

Overview of the leading countries in marketing research between 1990 and 2014

A bibliometric analysis

Leslier Valenzuela-Fernández

Department of Business Administration, School of Economics and Business, University of Chile, Santiago, Chile

Carolina Nicolas

Department of Business Administration, School of Economics and Business, Universidad Santo Tomás, Santiago, Chile, and

Jose M. Merigo

Department of Management Control and Information Systems, School of Economics and Business, University of Chile, Santiago, Chile and School of Information, Systems and Modelling, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, University of Technology Sydney, Ultimo, Australia

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to present a general overview of the most influential countries according to their scientific contributions in marketing for the 1990–2014 period. In this bibliometric-based research, the authors generate a ranking of the 50 most influential nations according to the H-index and citations per paper, co-authorship, citation analysis and bibliographic coupling. The study provides a map that identifies the networks of researchers between countries.

Design/methodology/approach – The method used is bibliometric analysis. The relevant research in marketing was extracted from Web of Science Database Core Collection, during the 1990–2014 period; 29,947 published articles in 50 countries were obtained. The investigation used: H-index as the first criterion in creating the country ranking, number of articles (TP) as a proxy for the productivity of each country, the average citation per article (C/P) and the number of citations (TC) to express the influence of a country's articles. In addition, the study adopts VOSviewer software to identify the collaboration networks of researchers between countries and the links between countries.

Findings – The results reveal a general level that 54 percent of countries have a category H-index greater than 20. In turn, the authors see a steady increase in the number of publications over the five-year periods. The first ten countries account for over 80 percent of all publications of the sample. The USA is presented here as the leader in all indicators and highlights the important role that China has been developing.

Research limitations/implications – Several limitations of the study result from the use of the Web of Science database. For example, each journal, author, university and/or country involved in a specific paper is considered a single unit. Therefore, in research papers with more than one author or with authors from different universities and/or countries, only the lead author is considered in the analysis. In addition, the study does not include new trends in publications between 2014 and 2018. However, there are other databases that could have been used such as: Scopus, Google Scholar, among others.

Practical implications – The findings are relevant for students, academics, organizations and governments, which may use this information for decision making on future research, identifying countries concerning the area and their relationships.

Originality/value – This paper shows progress and contribution of the most influential countries according to their scientific contribution in marketing during the period 1990–2014. This research is relevant because until now there has been no study with the sole purpose of ranking countries according to their marketing publications. In this sense, the study is useful to academics, publishers, educational institutions or other interested in marketing. The study provides a knowledge domain map that identifies the collaboration networks of researchers between countries and the links between countries.

Keywords Marketing, Bibliometrics, Web of Science, H-index, Countries ranking, VOSviewer

Paper type Research paper



Since emerging in the early twentieth century, marketing has undergone substantial changes, for example, in the evolution of its concept and its approach. In addition, processes such as digitalization have given the consumer greater power and information that aids in decision making (Chandler and Lusch, 2015). Research on marketing through bibliometric analysis can objectively reveal the nodes of marketing development by country. It can also reveal the emergence of new concepts. Such knowledge not only facilitates an understanding of the development of marketing as science but also helps us to understand the circumstances of the organizations that apply the marketing concept (Terpstra *et al.*, 2012). The high levels of scientific performance attained in countries such as the USA, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden, China's strong emergence (Leydesdorff and Wagner, 2009; Bornmann *et al.*, 2018) and the evolution of the contributions of these countries in the field prompted us to undertake this study. In developing this research, we take into account that the marketing discipline must advance with respect to the evolution and the dynamism of the different markets (Kumar, 2015) and science (Bornmann *et al.*, 2018).

Periodic evaluations have been performed linked to the progress of the discipline at a general level but not by country. Pricing is an important topic in the marketing domain (Leonidou *et al.*, 2010). However, to base a bibliometric study on that topic does not enable one to speak of countries. Valenzuela-Fernandez *et al.* (2018) analyze the most productive and influential countries engaged in market orientation (MO) using a bibliometric approach. Wannyn (2017) performed a bibliometric study on neuromarketing. Leung *et al.* (2017) use bibliometrics to investigate social media. Falcao *et al.* (2017) performed a bibliometric study on marketing publications in Brazil. Alonso *et al.* (2016) adopt bibliometrics to examine guerrilla marketing. Koseoglu *et al.* (2016) applied bibliometrics to tourism marketing and sought to identify how marketing methods differ according to country and region. Hopner *et al.* (2015) performed a bibliometric study on the consumer retail experience, whereas Munoz-Leiva *et al.* (2015) adopted bibliometrics to analyze integrated marketing communication. Murgado-Armenteros *et al.* (2015) use a bibliometric approach to study the conceptual evolution of qualitative marketing research. Using bibliometrics, Gonzalez-Valiente (2014) sought to clarify research trends related to marketing. Chabowski *et al.* (2013) performed a bibliometric analysis of global branding. In addition, bibliometric studies have been performed on marketing journals, such as the studies by Brown *et al.* (2018) on the *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, by Martinez-Lopez *et al.* (2018) on the *European Journal of Marketing*, by Valenzuela *et al.* (2017) on the *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing* and by Dabirian *et al.* (2016) on the *Journal of Food Products Marketing*.

Other relevant studies include Boulos (2005), which examines the contribution of different countries to research in different journals of medicine. Merigó and Núñez (2016) discuss background studies in the health area based on bibliometric research related to the countries in that area. There is a research gap from the perspective of contributions by country. In fact, a systematic review of articles published by several countries helps reveal how marketing has evolved by identifying emerging problems in theory and practice, increasing the development of knowledge (Malhotra *et al.*, 2013; Hyman and Yang, 2001; Inkpen and Beamish, 1994). In addition, key research areas that may not have received sufficient attention have been noted, offering us an opportunity to enrich marketing research in general (Leone *et al.*, 2012).

Bibliometric studies enable researchers to predict the future focus of scientific studies. For example, Yataganbaba *et al.* (2017) present a framework for understanding and revitalizing the important role of conceptual articles. Ellegaard and Wallin (2015) observe that bibliometric methods are increasingly applied in the study of various aspects of science and in ranking institutions and universities as well as the various disciplines worldwide (Tur-Porcar *et al.* 2018). Therefore, the structure of knowledge is likely to be improved by applying a bibliometric perspective (Samiee and Chabowski, 2012; Valenzuela *et al.*, 2017).

Quantifying the scientific production of the various marketing disciplines is important because research production systems still largely define the academic's professional

trajectory in the development, management and creation of knowledge (Powers *et al.*, 1998). In this context, it is important to note that the evolution of marketing at the international level is based on literary content that is suited to bibliometric research (Merigó, Gil-Lafuente and Yager, 2015; Leonidou *et al.*, 2010; Cavusgil *et al.*, 2005; Nakata and Huang, 2005; Aulakh and Kotabe, 1993; Albaum and Peterson, 1984).

Investigation through knowledge maps of co-authorship networks is an opportunity. Findings regarding collaborative research could facilitate the creation of collaborative research groups with other countries. Such maps might help individual researchers locate collaborators or provide information for publishers seeking to create editorial teams.

Based on the preceding review, this study aims to analyze the most productive and influential countries in marketing research according to their scientific contributions during the period 1990–2014. To achieve this objective, we establish a ranking of the 50 most influential countries in marketing research, study the evolution of the scientific contributions of these countries in intervals of five-year periods and present a map that identifies the networks of researchers between countries based on research citations.

Our study reflects market research on access to knowledge and its development at the country level. The data provide a better understanding of the evolution of the concept from the area of marketing and research, and our results can be used as a guide for anyone interested in the globalization of marketing, knowledge and learning. In the study, we bear in mind that each country has a unique culture that influences the thinking of its researchers. We also consider the links between nations that affect marketing researchers (Liu *et al.*, 2015). In addition, the objective evidence on emerging economies (Luo *et al.*, 2005) and the emergence of Asian countries in the ranking of influential countries in the area imply a new vision in the orientation of this research topic and new nuances in the contributions in the area.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. The second section briefly reviews the literature. The third section provides a conceptual framework for the role played by the country in marketing. The fourth section describes the research method followed to perform the bibliometric analysis. The fifth section presents the results of the data analysis at a general level according to five-year periods and journals in the area of marketing. The sixth section provides our conclusions and suggestions for future research.

Conceptual framework

Investigation of the effect of country on marketing

As noted, marketing theories evolved from a vision oriented at enterprises to cover exchange in all its forms. More recently, the paradigm has expanded to the level of relational networks and relational theories (Hult and Ferrell, 2012). These changes influence the worldview and the theoretical tools and methods that we use (Achrol and Kotler, 2012). In this sense, the current role of the countries in this quest for knowledge is paramount.

Many scholars have reflected on the internal evolution of the discipline and verified the productivity of authors and/or institutions (Helm *et al.*, 2003; Bakir *et al.*, 2000; Tellis *et al.*, 1999; Cote *et al.*, 1991; Spake and Harmon, 1997). There has been an emphasis on the increasing attention paid to international environmental changes in marketing (Eliashberg and Elberse, 2003; Tellis *et al.*, 2003; Stremersch and Verhoef, 2005).

Recently, Leonidou *et al.* (2010) concluded that a relatively small proportion of the articles published in leading marketing journals between 1975 and 2004 have reached the international stage. Although these researchers note that such articles have played an important role in the transition from the literature to practical application, they conclude that marketing strategy and its consequences for performance represent important areas of future international research. Consequently, several areas, such as relationship marketing and research methodology, have been identified as receiving the most attention.

The way this transition is occurring and its causes and effects in different countries must be further examined since there is little evidence from international studies (Luo *et al.*, 2005). Country-based marketing research can, for example, provide a natural experimental setting to understand how marketing attitudes form and change over time. Similarly, valuable insights could be gained in understanding the difficulties marketers face in different national contexts. The study of these issues in a specific setting may provide important insights into the mechanisms that underlie the effect of marketing efforts (Sheth and Sisodia, 2015).

The world has changed, and academic marketers must respond to such change. Marketing should be examined beyond the confines of a country, and the challenges marketers face should be investigated in other parts of the world. Otherwise, a loss of understanding regarding what is occurring globally will limit us in generating more knowledge, theories and laws in marketing (Sheth and Sisodia, 2015).

Thus, our research provides an important contribution by identifying the main countries and continents active in the area and the new regions interested in contributing their knowledge. Our research could also be an incentive to researchers from countries that are at the bottom of the ranking, for example, the countries of South and Central America.

Method

Bibliometric analysis

This investigation uses bibliometric analysis as its main method as it enables us to analyze and identify the most studied subjects in a specific area of interest (Grantt *et al.*, 2000). By collecting relevant information found in databases, such as citations, authors and keywords, we obtain valuable insights that help us understand the growth in research in the field and the importance of the topics that are addressed (Van Raan, 2005).

Thus, bibliometrics is a versatile, useful tool that provides quantitative data based on the academic literature (Beckendorff and Zehrer, 2013). This method is typically used for systematic mapping to better visualize the intellectual structure of a field (Cobo *et al.*, 2011). Bibliometrics uses objective techniques that avoid subjective bias that may be added by the author (Ferreira *et al.*, 2014; Ramos-Rodríguez and Ruiz-Navarro, 2004; Kuntner and Teichert, 2015).

Database choice

After analyzing related studies from other areas, we determined to follow Merigó *et al.* (2016), Merigó, Mas-Tur, Roig-Tierno and Ribeiro-Soriano (2015) and studies that adopt VOSviewer software (Van Eck and Waltman, 2010) to identify the networks among researchers. After discussion with leading researchers in the field, we opted to base the investigation on published information from the Web of Science Core Collection database (Yu *et al.*, 2016). Not only this database was recommended by researchers, as it is already used in various studies, but it also provides us with information on bibliography citations in the form of the Journal Citation Report (JCR), which is well known in the scientific community as it collects all the journal articles, books and other contributions on a given topic.

Indicators

This research uses the number of articles (TP) as a proxy for the productivity of each country and the number of citations (TC) to express the influence of a country's articles (totals and adjusted) according to population and GDP (Bonilla *et al.*, 2015; Buela, 2005). The study also uses the average citation per article (C/P), which is currently one of the most widely accepted methods used to analyze related data (Merigó, Gil-Lafuente and Yager, 2015). With these indicators and by crossing the data, information can be obtained

regarding the countries that publish and are cited the most or, more generally, according to time period or journal type (Merigó, Mas-Tur, Roig-Tierno and Ribeiro-Soriano, 2015).

The investigation uses the H-index introduced by Hirsch (2005) as the first criterion in creating the country ranking. The H-index possesses several favorable properties, including ease of computation and balance between the number of publications and their impact (Alonso *et al.*, 2009). An H-index of “x” implies that “x” number of articles have received at least “x” number of citations. The index combines the data on publication and citation influences. Its emphasis is on the primary citation (Zurita *et al.*, 2016). Note that the main advantage of the H-index is the possibility of combining publications and citations to the same extent.

Table II provides an initial approximation of the sample used to determine the average values of the number of publications (TP) and citations (TC) according to population level and GDP.

Given the differences between countries (Table I), the average value could be considered a fairly general first approximation, with substantial dispersion of the data. Such dispersion is further accentuated when analyzed according to population, with values of two or more digits (Table II).

Development of marketing process database

The search for information on articles on marketing research led us to analyze the documents for the 1990–2014 period in the Web of Science Database Core Collection.

The creation of our database first required a preselection of specialized marketing journals published in the Web of Science (WoS). The preselection of the 38 journals was validated by a panel of five experts, who determined productivity based on the number of citations in the WoS Core Collection and organized the outcome according to descending order. Only citations with a minimum of 100 references were considered. These data were then categorized based on document type, such as articles, reviews, letters and notes (Merigó and Núñez, 2016; Cornelius *et al.*, 2006; Schildt *et al.*, 2006; Ramos-Rodríguez and Ruíz-Navarro, 2004; McCain, 1990). Next, the results were filtered depending on the data we wished to obtain. For the studied period, a yield of 817,236 citations and 29,947

Table I.
Composition of the sample of countries

Values	According to population		According to GDP	
	Population (millions) – 2013	Country, continent	GDP (millions USD)	Country/continent
Minimum value in the sample	1.14	Cyprus, Europe	49.62	Costa Rica, Central America
Maximum value in the sample	1,357	China, Asia	16,770,000	USA, North America
Average value		94.00724		1,355,379.592

Source: Elaboration based on WoS

Table II.
TC and TP average in the sample according to population and GDP

Values	Per capita		Per GDP	
	TP per capita	TC per capita	TP per GDP	TC per GDP
Average values	18.4874	374.5513	0.01498	0.0788
SD	21.8367	493.0087	0.1025	0.4948

Source: Elaboration based on WoS

published articles in 50 countries was obtained. The selected journals are included in the Appendix. The 50 countries represent a fairly heterogeneous sample in terms of population and GDP (Table I).

Results

The results of the study are presented in this section. The evolution of publications worldwide in the marketing area over the past 25 years was investigated to quantify the scientific contributions of each considered country. The networks of researchers between countries as they interact through citations and publications were identified.

The following tables contain all indicators described in the previous section separated into three categories: general level, five-year periods and journals. Although the bibliometric data are only intended to be informative, they provide an indication of actual circumstances.

It is important to remember that the study aims to analyze the most productive and influential countries in marketing research (according to scientific contributions) during the 1990–2014 period. To achieve this objective, we establish a list of the 50 most influential countries in marketing research (Table III), study the evolution of the scientific contributions of these countries in five-year periods (Tables V and VI) and provide a map that identifies the researcher networks between countries based on citations (Figures 1–5).

Ranking of the 50 most influential countries according to the H-index (1990–2014)

As noted, countries play a key role as knowledge managers (Leydesdorff and Wagner, 2009; Bornmann *et al.*, 2018). Analyzing this role enables us to determine the degree of importance awarded to marketing issues worldwide. Thus, it is relevant to rank the 50 countries in marketing research. Table III presents the ranking order by H-index. Other indicators are included to generate a wider spectrum for analysis of the leading countries.

One should note that 54 percent of the countries in the category have an H-index greater than 20, which reflects present influence and productivity (Zurita *et al.*, 2016). However, the underlying data on the evolution of marketing describe an imbalanced scenario in which a small number of countries are the most powerful knowledge centers in the field. This fact can be observed in the table. The top 10 countries account for over 80 percent of all publications in our sample.

The USA leads in all indicators in the marketing area within the country sample, followed by Canada, the Netherlands and the UK (according to the H-index and C/P). The position of the USA is consistent with an analysis of the size of the global publishing markets (IPA's Global Ranking of Publishing Markets), which ranks the country first according to publishers' total net revenue (Wischenbart, 2012).

In addition, these results are consistent with the importance of each region in the global publishing industry according to IPA's Global Ranking of Publishing Markets. In fact, by 2012, 26 percent of publications had been produced by the USA and, when combined with the European output, 33 percent (Wischenbart, 2012).

The ranking also highlights the role of China, which alone is the second-largest publishing market at a general level worldwide. It is expected that China's publishing industry will continue to grow, driven by domestic consumption and aspirations for better education of the expanding middle class in the large urban regions (Wischenbart, 2015).

It is also interesting to analyze the indicators for publications in the area at a general level. Table IV provides a framework for the distribution of the number of citations that the various publications have received. The table shows that only 1.71 percent of publications have received 500 or more citations. The table clearly describes the sample of articles and their level of citations.

One can observe that most of the documents published by the countries in the sample received 50 citations or less. In fact, of the 5,914 citations included, only 101 documents

R	Country	H	TC	C/P	TP	≥500	≥250	≥100	≥50
1	USA	258	525,684	35.98	14,609	87	273	1,122	2,595
2	Canada	88	37,926	25.88	1,460	1	14	74	200
3	The Netherlands	80	30,524	28.74	1,062	2	9	60	151
4	UK	78	39,032	16.24	2,403	2	8	48	159
5	Australia	69	26,709	19.58	1,364	2	9	37	113
6	Germany	63	17,781	19.04	934	0	4	33	82
7	China	57	19,040	18.12	1,051	2	6	24	94
8	France	55	13,162	20.47	643	0	5	26	62
9	Belgium	50	12,096	36.65	330	3	7	21	50
10	South Korea	50	10,483	16.75	626	0	1	15	51
11	Singapore	40	6,621	20.63	321	0	2	6	27
12	Denmark	38	5,684	21.13	269	0	0	11	25
13	Sweden	37	6,621	19.94	332	1	4	12	22
14	Switzerland	37	5,705	23.1	247	1	3	8	29
15	New Zealand	37	5,503	14.95	368	0	0	4	24
16	Israel	37	5,195	22.79	228	0	2	10	24
17	Norway	36	4,978	20.15	247	0	1	9	24
18	Spain	34	5,957	11.61	513	0	0	4	18
19	Taiwan	34	5,752	10.07	571	0	0	2	20
20	Finland	34	5,045	14.25	354	0	1	8	18
21	Italy	34	4,205	15.46	272	0	0	6	15
22	Austria	34	4,085	19.83	206	0	0	6	19
23	Turkey	31	3,504	17.01	206	0	1	4	17
24	Greece	24	2,304	15.46	149	0	0	3	11
25	Portugal	23	1,653	16.05	103	0	0	1	4
26	Ireland	22	2,218	15.3	145	0	1	5	8
27	Japan	21	1,416	11.8	120	0	0	0	5
28	India	19	1,361	12.04	113	0	0	1	2
29	Cyprus	16	1,027	25.67	40	0	0	2	4
30	Chile	14	661	9.87	67	0	0	1	2
31	Brazil	13	768	8.35	92	0	0	2	3
32	South Africa	13	754	9.43	80	0	0	1	3
33	Thailand	12	613	19.16	32	0	0	2	4
34	Slovenia	12	552	13.46	41	0	0	2	2
35	Malaysia	10	340	7.56	45	0	0	0	1
36	Poland	9	360	10	36	0	0	1	2
37	United Arab Emirates	9	264	7.54	35	0	0	0	0
38	Mexico	9	255	8.5	30	0	0	0	0
39	Croatia	8	183	10.76	17	0	0	0	0
40	Costa Rica	7	174	4.83	36	0	0	0	0
41	Kuwait	6	122	10.17	12	0	0	0	0
42	Argentina	6	103	7.36	14	0	0	0	0
43	Iran	6	101	5.61	18	0	0	0	0
44	Russia	6	95	5.88	16	0	0	0	0
45	Saudi Arabia	5	170	13.08	13	0	0	0	0
46	Hungary	5	134	7.44	18	0	0	0	1
47	Vietnam	5	123	6.83	18	0	0	0	0
48	Colombia	5	113	7.06	16	0	0	0	0
49	Qatar	5	58	4.46	13	0	0	0	0
50	Nicaragua	3	22	1.83	12	0	0	0	0

Table III.
Ranking of the 50 most influential countries according to the H-index (1990–2014)

Notes: R, ranking. > 500, > 250, > 100, > 50, the number of papers with more than 500, 250, 100 and 50 citations, respectively
Source: Elaboration based on WoS

received 500 citations or more compared to 3,891 that received 50 or less (65.79 percent). This number is very low compared with other fields, such as physics and chemistry (Merigó, Mas-Tur, Roig-Tierno and Ribeiro-Soriano, 2015).

Evolution of total publications and citations according to five-year periods (1990–2014)

Analyzing the overall evolution between periods (Table V) with respect to publications and citations, we can observe the following regarding the top 15 positions. The five-year analysis reveals the changes that occur every five years in relation to the emerging countries in marketing research. It is not surprising that first place is occupied by the USA. However, the changes in the contributions made by other countries, such as the Netherlands, and emerging economies, such as China, are notable.

There is a steady increase in the number of publications over the five-year periods, particularly during the final period. More specifically, in the first five years, the total number of publications amounted to 2,058, compared to 12,549 in the final period. Thus, the rate of growth of publications is on average 20.0 percent.

However, the total citations tendency seems to change over time. While the first three five-year periods (1990–2004) exhibit an increasing trend (with a growth rate of approximately 19.6 percent), the last two five-year periods display the opposite trend (with rates of decline of 27.4 percent on average). This trend is particularly evident between 2009 and 2014 when the number of citations decreased at a rate of 52.4 percent. This outcome may be linked to the increase in the number of publications, which influences the total number of documents available to be cited.

As shown in Table VI, the leading role is consistently played by the USA. A strong decrease can be observed in the H-index for the USA in 2010–2014. Although a substantial number of papers were produced during this period, these papers received a lower level of citation by other authors.

In retrospect, second place is always disputed (mainly) between Canada and the UK. Only in the 2000–2004 period the Netherlands surprisingly ranked second. This country has

TC	Number of publications based on their TC values	% publications regarding the total
≥500	101	1.71
≥250	351	5.94
≥100	1,571	26.56
≥50	3,891	65.79
Total	5,914	100.00

Source: Elaboration based on WoS

Table IV.
Summary of the data
of publications by the
country, period
1990–2014

Q	Year	Total TP	% increase TP	Total TC	% increase TC
1	1990–1994	2,058	–	141,988	17.8
2	1995–1999	2,830	37.5	162,141	20.3
3	2000–2004	4,038	42.7	202,734	25.4
4	2005–2009	7,483	85.3	197,907	24.8
5	2010–2014	12,549	67.7	94,179	11.8
Total		28,958	58.3	798,949	100

Note: Q = five-year periods

Source: Elaboration based on WoS

Table V.
Evolution of total
publications and
citations according to
five-year periods

Table VI.
Quinquennial analysis,
country rankings
1990–2014

R	Country	1990–1994		1995–1999		2000–2004		2005–2009		2010–2014						
		TP	TC	H	TC	H	TC	H	TC	H	TC	TP				
1	USA	1,734	124,483	162	2,090	163	138,620	2,626	USA	114	100,682	3,606	USA	56	37,738	4,553
2	UK	44	1,266	18	7,386	140	10,267	176	Canada	54	11,462	424	UK	29	7,115	1,140
3	Canada	108	5,465	35	5,041	132	8,829	197	UK	50	12,782	637	The Netherlands	29	4,347	501
4	Australia	19	2,774	13	5,856	73	10,233	273	Australia	50	10,310	407	Canada	28	4,784	591
5	The Netherlands	13	593	11	3,450	50	6,461	158	The Netherlands	48	9,461	299	Germany	26	4,667	600
6	China	1	23	1	2,774	67	4,780	135	Germany	47	7,488	229	China	25	4,874	598
7	Germany	7	234	6	4,520	29	4,044	62	China	36	5,889	258	Australia	25	4,390	713
8	France	13	834	11	1,435	35	4,188	73	South K.	35	4,609	181	France	22	2,582	367
9	South K.	17	688	12	1,204	25	2,116	57	France	35	4,269	166	South K.	20	2,199	342
10	Taiwan	5	55	3	871	29	2,115	36	Belgium	30	2,595	88	Spain	20	1,860	308
11	Spain	5	186	5	685	22	1,951	56	Spain	29	3,110	170	Finland	20	1,788	231
12	NZ	8	137	5	659	19	2,103	32	Taiwan	29	2,968	162	Taiwan	19	2,143	373
13	Finland	3	229	3	409	16	2,140	41	Singapore	28	2,971	110	Italy	19	1,460	179
14	Sweden	6	952	5	1,252	10	1,400	51	Austria	27	2,113	62	Switzerland	19	1,384	152
15	Belgium	9	1,588	8	531	18	2,131	34	Switzerland	26	2,148	66	NZ	18	1,329	188
16	Singapore	4	161	3	288	12	1,356	31	Italy	26	1,930	73	Denmark	18	1,324	154
17	Italy	2	112	2	343	8	767	27	NZ	25	1,978	102	Singapore	18	1,007	133
18	Denmark	3	388	3	192	8	866	23	Sweden	25	1,921	82	Belgium	17	1,253	163
19	Switzerland	1	82	1	149	11	843	17	Finland	23	1,874	85	Sweden	17	1,208	194
20	Norway	5	56	4	261	9	839	18	Norway	23	1,786	72	Austria	15	934	118
21	Israel	14	1,082	9	249	6	843	17	Turkey	23	1,773	54	Turkey	15	760	128
22	Turkey	1	4	1	165	7	669	17	Denmark	23	1,514	68	Norway	14	772	129
23	Austria	1	3	1	124	6	421	24	Israel	18	1,326	50	Greece	14	573	78
24	Greece	1	5	1	77	6	452	13	Portugal	18	948	32	Portugal	14	488	63
25	Ireland	4	392	4	251	5	368	12	Greece	17	988	50	Israel	13	746	111
26	Japan	12	123	4	167	3	360	11	Ireland	13	634	36	Ireland	13	575	85
27	India	1	6	1	128	3	402	12	India	12	512	28	India	11	389	70
28	Portugal	1	6	1	94	3	419	5	Japan	12	371	30	Japan	9	371	55

(continued)

R	Country	1990-1994			1995-1999			2000-2004			2005-2009			2010-2014								
		TP	TC	H	H	Country	H	TC	TP	Country	H	TC	TP	Country	H	TC	TP					
29	Brazil	2	1	1	3	59	3	3	3	South A.	5	221	5	5	Slovenia	9	324	16	Brazil	9	248	70
30	South A.	2	26	2	2	34	2	4	4	Brazil	4	271	4	4	Chile	9	247	20	Cyprus	9	195	19
31	Chile	1	2	1	2	14	2	4	4	Slovenia	4	96	4	4	Cyprus	8	246	13	Chile	8	216	39
32	Malaysia	0	0	0	2	14	2	4	4	Portugal	4	83	4	4	South A.	7	261	16	South A.	7	169	51
33	Slovenia	0	0	0	1	65	1	4	4	Malaysia	4	79	4	4	Brazil	7	248	15	Malaysia	7	151	36
34	Cyprus	0	0	0	1	5	1	3	3	Chile	3	192	3	6	Thailand	6	187	11	Thailand	7	140	17
35	Poland	8	10	2	1	4	1	3	3	Poland	3	171	3	3	Costa R.	5	91	10	Slovenia	6	129	20
36	Costa R.	0	0	0	1	3	1	3	3	Costa R.	3	34	3	3	Mexico	5	81	7	EAU	6	124	26
37	EAU	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	EAU	3	28	3	3	EAU	4	112	6	Poland	6	115	19
38	Thailand	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	Thailand	2	221	2	2	Malaysia	3	110	5	Mexico	5	88	17
39	Mexico	2	22	1	0	0	0	2	2	Mexico	2	59	2	2	Poland	3	50	4	Vietnam	4	27	13
40	Vietnam	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	Vietnam	2	55	2	2	Vietnam	3	41	3	Costa R.	3	35	13

Source: Elaboration based on WoS

Table VI.

developed substantially in the field, rising from seventh in the rankings in the 1990–1994 period to third in the 2010–2014 period (TP: 13/H: 11 to TP: 501/H: 29, respectively) (Table VI).

Another relevant issue is the clear evolution of China, which in the 1990–1994 period achieved TP: 1/H: 1, which subsequently improved to TP: 598/H: 25 in the 2010–2014 period. The data also reveal that from the 1995–1999 period to the 2010–2014 period, China fluctuated between the fifth and seventh place, whereby it should be noted that in the 1990–1994 period China ranked 25th (Table VI).

Another country that displays notable growth is Germany. It rises consistently in all periods, jumping from the tenth place in the 1990–1994 period to the fifth place in the 2010–2014 period (Table VI).

Finally, the strong decline of Israel in scientific production in marketing should be noted. During the period 1990–1994, Israel ranked in the top 10 (i.e. eighth place) only to decline to 25th place in the 2010–2014 period (Table VI).

Comparison of countries according to journals for the 1990–2014 period

In this section, the analysis focuses on establishing the publishing trends of the countries in the most influential scientific journals. Many bibliometric studies have been conducted to determine the rankings of such journals (Urbancic, 2005; Mort *et al.*, 2004; Theoharakis and Hirst, 2002; Bakir *et al.*, 2000; Hult *et al.*, 1997; Kurtz and Boone, 1988).

Generally, the main marketing journals are the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS)*, the *Journal of Marketing (JM)*, the *Journal of Consumer Research (JCR)*, the *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, *Marketing Science (MS)* and the *Journal of Retailing*.

Thus, Table VII presents the ranking of the top 40 countries by total publications in the *JAMS*, the *JM*, the *JCR*, the *JMR*, *MS* and the *Journal of Business Research*.

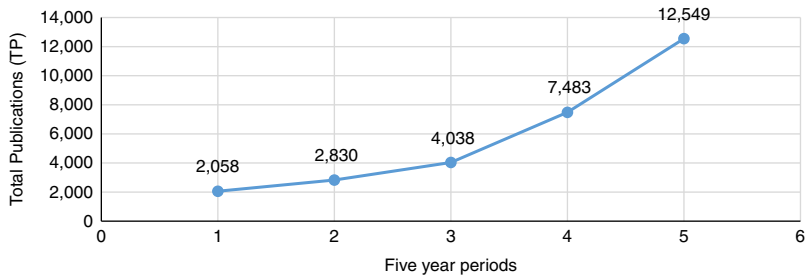


Figure 1.
Evolution of total de publications according to five-year periods

Source: Elaboration based on WoS

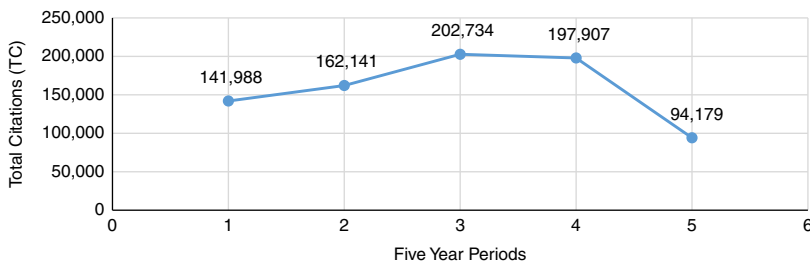


Figure 2.
Evolution of the total number of citations according to five-year periods

Source: Elaboration based on WoS

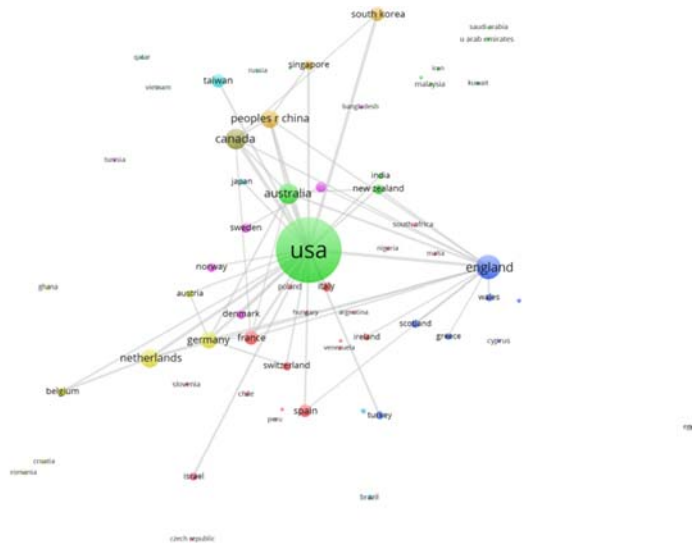


Figure 3. Co-authorship of countries in marketing research

Source: Elaboration based on WoS

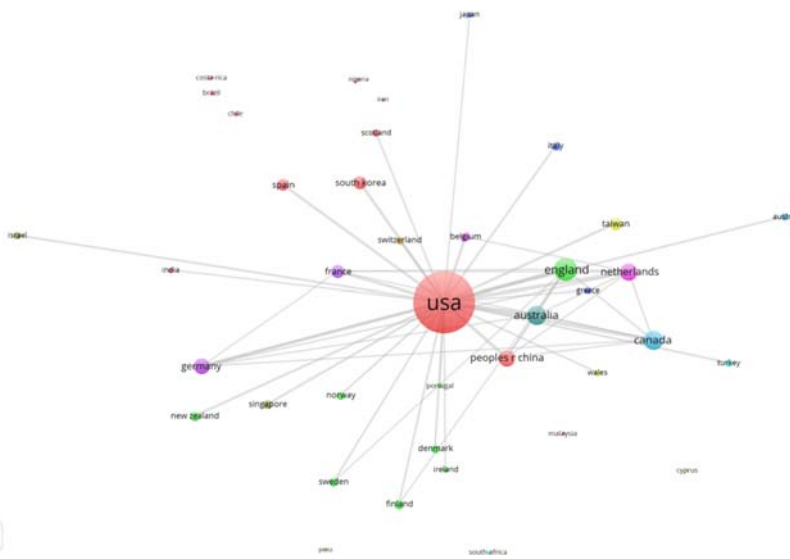


Figure 4. Citation analysis of countries in marketing research

Source: Elaboration based on WoS

The USA leads in all the journals, closely followed by the UK, Canada and the Netherlands in diverse orders (depending on period and/or indicators).

In particular, in *JAMS*, Canada ranks above the UK, which ranks higher than the Netherlands. In addition, we can note a breakthrough in the total number of publications of Germany in *JAMS* and the *JM* with respect to Germany's indicator in total journals.

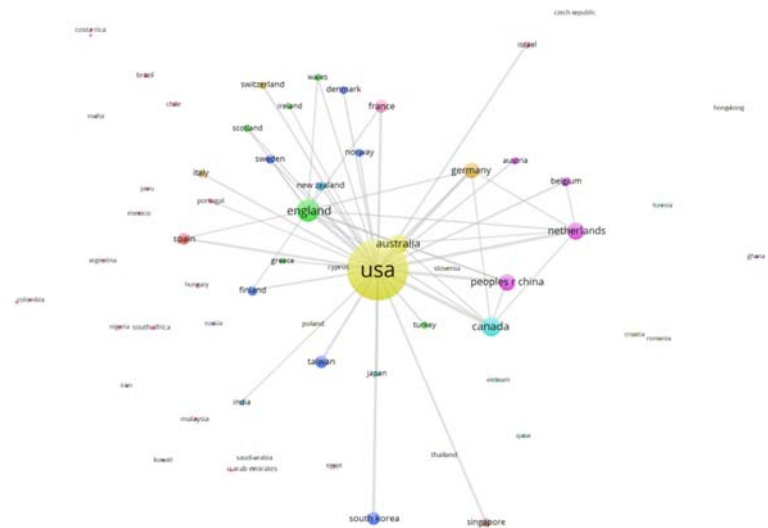


Figure 5.
Bibliographic coupling
of countries in
marketing research



Source: Elaboration based on WoS

In the case of China, the country ranks relatively highly in *Consumer Research*, where it is third in the number of publications by journal. This outcome is similar to what was observed for *Marketing Research*, the *Journal of Marketing Science and Research Business*, in which China ranks fourth, fifth and fourth, respectively.

If we analyze the publications by countries in the journals, we can observe that the *Journal of Business Research* is the group with the most publications (TP), with 38.46 percent of the total sample. In addition, the 15 countries that publish the most publish in a smaller quantity than the remaining countries. This outcome highlights the heterogeneity of the origins, which can be explained by the wide range of publications.

In retrospect, the *JAMS* has the lowest percentage of total publications considered in our sample. However, one should consider that this low percentage of the total is determined by the selected sample, which represents only a framework and not all marketing research.

Additionally, we should note that *JAMS* ranks the lowest in the number of publications because its main 15 contributor countries account for 94.19 percent of its content. That is, a group of countries publish a substantial amount but less than the rest. The concentration of publications from certain countries is consistent with the previous results, and complementing these data with a diversity of sources generates valuable knowledge in the area by providing new approaches (Table VIII).

Mapping countries in marketing research with VOSviewer software

To deepen the analysis of marketing research according to country, we develop a graphical visualization of the bibliographic material by using VOSviewer software (Van Eck and Waltman, 2010). In this manner, we generate a knowledge domain map of the main research countries to demonstrate the collaboration networks among those countries with respect to marketing studies. At the country level, VOSviewer can develop bibliographic visualizations based on co-authorship, citation analysis and bibliographic coupling (Merigó *et al.*, 2016).

It is important to recall that co-authorship measures the documents published by authors who work at institutions in countries with the highest number of documents co-authored with other countries. Figure 3 analyzes the co-authorship of countries in marketing research

R	Country	JM	JCR	JMR	MS	JAMS	JBR	Total
1	USA	806	1,187	1,086	876	532	1,776	6,263
2	UK	35	33	36	38	38	309	489
3	Canada	62	144	84	52	43	239	624
4	Australia	35	30	19	21	33	263	401
5	China	28	83	52	37	18	163	381
6	The Netherlands	58	47	95	59	33	84	376
7	Germany	77	10	22	17	49	115	290
8	South Korea	11	16	23	16	13	142	221
9	France	20	27	24	28	10	104	213
10	Spain	6	2	4	7	6	130	155
11	Taiwan	1	1	1	4	7	135	149
12	Singapore	9	38	28	20	8	31	134
13	Belgium	15	13	23	9	6	43	109
14	New Zealand	6	5	15	10	6	64	106
15	Israel	13	13	16	22	5	24	93
16	Turkey	10	10	6	6	7	27	66
17	Switzerland	14	4	10	4	5	27	64
18	Austria	4	4	2	4	5	39	58
19	Sweden	5	1	0	1	3	39	49
20	Norway	8	0	3	2	8	26	47
21	Denmark	3	9	1	1	2	29	45
22	Chile	0	2	0	3	1	38	44
23	Italy	3	4	1	1	5	29	43
24	Brazil	1	3	0	2	1	33	40
25	Finland	2	2	0	1	3	31	39
26	Costa Rica	0	0	0	0	0	36	36
27	Japan	1	1	6	6	1	20	35
28	Portugal	1	1	1	3	3	25	34
29	Greece	2	2	0	0	4	20	28
30	India	1	1	2	7	3	10	24
31	Ireland	2	1	0	0	1	15	19
32	Malaysia	0	0	0	0	0	14	14
33	Poland	0	0	1	0	0	12	13
34	Mexico	0	0	1	0	0	12	13
35	Cyprus	0	0	0	0	2	6	8
36	Thailand	0	1	0	0	0	6	7
37	South Africa	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
38	U Arab Emirates	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
39	Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
40	Vietnam	0	0	0	0	0	3	3

Overview of
the leading
countries

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Source: Elaboration based on WoS

Table VII.
Main countries
according to total
publications issued in
each journal, period
1990–2014

Journal	TP Total	% according to total	TP of Top 15 countries	% TP Top 15 in TP total of the journal
<i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>	861	8.01	811	94.19
<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	1,239	11.53	1,201	96.93
<i>Consumer Research</i>	1,695	15.77	1,665	98.23
<i>Marketing Research</i>	1,562	14.53	1,539	98.53
<i>Marketing Science</i>	1,257	11.70	1,219	96.98
<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	4,133	38.46	3,645	88.19

Source: Elaboration based on WoS

Table VIII.
Journal performance in
the periods 1990–2014

between 1990 and 2014 with a threshold of 55 connections. Each node symbolizes a country, and the node size indicates the number of published articles. The links between nodes indicate collaborations, whereby the greater the width of the link is, the closer the collaboration. One should note that VOSviewer separates the publications of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland instead of considering the UK as a whole.

Figure 3 reveals that the collaboration knowledge domain map presents several expected “locally centralized” networks, for example, England–Wales–Scotland, the Netherlands–Germany–Austria and the USA–Canada.

The USA has the most articles and links. In terms of link strength, the USA is primarily connected with Australia, England, Germany, the Netherlands, South Korea, Canada and the People’s Republic of China. Based on link strength, the UK is primarily connected with Australia and the USA. Canada also presents links with a variety of countries with which it has developed networks. It collaborates strongly with the USA.

The development of global markets focused on MO requires the experience and knowledge of experts in different cultures (Lopez-Duarte *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, the knowledge maps of the co-authorship network represent an opportunity since collaborative research could achieve advantages that complement the creation of collaborative research groups with other countries. Using these knowledge maps, individual researchers can search for collaborators. The maps can also be used to create groups of editors.

Citation analysis measures the number of times countries cite one another in the set of documents considered. Figure 4 presents the citation analysis of countries in marketing research between 1990 and 2014. Note that the figure considers a threshold of 55 connections. The network visualization map of citation relationships of highly cited documents clearly reveals that papers from the USA are cited by the largest number of countries. This outcome confirms the influence of the USA on marketing research and indicates that the USA has the broadest network. Other countries that stand out for their level of citation and thus represent significant references in marketing research are the Netherlands and England. There is a strong citation relationship between the USA and England, the USA and Germany, the USA and the Netherlands, and England. Asian countries, such as South Korea and the People’s Republic of China, also highly cite the USA. Another pair of countries that are cited is England and Australia.

Bibliographic coupling of countries occurs when the documents of two countries cite the same third documents (Martyn, 1964; Kessler, 1963). Figure 5 shows the bibliographic coupling of the leading countries in marketing research by using a threshold of 55 connections.

To summarize the information of Figures 3–5, Table IX presents the numerical results for co-authorship, citation analysis and the bibliographic coupling of countries. One should observe that Table IX uses fractional counting. That is, it awards one unit to each document, and each co-authoring country receives a percentage of this unit according to its participation.

The USA represents the core of marketing research. Other English-speaking countries achieve remarkable results. However, their output remains far below that of the USA. Several Western European (except the UK) and East Asian countries obtain significant results. However, their outcomes remain very low compared to those of the English-speaking nations. To analyze the countries based on population size, the last four columns of Table IX show the results per million inhabitants. From this perspective, the USA remains a leader in marketing research although several other countries obtain better results, including the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, Finland, Singapore, Denmark and Norway.

Discussion and managerial implications

The scientific community is increasingly aware of research quality. Today, scientific merit can be evaluated by various metrics thanks to the development of technologies that enable the creation of complex and exhaustive information databases (Alonso *et al.*, 2009), such as

R	Country	Doc	CAL	CL	BCL	D/P	CA/P	CL/P	BC/P
1	USA	13,202	3,420	161,138	280,429.77	41.40	10.72	505.29	879.37
2	England	1,881	1,070	35,193	87,654.16	35.48	20.18	663.87	1,653.48
3	Canada	1,341	849	28,092	57,426.87	38.14	24.15	798.98	1,633.30
4	Australia	1,331	698	26,222	59,607.60	57.54	30.18	1,133.68	2,577.07
5	The Netherlands	1,036	644	28,907	48,190.42	61.67	38.33	1,720.65	2,868.48
6	PR China	1,005	655	19,320	46,649.46	0.74	0.48	14.24	34.38
7	Germany	927	527	22,995	46,885.44	11.50	6.54	285.23	581.56
8	France	622	430	15,058	30,205.03	9.42	6.51	228.05	457.44
9	South Korea	609	425	11,255	27,592.75	12.13	8.46	224.11	549.44
10	Taiwan	566	142	8,880	24,576.14	24.22	6.08	379.97	1,051.61
11	Spain	507	185	10,118	25,166.39	10.84	3.96	216.34	538.09
12	New Zealand	355	212	7,462	16,780.91	79.40	47.42	1,668.98	3,753.28
13	Finland	347	132	6,760	16,713.46	63.80	24.27	1,242.88	3,072.89
14	Belgium	318	191	10,879	15,735.93	28.39	17.05	971.34	1,404.99
15	Sweden	318	154	6,240	14,254.52	33.15	16.05	650.47	1,485.93
16	Singapore	317	256	6,586	13,563.71	58.71	47.42	1,219.86	2,512.26
17	Italy	267	162	5,501	13,597.99	4.46	2.71	91.94	227.28
18	Denmark	264	135	5,424	13,396.88	47.03	24.05	966.16	2,386.33
19	Switzerland	243	180	6,182	13,410.63	30.07	22.27	765.00	1,659.53
20	Norway	240	110	5,449	11,122.92	47.21	21.64	1,071.79	2,187.83
21	Scotland	223	155	3,620	11,195.02	41.97	29.17	681.35	2,107.10
22	Israel	217	135	4,558	9,376.42	26.93	16.75	565.58	1,163.47
23	Austria	204	145	5,035	11,889.74	24.07	17.11	594.17	1,403.08
24	Turkey	203	142	4,785	11,172.72	2.71	1.90	63.86	149.11
25	Wales	172	117	3,759	10,699.01	56.15	38.20	1,227.23	3,492.98
26	Greece	145	67	2,973	7,346.38	13.15	6.07	269.54	666.04
27	Ireland	141	86	2,526	7,654.99	30.69	18.72	549.73	1,665.94
28	India	110	72	1,958	5,201.88	0.09	0.06	1.56	4.15
29	Japan	109	67	1,621	4,401.53	0.86	0.53	12.73	34.58
30	Portugal	102	62	2,157	5,705.56	9.75	5.93	206.21	545.46
31	Brazil	90	42	1,125	3,761.77	0.45	0.21	5.61	18.77
32	South Africa	78	33	1,119	2,895.64	1.47	0.62	21.12	54.66
33	Chile	67	35	866	2,425.58	3.80	1.99	49.15	137.66
34	North Ireland	61	33	878	3,195.38	33.70	18.23	485.08	1,765.40
35	Malaysia	44	33	561	2,391.33	1.48	1.11	18.88	80.46
36	Slovenia	41	20	814	2,265.89	19.90	9.71	395.15	1,099.95
37	Cyprus	39	33	1,344	2,956.64	46.54	39.38	1,603.82	3,528.21
38	U Arab Emirates	35	20	577	2,061.50	3.74	2.14	61.74	220.58
39	Thailand	31	27	759	1,758.24	0.46	0.40	11.33	26.24
40	Mexico	30	22	436	1,294.79	0.25	0.18	3.57	10.59

Notes: Doc, number of documents; CAL, co-authorship links; CL, citation links; BCL, bibliographic coupling links; D/P, documents per million inhabitants; CA/P, co-authorship links per million inhabitants; CL/P, citations links per million inhabitants; BC/P, bibliographic coupling links per million inhabitants
Source: Elaboration based on WoS

Table IX.
Co-authorship, citation
analysis and
bibliographic coupling
of countries

WoS (<http://portal.isiknowledge.com/portal.cgi?DestApp=WOS&Func=Frame>), Scopus (www.scopus.com/), and a database developed by Elsevier and Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com/>). By these means, bibliometric studies can be performed that enable one to establish the relevance of scientific investigations. This method is widely accepted by various journals, and with an increase in its application in the last decade (WoS). From what we have observed, this bibliometric method will continue to be used (Alonso *et al.*, 2009).

Regarding indicators, historically, researchers have been evaluated based on their total number of publications, the quality of which is judged based on the number of citations.

In this study, a composite index known as the H-index is considered in addition to the previous ones because it measures both productivity and the impact of the scholar's publications. An H-index of N in N publications, each of which has been cited in other documents at least N times (Hirsch, 2005) is a recognized indicator (Ball, 2005) of extensive citation in the scientific world (Alonso *et al.*, 2009). Among the H-index's advantages is its simplicity of calculation. In addition, it considers both the quantity and the impact of a researcher's publications. In addition, important journals have recognized its validity. It has been observed that increasingly more complex indicators will be created that combine information from other indicators (Leeuwen *et al.*, 2003; Imran *et al.*, 2018).

Thus, this paper presents an overview of the development of marketing research at the country level between 1990 and 2014 by bibliometric analysis.

Our results reveal that 54 percent of the sample countries have a category H-index greater than 20. In turn, we observe a steady increase in the number of publications over five-year periods. Regarding the number of citations, the picture is somewhat different. While the first three five-year periods (1990–2004) display an increasing trend, the last two five-year periods exhibit the opposite trend. In both cases, the trend is particularly pronounced in the final five-year period (2000–2004).

In a segregated analysis by country, the data reveal an uneven evolution of marketing research. The first 10 countries in our ranking account for over 80 percent of all publications in the sample. The USA appears as the leader in all indicators in the area of marketing within this sample of countries, which is indifferent to the journal analysis. The USA is followed by Canada, the Netherlands and the UK according to the H-index and C/P.

The ranking also reveals the important role that China is playing based on its own development. The country has clearly been advancing in the ranking over time, which suggests the importance that is being awarded to the marketing field by the Asian economic powerhouse. Currently, China ranks third, fourth, fifth and fourth in *Consumer Research*, *Marketing Research*, *MS* and the *Journal of Business Research*, respectively.

Our findings are relevant for students, academics, business organizations and governments, who may use this information for decision making regarding future research and to identify countries based on the marketing area and their relationships. The research makes an important contribution by identifying the leading countries and continents in marketing research and the countries that have recently begun making significant contributions to knowledge. Our results may also serve as an incentive to researchers from countries that are at the bottom of the ranking, for example, the countries of South and Central America.

The literature offers no other ranking of countries comparable to that proposed here, which prevents us from comparing results. However, the analysis by five-year periods enables us to perceive what has occurred during the last 25 years in different countries and continents with respect to marketing research. Our results also indicate a need for the countries of Central and South America to encourage research in the area considering the globalization of business and the importance of marketing to business performance.

Limitations

Several limitations of the study result from our use of the WoS database. For example, each journal, author, university and/or country involved in a specific paper is considered a single unit. Therefore, in research papers with more than one author or with authors from different universities and/or countries, only the lead author is considered in the analysis (Merigó and Núñez, 2016; Cornelius *et al.*, 2006; Schildt *et al.*, 2006; Ramos-Rodríguez and Ruíz-Navarro, 2004; McCain, 1990). In addition, the study does not include new trends in publications between 2014 and 2018 in different journals and countries.

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Appendix. Marketing journals

- *Consumption Markets and Culture (CMC)*.
- *Electronic Commerce Research (ECR)*.
- *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications (ECRA)*.
- *Electronic Markets (EM)*.
- *European Journal of Marketing (EJM)*.
- *Industrial Marketing Management (IMM)*.
- *International Journal of Advertising (IJA)*.
- *International Journal of Consumer Studies (IJCS)*.
- *International Journal of Electronic Commerce (IJECE)*.
- *International Journal of Market Research (IJMR)*.
- *International Journal of Research in Marketing (IJRM)*.
- *International Marketing Review (IMR)*.
- *Journal of Advertising (JA)*.
- *Journal of Advertising Research (JAR)*.
- *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing (JBIM)*.
- *Journal of Business and Technical Communication (JBTC)*.
- *Journal of Business Research (JBR)*.
- *Journal of Business-To-Business Marketing (JBBM)*.
- *Journal of Consumer Affairs (JCA)*.
- *Journal of Consumer Behaviour (JCB)*.
- *Journal of Consumer Psychology (JCP)*.
- *Journal of Consumer Research (JCR)*.
- *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research (JECE)*.
- *Journal of Interactive Marketing (JIAM)*.
- *Journal of International Marketing (JIM)*.
- *Journal of Macromarketing (JMM)*.
- *Journal of Marketing (JM)*.
- *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*.
- *Journal of Product Innovation Management (JPIM)*.
- *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing (JPPM)*.
- *Journal of Retailing (JR)*.

- *Journal of Services Marketing (JSM).*
- *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS).*
- *Marketing Letters (ML).*
- *Marketing Science (MS).*
- *Marketing Theory (MT).*
- *Psychology and Marketing (PM).*
- *QME – Quantitative Marketing and Economics (QME).*

Corresponding author

Carolina Nicolas can be contacted at: cnicolas@santotomas.cl

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