



Assessing the contribution of leading mainstream marketing journals to the international marketing discipline

Leading
marketing
journals

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Abstract

Purpose – Growing globalization in recent decades has been responsible for the emergence of a new stream of research focusing on international marketing. However, compared to domestic marketing knowledge, this field has received relatively less attention from mainstream marketing journals. The purpose of this paper is to report the findings of a study that assesses the contribution of leading mainstream marketing journals to the international marketing discipline.

Design/methodology/approach – A total of 508 international marketing-focused articles were identified from the top ten mainstream marketing journals during the period 1975-2004. Each article was content-analyzed in terms of six major aspects: article nature, authorship characteristics, research design, scope of research, research methodology, and thematic areas.

Findings – The paper revealed that: although there was an increase in the number of articles with an international focus over time, in most journals their share was limited; most of the articles were of an empirical nature, with an increasing trend over time; articles were mainly written by multiple authors, who were in most cases US-based; research designs of the studies reported were increasingly more formalized and causal, as well as statistical and cross-sectional; the scope of research provided a balanced coverage of country settings, product groups, and units of analyses; methodological aspects, especially sample sizes, response rates, and analytical methods, improved over time; and a wide array of thematic areas was examined, with issues pertaining to the macro-environment, marketing mix, and buyer behaviour attracting heightened attention.

Originality/value – Although many insightful attempts have been made in the past to review, assess, and consolidate extant research on international marketing, this paper focuses specifically on the contribution of top mainstream marketing journals to the international marketing field. This can assist in identifying possible gaps in the international marketing literature that have to be filled by future research on the subject. It specifically helps: to reveal the actual involvement of these influential journals as outlets for publishing research that focuses on international dimensions of marketing; to identify the characteristics of scholars publishing international marketing articles in such journals; to evaluate the methodological content of these international marketing-related articles; and to establish trends regarding the evolution of the international marketing field from the standpoint of leading mainstream journals.

Keywords International marketing, Marketing, Publications

Paper type General review

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Introduction

Effective international marketing activities are essential for the prosperity of many business organizations operating in today's highly globalized and competitive economy (Czinkota and Ronkainen, 2007). However, compared to domestic marketing knowledge, international marketing has received less attention from mainstream marketing journals (Albaum and Peterson, 1984; Douglas and Craig, 1992)[1]. Such a situation imposes serious limitations on the advancement of marketing theory and practice for three major reasons: first, many important issues in marketing (e.g. consumer buying behaviour, distribution structure, sales force management) are greatly influenced by the different socio-cultural, political-legal, and economic systems prevailing in each country; second, specific marketing problems (e.g. foreign exchange effects on prices, political risk impact on business transactions, language influences on brand policy) have their roots in the international environment; and third, the accelerating engagement of many firms in cross-border business operations, and their desire to compete effectively and efficiently on a global scale, necessitates the internationalization of marketing concepts and strategies (Wind and Perlmutter, 1977; Farley and Wind, 1980; Cavusgil, 1998; Stewart, 2002)[2].

Many insightful attempts have been made in the past to review, assess, and consolidate extant research on international marketing. These can be divided into two major groups: those evaluating developments made in the field in general (Cavusgil and Nevin, 1981; Albaum and Peterson, 1984; Li and Cavusgil, 1995), and those focusing on specific aspects of international marketing, such as country-of-origin effects (Peterson and Jolibert, 1995; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999), marketing strategy standardization/adaptation (Theodosiou and Leonidou, 2003), effect sizes on international marketing experiments (Wang and Yang, 2008), and exporting (Bilkey, 1978; Miesenböck, 1988; Aaby and Slater, 1989). Efforts have also been made to review the inventory of knowledge accumulated in individual international marketing/business journals, such as the *Journal of International Business Studies* (Inkpen and Beamish, 1994), the *Journal of International Marketing* (Schlegelmilch, 2003), and the *International Marketing Review* (Malhotra *et al.*, 2005)[3].

Despite their usefulness, these reviews suffer from several limitations: they have examined both mainstream marketing and specialized international marketing (and business) journals together, hence concealing the specific contribution made by mainstream journals to the international marketing field; they have assessed the international marketing literature at different points in time, almost all of them being outdated; they have covered relatively short periods of time, thus not allowing to establish any trends; they have only tangentially tackled issues pertaining to the characteristics of authors and manuscripts engaged in this line of academic inquiry; and they have revealed little about the methodological aspects of research on the subject.

In light of the above, the purpose of this study is a comprehensive assessment of all international marketing articles published in the leading mainstream marketing journals during the period 1975-2004[4]. In particular, our study has set out to accomplish six major objectives: first, to examine the source and nature of the articles published; second, to define the origin of the authors of these articles in terms of institutions, countries, and disciplines; third, to determine the research design adopted by empirical studies in these articles; fourth, to specify the scope of the research

conducted in these studies; fifth, to explain the specific research methodologies adopted; and sixth, to identify the major thematic areas addressed.

Our specific focus on the top mainstream marketing journals is justified on the grounds that, as a result of rigorous editorial practices, they have been publishing articles of the highest quality in the field of marketing. Moreover, their high impact factor implies that the content of the manuscripts they publish is most likely to be influential on academic and managerial thoughts. Furthermore, their long existence as reputable publication outlets means that they were among the first to host international marketing-related articles, thus making it possible to trace changes and developments in this sub-field of marketing over time. Finally, the diversity of topics tackled by these journals, coupled with their different methodological emphasis, offers an opportunity to obtain a holistic view of the contributions made to international marketing.

Such an assessment of the contribution of leading mainstream marketing journals to the international marketing discipline over a lengthy period of time is imperative, since it will identify possible gaps in the international marketing literature that have to be filled by future research on the subject. The existence of such gaps in various streams of social science research is a common phenomenon, especially if the specific stream involves too much diversity in operating modes, is highly complex and dynamic in its application, and encompasses many different countries and cultures, as in the case of international marketing (Douglas and Craig, 2005). Identifying these gaps through periodic assessments is crucial in refining, revitalizing, and even redefining the extant research environment (Jain, 2007). Thus, our study is expected to offer useful insights to academic scholars that could provide the basis for further investigating international marketing phenomena in a more systematic, thorough, and effective way.

This study contributes to the international marketing discipline in four major ways: it reveals the actual involvement of top mainstream marketing journals as outlets for publishing research that focuses on international dimensions of marketing, thus stimulating further interest in attracting more publications of this nature; it identifies the characteristics of scholars publishing international marketing articles in such journals, which will help to better understand the nature of future collaborative research efforts; it evaluates the methodological content of these articles, thus providing guidance toward capitalizing on the strengths and avoiding the pitfalls of the extant international marketing research; and establishes trends regarding the thematic evolution of the international marketing field from the standpoint of leading mainstream marketing journals, thus creating an inventory of knowledge that could be used as a reference for future research on the subject.

The remainder of the manuscript is arranged in five sections. The method employed in undertaking this study is first explained. Next, we present the findings with regard to each of the objectives of the study – namely, source and nature of articles, authorship characteristics, research designs, scope of research, investigation methods, and thematic areas covered. The following section draws conclusions about the contribution of top mainstream marketing journals to the international marketing discipline. The implications of the study are then discussed and directions for future research provided. The final section outlines the limitations of the study and suggests ways to overcome them.

Study method

The study covers all international marketing articles published in leading mainstream marketing journals during the period from 1975 to 2004. This is a sufficiently large time frame to incorporate the vast majority of such articles, as the first writings on the subject only made their appearance in the mid-1960s and amounted to only a small number up until 1975. Owing to the long time period covered, we focused on the top ten mainstream marketing journals only, identified from a study conducted by Baumgartner and Pieters (2003)[5]. In descending order of structural influence, these are the following: *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Management Science*, *Advances in Consumer Research*, *Marketing Science*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Retailing*, and *Industrial Marketing Management*. The publication characteristics of these journals are provided in Appendix 1, Table AI.

With the exception of *Marketing Science*, first circulated in 1982, all journals fully covered the period under investigation. Altogether, more than 10,000 articles were collectively published by these ten journals during the 30-year period examined, with *Management Science* having the largest share, mainly because it publishes a greater number of issues annually than the others. These articles were traced either electronically (i.e. searching the web pages of the journals) or manually (i.e. physically inspecting hard copies of the journals). An initial screening of the titles, abstracts, and keywords of each article was undertaken by two academic experts with extensive knowledge and experience in international marketing research. In total, 536 relevant articles were identified and selected for the purposes of the study. An in-depth examination of the full content of each article reduced this number to 508, as the international marketing status of some articles was not clear.

The articles collected were categorized into three decades: 1975-1984 (112 articles), 1985-1994 (174 articles), and 1995-2004 (222 articles). Notably, international marketing articles published in top mainstream marketing journals increased in number over time, reflecting a growing interest by scholars in shedding light on this important area of marketing. *Industrial Marketing Management* was the major contributing outlet (154 articles), followed by *Harvard Business Review* (88 articles), and the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (64 articles). On the low side as regards contributors were the *Journal of Retailing* (18 articles), *Management Science* (17 articles), and *Marketing Science* (11 articles). In relative terms, the share of international marketing articles as part of the total articles published in all ten journals reviewed was significantly low, averaging just 4.7 percent[6]. However, this ratio varied considerably across journals, with *Industrial Marketing Management* having the highest (11.5 percent) and *Management Science* the lowest (0.5 percent) contribution rate.

Each international marketing article was subsequently examined using content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980). This method has been widely used by other international marketing researchers in the past, providing insightful findings (Li and Cavusgil, 1995; Leonidou, 1995; Leonidou *et al.*, 1998). The content of each article was coded by two experienced researchers under the supervision of an academic with extensive knowledge of content analysis. Both coders underwent rigorous training on how to code the information contained in each article. To achieve consistency in interpreting this information, coders were supplied with a special manual incorporating operational definitions of each item that had to be analyzed. To ensure that the coding procedure

had been adequately understood, both coders and the supervisor participated in a coding exercise, where each was independently involved in coding a few randomly selected articles.

The codification of the information contained in each article was based on a specially developed coding protocol. This comprised six parts:

- (1) source and nature of articles (i.e. journal name, publication year, and nature of article);
- (2) authorship characteristics (i.e. number of authors, research institutions, country base, and academic discipline);
- (3) research design (i.e. problem crystallization, variable association, research environment, communication mode, topical scope, and time dimension);
- (4) scope of research (i.e. type of study, countries involved, reference region, nature of country, product focus, and unit of analysis);
- (5) research methodology (i.e. sampling design, data collection, sample size, response rate, data analysis, and analytical technique); and
- (6) thematic areas (i.e. general international, macro-environment, task environment, marketing research, buyer behaviour, global strategy issues, market entry strategies, marketing mix, specialized topics, and miscellaneous).

Coders worked separately to transfer the information contained in each of the 508 articles on to special coding sheets. With the completion of the coding procedure, the material transferred to the coding sheets by each coder was compared and contrasted to trace possible differences in their evaluations. Using Holsti's (1969) method, which identifies the percentage of times when both coders independently assign the same code to the same dimension, inter-coder agreement was found to range from 85 to 95 percent. Any coding discrepancies, as well as misunderstandings and/or problems that occurred during the coding process, were discussed and resolved with the assistance of the supervisor. The finalized set of coding sheets was checked by the supervisor to ensure that each was fully and appropriately completed. Finally, the data contained in the edited coding sheets were entered for computer analysis, and descriptive statistics taking the form of percentage frequencies were performed.

Study findings

This section analyzes and discusses the findings of the content analysis carried out for the international marketing articles collected. It should be emphasized that these findings are strictly confined to the bibliographic analysis of the top ten mainstream marketing journals[7]. The remainder of this section is divided into six sub-sections corresponding to each of the study's objectives, namely, source and nature of articles, authorship characteristics, research design, scope of research, method of investigation, and thematic areas. Although the analysis adopts a chronological perspective, any variations in the findings caused owing to journal idiosyncrasies are noted.

i. Source and nature of articles

Of the journals examined, the major source of international marketing articles was *Industrial Marketing Management* (30.3 percent of the total), which exhibited an increasing tendency toward publishing this kind of research over time (Table I). This was

Table I.
Share of top mainstream
marketing journals in the
publication of
international
marketing-related articles

Marketing journals	Total (<i>n</i> = 508) ^a %	Time period			Article nature		
		1975-1984 (<i>n</i> ₁ = 112) %	1985-1994 (<i>n</i> ₂ = 174) %	1995-2004 (<i>n</i> ₃ = 222) %	Conceptual (<i>n</i> ₁ = 116) %	Methodological (<i>n</i> ₂ = 15) %	Empirical (<i>n</i> ₃ = 377) %
<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	11.4	16.1	13.8	7.2	7.1	12.2	
<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	4.3	4.5	3.4	5.0	7.1	5.6	
<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	6.3	3.6	6.3	7.7	—	7.2	
<i>Harvard Business Review</i>	17.3	25.0	20.1	11.3	—	10.3	
<i>Management Science</i>	3.3	2.7	4.0	3.2	—	3.4	
<i>Advances in Consumer Research</i>	8.7	6.3	8.0	10.4	7.1	8.2	
<i>Marketing Science</i>	2.2	—	1.1	4.1	—	1.6	
<i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>	12.6	22.3	11.5	8.6	—	12.7	
<i>Journal of Retailing</i>	3.5	1.8	3.4	4.5	7.1	4.0	
<i>Industrial Marketing Management</i>	30.3	17.9	28.2	38.3	14.3	34.8	

Notes: ^aThese 508 international marketing-related articles were identified from more than 10,000 articles published in the top ten mainstream marketing journals; all calculations were made by relying exclusively on this sub-set of international marketing-related articles, rather than the total number of marketing articles

followed by *Harvard Business Review* (17.3 percent), *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (12.6 percent), and *Journal of Marketing* (11.4 percent), all of which show a diminishing trend. The share of each of the remaining journals to the total number of international marketing articles was relatively small, ranging from 2.2 percent in the case of *Marketing Science* to 8.7 percent for the *Advances in Consumer Research*.

Approximately three-quarters (74.2 percent) of the international marketing articles were empirical (i.e. referring to qualitative or quantitative data gathered via primary and/or secondary research methods), while conceptual (i.e. dealing exclusively with the formulation of ideas, concepts, or theories) and methodological (i.e. focusing on the development of special investigation methods and/or construct measurement) articles represented 23.0 and 2.8 percent of the total, respectively. A chronological analysis revealed a tendency toward publishing more empirical, as opposed to conceptual articles. The top three major contributors of empirical articles on international marketing were the *Industrial Marketing Management* (34.8 percent), *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (12.7 percent), and *Journal of Marketing* (12.2 percent). The major source of conceptual articles was *Harvard Business Review* (42.7 percent), which, however, were mainly approached from a practitioner's perspective. This was followed by *Industrial Marketing Management* (16.5 percent), *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (13.9 percent), and *Advances in Consumer Research* (10.4 percent). In the case of methodological papers, both *Marketing Science* and *Management Science* were the leaders (contributing 35.7 and 21.4 percent of the total, respectively), probably owing to their heavy quantitative orientation.

ii. Authorship characteristics

Only about a third (31.2 percent) of the articles published on international marketing were single authorships, while most (41.5 percent of the total) were written by two authors (Table II). The involvement of three authors or more in a publication occurred less frequently (27.3 percent of the total). Interestingly, the proportion of co-authored articles increased over time, reflecting the growing sophistication of work on the subject and the resulting need to share expertise with other researchers. Multiple authorships were more common in *Marketing Science* (averaging 2.6 authors per article), as opposed to the *Harvard Business Review*, where the tendency was for more single-authored articles (averaging 1.4 authors per article). In half of the cases (i.e. 49.7 percent of the total), the articles were written by researchers from the same institution, with collaboration among scholars coming from two institutions observed in more than a third (36.9 percent) of the articles.

The vast majority (78.0 percent) of articles were written by authors situated in one country, while another fifth (19.0 percent) involved two countries. The participation of researchers from more than two countries was rare (about 3.0 percent of the total), although recently there has been some increase in the number of articles by authors from multiple countries. These findings are somewhat paradoxical, because one would expect more cross-national collaboration owing to the global perspective of the issues addressed. The authors of more than two-thirds (68.8 percent) of the articles were located in North America (particularly the USA), attributable mainly to the existence of a greater number of academic/research institutions with an interest in studying international marketing phenomena. Other common locations of authors included Canada, the UK, and France. This domination of articles by authors mostly based in

Authorship characteristics	Total	Time period			Trend direction ^a
	(n = 508) %	1975-1984 (n ₁ =112) %	1985-1994 (n ₂ =174) %	1995-2004 (n ₃ =222) %	
<i>Number of authors</i>					
One	31.2	50.9	33.5	19.5	↓
Two	41.5	36.6	39.3	45.7	↑
Three or more	27.3	12.5	27.2	34.8	↑
<i>Number of institutions</i>					
One	49.7	66.4	50.9	40.5	↓
Two	36.9	25.5	36.8	42.7	↑
Three or more	13.4	8.1	12.3	16.8	↑
<i>Number of countries</i>					
One	78.0	85.5	79.4	73.1	↓
Two	19.0	11.8	18.2	23.3	↑
Three or more	3.0	2.7	2.4	3.6	∨
North America	68.8	78.1	57.6	70.7	∨
Europe	23.0	15.5	36.9	16.7	∧
Asia	6.9	5.2	5.2	10.4	↑
Other regions	1.3	1.3	0.3	2.2	∨
<i>Number of disciplines</i>					
One	63.8	72.9	62.9	59.3	↓
Two	31.9	23.5	31.1	37.3	↑
Three or more	2.4	3.6	0.7	3.4	∨
Not available	1.9	—	5.3	—	∧
<i>Type of discipline</i>					
Marketing	42.7	37.6	42.9	47.7	↑
Management	5.1	5.7	4.6	4.9	∨
International business	8.8	12.1	8.2	6.2	↓
Others	43.4	44.7	44.3	41.2	↓

Table II.
Authorship characteristics of international marketing-related articles published in top mainstream marketing journals

Note: ^a(↑) increasing, (↓) decreasing, (∧) increasing and then decreasing, (∨) decreasing and then increasing, and (↔) stable

economically advanced countries inevitably had its effect on the nature, scope, and direction of the international marketing research conducted.

The authors of approximately two-thirds (63.8 percent) of the articles specialized in a single discipline. As expected from the nature of the articles examined, this was mainly marketing and, to a lesser extent, international business or management. Some contributions from other business (e.g. accounting) and non-business (e.g. psychology) disciplines were also evident. Joint work with researchers from different academic fields was less frequent (31.9 percent of the total), although there were some signs of multi-discipline collaboration in recent years. Such collaborations were more evident in the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, and *Journal of Consumer Research*, probably owing to the significant challenges facing researchers in publishing articles in these top-tier journals.

iii. Research design

More than three-fifths (62.9 percent) of the empirical articles referred to studies of an exploratory nature (i.e. loosely structured and having less focus on

predetermined objectives). Over time, though, this type of research steadily declined in favour of more formalized research designs (i.e. well-structured and relying on hypotheses) (Table III). Such scholarly attempts to provide theoretical backing to research questions in international marketing helped significantly to augment the quality of research on the subject. In fact, some of these studies were based on paradigms advanced in other marketing/business fields, including the resource-based view, transaction cost economics, agency theory, and network theory. Descriptive studies were reported by three-fifths (60.0 percent) of the empirical articles, while causal studies were found in two-fifths (39.2 percent) of them. However, a shift was observed, with descriptive articles gradually giving way to those investigating cause-and-effect relationships between constructs.

Three-quarters (75.2 percent) of the empirical articles related to research that collected data using fieldwork procedures. Articles reporting research undertaken in laboratory conditions were infrequent (9.3 percent). Laboratory research was essentially introduced in the 1980s to study mainly consumer buying behaviour. Surveys were the most common communication mode, found in three-fifths (60.3 percent) of the articles, while the collection of data through observational methods was limited to a few articles only. Both the fieldwork- and survey-driven nature of most of the articles

Research design	Total (n = 377) %	1975-1984 (n ₁ = 78) %	Time period		Trend direction ^a
			1985-1994 (n ₂ = 127) %	1995-2004 (n ₃ = 172) %	
<i>Problem crystallization</i>					
Exploratory	62.9	89.6	65.9	48.8	↓
Formalized	36.8	10.4	34.1	50.6	↑
Others	0.3	–	–	0.6	↑
<i>Variable association</i>					
Descriptive	60.0	75.3	63.5	50.6	↓
Causal	39.2	23.4	36.5	48.3	↑
Others	0.8	1.3	–	1.2	∨
<i>Research environment</i>					
Field	75.2	81.8	65.1	79.7	∨
Laboratory	9.3	–	13.5	10.5	∧
Others	11.5	18.2	21.4	9.9	∧
<i>Communication mode</i>					
Survey	60.3	54.5	54.0	67.4	∨
Observational	34.7	39.0	42.9	26.7	∧
Others	5.1	6.5	3.2	5.8	∨
<i>Topical scope</i>					
Statistical study	73.3	70.1	65.9	80.2	∨
Case study	24.8	28.6	32.5	17.4	∧
Others	1.9	1.3	1.6	2.3	↑
<i>Time dimension</i>					
Cross-sectional	78.1	74.0	71.4	84.9	∨
Longitudinal	12.0	14.3	13.5	9.9	↓
Others	9.9	11.7	15.1	5.2	∧

Note: ^a(↑) increasing, (↓) decreasing, (∧) increasing and then decreasing, (∨) decreasing and then increasing, and (↔) stable

Table III.
Research design of
international
marketing-related articles
published in top
mainstream marketing
journals

reviewed clearly indicates a desire to obtain a more realistic, “hands-on” understanding of international marketing phenomena through the study of organizations and individuals under pragmatic rather than simulated market conditions.

Most (73.3 percent) of the empirical articles had a predominantly statistical format, while the use of case study analysis (which was mostly found in *Harvard Business Review* articles) occurred less frequently (24.8 percent of the total). In fact, the last decade witnessed a significant growth in statistically driven, as opposed to case study-oriented, articles. This clearly demonstrates a tendency among researchers publishing in marketing journals toward studying international marketing issues in greater breadth rather than depth. About four-fifths (78.1 percent) of the empirical articles contained studies that examined cross-sectional data. Longitudinal research was relatively rare (found in 12.0 percent of the articles), usually taking the form of identifying changes in results at different points in time. This disproportional emphasis on cross-sectional, as opposed to longitudinal, research designs can largely be ascribed to time, financial, and other constraints encountered by international marketing researchers.

iv. Scope of research

About two-fifths (39.5 percent) of the empirical articles referred to studies that took place in a single-country setting, while the remainder were either of a cross-cultural (28.1 percent) or comparative (45.6 percent) nature (Table IV). Interestingly, multi-country studies were increasingly used over time, the key underpinning objective being to capture the effect of contextual factors influencing international marketing practices. Approximately a third (32.1 percent) of the articles covered four or more countries, while another quarter (26.5 percent) focused on two to three countries.

More than half (56.8 percent) of the empirical articles dealt with international marketing issues referring to North America (particularly the USA), while research conducted in Europe and Asia provided the basis for the majority of the remaining articles. To some extent this is a reflection of the authors' location, where, as mentioned earlier, the USA played a dominant role. Three-quarters (74.8 percent) of the articles focused on developed countries (particularly the USA, the UK, and Canada), while another quarter (24.4 percent) concentrated on newly industrialized nations (such as South Korea, Taiwan, and China). Notably, there was an upward trend in investigating international marketing issues for either group of countries over time. Developing countries attracted the attention of 30.2 percent of the articles, although they dropped from 38.5 percent in the first decade to 21.5 percent in the last. Socialist countries formed another group which was mainly studied by articles published before their transformation into free market economies in the early 1990s.

Industrial goods were the focus of sizable research on the subject (58.6 percent of the total), with the share of empirical articles dealing with this product category being higher in the 1985-2004 period. Such a focus reflects the heavy engagement of firms producing industrial goods in international operations, which might have occurred because most studies were conducted in developed countries. To some extent this could also be attributed to the fact that *Industrial Marketing Management*, a journal specializing in research on industrial and high-tech products, contributed a higher percentage of international marketing articles compared to the other mainstream marketing journals. Concentration on consumer products was observed in more than two-fifths (44.3 percent) of the empirical articles, and focused on products ranging from

Scope of research	Total	1975-1984	Time period		Trend direction ^a
	(n = 377) %	(n ₁ = 78) %	1985-1994 (n ₂ = 127) %	1995-2004 (n ₃ = 172) %	
<i>Type of study</i>					
Individual country	39.5	34.6	43.3	38.9	∧
Cross-cultural	28.1	24.4	23.6	33.1	∨
Comparative	45.6	43.6	43.3	48.3	∨
Others	7.2	11.5	4.7	7.0	∨
Not available	4.8	2.6	7.1	4.1	∧
<i>Countries involved</i>					
One	40.6	37.2	41.7	41.3	∧
Two	18.8	17.9	18.1	19.8	↑
Three	7.7	3.8	7.1	9.9	↑
Four or more	32.1	38.5	32.3	29.0	↓
Not available	0.8	2.6	0.8	–	↓
<i>Reference region</i>					
North America	56.8	64.1	59.8	51.2	↓
Europe	40.8	53.8	35.4	38.9	∨
Asia	41.6	20.5	46.4	47.7	↑
Others	20.9	29.5	16.5	20.3	∨
Not available	5.6	3.8	8.7	4.1	∧
<i>Nature of country</i>					
Developed	74.8	70.5	70.1	80.2	∨
Newly industrialized	24.4	9.0	25.2	32.6	↑
Developing	30.2	38.5	37.0	21.5	↓
Others	13.0	16.7	15.7	9.3	↓
<i>Product focus</i>					
Consumer	44.3	56.4	37.0	44.2	∨
Industrial	58.6	53.8	62.2	58.1	∧
Services	10.1	9.0	7.1	12.8	∨
Not available	2.7	1.3	3.9	2.3	∧
<i>Unit of analysis</i>					
Multinational/subsidiary	13.3	11.5	17.3	11.0	∧
Exporter	6.2	6.5	5.5	6.9	∨
Distributor/agent	5.0	5.1	7.1	3.4	∧
Industrial buyer	2.6	1.3	3.9	2.3	∧
Consumer	4.2	7.6	4.7	2.3	↓
Others	37.4	42.3	31.4	40.1	∨
Not available	39.0	32.0	43.3	38.9	∧

Note: ^a(↑) increasing, (↓) decreasing, (∧) increasing and then decreasing, (∨) decreasing and then increasing, and (↔) stable

Table IV.
Scope of research of
international
marketing-related articles
published in top
mainstream marketing
journals

foodstuffs and beverages to clothing and electrical appliances. Services received the least attention, reported in only a tenth (10.1 percent) of the articles, owing to their idiosyncratic international marketing patterns. Recently, though, there has been a resurgence of interest in this category, probably as a result of the increasing internationalization of many services industries.

Two-fifths (39.0 percent) of the empirical articles did not disclose the unit of analysis used. Of the remainder, multinational corporations and/or their subsidiaries were

the most frequently examined (mentioned in 13.3 percent of the articles), followed by exporting firms (6.2 percent of the total). Distributors/agents provided the unit of analysis in 5.0 percent of the empirical articles, consumer buyers in 4.2 percent, while industrial buyers were the least examined (2.6 percent). The remaining articles used a variety of other units of analysis, for example, students, researchers, and advertisements.

v. Methods of investigation

With regard to sampling methods, about three-tenths (29.2 percent) of the empirical articles provided no information (Table V). Of the remainder, non-probability designs, such as convenience and judgmental, were reported by more than two-fifths (44.8 percent) of the articles. In fact, this sampling design was extensively used throughout the whole investigation period, which is surprising considering the limitations inherent in such research. The adoption of probability samples was reported less frequently, by about a quarter (26.0 percent) of the articles, but experienced increasing use over time. Mail questionnaires provided the main data collection method employed (reported in 30.8 percent of the articles), recording increasing use, particularly during the past decade. These were followed by personal interviews (18.6 percent of the total), and to a much lesser extent (1.9 percent of the total) by telephone interviews.

More than half (53.9 percent) of the empirical articles reported studies with sample sizes of < 250 units. About a quarter (23.6 percent) of the articles used samples ranging from 250 to 999 units, experiencing an upward trend over time. Only a small proportion (6.6 percent) employed samples exceeding the 1,000 mark. Larger samples were more often found in studies using mail surveys, while smaller samples were associated with personal interview methods. More than three-fifths (62.6 percent) of the articles did not report the response rates obtained from their studies, while of the remaining articles, those providing this information usually surpassed 40 percent.

In terms of the specific analytical tools used, a third (34.2 percent) of the empirical articles reported univariate (e.g. χ^2) and bivariate (e.g. *t*-test) analysis. Studies included in more than a quarter (27.1 percent) of the articles used multivariate statistical techniques, usually taking the form of multivariate regression analysis, multiple discriminant analysis, and MANOVA. Descriptive analysis was the least employed (16.2 percent of the articles), this being more evident in studies conducted during the early stages of research into international marketing.

vi. Thematic areas

As mentioned in the Study Method section, the content of the international marketing articles reviewed was categorized into 30 thematic areas, which fell into ten broad groups: general international (2), macro-environment (3), task environment (3), marketing research (2), buyer behaviour (3), global strategy issues (2), market entry strategies (3), marketing mix (7), specialized issues (4), and miscellaneous (1) (Table VI). These areas were mainly extracted from categorizations of international marketing knowledge proposed in the past (Albaum and Peterson, 1984; Li and Cavusgil, 1995; Schlegelmilch, 2003; Malhotra *et al.*, 2005). The contributions made to each of these thematic areas by mainstream marketing journals are discussed in the following sections.

Study methodology	Total (<i>n</i> = 377) %	1975-1984 (<i>n</i> ₁ = 78) %	Time period 1985-1994 (<i>n</i> ₂ = 127) %	1995-2004 (<i>n</i> ₃ = 172) %	Trend direction ^a
<i>Sampling design</i>					
Probability	26.0	19.2	23.6	30.8	↑
Non-probability	44.8	43.6	46.5	44.2	∧
Not available	29.2	37.2	29.9	25.0	↓
<i>Data collection</i>					
Mail	30.8	25.6	25.2	37.2	∨
Personal	18.6	23.1	13.4	20.3	∨
Telephone	1.9	2.6	3.1	0.6	∧
Others	33.1	25.6	33.1	36.6	↑
Not available	6.4	9.0	10.2	2.3	∧
<i>Sample size</i>					
99 or less	26.8	29.5	29.1	23.8	↓
100-249	27.1	24.4	27.6	27.9	↑
250-499	14.1	9.9	13.4	16.9	↑
500-999	9.5	7.7	7.1	12.2	∨
1,000 or more	6.6	7.7	0.8	10.5	∨
Not available	15.9	21.8	22.0	8.7	∧
<i>Response rate</i>					
19% or less	5.8	1.3	4.7	8.7	↑
20-29%	6.1	1.3	5.5	8.7	↑
30-39%	5.8	—	3.1	10.5	↑
40% or more	19.6	20.5	19.7	19.2	↓
Not available	62.6	76.9	66.9	52.9	↓
<i>Analytical technique</i>					
Descriptive	16.2	34.6	13.4	9.9	↓
Uni-/bivariate	34.2	25.6	36.2	36.6	↑
Multivariate	27.1	19.2	19.7	36.0	↑
Others	4.8	5.1	5.5	4.1	∧
Not available	19.4	16.7	36.0	15.7	∧

Note: ^a(↑) increasing, (↓) decreasing, (∧) increasing and then decreasing, (∨) decreasing and then increasing, and (↔) stable

Table V.
Study methodology of
international
marketing-related articles
published in top
mainstream marketing
journals

General international. This category includes two research topics: international trade analysis and the internationalization process. Of these, the former was explored in more than a tenth (11.2 percent) of the articles, especially during the first two decades, and covered various areas including: cross-cultural negotiations, counter-trade opportunities (especially in less-developed countries), as well as the business climate in eastern Europe, Japan, and China. Despite the heightened attention paid to the firm's internationalization process in the wider international business literature, research on this topic was extremely low (only 1.0 percent of the articles). Here, the emphasis was mainly on: stages of internationalization, inward/outward operations, and the global engagement of multinational enterprises.

Macro-environment. Macro-environmental factors comprised one of the most highly investigated areas, as demonstrated by the large share of articles focusing on each of the three dimensions examined. Socio-cultural environment attracted most

Thematic areas	Total (n = 508) %	1975-1984 (n ₁ = 112) %	Time period		Trend direction ^a
			1985-1994 (n ₂ = 174) %	1995-2004 (n ₃ = 222) %	
<i>General international</i>					
International trade analysis	11.2	14.3	14.3	7.2	↓
Internationalization process	1.0	–	–	2.2	↑
<i>Macro-environment</i>					
Socio-cultural	37.2	28.6	34.5	43.7	↑
Economic	19.1	23.2	25.3	12.2	∧
Political-legal	16.5	21.4	21.3	9.9	↓
<i>Task environment</i>					
Market characteristics	6.5	8.9	6.9	4.9	↓
Competitors' analysis	5.5	5.4	5.7	5.4	↔
Marketing infrastructure	3.5	6.2	4.0	1.8	↓
<i>Marketing research</i>					
Methodological issues	4.1	7.1	3.4	3.1	↓
Defining market potential	1.8	4.4	2.3	–	↓
<i>Buyer behaviour</i>					
Consumer buyer behaviour	28.7	33.9	25.3	28.8	∨
Industrial buyer behaviour	18.3	18.7	19.5	17.1	∧
Country-of-origin effects	7.1	6.3	10.3	4.9	∧
<i>Global strategy issues</i>					
Global strategy formulation	13.8	11.6	14.4	14.4	↔
Market segmentation/targeting	4.1	5.3	4.0	3.6	↓
<i>Market entry strategies</i>					
Foreign manufacturing	15.6	18.8	17.2	12.6	↓
Exporting	13.0	14.3	13.2	12.2	↓
Importing	3.7	6.2	2.9	3.1	∨
<i>Marketing mix</i>					
Marketing strategy	26.6	20.5	22.4	32.9	↑
Product/brand policy	33.3	30.3	32.2	35.6	↑
Pricing decisions	16.9	23.2	20.1	11.3	↓
Distribution channels	15.9	13.4	16.7	16.7	↔
Physical distribution	4.5	6.2	5.2	3.1	↓
Advertising and promotion	14.2	21.4	16.7	8.6	↓
Selling and sales management	6.9	6.2	4.0	9.5	∨
<i>Specialized issues</i>					
Planning and organization	7.1	5.3	5.2	9.4	∨
Marketing ethics	1.8	1.8	1.1	2.2	∨
IT and internet	1.4	0.9	0.6	2.2	∨
Relationship marketing	1.8	–	–	4.1	↑
<i>Miscellaneous</i>					
	4.1	0.9	5.2	5.0	↔

Table VI.
Thematic areas of
international
marketing-related articles
published in top
mainstream marketing
journals

Note: ^a(↑) increasing, (↓) decreasing, (∧) increasing and then decreasing, (∨) decreasing and then increasing, and (↔) stable, IT, information technology

of the attention (37.2 percent of the articles), with some of the major issues traced being: the influence of culture on building cross-border relationships, cultural effects on consumer/shopping behaviour, and the role of cultural factors on product or advertising decisions. The economic environment was the focus of about a fifth (19.1 percent) of the articles, which mainly addressed issues such as: the impact of foreign economic

conditions on marketing infrastructure, external economic influences on international marketing strategy formulation, and the role of economic factors in shaping consumer behaviour in foreign markets. The political-legal environment was also widely explored (16.5 percent), with special emphasis on: foreign government intervention/trade protectionism, political instability/risk in host countries, and certain unique issues associated with international trade, including bribery, counterfeiting, and anti-trust legislation. Notably, while interest in the socio-cultural environment recorded a sharp increase during the period examined, research on either the economic or political-legal environment experienced a significant fall during the past decade.

Task environment. As opposed to the macro-environment, which attracted a lot of research attention by marketing scholars, the task environment remained relatively unexplored. Of the three dimensions comprising this environment, market characteristics, such as foreign market structure, degree of market maturity/sophistication, and individualistic versus collectivist marketplaces, were the most widely researched (6.5 percent of the articles). However, interest in this thematic area declined over time. Issues relating to competitors' analysis were examined by 5.5 percent of the articles, with particular attention given to: achievement of competitive advantage in international markets, characteristics of competitors in overseas markets, and competitive intensity and response. Marketing infrastructure was the third aspect examined (mentioned in 3.5 percent of the articles), dealing primarily with: preconditions required for new product development, characteristics of the foreign market retailing system, and host country's infrastructural effects on marketing program standardization.

Marketing research. The two topics pertaining to marketing research were among the most neglected by researchers in the field, with interest in them diminishing over time. The first topic referred to methodological issues in international marketing (reported in 4.1 percent of the articles), with the focus on developing cross-cultural constructs, assessing the reliability/validity of measurement scales, and methods to improve response rates. Defining market potential in international marketing was the second area, found in 1.8 percent of the articles. Here, the emphasis was on: developing scales to identify trade areas in international markets, the use of shift share analysis to evaluate market opportunities abroad, and methods for estimating foreign market size.

Buyer behaviour. The issues contained in this category were also widely researched in the journals examined. This was particularly true of consumer buyer behaviour, which was ranked third among all topical areas examined in terms of frequency of appearance (28.7 percent). Some of the topics addressed here were: cross-cultural comparisons of buyer behaviour, differences in consumption patterns across countries, and cultural value influences on consumer decision making. International dimensions of industrial buyer behaviour were investigated to a lesser extent (18.3 percent of the articles), and the interest was mainly on global sourcing strategies (e.g. outsourcing) of industrial firms, international buying decisions, and foreign supplier selection criteria. Finally, country-of-origin effects, although widely studied in international marketing/business journals, received less attention in mainstream marketing journals (reported in only 7.1 percent). Some of the country-of-origin issues discussed were antecedents of forming country-of-origin evaluations, comparisons of goods made in developed versus developing countries, and consumer ethnocentrism.

Global strategy issues. Two topical areas are present in this category. The first, as the focus of 13.8 percent of the articles, centres on global strategy formulation issues, such as: the link between global strategy and performance, strategic comparisons of multinational firms originating from different countries, and cross-border strategic alliances/partnerships. The second area, market segmentation/targeting, was both less popular and its presence declined over time. Major topics addressed were: criteria for foreign market segmentation, evaluation of global market segment potential, and positioning in global target segments.

Market entry strategies. The way firms enter foreign markets has been a major challenge in international market operations. As a result, this was sufficiently studied in the marketing journals reviewed, although recent interest in this topic has dropped somewhat. Foreign manufacturing was the focus of 15.6 percent of the articles, the major themes addressed being: licensing, joint ventures, direct investment in foreign markets, international technology transfer/acquisition, and incentives for attracting manufacturing investments abroad. Exporting was also relatively popular (found in 13 percent of the articles), particularly focusing on managerial/organizational determinants of export attitude and behaviour, selecting and managing overseas distribution channels, and drivers of export performance. As opposed to exporting, importing received limited attention (3.7 percent of the articles), the emphasis being primarily on import stimuli/problems, parallel imports (or grey markets), and importing practices carried out in specific countries[8].

Marketing strategy. Strategic marketing aspects accounted for the lion's share of the articles examined, being reported in more than a quarter (26.6 percent) and receiving increasing attention during the period under investigation. The focal points were whether to standardize or adapt marketing strategy in foreign markets, the antecedents of marketing strategy, and the impact of marketing strategy on the firm's performance. The remaining topics in this category referred to the components of the marketing mix, with product/brand policy studied by a third (33.3 percent) of the articles. Some of the key issues examined were product adaptation, global branding, new product development/diffusion, and service quality adjustments across countries. Issues pertaining to pricing decisions, such as price perceptions/differences across countries, price negotiations, foreign exchange effects on pricing, and the use of counter-trade as a means to overcome problems with hard currency, were reported by 16.9 percent of the articles, but lost their popularity over time. Distribution channels were also relatively widely researched (15.9 percent of the articles), with emphasis placed on channel coordination/integration, behavioural aspects of distribution channels, and distribution practices in foreign markets. In contrast, physical distribution received limited attention (4.5 percent of the articles), with some of the issues addressed centring on product delivery, freight forwarding, and transportation problems in international markets. Advertising and promotion issues were present in 14.2 percent of the articles, the most popular topics being media habits in different countries, attitudes toward foreign advertisements, coordination of international advertising, and trade shows/exhibitions. Finally, selling and sales management (6.9 percent of the articles) was particularly focused on selling practices across countries, managing effectively the international sales force, and developing special sales negotiation skills.

Specialized issues. Of the topics contained in this category, issues relating to planning and organization were the most widely researched (reported in 7.1 percent of

the articles). Here, the interest was in goal-setting in a cross-cultural context, variations in planning systems adopted in different countries, and international coordination of cross-functional teams. The remaining three topics were examined by less than 2 percent of the articles each, and focused on the following issues: social responsibility, bribery, and multinational firms' ethical standards in developing countries for marketing ethics; e-commerce, cultural effects on web site design, and international advantages in using the internet for information technology and the internet; and working relationship differences across countries, the formation of global strategic partnerships, and relationship strategy design for relationship marketing.

Miscellaneous. This final category included a number of very diverse issues, such as forecasting foreign demand, budgeting behaviour across countries, and managing international marketing teams, all of which received scant attention.

Conclusions

Our study has provided a systematic, comprehensive, and updated assessment of international marketing knowledge published in the top mainstream marketing journals over a 30-year period. In this context, it has helped to uncover the positioning of these journals with respect to their role in advancing international marketing research. The findings offer useful insights for international marketing scholars interested in understanding the evolution of international marketing research over time, by particularly focusing on manuscripts published in the most influential journals in the field of marketing. They also provide hints as to the trends established with regard to conceptual, methodological, and empirical issues in the international marketing area, as well as offering a valuable inventory of knowledge that could be used as a reference for future research on the subject.

A central conclusion to be drawn from the previous analysis of international marketing articles published in leading mainstream marketing journals is their critically conducive role in gradually pushing this line of inquiry from an identification and exploration stage toward a more mature and advanced phase of development. The high standards set by these journals regarding submitted manuscripts have been responsible for upgrading and enabling the gradual expansion of the international marketing field over time. In addition, although contributions to the knowledge of a discipline are essentially made by scholars through their manuscripts, journals themselves (especially those with an international reputation) play a crucial role in refining and augmenting research work through their rigorous reviewing mechanisms.

In the absence of publication outlets focusing solely on international marketing issues, mainstream marketing journals were the first to stimulate an interest in and generate initial knowledge on the subject. Subsequently, they have disseminated many influential manuscripts written by authorities in the international marketing field. Moreover, they have helped to introduce useful ideas, theories, and techniques developed within the long-existing and more advanced field of domestic marketing, to the newly emerging area of international marketing. Furthermore, the varying scope of these journals has contributed toward examining the subject from different insightful angles. Finally, their quality has been crucial in safeguarding the application of high standards in the study of international marketing phenomena.

Despite the above, although there was a significant increase in the number of these articles over time, their share to the total number of articles published was, with the

exception of a few journals, relatively low. Hence, top mainstream marketing journals need to formulate editorial policies that will encourage scholars to submit more papers with an international marketing focus, as well as request incorporating an international perspective in “domestically oriented” marketing articles whenever this is feasible. To this end, the inclusion in their editorial boards of scholars with a research interest and expertise in international marketing would prove beneficial. Launching special guest issues on key international marketing topics could also enhance dissemination of knowledge on the subject through these journals. Announcing open calls for papers with a purely international marketing focus could further attract the attention of scholars in the field and lead them to submit their contributions to mainstream journals[9].

Implications and directions

Several implications can be extracted from the findings of this study. First, the fact that a high proportion of the international marketing articles appearing in these journals was of an empirical nature (with an upward trend over time) indicates that the discipline has gradually improved its scientific status (Leong, 1985). Indeed, this trend has been responsible for injecting into this new field of knowledge approaches and techniques advanced within the wider marketing (and business) domain. However, their introduction was rarely part of a systematically developed research agenda, which is crucial for advancing this field further in the future. Conceptual studies have also played a critical role through the construction of conceptual models, the suggestion of theoretical paradigms, and the development of research propositions. Again, what is needed here is the development of a more systematic framework that will add more building blocks to the subject. Pure methodological articles were the most neglected, despite the fact that the evolving character of international marketing research requires focal attention on the development of new measurement tools and techniques.

The growing tendency for multiple authorships in international marketing articles is also healthy, because such joint collaborations create synergies for better researching the subject. However, the fact that the authors of these articles were primarily based in North America has been responsible for a tendency toward approaching international marketing phenomena mainly from an American perspective. To achieve an all-round, cross-cultural understanding of the subject, however, it is important to encourage more collaboration among researchers from different parts of the world. In addition, the observed over-dependence on authors from single disciplines inhibits cross-fertilization of concepts, theories, and ideas, as well as prevents paradigmatic pluralism in studying international marketing issues. Therefore, future research should be conducted by more multidisciplinary initiatives, with some potential disciplines being industrial organization, strategic management, and cultural psychology.

Research designs of international marketing articles have become increasingly more programmatic, systematic, and sophisticated, as indicated by the growing adoption of a formalized (as opposed to exploratory) and causal (as opposed to descriptive) type of research. Such efforts are considered vital in gradually changing the “atheoretic” status of the international marketing discipline into one that is more theoretically anchored, and for this reason should be further encouraged. An issue that warrants particular attention is the heavy reliance on studies of a statistical and cross-sectional nature. Although this situation may also be prevalent in other marketing fields (characterized by a greater level of maturity), the dynamic, complex, and unique nature of international

marketing requires additional backing with in-depth and tracking knowledge deriving from case studies and longitudinal research, respectively.

The scope of the international marketing research published in mainstream marketing journals could be described overall as balanced. For instance, there was adequate coverage of single country versus multi-country settings, economies in a different stage of development, industrial versus consumer goods, and a wide array of units of analyses (ranging from multinationals and exporting firms to industrial and consumer buyers). Nevertheless, its scope could be further expanded by, for example, conducting research in other parts of the world, such as the emerging markets of Eastern Europe (e.g. Russia), Central Asia (e.g. India), and South America (e.g. Brazil). In light of the service-oriented character of most of today's advanced economies, it would also be useful to investigate more extensively the international marketing aspects of services.

Methodologically, the international marketing articles examined could be described as adequate and, in fact, experiencing systematic improvement over time. This is evident from the relatively large sample sizes employed, the high response rates achieved, and the powerful quantitative analysis used. Obviously, all these have helped toward obtaining representative, credible, and insightful findings on international marketing issues. However, there is still room to improve research methodologies through more rigorous construct development and assessment, adjustment of measurement scales in different countries, and greater application of advanced statistical methods (e.g. structural equation modelling) (for useful methodological guidelines for conducting international marketing research, see Craig and Douglas (2005) and Douglas and Craig (2006)).

The articles examined covered a wide variety of international marketing topics, with some areas researched given more emphasis than others. Three broad areas attracted most attention, namely, macro-environment (particularly socio-cultural aspects), marketing mix (particularly marketing strategy and product/brand policy), and buyer behaviour (particularly consumer behaviour). Despite differences in the developmental pattern of each topical area, some showed a steady upward trend over time. For example, socio-cultural issues seem also to have a crucial role to play in future inquiry, particularly as a result of greater market globalization and the need to operate in culturally distant and diverse countries. Strategic marketing aspects are likely to maintain their important status due to intensifying competition and the need to achieve superior performance. Another interesting area, which has been relatively neglected in the past, is relationship marketing, especially in light of the growing understanding that this is the key to entering and obtaining a foothold in foreign markets. With the significant advances in information technology, and the use of the internet as a new model for conducting transactions with foreign buyers, there is a need to channel more research toward online international marketing. Last, but not least, it would be useful to shed more light on methodological aspects of marketing in a global setting, since many of the existing marketing research methods need to be adjusted when crossing national borders. An overview of potential avenues for further research in each of the thematic areas examined, as these were proposed by the authors of the most recent articles included in this study, is presented in Table VII.

Future work in international marketing should take previous guidelines into consideration, in order to generate fresh input for theoretical advancement and practice development. This is more imperative nowadays due to the rapid globalization,

<i>General international</i>	
International trade analysis	Promoting imports from developing countries Demand elasticity analysis – Analysis of trade among regional economic groups – New trends in international product-life cycle
Internationalization process	Importer internationalization Foreign direct investment decision process Information internalization in company internationalization – Entrepreneurial-based internationalization – Inward-outward connections in internationalization
<i>Macro-environment</i>	
Socio-cultural	Antecedents of national culture variation New typologies of national culture Variation of marketing linguistics and semiotics across countries
Economic	Foreign government investment policies Global economic crisis and its effects on international marketing Marketing under growing regional economic integration – Trends in international counter-trade activity
Political-legal	Firm-level political activity in international markets Emerging regulatory forces in regional economic integration Harmonization of business legislation across countries – International product piracy legislation
<i>Task environment</i>	
Market characteristics	Understanding emerging markets (e.g. China, India, Russia) Characteristics of the global service market
Competitors' analysis	Effect of domestic competitive position on international marketing strategy Drivers for achieving superior competitive advantage in international markets
Marketing infrastructure	Consolidation of international marketing research agencies Advertising agencies from emerging economies The role of financial institutions in supporting international marketing decisions
<i>Marketing research</i>	
Methodological issues	Cross-country operationalization of constructs Cross-cultural validity and reliability analysis Variations in construct measurement methods across countries – Research instrument development and translation – Cross-country effectiveness of data collection methods
Defining market potential	Forecasting methods in assessing international markets Estimating the market potential of emerging and developing economies
<i>Buyer behaviour</i>	
Consumer buyer behaviour	Global consumer tendencies Foreign consumer socialization Intergenerational influences on foreign consumer behaviour – Effects of religiosity and patriotism on foreign product purchasing – Cross-cultural shopping behaviour
Industrial buyer behaviour	Globalization effects on industrial buyer behaviour Buying situations in international purchasing Foreign supplier selection process
Country-of-origin effects	Developing an integrative model of COO evaluations Cultural variations in COO effects Consumer ethnocentrism and animosity in COO formation – Developing a COO image for industrial goods – COO effects on services

Table VII.
Potential future avenues of international marketing research

(continued)

<i>Global strategy issues</i>	
Global strategy formulation	Cross-country strategy applicability National ideologies and strategy formulation International market-oriented strategies – Global strategy design under recession – Strategic market position and R&D
Market segmentation/targeting	Identifying foreign target segments New bases of global market segmentation Consumer-product relations in international market segmentation – Global market diversification
<i>Market entry strategies</i>	
Foreign manufacturing	Foreign market entry timing Combinations of multiple foreign operation modes Strategic use of licensing/franchising – Drivers and outcomes of IJVs – Foreign entry governance structures – Acquisitions versus greenfield foreign entries
Exporting	Developing an integrated export development model Internalization of exports Strategic fit of exporting with other business functions – Macro- and micro-environmental effects on exporting
Importing	Import decision process Global sourcing strategies Achieving superior import performance – Parallel imports
<i>Marketing mix</i>	
Marketing strategy	International strategic positioning Strategic fit of marketing standardization/adaptation Performance implications of marketing strategy
Product/brand policy	Cultural differences in NPD Product innovation in strategic partnerships Global market orientation and NPD – New product success determinants across countries – Brand linguistics – Service delivery across countries
Pricing decisions	Price elasticity across global segments Cultural effects on pricing decisions International pricing in a recessionary global environment
Distribution channels	Governance modes of foreign distribution channels Retail transfer strategies across countries Retailer international image development – Retailing structures in emerging economies – International retail development
Physical distribution	Global supply chain management Global inventory control systems Use of information technology in achieving international logistics efficiency
Advertising and promotion	Advertising standardization/adaptation Relationship between international advertising agency and advertiser – Culturally relevant advertising stimuli – International sponsorships – Sales promotion effectiveness across countries
Selling and sales management	Supervisor-international salesperson relationship International sales force training – Variations of salesperson work values across countries – Cross-national sales force performance appraisal
<i>Specialized issues</i>	
Planning and organization	Global organizational learning structures International marketing planning systems – Achieving cross-functional coordination on a global scale – Organizing the international marketing department

(continued)

Table VII.

Marketing ethics	Cross-cultural ethical differences in marketing practices Ethical sensitivity to international stakeholder interests – Developing an ethical performance in a global sales organization
IT and internet	Effectiveness of electronic marketing The future of dot.com international firms – Cross-cultural web site navigation – Foreign language role in achieving web site effectiveness – Internet as a new mean for international advertising
Relationship marketing	Cross-cultural relationship management Intercultural communication – Personal bonding in international buyer-seller relationships – Variations in buyer-seller negotiations across countries – Influence strategies in different cultures – Global networking
Miscellaneous	Global green issues Headquarter-subsidiary coordination – Developing international marketing expert systems – Service quality management across different cultures – International marketing performance measurement

Notes: COO, country-of-origin; IJV, international joint venture; NPD, new product development; IT, information technology

Table VII.

complexity, and dynamism of both markets and marketing activities, and the resulting need to come up with more rigorous tools, innovative ideas, and powerful explanations to accommodate the challenging problems that are constantly arising (Cavusgil, 1998; Jain, 2007). Leading mainstream marketing journals (together with their specialized counterparts) could assist in this respect, by continuously enhancing their status as useful forums for generating fruitful, inspiring, and constructive discussions among scholars in the international marketing field. At the same time, periodic assessments, such as the one performed in this study, are vital for consolidating scattered study findings into a meaningful body of knowledge that could serve as a platform for future research on the subject.

Limitations

Although our study has added value to the literature (by ascertaining the status of the international marketing discipline, identifying trends in theoretical, methodological, and empirical issues relating to this line of research, and providing a useful reference point in the field), its findings should be viewed within the context of a number of limitations that could provide the impetus for future assessments on the subject. First, the study was confined to the ten leading mainstream marketing journals, although it is widely recognized that contributions to international marketing thought have also been made by other mainstream journals, such as the *European Journal of Marketing*, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, and *Journal of Business Research*. Second, since the editors (and editorial boards) are usually the key actors in shaping a journal's publication pattern, future research should investigate their specific role in determining the relative international marketing exposure of mainstream marketing journals. Third, the study did not embark on a citation analysis to measure the impact of scholars and articles included in this assessment on marketing knowledge in general and international marketing in particular, which, however, could be the focus of a specialized bibliometric exercise. Fourth, the emphasis of this study was mainly on providing evaluations and showing trends in key parameters regarding the inputs and outputs of international marketing research, although there is an understanding that

an epistemological assessment of its foundations and developments (along the lines of Aulakh and Kotabe (1993), Cavusgil (1998), and Cavusgil *et al.* (2005)) could improve further our knowledge on the subject. Fifth, the findings of the study could be augmented if additional input was derived directly from scholars specializing in the field (using, for example, the Delphi method), though such an approach has recently been used in another study focusing on international business (which is inextricably linked to international marketing) (Griffith *et al.*, 2008). Finally, despite the fact that the study has made a thorough assessment of research into international marketing from an academic perspective, it would be useful to evaluate its relevance to and impact on managers who are ultimately putting this knowledge into practice, through the undertaking of further qualitative and/or quantitative investigations.

Notes

1. For the purposes of this study, international marketing refers to any marketing activities of products/services that directly or indirectly cross-national boundaries, and are taking place not only with, but also within, foreign markets (Albaum and Peterson, 1984).
2. Cavusgil (1998) argues that the ongoing and radical globalization of markets makes the distinction between “domestic” and “international” marketing counterproductive, since many business executives have been led to think in terms of the domestic market alone. To reduce this ethnocentrism in marketing practice, he suggests restructuring business curricula and faculty organization so as to build bridges between domestic and international elements.
3. Since the early 1980s, we have seen the appearance of new journals, such as *International Marketing Review*, *Journal of Global Marketing*, and *Journal of International Marketing*, specializing in international marketing issues. These sub-discipline journals, coupled with long-established international business journals (e.g. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Management International Review*, and *Journal of World Business*) have published numerous international marketing-related articles, exceeding the 2,000 mark during the period 1975-2004.
4. Our study was inspired by similar research previously conducted in the management field, which investigated the contribution made to the international management discipline by 271 articles published in the top 20 management journals during the period 1996-2000 (Werner, 2002). This study was subsequently updated and augmented by recent work, investigating the diffusion of international management research in top management journals (Pisani, 2008).
5. Baumgartner and Pieters’ (2003) study provides the most recent and comprehensive assessment of marketing journals at three points in time during a 30-year period, using a citation-based measure of structural influence. With the exception of *Advances in Consumer Research* and *Industrial Marketing Management*, this list is comparable to that of two other earlier studies ranking marketing journals, namely those by Hult *et al.* (1997) and Theodorakis and Hirst (2002).
6. Although this contribution rate may be considered low, it is higher than the contribution of international management articles by the top 20 management journals during the period 1976-2006, where the average was 2.7 percent (ranging from 0.6 percent in *Journal of Applied Psychology* to 6.0 percent in *Strategic Management Journal*) (Werner, 2002; Werner and Brouthers, 2002; Pisani, 2008).
7. To explore the potential of disparities between “mainstream” and “specialized” journals, the results obtained from the articles published in the top ten marketing journals were compared to those of 401 articles published in the top ten international marketing/business journals,

identified in Dubois and Reeb (2001) (Table AII). To achieve homogeneity in our analysis, this comparison was confined to articles focusing on a single thematic area, namely exporting. Interestingly, it was revealed that with the exception of “authors’ discipline”, “problem crystallization”, “product focus”, and “sampling design”, all other parameters examined exhibited only minor differences between the two sets of journals. This implies that the nature of international marketing research, specifically that focusing on exporting, is overall more or less the same in both “mainstream” and “specialized” journals.

8. A recent study examining 540 articles published in the *International Marketing Review* during the period 1983-2003 found that, out of the 27 international marketing topics, exporting was the most widely researched (by 15.4 percent of the articles). This was followed by global marketing (7.4 percent), comparative marketing (6.5 percent), and strategic marketing (5.7 percent) (Malhotra *et al.*, 2005).
9. These guidelines for facilitating the inclusion of international marketing-related articles to mainstream marketing journals do not imply that specialized international marketing journals should be the target of articles of lower quality. On the contrary, to help improve the status, impact, and reputation of these specialized journals, it is important to maintain rigorous peer review processes that will safeguard the inclusion of high quality articles.

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Further reading

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Marketing journals	Baumgartner and Preters' (2003) ranking	Year introduced	Country of publication	Annual issues	Articles per issue	Total number of articles ^a	Number of IM- related articles ^a	Proportion of IM-related articles to the total ^a (%)
<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	1	1936	USA	Four	5	1,349	58	4.3
<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	2	1964	USA	Four	10	1,375	22	1.6
<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	3	1974	USA	Four	6-7	1,185	32	2.7
<i>Harvard Business Review</i>	4	1922	USA	Five	NA	NA	88	NA
<i>Management Science</i>	5	1954	USA	12	9-11	3,400	17	0.5
<i>Advances in Consumer Research</i>	6	1969	USA	NA	NA	NA	44	NA
<i>Marketing Science</i>	7	1982	USA	Four	5-6	524	11	2.1
<i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>	8	1973	USA	Four	6-7	889	64	7.2
<i>Journal of Retailing</i>	9	1925	USA	Four	5-6	643	18	2.8
<i>Industrial Marketing Management</i>	10	1971	UK	Six	5-8	1,339	154	11.5

Note: ^aFigures refer to the period from 1975 to 2004

Table AI.
Characteristics of top ten
mainstream marketing
journals

Appendix 2

Authorship profile	M (%)	S (%)	Research design	M (%)	S (%)	Scope of research	M (%)	S (%)	Study methodology	M (%)	S (%)
<i>Number of authors</i>			<i>Problem crystallization</i>			<i>Countries involved</i>			<i>Sampling design</i>		
One	26.5	36.4	Exploratory	45.0	55.0	One	87.5	84.2	Probability	74.4	36.8
Two	44.5	42.4	Formalized	55.0	45.0	Two	7.5	8.9	Non-probability	12.8	10.5
Three or more	29.0	21.2	Others	-	-	Three	2.5	1.9	Whole population	-	39.4
						Four or more	2.5	5.0	Not available	12.8	13.3
<i>Number of institutions</i>			<i>Variable association</i>			<i>Reference region</i>			<i>Data collection</i>		
One	48.9	53.9	Descriptive	47.5	43.8	North America	44.4	40.6	Mail	64.4	50.6
Two	31.1	37.4	Causal	52.5	55.8	Europe	31.1	22.7	Personal	20.0	8.5
Three or more	20.0	8.7	Others	-	0.4	Asia	11.3	11.2	Telephone	-	3.5
						Others	6.6	22.2	Others	2.2	7.4
						Not available	-	0.5	Not available	13.4	30.0
<i>Number of countries</i>			<i>Research environment</i>			<i>Product focus</i>			<i>Sample size</i>		
One	80.3	75.6	Field	97.5	96.9	Consumer	27.5	52.3	99 or less	15.4	26.3
Two	17.5	17.8	Laboratory	2.5	0.3	Industrial	50.0	51.0	100-249	53.8	39.7
Three or more	2.2	6.6	Others	-	2.8	Services	-	-	250-499	17.9	20.2
						Not available	27.5	39.0	500 or more	7.7	7.4
									Not available	5.2	6.4
<i>Geographic location</i>			<i>Communication mode</i>						<i>Response rate</i>		
North America	62.2	63.8	Survey	95.0	93.1				19% or less	12.8	9.0
Europe	31.3	28.4	Observational	5.0	0.3				20-29%	2.8	21.9
Asia	8.9	5.5	Others	-	6.5				30-39%	0.5	16.7
Other regions	8.9	13.2							40% or more	41.0	26.0
									Not available	42.9	26.4
<i>Number of disciplines</i>			<i>Topical scope</i>						<i>Analytical technique</i>		
One	68.9	47.4	Statistical study	97.5	93.4				Descriptive	11.1	21.4
Two	15.6	18.7	Case study	2.5	4.4				Uni-/bivariate	20.0	36.2
Three or more	-	1.7	Others	-	2.2				Multivariate	55.6	44.4
Not available	15.5	32.2							Not available	15.3	1.0
<i>Type of discipline</i>			<i>Time dimension</i>								
Marketing	68.9	44.8	Cross-sectional	100	93.7						
Management	4.4	9.2	Longitudinal	-	6.8						
Business	11.1	18.0	Others	-	0.3						
Others	15.6	28.0									

Note: The top ten specialized journals included: *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Management International Review*, *Journal of World Business*, *International Marketing Review*, *Journal of International Marketing*, *International Business Review*, *International Studies of Management & Organization*, *Journal of Global Marketing*, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, and *Advances of International Comparative Management* (Dubois and Reeb, 2001)

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