

A Bibliometric Analysis on Societal Marketing: A Strategic Approach

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Abstract

Conventional marketing techniques were criticized by many philanthropic marketing researchers. In 1960s this criticism transformed into volcanic eruption, which leads to the emergence of societal marketing concept. Societal marketing concept has primary responsibility to consider responsible consumption as the key concept while designing the integrated marketing activities considering long term social welfare, in which every marketing planning execution was seen through the lance of ecological, social and environmental impacts on the society. In this paper, Author tries to find out how societal marketing evolved from the 1960s to present. The study aims at mapping the trends in context of publications, responsiveness towards societal marketing & environmental responsible consumption trends over the past years. The usage of VOS viewer software is done in order to map out the occurrence of publications, keywords, and clusters of researchers active in the field in different regions. Furthermore, this paper also provides a more detailed overview of societal marketing through its significance, definition evolution, requirement, and its practical usefulness. Stating the fact that firms would not only have a competitive advantage but will also have a better chance of long-term survival and profitability with society's support and approval.

Keyword: Bibliometric Analysis, Societal Marketing, Social Welfare, Customer satisfaction, Sustainable Development, Social Responsibility

Introduction

In past decades, marketing literature merely focused on efficiently meeting the needs and wants of customers to generate maximum profits for the business firms. The main goal of the business was to integrate its all marketing activity to maximize profit and was to put its customers on first priority. As a result, businesses were dwelled into the ocean of aggressive hard selling techniques to fulfill its short-term objectives. During that time it was a well-established culture that if they wish to be successful in the marketing practices, it had to be followed religiously by the marketing department (Prothero, 1990). Marketing was not only an

indispensable tool to make a symbiotic relationship with customers and businesses, but also it was useful to apply in different channels of corporate such as product manufacturing, commercial and service companies, or nonprofit and profit companies.

In the 1970s marketing practices faced worldwide criticism by various marketing authors. Marketing receives huge social activist's criticisms due to its adverse impacts on environmental resources, individual consumers, other businesses channels, and the whole society (Gopaldas, 2015). As marketing department was focused on hard selling activities, it is immensely difficult to purchase everything what customers want and need because it has long-term damaging impacts on the society and environment as a whole because the environment and its resources are more vulnerable due irresponsible consumption. During 1970s it was clear that society's resources tends to be finite, and its irrational use is environment damageable hence few marketing experts were critical towards material consumption without paying attention towards societal long-term welfares. Marketing concept, which was focused initially on short run operations in context of profits with the contentment of consumer not being a thoughtful objective, but merely a means to this end; its priority on material intake with contemplation on long run societal or environmental impact became its new strategy. Moreover, critics argued that these marketing practices promotes the trends of materialism in the society that leads to wastage, pollution, unnecessary buying, and social stigma (Sheth et al., 2011). These criticisms and concerns gave marketers researchers to reevaluate the marketing research by adding philanthropy and social long term benefits (Prothero 1990, Kotler & Zaltman, 1996, Vasconcelos, 2011).

These arguments laid the solid groundwork for the development of the idea of societal marketing. Because of to increasing public concern over environmental and social issues in addition to mounting pressure from informed and empowered buyers, the societal marketing concept—which states that business organisations should strive to offer a service that seem to be advantageous to the market as well as serve long-term consumer and societal wellbeing—was

introduced. (Abratt and Sacks 1988 and Livas, 2021).

This study is designed to map trends in publications, attention on societal marketing and environmental responsible consumption trends over the past years. The usage of VOSviewer software is done to map the occurrence of publications, keywords, and clusters of researchers active in the field in different regions.

Societal Marketing as a concept

In response to the aforementioned social criticisms of marketing, two revolutionary concepts have emerged: consumerism and environmentalism, which played key role in adoption of societal marketing. The former protects the powers and rights of customers in their relationships with sellers, while the latter improves people's living conditions. The marketing concept can be redefined as a part of unified struggle focused towards ensuring customer gratification in order for the company to achieve long-term benefits. To achieve long-term consumer welfare, the societal marketing idea also necessitates the promotion of proper consumption values. As a result, it is necessary for a company's product and market planning to include ethical, social and environmental parameters (Abratt & Sacks, 1989). Resulting to which in the year 1972, Kotler led the notion of societal marketing that focused on the need for a long-term goal to achieve customer satisfaction and welfare through societal marketing. A profound remodeling of marketing was offered by social marketing, which raised the prospect of a more moral strategy that included instead than discounted the needs of the general people (Crane & Desmond, 2002). Furthermore, societal marketing was defined as a strategic instrument for businesses (Fiore et al., 2016; Tudisca, Di Trapani, Sgroi, and Testa, 2013) that allows them to study the interests and needs of the target audiences in such a manner that it safeguards and encourages the consumer and the social order wellbeing. In addition to identify market possibilities, attain sustainable business performance, and offer long-term societal welfare, businesses must carefully examine how society's requirements are evolving and maximize the use of their resources and talents. (Zhu et al., 2006).

As per the content analysis of past year papers on this topic, it is noticed that societal marketing was a hot topic of debate

among marketing experts till 2016, but after that there is scant research articles are available on this topic. However, after Paris climate change summit (2015), Societal marketing has a huge scope for managerial, societal and environment implication because responsible consumption (SDG 12) is directly linked to societal marketing.

Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis is an approach that enables researchers to get detailed information on the history and advancement of the topic concern (Ellegaard & Wallin, 2015) via mapping data (Nandiyanto & Al Husaeni, 2021). It is one of the most efficient methods for assessing and keeping track of dynamic shifts in research areas within a given field of study. This practice is crucial as it offers a confidential perspective of the publications out in each subject on the basis of impartial standards for evaluating & categorizing publications. This method aims to recognize the connections between journal citations & summarize the existing context of affairs in relation to a hot or emerging research area (Nandiyanto & Al Husaeni, 2021). Bibliometric research is a strategy for analyzing published articles that makes use of a precise statistical approach (Ghorbani et al., 2022). A great technique for describing a literature's characteristics as well as its patterns and inclinations is what is expressed in bibliometric analysis (Block & Fisch, 2020). The VOSviewer software, a publicly, free of cost available tool to paradigmize and visualize the link between networks, is used for the analysis (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

Method

The literature on societal marketing publications in the time frame from the year 1974 to 2022 were perused from the Scopus database (Nobanee et al., 2021) and was exported in a ".csv" (Microsoft Excel) format (Tamala et al., 2022). The search words used to classify the adjoining corresponding publication comprised of "Societal Marketing" or "environmental responsible consumption" was used as the keyword in the title. Language of the paper was limited to "English". The year of publication, language, journal, title, author, affiliation, keyword, document type, abstract, and counts of citations for the articles that complied with the

requirements were all saved into CSV format. The date of the retrieval was October 7, 2022 via VOSviewer Software (1.6.15).

Result and Discussion

Bibliometric analysis of publications

In total 115 publications in this context were recognized in the Scopus database in between 1974 to 2022 which comprised of 83 (72.17%) research articles, 21 (18.26%) book chapters, 6 (5.21%) conference papers, 4 (3.47%) review papers and 1 (0.87%) editorial was included. Among them, 3 (2.60%) papers were published in 2022 (till October 7) and 9 (7.82%) were published in 2021. Highest range was limited to 16 (13.91%) papers published in 2016. 108 publications (93.91%) were transcribed in English language and 11 (9.56%) papers were open access.

Bibliometric analysis of the keywords

The final analysis included keywords that were submitted by the paper's authors and appeared more than twice in the Scopus database. 53 of the 405 keywords satisfied the criteria. "Social Marketing" (total link strength: 57) and "Corporate Social Responsibility" were the keywords that have been most often used (total link strength 38). In comparison, Societal Marketing and Marketing, two other keywords, each had a total link strength of over 35. (Reference Figure 1)

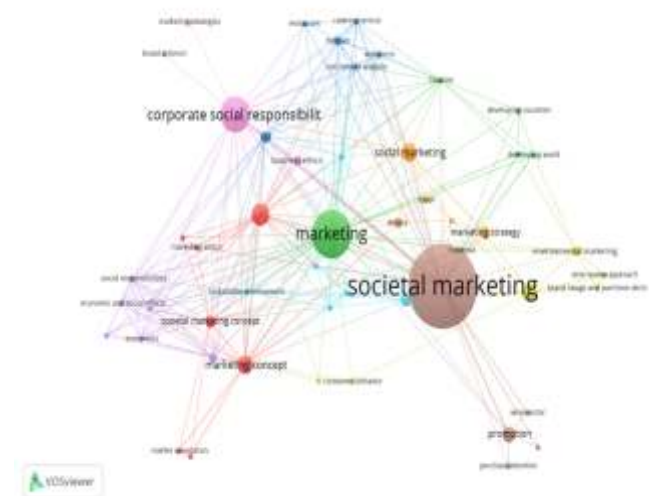


Figure 1 Keywords Mapping

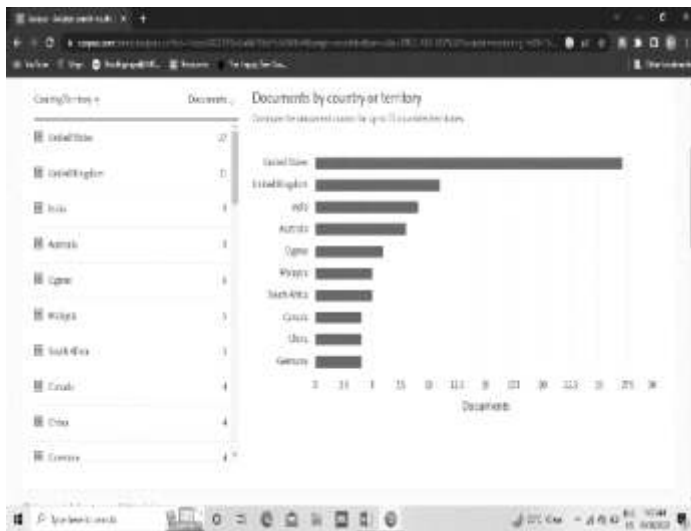
Leading Countries in the research

Of the total 115 documents published, United States embarks a highest publication with a total of 27 papers. India ranks third in the category of total publication. More than five percent publication countries are United States, United Kingdoms, India, Australia and Cyprus (Scopus data). Table 1 shows the total number of publications against the top 10 countries which is shown graphically in figure 2.

Table 1: List of top 10 countries in publication

S.No.	Country	Total publications	Percentage as a part of total publications
1	United States	27	23.48%
2	United Kingdom	11	9.56%
3	India	9	7.82%
4	Australia	8	6.95%
5	Cyprus	6	5.21%
6	Malaysia	5	4.35%
7	South Africa	5	4.35%
8	Canada	4	3.49%
9	China	4	3.49%
10	Germany	4	3.49%

Figure 2: Graph showing documents by countries or territories



Leading Journals in publication

One advantage of bibliometric analysis is that it has the ability used to show potential researchers where articles on a subject have been published and which journals have the greatest influence on the field. As the subject line deals with marketing, CSR; the prominent journals are from these fields only.

Leading Journals in publication

Table 2: List of Journal Title

S.No.	Journal Title	Articles
1	Journal of Promotional Management	7
2	European Journal of Marketing	6
3	Development in marketing Science proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science	5
4	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	5
5	Journal of Business Ethics	4
6	Journal of Macromarketng	4
7	Journal of Marketing Management	4
8	Journal of Non-profit and Public Sector Marketing	4
9	Amfiteatru Economic	2
10	Csr Sustainability Ethics And Governance	2

Author Analysis

Bibliometric analysis enables the mapping of researcher networks. This kind of study has the advantage of demonstrating the mutual influence of ideas and viewpoints as well as the inclusion of the academic community. Highest authorship is claimed by Pappasolomou I. and the biggest cluster in in networking consists of six authors as shown in figure 3.



Figure 3 List of Authors

Conclusion

In conclusion, the societal marketing idea by advising businesses to strike a balance between customer satisfactions, public interest and profit. A corporate enterprise's core purpose – long-term survival and profitability – would be preserved, and companies that adopted it would most likely benefit society. The Societal Marketing Concept and its effectiveness are maintained by offsetting the demands of a business corporation and its stakeholders. To be sure, the Societal Marketing Concept involves the adoption of strong ethical consequences, or, more precisely, in feelings and concerns about doing good for society, and the environment. Therefore, companies that follow the societal marketing concept in their integrated marketing campaign through sensitively fulfilling and meeting customer's needs would not only have a competitive advantage but will also have a better chance of long-term survival and profitability with society's support and approval.

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