

“I may have never walked in your shoes, but I can see your soles are worn” – A systematic literature review on consumer empathy using the TCCM approach

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**Abstract**

In the evolving marketing landscape, the growing emphasis on rationality and objectivity diminishes the role of empathy. Despite this trend, empathy, as a crucial social glue, should be a cornerstone in companies’ marketing activities, meeting consumers’ desire to be understood and cared for. This article conducts the first systematic literature review on empathy from the consumer perspective. Analyzing 96 articles with the Theory-Context-Characteristic-Methodology (TCCM) framework, we identified theoretical foundations, relevant research contexts, antecedents, consequences, and moderating variables of empathy, along with prevailing research methodologies and measurement scales. Marketing research lacks a unified understanding and measurement of empathy, yet it remains highly relevant in both human and non-human marketing encounters, consistently impacting consumer response in both short- and long-term perspectives. We propose future research directions across the TCCM building blocks.

**Subject Areas:** *Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Services*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour