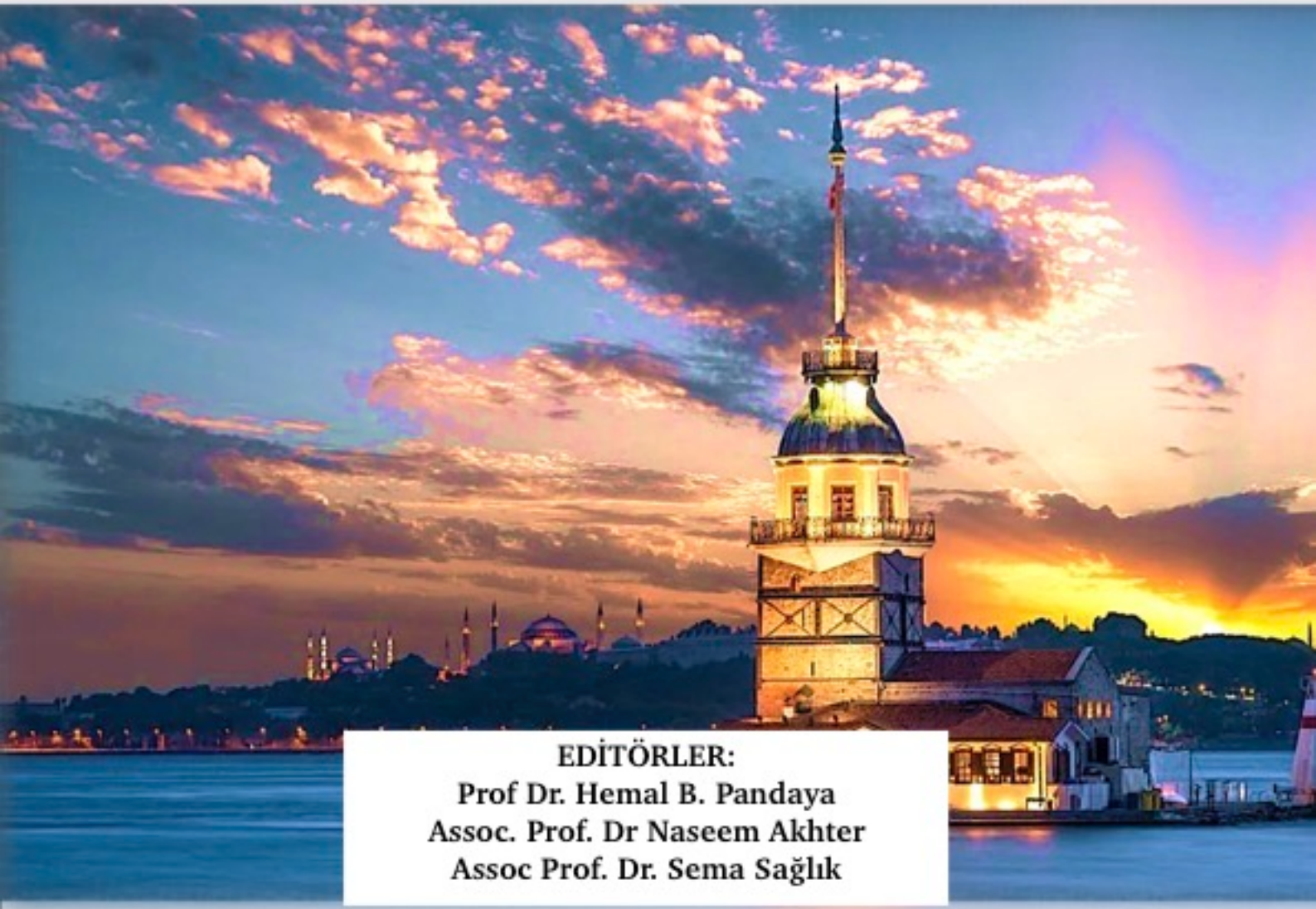
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20.07.2024

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WHY DO CONSUMERS COMPLAIN? A BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW ON COMPLAINING BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Post-purchase behavior constitutes the final stage of the consumer purchasing decision process. One behavior we may encounter at this stage is complaining behavior. So why do consumers complain? In this study, it is aimed to examine the studies on consumer complaining behavior with bibliometric analysis and to evaluate the antecedents and consequences of complaining behavior. Study data were obtained using the Web of science database. Data on 317 studies, including articles and papers in English only and selected from some research areas, were used in the analysis carried out with VOSviewer. The data was analyzed based on author, country, citation, source and keywords. As a result of the study, it was revealed that the first study on complaining behavior was published in 1981, and the largest number of publications was published in 2016 and 2019. While a total of 759 authors have worked on this concept so far, the author with the most publications is Mattila (N=7). Authors from 55 different countries have conducted studies on complaining behavior. The countries of the authors (top 10) are USA (N=106), China (N=42), Australia (N=21), Spain (18), England (N=17), India (N=16), South Korea (N=14), Turkey (N=12), Malaysia (N=11) and Taiwan (N=11). The most cited study is the study of Meuter, Ostrom and Bitner (2000). The top 3 journals with the most publication contributions are, respectively, International Journal of Hospitality Management, Journal of Services Marketing, International Journal of Consumer Studies. While a total of 815 different keywords were used in the studies, the number of keywords used at least twice was 149. The most commonly used keywords with the concepts of consumer complaining/complaint behavior are service failure, service recovery, dissatisfaction, service quality, satisfaction, culture. At the end of the study, the findings were summarized, the results were discussed, inferences were made, and future study predictions and limitations were included.

Keywords: Complaining behavior, Bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer

TÜKETİCİLER NİÇİN ŞİKÂYET EDER? ŞİKÂYET ETME DAVRANIŞI ÜZERİNE BİBLİYOMETRİK BİR İNCELEME

ÖZET

Tüketici satın alma karar sürecinin son aşamasını satın alma sonrası davranış oluşturmaktadır. Bu aşamada karşılaşabileceğimiz bir davranış ise şikâyet etme davranışıdır. Peki tüketiciler neden şikâyet etmektedir. Bu çalışmada tüketici şikâyet etme davranışı üzerine yapılmış çalışmaların bibliyometrik analiz ile incelenmesi ve şikâyet etme davranışının öncülleri ve ardıllarına ilişkin değerlendirme yapılmak amaçlanmıştır. Çalışma verileri Web of science veri tabanı kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Sadece İngilizce dildeki, makale ve bildirileri içeren ve bazı araştırma alanları seçilerek oluşturulan 317 çalışmaya ilişkin veri, VOSviewer ile gerçekleştirilen analizde kullanılmıştır. Veriler yazar, ülke, atıf, kaynak ve anahtar kelimeler üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. Çalışma sonucunda, şikâyet etme davranışı üzerine yapılan ilk çalışmanın 1981 yılında yayınlandığı, en fazla yayın sayısının ise 2016 ve 2019 yıllarında yayınlandığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu zamana kadar toplam 759 yazar bu kavram üzerine çalışma yapmışken, en fazla yayına sahip yazar Mattila (N=7)'dır. 55 ayrı ülkeden yazar şikâyet etme davranışı üzerine çalışmalar yürütmüştür. Yazarların ülkeleri sırasıyla (ilk 10) USA (N=106), China (N=42), Australia (N=21), Spain (18), England (N=17), India (N=16), South Korea (N=14), Turkey (N=12), Malaysia (N=11) ve Taiwan' (N=11)dır. En çok atıf alan çalışma Meuter, Ostrom ve Bitner (2000)'ın çalışmasıdır. En fazla yayın katkısı sağlayan ilk 3 dergi sırasıyla, International Journal of Hospitality Management, Journal of Services Marketing, International Journal of Consumer Studies'dir. Çalışmalarda toplam 815 farklı anahtar kelime kullanılırken, en az 2 defa kullanışmış anahtar kelime sayısı 149'dur. Consumer complaining/complaint behaviour kavramları ile en çok kullanılan anahtar kelimeler service failure, service recovery, dissatisfaction, service quality, satisfaction, culture'dır. Çalışma sonucunda bulgular özetlenmiş, sonuçlar tartışılmış, çıkarımlarda bulunulmuş ve gelecek çalışma öngörüleri ile sınırlılıklara yer verilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Şikâyet etme davranışı, Bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer

1. INTRODUCTION

Although companies aim to create satisfied customers and achieve complete success in their marketing activities, it may sometimes be impossible and difficult to meet all consumer expectations. Even if the customer relationship management process is well designed, some unsuccessful situations that may arise for different reasons may be inevitable for brands. For

this reason, companies should conduct complaint management and manage this process in a planned manner.

There are different factors that lead consumers to complain. Reasons such as supply processes, production-related disruptions, poor service quality, returns, maintenance and repair processes, delays in delivery times, and the approach of sales personnel may lead consumers to complaint behavior. In terms of academic studies, examining the studies on complaining behavior holistically and presenting the current situation through systematic literature evaluation will help to identify these elements. It is important for both marketers and researchers to reveal why consumers complain and what factors lead to this behavior.

The platforms on which consumers complain have increased in number with the development of internet and communication technologies. Nowadays, consumers frequently use social media and complaint platforms about any issue that can be complained about and expect solutions from brands. This situation has led brands to redesign their complaint management processes and manage the process more effectively.

Research on consumer complaining behavior has continued to increase in the last two decades (Khamitov, Grégoire, and Suri, 2019). These stated reasons revealed the need to evaluate the issue through academic studies. Evaluating the studies on the subject can help new researchers to gradually address current and potential problems. In the study prepared for this purpose, visual mapping and bibliometric analysis of studies on complaining behavior were carried out according to author, country, citation, source and keywords.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Consumer complaining behavior is a set of possible reactions of consumers to unsatisfactory consumption situations. It is the sum of consumer reactions related to dissatisfaction with a specific experience, covering behavioral and non-behavioral actions that can be carried out simultaneously or sequentially (İstanbulluoğlu, Leek and Szmigin, 2017). This concept, which dates back to the 1970s, continues to be a research subject in many studies, continuing to this day in different forms and with increasing importance (Khamitov, Grégoire and Suri, 2019). With the increasing importance, brands have started to give more importance to complaint management. Companies are implementing multi-channel complaint management systems in order to respond to consumers and customers through every channel and produce solutions (De Keyser et al., 2015).

In the new customer relations management process, where, in addition to one-sided interaction with the consumer, consumers also increase their effectiveness in the

communication process and communication turns from a monologue structure to a dialogue structure, internet technologies, increasing competition, globalization and the increase in society's surveillance on economic actors can be cited as reasons for the development and increasing importance of complaint management (Lewis, 1991). With the influence of the internet and social media, in an environment where access to each other and brands has become almost unlimited (Ward and Ostrom, 2006), consumers have begun to express their complaints in almost every medium they find the opportunity and to expect a solution on the issue related to the complaint. Especially social media is used very effectively with negative word of mouth communication in order to announce the complaint to more people, to convey the request to the company, to resolve the complaint and to receive a response.

Complaint actions are evaluated in two categories: private and public complaints (Singh, 1988). While private complaints indicate that customers convey their complaints only to the company, public complaints aim to announce the complaint action to almost every segment of the society, while consumers primarily reach out to the company in order to warn others or to take revenge on the brand (Svari and Erling Olsen, 2012) or to resolve their grievances.

Reasons that may cause a complaint action are perceived benefit from the employee, lack of service quality, inadequate repair, maintenance and repair processes of the service and product, failure to meet expectations, sale of defective products, disruptions in the e-commerce platform, failure to provide a good experience, delays in the delivery process, etc. it could be.

The channels through which the reasons for complaints are expressed are also important for marketers. Lee and Cude (2012) found that online buyers are more likely to use online channels to complain, while offline buyers are more likely to use offline complaint channels.

3. BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS AND RESEARH METHOD

Bibliometric analysis involves evaluating previous studies in terms of author, country, organization, citation, source, keyword and concepts included in the abstract of studies on a specified topic or concept. The data to be used in the analysis are downloaded from databases. With these analyses, the current situation on the subject is evaluated and projections are provided for new research for the future. In author analyzes and citation analyses, the main sources that researchers should refer to for future studies are highlighted. In terms of country, it can be determined from which countries the participating authors are inclined to the subject depending on the country situation. In the organizational analysis, it is revealed which universities the authors work at and in what direction they conduct research. Keywords can be considered as the most important usage page presenting tool. Because, in the process of

developing hypotheses and establishing relationships between concepts, which relationships between concepts have been previously studied in the literature and can be the subject of new research can be established more accurately with the predictions in this analysis. In source analysis, assistance can be provided in determining which journal the study will be sent to during the publication submission process for new studies on similar subjects.

In this study, it is aimed to examine the studies on complaining behavior through bibliometric analysis. With the results of the analysis, the reasons for the complaining behavior and the areas in which the complaining behavior mostly occurs have been tried to be examined within the framework of predictions. Studies were analyzed according to author, country, citation, source and keywords. As a result of the search made by typing the concepts "complaining behavior" or "complaining behavior" or "complaint behavior" or "complaint behavior" from the Web of Science database, 436 studies were obtained. During the filtering process, only studies whose language was English were selected and 407 studies remained. Book and book chapter publications have been published as publication types, and fields such as business economics, social sciences other topics, psychology, communication, sociology and cultural studies have been included as research areas. A total of 317 studies were reached by including articles, proceeding papers and review articles as study types. Data analysis was carried out on these 317 studies.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Distribution of Authors

While a total of 759 authors have worked on this concept so far, the author with the most publications is Mattila (N=7). Afterwards, Donoghue (N=6), de Klerk (N=5), Robertson and Tronvoll (N=4, per Author) were ranked. Other authors have between three and six publications. The distribution of authors is shown in Figure 1. Links between authors indicate collaborations between authors in studies. While it is seen that Mattila, who has the most publications, works with different authors in each of his works, it is seen that Donoghue and de Klerk, who also have the most publications, work together and are co-authors in these works. The authors with few connections and single authors refer to studies with a single author.

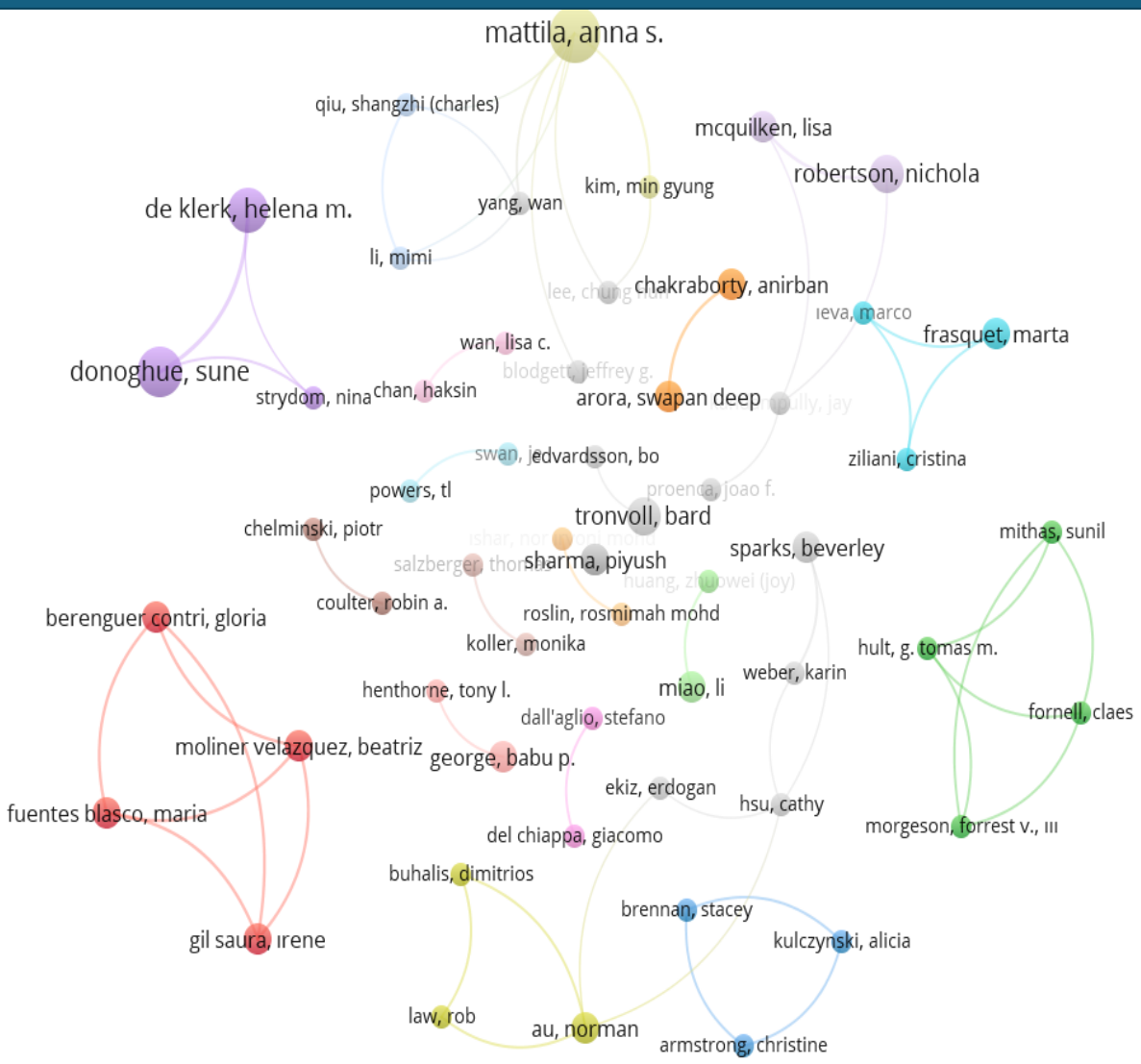


Figure 1. Distribution results of authors included in the studies

4.2. Distribution of Countries

When the country distribution stated by the authors in their studies was examined, it was revealed that authors from 55 different countries conducted studies on complaining behavior. USA (N=106) ranked first in terms of number of studies, while China (N=42), Australia (N=21), Spain (N=18), England (N=17), India (N=16), South Africa (N=106) Korea (N=14), Turkey (N=12), Malaysia and Taiwan (N=11, per country) are listed as countries with ten or more publications. Groups of the same color indicating other countries and the countries with which the authors collaborate are seen in Figure 2.

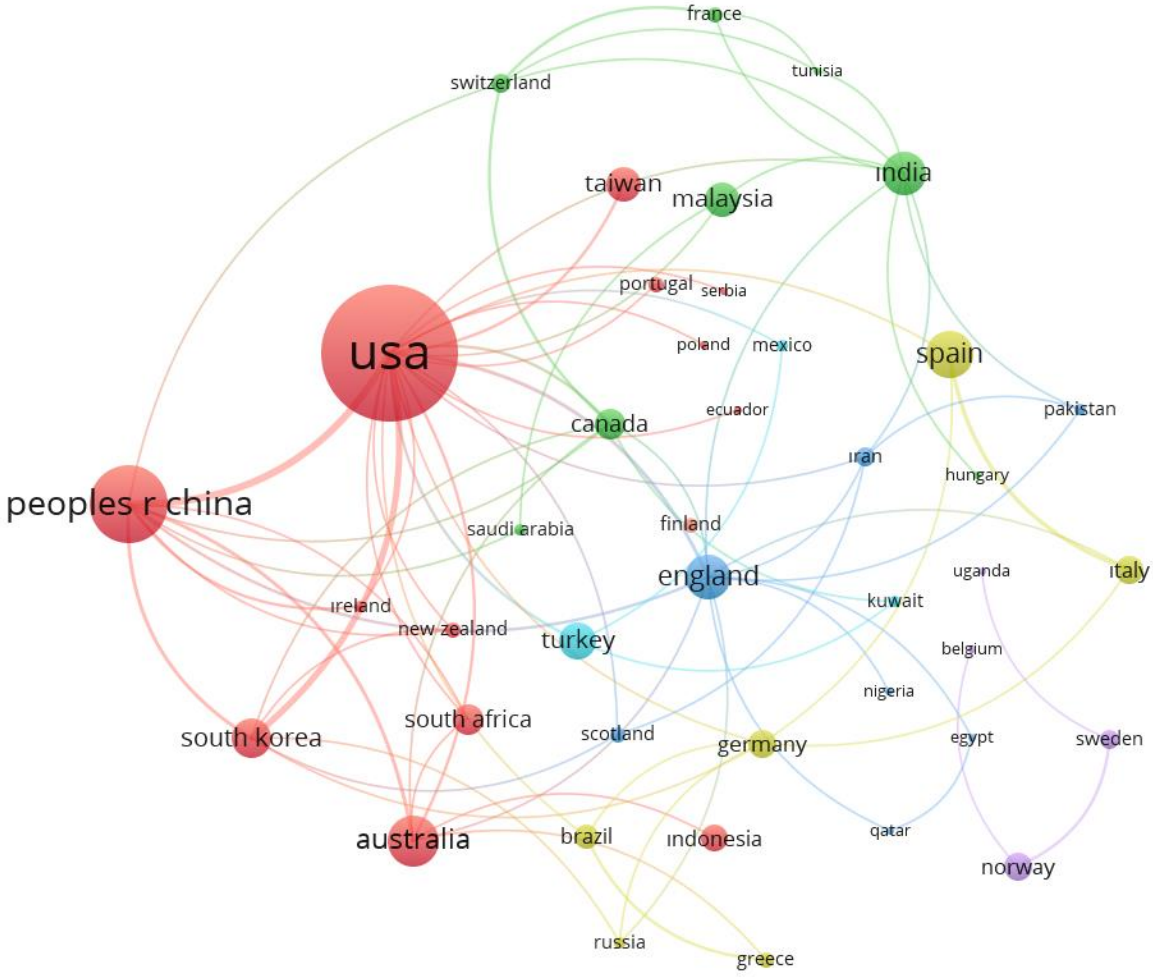


Figure 2. Mapping results of the distribution of countries

4.3. Distribution of Citations

The citation distribution of the studies was evaluated using the ranking on the web of science database. According to these results, the work of Meuter, Ostrom, Roundtree, and Bitner (2000) ranked first with 1402 citations, while the study of Son and Kim (2008) ranked second with 343 citations. The study of Blodgett, Granbois and Walters (1993) ranks third with 307 citations, the study of Gelbrich and Roschk (2011) ranks fourth with 260 citations, and the study of Stephens and Gwinner (1998) ranks fifth with 248 citations.

4.4. Source Distribution

When the distribution of the sources where the studies are published is examined, it is seen that International Journal Of Hospitality Management (N=11), Journal of Services Marketing and International Journal of Consumer Studies (N=10, per journal), Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management and Journal of Business Research (N= 9, per journal), European Journal of Marketing and International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management

(N=8, per journal), Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research and Social Behavior and Personality and International Journal of Bank Marketing (N=6, per journal).), Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Marketing Management, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, and Service Industries Journal (N=5, per journal) emerged as the ranking of journals that published at least 5 publications. The distribution of journals that publish fewer than five publications is shown in Figure 3.

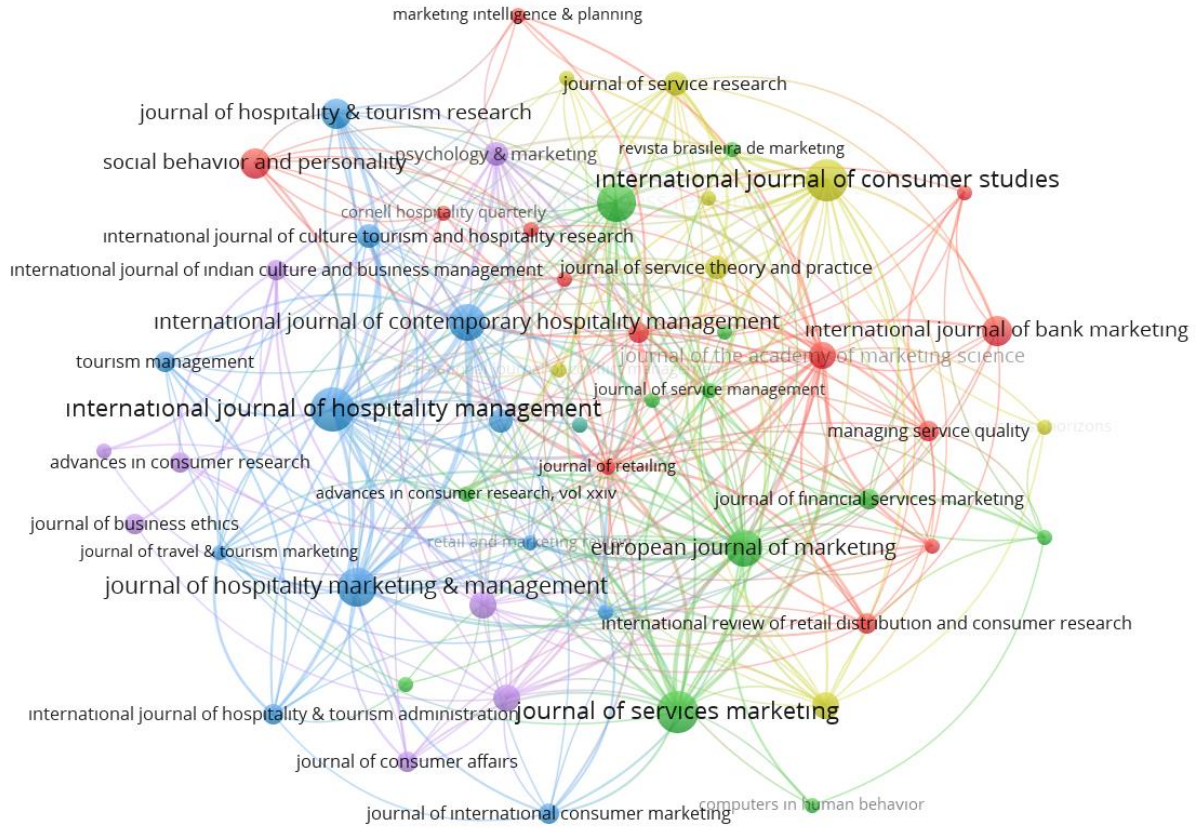


Figure 3. Mapping results of the distribution of contributing journals

4.5. Distribution by Keywords

When the distribution of keywords used in studies on complaining behavior is evaluated, 845 different words were used in these studies, while 149 words were used at least 2 times. The most frequently used keywords, provided that they have been used at least 10 times, are service failure (N=34), complaints, service recovery (N=26, per word), consumer behavior, customer sarisfaction (N=24), complaint behavior (N=). 19), complaint behavior (N=16), complaining behavior, dissatisfaction (N=15, per word), service quality (N=13), consumer complaining behavior, consumer complaint behavior (N=11, per word). Other keywords used less than 10 times and the links between all keywords are shown in Figure 4. Words in the same color groups are words used together, and connections between other words show words that are associated

together. While close connections express relationships between frequently used words, distant connections provide guidance for new study topics because they show less related words.

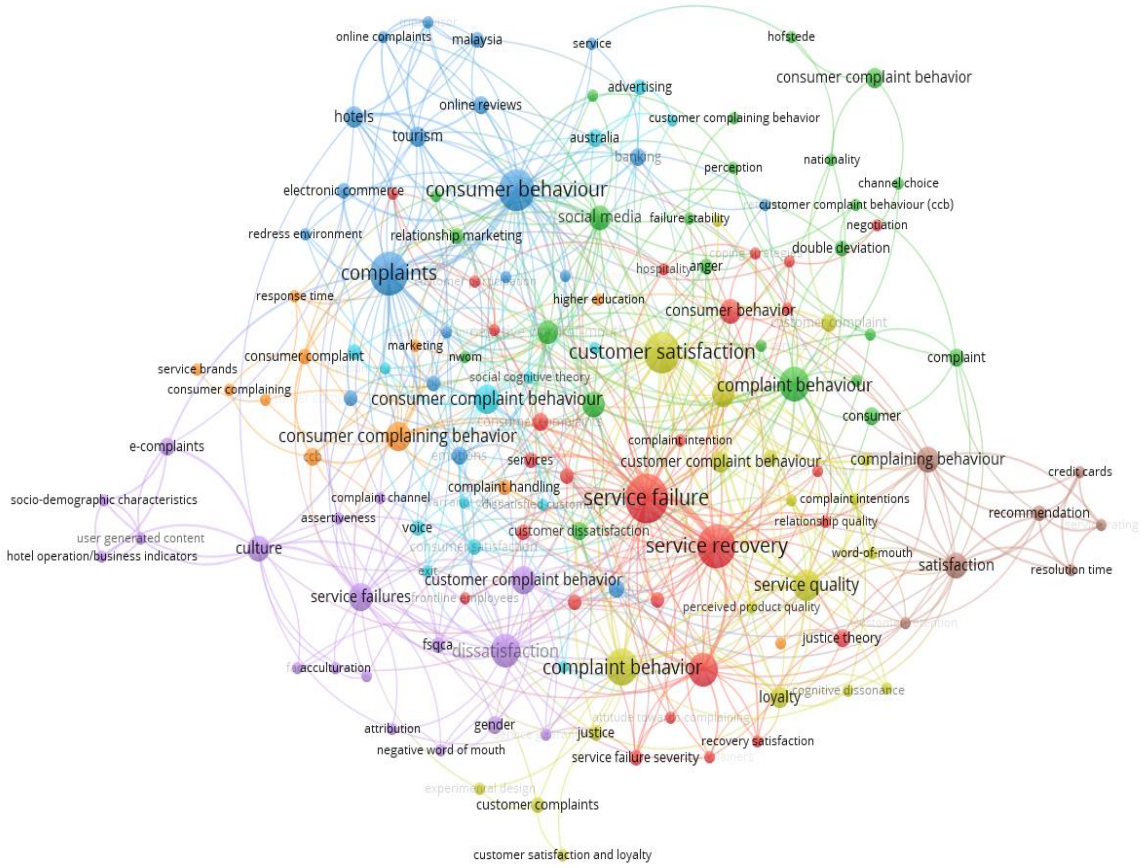


Figure 4. Mapping results of distribution according to keywords

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the analysis made in the VOSviewer program by downloading the studies on complaining behavior from the Web of science database with some filtering, the following results were obtained and inferences are included.

The fact that the first study on complaining behavior was conducted in 1981 shows that the history of the subject dates back many years. The increase in studies on the subject between 2016 and 2019 can be explained by the fact that different elements that were the subject of complaints came to the fore at that time. In order to make detailed comments, it is useful to examine the studies of that period. The increase in the number of studies recently can be explained as the subject has gained importance recently.

The fact that 759 authors have worked on the subject so far expresses the depth of the subject. Similarly, the fact that authors from 55 different countries are involved in studies on this subject

shows that the subject is a prominent issue internationally. It can be a guide as to which countries the authors work with in terms of collaboration. It can also be considered an interesting result that authors from the USA publish jointly with authors from China, Australia, South Korea and South Africa.

Presenting the most cited studies is important in terms of showing which publication and its subject are more prominent regarding the concept. Therefore, authors can refer to these publications in subsequent research.

Evaluating the works of Mattila, who has the most publications, may be important in terms of the development of the subject and observing how the subject is viewed by a single author. When the collaborations between authors are examined, it can be considered a surprising result that Mattila always works with different authors in all works.

It has been revealed that the journals that provide the most publication contributions are mostly in the field of hospitality, but also from the service sector, and some journals such as bank marketing also contribute. Marketing, consumer behavior, and business journals have also contributed to the field. The fact that studies on complaining are mostly published in hospitality and services journals can be interpreted as complaints-related issues being mostly in such areas. For detailed evaluation, studies on this subject can be evaluated separately according to these journals.

The use of 815 different keywords in the studies is important as it shows the depth of the subject. The words most associated with complaining behavior are words such as service failure, service recovery, dissatisfaction, service quality, satisfaction and culture. These results also provide an answer to the question of why consumers complain. It can be said that complaints may arise in cases such as service failure, service recovery, service quality and dissatisfaction. The association of culture with complaining behavior can be explained as consumers from different cultures may exhibit different complaining behavior. The fact that concepts in the same color group represent words used together shows under which groups the words related to complaining are collected. These results will guide marketers in the complaint management process. At the same time, it will also contribute to the development of the field for researchers to investigate the relationships between these concepts and less commonly used concepts by constructing new research models in future studies.

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