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Mapping the Scientific Landscape of Integrated Marketing Communication and Brand: A Bibliometric Analysis (1996–2023)

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to map and analyze the scientific development of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) research and its relationship with brand equity within the fields of business, management, and accounting.

Methodology – A bibliometric analysis was conducted using 175 peer-reviewed articles indexed in the Scopus database published between 1996 and 2023. The study applies performance analysis and science mapping techniques, utilizing VOSviewer to identify influential authors, documents, journals, and thematic research clusters in the IMC–branding literature.

Findings – The results reveal that Keller (2009) and Schultz emerge as the most influential contributors in the IMC research landscape. The thematic mapping indicates that recent research trends emphasize the integration of social media and message consistency as critical elements of effective IMC strategies in building brand equity. The analysis also shows a growing interdisciplinary orientation and increasing academic interest in digital communication channels.

Originality – This study offers a comprehensive bibliometric overview of IMC and branding research over nearly three decades, highlighting intellectual structures, influential contributors, and emerging themes. It contributes to the literature by systematically synthesizing the evolution of IMC scholarship and identifying future research directions relevant to both academics and practitioners.

Practical implications – The findings provide valuable insights for marketing practitioners and brand managers in designing cohesive IMC strategies, particularly in leveraging digital and social media platforms to enhance brand equity through consistent messaging.

Introduction

Nowadays, the number of new companies is increasing. From 2005 to 2021, the number of new firms in the United States consistently grew, peaking at 5.4 million firms in 2021, marking a 23% increase from 2020 (Economic Innovation Group, 2022). The establishment of new

businesses is not solely undertaken by individuals but also by companies. McKinsey (2022) discovered that eight out of ten CEOs prioritize the creation of new businesses within their top five priorities. Companies emphasizing the establishment of new ventures often experience accelerated growth (McKinsey, 2020). This represents a diversification strategy aimed at enhancing both revenue and efficiency (Needle and Burns, 2019).

However, starting a new company is not easy. According to the Commerce Institute (2023), 80% of new companies survive the first year, 70% survive for at least two years, 50% last at least five years, 30% endure for at least 10 years, and only 25% manage to last at least 15 years. This demonstrates that the longer a new company operates, the lower its probability of survival. The primary reasons for this challenge include running out of capital/unable to raise capital, lack of market demand for the product/service, and losing out to competition (CB Insights, 2021).

To sustain the existence of a business, whether new or long-established, branding stands out as a key strategy. According to American Marketing Association (AMA) (2023), branding entails distinguishing products and services by crafting names, terms, designs, or symbols. In contrast to the AMA's emphasis on brand elements, Keller (2013) defines a brand as an endeavor to set products apart, encompassing both tangible aspects (related to product performance) and intangible aspects (associated with what the brand embodies, including emotional and symbolic elements). Branding aims to establish what's known as brand equity, defined by Aaker (1996) as a collection of assets linked to a brand name/symbol that augments (or diminishes) the product's value. Brand equity encompasses measurements such as brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 2013), alongside factors like loyalty, perceived quality, associations, awareness, and market behavior (Aaker, 1996). Building brand equity yields numerous advantages beyond just distinctiveness, which sets brands apart (Keller, 1993). These benefits include enhancing perceptions of product performance, fostering consumer loyalty and preference, influencing consumer behavior, allowing for premium pricing, addressing price elasticity (Kotler and Keller, 2016; Tasci, 2020), and amplifying company revenue (Aliwadi et al., 2003). Without differentiation or added value through—but not limited to—brand equity, products are at risk of being perceived as mere commodities, and, in such cases, with price being the sole differentiator, they become susceptible to price wars (Keller, 2013; Kotler and Keller, 2016; Needle and Burns, 2019; Davis et al., 2008; Mudambi, 2002; Haigh, 2003).

Therefore, creating a recognizable brand with a positive reputation and preference is important. Apart from refining the product using the marketing mix (such as marketing activities, product, price, distribution strategy)—given that the product forms the cornerstone of brand equity (Keller, 2013)—it's equally essential to propagate the brand to the wider audience through marketing communication. Efficient and effective marketing communication practices are imperative, especially considering that one effective avenue is advertising, which demands substantial financial investment. According to Insider Intelligence (2023), advertising spending escalated by 8.5% from $506.43 billion in 2021 to $549.51 billion in 2022, and the projection indicates continued annual growth. By 2027, advertising spending is estimated to reach $870.85 billion.

One effective method for optimizing marketing communication is through integrated marketing communication (IMC). This concept emerged in the late 1980s to early 1990s (Wu et al., 2022; Munoz-Leiva et al., 2015). According to Wu et al. (2022), one of the pioneers credited with introducing the IMC concept was Schultz in 1922, through an article titled

'Integrated Marketing Communications'. Schultz (1922) observed the limited adoption of IMC practices in America, thus elucidating the principles, challenges, and significance of IMC, believing it to be the primary pathway to success. Wu et al. (2022) also underscore the significant impact of IMC on brand equity, as outlined by Duncan and Moriarty in the book 'Driving Brand Value: Using Integrated Marketing to Manage Profitable Stakeholder Relationships'. Duncan and Moriarty (1997) emphasize the significance of cultivating brand relationships—a key component of brand equity, which they define as encompassing concepts like customer loyalty—through IMC to enhance brand value. In essence, IMC represents a sustained endeavor to establish brand equity (such as boosting brand awareness, shaping brand image, and fostering customer loyalty) by integrating all available mediums, employing the marketing communication mix (Kotler and Keller, 2016). When selecting a marketing communication mix, it is crucial to consider its effectiveness, efficiency, and diversity; ensuring diversity and coherence among them is essential to build brand equity among consumers (Keller, 2009). Each facet of the marketing communication mix complements the others, thereby leveraging the combined impact (Keller, 2013).

Given the significance of IMC, numerous studies have been undertaken, particularly in the realms of business, management, and accounting. As of November 2023, the Scopus database reflects a total of 461 studies in this subject. Some notable research endeavors in the fields of business, management, and accounting concerning IMC include: Naik and Raman (2003), who employed Kalman filtering methodology to estimate and measure effectiveness and synergy in IMC; Christensen et al. (2008), who highlighted the importance of reconciling organizational differences in IMC implementation; Bartra and Keller (2016), who introduced two novel models aimed at enhancing IMC effectiveness and efficiency; Beverland and Luxton (2005), who observed the practice of segregating IMC from wine company operations to maintain its value while ensuring commercial competitiveness; and Killian and McManus (2015), who underscored the significance of managing and assessing the efficacy of individual social media platforms as part of IMC.

To advance the knowledge of IMC, particularly within the domains of business, management, and accounting, science mapping within this field is imperative, and one viable approach is through bibliometric analysis. This methodology enables the acquisition of a comprehensive knowledge base (Donthu et al., 2021) by outlining its structure, relationships, and focal topics (Zupic and Cater, 2014). Upon exploring the Scopus database, only two articles were identified discussing bibliometric analysis pertinent to IMC in the subject of business, management, and accounting. Munoz-Leiva et al. (2015) conducted a bibliometric analysis utilizing co-word analysis, sourcing bibliometric data from Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus spanning from 1991 to 2012, focusing on IMC in general. Similarly, Wu et al. (2022) executed a study covering the period from 1991 to 2020, utilizing bibliometric data from WoS and Scopus, also examining IMC in a general context. However, neither study explicitly emphasized the science mapping related to IMC and brands, as IMC is closely related to brands in general (Kliatchko, 2008) and brand equity in particular (Keller, 2009). Furthermore, there is no bibliometric studies using the most current data up to 2023. Hence, this study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis focused on IMC and brands using the latest data available up to 2023.

Method

According to Groos and Pritchard (1969), bibliometrics involves applying mathematical and statistical methods to books and other forms of communication media. Donthu et al. (2021) further define bibliometric analysis as a quantitative approach to analyzing bibliometric data, typically sourced from journal databases like Scopus. This data undergoes two primary analyses within bibliometric analysis: performance analysis (e.g., total authors) and science mapping (e.g., citation mapping) (Zupic and Cater, 2014). Through bibliometric analysis, insights are gleaned from bibliometric data, allowing for an understanding of the evolving structure and topics within the related scientific field (Donthu et al., 2021) and its dynamics (Zupic and Cater, 2014). The benefits derived from bibliometric analysis encompass a comprehensive review of related scientific studies, identification of knowledge gaps, generation of new research ideas, and providing insights into the positioning of research contributions (Donthu et al., 2021).

In order to structure bibliometric studies effectively, employing a framework is important. This study adopts the bibliometric analysis framework proposed by Donthu et al. According to Donthu et al. (2021), the procedure for bibliometric analysis comprises four stages: (1) defining the purpose and scope of the study, (2) selecting bibliometric analysis techniques, (3) designing and retrieving bibliometric data for analysis, and (4) conducting bibliometric analysis and reporting the study findings.
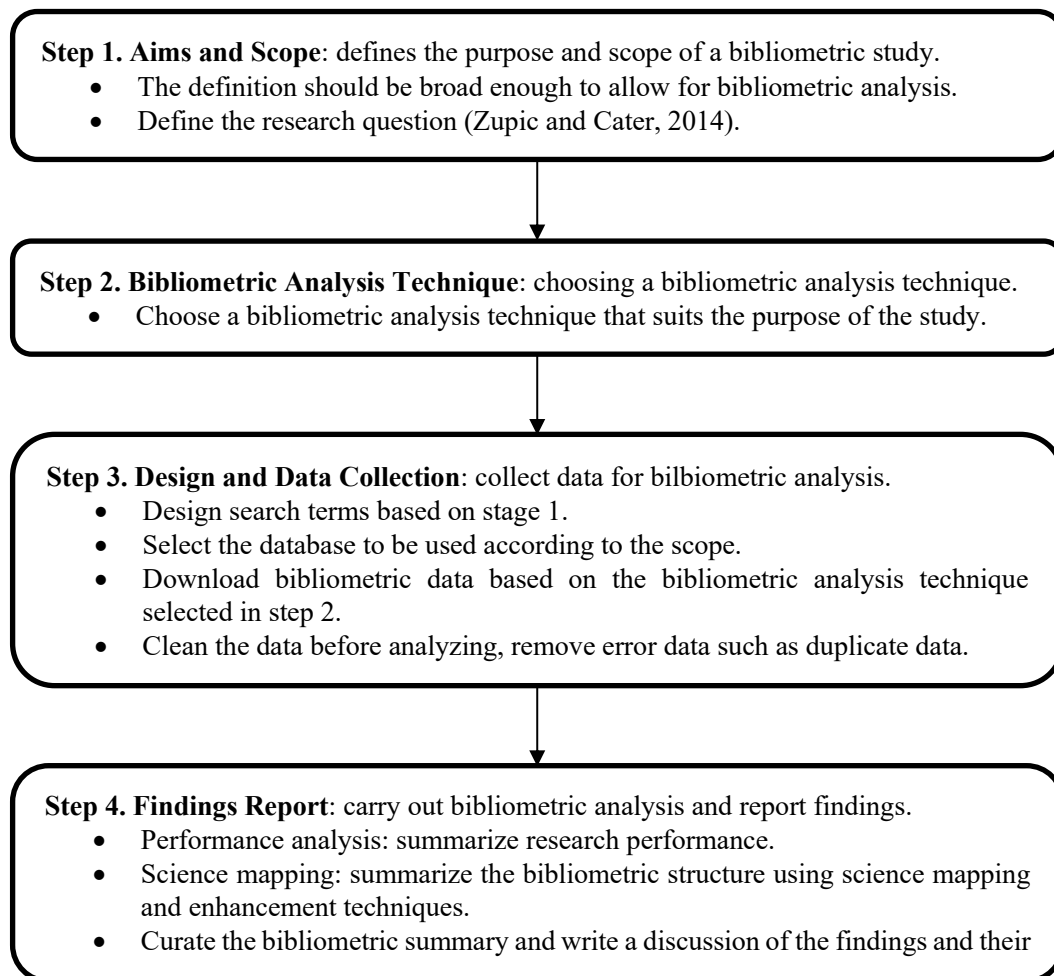
Step 1. Aims and Scope: defines the purpose and scope of a bibliometric study.
- The definition should be broad enough to allow for bibliometric analysis.
- Define the research question (Zupic and Cater, 2014).

Step 2. Bibliometric Analysis Technique: choosing a bibliometric analysis technique.
- Choose a bibliometric analysis technique that suits the purpose of the study.

Step 3. Design and Data Collection: collect data for bilbiometric analysis.
- Design search terms based on stage 1.
- Select the database to be used according to the scope.
- Download bibliometric data based on the bibliometric analysis technique selected in step 2.
- Clean the data before analyzing, remove error data such as duplicate data.

Step 4. Findings Report: carry out bibliometric analysis and report findings.
- Performance analysis: summarize research performance.
- Science mapping: summarize the bibliometric structure using science mapping and enhancement techniques.
- Curate the bibliometric summary and write a discussion of the findings and their

Figure 1. Bibliometric analysis procedure by Donthu et al (2021), with adjustments. In step 1, a description from Zupic and Cater (2014) was added.

Aims and Scope

Some previous bibliometric studies have analyzed IMC in a general context, with database records up to 2020. As IMC is closely associated with fields such as business, management, and accounting, this study will specifically focus on these areas. Therefore, the research aims to conduct bibliometric analysis related to IMC and brands utilizing the Scopus database, encompassing data up until 2023 with no time restrictions, within the subjects of business, management, and accounting. The objectives of this study are to: (1) assess the performance related to IMC and brands, and (2) conduct science mapping pertaining to IMC and brands.

Bibliometric Analysis Techniques

According to Donthu et al. (2021), there exist two primary techniques within bibliometric analysis: performance analysis and science mapping. Correspondingly, Zupic and Cater (2014) note that performance analysis aims to assess contributions and publications within relevant scientific fields, whereas science mapping aims to elucidate relationships, structures, and dynamics within the related scientific domain. Moreover, Donthu et al. (2021) also delineated an additional technique within bibliometric analysis termed the enrichment technique, aimed at enhancing the outcomes of the study. This technique primarily focuses on visualizing science mapping through the employed bibliometric analysis tool.
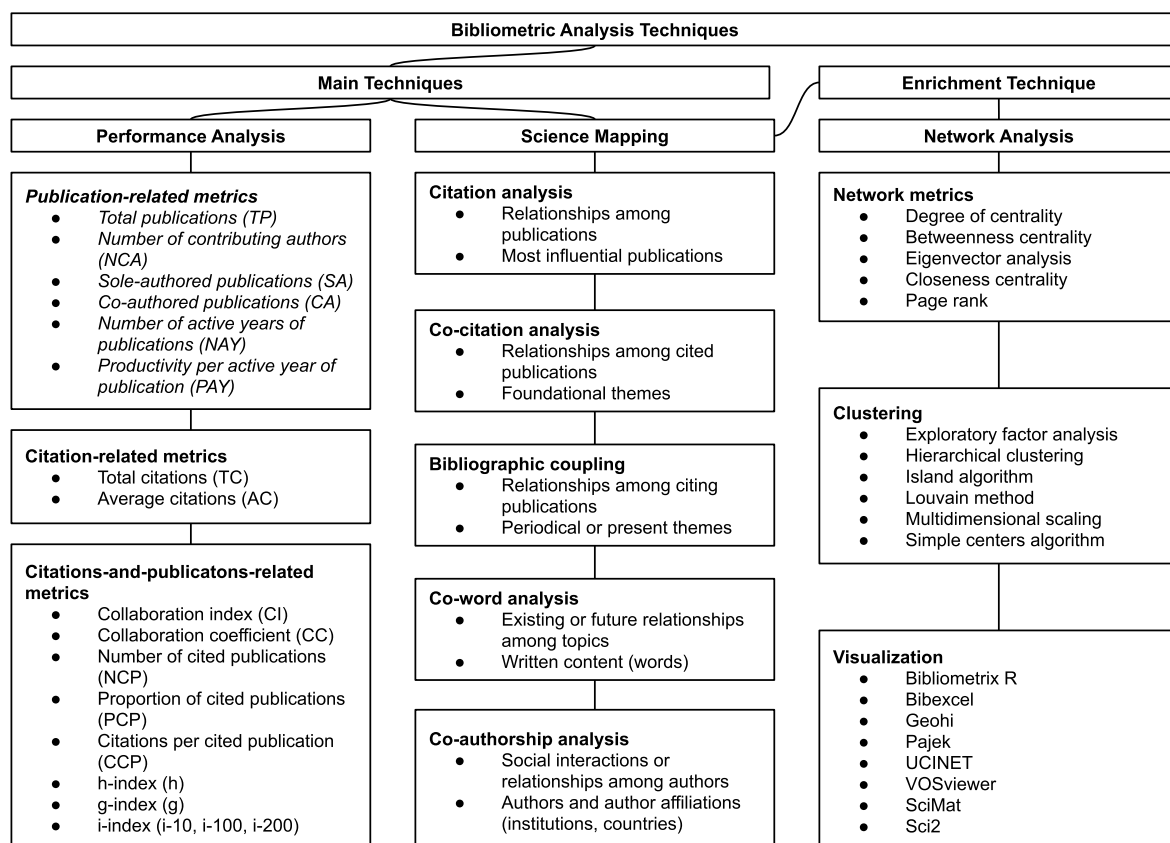

Figure 2. Bibliometric analysis toolbox by Donthu et al (2021), with adjustments.

Donthu et al. (2021) indicate that the figure above represents a range of bibliometric analysis techniques that can be chosen and tailored according to the study's objectives. In this study, the employed bibliometric analysis techniques will include: (1) performance analysis encompassing publication-related metrics, (2) science mapping involving citation analysis, co-

citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and co-word analysis, and (3) network analysis and clustering conducted using the VOSviewer application.

Design and Data Collection

The focus of this study is 'Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Brand'. Bibliometric data were retrieved from the Scopus database on November 30, 2023. To collect bibliometric data, a search was conducted within the article titles, abstracts, and keywords. The search keywords utilized were: "integrat* market* communicat*" AND brand*. No limitations were imposed on the publication year of the articles used as bibliometric data. The study confined its search to the subject areas of business, management, and accounting. Data were limited to the document type of articles and the English language.
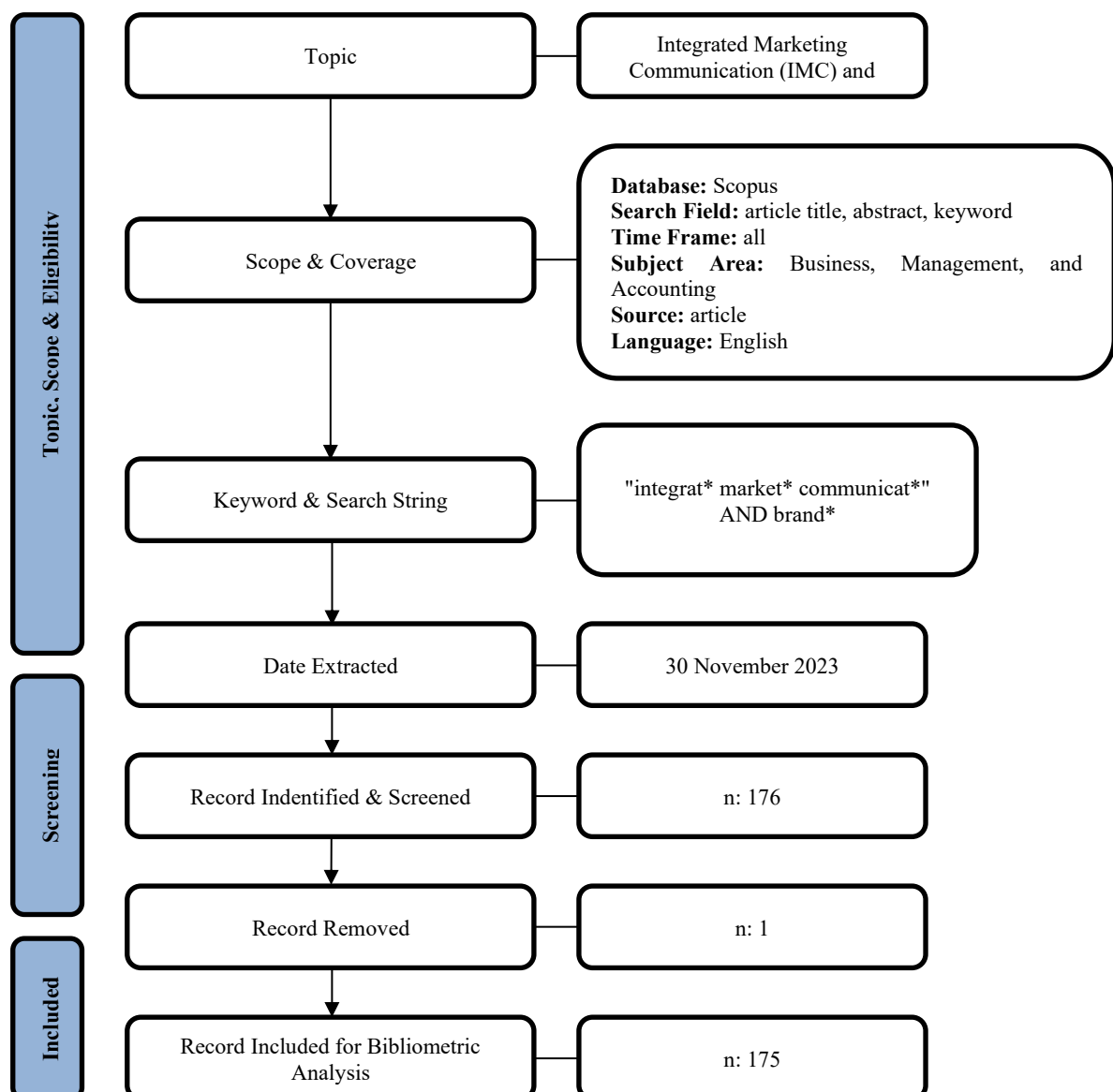
Stage	Step	Detail
Topic, Scope & Eligibility	Topic	Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and
	Scope & Coverage	**Database:** Scopus **Search Field:** article title, abstract, keyword **Time Frame:** all **Subject Area:** Business, Management, and Accounting **Source:** article **Language:** English
	Keyword & Search String	"integrat* market* communicat*" AND brand*
	Date Extracted	30 November 2023
Screening	Record Indentified & Screened	n: 176
	Record Removed	n: 1
Included	Record Included for Bibliometric Analysis	n: 175

Figure 3. Study design using *framework* from Zakaria *et al* (2021).

Analysis

Beyond simply describing the results of the bibliometric analysis, it's crucial to delve deeper into comprehensive discussions of trends and underlying reasons (Donthu et al., 2021). This depth is necessary as bibliometric analysis entails interpreting data through a thorough exploration, not merely extraction (Zupic and Cater, 2014). Hence, this study will incorporate content analysis to yield more comprehensive insights. Content analysis involves a detailed examination of the acquired documents (Madeira, 2023) through an in-depth reading aimed at generating new knowledge and enhancing understanding (Krippendorff, 2019), facilitating a deeper exploration of the findings derived from bibliometric analysis (Bhandari, 2022).

Performance Analysis
Year of Publication
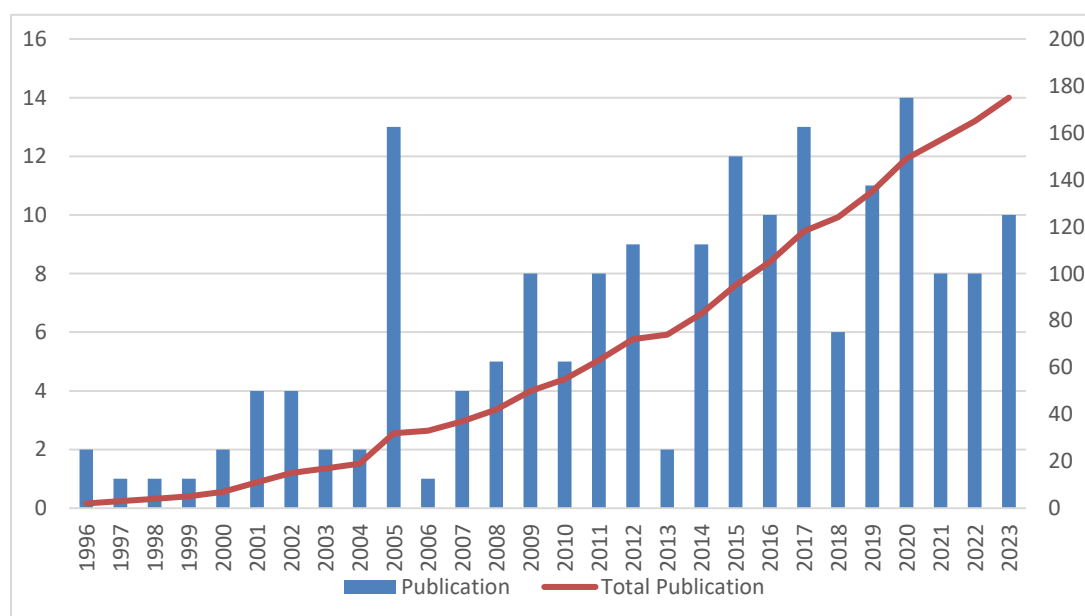
Figure 4. Total publications and publications per year. Data from Scopus.

After screening, there were 175 bibliometric data retrieved from the Scopus database. As shown in Figure 4, the highest number of publications occurred in 2020 (14 publications), followed by 2017 and 2005 (13 publications each), and 2015 (12 publications). Both 2021 and 2022 saw 8 publications in the field of IMC and brand. However, in 2023, there was an increase in publications to a total of 10. These figures suggest a potential upward trend in research focusing on IMC and brand.

Author of IMC and Brand

The total number of authors in the subject of IMC and brand is 159. As depicted in Table 1, the author with the highest number of publications is Seric, followed by Kitchen and Reid.

Table 1. Top 10 author.

Author Name	Publication
Šerić, M.	9
Kitchen, P.J.	6
Reid, M.	6
Gil-Saura, I.	5

Author Name	Publication
Eagle, L.	4
Luxton, S.	4
Foroudi, P.	3
Mavondo, F.	3
Porcu, L.	3
Bailey, A.A.	2

Note: Data from Scopus.

Source Publication

The highest number of publications related to IMC and brands is in the Journal of Marketing Communications, with 22 publications, which notably exceeds the second-ranked journal, Emerald Emerging Market Case Studies, with 12 publications. The differences in rankings beyond these two journals vary by 1-3 publications. Further details can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Top 10 source.

Source Title	Publications
Journal Of Marketing Communications	22
Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies	12
Journal Of Advertising	11
European Journal Of Marketing	10
Journal Of Promotion Management	8
Journal Of Research In Interactive Marketing	5
International Journal Of Applied Business And Economic Research	4
Case Journal	3
International Journal Of Advertising	3
Business Horizons	2

Note: Data from Scopus.

Country/Territory of Publication

Table 3. Top 10 country/territory.

Country/Territory	Publication
United States	50
United Kingdom	23
Australia	21
India	18
Spain	18
Italy	9
France	8
New Zealand	6
Thailand	6
Indonesia	4

Note: Data from Scopus.

In Table 3, the country/territory with the highest number of publications is the United States with 50 publications. The publication counts for the United Kingdom, Australia, India, and Spain are relatively close. However, there is a notable gap between Spain and Italy, with a difference of 9 publications. Following Italy, the publication gap diminishes, varying between 2-3 publications.

Science Mapping
Citation Analysis

Citation analysis assumes that authors will cite documents they find important and can support their research. Therefore, frequently cited documents indicate their impact on the development of related science (Ramos-Rodríguez and Ruíz-Navarro, 2004). Donthu et al. (2021) also state a similar concept, highlighting citation analysis as a method to assess the most influential publications in related scientific fields.

For citation analysis, the unit of analysis is the document, with a threshold (minimum citation limit) set at 30, allowing the analysis of 48 documents. Figure 5 illustrates the results of the VOSviewer analysis.
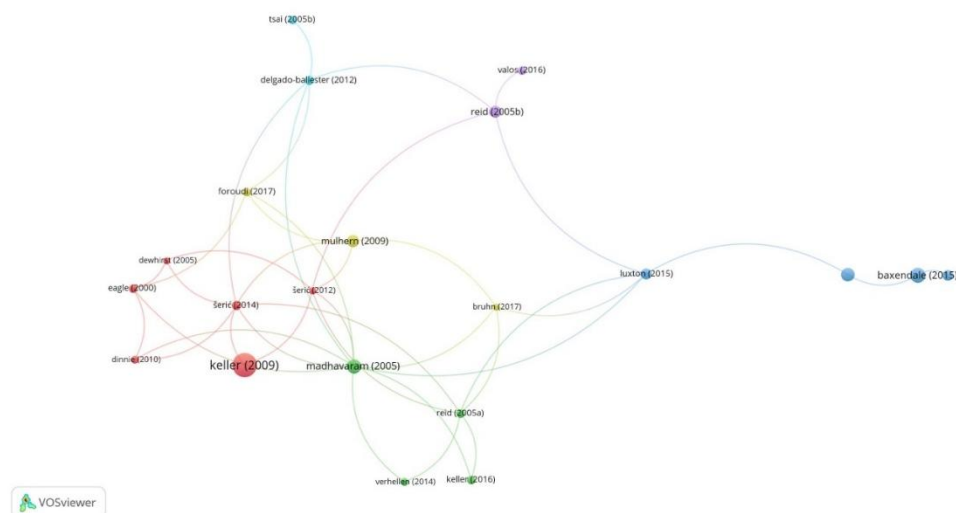

Figure 5. Citation analysis graph based on documents.

Since the purpose of citation is to identify documents with the most significant impact, determined by the highest number of citations, the displayed data will be sorted by total citations. Table 4 outlines the data based on the mapping from VOSviewer.

First, there is a publication by Keller (2009) that examines the primary role of IMC, along with its respective options and impacts, in building brand equity. Baxendale et al (2015) examined the different influences of brand touchpoints (brand owner, retail, and third party) on brand consideration. Madhavaram et al (2005) provide a new conceptual framework as part of a brand equity strategy to connect brand identity, IMC, and brand equity. Payne et al (2017) propose a new IMC framework by considering the presence of omnichannel, which they call the omnichannel IMC framework. Mulhern (2009) sees the need for a new theoretical basis for IMC by examining the development of the digital world based on four main aspects: demand-based, social, interactivity, and metrics. Reid et al (2005) proposed a framework to examine the relationship between IMC, market orientation, and brand orientation in external performance. Stammerjohan et al (2005) conducted an experimental study to observe the impact of IMC on advertisement attitude and brand attitude. Luxton et al (2014) conducted a study to assess the

impact of IMC on the company's financial performance. Seric et al (2014) conducted a study to explore the effect of IMC on brand equity, incorporating information and communication technology (ICT) as a moderating variable. Finally, Delgado-Ballester et al (2012) examined the effect of IMC consistency on brand equity based on brand familiarity.

Table 4. Top 10 document by citation.

Author	Year	Document	Citation
Keller	2009	Building Strong Brands In A Modern Marketing Communications Environment	551
Baxendale	2015	The Impact Of Different Touchpoints On Brand Consideration	211
Madhavaram	2005	Integrated Marketing Communication (Imc) And Brand Identity As Critical Components Of Brand Equity Strategy: A Conceptual Framework And Research Propositions	190
Manser Payne	2017	Omni-Channel Marketing, Integrated Marketing Communications And Consumer Engagement: A Research Agenda	175
Mulhern	2009	Integrated Marketing Communications: From Media Channels To Digital Connectivity	140
Reid	2005	The Relationship Between Integrated Marketing Communication, Market Orientation, And Brand Orientation	139
Stammerjohan	2005	An Empirical Investigation Of The Interaction Between Publicity, Advertising, And Previous Brand Attitudes And Knowledge	115
Luxton	2014	Integrated Marketing Communication Capability And Brand Performance	109
Šerić	2014	How Can Integrated Marketing Communications And Advanced Technology Influence The Creation Of Customer-Based Brand Equity? Evidence From The Hospitality Industry	92
Delgado-Ballester	2012	Revitalising Brands Through Communication Messages: The Role Of Brand Familiarity	89

Co-Citation Analysis

Co-citation analysis is conducted to observe the relationship between cited documents (Donthu et al., 2021). This analysis can interpret similar fields, research, or schools of thought (Rossetto et al., 2018). This assumption is based on communication between authors: authors will cite articles that have similar themes to their own, creating a network of intellectual relationships in the process (Nerur et al., 2008). Through co-citation analysis, it is possible to understand the structure of knowledge (McCain, 1986), comprehend the underlying basis (Donthu et al., 2021), and trace the roots of science by identifying the publication base, or in other words, "the past of science" (Voggel and Guttel, 2012). Figure 6 explains the co-citation analysis.
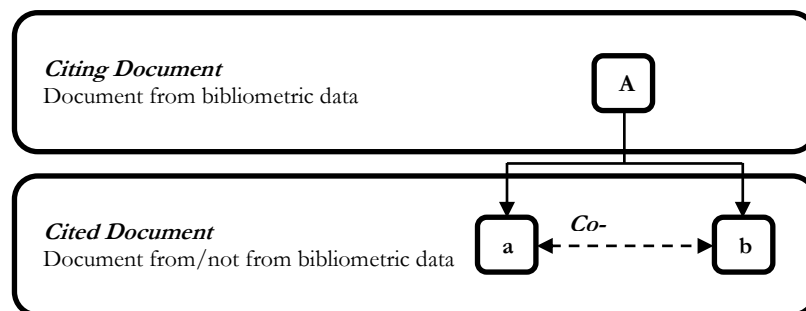

Figure 6. Co-citation analysis chart (Voggel and Guttel, 2012), with adjustments.

This co-citation analysis uses cited references as the unit of analysis. The threshold (the lower limit of the number of citations in the cited document) is eight citations. Thus, a document will be analyzed if it is cited by at least eight documents from different bibliometric data. Consequently, 20 documents were analyzed.
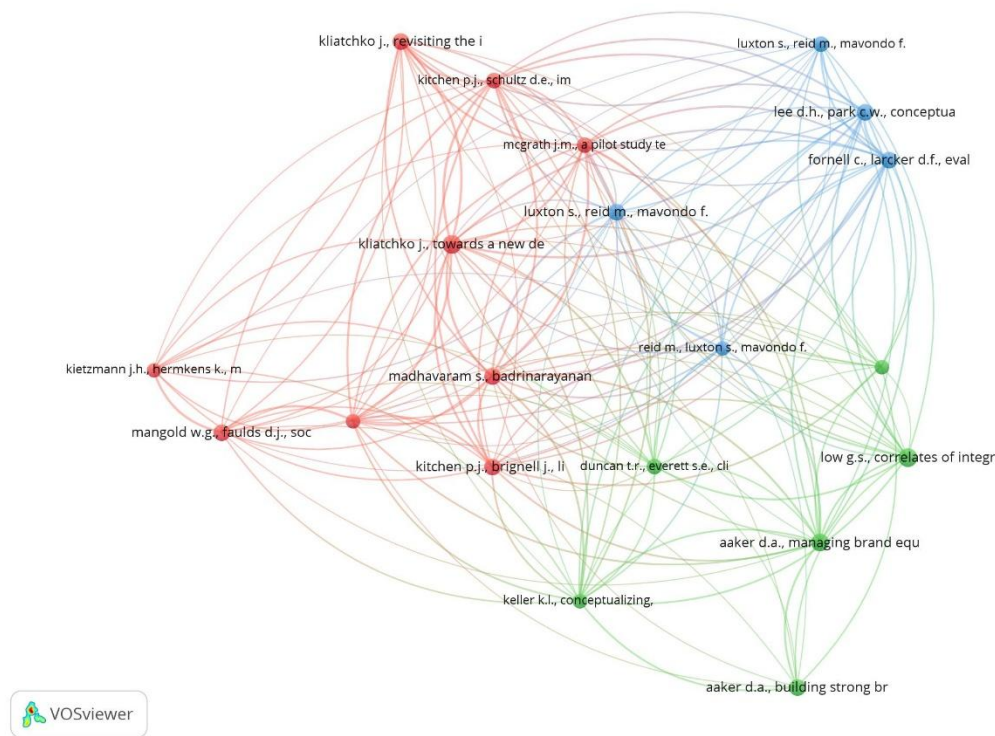

Figure 6. Graph of co-citation analysis based on documents.

Table 5. Publications by cluster and citation from co-citation analysis.

Author	Year	Document	Cluster	Citation
Kliatchko J.	2005	Towards A New Definition Of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)	1	14
Kitchen P.J., Brignell J., Li T., Jones G.S.	2004	The Emergence Of IMC: A Theoretical Perspective	1	11
Madhavaram S., Badrinarayanan V., Mcdonald R.E.	2005	Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) And Brand Identity As Critical Components Of Brand Equity Strategy: A Conceptual Framework And Research Propositions	1	11
Low G.S.	2000	Correlates Of Integrated Marketing Communications	2	13
Aaker D.A.	1991	Managing Brand Equity	2	12
Aaker D.A.	1996	Building Strong Brands	2	11
Fornell C., Larcker D.F.	1981	Evaluating Structural Equation Models With Unobservable Variables And Measurement Error	3	11
Luxton S., Reid M., Mavondo F.	2014	Integrated Marketing Communication Capability And Brand Performance	3	11
Lee D.H., Park C.W.	2007	Conceptualization And Measurement Of Multidimensionality Of Integrated Marketing Communications	3	10

Note: (1) Each cluster shows only three documents with the most citations, (2) cluster 1 is marked in red, cluster 2 in green, while cluster 3 is represented by blue.

In cluster 1, there are publications from Kliatchko, Kitchen et al., and Madhavaram et al. Kliatchko (2005) conducted a literature review and analysis related to IMC, providing a new proposition for the definition of IMC through three pillars: audience-focused, channel-centered, and results-driven. Kitchen et al. (2004) conducted a critical review of IMC concerning its development process, its impact on marketing communications, and the field's further advancement, addressing both obstacles and goals. Madhavaram et al. (2005) also contributed to the IMC field by proposing a conceptual framework that connects brand identity, IMC, and brand equity as part of a brand equity strategy. Therefore, cluster 1 primarily discusses the development of the IMC field, encompassing historical perspectives, definitions, and new advancements and propositions.

Cluster 2 features works by Low and Aaker. Low (2000) conducted research to understand how to measure IMC: exploring the level of IMC application, factors supporting IMC (such as industry characteristics, business competition, and managerial aspects), and its impact on company marketing. Aaker (1991, 1996) discusses the intricacies of brand equity comprehensively in two books, delving into methods of measurement and also addressing IMC as a means to build and sustain brand equity. From this description, cluster 2 emphasizes IMC measurement concerning brand equity so that it can be applied and can be evaluated carefully.

In cluster 3, the documents belong to Fornell and Larcker, Luxton et al., and Lee and Park. Fornell and Larcker (1981) considered limitations in chi-square statistical testing and proposed a new testing system model related to theories in marketing. Luxton et al. (2014) conducted research in Australia on the relationship between a company's IMC capabilities, campaign effectiveness, brand market performance, and their subsequent impact on the company's financial aspects, which mutually influence each other. Finally, Lee and Park (2007) conducted research in South Korea to test their proposition of IMC consisting of four dimensions (unified communications, differentiated communications, database-centered communications, and relationships), confirming the reliability and validity of these four dimensions. Thus, cluster 3 represents a cluster focusing on testing and applying IMC along with associated methodologies.

In addition to clusters, co-citation analysis also yields total link strength, which denotes the overall frequency of association between one unit of analysis and another (Donthu et al., 2020). Total link strength signifies the significance or relationship within the analysis (Baker et al., 2020). Therefore, the higher the total link strength, the stronger the relationship and influence of the document. Table 6 outlines the top 10 documents with the highest total link strength.

The publication by Kliatchko, conducting a literature review of IMC and presenting its proposition, holds the document with the highest total link strength at 60. Furthermore, several publications discussed in the cluster discussion also exhibit high total link strength: Madhavaram et al. (58), Fornell and Larcker (51), Lee and Park (48), Aaker (44), and Kitchen et al. (43). However, some documents within their clusters lack the highest citations yet maintain high total link strength, namely: Kitchen and Schultz, McGrath, Mulhern, and Keller. Kitchen and Schultz (2009) conducted a comprehensive review of IMC, advocating the need to revisit IMC by introducing new parameters—based on changes in the market and consumers—that serves as a reference base to assess that IMC is a field that brings a positive impact in marketing, not merely a concept. McGrath (2005) conducted an experimental study to observe the impact of IMC on brand attitude and brand recall; the result indicated that IMC had a

positive impact on brand attitude but not on brand recall. Mulhern (2009) contributed to the development of IMC by reviewing the shift from traditional media to digital media and its influence on this field; it's essential to establish a theoretical basis for IMC in the digital world based on four main characteristics: demand-based, social, interactivity, and metrics. Meanwhile, Keller (1993) introduced the concept of customer-based brand equity (CBBE), including strategies on how to build, measure, and manage it.

Table 6. Top 10 total link strength from co-citation analysis.

Author	Year	Document	Total Link Strength
Kliatchko J.	2005	Towards A New Definition Of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)	60
Madhavaram S., Badrinarayanan V., Mcdonald R.E.	2005	Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) And Brand Identity As Critical Components Of Brand Equity Strategy: A Conceptual Framework And Research Propositions	58
Fornell C., Larcker D.F.	1981	Evaluating Structural Equation Models With Unobservable Variables And Measurement Error	51
Kitchen P.J., Schultz D.E.	2009	IMC: New Horizon/False Dawn For A Marketplace In Turmoil?	50
Lee D.H., Park C.W.	2007	Conceptualization And Measurement Of Multidimensionality Of Integrated Marketing Communications	48
Mcgrath J.M.	2005	A Pilot Study Testing Aspects Of The Integrated Marketing Communications Concept	46
Mulhern F.	2009	Integrated Marketing Communications: From Media Channels To Digital Connectivity	46
Aaker D.A.	1991	Managing Brand Equity	44
Kitchen P.J., Brignell J., Li T., Jones G.S.	2004	The Emergence Of IMC: A Theoretical Perspective	43
Keller K.L.	1993	Conceptualizing, Measuring, And Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity	42

Moreover, co-citation analysis reveals the most influential authors. To gauge this, the analysis employs the cited authors' unit of analysis with a minimum threshold (minimum number of citations by authors) of 30. Therefore, authors will only be considered if they are cited by at least 30 different publications. With this adjustment, 25 authors were analyzed.
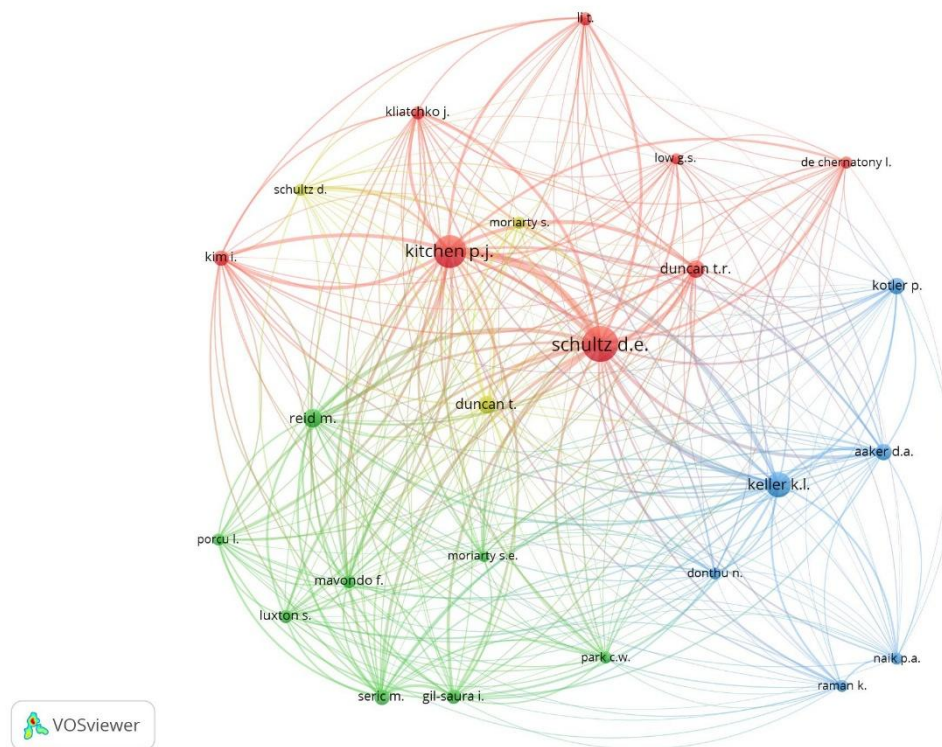
Figure 7. Graph of co-citation analysis by author.

The most frequently cited author is Schultz with 292 citations. Additionally, Kitchen (240) and Keller (141) had the most citations before a larger gap emerged. The differences in total link strength become apparent from the 6th to the 10th place. Table 7 furnishes further details about the top 10 most cited authors and their link strength in the field of IMC and brands.

Table 7. Top 10 authors based on citation and total link strength from co-citation analysis.

Citation		Total Link Strength	
Author	**Citation**	**Author**	**Total Link Strength**
Schultz D.E.	292	Schultz D.E.	5145
Kitchen P.J.	240	Kitchen P.J.	4409
Keller K.L.	141	Keller K.L.	2302
Reid M.	77	Reid M.	1794
Duncan T.R.	71	Duncan T.R.	1599
Duncan T.	69	Seric M.	1444
Aaker D.A.	64	Kim I.	1280
Kotler P.	59	Gil-Saura I.	1270
Seric M.	56	Aaker D.A.	1127
Kim I.	53	Duncan T.	1114

Bibliographic Analysis

Bibliographic analysis examines pairs between publications; two publications that cite the same publication at least once will be paired (Kessler, 1963). The assumption is that two publications citing the same source will likely have similar content (Donthu et al, 2021). This analysis is suitable for exploring the spectrum of themes and their development (Donthu et al,

2021), observing ongoing trends, and identifying future research opportunities (Voggel and Guttel, 2012). Figure 8 illustrates bibliographic analysis.
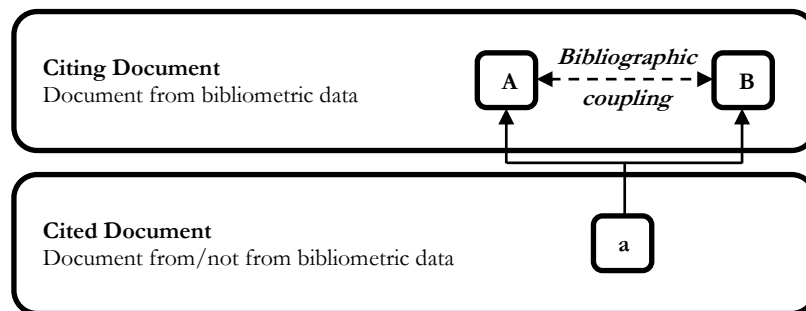

Figure 8. Bibliographic analysis chart (Voggel and Guttel, 2012), with adjustments.

In analyzing bibliographic coupling, the unit of analysis used is documents. The threshold (minimum number of citations from other documents) was set at 50. Following this configuration, 31 documents were initially obtained. However, five documents remained unconnected. Thus, the final total of analyzed documents is 26. This analysis will utilize total link strength as the primary indicator. This is because the stronger the relationship between two authors based on co-citations of multiple documents, the greater the topic similarity between them (Ma, 2012).
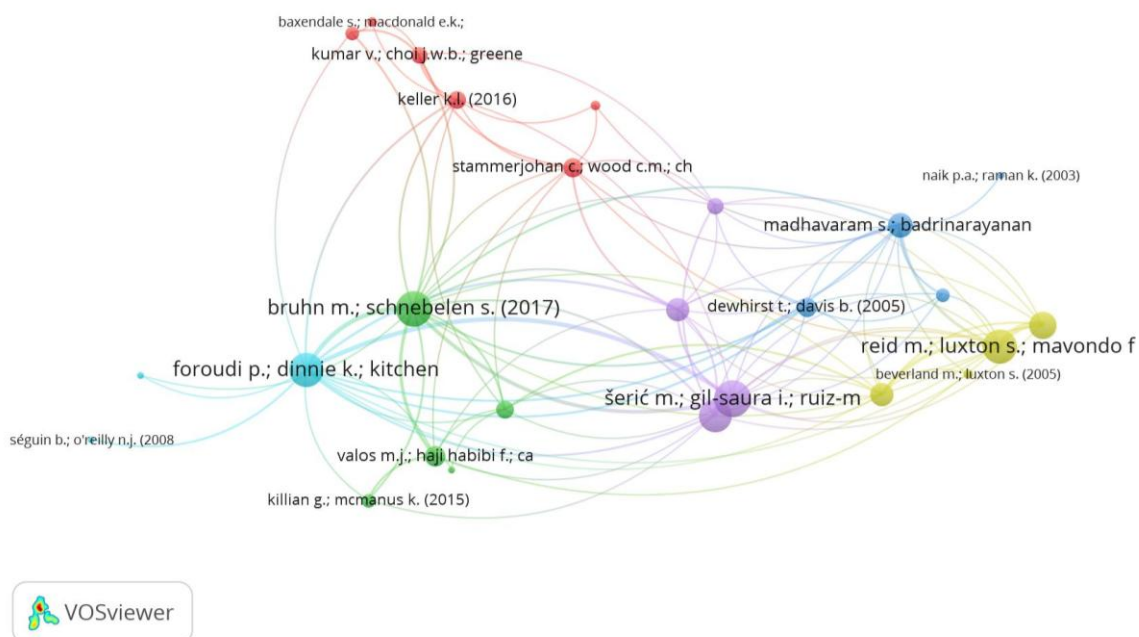

Figure 9. Graph of bibliographic coupling analysis based on documents.

Table 8. Publications based on cluster and total link strength from bibliographic analysis.

Author	Year	Document	Cluster	Total Link Strength
Stammerjohan C.; Wood C.M.; Chang Y.; Thorson E.	2005	An Empirical Investigation Of The Interaction Between Publicity, Advertising, And Previous Brand Attitudes And Knowledge	1	12
Keller K.L.	2016	Unlocking The Power Of Integrated Marketing Communications: How Integrated Is Your IMC Program?	1	11

Kumar V.; Choi J.W.B.; Greene M.	2017	Synergistic Effects Of Social Media And Traditional Marketing On Brand Sales: Capturing The Time-Varying Effects	1	10
Bruhn M.; Schnebelen S.	2017	Integrated Marketing Communication – From An Instrumental To A Customer-Centric Perspective	2	43
Valos M.J.; Haji Habibi F.; Casidy R.; Driesener C.B.; Maplestone V.L.	2016	Exploring The Integration Of Social Media Within Integrated Marketing Communication Frameworks: Perspectives Of Services Marketers	2	14
Verhellen Y.; Oates C.; De Pelsmacker P.; Dens N.	2014	Children's Responses To Traditional Versus Hybrid Advertising Formats: The Moderating Role Of Persuasion Knowledge	2	11
Madhavaram S.; Badrinarayanan V.; Mcdonald R.E.	2005	Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) And Brand Identity As Critical Components Of Brand Equity Strategy: A Conceptual Framework And Research Propositions	3	21
Dewhirst T.; Davis B.	2005	Brand Strategy And Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC): A Case Study Of Player's Cigarette Brand Marketing	3	12
Keller K.L.	2009	Building Strong Brands In A Modern Marketing Communications Environment	3	6
Reid M.; Luxton S.; Mavondo F.	2005	The Relationship Between Integrated Marketing Communication, Market Orientation, And Brand Orientation	4	38
Reid M.	2005	Performance Auditing Of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Actions And Outcomes	4	25
Luxton S.; Reid M.; Mavondo F.	2014	Integrated Marketing Communication Capability And Brand Performance	4	18
Šerić M.; Gil-Saura I.; Ruiz-Molina M.E.	2014	How Can Integrated Marketing Communications And Advanced Technology Influence The Creation Of Customer-Based Brand Equity? Evidence From The Hospitality Industry	5	44
Šerić M.; Gil-Saura I.	2012	ICT, IMC, And Brand Equity In High-Quality Hotels Of Dalmatia: An Analysis From Guest Perceptions	5	36
Dinnie K.; Melewar T.C.; Seidenfuss K.-U.; Musa G.	2010	Nation Branding And Integrated Marketing Communications: An Asean Perspective	5	19
Foroudi P.; Dinnie K.; Kitchen P.J.; Melewar T.C.; Foroudi M.M.	2017	IMC Antecedents And The Consequences Of Planned Brand Identity In Higher Education	6	38
Séguin B.; O'Reilly N.J.	2008	The Olympic Brand, Ambush Marketing And Clutter	6	2
Christensen L.T.; Torp S.; Firat A.F.	2005	Integrated Marketing Communication And Postmodernity: An Odd Couple?	6	2

Note: (1) Each cluster only shows three documents with the highest total link strength, (2) cluster 1: red, cluster 2: green, cluster 3: dark blue, cluster 4: yellow, cluster 5: purple, and cluster 6: light blue.

From the bibliographic coupling analysis, six different clusters emerged. In cluster 1, there are publications from Stammerjohan et al., Keller, and Kumar et al. Stammerjohan et al. (2005) conducted an experimental study related to two IMC components (publicity/news from outside the company and company advertising) on advertisement attitude and brand attitude through radio and print publications, considering differentiated brand familiarity; the results indicated that although the two IMC components were influential, they had different impacts due to the complexity between media, brand familiarity, and news valence. This study contributes to understanding different IMC applications at each stage of brand familiarity. Keller (2016), drawing from an understanding of how consumers choose brands and products and the varied impacts of communication channels, proposed a framework to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of implemented IMC, referred to as the 'Seven C's'. Kumar et al. (2017) examined the time-varying effect of social media impressions and traditional marketing on brand performance; the results revealed that the impact of social media impressions and traditional marketing changes over time, emphasizing the necessity for more effective and efficient management. Consequently, in cluster 1, the publication demonstrated variations in effectiveness and efficiency across each IMC channel. This is attributed to the distinct influence of each IMC channel, highlighting the importance of optimizing their selection. Without careful selection, IMC practices may not yield effective and efficient results.

Cluster 2 comprises Bruhn and Schnebelen, Valos et al., and Verhellen et al. Bruhn and Schnebelen (2017) conducted a literature review of IMC within the context of social media development and proposed a new proposition; outlining IMC challenges in the context of social media development, emphasizing the need for adjustment through the application of customer-centric IMC (oriented toward relationships, content, and process) also accompanied by a framework and how to implement it. Valos et al. (2016) conducted exploratory research in the services field to develop an IMC framework for social media development; to integrate social media into the IMC framework and combine with traditional media, four things are needed: integrated strategy, message, organization implementation, and measurement. Verhellen et al. (2014) performed an experimental study on 11-14-year-old children to compare the influence of television advertising, hybrid advertising, and IMC, considering the mediating variable of persuasion knowledge; the results showed that IMC had a more positive impact on children without persuasion knowledge regarding brand attitude than on children with persuasion knowledge. Consequently, cluster 2 focuses on discussing the evolution of IMC concerning advancements in social media.

In cluster 3, there are publications from Madhavaram et al., Dewhirst and Davis, and Keller. Madhavaram et al. (2005), as mentioned earlier, contributed to the IMC field by proposing a conceptual framework that links brand identity, IMC, and brand equity as components of a brand equity strategy. Dewhirst and Davis (2005) conducted a case study of Imperial Tobacco Limited (ITL) to understand IMC practices; ITL implemented IMC as part of its brand strategy to enhance brand equity and shareholder value through three practices: strategically consistent brand communication, cross-functional planning and monitoring, and data-driven targeting and communication. Meanwhile, Keller (2009) elucidates the role of IMC in building brand equity by referring to the brand resonance pyramid, which represents consumers' brand knowledge structure; the necessity to carefully select each element in IMC to positively impact brand equity is highlighted. Cluster 3 shares similarities in discussing IMC as an integral part of brand strategy and its influence on brand equity.

In cluster 4, the authors identified from bibliographic coupling mapping are Reid et al., Reid, and Luxton et al. Reid et al. (2005) explored the relationship between IMC, market orientation (MO), and brand orientation (BO) concerning external (marketing communication performance (operational and campaign)) and brand performance (customer impact and asset-related, market impact and position-related, also financial impact and impact on firm value) and also proposed a testable framework proposition; assuming that MO and BO would influence IMC—acting as the mediating variable—which, in turn, would affect external performance. Reid (2005) conducted an exploratory study using a modified Duncan-Morriarty miniaudit (into three determinants of IMC success: interactivity, mission marketing, and cross-functional strategic planning) to look at the relationship between IMC and brand outcomes (sales performance, customer satisfaction, and brand advantage); the result is that there is a positive relationship between IMC and brand outcomes positively and there are several things that affect the IMC process: market orientation, organizational characteristics, position in the market, and the level of competition. Additionally, as previously described, Luxton et al. (2014) conducted research in Australia on the relationship between a company's IMC capabilities, campaign effectiveness, brand market performance, and their mutual influence on the company's financial aspect. Consequently, cluster 4 discusses numerous factors influencing the success of IMC in impacting brand performance, with a particular focus on financial performance.

In cluster 5, three authors who have published are Seric et al., Seric and Gil-Saura, and Dinnie et al. Seric et al. (2014) conducted research on 20 luxury hotels in Italy to examine the effect of IMC on brand equity (brand image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty) using information and communication technology (ICT) sophistication as a moderating variable; the results indicated that IMC affects brand equity, yet ICT does not moderate it, although a relationship exists between ICT and IMC regarding brand equity (hotels with high ICT display a stronger relationship between IMC and brand equity compared to hotels with low ICT). Seric and Gil-Saura (2012) conducted research in 13 hotels in Dalmatia, Croatia, exploring the relationship between ICT, IMC, and brand equity (brand image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty); the results showed a positive relationship both between ICT and IMC and between IMC and brand equity. Furthermore, Dinnie et al. (2010) conducted a study on the process of IMC practices in nation branding, involving 10 key informants from five ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) members; the results identified seven principles of coordination between organizations in the context of nation branding: sector, organization domicile, mode, strategy formulation, nature, frequency, and target audience. This cluster explores IMC in relation to both ICT and nation branding, demonstrating how IMC is developed through its connection with other concepts.

The last cluster, cluster 6, comprises three publications from three authors: Foroudi et al., Seguin and O'Reilly, and Christensen et al. Foroudi et al. (2017) researched the impact of IMC (brand elements, service attributes, websites, social media, advertising, public relations, direct marketing, and place/country-of-origin) on planned brand identity (IMC consequences: awareness, image, positioning, reputation, and identification); the results indicated that brand elements, service attributes, public relations, and place/country of origin positively influenced planned brand identity, however, websites, social media, and advertising did not have such an effect, while direct marketing exhibited inconsistency, and IMC consequences influenced each other sequentially. Furthermore, Foroudi et al. (2017) explained a potential reason behind why websites, social media, and advertising might not influence planned brand identity: the failure

of brand co-creation. Subsequently, Seguin and O'Reilly (2008) examined sponsorship in Olympic events, addressing issues such as ambush marketing and clutter that diminished the Olympic brand and consequently impacted the sponsor's brand equity; they emphasized the necessity for collaboration between the Olympics and sponsors, focusing on aspects like brand management, brand protection, safeguarding sponsors' rights, consumer education, a comprehensive IMC program, also educating the Olympics about marketing and brand management. Christensen et al. (2005) conducted a critical review of Postmodern concepts and IMC, highlighting the importance of involving consumers as partners or collaborators in developing IMC. Through the examination of documents in cluster 6, the predominant theme identified is the imperative need for collaboration in constructing IMC.

When considering the publication years, the clusters exhibiting the latest publication trends are clusters 6, 2, 1, and some publications from clusters 5 and 4. However, cluster 3 mostly reflects the previous publication trend. Figure 10 illustrates the publication year trends.
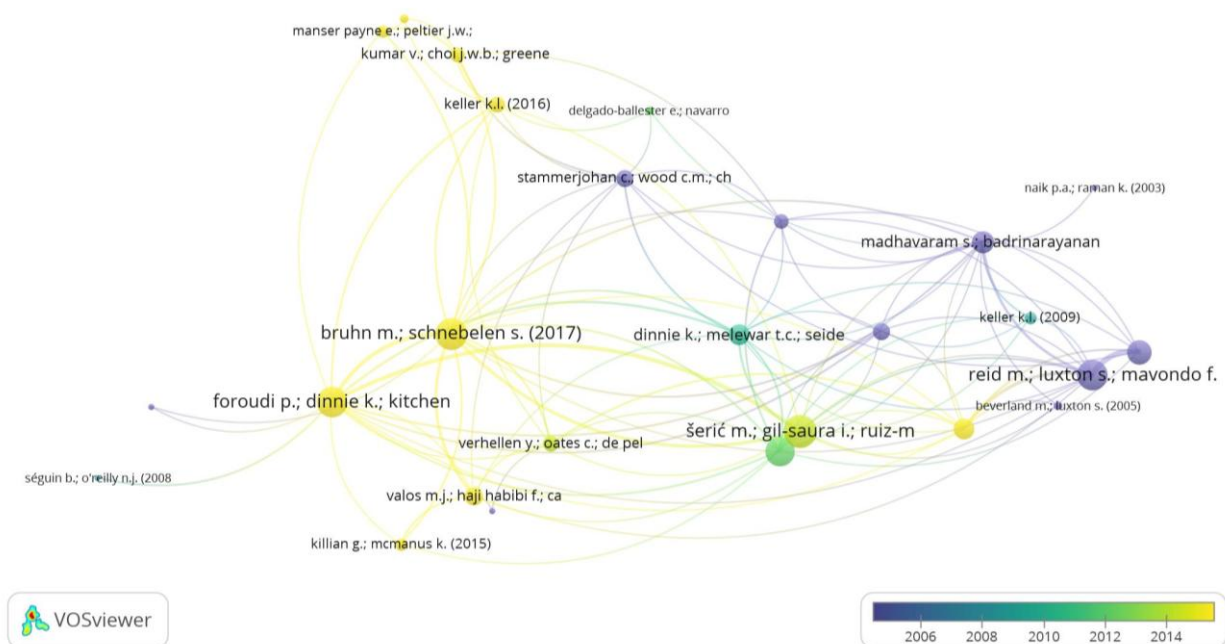

Figure 10. Publication trends from bibliographic coupling analysis based on documents.

Co-Word Analysis

Co-word analysis examines the relationship between keywords utilized in publications sourced from bibliometric data. The fundamental assumption mirrors that of co-citation and bibliographic coupling analysis: keywords frequently used together create clusters that signify similar themes (Donthu et al, 2021). This analysis aids in comprehending cognitive structures within the scientific realm (Borner et al, 2005). Beyond identifying patterns, co-word analysis serves to detect trends in the scientific field, allowing for the observation of changes within it (Coulter et al, 1998). Consequently, it facilitates an insight into the direction of future research endeavors (Donthu et al, 2021). This analytical method further augments the understanding garnered from co-citation and bibliographic coupling analyses (Donthu et al, 2021).

In the analysis of co-words, the unit of analysis employed is the author keyword, set with a threshold of minimum keyword occurrence of 3. This filtering yielded 26 keywords. One keyword, namely 'India,' was excluded as it was not considered a relevant keyword. Furthermore, to prevent the recurrence of similar keywords across different clusters, which might lead to ambiguous visualizations, manual configuration was undertaken: (1) keywords

such as 'IMC', 'integrated marketing communications', 'integrated marketing communications (IMC)', 'integrated marketing communication', and 'integrated marketing communication (IMC)' were merged into 'integrated marketing communications'; (2) 'brand' and 'brands' were consolidated into 'brands'; (3) 'brand equity' and 'brand-equity' were merged into 'brand equity'; and (4) 'marketing communications' and 'marketing communication' was unified into 'marketing communications'.
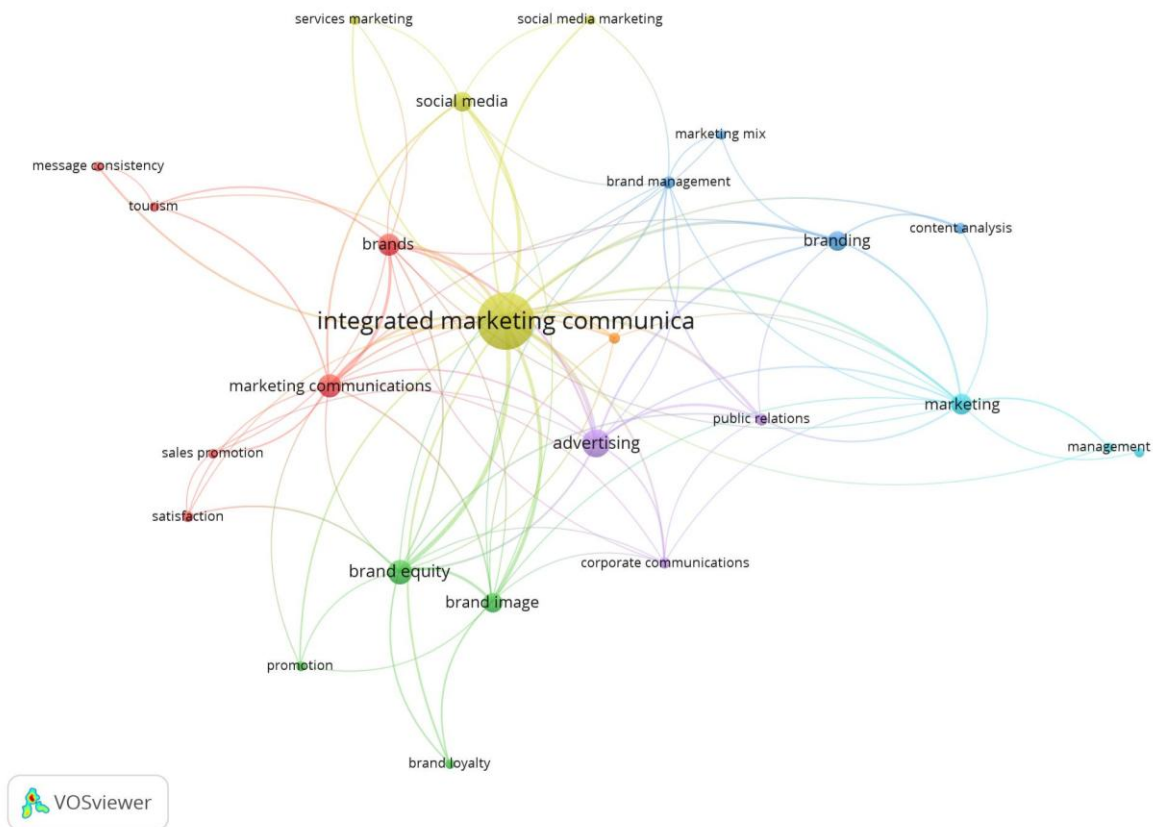

Figure 11. Co-word analysis.

To interpret the co-word analysis: the closer two keywords are, the more frequent their co-occurrence, and vice versa. The outcomes of this analysis indicate that the central keyword is 'IMC.' This keyword commonly associates with other clusters, such as 'brands,' 'marketing communications,' 'advertising,' 'social media,' and 'brand identity.' Interestingly, 'IMC' seldom intersects with 'brand loyalty' and 'management.' Moreover, there is relatively infrequent intersection observed between 'IMC' and 'message consistency' as well as 'social media marketing'.

This analysis also produces clusters that illustrate the continuity among the keywords within them. Seven clusters were generated from this analysis, detailed in table 9.

Table 9. Cluster from co-word analysis.

Cluster	Main Keyword	Sub Keyword
1	Marketing Communications	Brands
		Satisfaction
		Message Consistency
		Sales Promotion
		Tourism

Cluster	Main Keyword	Sub Keyword
2	Brand Equity	Brand Image
		Brand Loyalty
		Promotion
3	Branding	Brand Management
		Content Analysis
		Marketing Mix
4	Integrated Marketing Communications	Social Media
		Services Marketing
		Social Media Marketing
5	Advertising	Public Relations
		Corporate Communications
6	Marketing	Management
		Strategy
7	Brand Identity	

Note: (1) Main Keyword is determined from the highest occurrence in its cluster, while Sub Keyword is sorted by its occurrence, (2) cluster 1: red, cluster 2: green, cluster 3: dark blue, cluster 4: yellow, cluster 5: purple, cluster 6: light blue, and cluster 7: orange.

Interestingly, IMC keywords are in the same cluster as 'social media,' implying a strong association between IMC research and social media. This aligns with the ongoing publication trend depicted in figure x. Additionally, the current trend in IMC publications correlates with keywords like 'satisfaction,' 'message consistency,' 'marketing mix,' and 'brand identity.' Due to its frequent referencing in IMC, the average publication year trend for IMC publications is on the rise. This suggests ongoing and frequent development within the IMC field today.
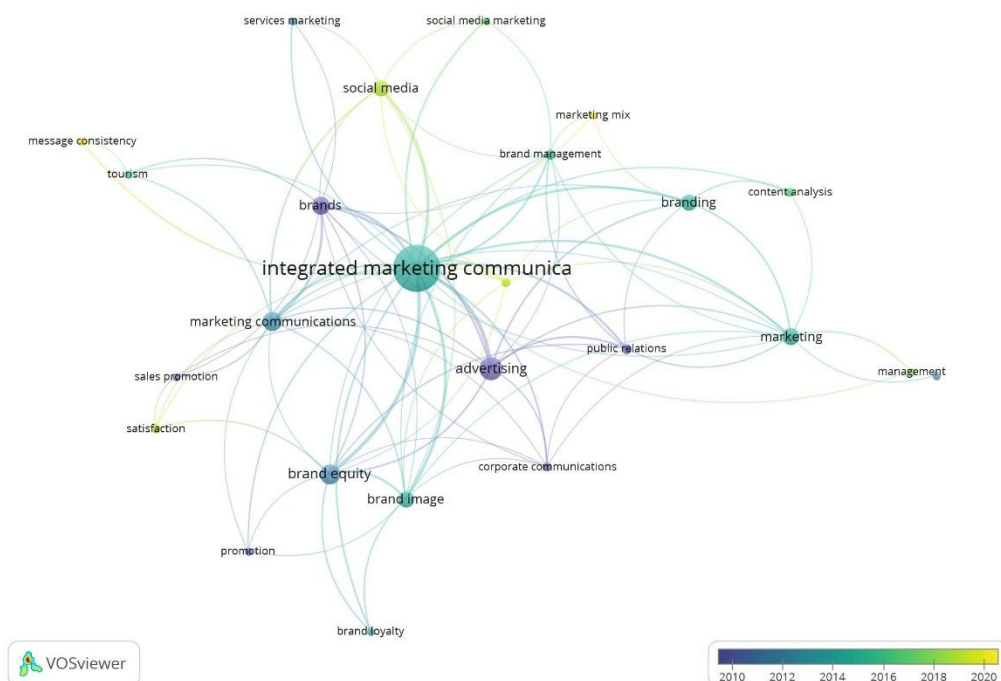

Figure 12. Publication year trends from co-word analysis.

Once again, some trending keywords associated with IMC include: social media, message consistency, satisfaction, brand identity, and marketing mix. An illustration of social media usage in publications is evident in Kumar et al.'s work. As mentioned earlier, Kumar et al. (2017) discern the disparities between social media and traditional marketing, emphasizing the necessity for effective and efficient management of these platforms. Regarding message consistency, one notable publication employing this keyword is by Rodriguez-Molina et al. in 2019. In their study, Rodriguez-Molina et al. (2019) conducted an experimental study examining the correlation between positioning strategy and message consistency in IMC concerning brand equity; the findings indicate that a specialized positioning strategy coupled with high message consistency positively influences brand equity, also despite using a differentiated positioning strategy, high message consistency in IMC moderates the positive impact on brand equity.

Regarding the keyword 'satisfaction,' Thaichon and Quach are among the authors who utilize it. In their publication, Thaichon and Quach (2016) conducted a literature review to propose a framework analyzing the influence of IMC on brands (brand awareness, brand personality, and brand image) which affects customer expectations, continuance commitment, and switching costs, ultimately impacting customer switching intentions. As for the keyword 'brand identity,' one of its proponents is Foroudi et al. As previously noted, Foroudi et al. (2017) explored the impact of IMC on brand identity, revealing that several IMC elements significantly influence brand identity. This underscores the importance of strategic planning and maximizing channels within the available IMC options. Lastly, the term 'marketing mix' was employed by Rakhmanova et al. (2021), emphasizing the significance of customization in IMC strategies and developing an IMC model based on this argument.

Conclusion

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) serves as an effective approach for building brand equity. Recognizing its substantial impact, fostering the advancement of this field is crucial. Consequently, this study focuses on IMC development, specifically concerning brands. A dataset of 175 bibliometric entries from the Scopus database was utilized for analysis, encompassing performance analysis and science mapping conducted via VOSviewer software.

Through citation analysis, Keller's 2009 publication emerges as the most frequently cited. This work examines IMC's influence on brand equity, emphasizing the importance of meticulous selection of IMC variations for heightened efficiency and effectiveness. On the other hand, within co-citation analysis, Kliatchko's publication stands as foundational in IMC and brand science. Kliatchko's work redefines IMC and shapes its core concepts. Regarding authors, Schultz emerges as the pivotal figure in shaping the scientific foundation of IMC and branding.

Upon analyzing publication trends, it appears that the domain of IMC and brands continues to evolve significantly in present times. Current trends, observed through bibliographic coupling, revolve around collaborative practices—both internal and external—in executing IMC. There is also notable discussion on IMC in the digital landscape, particularly concerning social media, and the evaluation of effectiveness and efficiency across various IMC channels. Furthermore, when considering co-word analysis, prevailing trends in IMC and brand

research are centered around themes such as social media, message consistency, satisfaction, brand identity, and the marketing mix.

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