

The evolution of consumer well-being over the last four decades: A comprehensive review and future directions

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ABSTRACT

Research on consumer well-being (CWB) has grown considerably; however, the absence of a shared definition, consistent measures, and agreement on its essential nature has restricted the field's progress. This article responds to these gaps by conducting a systematic literature review of CWB over the past forty years. The review draws on 170 articles published between 1981 and 2025, identified through a scientific search and screening protocol. We relied on Web of Science database for procuring the articles. We conducted theme-based analysis to develop an integrative framework. This review examines the theoretical foundations, methodological approaches, and perspectives on CWB across macro, micro, individual, hedonic, and eudaimonic dimensions. It traces publication trends, identifies credible outlets, and demonstrates how different frameworks and methods have been applied. By outlining key variables, their interrelationships, and major research gaps, the review develops an integrative framework and outlines clear directions for future inquiry for academicians and practitioners alike. Understanding the antecedents, mediators, and moderators driving CWB will enable managers to enhance it and prevent its depletion—an increasingly critical objective in contemporary consumption contexts.

1. Introduction

Consumer well-being (CWB) is now central to all aspects of consumption. It has become a key priority for consumers both during and after the pandemic (Callaghan et al., 2021; Yik & Siu, 2025). In a survey of 7500 consumers across six countries, 79 % reported that well-being is essential, and 42 % considered it their top priority (Callaghan et al., 2021). Consumers across markets also indicated a marked increase in prioritizing well-being, which has driven a continual rise in research aimed at understanding and enhancing CWB. Over time, the concept of CWB has expanded to include both cognitive development and affective well-being (Pancer & Handelman, 2012), and the literature reflects growing interest in the topic (Brüggen et al., 2017). However, despite its earliest investigation in the 1980s (Suranyi-Unger Jr, 1981), CWB remained underexplored until the early 2000s.

Marketing plays a significant role in shaping CWB, directly influencing satisfaction in the consumer life domain (marketplace experiences) and indirectly affecting other domains such as health and safety, work, family, leisure, and finance (Sirgy, 2002). Marketing scholars have therefore sought to understand CWB and encouraged practitioners to consider it when making decisions (Sirgy & Lee, 2006). However, the literature remains fragmented, with varied conceptualisations and measures. This lack of clarity makes it difficult for industry analysts and policymakers to choose appropriate definitions and metrics (Rahmani et al., 2018). A deeper understanding of CWB, its dimensions, and its challenges is needed to build a coherent research agenda around this critical indicator of marketing activity and societal progress.

Earlier definitions also illustrate this diversity. Lee et al. (2002) described CWB as comprising “satisfaction with possession” and “satisfaction with acquisition.” They argued that the marketing function, as

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the most consumer-oriented aspect of the firm, should drive CWB-related investigations. Other studies proposed alternative measures, such as “overall consumer satisfaction” (Meadow, 1983) or a combination of “material possessions” and “standard of living” (Nakano et al., 1995). Lee et al. (2002) later developed a five-dimensional model of CWB, based on consumer satisfaction at different stages of the consumption process: acquisition, maintenance, and disposal. In some contexts, one dimension may be sufficient to capture CWB, while in others, all five are needed. Overall, the literature remains disparate and lacks consensus on how to define and measure the construct. Nonetheless, the importance of CWB as an indicator of societal development is widely recognised (Bharti et al., 2024; Renton & Hooper, 2024). This underscores the need to better conceptualize CWB, advance theory, and establish appropriate measurement approaches. A comprehensive review of the literature is therefore necessary to guide future research, especially given the rapid growth of interest in this area (Abrantes-Braga & Veludo-de-Oliveira, 2019).

To this end, we examined three prior reviews of CWB by Bhardwaj and Kalro (2024), Zhao and Wei (2019), and Roye and Mohan (2024). The present review differs substantially in its objectives, protocol, scope, and coverage. Zhao and Wei (2019) did not specify the database or time frame for their data collection, while Bhardwaj and Kalro (2024) relied only on Scopus, covering 1998–2022. Similarly, Roye and Mohan (2024) reviewed articles published between 2003 and 2023. In contrast, our review adopts a more exhaustive approach, incorporating both Scopus and Web of Science and covering over four decades (1981–2025). We also employed a broader set of keywords, including both “consumer well-being” and “customer well-being,” which expanded the coverage of relevant articles.

Methodological rigor further distinguishes our review. Zhao and Wei (2019) did not describe their screening and selection process, while the other two reviews overlooked a seminal contribution by Suranyi-Unger Jr (1981) in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. To ensure inclusivity, we incorporated key contributions from Joseph Sirgy and Dong-Jin Lee, widely recognised as two of the most influential scholars in the CWB domain. Such omissions in earlier reviews, possibly resulting from oversight, may have limited their completeness. In terms of scope, Zhao and Wei (2019) focused primarily on Chinese consumers, while Roye and Mohan (2024) limited their review to low-income consumers. In contrast, our review is broader in scope, more inclusive, and therefore applicable across diverse global and socio-economic contexts. Furthermore, while Zhao and Wei (2019) divided CWB into individual, subjective, and psychological dimensions, our review develops an integrative framework that brings together multiple perspectives, including macro and social dimensions, which were missing from some earlier studies. Finally, our review is based on 170 articles, making it more comprehensive than previous reviews.

Thus, to address the aforementioned identified literature gaps of – lack of a comprehensive definition of CWB, existing reviews having limited methodological rigor and missing certain seminal works, and to provide future research avenues, we address the following questions in the current paper:

- **RQ1:** What gaps exist in the current literature, and what are their implications?
- **RQ2:** Which theories have been employed in CWB research?
- **RQ3:** What types of methodologies have been used in CWB research?
- **RQ4:** What constructs and variables have been studied in relation to CWB?
- **RQ5:** What are the key trends in the extant literature, and what future avenues for research do they suggest?

In sum, this review offers a comprehensive synthesis of four decades of consumer well-being research. It brings together diverse perspectives, theories, methods, and variables, while identifying critical gaps that continue to limit the growth of research related to CWB. By advancing

an integrative framework, the study not only organizes existing knowledge but also sets out clear directions for future research. This review also advances CWB scholarship by offering novel propositions for future research. Importantly, it underscores the practical value of CWB by demonstrating how managers can enhance well-being and prevent its depletion, and how policymakers can frame consumer-centric standards to safeguard the interests of vulnerable and underserved consumers. Through these contributions, this review aims to provide a foundation for theoretical advancement and the development of actionable strategies in marketing and society.

2. Consumer well-being background and classification

2.1. Consumer well-being: What it is and why it is important

The phrase “consumer well-being” has been frequently used in marketing parlance and is considered a vital marketing concept (Zhao & Tsubaki, 2025). Research on the nature, measurement, and scope of CWB has appeared in recent marketing literature (Sirgy, 2021), along with an increasing academic interest in tackling marketing issues aligned with CWB (Anderson et al., 2013). Thus, we argue that CWB is a crucial marketing goal (e.g., Sirgy, 2021). However, the concept of CWB is multifaceted and manifests in various ways.

2.1.1. The macro perspective

CWB is conceptualized in economics to encompass the ‘satisfaction of all types of wants (including needs and desires) – material, emotional, social, and physical’ (p. 132) at the individual (or consumer) level (Suranyi-Unger Jr, 1981). Others conceptualize CWB as a flourishing state involving health, happiness, and prosperity (Devezer et al., 2014). Thus, CWB is a macro concept based on the assumption that higher levels of CWB enhance the quality of life, satisfaction, and overall happiness (Sirgy, 2021). Most authors conceptualize CWB as a macro construct that measures consumers' health as a group (Sirgy & Lee, 2006). Also, definitions of CWB at the macro level focus on material possessions despite some evidence that materialism is negatively associated with individual well-being (Malhotra, 2006).

Researchers have also used different conceptualizations or surrogate constructs such as quality-of-life, happiness, life satisfaction, and positive affect (Sirgy & Lee, 1996) to empirically assess the utility of CWB. Also, empirical research on CWB assumes the utility of various dimensions of CWB as linear (Peterson, 2006). However, this assumption undermines the possibility that the utility function of CWB may be nonlinear (Malhotra, 2006).

2.1.2. The individual and social perspectives

Sirgy and Lee (1996) studied extant CWB models and identified two primary sources of CWB, namely, individual and societal. Individual sources represent consumer perceptions and behaviors that affect their well-being. They include consumption and post-consumption perceptions and behaviors (Devezer et al., 2014), such as elements of the consumption process (Lee et al., 2002), end-goals, sub-goals (Devezer et al., 2014), and transformational choices. Societal sources are factors that influence consumers indirectly through their environment. Examples include cultural influences (Leong et al., 2015), technology (Zhao & Tsubaki, 2025), social media norms (Berezan et al., 2020), and information overload (via mobile devices and social media platforms) associated with choices (Markus & Schwartz, 2010). These influence consumers' emotional experiences and well-being (Ho & Ito, 2019).

2.1.3. The hedonic and Eudaimonic perspectives

The two well-known schools of thought in well-being literature are hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, constituting overall CWB (Huta & Ryan, 2010). The former relates to immediate happiness, pleasure, and enjoyment, while the latter refers to long-term concepts such as self-actualization and self-growth aspects of CWB (Rahmani et al., 2018).

Hedonic well-being has been much studied in the consumer shopping context (e.g., [Nghia et al., 2020](#)) as it is related to shopping for products that provide individual consumers with happiness, pleasure, and enjoyment ([Nghia et al., 2020](#)). Thus, we can conclude that hedonic well-being is a part of individual well-being ([Teichmann et al., 2025](#)).

The eudaimonic school of thought about life satisfaction and growth is related to selling experiential products that help create life experiences ([Guevarra & Howell, 2015](#)). These experiential products help consumers achieve self-growth by living extraordinary experiences. Moreover, the use of certain products and brands over time helps fulfil individual consumers' psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, leading to self-actualisation and attainment of life satisfaction ([Deci & Ryan, 1985](#)). Thus, eudaimonic well-being is also a form of individual well-being as it pertains to an individual's self-growth and self-actualisation. Additionally, there is another school of thought regarding well-being classification, which is referred to as subjective well-being.

2.1.4. Subjective well-being

[Diener \(1984\)](#) describes subjective well-being as having three components: (a) it resides within the experience of individuals, (b) it includes positive measures such as satisfaction, happiness, and positive affect, and (c) it includes a global assessment of all aspects of an individual's life. In other words, subjective well-being is the evaluation of an individual's life aspects wherein they feel positive emotions such as satisfaction and happiness. Thus, subjective well-being also refers to the absence of negative affect or negative feelings in an individual's life.

Subjective well-being has often been linked with hedonic well-being as well as eudaimonic well-being ([Kesari & Atulkar, 2016](#)). Thus, subjective well-being can also be connected to individual well-being as it comprises the evaluation of an individual's life aspects to determine emotions of hedonia as well as eudaimonia. Thus, we conclude that subjective well-being includes individual, hedonic, and eudaimonic well-being.

Thus, there is some overlap between the different schools of thought about CWB (refer to [Fig. 1](#)). We delve deeper into the CWB literature in the subsequent sections. (See [Tables 1 and 2](#).)

3. Methodology

The systematic literature review (SLR) process goes beyond identifying, selecting, critically evaluating, and synthesizing extant literature ([Hao et al., 2019](#)). While an SLR enhances the quality and validity

([Wang & Chugh, 2014](#)) of the inferences, it also maintains transparency while doing justice to both quantitative and non-quantitative articles. Our SLR follows the process suggested by [Nguyen et al. \(2018\)](#). There has been a rise in SLRs in leading marketing journals in recent years e.g., ([Mittal et al., 2024](#)); ([Gupta et al., 2025](#)). These articles trace specific domains' history and offer deep insights and directions toward future research endeavours ([Khan & Henschel, 2024](#)).

3.1. Search process

An initial literature search was conducted in Web of Science (WoS), Scopus, and Google Scholar to access published scientific research on CWB between 1981 and 2025 ([Chandra et al., 2020](#)). The aim was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the CWB domain. To this end, we reviewed two seminal and foundational papers in the field authored by [Suranyi-Unger Jr \(1981\)](#) and [Sirgy and Lee \(2008\)](#). In this process, the authors identified relevant keywords, including "consumer well being," "consumer well-being," "customer well being," and "customer well-being." The search generated a total of 3881 hits. Following the suggestions of [Kauppi et al. \(2018\)](#), our search included all articles on the subject. At the next stage, to eliminate non-relevant articles, enhance transparency, and avoid unintended duplication ([Dada, 2018](#)), we applied exclusion criteria. We then downloaded the titles, journals, keywords, authors, abstracts, publication years, and DOIs of all 3881 articles from WoS for further analysis ([Nguyen et al., 2018](#)). This produced an Excel document containing all articles for review, which was conducted simultaneously by the first two authors.

3.2. Screening

We applied specific criteria to eliminate non-relevant articles from our review. Non-marketing journals and those not included in the Chartered Association of Business Schools' Academic Journal Guide ([CABS, 2018](#)) were excluded ([Atewologun et al., 2017](#)). The CABS guide provides a comprehensive list of high-quality journals ([Gilal et al., 2019](#)). Book chapters and conference proceedings were also excluded. These steps reduced the initial pool from 3881 to 1024 articles.

In the second stage of screening, two authors read the abstracts of all 1024 articles to remove irrelevant studies. After checking inter-rater reliability and resolving all differences, 358 articles were retained. Inter-rater reliability was assessed using Cohen's kappa test, which produces values between 1 (perfect agreement) and 0 (agreement no better than chance). Our study reported Cohen's kappa coefficients

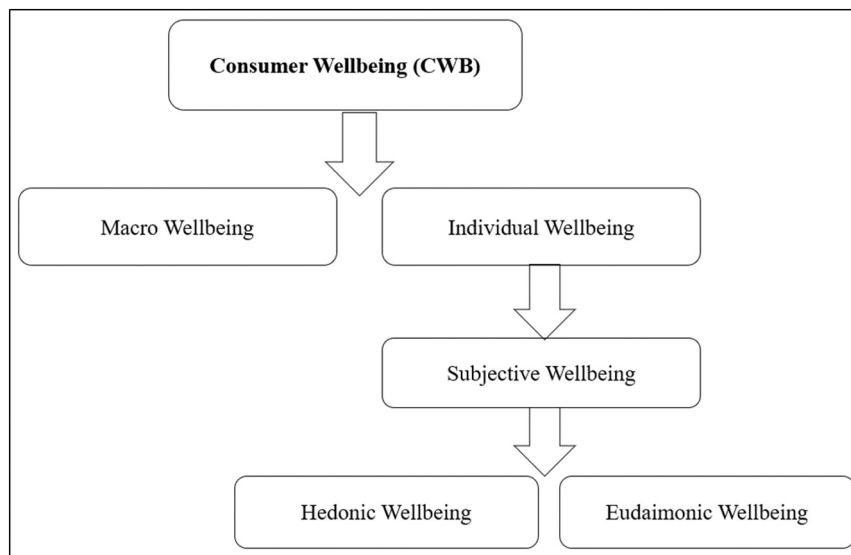


Fig. 1. Types of Consumer Wellbeing (CWB).

Table 1
Journal-wise Publications.

Journal	No of article	%	Exemplars
Journal of Services Marketing	18	10.59	Gardiazabal et al. (2020); Dean and Indrianti (2020); Azzari et al. (2021)
Journal of Business Research	15	8.82	Fifta et al. (2020); Maggioni et al. (2019); Batat et al. (2019); Tang et al. (2024); Zheng et al. (2021)
Journal of Consumer Affairs	12	7.06	Simkins and Geiger-Oneto (2020); Balderjahn et al. (2020); Dorsey et al. (2020); Singh et al. (2023)
International Journal of Bank Marketing	11	6.47	Wong and Lynn (2019); Riitsalu and Murakas (2019); Naveed et al. (2021)
Journal of Macromarketing	10	5.88	Sirgy et al. (2007); Sirgy (2008); Wunderlich et al. (2021)
International Journal of Consumer Studies	9	5.29	de Beer et al. (2020); Gong et al. (2020); Jain et al. (2024)
Journal of Service Research	8	4.71	Tang et al. (2016); Mende et al. (2024); Martin and Hill (2015)
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	8	4.71	Troebs et al. (2018); Prentice and Loureiro (2018); Zhao and Tsubaki (2025)
International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management	7	4.12	Marshall (2019); Ungaro et al. (2022); Sramova and Pavelka (2019)
Journal of Public Policy & Marketing	5	2.94	Mugel et al. (2019); Sirgy (2008); Banker and Khetani (2019)
Journal of Consumer Behavior	4	2.35	Chan (2019); Suzuki et al. (2019); Cornish (2012); Moschis and Ong (2011)
Journal of Consumer Psychology	4	2.35	Mick (2017); Guevarra and Howell (2015); Zhong and Mitchell (2010)
European Journal of Marketing	4	2.35	Veeck et al. (2018); Smith (2013)
Psychology & Marketing	4	2.35	Pera et al. (2020); Zhong and Mitchell (2012)
Journal of Consumer Research	3	1.76	Netemeyer et al. (2018); Suranyi-Unger Jr (1981)
Social Indicators Research	3	1.76	Sirgy et al. (2006); Leong et al. (2015)
Journal of Service Theory and Practice	3	1.76	Teichmann et al. (2025)
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	3	1.76	Chen et al. (2021); Anisimova et al. (2025)
Journal Of Product and Brand Management	2	1.18	Jian et al. (2019)
International Journal of Research in Marketing	2	1.18	Henkens et al. (2020)
Journal of Marketing	2	1.18	Devezer et al. (2014)
Young Consumers	2	1.18	Helm et al. (2019); Junior Ladeira et al. (2016)
Qualitative Market Research	2	1.18	Bodunrin and Stone (2019); Harris (2017)
Marketing Intelligence & Planning	2	1.18	Nghia et al. (2020); Barari (2023)
Journal of Consumer Marketing	2	1.18	Barari et al. (2025)
Marketing Theory	1	0.59	Lindridge et al. (2015)
Tourism Management	1	0.59	Lee et al. (2014)
International Journal of Advertising	1	0.59	Lou and Tse (2021)
Yonsei Business Review	1	0.59	Sirgy and Lee (2003)
Social Behavior and Personality	1	0.59	Gong et al. (2016)
Quality of Life Research	1	0.59	Joshanloo et al. (2018)
Applied Research in Quality of Life	1	0.59	Sirgy et al. (2007)
Journal of Advertising	1	0.59	Dodds et al. (2021)

Table 1 (continued)

Journal	No of article	%	Exemplars
Journal of International Marketing	1	0.59	Davvetas et al. (2022)
Journal of Retailing	1	0.59	Berry et al. (2018)
International Review of Retail Distribution and Consumer Research	1	0.59	Saarijärvi et al. (2016)
International Marketing Review	1	0.59	Hampson et al. (2018)
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management	1	0.59	Lai and Perminiene (2020)
Journal of Business Ethics	1	0.59	Sirgy and Lee (2008)
Cogent Business & Management	1	0.59	De Araujo et al. (2024)
Corporate Communications	1	0.59	Chang and Berwanger (2024)
Journal of Interactive Marketing	1	0.59	Tikkanen et al. (2023)
Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing	1	0.59	Peng et al. (2025)
Journal of Strategic Marketing	1	0.59	Ting and Ahn (2024)
Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research	1	0.59	Huang et al. (2024)
Service Business	1	0.59	Shen et al. (2025)
Marketing Letters	1	0.59	Brunnereder and Dholakia (2018)
Journal of Brand Management	1	0.59	Junaid et al. (2020)
Australasian Marketing Journal	1	0.59	Chou and Sawang (2015)
Journal of Social Marketing	1	0.59	Johns (2020)

above 0.85 for the review dimensions, which are consistent with standards for systematic literature reviews (Krippendorff, 2004). All disagreements were discussed until consensus was reached.

In the third stage of the screening process, the same two co-authors did a deeper study of the remaining 358 articles, which resulted in a final set of 144 relevant articles. We identified relevant attributes of the remaining 144 articles, such as the type of paper, antecedent, mediator, moderator, place of study, sampling unit, and methodology. To ensure that all relevant articles were included, we re-reviewed the references of the 144 articles to identify any that we had missed in our process. We identified prolific authors in the field of well-being, such as Joseph Sirgy and Dong-Jin Lee. We then searched for these authors to determine if any of their published articles were missing from our list. We searched outlets positioned to publish research on CWB (Dada, 2018), such as *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, *Quality of Life Research*, and *Social Indicators Research*. This step identified 26 articles that had not been included in our list of 144. Our inclusion and exclusion criteria led to a final repository of 170 articles for analysis (see Fig. 2).

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive trends

The timeline covered in our review spans 1981–2025. The first paper, a conceptual study, was published in 1981 in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. The publication trend, which includes different methodological approaches (28 conceptual papers, 34 qualitative papers, 102 quantitative papers, and six mixed-method papers), is shown in Fig. 3. During the first 20 years, very few articles on CWB appeared; between 1981 and 2002, only three articles were published. Challenges in the business environment during 1980–2003, such as a short-term financial focus, downsizing, globalization, and reengineering (Wilkie & Moore, 2003), created conditions antagonistic to CWB and long-term consumer health.

Table 2
Conceptual Articles.

Key articles	Conceptual article types	Theory	Key findings
Mick (2017)	Propositions	TME framework	The Three Marks of Existence framework—suffering, impermanence, and no-self—and its incorporation of mindfulness, equanimity, and moderation constitute a paradigm of comparatively unorthodox thinking for consumer psychology that can stimulate novel propositions, questions, and directions about consumer well-being.
Bahl et al. (2016)	Review & Application	NA	Mindful consumption is an ongoing practice of bringing attention, with acceptance, to inner and outer stimuli and their effects on the consumption process, resulting in well-being.
Crockett et al. (2011)	Exploration	NA	Immigration, culture, and ethnicity will continue to play a critical role in structuring the social relations that affect well-being
Sirgy (2008)	Overview	NA	Consumer well-being research has been divided into five ethics perspectives.
Simkins and Geiger-Oneto (2020)	Literature Review	NA	Enumerated the implications of conflicting government policies on consumer well-being.
Dorsey et al. (2020)	Proposed Framework & Model	NA	In this paper, researchers identify primary barriers to the financial well-being of healthcare consumers and propose individual opportunities within the existing healthcare structure that are likely to improve fiscal outcomes.
Fitzgerald (2017)	Literature Review	AIDA Model	Insurance coverage impacts consumer well-being and the role health and financial literacy play in achieving well-being.
Sirgy et al. (2007)	Introduction to The Special Issue	NA	Sirgy discussed the distinction between consumer satisfaction and consumer well being.
Sirgy (2021)	Commentary	NA	In this commentary, Sirgy discussed conceptualisation and the metrics of well-being from the public sector and the academic sector.
Sirgy and Lee (2006)	Redefined CWB	NA	Dimension of CWB is enhanced, another dimension is added.
Malhotra (2006)	Communications	NA	An assessment of the current state of literature on consumer well-being and quality of life and illustrates the challenges researchers in this area face.
Samli (2003)	Literature Review	NA	This article explores the far-reaching implications of

Table 2 (continued)

Key articles	Conceptual article types	Theory	Key findings
Prakitsuwan and Moschis (2021)	Propositions & Model	Life course Paradigm	the Consumer Price Index (CPI) on consumer well-being.
Ajitha et al. (2019)	Model & Propositions	Reactance Theory	With the help of life course paradigm, the effects of service consumption on older people's well-being can be improved.
Batat et al. (2019)	Conceptual Framework	NA	Task-related affective well-being mediates the link between customer participation and service outcomes.
McColl-Kennedy et al. (2017)	Conceptual Framework	Emotion Theory	This research defines various stages of epicurean eating pleasure and the determinants that lead to consumers' food well-being.
Anderson et al. (2013)	Conceptual Framework	NA	Impact of emotions on customer experiences is validated.
Bublitz et al. (2013)	Conceptual	NA	This article describes the emerging research domain of transformative service research and presents a conceptual framework that can serve as a catalyst for future research focusing on the impact of service entities on consumer and employee well-being.
Kipnis et al. (2013)	Framework & Model	NA	The authors deconstruct the automatic and deliberative influence on food decision making into cognitive and emotional information that guide food choices and can be used by consumers to advance their own food well-being.
Sirgy and Lee (2008)	Conceptual	Stakeholder Theory	Activated cultural identity, the appeal, and the brand are aligned and congruent influences the well-being or vulnerability of different cultural groups.
Suranyi-Unger Jr (1981)	Conceptual	NA	Well-being marketing can be regarded as an ethical extension of relationship marketing which has a long term impact on business.
Johns (2020)	Conceptual	NA	Economic concepts of well-being in relation to consumer behavior are clarified.
Lindridge et al. (2015)	Commentary	NA	Both social marketing and transformative service research can impact consumer well-being positively.
Batat and Addis et al. (2021)	Conceptual Framework	NA	This paper gave a clear picture of the importance of internet and its impact on the well-being of the consumer.
Dodds et al. (2021)	Conceptual Framework	NA	How food well-being is achieved through the design of healthy and pleasurable food experience.
			The contribution of advertising to consumer well-being through spirituality and fantasy.

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Table 2 (continued)

Key articles	Conceptual article types	Theory	Key findings
Wunderlich et al. (2021)	Interactive Framework	NA	Promotion of consumer–animal interaction helps in attaining the system well-being.
Lima and Belk (2022)	Conceptual Framework	NA	Human enhancement technologies has both good and bad impacts on its users. It affects well-being of consumers.
Roy et al. (2023)	Conceptual Framework	NA	The study conceptualize technology-enabled well-being.

From 2003 to 2015, the field experienced an increase in publications, with 36 articles appearing. In 2015 alone, nine articles were published, making it one of the most productive years for CWB research. This growth corresponds with Vargo and Lusch's Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), which views consumers as value co-creators (Vargo & Lusch, 2014). The proliferation of CWB research also coincided with the digital era, marked by greater consumer–firm interactions through data sharing, online engagement, and anti-consumption campaigns. These developments ushered in the transformative marketing era (Kumar, 2018), which carries great potential for customized value creation but

also presents challenges, most notably privacy risks and threats to CWB arising from digitization and social media.

The most prolific period for CWB research has been from 2016 to the present. Between 2016 and 2025, 131 articles were published, including 16 conceptual papers (e.g., Roy et al., 2023), 30 qualitative studies (e.g., Pera et al., 2020), 79 empirical papers (e.g., Anisimova et al., 2025), and six mixed-method studies (e.g., Veeck et al., 2018).

4.2. Theoretical foundations

We examined all 170 articles to ascertain the theories the authors relied on. 28 articles were purely conceptual. The conceptual articles ranged from proposition-based research (Mick, 2017) to commentaries (Sirgy, 2021). For example, Kipnis et al. (2013) suggested a CWB framework incorporating a consumer's cultural identity and brand alignment. Sirgy and Lee (2008) apply stakeholder theory to explain well-being marketing as an ethical extension of relationship marketing. Theoretical articles put forward new theories and propositions that guide future research in the domain and are often more impactful than empirical articles. All 28 theoretical articles are included in Table-2. Next, we present two important theories adopted by multiple authors in the literature.

4.2.1. Stakeholder theory

The stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) suggests that a firm is embedded in a network of relationships with customers, collaborators,

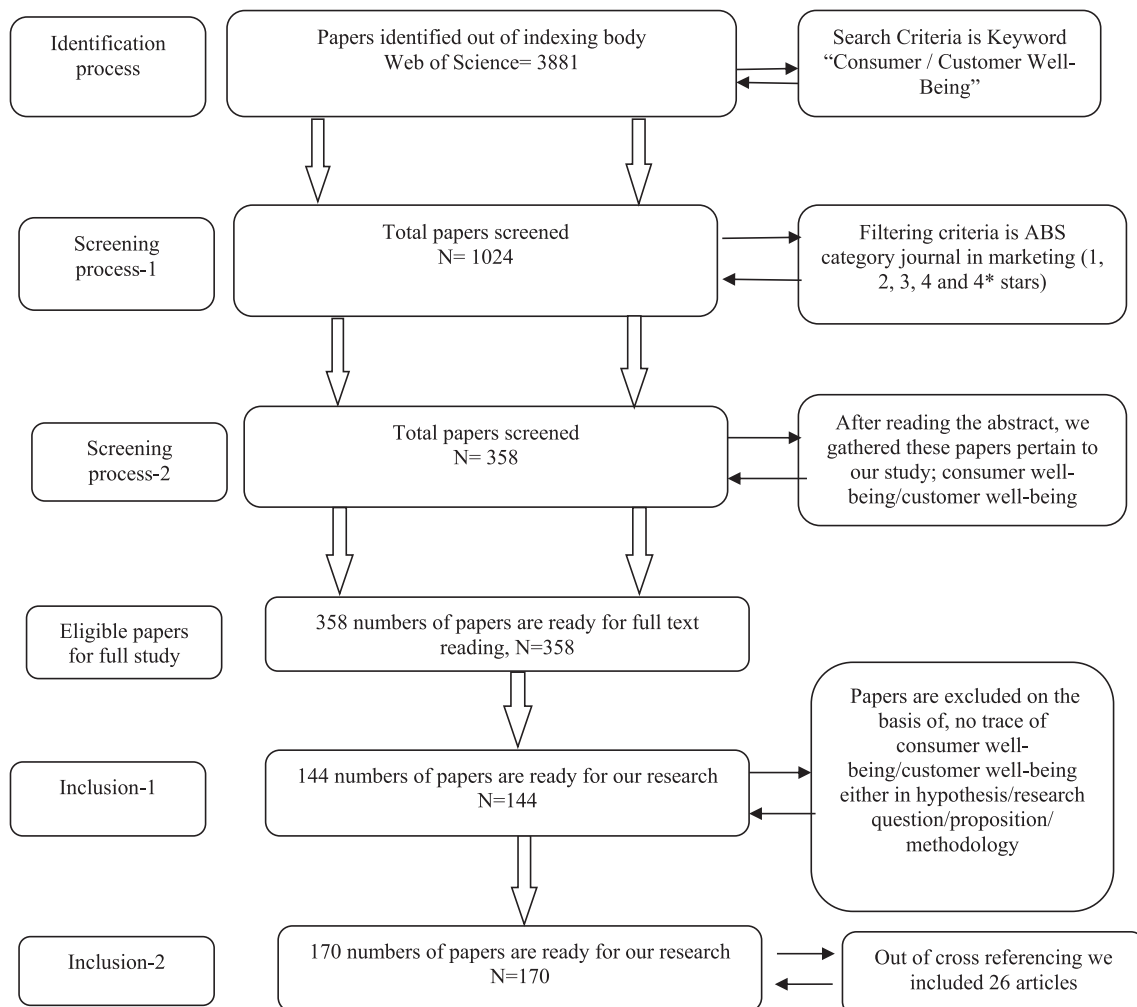


Fig. 2. Review Procedure.

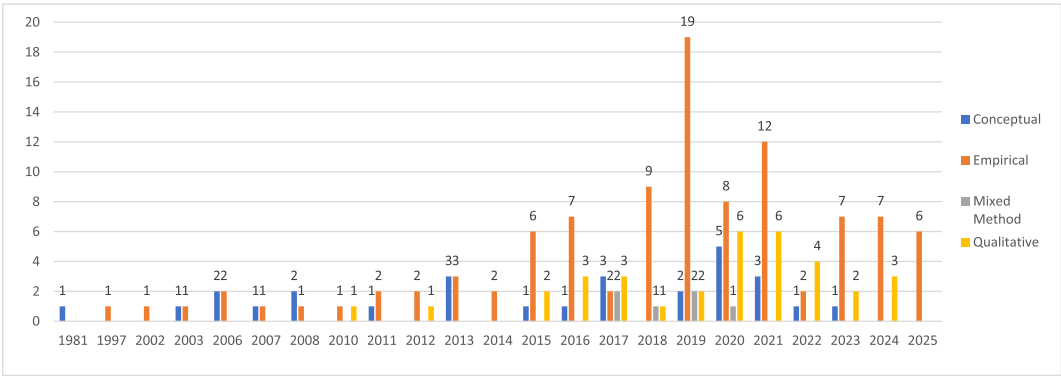


Fig. 3. Year-wise Publications.

and competitors that it forges and cements from time to time, which is of eminence to the firm. The actions of the firm impact the well-being of consumers and society (Sirgy & Lee, 2008). Much of the research on CWB involving consumer satisfaction, relationship marketing, and brand community has been guided by the Stakeholder Theory (Sirgy, 2008).

4.2.2. Broaden-and-build theory

According to the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), positive emotions broaden an individual's thought-action reservoir, fostering long-term personal resources that lead to well-being (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). The theory postulates that, though ephemeral, positive emotions can build durable psychological, social, and physical resources (Fredrickson, 2001) that can be utilized either later or in different emotional states. Thus, by broadening people's mental faculties and creating sustainable resources, positive emotions help people attain a sense of well-being (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998). In fact, Lyngdoh et al. (2018) found that personal happiness broadens and builds coping strategies of individuals and enhances their adaptive behavior. Drawing on the broaden-and-build theory, Zhong and Mitchell (2012) examine the effects of consumers' long-term subjective well-being on hedonic consumption. They found that positive emotion-driven activities mediate the relationship between CWB and hedonic consumption.

4.3. Scope of research on consumer well-being

4.3.1. Geographical and cultural research context

Fig. 4 presents the countries where data were collected for the empirical studies. CWB research has been conducted across almost every continent, including North and South America, Europe, Asia, Oceania, and Africa. Twelve empirical studies were carried out in multiple countries (e.g., Leong et al., 2015). This multicultural interest in CWB is valuable, as it helps clarify the boundaries of this research stream. However, eight empirical studies did not report the context of data collection.

4.3.2. Consumer well-being indicators: Metrics and measurements

CWB has been measured in various contexts, including macro and micro levels. However, while most conceptual articles conceptualize CWB as a macro construct, most empirical studies operationalize CWB at the micro level. An adequate measure of CWB is essential to reap the associated benefits to the firm, consumers, and society. Some of the prominent metrics used to capture CWB at the micro level are need satisfaction, shopping satisfaction, acquisition/possession satisfaction, and consumption life cycle, among others (Sirgy, 2021). Lee et al. (2002) postulate five dimensions of CWB based on consumer satisfaction with the process of consumption. These dimensions are (1) acquisition,

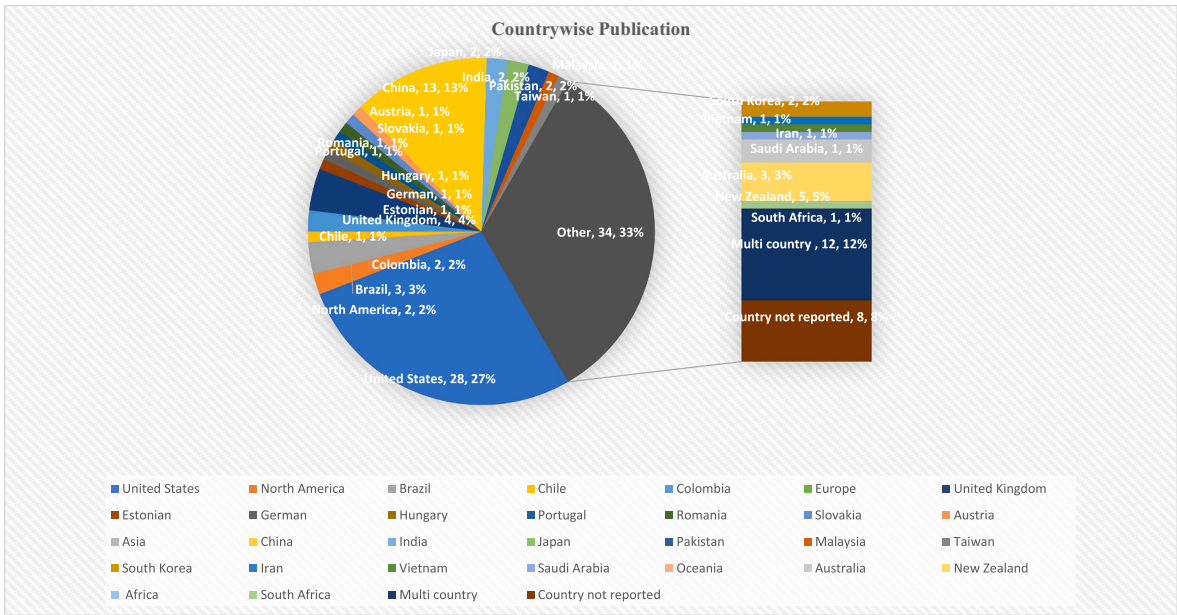


Fig. 4. Country-Wise Publication
Note: The reported frequencies are based on 170 individual studies in 102 empirical articles (we excluded conceptual and qualitative articles).

(2) possession, (3) consumption, (4) maintenance, and (5) disposition. The consumption process varies for different goods and services categories; therefore, measures of CWB based on the consumption process are dynamic. For example, consuming a chocolate bar could lead to instant satisfaction, which could be captured using a single dimension. However, the consumption of certain goods/services, such as a personal vehicle, is prolonged and thus requires maintenance and eventual disposal.

Nakano et al. (1995)’s measure of CWB captured feelings about material possessions and standard of living with two items - “How do you feel about your standard of living — the things you have, like cars, house, etc.?” and “How do you feel about the extent to which your physical needs are met?”. Another measure of CWB is “perceived value in life” which captures the well-being of the consumer for sectors such as the internet (Sirgy et al., 2006).

Investigations of CWB in the public sector combine different measures, such as the metrics used by governments, non-governmental organizations, and the business community (Sirgy, 2021). Databases and consumer reports by these agencies are important as they capture essential aspects of CWB. Measures such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) of a country predict and measure its quality of life at the macro level and could be indicative of national well-being (Ng & Diener, 2014).

4.4. Data analysis techniques

A. Data Collection Methodology Used

In case of non-conceptual articles, 91 used the survey method, six used secondary data, and five used experimental design (See Table 3). Experiments are better suited for understanding causality. The paucity of experimental studies in CWB research may be due to the difficulty of manipulating CWB. However, secondary data is well-suited for CWB research as it holds artefacts of consumer decisions. Zhong and Mitchell (2012) demonstrated the usefulness of secondary data in CWB research. The availability of big data today could be an opportunity for CWB researchers. The survey method is the most widely used method of data collection, probably because of the ease of data collection and analysis.

B. Qualitative Techniques

In qualitative studies, the thematic analysis method is used more frequently (Kemppainen & Paananen, 2024). The grounded theory approach is the second most frequently adopted method (Sithole et al., 2021), with four articles. The case study approach (Balouchi et al., 2017) is used in three studies. Additionally, other lines of inquiry were employed in fifteen different studies, such as the gradual induction

Table 3
Data Collection Methodology.

Methods	No. of papers	Exemplary Studies
Survey	91	Guevarra and Howell (2015); Zhong and Mitchell (2010); Smith (2013); Ho and Ito (2019); Hampson et al. (2018); Gong et al. (2020); Oral and Thurner (2019); Balderjahn et al. (2020); Iyer and Muncy (2016); Sirgy et al. (2006); Leong et al. (2015); Sirgy et al. (2006); Lou and Tse (2021); Lee et al. (2014); Henkens et al. (2020);Jian et al. (2019); Chou and Sawang (2015); Junaid et al. (2020); Shafiee and Es-Haghi (2017); Brunneder and Dholakia (2018); Zhao and Tsubaki (2025)
Secondary data	6	Hill and Martin (2012); Riitsalu and Murakas(2019); Bartikowski et al. (2018); Netemeyer et al. (2018); Zhong and Mitchell (2012)
Experiment	5	Banker and Khetani (2019); Troebs et al. (2018); Ezan et al. (2019); Devezer et al. (2014); Berry et al. (2018)

method (Watson & Ekici, 2017) (See Table 4).

C. Empirical Techniques

We present the methods adopted for data analysis in the quantitative studies. 38 studies applied regression analysis, while factor analysis techniques were used in 27 articles. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used in 35 studies, 21 employed Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and 6 studies used mixed methods (See Table 5).

4.5. Relationships studied: Antecedents, mediators, and moderators

Guevarra and Howell (2015) argue that the purchase and consumption of experiential products enhance consumer happiness and CWB. Even spoken language in service interactions has been shown to influence CWB positively (Scerri & Presbury, 2024). Similarly, the consumption process itself can increase CWB through life satisfaction (Zhong & Mitchell, 2010). Research on the influence of the internet on CWB, however, remains mixed. On one hand, studies have found that internet and social media use improve life satisfaction by increasing convenience and access to goods and services (Sirgy et al., 2006). On the other hand, other findings suggest that while internet use may initially improve life satisfaction and CWB, excessive social media engagement reverses this effect (Ho & Ito, 2019).

Consumer engagement with brands and products is another important contributor to CWB (Zhang et al., 2024). Junaid et al. (2019) report that consumer engagement mediates the relationship between brand love and CWB, and also partially mediates the relationship between social motives and CWB. Social motives and broader social contexts, such as societal poverty, have also been found to moderate the relationship between individual savings and CWB (Martin & Hill, 2015). Socially driven aspirations further mediate financial well-being and perceptions of income security (Chatterjee et al., 2019).

Consumers today are socially more active, particularly online, and the literature reveals mixed findings regarding the relationship between anti-consumption and CWB. Research shows that anti-consumption campaigns can enhance CWB (Oral & Thurner, 2019). Beyond anti-consumption, factors such as sustainability and consumer empowerment also contribute to CWB (Balderjahn et al., 2020). Consumer empowerment, in particular, moderates the relationship between sustainable anti-consumption and CWB. However, other studies suggest that subjective well-being can lead to brand avoidance, a form of anti-consumption (Kuanr et al., 2022).

Mindful consumption and co-creation have been shown to positively influence customer value and CWB (Brunneder & Dholakia, 2018). More recently, wearable devices have been identified as another factor that can affect CWB under certain conditions (Jain et al., 2025). Fig. 6 presents the different antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes of CWB. For clarity, the antecedents are further grouped into three categories: consumer interface, social/government interface, and technology interface (see Fig. 5).

Table 4
Different Qualitative Approaches.

Methods	No. of papers	Exemplary Studies
Grounded Theory	4	Mugel et al. (2019); Ting and Ahn (2024); Azzari et al. (2021)
Case Study	3	Dean and Indrianti (2020); Saarijärvi et al. (2016)
Thematic Approach	9	Pera et al. (2020);Neulinger et al. (2020); Kemppainen and Paananen (2024)
Any other	15	Engström and Elg (2015); Lai and Perminiene (2020); Bodunrin and Stone (2019); Harris (2017); Azzari et al. (2021); Scerri and Presbury (2024)

Table 5
Different Types of Empirical Data Analysis Techniques.

Techniques	No. of papers	Exemplary Studies
Regression Analysis	38	Guevarra and Howell (2015), Zhong and Mitchell (2010), Veeck et al. (2018), Zhong and Mitchell (2012), Oral and Thurner (2019), Suzuki et al. (2019), Barari (2023)
ANOVA/ANCOVA/MANCOVA	21	Gong et al. (2020), Hill and Martin (2012), Moschis and Ong (2011), Ganglmair-Wooliscroft and Lawson (2011), Cheung et al. (2017), Teichmann et al. (2025)
SEM	35	Nghia et al. (2020), Helm et al. (2019), Guo et al. (2013), Maggioni et al. (2019), McColl-Kennedy et al. (2017), Shafiee and Es-Haghi (2017), Junaid et al. (2020), Jian et al. (2019), Henkens et al. (2020), Peng et al. (2025)
Cluster Analysis	1	Leong et al. (2015)
Mixed	6	Veeck et al. (2018), Albrecht et al. (2017), McColl-Kennedy et al. (2017), Abrantes-Braga and Veludo-de-Oliveira (2019), H��mar-Nicolas and Ezan (2019), de Beer et al. (2020)
Factor Analysis	27	Hampson et al. (2018), Gong et al. (2020), Oral and Thurner (2019), Balderjahn et al. (2020), Prentice and Loureiro (2018), Hedhli et al. (2016), Gardiazabal et al. (2020)

5. Discussion

5.1. Research gap linking with implication

5.1.1. Research gap

The current review highlights the growing scholarly focus on CWB over the past four decades; however, several conceptual and empirical gaps remain that warrant further investigation. First, the field lacks a universally accepted definition and measurement approach. This absence has led to conceptual fragmentation, inconsistencies in operationalization, and difficulties in comparing findings across studies. Second, most research remains context-specific, relying predominantly on cross-sectional surveys, with limited longitudinal or cross-cultural validation (Qayyum et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024), thereby offering little scope for causal explanation. Third, there is limited theoretical integration across studies, which constrains efforts to capture the

multifaceted nature of CWB (Barari et al., 2025; Ting & Ahn, 2024). Fourth, research on CWB in emerging markets and culturally diverse settings remains sparse, despite evidence that cultural values moderate its drivers and outcomes (Elsharnouby & Maher, 2023; Anisimova et al. 2025). Finally, emerging dimensions—such as online shopping well-being, financial well-being, and eudaimonic well-being—remain underexplored, representing a significant oversight (Mulcahy et al., 2024).

5.1.2. Implications

Need for a Measure of CWB: Firms should incorporate validated metrics of Consumer Well-Being (CWB), encompassing both micro-level and societal dimensions, when evaluating product or service changes. Such measurement not only supports sales and customer satisfaction but also ensures strategic alignment with consumer health (Singh et al., 2023; Zhao & Tsubaki, 2025).

Ensuring Long-Term CWB: By emphasizing eudaimonic outcomes—such as self-growth, meaningful experiences, competence, and societal connectedness—alongside hedonic benefits, firms can foster stronger and more enduring customer relationships (Ting & Ahn, 2024; Teichmann et al., 2025).

Safeguarding Online Shopping Well-Being: To strengthen trust and cultivate long-term loyalty, firms must uphold transparency in information practices and protect consumer privacy. These efforts contribute directly to both financial well-being and online shopping well-being (Qayyum et al., 2023; Shen et al., 2025).

Promoting CWB-Enhancing Strategies: Strategies aimed at enhancing CWB should be context-sensitive and aligned with local and cultural norms (Elsharnouby & Maher, 2023).

Policy implications of CWB: Consumer-centric policies—Such as disclosure requirements and privacy standards—Can safeguard and enhance the well-being of vulnerable or underserved populations (Chang & Berwanger, 2024; Roy et al., 2023)

5.2. Integrative framework

Our review found that a significant reason for confusion in CWB research is the confounding of micro and macro CWB. We believe that macro CWB should be referred to as “societal well-being” while micro

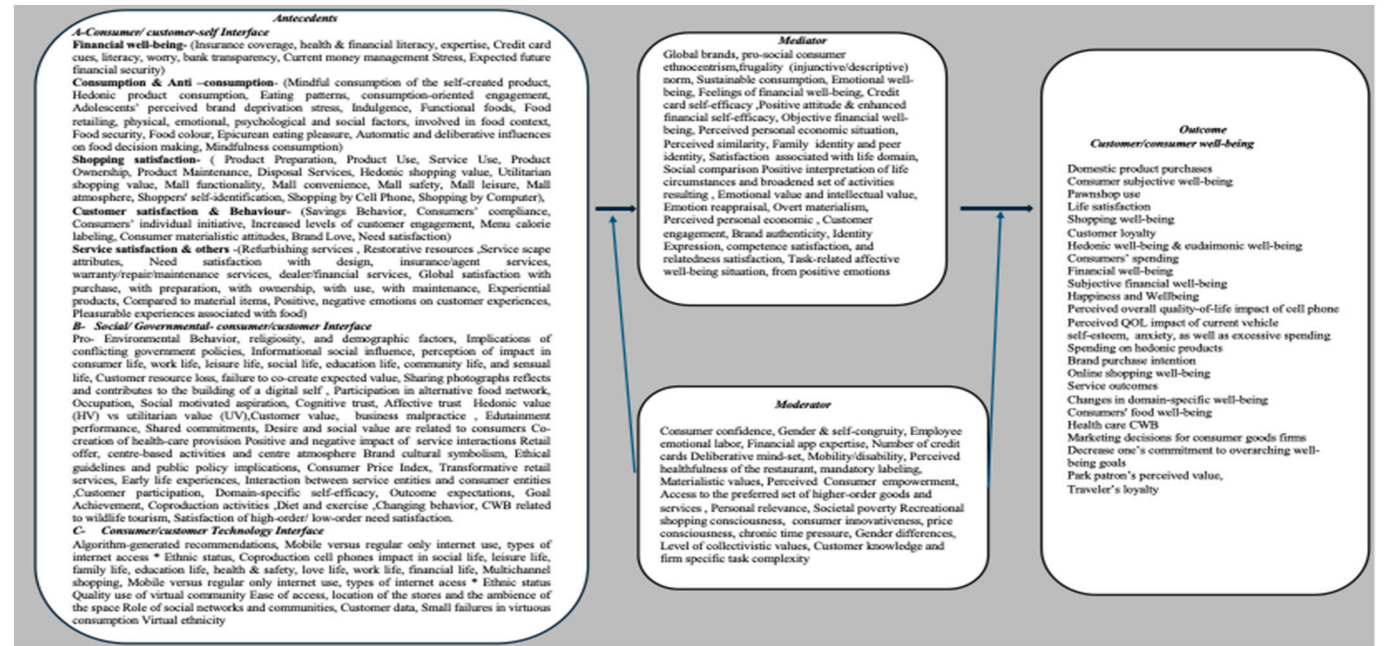


Fig. 5. Relationship Framework of CWB literature.

CWB retains its appellation. We also found that there is some overlap between the various schools of micro CWB, such as individual, hedonic, eudaimonic, and subjective well-being. We offer a simplified hierarchy of the same (see Fig. 1). This helps academicians and practitioners to get an integrative view of the fragmented CWB literature. Based on the same, we also present a bibliometric thematic representation of articles that have used the various CWB classifications (refer to Fig. 7).
Based on our review of the literature, we advance the following propositions to aid future research on CWB:

- P1. Consumer well-being is made up of (1) acquisition, (2) possession, (3) consumption, (4) maintenance, and (5) disposition satisfaction (Adapted from Lee et al., 2002).
- P2. The consumer is actively involved in their experience of CWB through the elicitation and regulation of emotions.
- P3. Consumers who are more actively involved in the consumption process experience more well-being through self-determination.
- P4. There is an inverted-U-shaped relationship between consumer choice and CWB.
- P5. Social comparison negatively/positively affects CWB when the consumer perceives themselves as worse off/better than their peers.
- P6. The utility function of CWB and overall life satisfaction is curvilinear, such that consumers experience marginal satisfaction from increases in CWB beyond a certain threshold.

Based on this, we present an integrative framework for the construct of CWB and the factors affecting it (See Fig. 6).

6. Future research directions

The review highlights the need to advance the field of CWB by prioritizing the expansion of conceptual breadth. This can be achieved by examining under-researched areas, such as health tech, multicultural marketplaces, and crisis consumption, and by expanding underexplored well-being dimensions, including eudaimonic outcomes, identity alignment, and psychological empowerment (Elsharnouby & Maher, 2023; Mulcahy et al., 2024).
Extant research in CWB relies heavily on psychological and economic theories. An exploration of theories from other domains could help enhance our understanding of well-being. Theories at the individual level related to individual differences and social psychology can also be explored. CWB is a vast field comprising multiple dimensions. These dimensions affect different domains such as financial, emotional, and mental well-being (Sirgy & Lee, 2006). Thus, it is necessary to apply multiple theories to examine CWB from multiple perspectives and thereby develop a general theory of well-being. Future research can also

explore social interactions, including social networks and social theories, and their impact on CWB. Future research may utilize the social comparison theory (Suls & Wheeler, 2013) to examine the impact of social comparison on personal and societal well-being. This would help researchers discover the antecedents and mediators of CWB and identify novel pathways that lead to CWB in this age of social media. This will help researchers understand how the different facets of well-being interact and aid in the development of a general model of CWB.
Sirgy and Lee (2006) proposed a model of CWB based on the Stakeholder Theory (Sirgy & Lee, 2008). However, this conceptual framework has not been adequately tested. The consumer is an essential stakeholder in business and consumer welfare; thus, it is reasonable to expect that it would be strategically important to all businesses. Further, the relationship marketing paradigm is believed to be the key to firms' long-term success. Future research should examine the role of CWB in relationship marketing for customer retention and long-term profitability. There is a lack of cross-cultural research in the field of CWB. Consumer purchase orientation differs across cultures (Williams & Paul, 2014), warranting the application of CWB across multiple cultures. Cross-cultural studies would shed light on whether, how, and under what conditions the purchase and consumption of goods/services lead to well-being over time. Thus, we suggest that future research should apply theories such as Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions and the model of national culture differences (Trompenaars, 1993) to uncover the interplay of variables leading to well-being at the cultural level. Future research should also consider theories of anti-consumption and prosocial behavior. What is the relationship between anti-consumption and well-being? Additionally, we turn the attention of researchers in this field toward epicurean eating pleasure (Batat et al., 2019) and eudaimonic well-being for new directions for research on consumers' relationship with food.
Though the aim of CWB is to enhance the consumer's quality of life, research on this topic is scant (e.g., Martin & Hill, 2015). Previous research has investigated the impact of customer engagement on CWB (Henkens et al., 2020). However, few have examined the role of CWB in inducing customer engagement, a significant avenue for future research. The internet and social media revolution call for research on the association between characteristics of websites and CWB. Future studies should investigate how website attributes enhance the level of satisfaction and purchase intention of consumers, which, in turn, determine online shopping well-being. The role of trust and online shopping well-being is also an untapped area for future researchers. Thus, online privacy is an area of concern today, and it will be worthwhile to see how consumers' perceptions of risk are affected by CWB and trust.
We encourage researchers to examine the impact of information transparency and privacy on the dynamics of financial well-being. Future research needs to explore the interactive effect of a variety of

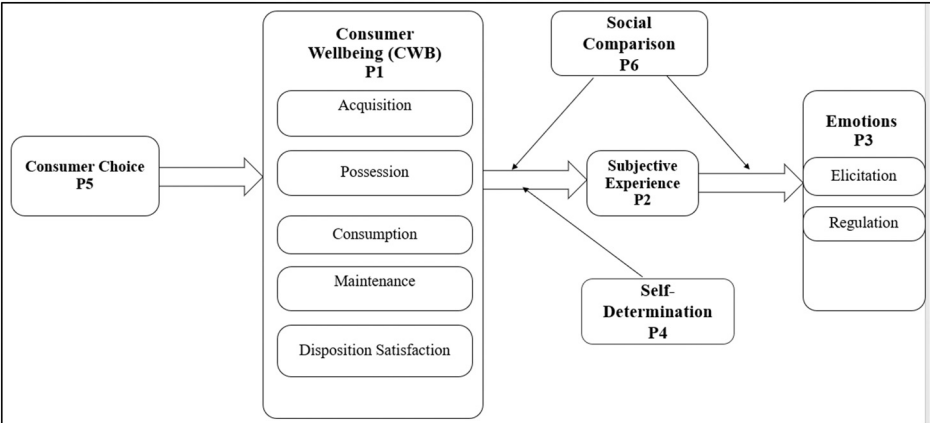


Fig. 6. Integrative Framework for Consumer Wellbeing.

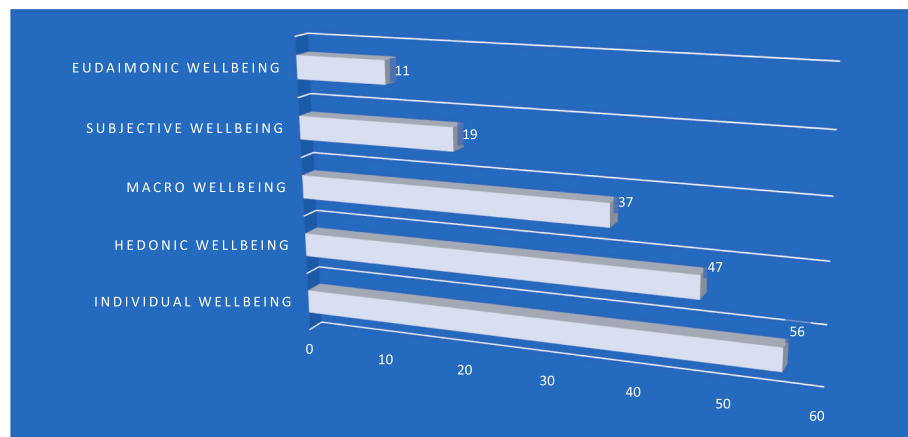


Fig. 7. Bibliometric Classification of CWB Schools of Thought.

resources provided by the stores on CWB and how resource exchange influences consumer emotional well-being. The exploration of different types of customer participation and their impact on well-being is another area for future research. Further, we suggest that researchers study the role of service delivery in enhancing CWB. The moderating effects of individual differences (e.g., consumer involvement, consumer lifestyle) and product-related differences (e.g., experiential versus material consumption; marketplace activities related to luxury versus non-luxury goods and services; and products beneficial to society versus “sin” products) should also be investigated.

Most of the empirical research on CWB relies on a positivist approach. Quantitative methods emerge as the dominant approach, while the application of qualitative and mixed methods is less common. Most of the quantitative studies have employed SEM. In contrast, fewer papers utilized the mixed method or other methods such as econometric modelling (Zhong & Mitchell, 2012) and grounded theory. However, qualitative and mixed methods techniques could help investigate the multi-dimensional nature of CWB and its relationships.

Furthermore, experimental designs help make causal inferences and exhibit high internal validity. Along with quantitative studies, future researchers should employ a variety of other research methodologies, such as longitudinal analysis, field studies, experiments, and ethnographic explorations. Future research can also adopt time series analysis to explore CWB over more extended periods.

Researchers can use advanced text mining tools to analyse shopping well-being. CWB should be evaluated using psychophysiological techniques such as eye tracking, brain waves, and emotions instead of relying on self-reported measures. The validation and improvement of the measures of novel constructs of well-being, such as eudaimonia and social well-being (Sirgy, 2021), would also advance the domain. Researchers should apply objective and subjective measures of credit card literacy (Limbu & Sato, 2019) to examine its effect on financial well-being, as this area remains relatively less explored. We suggest reliance on longitudinal data and two-wave study designs to investigate the relationship between consumption-oriented engagement and personal well-being (Ho & Ito, 2019). A multifaceted approach could be undertaken to develop a deeper understanding of the dynamics of CWB. Such variety in data and methods would enhance the perspectives of scholars and practitioners on CWB.

Methodologically, the future researcher must adopt longitudinal design, field experiments and mixed method approaches (Mende et al., 2024; Zhao & Tsubaki, 2025). Cross-cultural and comparative investigation is required to unfold cultural moderators in CWB, specifically in non-Western and emerging market contexts (Anisimova et al., 2025). The review also necessitates the integration of multiple theoretical frameworks to evaluate the complex, multi-actor and multi-domain nature of well-being (Teichmann et al., 2025; Barari, 2023).

Additionally, the lens of transformative consumer research, focusing on boundary conditions and moderators such as trust, privacy concern, materialism, and digital literacy, should be used to examine the emerging WB domains (Shen et al., 2025). Finally, the academicians must collaborate with policymakers and industrialists to assess how strategic, operational, and policy-level changes impact CWB through applying real-world intervention studies (Roy et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2024).

7. Conclusion

At the conclusion of this study, we can affirm that the defined objectives—namely, mapping the background of CWB literature, examining the use of different theories in CWB research, and identifying gaps with their implications—were successfully achieved. Our systematic literature review (SLR) contributes to the extant body of knowledge in several ways. First, by covering literature published between 1981 and 2025, it highlights diverse perspectives on well-being, including macro, individual, micro, hedonic, and eudaimonic dimensions. Second, the study outlines the publication trends in CWB and identifies credible outlets for future research. Third, it sheds light on the application of various theoretical frameworks in CWB studies. The review documents the empirical and qualitative methods used in earlier studies. It also lists the main variables linked to CWB and explains their interrelationships. In addition, it identifies key research gaps and connects them to their implications. Finally, it offers an integrative framework and suggests clear directions for future research.

This study also acknowledges certain limitations. We excluded non-CABS journals and intentionally omitted research focusing on quality of life and happiness, which, although related, fall outside the scope of CWB as defined here. Additionally, only English-language publications were considered, and our review is restricted to marketing journals. Future research can address these limitations to broaden the scope and inclusivity of CWB scholarship.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Debasis Pradhan: Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Bikash Kumar Rup:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Teidorlang Lyngdoh:** Writing – original draft, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Ellis Chefor:** Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation. **Sampa Anupurba Pahi:** Writing – original draft, Investigation, Formal analysis. **Abhisek Kuanr:** Writing – original draft, Validation, Investigation, Formal analysis.

Ethical approval and informed consent statements

There are no human participants in this article and informed consent is not required.

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Declaration of competing interest

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Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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