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# **In Pursuit of the 'Pink Pound': A Systematic Literature Review**

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## **Abstract**

The visibility of non-heterosexual identities is more prevalent today than ever before, yet there is little research about the consumption behaviours and preferences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, 2/two-spirit, questioning, intersex, asexual, ally, and other non-heterosexual (LGBTQ+) consumers - often referred to as the 'pink pound'. A rare systematic review of LGBTQ+ literature is presented in this paper with the purpose of offering an argument for a wider adoption by marketing scholars and practitioners for research into LGBTQ+ consumer segments. The results of a longitudinal bibliometric analysis are presented to objectively demonstrate the hitherto limited engagement that consumer researchers have had with the discipline, and the limited degree that the discipline has influenced that literature. The key findings reveal a growing, but formative body of inter- and intra-disciplinary literature that, hitherto, has only just begun to be addressed by present day marketing researchers. A conclusion of the paper is that although the bibliometric analysis identifies the limited engagement with LGBTQ+ consumer research, this limited engagement appears to present a very significant lacuna and just as significant an opportunity for both marketing scholars and practitioners to engage much further with this literature in the future. Building on the analysis,

the value of the paper also discusses potential directions for further research in marketing scholarship and practice.

## **Keywords**

Bibliometrics, Citation analysis, Consumer research, LGBTQ+ segments, SPAR-4-SLR protocol, Systematic literature review.

## **Introduction**

The visibility of non-heterosexual identities is more prevalent today than ever before, yet little information is available to marketers about the consumption behaviours and preferences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, and queer (LGBTQ) consumers (Ginder & Byun, 2015). More recently, the alternative acronym LGBTQ+ has been adopted to encompass further non-heterosexual identities. As LGBTQ+ communities around the world are increasingly breaking down barriers to gain equality, the purpose of this paper is to offer an argument for a wider adoption by marketing scholars and practitioners for research into the consumption behaviours and preferences of these LGBTQ+ consumer segments. Whilst early research considered how non-heterosexual identities are often expressed through deviance from heterosexual gender norms (see Kates, 2003; Rinallo, 2007), it remains to be fully discovered how the consumption behaviours and preferences of LGBTQ+ communities differ for these consumer segments - often referred to colloquially as the 'pink pound' or 'pink dollar'. Although there is a growing interest in the LGBTQ+ marketplace, the targeting of these market segments is not a new phenomenon (Ginder & Byun, 2015) and recently there has been an increased focus on the LGBTQ+ consumer by both scholars and practitioners. A search of the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science Core Collection citation index revealed just 190 articles published in 76 business and management category journals during the forty-year-period

between 1981 and 2020. However, only 29 of these articles appeared in journals classified as *Marketing* by the Chartered Association of Business Schools<sup>1</sup> (CABS). This finding demonstrates the lack of LGBTQ+ research within business and management literature hitherto and from the perspective of consumption. We contend further investigation of this situation, therefore, seems appropriate and timely. However, we argue that more can be learned from a *systematic* analysis of the entire body of work discussing LGBTQ+ consumer research. To achieve the purpose of the paper, the bibliometric method of citation analysis is deployed (Garfield, 1972; Ruggeri et al., 2019). In this paper, we first review some of the leading contributions to the field of LGBTQ+ consumer research; second the methodology used to undertake our analysis is presented; third the findings of the analysis are presented; finally, a discussion, including potential directions for future research, is offered followed by the limitations of the study.

### **LGBTQ+ consumer research**

People identified/self-labelled as either lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, or queer (LGBTQ) are using relatively modern terms (Katz, 1995; Weeks, 2017). More recently, further identities have been evidenced including 2/two-spirit, questioning, intersex, asexual, and ally, which is encompassed in an alternative acronym LGBTQ+ to represent all other non-heterosexual communities. Despite the emergence of a growing body of literature in a relatively short time, much of this research has been based on theoretical perspectives from a period when non-heterosexuality was widely stigmatised and LGBTQ+ communities were socially, culturally, and often spatially segregated (Coffin et al., 2019). Since the mid-1990s, many countries have made progress on the issues of anti-discrimination legislation for LGBTQ+ citizens, including the legal recognition of same-sex couples. The increasing recognition of the

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<sup>1</sup> Chartered Association of Business Schools Academic Journal Guide 2021.

rights of these LGBTQ+ communities has led marketers to appreciate the potential of these communities as discrete consumer segments and hence these segments have become recognised as target markets, resulting in a large increase in marketing activities focused on such non-heterosexual consumers (Keating & McLoughlin, 2005; Penaloza, 1996; Ragusa, 2005). Ginder and Byun (2015) identify four main research streams related to gay and lesbian consumers. The first stream investigates whether the gay and lesbian market is a viable one by describing the main features of gay and lesbian consumers as well as assessing whether they constitute a distinct market segment; the second stream explores how gay and lesbian-targeted advertising and media portrayals have changed over time and how these representations affected the evolution of the gay and lesbian market; the third stream investigates how consumers interpret and respond to gay and lesbian-oriented advertising; and the fourth stream considers gay and lesbian consumer behaviours and attitudes. However, whilst the engagement by scholars and practitioners with LGBTQ+ consumers, their consumption behaviours and preferences, and their target markets, is not a new phenomenon, the range and depth of coverage of LGBTQ+ consumer research is still limited and has still not caught up with the pace these communities are making their presence felt in the marketplace. Known as the 'pink pound' or 'pink dollar', with up to GBP £6 billion of purchasing power in the UK, and approximately GBP £3.7 trillion of purchasing power globally (Wolny, 2019), arguably, there is little doubt these communities form viable market segments. With growing worldwide acceptance, visibility and political support, more and more people are 'coming out' thus adding to a growing LGBTQ+ community which, arguably, calls for a better understanding of their consumption behaviours and preferences (Schneider & Auten, 2019). Therefore, as a moderately immature body of knowledge, we argue more insights can be discovered from a systematic review of the entire body of work discussing LGBTQ+ consumers in extant business and management research.

## **Methodology**

In contrast to narrative-based literature review methods, systematic review papers can be manifested of several types with bibliometric reviews (see for instance Khan et al., 2020; Martinez-Lopez et al., 2018, 2020) and meta-analyses (see for instance Blut et al., 2018; Ladeira et al., 2019) widely adopted in marketing literature (see Paul et al., 2021 for a more detailed review). This paper is rooted in bibliometrics (Donthu et al., 2021; Garfield, 1972) which consist of a set of methods that can be deployed to evaluate research through statistical analysis of bibliographic data, commonly focusing on citation analyses of research publications. Citation analysis is a commonly used method to support empirical investigations of the research activity, as well as the structure, of various disciplines (Garfield, 1972; Smith, 1981). Arguably, a more contemporary approach for ranking the impact of journals is the h-index (see Hirsch, 2005). The h-index can be a particularly powerful tool to rank the impact of bodies of scholars' work. In essence, as the h score increases, the volume of citations to a volume of work increases. According to Cronin and Meho (2005:1275), the h-index "helps us to distinguish between a 'one hit wonder' and an enduring performer." The findings from our bibliometric analyses are presented next.

## **Findings**

To provide an exhaustive review of LGBTQ+ consumer research, a search using Web of Science (WoS) - a leading database for academic research (Martinez-Lopez et al., 2020) - was undertaken for the forty-year period between 1981 and 2020 to create our sample. However, before conducting our review, we took cognizance of the Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews (SPAR-4-SLR) protocol (see Paul et al., 2021 for a more detailed explanation of the protocol). In essence, the protocol consists of three stages and six

sub-stages that flow sequentially, namely (1) *assembling*, which involves (1a) identification and (1b) acquisition of literature that have not been synthesized, (2) *arranging*, which involves (2a) organization and (2b) purification of literature that are in the process of being synthesized, and (3) *assessing*, which involves (3a) evaluation and (3b) reporting of literature that have been synthesized. According to Paul et al. (2021:6), these three stages of assembling, arranging, and assessing literature based on the SPAR-4- SLR protocol, should be able to deliver "state-of-the-art insights of" and "stimulating agendas to" advance our knowledge of LGBTQ+ research.

### *Assembling and arranging of literature*

In terms of assembling, the initial search criterion used was based on one search string with the words 'LGBT\*' OR 'LGBTQ\*' OR 'lesbian' OR 'gay' OR 'bisexual' OR 'transsexual' OR 'transgender' OR 'queer' in the TITLE of the publication. By selecting the TITLE, WoS searches only the document titles. This search revealed a total of 25,992 documents which included journal articles, book reviews, editorial material, and letters to editors. There was no research found prior to 1981. In terms of arranging, this initial search was then refined to include only published journal articles, thereby excluding book reviews, editorial material, and letters to editors. We selected only journal articles for the study because we consider these to be at the frontier of scholarly research. This search revealed 15,378 journal articles published in interdisciplinary journals between 1981 and 2020. Following these searches, the search criterion for the data obtained was further refined to include only intra-disciplinary business and management journal articles in the search categories in the WoS Core Collection citation index. The outcome of this search revealed just 190 journal articles published in 76 journals between 1981 and 2020. A summary of the top 25 journals that published the 190 journal articles is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Top 25 business and management journals publishing articles between 1981-2020**

Rank	Journal	No. of articles	Weight (%)
1	Gender Work and Organization	21	11.1
2	Human Relations	10	5.3
3	Human Resource Management	8	4.2
4	Journal of Sport Management	8	4.2
5	Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences- <i>Revue Canadienne Des Sciences De L'Administration</i>	7	3.7
6	International Journal of Human Resource Management	7	3.7
7	Psychology & Marketing #	7	3.7
8	Journal of Nursing Management	6	3.2
9	Equality Diversity and Inclusion	5	2.6
10	Journal of Consumer Research #	5	2.6
11	Tourism Management	5	2.6
12	Journal of Applied Psychology	4	2.1
13	Public Relations Review	4	2.1
14	Organization	3	1.6
15	British Journal of Management	3	1.6
16	Fortune	3	1.6
17	Human Resource Management Journal	3	1.6
18	Journal of Advertising Research #	3	1.6
19	Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management #	3	1.6
20	Leadership	3	1.6
21	Management Learning	3	1.6
22	Action Research	2	1.1
23	American Business Law Journal	2	1.1
24	Clothing and Textiles Research Journal	2	1.1
25	Consumption Markets & Culture #	2	1.1
26-76	Others	61	32.1
	TOTAL	190	100

# Marketing journal as classified by the Chartered Association of Business Schools

Gender, Work and Organization, classified as *Human Resource Management and Employment Studies* by the CABS, clearly leads the table accounting for 11.1% of the number of published articles. Psychology & Marketing, classified as *Marketing* by the CABS, is the highest ranked marketing journal appearing at number 7. Whilst 5 of the top 25 journals that published the 190 articles are classified as *Marketing* by the CABS, however, the remaining 20 journals are from other disciplines majoring in the CABS categories of *General Management*, *Ethics*, *Gender and Social Responsibility*, *Human Resource Management and Employment Studies*, *Organisation Studies*, and *Sector Studies*. Furthermore, within these business and management



category journals, only 29 articles have been published in journals classified as *Marketing* by the CABS. Table 2 presents a summary of the 29 articles published in these marketing journals.

**Table 2: Summary of articles published in journals classified as *Marketing* by the Chartered Association of Business Schools**

Journal	Author	Year of Publication	Title	Country of Authors	Country of Sample	Sample focus for LGBTQ	Individual or Family	Intersection	Method
Journal of Advertising Research	Northey, Gavin; Dolan, Rebecca; Etheridge, Jane; Septianto, Felix; van Esch, Patrick	2020	LGBTQ imagery in advertising: how viewers' political ideology shapes their emotional response to gender and sexuality in advertisements	Australia	USA	Lesbian and gay	Individual	Race, political ideology, gender	Quantitative
Consumption Markets & Culture	Kapoor, Vikram; Belk, Russell W.	2020	Coping and career choices: Irish gay men's passage from hopelessness to redemption	Ireland, Canada	Ireland	Gay men	Individual	Religion, career	Qualitative
Journal of Advertising Research	Bond, Bradley J.; Farrell, Justine Rapp	2020	Does depicting gay couples in ads influence behavioural intentions? How appeal for ads with gay models can drive intentions to purchase and recommend	USA	Not clear	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual	Individual	None	Quantitative
Psychology & Marketing	Russell, Eric M.; Bradshaw, Hannah K.; Rosenbaum, Mark S.; Hill, Sarah E.; Russell-Bennett, Rebekah	2019	Intra-sexual female competition and female trust in gay male sales associates' recommendations	USA, Australia	Australia, New Zealand, UK	Gay Men, heterosexual female	Individual	None	Quantitative
Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	Ram, Yael; Kama, Amit; Mizrahi, Isaac; Hall, C. Michael	2019	The benefits of an LGBT-inclusive tourist destination	Israel, New Zealand	International tourist/Israel	Unclear	Individual	Religion	Quantitative
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management	Strubel, Jessica; Petrie, Trent A.	2018	Perfect bodies: The relation of gay men's body image to their appearance enhancement product consumption behaviours	USA	USA	Gay men	Individual	None	Quantitative
Journal of Marketing Management	Descubes, Irena; McNamara, Tom; Bryson, Douglas	2018	Lesbians' assessments of gay advertising in France: not necessarily a case of La Vie en Rose?'	France	France	Lesbian and gay	Individual	None	Quantitative
Social Marketing Quarterly	Adams, Jeffery; Neville, Stephen; Parker, Karl; Huckle, Taisia	2017	Influencing condom use by gay and bisexual men for anal sex through social marketing: a program evaluation of get it on!	New Zealand	New Zealand	Gay and bisexual	Individual	None	Quantitative
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	Rosenbaum, Mark S.; Russell, Eric M.; Russell-Bennett, Rebekah	2017	I'll wait for him: understanding when female shoppers prefer working with gay male sales associates	USA, Australia	USA	Gay men/female heterosexual	Individual	None	Mixed methods
Journal of Advertising Research	Pounders, Kathryn; Mabry-Flynn, Amanda	2016	Consumer response to gay and lesbian imagery: how product type and stereotypes affect consumers' perceptions	USA	USA	Heterosexual, gay, lesbian	Individual	None	Quantitative
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management	Aung, May; Sha, Ou	2016	Clothing consumption culture of a neo-tribe Gay professionals within the sub-culture of gay consumers	Canada	Canada	Gay	Individual, but impact of partner	Homosexual partners	Qualitative
Psychology & Marketing	Ginder, Whitney; Byun, Sang-Eun	2015	Past, present, and future of gay and lesbian consumer research: critical review of the quest for the queer dollar	USA	NA	Lesbian and gay	Lit review	None	Critical review of literature
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	Rosenbaum, Mark S.; Russell-Bennett, Rebekah; Drennan, Judy	2015	Commercial friendships between gay sales associates and straight female customers in luxury settings: a proposed theoretical framework	USA, Australia	NA-conceptual paper	Gay men/female heterosexual	Conceptual paper	None	Qualitative/secondary data-articles etc.
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management	Braun, Kerstin; Cleff, Thomas; Walter, Nadine	2015	Rich, lavish and trendy: is lesbian consumers' fashion shopping behaviour similar to gays? A comparative study of lesbian fashion consumption behaviour in Germany	Germany	Germany	Lesbian and gay	Individual	Gender identity	Mixed methods
International Journal of Advertising	Um, Nam-Hyun	2014	Does gay-themed advertising haunt your brand? The impact of gay-themed advertising on young heterosexual consumers	USA	USA	Heterosexual	Individual	None	Quantitative
Journal of Public Policy & Marketing	Oakenfull, Gillian W.	2013	What matters: factors influencing gay consumers' evaluations of gay-friendly corporate activities	USA	USA	Gay and lesbian	Individual	None	Quantitative
Journal of Public Policy & Marketing	Hildebrand, Diogo; DeMotta, Yoshiko; Sen, Sankar; Kongsompong, Kritika	2013	In-group and out-group influences on the consumption behaviour of minority groups: the case of gay men	USA, Thailand	Bangkok, Thailand	Gay men	Individual	None	Quantitative
Consumption Markets & Culture	Tsai, Wan-Hsiu Sunny	2012	Political issues in advertising polysemy: the case of gay window advertising	USA	USA	Lesbian, gay and bisexual	Individual	None	Qualitative
Psychology & Marketing	Oakenfull, Gillian	2012	Gay consumers and brand usage: the gender-flexing role of gay identity	USA	USA and Canada	Gay and lesbian	Individual	Gender identity	Quantitative
Journal of Advertising	Tsai, Wan-Hsiu Sunny	2011	How minority consumers use targeted advertising as pathways to self-empowerment	USA	USA	Gay and lesbian	Individual	None	Qualitative
Psychology & Marketing	Gudelunas, David	2011	Consumer myths and the gay men and women who believe them: a qualitative look at movements and markets	USA	USA	Gay and lesbian	Individual	None	Qualitative

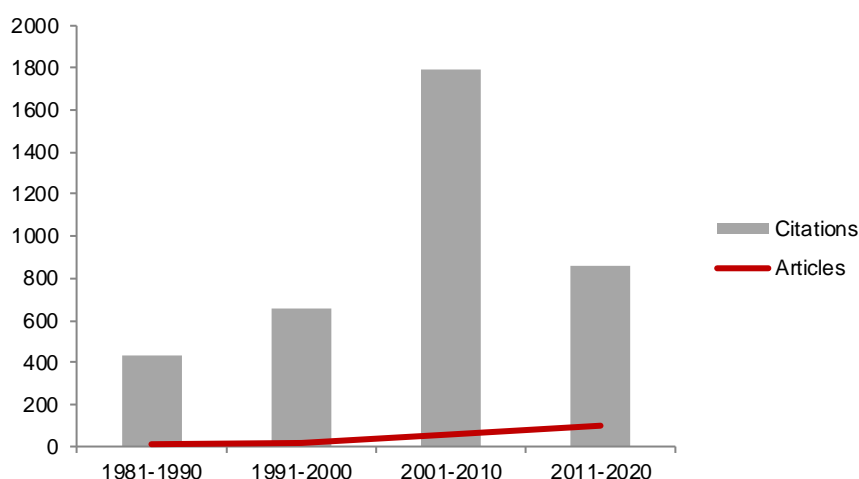
Psychology & Marketing	Hsieh, Ming Huei; Wu, Shu Ling	2011	Gay men's identity attempt pathway and its implication on consumption	Taiwan	Taiwan	Gay men	Individual	None	Qualitative
International Journal of Consumer Studies	Sha, Ou; Aung, May; Londerville, Jane; Ralston, Catherine E.	2007	Understanding gay consumers' clothing involvement and fashion consciousness	Canada	Canada	Gay men	Individual	None	Mixed methods
Psychology & Marketing	Oakenfull, GK; Greenlee, TB	2005	Queer eye for a gay guy: using market-specific symbols in advertising to attract gay consumers without alienating the mainstream	USA	USA	Gay, lesbian and heterosexual	Individual	None	Quantitative
Journal of Consumer Research	Kates, SM	2004	The dynamics of brand legitimacy: an interpretive study in the gay men's community	Canada	Canada	Gay men	Individual	None	Qualitative
Journal of Consumer Research	Kates, SM	2002	The protean quality of subcultural consumption: an ethnographic account of gay consumers	Australia	Canada	Gay men	Individual	None	Qualitative
Advances in Consumer Research	Wilkes, RE; Laverne, DA	2002	Toward understanding the dynamics of non-traditional consumers: an exploratory consideration of lesbian couples in America	USA	USA	Lesbian couples	Household	None	Quantitative
Psychology & Marketing	Kates, SM	2000	Out of the closet and out on the street!: gay men and their brand relationships	Australia	Canada	Gay men	Individual	None	Qualitative
Journal of Advertising	Kates, SM	1999	Making the ad perfectly queer: marketing normality to the gay men's community	Australia	Australian Advert	Gay men	Individual	None	Qualitative Content analysis

### *Assessing - longitudinal citation analysis and thematic analysis*

In terms of assessing, to evaluate and report the syntheses literature longitudinal citation analysis of 190 journals published in business and management journals and thematic analysis of the 29 articles published in marketing journals was conducted. To achieve a longitudinal citation analysis of the evolution of LGBTQ+ consumer research in business and management category journals, the time frame was divided into four multi-year periods. The multi-year periods assist in revealing both the distribution and evolution of the literature. The first period was selected between 1981 and 1990, the second period was between 1991 and 2000, the third period was between 2001 and 2010, and the fourth and final period was between 2011 and 2020. These multi-year periods cover a wide range of years because bibliometric 'snapshots' for analysis are inadequate, even periods of five years are not considered long enough (Van Raan, 1996). The first two periods between 1981 and 1990, and 1991 and 2000 only saw 12 published articles. The third period between 2001 and 2010 saw 25 published articles, but it was the final period between 2011 and 2020 that saw the beginning of substantial growth for the discipline with 153 published articles. Figure 1 presents a histogram illustrating the distribution of these 190 published articles and their associated citations for each of the four multi-year periods.

However, to identify the research that has made the most impact in the field, we next performed a citation analysis of the data to calculate the frequency of citation of the bibliographic references used in the business and management category journals. The analysis of the knowledge transfer processes involved (1) the characteristics of the key references, and (2) the citation impact of the top cited journals. The final analysis of author keywords reveals the trends of LGBTQ+ literature in consumer research.

**Figure 1: Distribution of published articles and related citations in business and management category journals between 1981 and 2020**



### *Prominent scholars and key disciplines*

First, the characteristics of the key references, including the identification of each of the five multi-year periods' most cited publications revealed the prominent scholars and related key disciplines driving LGBTQ+ consumer research at different points in time. Table 3 presents the top-ten most cited scholars' journal articles for each of the four multi-year periods. A citation value (CV), calculated as the ratio of individual citations to the total citations (Backhaus et al., 2011), has been applied to each cited article in each individual multi-year period.

The first of the four multi-year periods (1981-1990) saw Baker (1982) and Lance (1987) appear with a CV of 87.5% and 12.5% respectively. Baker (1982) appearing to have had a major influence on the discipline during the first period. The second period (1991-2000) saw Lance (1987) and the new addition of Vinke and Bolton (1994) appear with a CV of 60.9% and 17.4% respectively, with Lance (1987) appearing to have had a major influence on the discipline during the second period. Baker (1982) appeared once again with a CV of 10.9%. The further new additions during the second period were Taub and Leger (1984) appearing with a CV of 6.5% as well as Pritchard et al. (1998), and Gibson-Graham (1996) both with CVs of 2.2%.

**Table 3: Key references**

1981-1990			1991-2000		
Rank	Author(s)	CV	Rank	Author(s)	CV
1	Baker (1982)	87.5%	1	Lance (1987)	60.9%
2	Lance (1987)	12.5%	2	Vincke and Bolton (1994)	17.4%
			3	Baker (1982)	10.9%
			4	Taub and Leger (1984)	6.5%
			5	Pritchard et al. (1998)	2.2%
			6	Gibson-Graham (1996)	2.2%
2001-2010			2011-2020		
Rank	Author(s)	CV	Rank	Author(s)	CV
1	Ragins and Cornwell (2001)	17.1%	1	Ragins and Cornwell (2001)	7.2%
2	Kates (2002) #	11.2%	2	Griffith and Hebl (2002)	7.1%
3	Griffith and Hebl (2002)	11.0%	3	Kates (2004) #	4.1%
4	Kates (2004) #	9.4%	4	Kates (2002) #	3.7%
5	Lance (1987)	7.2%	5	Rumens and Kerfoot (2009)	3.0%
6	Pritchard et al. (1998)	6.6%	6	Bell et al. (2011)	2.9%
7	Clift and Forrest (1999)	5.7%	7	Huffman et al. (2008)	2.8%
8	Day and Schoenrade (2000)	5.3%	8	Ozturk (2011)	2.5%
9	Kates (2000) #	4.0%	9	Day and Schoenrade (2000)	2.4%
10	Vincke and Bolton (1994)	2.6%	10	Tilcsik et al. (2015)	1.8%

# Marketing journal as classified by the Chartered Association of Business Schools

However, it was the third period (2001-2010) that revealed a significant increase in the number of journal articles being cited. The period saw Ragins and Cornwell (2001) feature strongly with a CV of 17.1% who clearly leads the table. However, the period also saw substantial growth in several other scholars' journal articles being cited, most notably in *Marketing* journals as classified by the CABS, with Kates (2002) with CV of 11.2%, Kates (2004) with a CV of 9.4%, and Kates (2000) with a CV of 4.0%. In non-marketing journals, Griffith and Hebl (2002) also featured strongly with a CV of 11.0%. However, this period also saw the influence of Lance (1987) reduce substantially with a CV of 7.2% to the advantage of Pritchard et al. (1998), Clift and Forrest (1999), Day and Schoenrade (2000), and Vincke and Bolton (1994). Arguably, Kates (2000, 2002, 2004) has had an important influence in marketing scholarship with three publications appearing once again in the top ten. The fourth period (2011-2020) also

continued to reveal an increase in the number of journal articles being cited. The period again saw the influence of Ragins and Cornwell (2001) and Griffith and Hebl (2002) albeit with reduced CVs of 7.2% and 7.1% respectively to the advantage of Rumens and Kerfoot (2009), Bell et al. (2011), Huffman et al. (2008), Ozturk (2011), Day and Schoenrade (2000), and Tilcsik et al. (2015). In marketing journals, once again Kates (2002, 2004) also featured strongly albeit with reduced CVs of 4.1% and 3.7% respectively. The analysis of the key references has provided evidence of the formative nature of marketing literature in LGBTQ+ research. During the period between 1981 and 2020, the only cited publications that appeared in journals classified as *Marketing* by the CABS were the three papers by Kates (2000, 2002, 2004). We can, therefore, draw a conclusion that Kates has had a significant influence on the development of the field of LGBTQ+ consumer research in marketing literature hitherto.

#### *Key journals*

Second, the top 25 business and management journals in the WoS Core Collection citation index between 1981 and 2020 ranked according to the h-index (Hirsch, 2005) of their published articles is presented in Table 4.

The 3,655 references analysed appeared from a total of 190 articles published in 76 journals. Gender, Work and Organization, classified as *General Management, Ethics, Gender and Social Responsibility* by the CABS, clearly leads the table with a h-index of 10. Psychology and Marketing is the highest ranked journal classified as *Marketing* by the CABS, appearing at number 3 with a h-index of 6. Only five other journals, classified as *Marketing* by the CABS appear in the table. These journals are the Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Advertising, and Journal of Public Policy and Marketing, and Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services. This dominance of non-marketing

journals is further evidenced with 19 journals from other disciplines majoring in the CABS categories of *General Management*, *Ethics*, *Gender and Social Responsibility*, *Human Resource Management and Employment Studies*, *Organisation Studies*, and *Sector Studies*.

**Table 4: Citation impact**

Rank	Journal	No. of times cited	h-index
1	Gender Work and Organization	275	10
2	Human Relations	409	7
3	Psychology & Marketing #	152	6
4	Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences-Revue Canadienne Des Sciences De L'Administration	35	5
5	Tourism Management	194	4
6	International Journal of Human Resource Management	88	4
7	Organization	51	3
8	Journal of Applied Psychology	604	3
9	British Journal of Management	79	3
10	Management Learning	74	3
11	Journal of Business Research	50	3
12	Equality Diversity and Inclusion	28	3
13	Public Relations Review	18	3
14	Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management #	9	3
15	Journal of Consumer Research #	337	2
16	Human Resource Management	237	2
17	Journal of Sport Management	77	2
18	Human Resource Management Journal	72	2
19	Journal of Advertising #	63	2
20	Human Resource Development Review	42	2
21	Sport Management Review	38	2
22	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing #	26	2
23	Action Research	24	2
24	Clothing and Textiles Research Journal	14	2
25	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services #	12	2
26-76	Others	647	
	TOTAL	3655	

# Marketing journal as classified by the Chartered Association of Business Schools

### *Bibliometric analysis of keywords*

Finally, unlike citation analysis, the co-word analysis is a technique that examines the actual *content* of journal articles derived from the ‘author keywords’. Therefore, to identify the trends of LGBTQ+ literature in consumer research, we deployed the VOS viewer application (Van





have been identified. In Cluster 1, coloured in red, the keywords of identity and work as well as masculinity and organisations are particularly evidenced. In Cluster 2, coloured in blue, the keywords of discrimination and sexual orientation as well as prejudice and women are evidenced. In Cluster 3, coloured in purple, the keywords of gay and LGBT as well as bisexual and orientation are evidenced. The keywords with lower link strength, and hence opportunities for consumer research, are experiences, attitudes, strategies, consumption, business, consumers, homosexual imagery, decision-making, behaviour, brand, media, consumer research, corporate social responsibility, and social media.

#### *Thematic analysis of the articles published in marketing journals*

The foregoing analysis of the articles in our sample offers both insights into how marketing scholarship has engaged with LGBTQ+ consumer research hitherto and provides the basis for a discussion of the research gaps and potential directions for the future development of the discipline.

#### *Dominance of Western-based scholars and consumers*

By analysing the 29 articles published in marketing journals presented in Table 2, we found the majority of LGBTQ+ research has been published by authors primarily based in Western-based institutions, more specifically North America, Europe, and Australasia. The only exceptions being two studies by Hildebrand et al. (2013) and Hsieh and Wu (2011), which studied gay men in Thailand and Taiwan respectively. The remainder of the studies have focused on consumer segments in Western countries, again dominated by Anglo-American institutions. This demonstrates a gap in LGBTQ+ research in marketing literature which is yet to focus on consumers from different geographic locations and cultures.

### *Less focus on groups other than gay and lesbians*

Most articles published in marketing journals appeared to focus on lesbian and gay communities. For instance, whilst Kates (2000, 2002, 2004) appears to have had a significant impact on the development of the field of LGBTQ+ consumer research hitherto, this work has focused exclusively on the gay consumer. Only the more recent work of Adams et al. (2017), Bond and Farrell (2020), and Tsai (2012) include the bisexual community, with no studies appearing in marketing journals that include transgender and queer populations. This lacuna in understanding the psychological, social, and behavioural elements of LGBTQ+ consumers appear to offer opportunities for further research.

### *Individuals as unit of analysis*

Furthermore, most of the focus of work in marketing literature appears to be related to *individual* consumers as units of analysis as opposed to consumers who are collectively part a group such as a couple or a family. Notable exceptions are Aung and Sha (2016) who discuss the influence of the partners of individual gay men and Wilkes and Laverne (2002) who consider lesbian couples as a unit of analysis. Therefore, the influence of such partners on consumption behaviours could be an attractive direction for further research. For instance, Hildebrand et al. (2013) study the influence of what they term *in-group* and *out-group* on gay men's consumption behaviours. Furthermore, extended adult LGBTQ+ families, as well as extended families with children, as units of consumption, could provide attractive directions for future research.

### *Lack of focus on LGBTQ+ consumers in their social self*

Exploring each letter in the LGBTQ+ acronym is limiting because it focuses exclusively on one identity category (i.e., sexuality or gender) without appreciating how these impact with

other categories such as age, class, culture, economic background, political ideologies, race, religion, etc. Our sample from 2019 onwards appears to demonstrate a widening of the research agenda studying the LGBTQ+ segment in their social space. For instance, Northey et al. (2020) examine how individuals' political ideologies determine their emotional responses to consumer advertisements and how these act as causal mechanisms responsible for product-related attitudes. Kapoor and Belk (2020) and Ram et al. (2019) look at the impact of religion on consumer decision making processes. Extant research only appears to include certain age, class, and educational compositions of LGBTQ+ respondents and hence research considering the wider impact of age, class, and education (i.e., different socio-economic groups and generations) appears absent.

#### *Rigid concept of gender identity*

The concept of gender and gender identity is another area which is under-researched. Most of the published work considers gender either as a rigid concept or does not consider gender as influencing concepts in their work. However, gender is gradually being recognised as a 'fluid' concept and can have a different orientation than sexual preference. The work of Oakenfull (2012) and Braun et al. (2015) explicitly study the role of gender which opens this debate. Therefore, studying the impact of opted gender and biological gender on LGBTQ+ communities, as well as their consumption choices, requires further exploration.

#### *Media channels used in the articles*

Whilst LGBTQ+ consumers have been represented in the media for several years, initially this was limited to printed (newspapers and magazines) media. Gradually this representation extended into the mass media including TV, events, and online channels. However, the studies published in marketing journals have mostly taken printed media as their focus (Kates, 1999;

Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005; Um, 2014; Descubes et al., 2018; Bond & Farrell, 2020). Only the work of Tsai (2012) focuses exclusively on TV advertising. Adams et al. (2017) work focuses on the impact of a social marketing campaign which uses a wide range of channels. When social media is offering the potential of a wide and more personalised connectivity and playing a major role in not only activism but also representation, there is a lack of research focusing on social media channels.

### *Research methods used*

The twenty-nine articles published in marketing journals appears to show a dominance of quantitative methods in researching LGBTQ+ consumers. Table 2 shows that from the 29 articles, 14 used quantitative methods, 11 qualitative, 3 mixed methods and 1 is a thematic review of literature. The trend shows that more recent publications seem to use quantitative method more than qualitative methods. Access to the LGBTQ+ consumers is challenging and probably using quantitative methods specifically survey or online experiment design may help researchers overcome this challenge. However, delving deeper into their daily life and understanding the nuances, as discussed in preceding sections, will require in-depth qualitative methods of inquiry.

### **Discussion, future research directions, and limitations**

The aim of this paper was to offer an argument for a wider adoption by marketing scholars and practitioners for research into the consumption behaviours and preferences of LGBTQ+ consumer segments and we argued that more could be learned from a systematic analysis of the entire body of work discussing LGBTQ+ consumer research. A systematic review of the literature following the Scientific Procedure and Rational for Systematic Literature Reviews (SPAR-4-SLR) protocol (Paul et al., 2021) was then deployed. The findings from the analyses

provided a detailed insight in the breadth and depth of the extant research published in business and management, and especially in marketing journals, hitherto.

The bibliometric analyses discovered the earliest research on LGBTQ+ communities was published in 1981. Between 1981 and 2020, 15,378 journal articles were published in interdisciplinary journals, from which only 190 journal articles were evidenced in intra-disciplinary business and management journals. From these 190 journal articles, only 29 articles were published in *Marketing* journals as classified by the CABS, hence demonstrating a paucity of research by marketing scholarship hitherto. Table 1 indicated that LGBTQ+ communities had been studied in Human Resources and Employment, Organisation Studies, General Management, Ethics, Gender and Social Responsibility disciplines. However, there was much less research on these communities from the perspective of consumption despite a growing acknowledgement of their consumer power and representation. The dominance of non-marketing journals was further evidenced in Table 3 and Table 4 where only 6 journals classified as *Marketing* by the CABS appeared in the top 25 journals measured by their citation impact. Figure 1 shows that even though LGBTQ+ research was growing, especially from 2001 onwards, there is still a need to explore LGBTQ+ communities from the perspective of consumption. The co-occurrence of keywords network map in Figure 2 revealed three clusters of keywords including identity and work, masculinity and organisation, discrimination and sexual orientation, and prejudice and women, dominating the research in business and management journals. These analyses have, therefore, offered marketing scholarship potential directions for future research in areas including experience, attitudes, consumption, homosexual imagery, behaviour, brands, and media. The thematic analysis of the 29 articles published in marketing journals presented in Table 2 highlighted their research themes, identified gaps, and offered potential directions for future research. The analysis revealed the

articles were mostly focused on lesbian and gay communities, hence calling for further research on other members of the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, the LGBTQ+ community in their social self was found less researched which excluded their familial representation, people with partners and children and influence factors of the partners and other members in the family, their social, political, religious ideologies on them as social self-influencing their identity, calls for further research. Gender and gender identity was taken as a rigid concept in current research in marketing, whereas the growing importance of considering gender as 'fluid' concept needed to be considered by future research to deepen understanding of LGBTQ+ community as consumers and its impact of their consumption ideologies. In practice, a wide range of media are now representing LGBTQ+ community, however, most of the research has focused on print advertisements. When broadcast commercials (i.e. television and radio advertisements) and social media are playing a prominent role, future research needs to explore the role of these media as well. The analysis in Table 2 also revealed a methodological dominance of quantitative methods, especially in more recent publications, which may be because of challenges in accessing the community. However, we suggest in future researchers should consider adopting innovative qualitative methods to gain rich and deep insights into the LGBTQ+ community from the perspective of consumption. The analysis also identified the dominance of research by scholars from Western-based institutions thus providing opportunities for research in other geographic locations and cultures. With a growing worldwide acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community increasingly showcased by pride parades and media representation; this paper represents a call to action for both marketing scholarship and practitioners. Hence, from a practical perspective, whilst we do not yet offer a direct benefit to practice in this paper, we do offer a route map for further research that may lead to significant contributions to practice being made in the future.

The results from the foregoing analysis have been limited due to the bibliometric constraints that resulted from our sample. The first constraint relates to the nature of the database searches of published journal articles. The WoS Core Collection citation index is constantly being updated with new literature as it becomes published; therefore, the sample collected for this study represents a 'snapshot' of data during the short period of data collection. The second constraint relates to the nature of the search strings. Different keyword search strings when undertaking the WoS searches could have also resulted in different findings; semantically, such as by selecting LGTBQ+ instead of LGBTQ+. The third constraint relates to the citation analysis of our sample. Citation analysis is retrospective in nature so developments in the field of LGBTQ+ consumer research appear in the citation data only after some time has passed. We suggest this was a limitation in our sample, during the fourth and final multi-year period.

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