purpose of the current study is not to make direct comparisons with the early stage of DMC, analysis of similarities and differences covered by previous works can offer insights for current DMC.

Between 1994 and 2003, Internet marketing communication developed essential theoretical and methodological perspectives in the domain of digital advertising (Kim & McMillan, 2008). Previous Internet-focused DMC studies focused on interactivity and DMC effectiveness as the main themes. In the online era, interactivity was a key feature of online DMC in the context of the Internet. The most cited works mainly discussed interactivity as a conceptual perspective and as a central variable in the context of the Internet (Kim & McMillan, 2008). In online-based DMC, the co-citation network (Kim & McMillan, 2008) showed strong interconnections among the works of Coyle and Thorson (2001), Heeter (1989, 2000), Rafaeli and Sudweeks (1997), and Steuer (1992), and indirect links to Ghose and Dou (1998) through Hoffman and Novak (1996), which emphasized interactivity as a dominant research stream.

In the early stage of DMC, key cited articles also discussed the issue of the effectiveness of DMC in the Internet context, including user perceptions and click-through applications (Kim & McMillan, 2008). Previous co-citation networks in the Internet context reported strong interconnections among Berthon, Pitt, and Watson (1996), Briggs and Hollis (1997), Ducoffe (1996), Eighmey (1997), Hoffman and Novak (1996), and Korgaonkar and Wolin, who discussed the effectiveness of Internet advertising. In works between 1994 and 2003, the main themes of the most cited works and co-citation network proposed influential works in the domain of DMC in the Internet era, and interactivity and effectiveness research as central invisible colleges and/or schools of thought.

In 2004, when Facebook was launched, social media exploded into the public consciousness. As many businesses and consumers began to use social media, marketing academics and practitioners began to examine its potential as a marketing communication medium. Now operating for more than a decade, social media has integrated new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity,

blogging, and photo/video sharing, which allow users to express extensive interests. Social media has moved from its beginnings as a limited technology among a few users to a tool used broadly by consumers worldwide. Thus, citation and co-citation analysis of DMC from 2004 to the present as a social media-oriented phenomenon is noteworthy for informing us how social media has shaped the domain of DMC.

This study assessed the most cited authors and most cited works in articles about DMC in three core journals over a 12-year period (2004–2016) to deal with research question 1. The most cited authors and most cited works clearly depict certain overlaps between the two lists of most cited authors and most cited works.

Petty is the most cited author in Table 1, and his work on ELM is ranked in Table 2. McMillan is the sixth most cited author in Table 1. Her article on perceived interactivity appears as the eighth most cited work. Liu is also the tenth most cited author in Table 1. Her article on interactivity is shown as the sixth most cited work. Hennig-Thurau appears to be a key influencer on eWOM research. For instance, his 2004 study with co-authors on eWOM is ranked as the third most cited work.

Most of the authors who emerge in both Tables 1 and 2 have strongly shaped the field of DMC as a discipline that offers theoretical implications. Petty et al. (1983) work indicates that the ELM still influenced the DMC domain as a theoretical underpinning in the social media era between 2004 and 2015. McMillan's (2002) work and Liu's (2002) article on interactivity indicate that interactivity as a theoretical underpinning still shapes the field of DMC as a discipline in the social media and online media age. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) work on eWOM, which focuses on eWOM as a theoretical underpinning, strongly shaped the DMC field in the social media era between 2004 and 2015. The study shows that ELM, interactivity, and eWOM as theoretical underpinnings have shaped the domain of DMC in the social media era between 2004 and 2016.

To address research question 2, the current study conducted citation and co-citation analysis of papers related to DMC that appeared in the target journals between 2004 and 2016. All the DMC-related articles found in these journals were incorporated in the evaluation. The current review identified the major themes that have emerged in DMC research: eWOM, interactivity, and DMC effectiveness. The evaluations indicated the same three key findings and implications for DMC: eWOM, interactivity, and DMC effectiveness. The results of this analysis suggest thematic insights and implications for academics and practitioners, which are promising avenues for creating effective DMC.

To discuss research question 3, bibliometric visualization analysis involved co-citation analysis, which enabled the visualization of social networks among scholarly communications in the DMC field. This assessment highlighted the value of visualizing co-citation networks using Gephi. This data visualization analysis was addressed by evaluating various existing techniques alongside a new technique employing Gephi, which draws insights on how best to visualize network data grouped into comprehensive co-citation network sets. Co-citation networks that reflect influential works in a discipline clearly show clusters that refer to invisible colleges as schools of thought in the field of DMC.

As one school of thought, eWOM represents an invisible college that strongly influences DMC research. Co-citation networks present a set of strong interconnections among others (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Lee & Youn, 2009; Phelps et al., 2004; Trusov et al., 2009) and WOM (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Granovetter, 1973), highlighting eWOM as a central research stream in DMC. In terms of its theoretical implications, eWOM works for DMC in the social media age, and its theoretical underpinnings and influence are highlighted in studies by Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Lee & Youn, 2009; Phelps et al., 2004; Trusov et al., 2009.

Interactivity is a school of thought that appears to have a clear impact on DMC research. The co-citation network shows strong interconnections among the works of Coyle and Thorson (2001), Liu and Shrum (2002), McMillan and Hwang (2002), and Song and Zinkhan

(2008), who focus on interactivity as a dominant research stream. The co-citation network suggests that the research streams on eWOM and interactivity are central and influential schools of thought in the DMC domain.

It is noteworthy that the theoretical underpinnings of interactivity have primarily shaped the domain of DMC, both in the online age between 1994 and 2003 and in the social media age between 2004 and 2016. In particular, interactivity as a function (Coyle & Thorson, 2001), interactivity as a process (Rogers & Thorson, 2000; Sicilia et al., 2005), and interactivity as perception (Liu & Shrum, 2002; McMillan & Hwang, 2002; Song & Zinkhan, 2008) have shaped the DMC field in a way that offers new insights for future research directions.

8.2. Future research directions

Evaluating DMC research from a historical perspective is important for measuring the current and future impacts of DMC. By scrutinizing key articles, this study potentially sets a baseline for the emerging field of DMC that will enable future scholars to evaluate the impact of DMC on brand experiences and DMC value.

Future research could consider how the latest technology drives the marketing field by utilizing interactivity and eWOM as key theoretical underpinnings in the domain of DMC. Interactivity that shaped DMC between 1994 and 2003 concentrated on the online context, while between 2004 and 2016, it focused on the social media context. Interactivity is noteworthy for assessing the manner in which it shapes the domain of DMC in the new technology-driven context.

Currently, AI technology as a discipline may be at the tipping point of bringing a totally different paradigm shift in the marketing field. Revolutionizing AI at a critical point in its evolution would facilitate the implementation of new and innovative ways of conducting business with its applicability in the marketing field. It is important to assess citation analysis and co-citation analysis to uncover how AI-driven technology transforms the marketing field into AI-proficient spheres in terms of eWOM, interactivity, and effectiveness. In particular, an AI recommendation system enables differentiation between AI-driven interactivity and digital marketing, thereby transforming the domain of marketing.

8.2.1. Future research directions for AI-driven interactivity as a function

Research focusing on functional aspects has emphasized the importance of identifying the characteristics of interactivity within a website. Most studies have started from the conceptual definition of interactivity proposed by Heeter (1989), whose studies analyzed the interactive functions available to users (Ha & James, 1998; McMillan, Hwang, & Lee, 2003).

In the future, the research direction could focus especially on the interactivity of an AI-driven recommendation system among the factors that influence consumers' choices. Technology companies, such as Amazon, Google, and Apple, are competitively launching intelligent personal assistants to expand their services and platforms. For example, Amazon has introduced Echo based on Alexa; Google has produced Google Home with Google OK; Apple has announced Apple Homepod with Siri and the Apple Music service; and Facebook has developed the intelligent private secretary, M (Pasiformlli & Wohl, 2017; Sloane, 2016). They are similar in form to software apps and AI speaker hardware devices, but each company seeks to maximize revenue by linking its core business with AI speakers as intelligent personal assistants. A new market similar to the mobile app market is being formed, since third-party companies have added new features to AI speakers.

Amazon focuses on shopping and the cloud service with the Alexa-based Echo AI speaker series and pays attention to the potential home market with diversified Alexa devices. Google is concentrating on online search, mobile operating systems, and advertising with Google Home AI speakers based on Google OK. Google is also targeting the mobile market in addition to Google's Action Home. Facebook is

focusing on linking with its own next-generation devices, such as messenger bot, social media chatbot, VR/AR devices, and wearable devices, which are all based on M (Yang & Kim, 2017). Facebook is developing a new messenger scheme that provides information with images when users ask M about restaurants, gifts, resorts, etc., and users can make reservations and make purchases within one messenger system without running other apps.

The interactivity of AI speakers is now expanding to search advertising, shopping, cloud services, mobile communication, social communication, VR/AR apps, and wearable devices. AI speakers can be extended to consumers' sharing and engagement, including interactions between highly personalized company-to-customer searches, referrals, personalized ads, and shopping. In interacting with consumers, these AI speakers employ components of the company, and it is possible for consumers to lead selection and sharing. Therefore, it is necessary to study interactivity as a function of AI speakers from this new perspective.

8.2.2. Future research directions for AI-driven interactivity as a process

Future research directions could focus on the process of interactive engagement, including two-way communication, exchange of information, user control, and responsiveness (Bezjian-Avery et al., 1998). Specifically, product type, based on personal information and consumers' choices, could affect interactive behavior and the extent to which consumers use these products (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Childers & Rao, 1992; King & Balasubramanian, 1994). Types of products can be classified as having a search or experience quality (Nelson, 1974; Senecal & Nantel, 2004). Search quality refers to what a consumer decides as a result of searching before purchasing. Experience products, whose quality is difficult or impossible to assess prior to purchase, depend more on recommendations than search products do. For example, consumers are more likely to incorporate consumer evaluations or product recommendations into their decision-making processes for experience products (e.g., movies and games) than for search products (e.g., cameras) (King & Balasubramanian, 1994; Senecal & Nantel, 2004). Product types, such as search and experience products, may influence consumer choices and AI-driven interaction processes. Therefore, for future research directions, it is necessary to clarify AI-driven interactive processes reflected by the effect of product type: search product versus experience product.

8.2.3. Future research directions for AI-driven interactivity as perception

Future research directions that focus on the perception that individuals are interacting could investigate the roles of timeliness and engagement in such interactions (McMillan & Hwang, 2002; Liu & Shrum, 2002). Although research has been conducted on interactivity in the contexts of online and social media, research on completely new AI-driven interactivity should be studied further. AI-driven interactive personalized relationships between consumers and companies are increasing. Managers of company brands and advertising activities need to pay attention to opportunities to create personalized and valuable communication activities by focusing on the micro-moments of AI speakers. Indeed, AI speakers are evolving steadily toward DMC strategies as well as brand communication based on consumers' personalized searches and selectable activities. It is necessary to study the influence of AI-driven interactivity by paying attention to the personalized DMC of AI speakers.

8.3. Conclusion and limitations

Citation and co-citation analyses have the potential to inform collection development, describe institutional scholarship strengths and citation patterns, and suggest visible co-citation networks of schools of thought. The current study focused on only the top three journals of DMC-indexed SSCI as the most influential journals. Future research should expand to other journals related to the DMC field, such as the

Journal of Interactive Marketing, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, and *Journal of Interactive Advertising*. For additional assessments of expanded citations in the extended journals, identifying DMC research categorized by different types of digital communication channels is suggested.

This study is limited to a bibliometric study of the DMC field. Citation analysis and visualization of co-citation networks present a depiction of invisible colleges within the DMC field. Because an academic analysis of overall digital marketing embraces too broad an area to aggregate citation patterns over time, this study focused on DMC to evaluate citation and co-citation assessments. However, future studies on cumulative citation and co-citation networks should be pursued in the overall marketing area to offer a bigger picture in the domain of marketing. Further studies on citation and co-citation analyses should be conducted to show paradigm changes in the domain of marketing over time to suggest a starting point for future research directions.

Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

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