



A BIBLIOMETRIC INVESTIGATION OF THE PUBLISHED LITERATURE ON DIRECT MARKETING: UNRAVELING THE RESEARCH LANDSCAPE

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Abstract: The use of the bibliometric analytical technique for examining Direct Marketing research is found to be non-existent in the literature. The basic purpose of the study was to perform an empirical examination of bibliometric trends and patterns of all Direct Marketing-related publications in the Web of Science core collection. This study covers 617 search results from the Web of Science website resulting from a query for documents with titles containing the keywords, Direct marketing and marketing. Analysed parameters included document type, year of publishing, language of publication, authorship, distribution of subject category, country of publication and most-frequently cited article. VOS viewer was used for data visualization. Standard bibliometric analysis was used for presenting the growth of publications, research productivity and citation analysis. The present research aims to address a significant gap in the current academic literature by utilizing bibliometric analysis to examine the landscape of Direct Marketing research. Specifically, this study focuses on conducting a comprehensive analysis of all publications related to Direct Marketing within the Web of Science core collection. A total of 617 search results were obtained by querying the Web of Science website using the keywords "Direct marketing" and "marketing" in the title of the documents. The analysis encompasses various parameters including document type, year of publication, language of publication, authorship, subject category distribution, country of publication, and the most frequently cited article. To visualize the data, VOS viewer was employed. In addition, standard bibliometric analysis methods were employed to present the growth of publications, research productivity, and citation analysis. It is worth noting that the use of the bibliometric analytical technique in the examination of Direct Marketing research has not been explored in the current body of scholarly works. Hence, this study represents a novel contribution to the academic field by providing a comprehensive overview of the publications in this area.

Keywords: Direct Marketing, marketing, bibliometric analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

Direct Marketing is a system of marketing by which organizations communicate directly with target customers to generate a response or transaction. This response may take the form of an inquiry, a purchase, or even a vote. Direct marketing encompasses any marketing strategy that relies on direct communication or distribution channels to reach individual consumers, as opposed to utilizing intermediaries like mass media platforms.

Direct marketing utilizes various delivery systems such as mail, email, social media, and texting campaigns. The inherent characteristic of direct marketing lies in its ability to eliminate intermediaries, such as advertising media, hence its nomenclature. Direct Marketing is an approach utilized by organizations to establish direct communication with specific target customers, with the aim of eliciting a response or initiating a transaction. This response may involve inquiries, purchases, or even political support. Direct marketing is a distinct marketing approach that diverges from conventional methods reliant on intermediaries such as mass media. Instead, direct marketing employs direct communication or distribution channels to directly engage with individual consumers. These channels encompass a wide array of platforms including mail, email, social media, and texting campaigns. The name "direct marketing" stems from its characteristic of bypassing intermediaries, such as advertising media, and interacting directly with the intended audience.

Direct marketing campaigns function autonomously to directly engage target audiences, as opposed to conventional public relations campaigns that rely on intermediaries, such as media publications or mass media, for dissemination purposes. In the realm of direct marketing, enterprises employ various communication channels such as email, social media, physical mail, telephone, and short message service (SMS) campaigns to effectively disseminate their brand messages and promote sales propositions. Direct marketing frequently tries to personalise the message by including the recipient's name or city in a prominent place in order to increase engagement, despite the fact that the number of communications sent can be enormous.

Direct Marketing is an approach utilized by organizations to establish direct communication with specific target customers, with the aim of eliciting a response or initiating a transaction. This response may involve inquiries, purchases, or even political support. Unlike traditional marketing methods that rely on intermediaries, such as mass media, direct marketing relies on direct communication or distribution channels to reach individual consumers. This includes various platforms such as mail, email, social media, and texting campaigns. The name "direct marketing" stems from its characteristic of bypassing intermediaries, such as advertising media, and interacting directly with the intended audience.

Even though the term Direct Marketing was well defined since 1967, by Lester Wunderman ,the earliest research papers found on the topic dates back to only 1989. Since then the term has been widely used by researchers for further investigation and development. Thus, the objective of this study is to analyse the scientific literature published in the field of Direct Marketing using bibliometric analysis. Bibliometric analysis is defined as a statistical evaluation of published scientific articles, books, or the chapters of a book, and it is an effectual way to measure the influence of publication in the scientific community(Iftikhar & Faisaluddin, 2019).Although the concept of Direct Marketing has been well-defined since 1967 by Lester Wunderman, scholarly research on this topic is relatively recent, with the earliest research papers found dating back to 1989. Since then, researchers have extensively utilized the term Direct Marketing for further investigation and advancement in the field. Therefore, the objective of this study is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of the scientific literature pertaining to Direct Marketing. Bibliometric analysis is a statistical evaluation method used to measure the impact and influence of published scientific articles, books, or book chapters within the academic community (Iftikhar & Faisaluddin, 2019).

This section is intended to explain the reason for conducting this bibliometric analysis. The following sections will explain the methodology used for the study, relevant results and ultimately findings of the study.The present research aims to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the existing scholarly literature in the field of Direct Marketing. This analysis is driven by the need to understand the impact and influence of published scientific articles, books, and book chapters pertaining to Direct Marketing within the academic community. By employing a rigorous methodology, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into the trends, patterns, and advancements in research related to Direct Marketing. The subsequent sections will elaborate on the specific methodology employed for this analysis, present relevant results, and ultimately contribute to the body of knowledge in this field.

II. METHODS

All information for this study was gathered from the Web of Science database as of July 17, 2022. Insights into the collected documents' year, author, subject, document type, source title, keywords, affiliation, country, source type, and language are just a few of the analytical findings. For the purposes of this study, we concentrated on all Direct Marketing-related documents that were based on the document's title. As a result, the following inquiry was made: (TITLE("Direct Marketing","Marketing")). To remove the documents pertaining to foreign direct investment, the term "marketing" had to be used. 617 documents were generated as a result of this query. In this study, all 617 documents were used for the bibliometric. All data for this study was obtained from the Web of Science database as of July 17, 2024. Comprehensive insights were derived from the collected documents, including information regarding the year of publication, authors, subjects, document types, source titles, keywords, affiliations, countries, source types, and languages. To focus exclusively on Direct Marketing-related documents, the inquiry was limited to those containing the terms "Direct Marketing" or "Marketing" in their titles. Specifically, the following query was employed: (TITLE("Direct Marketing", "Marketing")). In order to exclude documents related to foreign direct investment, the term "marketing" was used. A total of 617 documents were generated as a result of this query. For the bibliometric analysis conducted in this study, all 617 documents were utilized.

III. RESULTS

A. Document Types

To determine the document types of the data, analysis of the data was done first. Articles, editorial materials, meeting abstracts, letters, proceedings papers, book reviews, early access, review articles etc.

The research identified 13 different types of documents that have been published in relation to Direct Marketing: articles, book chapters, editorial materials, meeting abstracts, letters, proceedings papers, book reviews, early access, review articles, corrections, news items, notes, book chapters and reprints. According to Table 1, articles made up the majority of publications (78.12%), followed by editorial materials (7.131%) and meeting abstracts (5.024%), respectively. Each of the other document types represented less than 5% of the total documents, making up almost 10% of the total. With just 1 document each, the lowest two types were reviews of book chapters and reprints. To gain insight into the document types included in the dataset, an analysis was conducted. Various types of documents were identified, such as articles, editorial materials, meeting abstracts, letters, proceedings papers, book reviews, early access, and review articles. A total of 13 different document types were associated with Direct Marketing literature. Among these, articles constituted the largest proportion (78.12%) of publications, followed by editorial materials (7.131%) and meeting abstracts (5.024%), respectively. Each of the remaining document types accounted for less than 5% of the total, collectively representing approximately 10% of the entire dataset. The least prevalent document types were reviews of book chapters and reprints, with only one document each. This information is summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1: DOCUMENT TYPE

Document Types	Frequency	%
Article	482	78.120%
Editorial Materials	44	7.131%
Meeting Abstracts	31	5.024%
letters	24	3.890%
Proceedings Papers	21	3.404%
Book Reviews	17	2.755%
Early Access	10	1.621%
Review Articles	9	1.459%
Corrections	4	0.648%
News Items	3	0.486%
Notes	2	0.324%

Book Chapters	1	0.1625
Reprints	1	0.162%

B. Year of Publications

In 1989, Roberts & Roman, 1989 published the first study on Direct Marketing in a paper titled "Integrated Direct Marketing." Since then the number of publications over the year has grown significantly. But the growth was rather wave like rather than a steady increase (as shown in Fig. 1). The initial research on Direct Marketing was conducted by Roberts and Roman in 1989, with their seminal paper titled "Integrated Direct Marketing." Since then, the body of literature on this subject has expanded considerably. However, rather than exhibiting a consistent and linear growth pattern, the publication trends demonstrate a more fluctuating pattern, as illustrated in Figure 1.

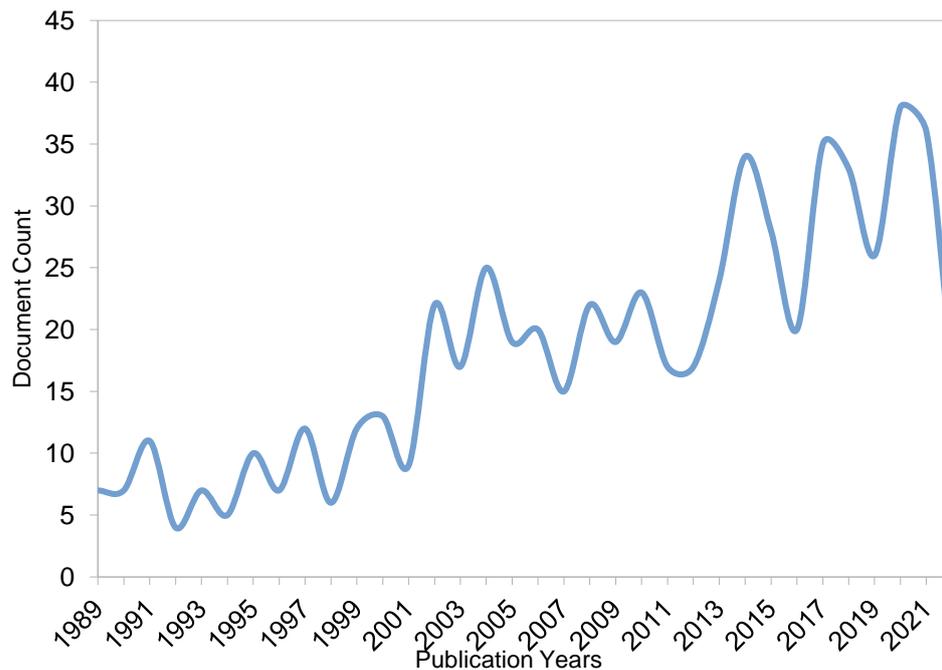


Fig. 1: Total number of publications by year

C. Languages of Documents

Table 2 demonstrates that the majority of the documents found were published in English (95.62% percent). Being the second most used language in publications, there are 19 documents in German constituting 3.08% of total publications. The least used languages in the papers examined were Spanish and Swedish. The initial research on Direct Marketing was conducted by Roberts and Roman in 1989, with their seminal paper titled "Integrated Direct Marketing." Since then, the body of literature on this subject has expanded considerably. However, rather than exhibiting a consistent and linear growth pattern, the publication trends demonstrate a more fluctuating pattern, as illustrated in Figure 1.

TABLE 2: LANGUAGES

Languages	Document Count	%
English	590	95.62
German	19	3.08
Czech	3	0.49
French	3	0.49
Spanish	1	0.16
Swedish	1	0.16

D. Research Areas

Additionally, this study listed the published papers according to the topics it covered. Business Economics accounted for the majority of studies on direct marketing among all documents(266), followed by Agriculture(50), and Engineering(40). Operation Research Management Science and General Internal Medicine had same number of documents. Fig. 2 Shows the additional topics covered by direct Marketing research. In 1989, Roberts and Roman conducted a fundamental study titled "Integrated Direct Marketing," which served as the basis for the subsequent body of research on the topic. Since then, the literature on direct marketing has expanded significantly. However, the growth pattern of publications in this field has not been consistent or linear, as evidenced by Figure 1. Moreover, this study also classified the published papers based on their respective topics. Notably, the majority of studies on direct marketing were classified under Business Economics (266 papers), followed by Agriculture (50 papers) and Engineering (40 papers). Furthermore, there were an equal number of studies under Operation Research Management Science and General Internal Medicine categories. Figure 2 provides an overview of the additional topics covered in direct marketing research.

Fig. 2: Subject area



E. Keyword Analysis

With the aid of VOSviewer, a programme for creating and visualising bibliometric networks, the author keywords were mapped. A network visualisation of the author's keywords is shown in Figure 3, where the relationships with other keywords are shown using colour, circle size, font size, and the thickness of connecting lines. Examples include the grouping of keywords with the same colour. Direct marketing, market orientation and direct mail, for instance, all have a similar colour (grey) in this study, indicating that they are closely related and frequently occur together. Utilizing the bibliometric analysis tool VOSviewer, the author keywords were examined and formed into a network visualization, as depicted in Figure 3. In this visualization, the interrelationships between keywords are represented through various visual cues, such as color, circle size, font size, and line thickness. Notably, keywords that share similar color, such as direct marketing, market orientation, and direct mail, indicate their close association and frequent co-occurrence within this study.

Fig. 3: Keyword map



F. Countries/Regions

The publication of the retrieved documents included contributions from researchers in 69 different nations. Table 3 lists the top 20 nations that contributed to publications on direct marketing. USA ranked first with a total of 299 documents followed by Peoples R China(51), England(51) and Germany (44). The corpus of retrieved documents comprises scholarly works contributed by researchers from a diverse range of nations across the globe. Table 3 showcases the top 20 nations that have made significant contributions to the field of direct marketing through their publications. Leading the pack is the United States, with an impressive count of 299 documents. Following closely are Peoples R China and England, both with 51 publications each, while Germany holds the fourth position with 44 publications.

TABLE 3: COUNTRIES/REGIONS

Rank	Countries/Regions	Documents Count
1	USA	299
2	PEOPLES R CHINA	51
3	ENGLAND	48
4	GERMANY	44
5	AUSTRALIA	23
6	CANADA	21
7	FRANCE	19
8	BELGIUM	17
9	NETHERLANDS	17
10	JAPAN	16
11	TAIWAN	16
12	SPAIN	15
13	INDIA	12
14	ITALY	9
15	NORWAY	7
16	SCOTLAND	7

17	SINGAPORE	7
18	SOUTH AFRICA	7
19	SWITZERLAND	7
20	TURKEY	7

G. Publishers

Table 4 shows the publishers with most documents published related to direct marketing. A total of 156 papers were published by Elsevier which constitutes almost 25% of the total papers and which is highest among them all. Wiley and Springer Nature are second and third in the list of publishers with most papers. Table 4 presents a breakdown of the leading publishers in terms of the number of documents published in the field of direct marketing. Notably, Elsevier emerges as the most prolific publisher, contributing a significant portion of the scholarly works with a total of 156 papers, accounting for approximately 25% of the entire corpus. Following closely behind, Wiley and Springer Nature rank as the second and third highest publishers, respectively, further enriching the academic literature on this subject matter.

TABLE 4: PUBLISHERS

Rank	Publishers	Document Count	%
1	Elsevier	156	25.28
2	Wiley	73	11.83
3	Springer Nature	45	7.29
4	Taylor & Francis	33	5.35
5	Sage	24	3.89
6	Cambridge Univ Press	17	2.76
7	Emerald Group Publishing	12	1.95
8	Oxford Univ Press	10	1.62
9	Amer Soc Horticultural Science	9	1.46
10	MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOC/NEJM	9	1.46

H. Funding Agencies

Table 5 shows that the agency that funded most number of documents is United States Department Of Health Human Services. But the fact that they only funded 18 documents which is less than 3% of all the documents points out that the funding agencies of these documents are widely spread. Table 5 highlights the extensive dispersion of funding agencies that have contributed to the production of documents in this field. It is noteworthy that the United States Department of Health and Human Services emerged as the top funding agency, supporting a total of 18 documents. However, this represents a mere fraction of less than 3% of the entire corpus, indicating that funding for these documents is distributed across numerous agencies.

TABLE 5: Funding Agencies

Rank	Funding Agencies	Document Count	%
1	United States Department Of Health Human Services	18	2.92
2	National Institutes Of Health Nih Usa	16	2.59
3	National Natural Science Foundation Of China Nsfc	13	2.11
4	European Commission	10	1.62
5	Economic Social Research Council Esrc	6	0.97
6	Nih National Cancer Institute Nci	6	0.97
7	Uk Research Innovation Ukri	6	0.97
8	Nih National Institute On Drug Abuse Nida	4	0.65

9	Nih National Institute Of Mental Health Nimh	3	0.49
10	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Rwjf	3	0.49

I. Citation Analysis

Data gathered from the Scopus database has been imported to generate the citation metric. Table 6 summarizes the citation metrics for the retrieved documents as at 17th July 2022. The summary includes the total number of citations with their average citations, citation years, and H-Index. Utilizing Scopus as the data source, citation metrics have been derived to assess the impact of the retrieved documents. Table 6 presents a comprehensive overview of the citation metrics as of July 17, 2022, encompassing the total number of citations, average citations, citation years, and H-Index.

TABLE 6: CITATION ANALYSIS

Reference date	July 17, 2022
Publication years	1989-2022
Citation years	34
Publications	617
Citations	12,335(Without self-citation)
Average citations	20.46
H-Index	50

Top 20 cited articles in the field of Direct-marketing were listed in Table 7. An article entitled "Direct-marketing, indirect profits: A strategic analysis of dual-channel supply-chain design" by Chiang, WYK; Chhajed, D; Hess, JD received the highest citation (based on Web of Science database) with a total of 1016 citations (50.8 citations per year). The table provided in this study encompasses the top 20 highly-cited articles within the discipline of Direct-marketing. One particular article, titled "Direct-marketing, indirect profits: A strategic analysis of dual-channel supply-chain design," authored by Chiang, WYK; Chhajed, D; and Hess, JD, has garnered the highest number of citations (based on the data obtained from the Web of Science database). Specifically, this article has received a total of 1016 citations, resulting in an average of 50.8 citations per year.

TABLE 7: TOP 20 CITED ARTICLES IN DIRECT MARKETING

NO	TITLE	Authors	Publication Year	Total Citations	Average per Year
1	Direct-marketing, indirect profits: A strategic analysis of dual-channel supply-chain design	Chiang, WYK; Chhajed, D; Hess, JD	2003	1016	50.8
2	Embeddedness and local food systems: notes on two types of direct agricultural market	Hinrichs, CC	2000	749	32.57
3	EXCHANGE-RATES AND FOREIGN DIRECT-INVESTMENT - AN IMPERFECT CAPITAL-MARKETS APPROACH	FROOT, KA; STEIN, JC	1991	504	15.75
4	Foreign direct investment in Africa: The role of natural resources, market size, government policy, institutions and political instability	Asiedu, E	2006	466	27.41

5	Resource commitment, entry timing, and market performance of foreign direct investments in emerging economies: The case of Japanese international joint ventures in China	Isobe, T; Makino, S; Montgomery, DB	2000	284	12.35
6	Environmental Policy and Directed Technological Change: Evidence from the European Carbon Market	Calel, Raphael; Dechezlepretre, Antoine	2016	261	37.29
7	Do organizational practices matter in role stress processes? A study of direct and moderating effects for marketing-oriented boundary spanners	Singh, J; Verbeke, W; Rhoads, GK	1996	256	9.48
8	Does foreign direct investment promote growth? Exploring the role of financial markets on linkages	Alfaro, Laura; Chanda, Areendam; Kalemli-Ozcan, Sebnem; Sayek, Selin	2010	194	14.92
9	Managerial and customer costs of price adjustment: Direct evidence from industrial markets	Zbaracki, MJ; Ritson, M; Levy, D; Dutta, S; Bergen, M	2004	190	10
10	The effect of foreign direct investment and stock market growth on clean energy use across a panel of emerging market economies	Paramati, Sudharshan Reddy; Ummalla, Mallesh; Apergis, Nicholas	2016	180	25.71
11	Direct causal cascade in the stock market	Arneodo, A; Muzy, JF; Sornette, D	1998	180	7.2
12	OUTWARD FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT BY EMERGING MARKET FIRMS: A RESOURCE DEPENDENCE LOGIC	Xia, Jun; Ma, Xufei; Lu, Jane W.; Yiu, Daphne W.	2014	172	19.11
13	THE ROLE OF ACQUISITIONS IN FOREIGN DIRECT-INVESTMENT - EVIDENCE FROM THE UNITED-STATES STOCK-MARKET	HARRIS, RS; RAVENSCRAFT, D	1991	164	5.13
14	The interpersonal world of direct marketing: Examining conventions of quality at UK farmers' markets	Kirwan, James	2006	135	7.94
15	Direct-to-consumer marketing of prescription drugs - Creating consumer demand	Hollon, MF	1999	130	5.42
16	Bayesian neural network learning for repeat purchase modelling in direct marketing	Baesens, B; Viaene, S; Van den Poel, D; Vanthienen, J; Dedene, G	2002	127	6.05
17	Information, Direct Access to Farmers, and Rural Market Performance in Central India	Goyal, Aparajita	2010	121	9.31
18	GOVERNMENT POLICIES, MARKET IMPERFECTIONS, AND FOREIGN DIRECT-INVESTMENT	BREWER, TL	1993	120	4

19	The impact of preprocessing on data mining: An evaluation of classifier sensitivity in direct marketing	Crone, Sven F.; Lessmann, Stefan; Stahlbock, Robert	2006	116	6.82
20	Dynamic Effects of Social Influence and Direct Marketing on the Adoption of High-Technology Products	Risselada, Hans; Verhoef, Peter C.; Bijmolt, Tammo H. A.	2014	106	11.78

IV. CONCLUSION

This research presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to provide a thorough understanding of the Direct-marketing literature, encompassing its trends, historical evolution, forecasts, and contributions. The investigation of this field commenced in 1989 and has witnessed a steady increase in scholarly publications over the years, albeit in a cyclical pattern. Notably, the number of publications has exhibited an upward trajectory, and it is anticipated that this trend will continue, with a further rise expected in 2022.

The articles examined in this study were written in various languages; however, English predominated as the primary language of discourse. Moreover, the review highlights that Direct-marketing research primarily covers areas within business economics and agriculture. Analyzing the geographical dispersion of the literature, it becomes evident that the United States has not only produced the highest number of publications but also exerts substantial influence in terms of citation impact compared to other major countries such as China and England.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations inherent in using the Web of Science database for this study. While it is one of the largest databases available, it does not index all journals, potentially resulting in the exclusion of publications from unindexed journals. Additionally, this study focused solely on documents explicitly incorporating the term "Direct-marketing" in their titles, excluding other relevant literature that may be indirectly related. Moreover, it is essential to recognize that no search query is entirely infallible, and false positive or false negative results may occur.

The citation analysis presented in this study is based on data retrieved from the Web of Science, and it should be noted that the total number of publications and citations provided is accurate only at the time of the search. Despite these inevitable limitations, this study represents one of the initial endeavours to thoroughly analyze the detailed bibliometric indicators of published Direct-marketing literature.

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