Is Microsoft Academic a viable citation source for ranking marketing journals?

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to assess the viability of the scholarly search engine Microsoft Academic (MA) as a citation source for evaluating/ranking marketing journals.

Design/methodology/approach – This study performs a comparison between MA and Google Scholar (GS) in terms of journal coverage, h-index values and journal rankings.

Findings – Findings indicate that: MA (vs GS) covers 96.80 percent (vs 97.87 percent) of the assessed 94 marketing-focused journals; the MA-based h-index exhibits values that are 35.45 percent lower than the GS-based h-index; and that the MA-based ranking and the GS-based ranking are highly consistent. Based on these findings, MA seems to constitute a rather viable citation source for assessing a marketing journal's impact.

Research limitations/implications – This study focuses on one discipline, that is, marketing.

Originality/value – This study identifies some issues that would need to be fixed by the MA's development team. It recommends some further enhancements with respect to journal title entry, publication year allocation and field classification. It also provides two up-to-date rankings for more than 90 marketing-focused journals based on actual cites (October 2018) of articles published between 2013 and 2017.

Keywords Ranking, Assessment, Journals, h-index, Marketing, Microsoft Academic

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Using citation analysis to rank journals has a long tradition in marketing (see, e.g. Jobber and Simpson, 1988; Baumgartner and Pieters, 2003; Guidry *et al.*, 2004; Moussa and Touzani, 2010). Prior citation-based rankings of marketing journals have used various citation sources. For instance, Jobber and Simpson (1988) examined the references in a sample of 25 articles taken from each of the 19 journals that served as their journal base. Similarly, Guidry *et al.* (2004) proposed a ranking of 27 marketing journals based on manual count of citations in articles that appeared between 1997 and 2001 in the then six top-tier marketing journals (i.e. *Journal of Marketing* (*JM*), *Journal of Marketing Research* (*JMR*), *Journal of Consumer Research* (*JCR*), *Marketing Science* (*MS*), *Journal of Retailing* (*JR*) and *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (*JAMS*)). Baumgartner and Pieters (2003) used a manual count along with the Journal Citation Reports (from the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI)) to collect citation data to rank 49 marketing and marketing-related journals. More recently, Moussa and Touzani (2010) used GS (the academic search engine by Google) as a citation source to rank some 69 marketing journals. In this study, the author tries to assess a different and new citation source: Microsoft Academic (MA).

Why MA? First, MA is currently (i.e. May 2019) claiming to index about 49,000 journals, 4,390 conferences and nearly 220m publications in 665,000 study fields/topics, marketing included[1]. Second, several scientometric/bibliometric/informetric studies claim that MA is: "the most promising for citation analysis" (Thelwall, 2018b, p. 914); "rapidly becoming the data source of choice" (Harzing and Alakangas, 2017b, p. 1894); and is "on the verge of becoming a bibliometric superpower" (Hug and Brändle, 2017, p. 1569). This study aims to

evaluate whether these keen claims are true or false, as far as the marketing discipline is concerned. Stated differently, this study tries to provide an answer to the following question:

RQ1. Is MA a viable citation source for ranking marketing journals?

Why marketing? First, and to the best of the author's knowledge, no published study has examined MA's coverage of the marketing discipline. Second, the extant literature proposes citation-based rankings/assessments that are, in actual fact, obsolete. For instance, rankings in Moussa and Touzani (2010) are based on citations of articles that appeared between 2003 and 2007. The issue of obsolescence is crucial because marketing has always "been simultaneously responsive to the exigencies of its times, yet also volitional in terms of the topics and approaches chosen for development" (Wilkie and Moore, 2003, p. 117). Third, prior citation-based rankings are also very limited in terms of the journals they covered. For example, Moussa and Touzani (2010) provide rankings for 69 journals that were launched before 2003. Since then, many new marketing journals have appeared (e.g. *Academy of Marketing Science Review* (*AMSR*) and *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management* were launched in 2011 and 2012, respectively).

In her early study on the coverage of Microsoft Academic, Harzing (2016, p. 1646) concludes that "only Google Scholar outperforms Microsoft Academic in terms of both publications and citations coverage." In her latest study, Harzing (2019, p. 341) depicts MA and GS as "the most comprehensive free sources for publication and citation data." After selecting the marketing journals to be assessed and the citation metric to be used, this study performs a comparison between results from MA and GS.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 offers a literature review on the pros and cons of MA as a citation source. Section 3 describes in details the adopted methodology. Results are discussed in Section 4. This paper concludes by summarizing this study's findings, enumerating its implications and pointing to limitations and further research directions.

2. Microsoft Academic as a citation source
MA is a free public web search engine for academic publications (i.e. journal articles, books, book chapters, conference papers, etc.) owned by Microsoft. Launched in 2016 in a trial version and formally in July 2017, the MA service is the successor of MA Search which was a research project that ceased in 2012 (Jacsó, 2011; Orduña-Malea *et al.*, 2014). Because of its ease of use and the "Microsoft" brand equity, MA is now attracting the attention of thousands of users (Harzing and Alakangas, 2017b; Hug and Brändle, 2017). The slogan presently used by MA is "research more, search less." It reminds us that MA's main goal was to be a semantic academic search engine that would help users to find relevant research documents even if they did not match the query terms (Sinha *et al.*, 2015).

In a series of articles, Harzing *et al.* depict MA as a phoenix that arose from the ashes of the MA Search project (Harzing, 2016), that got wings (Harzing and Alakangas, 2017a) and left the nest (Harzing and Alakangas, 2017b). Since its resurrection, MA has been the subject of several investigations that compared its performance to those by its three main competitors: Google's scholarly search engine GS, Elsevier's Scopus and Clarivate analytics' Web of Science (see, e.g. Harzing, 2016, 2019; Harzing and Alakangas, 2017a, b; Hug and Brändle, 2017; Hug *et al.*, 2017; Ranjbar-Sahraei *et al.*, 2018; Thelwall, 2018a, b). The major conclusions from all of these comparative studies are summarized here below.

2.1 The pros of Microsoft Academic
According to these studies, MA has five major advantages.

The first advantage is that MA has a broad coverage both in terms of publication types and citations. In her study on the coverage of MA, Harzing (2016, p. 1646) indicates that

"Google Scholar and Microsoft Academic appear to be a better choice than the Web of Science or Scopus." A follow-up study by Harzing and Alakangas (2017b, pp. 1889-1890) shows that, like GS, MA covers journal articles, books, book chapters, conference papers and even software. Harzing and Alakangas (2017b, p. 1893) conclude their study by stating the following: "for the most important academic publications, journal articles and books, Google Scholar and MA displayed very similar publication and citation coverage, leaving both Scopus and Web of Science far behind, especially in terms of citation counts." In her latest study, Harzing (2019) indicates that MA citation levels are almost identical to GS (at 98 to 99.5 percent).

The second advantage is that the MA data are structured and rich. Harzing and Alakangas (2017b, p. 1894) were perhaps the firsts to indicate that MA "appears to be combining the comprehensive coverage across disciplines, displayed by Google Scholar, with the more structured approach to data presentation, typical of Scopus and Web of Science." Investigating MA as a bibliometric tool, Hug *et al.* (2017) found that the metadata (i.e. data that provides information about other data) in MA is clearly more structured and considerably richer than in GS. They conclude by stating that "MA outperforms Google Scholar in terms of functionality, structure and richness of data" and that "MA has an edge over Google Scholar with respect to calculating indicators and therefore is more suitable for evaluative bibliometrics"(Hug *et al.*, 2017, pp. 377-378).

The third advantage is that data retrieval and handling in MA is easy and quick. Harzing and Alakangas (2017b, p. 1888) report that searches in Scopus and Web of Science are very time-consuming and unwieldy to use, and that they do not allow merging, sorting, exporting or any further analysis of the data. They also tell us that they were able to conduct the MA searches for 145 academics in less than 10 min, whereas – due to the necessary delays between queries – this took them several hours for GS (Harzing and Alakangas, 2017b, p. 1894). Hug *et al.* (2017, p. 378) also indicate that data retrieval and handling with GS is extremely laborious and rather unsatisfactory. They further inform us that they retrieved and handled data from MA without much effort and obtained various citation metrics with relative ease.

The fourth advantage is precision. Studying MA's accuracy and suitability for citation analysis, Thelwall (2018a, p. 8) indicates that "it is possible to search for journal articles from almost all fields in Microsoft Academic with a high degree of precision" and that "it is possible for evaluators with sets of articles to analyze to use Microsoft Academic citations as a substitute for Scopus (or Web of Science) citations."

The fifth advantage is MA's free availability. Like GS, MA is a free academic search engine. In contrast, Scopus and Web of science are only available to those academics whose institutions are able and willing to bear the (quite substantial) subscription costs.

2.2 The cons of Microsoft Academic

Even though its advantages are considerable, MA is not without limitations. Previous studies have, indeed, highlighted five shortcomings associated with MA.

The first limitation is MA's opaque coverage policy (Hug and Brändle, 2017). Notwithstanding the open approach taken by its development team, the only known sources of MA are metadata feeds from publishers and web pages indexed by Bing (Sinha *et al.*, 2015). This limitation is, however, not exclusive to MA. Most academic search engines are rather opaque about the sources they cover (Ortega, 2014) and, according to Jacsó (2005), this is also true for GS.

The second limitation is its less comprehensive coverage of the Social Sciences and Humanities. In their disciplinary comparison between MA and GS, Harzing and Alakangas (2017b) found that citation counts for MA are roughly identical to those by GS for the Life Sciences and that they are 14 to 20 percent lower for the Sciences (13.64 percent), Engineering

(15.65 percent) and Social Sciences (20.09 percent). In the Humanities, they are 59.45 percent lower. Harzing and Alakangas (2017b) indicate however, that MA provided higher citation counts than Scopus and the Web of Science for Engineering and the Social Sciences. They also put forth that one "shouldn't forget that MA coverage for the Humanities still dwarfs coverage for this discipline in Scopus and the Web of Science" (Harzing and Alakangas, 2017b, p. 1894).

The third limitation pertains to MA's less comprehensive coverage of older publications/citations. MA's coverage starts in 1978. This limitation is, however, not relevant for this study as it focuses on actual (i.e. October 2018) citations of articles published between 2013 and 2017.

The fourth limitation is MA's inability to always correctly identify the publication year and the title of the article (Harzing, 2016; Harzing and Alakangas, 2017a). Harzing and Alakangas (2017b, p. 1894) however assert that "problems in MA with regard to title splits and incorrect year allocations had been resolved."

The fifth limitation is MA's indexing of "non-scholarly" documents (Harzing and Alakangas, 2017b). Harzing and Alakangas (2017b, p. 1891) found that approximately 6 percent of the citations were from sources that most would agree should not be included in citation studies, like white papers, magazine articles, newsletter, blog posts and software.

Despite these limitations, the reviewed literature depicts MA as: "an excellent alternative for citation analysis" (Harzing, 2016, p. 1637); having "the potential to be used for full-fledged bibliometric analyses" (Hug *et al.*, 2017, p. 371); and at least as "a practical tool for evaluating the impact of a set of journal articles" (Thelwall, 2018a, p. 8).

The next section describes in details the adopted methodology.

3. Methodology

3.1 Journal list

The journal selection procedure was as follows: in the first stage, a list of journals was sourced from Moussa and Touzani (2010). That list includes 69 marketing-focused journals, all of which were launched before 2004. In the second stage, this list of 69 journals was brought up-to-date by taking into account journal name changes (e.g. the *International Journal of Service Industry Management* changed its name to *Journal of Service Management* in 2009), journal mergers (e.g. in 2013, The *Journal of Database Marketing and Customer Strategy Management* merged with the *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing* to form *Journal of Marketing Analytics* (*JMA*)) and journal extinctions (e.g. *Journal of Euromarketing* ceased to exist in 2010). After a careful examination, it turned out that these changes (except for *Managing Service Quality* which was renamed *Journal of Service Theory and Practice* in 2015) happened before 2013 or after 2017. Therefore, they have not any deteriorating effect on this study's results for the period under scrutiny (i.e. 2013–2017). In the third stage, were added to the list: journals that were not included in the ranking by Moussa and Touzani (2010) though they were established in the 1990s (e.g. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* was launched in 1992); journals that have the word marketing in their titles and that were incepted between 2004 and 2012 (e.g. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* and *Journal of Islamic Marketing* were launched in 2009 and 2010, respectively); and journals that are currently indexed in Clarivate analytics' SSCI (e.g. *Sport Marketing Quarterly* and *Journal of Consumer Culture*).

Following this procedure, the final list contained 94 journals among which *JR* (launched in 1925) is the oldest and *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management* (launched in 2012) is the youngest.

3.2 Publish or Perish (PoP) queries

PoP computer program has included a search option for MA since 2013 (Harzing, 2016). The PoP (version 6.45) was utilized in this study. It exploits the advanced search features of MA

to retrieve and analyze citations. All citation analyses with PoP were conducted during the third week of October 2018. The PoP queries covered citations to articles published between 2013 and 2017. Consequently, the citation window covers the period from 2013 to the third week of October 2018. Following Moussa and Touzani (2010), a five-year citation coverage was chosen to ensure a current yet stable and representative sample of articles. The results of all automatic search queries have then undergone a careful visual inspection to detect false hits (i.e. an article in a look-alike journal). For instance, the search "Marketing Science" may return articles in *MS* (i.e. which is the intended journal) but also articles in *JAMS*. If it was the case, all the wrong hits were manually excluded. Harzing's PoP computer program returns a wide array of indices. The most relevant index to this investigation is the *h*-index.

3.3 Ranking metric: the h-index

Hirsch (2005) describes the *h*-index as an indicator built to consider both the actual scientific productivity and the scientific impact of a scientist and defined it as follows: "A scientist has index *h* if *h* of his/her *Np* papers have at least *h* citations each, and the other (*Np-h*) papers have ≤ *h* citations each" (Hirsch, 2005, p. 16569). For example, a scientist with an *h*-index of 15 has published 15 papers with at least 15 citations each. A zero *h*-index characterizes authors that have at best published papers that have had no visible impact. An author cannot have a high *h*-index without publishing a substantial number of papers. However, productivity, as measured by the number of publications, is not enough. These papers have to be cited in order to count for the *h*-index. Thus, the main advantage of the *h*-index is that it combines an assessment of both quantity (i.e. number of papers) and quality (i.e. impact or citations to these papers). The second advantage associated with the *h*-index is that it is very easy to understand.

Since its introduction, the *h*-index has been the subject of an enormous number of articles (see, e.g. Rousseau, 2014; Soheili *et al.*, 2017) and has generated tremendous interest in many disciplines, marketing included. For instance, Saad (2006) showed that the *h*-index of productive consumer researchers strongly correlates with their overall citation count. Uslay *et al.* (2009) reviewed Peter Drucker's contributions to marketing thought and quantified his research output using the *h*-index. Moussa and Touzani (2010) used a GS-based *h*-index (and one of its variants) to rank 69 marketing-focused journals.

It should be indicated, however, that the *h*-index is not flawless (see, Costas and Bordons, 2007; Costas and Franssen, 2018). One of the major weaknesses of the *h*-index is that it ignores the number of citations to each article above and beyond what is needed to achieve a certain *h*-index. Therefore, an author with an *h*-index of five could theoretically have a total of 25 citations (i.e. five for each paper), but could also have more than 4,000 citations (i.e. four papers with 1,000 citations each and one paper with five citations). In reality, these extremes are not likely. However, it is true that once a paper belongs to the top *h* papers (i.e. the *h* core papers), its subsequent citations no longer "count" (see Egghe, 2006). Another limitation is that when applied to journals, the *h*-index may favor journals that published many moderately cited articles over those that publish fewer highly cited articles (Costas and Franssen, 2018). For instance, *Industrial Marketing Management* (*IMM*) made, in 2015, the decision to move from publishing eight issues per volume (i.e. year) to publishing eight entire volumes per year (including more than 16 articles each). Far from trivial, this decision is, instead, an integral part of editorial strategies that are aimed to attract potential highly cited articles and may ultimately lead to inflated *h*-index values.

Despite these and other limitations, the *h*-index has become a generally accepted bibliometric measure. Perhaps the strongest indication on this is the fact that both MA and GS have included it as part of their citation reports.

For the sake of comparison, the MA-based *h*-index was correlated with the five-year GS-based *h*-index. The GS-based *h*-indices were collected (in October 2018) from GS's

webpage using the "Metrics" option. GS uses the name "*h*5-index" to refer to "the *h*-index for articles published in the last five complete years. It is the largest number *h* such that *h* articles published in 2013–2017 have at least *h* citations each" (Google Scholar, 2018). Because they assess a journal's impact (or quality) using the same metric (i.e. *h*-index) during the same time period (i.e. 2013–2017), a considerable correlation is expected between the MA-based *h*-index and the GS-based *h*-index.

3.4 The five-year journal impact factor (JIF)
Also, for the sake of comparison, The MA-based *h*-index was correlated with the five-year JIF. The five-year JIF is calculated in the same manner as the two-year JIF, except that it encompasses five cited years rather than two. The five-year JIF is therefore equal to the sum of citations in the edition year to items published in each of the previous five years, divided by the number of scholarly items published in the previous five years (Clarivate Analytics, 2018). This indicator was collected using the InCites Journal Citation Reports (accessed via Clarivate Analytics' Web of Science on October 22, 2018) and is available for only 38 of the 48 SSCI-indexed marketing journals (i.e. the remaining ten journals were indexed in 2018). Because they assess a journal's impact during a considerably overlapping time period (i.e. 2013 to 2016), a sizable correlation is expected between the MA-based *h*-index and the five-year JIF.

4. Results and discussion
4.1 Problematic journal title entries
The PoP queries were unfruitful for 7 of the 94 retained journals. These seven journals are *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* (*JPPM*), *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* (*JBIM*), *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, & Complaining Behavior* (*JCSDCB*), *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* (*IJRDM*), *AMSR*, *Marketing Management Journal* (*MMJ*) and *JMA*. As the reader may already have gleaned, four of these seven journals have the "&" sign in the title. Other queries were performed with titles spelled with an "and" rather than the "&" sign but in vain. The author then visited MA's webpage to check the title entries of these publication outlets. It turned out that instead of *Journal of public policy & marketing* or *Journal of public policy and marketing*, *JPPM*'s entry in MA is *J public policy marketing*. For *JBIM*, it is *J bus ind mark*. For *IJRDM*, it is "*retail and distribution management*." This issue has been already highlighted by Jacsó (2011) for MA's predecessor, MA Search. It is problematic as not every user can guess what the journal title entry in MA is. Is it "journal" or "j"? Should it be spelled with "international," "int" or without it at all?

4.2 Journal coverage
The *AMSR*, *JMA* and *MMJ* have no entries in MA and are not covered by it. Therefore, MA covers 91 of the 94 retained marketing-focused journals.

As for GS, it covers 92 of the 94 selected journals. The *JCSDCB* and the *AMSR* are not indexed in GS yet.

4.3 A major anomaly
While conducting the MA-based bibliometric analysis, a major anomaly emerged. The *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management* (*JPSSM*) got a substantive *h*-index of 88. The *h*-index for *JM* (which is marketing's foremost journal) yielded a value of 65.

A visit to MA's website and its Top 100 marketing journals showed *JPSSM* in the fifth position while *JM* placed seventh. This finding was unexpected given that all previous citation-based rankings of marketing journals give *JM* the first position (see, e.g. Baumgartner and

Pieters, 2003; Guidry *et al.*, 2004; Moussa and Touzani, 2010). To have a specialized, second-class and a non-SSCI-indexed publications outlet as marketing's number one journal is bizarre.

A visit to *JPSSM*'s website revealed that most of the articles that contribute to the *h*-index are in fact articles that were published before 2013. For instance, the article by Lagace *et al.* (1991) was published in *JPSSM* more than 27 years ago. The problem is that Taylor & Francis was not the official publisher of *JPSSM* before 2013. Following copyright acquisition/transfer, Taylor & Francis published all *JPSSM* articles online in 2013. The hitch is that MA assimilates *JPSSM* articles published before 2013 (but put online in 2013) as if being published in 2013. This is a serious issue that needs to be fixed by MA's development team. Hence, Harzing and Alakangas' (2017b, p. 1894) assertion, that "problems in MA with regard to title splits and incorrect year allocations had been resolved," seems to be unfounded, at least for the case of the *JPSSM*.

4.4 What are the boundaries of the marketing field?
The visit to its website indicated that MA attempts to automatically classify documents into fields. The problem is that MA is unable to correctly draw the boundaries of the marketing discipline. Most marketing scholars and practitioners would agree that the *Journal of Business Research* (*JBR*) is not a marketing journal (Lehmann, 2005; Moussa and Touzani, 2010). Even *JBR* bills itself as an interdisciplinary journal that promotes "theoretical and empirical advances in buyer behavior, finance, organizational theory and behavior, marketing, risk and insurance and international business"[2]. The same argument is also valid for *Tourism Management*, *Research Policy*, and *Strategic Management Journal*. Talking about field classification in MA, Thelwall (2018b, p. 915) stated that "the Microsoft Academic scheme does not seem to be coherent enough to be useful yet."

While it also presents *JBR* as the leading marketing journal, the issue of field (mis) classification is less pronounced for GS than for MA.

4.5 The Microsoft Academic-based h-index vs the Google Scholar-based h-index
Table I reports for each journal its MA-based *h*-index and GS-based *h*-index. The MA-based *h*-index obtained values ranging from 2 to 88 with a mean of 19.960 and a median of 17. The GS-based *h*-index obtained values ranging from 1 to 66 with a mean of 24.140 and a median of 22.500.

The MA-based *h*-index exhibited values that are significantly (*t*-test $= -2.618$, df $= 90$, $p < 0.01$) and in mean 35.45 percent lower than the GS-based *h*-index. This finding suggests that, when compared to GS, MA has a relatively smaller coverage of academic materials citing the assessed marketing-focused journals.

4.6 Journals rankings (in)consistency
As Table I indicates, MA and GS are a bit inconsistent about the top five marketing journals. For MA, the top five journals are, in order, *JPSSM*, *JM*, *JCR*, *IMM* and *Journal of Product Innovation Management* (*JPIM*). For GS, the five top-tier journals are, in order, *JM*, *JCR*, *IMM*, *JPIM* and *JMR*.

MA and GS provide corroborative evidence on the high status of journals such as *JAMS* (6th both in MA and GS), *Journal of Service Research* (11th both in MA and GS) and *Journal of Advertising* (15th in MA and 16th for GS).

Nonetheless, some remarkable (if not, surprising) results that distinctively differs from prior rankings emerged. They are as follows:

- Quantitative and methodologically oriented journals placed relatively low. For instance, MA places *JMR* as 8th, *MS* as 13th and the *International Journal of Research in Marketing* (*IJRM*) as 18th. Likewise, GS places *JMR, MS* and *IJRM* as 5th, 11th and

Journal full title (acronym)	Microsoft Academic		Google Scholar	
	h-index	Rank	*h*-index	Rank
Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management (JPSSM)[ESCI]	88	1	21	50
Journal of Marketing (JM)[SSCI]	65	2	66	1
Journal of Consumer Research (JCR)[SSCI]	63	3	61	2
Industrial Marketing Management (IMM)[SSCI]	63	3	61	2
Journal of Product Innovation Management (JPIM)[SSCI]	60	5	58	4
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS)[SSCI]	52	6	51	6
Journal of Retailing & Consumer Services (JRCS)[SSCI]	48	7	51	6
Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)[SSCI]	46	8	55	5
Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing (JBIM)[SSCI]	38	9	28	28
Journal of Consumer Psychology (JCP)[SSCI]	34	10	42	8
Journal of Service Research (JSR)[SSCI]	33	11	38	11
Journal of Retailing (JR)[SSCI]	32	12	39	10
European Journal of Marketing (EJM)[SSCI]	31	13	40	9
Marketing Science (MS)[SSCI]	31	13	38	11
Journal of Interactive Marketing (JIM)[SSCI]	27	15	31	21
Journal of Service Management (JSMn)[SSCI]	27	15	36	15
Journal of Advertising (JA)[SSCI]	27	15	35	16
Psychology & Marketing (PM)[SSCI]	26	18	38	11
Journal of Services Marketing (JSM)[SSCI]	26	18	33	18
International Journal of Research in Marketing (IJRM)[SSCI]	26	18	32	19
Journal of Marketing Management (JMM)[SSCI]	26	18	37	14
International Journal of Consumer Studies (IJCS)[SSCI]	24	22	35	16
International journal of Retail & Distribution Management (IJRDM)[SSCI]	24	22	23	42
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing (JTTM)[SSCI]	23	24	31	21
International Journal of Bank Marketing (IJBM)[SSCI]	23	24	32	19
Journal of International Marketing (JInM)[SSCI]	23	24	31	21
International Marketing Review (IMR)[SSCI]	22	27	29	25
Marketing Theory (MT)[SSCI]	21	28	29	25
Journal of Product & Brand Management (JPBM)[SSCI]	21	28	29	25
Journal of Destination Marketing & Management (JDMM)[SSCI]	20	30	31	21
The Service Industries Journal (SIJ)[SSCI]	20	30	26	32
Marketing Letters (ML)[SSCI]	20	30	25	37
Journal of Consumer Culture (JCC)[SSCI]	19	33	28	28
Journal of Brand Management (JBM)[SSCI]	19	33	26	32
Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management (JHMM)[SSCI]	19	33	27	31
International Journal of Advertising (IJA)[SSCI]	19	33	28	28
Journal of Public Policy & Marketing (JPPM)[SSCI]	19	33	22	47
Journal of Consumer Marketing (JCM)[ESCI]	18	38	24	40
Journal of Consumer Behaviour (JCB)[SSCI]	18	38	26	32
Journal of Macromarketing (JMacroM)[SSCI]	18	38	22	47
Journal of Fashion Marketing & Management (JFMM)[SSCI]	18	38	25	37
Journal of Marketing Communications (JMC)	17	42	25	37
Electronic Markets (EM)[SSCI]	17	42	23	42
Journal of Advertising Research (JAR)[SSCI]	17	42	26	32
Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing & Logistics (APJML)[SSCI]	17	42	22	47
Journal of Strategic Marketing (JStrM)	17	42	23	42
Consumption, Markets, & Culture (CMC)[SSCI]	17	42	24	40
Marketing Intelligence & Planning (MIP)[SSCI]	16	48	26	32
Journal of Vacation Marketing (JVM)[SSCI]	16	48	23	42
Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing (JRIM)[SSCI]	15	50	20	53
Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice (JMTP)	15	50	23	42
Journal of Consumer Policy (JCPol)	15	50	19	55
Journal of Consumer Affairs (JCA)[SSCI]	15	50	21	50

Table I.
Ranked list of the 94 assessed marketing-focused journals

www.

Journal full title (acronym)	Microsoft Academic		Google Scholar	
	h-index	Rank	*h*-index	Rank
International Journal of Market Research (IJMR)[SSCI]	14	54	21	50
Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ)	14	54	20	53
Journal of Marketing Education (JME)	14	54	17	59
Journal of Islamic Marketing (JIsM)[ESCI]	14	54	18	56
Qualitative Market Research (QMR)[ESCI]	12	58	18	56
Quantitative Marketing & Economics (QME)[SSCI]	12	58	17	59
Journal of Social Marketing (JSoM)[SSCI]	12	58	17	59
Journal of Global Fashion Marketing (JGFM)	12	58	13	72
Journal of Marketing for Higher Education (JMHE)	11	62	18	56
Journal of International Consumer Marketing (JICM)	11	62	18	63
International Review of Retail, Distribution, & Consumer Research (IRRDCR)	11	62	16	63
Journal of Food Products Marketing (JFPM)	11	62	15	66
Social Marketing Quarterly (SoMQ)	10	66	14	69
Journal of Political Marketing (JPolM)	10	66	15	66
International Journal of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing (IJNVSM)	10	66	17	59
Journal of Business to Business Marketing (JBBM)[SSCI]	10	66	11	81
Place Branding and Public Diplomacy (PBPD)	9	70	15	66
Journal of Revenue & Pricing Management (JRPM)	9	70	12	76
Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing (JNPSM)	9	70	14	69
Journal of Historical Research in Marketing (JHRM)	9	70	12	76
Marketing Education Review (MER)	9	70	14	69
Journal of Global Marketing (JGM)	9	70	12	76
Services Marketing Quarterly (SMQ)	8	76	12	76
Sport Marketing Quarterly (SpMQ)[SSCI]	8	76	16	63
Journal of Promotion Management (JPM)	8	76	13	72
International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship (IJSMS)	8	76	12	76
International Review on Public & Nonprofit Marketing (IRPNM)	8	76	13	72
Journal of Financial Services Marketing (JFSM)	8	76	10	82
International Journal of Pharmaceutical & Healthcare Marketing (IJPHM)	8	76	9	87
Journal of Relationship Marketing (JRM)	7	83	13	72
Journal of Marketing Channels (JMCh)	7	83	10	82
Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising (JCIRA)	7	83	1	92
Journal of Direct, Data & Digital Marketing Practice (JDDDMP)	6	86	10	82
Journal of Research in Marketing & Entrepreneurship (JRME)	6	86	10	82
Journal of Medical Marketing (JMedM)	6	86	9	87
Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, & Complaining behavior (JCSDCB)	4	89	NC	–
Asian Journal of Marketing (AJM)	2	90	4	90
Foundations & Trends in Marketing (FTM)	2	90	4	90
Journal of Marketing Analytics (JMA)	NC	–	10	82
Academy of Marketing Science Review (AMSR)	NC	–	NC	–
Marketing Management Journal (MMJ)	NC	–	8	89
Mean	19.960		24.140	
Median	17.000		22.500	
Skeweness	2.114		1.101	

Notes: NC, not covered. SSCI denotes journals that are indexed in the Social Sciences Citation Index; ESCI denotes journals that are indexed in the Emerging Sources Citation Index

Table I.

19th, respectively. In Moussa and Touzani (2010), *JMR, MS* and *IJRM* placed 3rd, 4th and 13th, respectively.

- *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* (*JRCS*) placed 7th according to MA and 6th, according to GS. The *JRCS* never made it higher than the top 30 in previous rankings.

- *Journal of Marketing Management* (*JMM*) has made a significant leap passing from 33rd in Moussa and Touzani (2010) to the top 20 here (18th according to MA and 14th in GS).

Why have these journals reached such high (vs low) rankings here? This is a difficult question to answer given the diversity of the possible reasons. However, one can speculate on some of the shifts in journal impact.

Quantitative and methodologically oriented marketing journals (i.e. *JMR*, *MS* and *IJRM*) are becoming more and more unreadable to common marketing scholars. To see the validity of this claim, one has only to glance through the recent articles by Rubel and Naik (2017), Du and Kamakura (2015) and Syam *et al.* (2016) which contain 32, 28 and 26 equations, respectively. Several are those quantitative marketing scholars who frankly admit that "the limited impact of [their] research on business and policy-making audiences is a perennial and well-recognized issue" and that to resolve such an issue they must "improve the way [they] communicate [their] complex results and models in an understandable way" (Lehmann *et al.*, 2015, p. 7). Studying the citability (i.e. a dynamic construct that captures the changing relationship of an article to a field) of marketing journal articles, Li *et al.* (2015, p. 66) found that "quantitatively oriented articles (those published in *MS*, *JMR* and *IJRM*) tend to start and stay in the lower citability state." One explanation that they advance to elucidate such a finding is that "the more quantitatively oriented *MS* and *JMR* may have more articles using sophisticated techniques that fewer researchers fully comprehend." They recommended that "editors at *MS* and *JMR* should pay closer attention to the substantive and theoretical aspects of papers being submitted to their journals." Given the here offered ranking, one can only join his voice to theirs. The editors of these particular journals are cordially invited to not favor mathematical complexity (or what George Box calls "mathematistry") over clarifying, formulating and ultimately solving real marketing problems.

An obvious explanation for the ascendance of *JRCS* is the increase in the quality of the articles appearing in this journal. In recent years, *JRCS* was fortunate to have some of the most reputable scholars in the subfields of consumer and service research – such as James C. Spohrer, Michel Laroche and Gopal Das – as its frequent contributors. This means that *JRCS*' articles are written to a high academic standard and thus are serious candidates for receiving a high number of citations. Recall that Stremersch *et al.* (2007) found that the number of citations an article in the marketing discipline receives depends, among other things, on "who says it" (i.e. author visibility and personal promotion).

The *JMM* is the official journal of the UK-based Academy of Marketing. Though it was launched in 1985, *JMM* entered the SSCI only in 2018. The *JMM*, as one of its editor-in-chief states, was not meant "to gravitate toward an Americanised system of knowledge production and paradigmatic adherence […] that does not represent what marketing scholarship is all about" (Tadajewski, 2016, p. 14). The *JMM* claims to "provide space to those pursuing interesting, innovative, iconoclastic, and contentious work. This can be managerial, interpretive, or critical in orientation […] This pluralism stands us in contrast to nearly all other marketing journals" (Tadajewski, 2016, p. 11). Based on this study's findings, it is probably safe to say that such an editorial strategy has finally paid off. The *JMM* is for the first time in the top 20 marketing journals. This also tells us that "neither marketing nor all the best work in the field is confined to North America" (Lehmann, 2005, p. 137).

4.7 Correlations between citation-based metrics

Spearman's rank-order correlations between the various citation-based metrics (used because of the skewed distribution of the metrics) are shown in Table II.

The correlation between the MA-based *h*-index and the GS-based *h*-index was substantial and statistically significant ($\rho = 0.952$, $p < 0.01$, $n = 90$). Given that they are based on different citation sources (MA vs GS), such a strong correlation is quite remarkable. It indicates that the rankings are highly consistent. That correlation should not,

however, mask some major discrepancies. Specifically, the position of some publication outlets differs greatly between MA and GS. For instance, *JPSSM* is 1st in MA and 50th for GS. The *JBIM* is 9th in MA and 28th in GS. Thus, care and caution should be taken in this regard.

As expected, the MA-based *h*-index was moderately and significantly correlated with the five-year JIF ($\rho = 0.781$, $p < 0.01$, $n = 38$). This correlation implies that though they are based on different metrics (i.e. a combined quantity/impact measure for the *h*-index and a mean citations-per-paper count for the JIF) and different data sources (i.e. MA for the *h*-index and the SSCI for the JIF), the rankings are in agreement. This agreement between these two rankings suggests that, for the marketing discipline, the MA-based *h*-index can, to a certain extent, constitute an alternative for the 53 journals not covered by the SSCI.

The GS-based *h*-index was highly and significantly correlated with the five-year JIF ($\rho = 0.812$, $p < 0.01$, $n = 38$).

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary of findings
This study aimed to answer the following question: is MA a viable source for ranking marketing journals? In order to provide an answer to that question, a comparison was performed between MA and GS in terms of journals coverage, *h*-index values and journal rankings. Results indicate that: MA (vs GS) covers 91 (vs 92) of the assessed 94 marketing-focused journals; the MA-based *h*-index exhibited values that are 35.45 percent lower than the GS-based *h*-index; and that the MA-based ranking and the GS-based ranking are highly consistent. Based on these findings, MA seems to constitute a rather viable citation source for assessing a marketing journal's impact.

5.2 Implications
This study's findings could be helpful for a variety of constituencies. For MA's development team, it identifies some issues that need to be fixed. These issues delve around journal title entry, wrong year allocation and field misclassification. For individual knowledge consumers (i.e. practitioners, academic researchers along with educators and other students of marketing), it provides evidence that MA is, to a certain extent, a practical tool for performing bibliometric analyses. For knowledge managers (i.e. journal editors and publishers), the here provided rankings offer objective feedback about their standing in the marketing journal market and the implications of their editorial policies in terms of their journals' influence and impact. Finally, the here offered rankings, when used with care and caution, can constitute interesting alternatives to the SSCI and its JIF that can be useful for hiring, tenure, promotion, granting and merit pay decisions.

5.3 Limitations and further research directions
Though it has several implications, this study has limitations too. First, MA is still evolving (Harzing, 2016; Harzing and Alakangas, 2017a, b). This implies that it does include neither

Citation metric	Source	MA-*h* (2013–2017)	GS-*h* (2013–2017)	5-Y JIF 2017
Microsoft Academic-based *h*-index (MA-*h*)	Current Study	1.000		
Google Scholar-based *h*-index (GS-*h*)	Google Scholar (2018)	0.952** (90)	1.000	
Five-year journal impact factor (5-Y JIF)	Clarivate Analytics (2018)	0.781** (38)	0.812** (38)	1.000

Notes: Numbers in parentheses are sample sizes. **Significant at the 0.01 level

Table II.
Spearman rank-order correlations between citation metrics

all available marketing journals nor all academics documents that are citing them. As such, it may offer a downward biased estimate of a journal's impact (or quality). Second, there is no doubt that the *h*-index is imperfect (Costas and Bordons, 2007; Costas and Franssen, 2018). It is a hybrid indicator that combines quantity and citations and, as such, it may favor journals that publish 12 issues per volume (e.g. *European Journal of Marketing*) more than those publishing only four issues a year (e.g. *JR*). However, most bibliometric indices are also imperfect. Third, this study provides rankings for 91 to 92 journals that were launched before 2013. The market of marketing journals, however, continues to evolve, and new journals continue to appear (e.g. *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research* and *Journal of Marketing Behavior* were both incepted in 2016). As such, future journal assessments and rankings have to include these new publication venues.

Notes

1. See https://academic.microsoft.com

2. See www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-business-research

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