

**SERVICE MARKETING RESEARCH:
TEN YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT FROM 1993 TO 2003**

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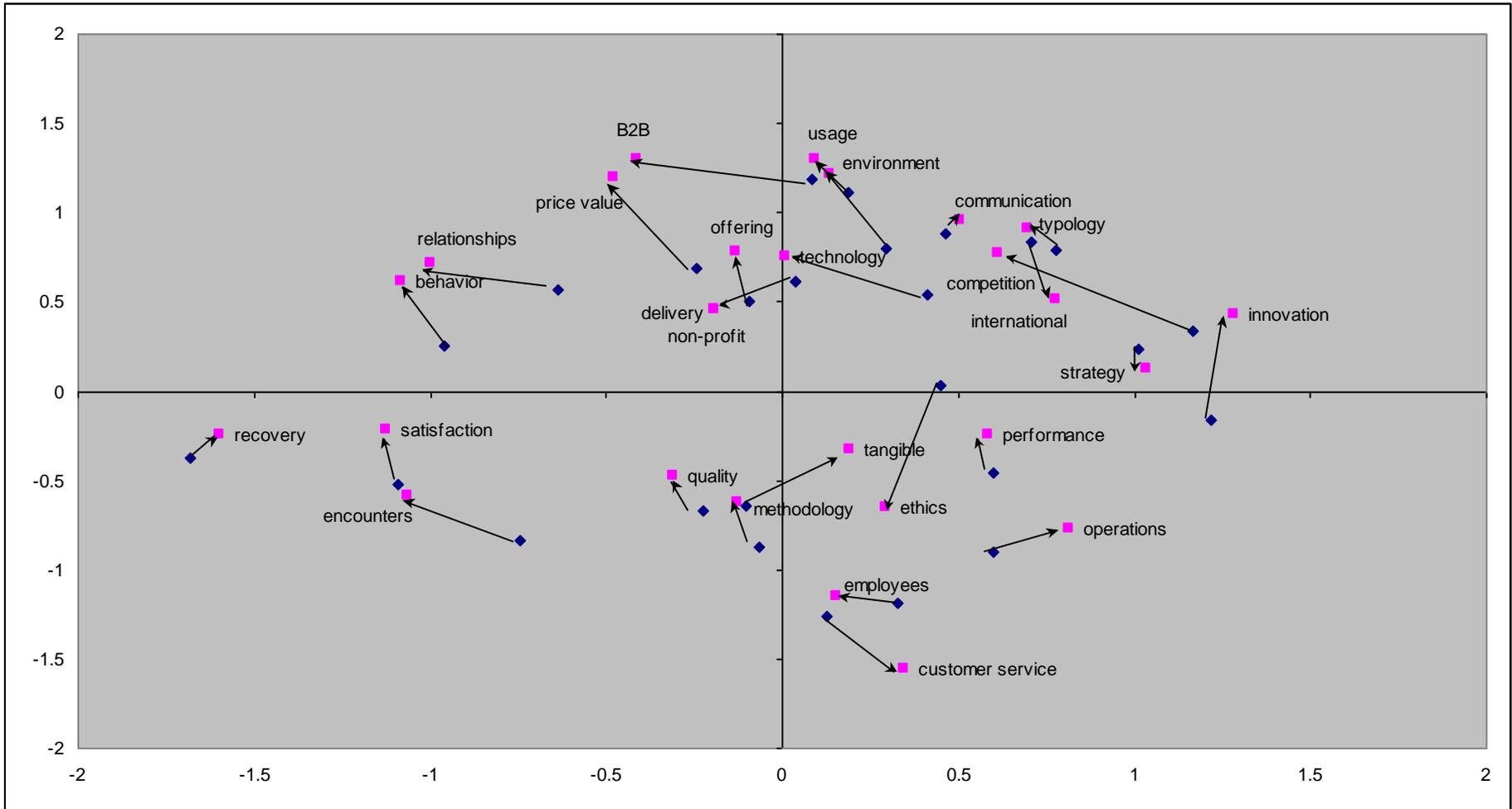
Ten years ago, in 1993, Fisk, Brown, and Bitner and Berry and Parasuraman published two seminal articles on the early developments of a new academic field: service marketing. In these papers, the authors described how service marketing emerged and developed to become an autonomous academic field, independent from general marketing. Ten years later, the service marketing field has developed and matured and a study of its recent developments is needed. This paper analyzes the content the service marketing research articles published in key journals from 1993 to 2003. Through cluster and multiple correspondence analyses (MCA), we study the relationships between the subfields of service marketing research. These analyses allowed us to map keywords, authors, impact papers, and journals and to track their evolution over the past ten years.

To examine the content of the service marketing literature, trace its evolution, and identify main streams research, we performed a content analysis of about 1000 papers written by more than 1200 authors published in the top journals for service marketing research over the period 1993-2003 (JSR, JSM, IJSIM, JM, JMR, JCR, MS, JR, JAMS, and IJRM). Based on their content, these articles were allocated across one or more of 27 categories or keywords representing research themes. We first computed a cluster analysis to identify the keywords which “hanged together.” Second, we computed a MCA to complement the cluster analysis and to obtain a richer representation of the relationships between keywords. Third, we studied the evolution over time of the relationships between keywords. Based on the results of the MCA, we also map in a bi-dimensional space the most prolific authors, the most cited papers, as well as the evolution of the position of the 10 journals under study.

The a first dimension of the two-dimensional map separates keywords emphasizing the management-side of service marketing from those concerned with its customer-side. The second dimension separates keywords, which have a higher, more strategic level, from those focusing on a lower, more operational level. The analysis of the evolution over time shows that most keywords evolve toward more strategic customer-side research. This evolution not only corresponds to the evolution of relationships between the keywords, but also the evolution of the topics studied in the papers. This denotes an evolution 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. To the extent that the selected journals reflect the evolution of the service marketing field as a whole, this trend raises important questions about future of the service marketing fields such as: “Is the field likely to further concentrate toward a dominant paradigm or to fragment itself into a myriad of subfields?”

The results of our study should also contribute to development an agenda for future research in service marketing. One of the limitations of our study is the necessary limit in the number of selected journals. We only selected 10 of the top journals for service marketing research. The actual profusion of research published in service marketing make virtually impossible to include all publications in a single study. We are, however, confident that our selection of the top journals makes our results valid and reliable.

Keywords Evolution over Time (1993-2003)



Biographical Background

Pierre Sollberger is a Ph.D. student in international service marketing at the Enterprise Institute of the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland. He completed his master degree in statistics at the same University. His research interests are in service marketing and country-of-origin effect.

Olivier Furrer is an Associate Professor of Strategic Management at the Nijmegen Business School (The Netherlands). He holds a Ph. D. from the University of Neuchâtel (Switzerland). His major research interests are in the areas of service marketing, customer services, the resource-based theory, and the strategic role of intangible assets. He has published various articles including such journals as *Journal of Service Research*, *European Management Journal*, *Revue Française de Gestion*, and *Revue Française du Marketing*. He is also currently on the editorial board of the *Journal of Service Research*.