

# **A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICES MARKETING: THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

A bibliometric analysis, spanning five decades of knowledge is employed with the aim of: (i) assessing core intellectual knowledge of international services research; (ii) examining the contribution of international services marketing to broader research disciplines; and, (iii) estimating forecasting trends for the most promising international services research directions.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The trading of services, as opposed to products, represents more than two-thirds of global GDP and accounts for over 75% of foreign direct investment in the advanced economies of the world. Scholars have developed a rich body of literature on international services across different periods of study marked by shifts in pace and direction, covering a broad spectrum of activities, and producing varied implications for different services operations (Hofer and Knight, 2022). A bibliometric review approach is required to aggregate disparate subfields within the international services marketing literature. Specifically, our study answers three research questions: (1) *What* is the core knowledge structure of international services marketing research? (2) *How* has the perspective spread within international services work and beyond it to other disciplines? (3) *When* will the diffused knowledge structure shift in the sense of research progression and devolution?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Three studies were carried out in order to address the main research questions. We generated data appropriate for each study, corresponding to the knowledge core, diffusion and time evolution. Our study employs direct citation links (the number of direct citations or ‘links’ between published articles) using the specialized software suite *VOSviewer*, as it represents a clear and direct research relatedness and influence (van Eck and Waltman, 2017). The authors generated data from 1022 publications encompassing 22,679 citations in 48 academic journals.

## **CONCLUSION**

The disparate and dynamic nature of the international service literature has led the way to acknowledge the direct citations within the field over time which results in identifying both core and diffused research themes, and presenting projected and emerging future research opportunities. In doing so, this study first unveils that international services marketing literature is heavily fragmented, revealing seven core research themes and ten diffused research clusters within international service marketing literature. Beyond these, our findings reveal inter and intra cluster citations, demonstrating the most homophilic and eclectic diffused clusters in terms of the interdependencies among the research ideas. In addition to grasping the intellectual structure of research clusters, we also provided forecasting results, offering several important and hidden research opportunities with an intent to guide future knowledge foundations of international service literature.

## **REFERENCES**

Full list of references are available from the first author upon request.