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Mapping the Landscape of International Advertising: A Bibliometric Review

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Abstract

Purpose – This study maps the research performance, intellectual structure, and thematic development of international advertising scholarship to identify persistent debates, research gaps, and opportunities for theoretical renewal.

Methodology – Guided by the PSALSAR framework, the study reviews 208 English-language journal documents indexed in Scopus and retrieved on April 28, 2024. Performance analysis examines publication trends and leading contributors, journals, and countries. Science mapping employs bibliographic coupling and author-keyword co-occurrence analysis using VOSviewer, supported by qualitative interpretation of thematic clusters.

Findings – International advertising research remains anchored in three established perspectives: standardization, adaptation, and contingency. Bibliographic coupling identifies six thematic clusters, while keyword co-occurrence analysis reveals five, highlighting consumer responses, cultural influences, cross-cultural comparisons, and social media. Research output is geographically concentrated, particularly in the United States. The findings indicate opportunities to renew established debates through digital communication research and investigations in underrepresented markets.

Practical implications – The synthesis suggests that international advertisers should balance consistent global brand positioning with culturally responsive campaign execution. Local consumer insights and social media engagement can inform decisions about which advertising elements to standardize or adapt across markets.

Introduction

Broadly defined as the dissemination of promotional messages across national boundaries (Douglas & Craig, 2001), international advertising constitutes a central strategic mechanism for firms seeking to establish a presence in foreign markets. Beyond facilitating transactions, it plays a key role in communicating product and corporate images to heterogeneous consumer segments (Akaka & Alden, 2010), thereby contributing to global brand equity development. This communicative function aligns with the primary objectives of corporate internationalization, which typically include entry into new markets, realization of scale efficiencies, and maximization of profitability (Needle & Burns, 2019).

However, global marketers continue to face persistent implementation challenges, particularly in determining optimal strategies for achieving message acceptance across national

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contexts. This challenge is commonly framed as a strategic tension between standardization, which aims to ensure brand consistency and reduce costs (Jiang & Wei, 2012), and adaptation, which aligns promotional messages with local cultural expectations and consumer sensitivities (Melewar et al., 2009; Susan Tai, 2004). The selection of an appropriate approach is critical, as poorly aligned campaigns can undermine brand performance, whereas well-executed strategies, including contemporary applications of social media, can substantially enhance firm outcomes (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013).

As an established academic field, international advertising has received sustained scholarly attention for more than four decades (Taylor, 2005; Zou, 2005). Research has examined how cross-national differences and similarities influence advertising receptivity, as well as how promotional activities in one country affect consumer behavior in another (Ha et al., 2014). Despite this long-standing scholarly interest, the field's conceptual development has been characterized by relative stagnation. Prior studies have noted that core paradigms have exhibited limited theoretical progression due to insufficient replication and innovation, resulting in a lack of substantive conceptual advancement in recent decades (Fastoso & Whitelock, 2007; Ryans et al., 2003).

To address this stagnation, it is necessary to systematically map the field's intellectual structure, evolutionary trajectory, and active research fronts. Bibliometric analysis provides a structured quantitative approach for identifying key themes, underlying knowledge structures, and relational patterns within a scientific domain (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). By revealing established trends and underexplored areas, bibliometric mapping supports the identification of research gaps and the formulation of future research directions (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). However, as of April 2024, a comprehensive bibliometric assessment of international advertising literature was not available in the Scopus database.

This study addresses this gap by conducting a comprehensive bibliometric review of international advertising literature using performance analysis and science mapping techniques, specifically bibliographic coupling and keyword co-occurrence analysis. Accordingly, the study addresses two research questions:

- (RQ1) What is the research performance in the field of international advertising?
- (RQ2) What are the research trends in the field of international advertising?

By addressing these questions, this study aims to systematically map the state of the art, identify thematic and geographic gaps, and provide directions for future academic inquiry and managerial practice.

Literature Review

Advertising, as a form of marketing communication, contributes to brand equity and drives sales in various ways: creating brand awareness and image, evoking favorable brand judgments or feelings, and fostering brand loyalty (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Advertising that is done globally is referred to as international advertising. International advertising encompasses the distribution of promotional messages to target audiences across multiple countries (Douglas & Craig, 2001). Akaka and Alden (2010) stated that international advertising holds significant importance in communicating both product and company image to consumers.

The topic of international advertising has received attention and recognition as an important area of research (Taylor, 2005). In line with this, Zou (2005) stated that this field has attracted various studies over four decades, making it a legitimate academic research field. Academically, Ha et al. (2014) defined it as a subfield within international advertising and marketing that studies the differences and similarities in advertising across countries, as well as how a country's advertising abroad affects other countries.

According to Agrawal (1995), there are three perspectives in international advertising studies: standardization, adaptation, and contingency. These three perspectives consider cost, profit, and advertising effectiveness/brand image consistency (Melewar & Vemmervik, 2004;

Onkvisit & Shaw, 1990). The standardization perspective posits that globalization drives markets toward convergence of similar preferences, allowing companies to reduce advertising costs and achieve universal brand image consistency (Melewar & Vemmervik, 2004). In contrast, the adaptation perspective views advertising as dependent on local culture, necessitating adaptation through local sensitivity to achieve communication effectiveness (Hite & Fraser, 1990). The contingency perspective, on the other hand, considers the internal and external factors influencing the firm's advertising strategies, suggesting that these strategies should be neither completely standardized nor completely adaptive, but rather depend on the situation (Agrawal, 1995; Melewar & Vemmervik, 2004). Onkvisit and Shaw (1990) proposed that standardization and adaptation should be seen as a continuum in each country; it is necessary to examine the extent to which standardization is effective and efficient before determining the need for adaptation.

Research Methods

The bibliometric method applies quantitative techniques (e.g., bibliographic coupling analysis) to bibliometric data (e.g., data from Scopus, where the unit is documents), which are then processed into two main analyses: performance analysis and science mapping (Donthu et al., 2021). Performance analysis evaluates the development of the field based on the number of publications and author contributions, whereas science mapping seeks to uncover the structure and evolution within the field (Zupic & Čater, 2015). This method, which synthesizes existing research, aims to: obtain research trends, review/map the field, identify research gaps, generate new research ideas, and provide information on the position of research contributions (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

To assess performance in international advertising, data from VOSviewer and Scopus citation analysis will be used. To examine current research trends, this study employs two bibliometric analyses: bibliographic coupling and co-occurrence. Bibliographic coupling is a bibliometric analysis that investigates the relationship between studies using the same reference sources to comprehend the development of themes in this scientific field (Donthu et al., 2020, 2021). Meanwhile, co-occurrence is used to observe the relationship between studies employing keywords to understand the development of topics in related fields of science (Donthu et al., 2021; Emich et al., 2020).

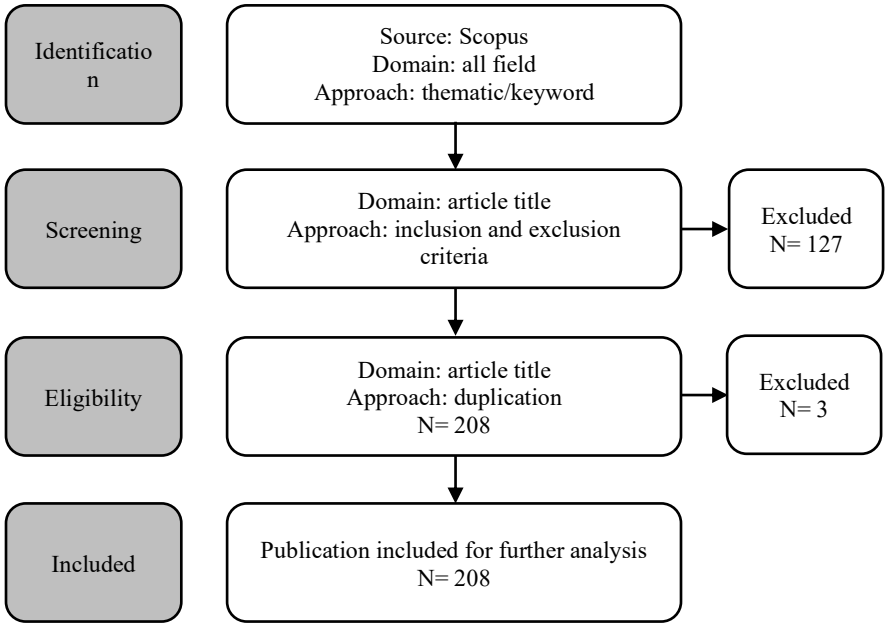


Figure 1. PRISMA framework, adapted from Mengist et al. (2020) and Sanga and Aziakpono (2023).

For the research to be structured, a research framework is necessary. Frameworks applicable in economics include PSALSAR (Table 1) and PRISMA (Figure 1) (Sanga & Aziakpono, 2023). PSALSAR (Protocol, Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, Analysis, and Report) is a development of SALSA (Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, and Analysis) designed to assist in planning review studies precisely and minimizing errors (Mengist et al., 2020).Meanwhile, PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) aids in ensuring that review methods (including bibliometrics) are transparent, complete, and accurate (Page et al., 2021).

Table 1. PSALSAR framework.

Steps	Outcomes	Methods	
Protocol	Scope of the study	Scope	Conduct a review of international advertising studies using bibliometric methods
Search	Search strategy	Search keyword for International Advertisement	"international* advertis*"
		Extraction date	• April 28th, 2024
		Search database	• Scopus
Appraisal	Selection of publication	Inclusion criteria	• Year: All • Subject area: Business, Management and Accounting • Source type: Journal • Language: English
		Exclusion criteria	• Duplicate documents
		Framework	• Details and results of the inclusion and exclusion criteria are provided in PRISMA
Synthesis	Data extraction and categorization	• Extracted data were entered into an Excel program to identify duplications • The final data were entered into VOSviewer for bibliometric analysis	
Analysis	Data analysis	• Content analysis was conducted using reference data from Excel • VOSviewer analysis: bibliographic coupling and co-occurence • Descriptive analysis and content analysis of VOSviewer analysis results	
	Result and discussion	• Synthesize the findings of the bibliometric analysis and write a conclusion	
Report	Article writing	• Presenting the results of research	

The PSALSAR framework was adapted from Mengist et al. (2020) and Sanga and Aziakpono (2023).

Results and Discussion

4.1 Performance Analysis

4.1.1 Publication by Year

Scopus records indicate that studies in the field of international advertising began in 1972

(Figure 2). The first recorded research was conducted by Donnelly and Ryans (1972), who examined how large US companies choose international advertising agencies in specific locations. Studies in this field peaked between 2006 and 2013, with article publications ranging from five to ten per year during this period. From 2020 to 2023, there was a noticeable growth trend in this research, although it declined again in 2024. The decline in 2024 can be attributed to the fact that these data are only calculated until the first quarter, which ends in April. There remains the possibility of an increase in the next quarter.

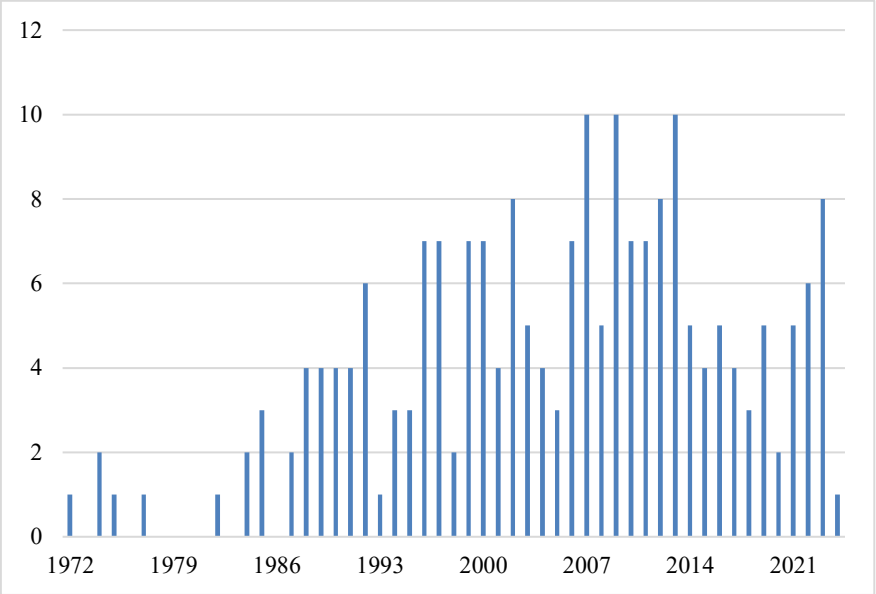


Figure 2. The publication trend of international advertising articles from the Scopus database.

4.1.2 Publication by the Author

The author with the largest contribution to this field is C. R. Taylor, who has published six articles. Most authors in the field of international advertising have only one published article. Details are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Top ten authors and publications.

Author	Publications
Taylor, C.R.	6
Diehl, S.	5
Laroche, M.	5
Whitelock, J.	5
Mueller, B.	4
Waller, D.S.	4
Cui, G.	3
Yang, X.	3
Fam, K.S.	3
Fastoso, F.	3

4.1.3 Most Cited Documents

The most cited document is by Zhou and Belk with 306 citations. Zhou and Belk (2004) examined consumer responses to international advertising in China. Furthermore, no article publications have garnered more than 300 citations (Table 3).

Table 3. Top ten most cited documents.

Name	Title	Year of Publication	Citations
Zhou N.; Belk R.W.	Chinese consumer readings of global and local advertising appeals	2004	306
Okazaki S.; Taylor C.R.	Social media and international advertising: Theoretical challenges and future directions	2013	243
Taylor C.R.	Moving international advertising research forwar: A new research agenda	2005	174
Agrawal M.	Review of a 40-year debate in international advertising Practitioner and academician perspectives to the standardization/ adaptation issue	1995	167
Leonidou L.C.; Leonidou C.N.; Palihawadana D.; Hultman M.	Evaluating the green advertising practices of international firms: A trend analysis	2011	158
Akaka M.A.; Alden D.L.	Global brand positioning and perceptions: International advertising and global consumer culture	2010	123
Hung K.H.; Li S.Y.; Belk R.W.	Glocal understandings: Female readers perceptions of the new woman in Chinese advertising	2007	111
Papavassiliou N.; Stathakopoulos V.	Standardization versus adaptation of international advertising strategies: Towards a framework	1997	110
Solberg C.A.	The perennial issue of adaptation or standardization of international marketing communication: Organizational contingencies and performance	2002	99
Gregory G.D.; Munch J.M.	Cultural values in international advertising: An examination of familial norms and roles in Mexico	1997	96

4.1.4 Top Article Source

The publisher with the highest total number of articles is the International Journal of Advertising from Taylor & Francis, with 51 articles related to international advertising studies. Furthermore, each publisher has a maximum of 18 articles (Table 4).

Table 4. Top ten article sources.

Source	Articles
International Journal Of Advertising	51
Journal Of Advertising	18
International Marketing Review	16
Journal Of Marketing Communications	11
Asia Pacific Journal Of Marketing And Logistics	7
European Journal Of Marketing	7
Journal Of Business Research	7
Journal Of Global Marketing	6
Journal Of International Consumer Marketing	6
Journal Of Advertising Research	5

4.1.5 Top Country

The country with the highest number of publications is the United States, with 108 publications. The other countries have a maximum of 23 articles (Table 5).

Table 5. Top ten countries with the most publications.

Country	Publications
United States	108
United Kingdom	23
Australia	12
Hong Kong	11
Canada	10
France	10
South Korea	10
Austria	8
New Zealand	8
China	7

4.2 Science Mapping

To map the relational structure and intellectual evolution of the international advertising literature, this study employs science mapping using two complementary bibliometric techniques: bibliographic coupling and co-occurrence (co-word) analysis. Science mapping represents relational structures spatially, whereby shorter distances between nodes indicate stronger thematic or intellectual proximity (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

To ensure reproducibility, the science mapping procedure followed a systematic five-step workflow. First, data preparation and cleaning were conducted by exporting Scopus metadata (N = 208 documents) in comma-separated values (.csv) format, followed by spelling correction and keyword standardization, including the merging of synonyms and harmonization of singular and plural forms. Second, the standardized dataset was imported into VOSviewer. Third, threshold settings and node filtering were applied by establishing minimum citation and keyword occurrence thresholds to distinguish core thematic structures from peripheral elements. Fourth, algorithmic layout and normalization were performed using the default full counting method and the association strength index, followed by application of the VOS clustering algorithm. Fifth, thematic labeling was conducted through qualitative content analysis of the core publications within each network cluster.

4.2.1 Top Article Source

Bibliographic coupling occurs when two publications share at least one common reference (Kessler, 1963). The underlying theoretical assumption is that overlap in cited references reflects a shared intellectual foundation, indicating that the citing documents address similar thematic paradigms. Unlike co-citation analysis, which identifies historical intellectual foundations, bibliographic coupling provides a forward-looking perspective because the citing documents represent active research fronts (Figure 3) (Vogel & Güttel, 2013). Consequently, this approach is particularly suitable for mapping contemporary research trends.

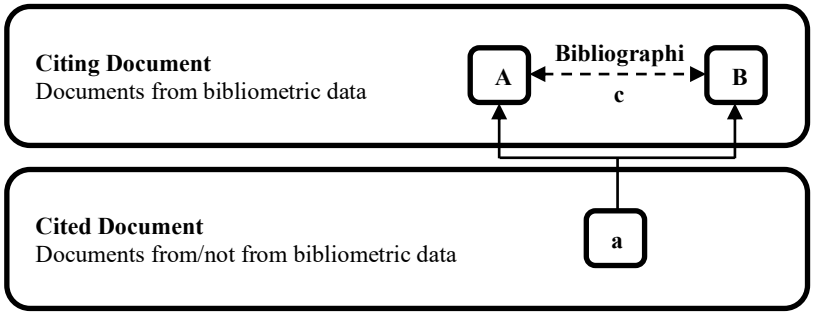


Figure 3. Illustration of bibliographic coupling analysis. Figure adapted from Vogel and Güttel (2013).

In this study, documents constitute the primary unit of analysis for bibliographic coupling. To reduce the influence of peripheral and minimally cited works and to avoid network fragmentation, a minimum citation threshold of 50 was applied. This threshold ensures that the resulting science map is grounded in well-established and influential works that have shaped the field, while maintaining structural clarity and cluster cohesion. Application of this criterion resulted in 32 eligible documents from the initial sample of 208. During network construction in VOSviewer, six documents were not connected to the largest connected component, as they shared no references with highly cited publications. These isolated nodes were excluded, resulting in a fully connected network comprising 26 documents for visualization.

To examine relationships within the network, total link strength is employed. This measure captures the intensity of connections between documents, where higher values indicate a greater number of shared references (Jan van Eck & Waltman, 2023), thereby implying stronger conceptual similarity between publications (Ma, 2012). Based on these normalized similarities, the VOS clustering algorithm partitioned the 26 core documents into six distinct thematic clusters (Figure 4).

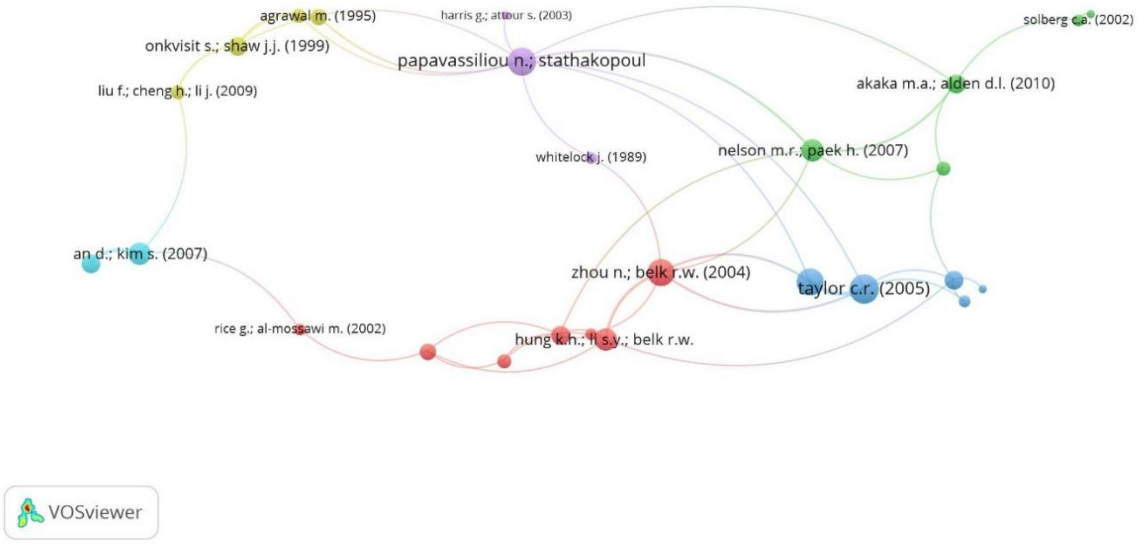


Figure 4. Bibliographic coupling analysis by VOSviewer.
Cluster 1= red, cluster 2= green, cluster 3= dark blue, cluster 4= yellow, cluster 5= purple, and cluster 6= light blue.

To transition from quantitative network metrics to qualitative insights, a manual content analysis of the documents was conducted. Rather than providing a descriptive annotated bibliography of all 26 documents, the qualitative synthesis focused on the most influential papers within each cluster, as indicated by their total link strength. Accordingly, the qualitative review was anchored in the top three representative publications per cluster, which sufficiently capture the conceptual boundaries and theoretical saturation of each theme. These key publications, ranked by total link strength, are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Documents by cluster and total link strength from VOSviewer.

Author	Year	Document	Cluster	Total Link Strengths
Zhou N.; Belk R.W.	2004	Chinese consumer readings of global and local advertising appeals	1	10
Hung K.H.; Li S.Y.; Belk R.W.	2007	Glocal understandings: Female readers perceptions of the new woman in Chinese advertising	1	7

Hornikx J.; van Meurs F.; de Boer A.	2010	English or a local language in advertising?: The appreciation of easy and difficult english slogans in the Netherlands	1	5
Nelson M.R.; Paek H.	2007	A content analysis of advertising in a global magazine across seven countries: Implications for global advertising strategies	2	7
Akaka M.A.; Alden D.L.	2010	Global brand positioning and perceptions: International advertising and global consumer culture	2	5
Watson J.; Lysonski S.; Gillan T.; Raymore L.	2002	Cultural values and important possessions: A cross-cultural analysis	2	3
Taylor C.R.	2005	Moving international advertising research forwar: A new research agenda	3	12
Taylor C.R.	2002	What is wrong with international advertising research?	3	10
Diehl S.; Terlutter R.; Mueller B.	2016	Doing good matters to consumers: The effectiveness of humaneoriented CSR appeals in cross-cultural standardized advertising campaigns	3	5
Onkvisit S.; Shaw J.J.	1999	Standardized international advertising: Some research issues and implications	4	5
Agrawal M.	1995	Review of a 40-year debate in international advertising Practitioner and academician perspectives to the standardization/ adaptation issue	4	4
Liu F.; Cheng H.; Li J.	2009	Consumer responses to sex appeal advertising:A cross-cultural study	4	3
Papavassiliou N.; Stathakopoulos V.	1997	Standardization versus adaptation of international advertising strategies: Towards a framework	5	11
Whitelock J.	1989	Cross-Cultural Advertising an Empirical Study	5	2
Harris G.; Attour S.	2003	The international advertising practices of multinational companies: A content analysis study	5	1
An D.; Kim S.	2007	Relating Hofstede's masculinity dimension to gender role portrayals in advertising: A cross-cultural comparison of web advertisements	6	7
Milner L.M.; Collins J.M.	2000	Sex-role portrayals and the gender of nations	6	5

Based on this qualitative content analysis of the core publications, six distinct thematic perspectives were identified. In cluster 1, Zhou and Belk (2004) employed a reader-response approach to observe Chinese consumers' reactions to global and local advertisements on television and print media. Hung et al. (2007) conducted an exploratory study to examine the image of modern Chinese women and how they interpret it in the context of global and local ideals. Meanwhile, Hornikx et al. (2010) conducted an experimental study on Dutch participants to observe their preference for slogans that use English or their local language, Dutch. This cluster focuses on how local consumers respond to exposure to international advertising.

In cluster 2, Nelson and Paek (2007) conducted a content analysis study on Cosmopolitan magazine to examine the extent to which the advertisements of global companies in this magazine standardized the advertisements in terms of the use of models and language across seven countries. Akaka and Alden (2010) observed that international advertising encourages global consumer culture (GCC); however, they required a theoretical framework to provide a more detailed explanation through an exploratory study of two constructsrelated to international

advertising and GCC: global consumer culture positioning and perceived brand globalness. Watson et al. (2002) conducted a comparative study in the USA and New Zealand on differences in values and their influence on the most valued goods. Thus, this cluster focuses more on how the culture of each country affects consumers' interpretation of international advertising.

In cluster 3, Taylor (2005) reviewed the field of international advertising and provided directions for future studies: using equivalent data, measuring cultural dimensions, fostering collaboration between academics and practitioners across countries and disciplines, and testing theories across cultures while incorporating various perspectives. In the preceding three years, Taylor (2002) also conducted a review to identify stagnant issues in this field and proposed new research directions, emphasizing the need for more programmatic research and collaboration with practitioners. Finally, Diehl et al. (2016) examined the impact of international advertising using a corporate social responsibility approach in six countries and explored how such advertising could be standardized. Based on these recurring themes, this cluster reviews the field of international advertising studies and provides guidelines for its development.

In cluster 4, Onkvisit and John (1999) conducted a review of international advertising research over the past 40 years, leading them to conclude that there is no proper scientific evidence to either reject or agree with the concept of international advertising standardization. Agrawal (1995) conducted a review to observe the differences in perspectives between practitioners and academics over 40 years regarding international advertising. Meanwhile, Liu et al. (2009) found that there was no significant difference in buying intentions toward brands advertised with sexual attraction in Australia, China, and the US, and discovered that product involvement played a role in this relationship. This cluster is unique because it lacks a distinctive theme.However, it can be inferred that this cluster is more aligned with the standardization perspective.

In cluster 5, Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos (1997) present a comprehensive framework to explain the relevant factors that lead to the decision to standardize advertisements or adapt them to the destination country. Chung (1989), who conducted an exploratory study in France and the UK, found that most international advertisements are partially standardized. Meanwhile, Harris and Attour (2003) found that most international firms modify advertising standardization; they rarely actually standardize, and standardization is flexible. Therefore, this cluster discusses how international advertising is not dichotomized into standardization and adaptation only but depends on various factors. This idea is known as the contingency perspective.

In the last cluster, cluster 6, there were only two publications. An and Kim (2007) found that the different portrayals of men and women in Korea and the US conformed to Hofstede's theory of masculinity and supported the use of Hofstede's theory as a reference in planning international advertisements. Meanwhile, Milner and Collins (2000) found that television advertisements in Japan, Russia, Sweden, and the United States are different and in accordance with Hofstede's theory of feminine-masculine. Thus, this cluster employs Hofstede's theory to explain advertising differences at the local level.

Furthermore, bibliographic coupling analysis can identify clusters based on the year of document publication (Figure 5). The results of this analysis are combined with a recap of the cluster analysis results and are presented in Table 7.

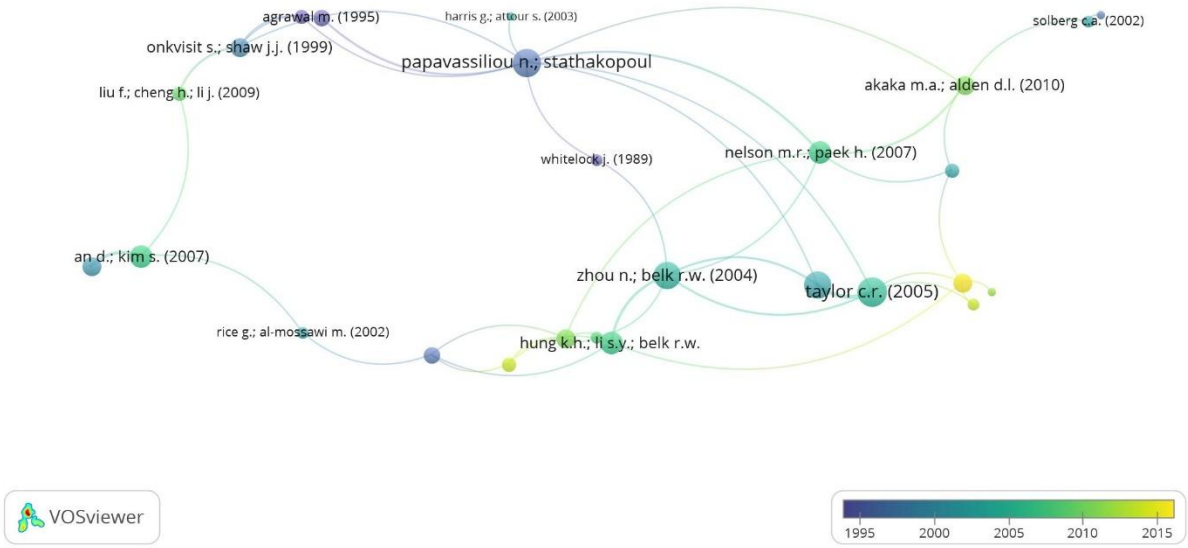


Figure 5. Bibliographic coupling analysis by year of publication.

The theme of the most recent publication year is reviews of international advertising. This theme is often followed by authors' criticism of the slow theoretical progress in this field. Meanwhile, the theme of consumer response is the second theme with the most recent publication year, followed by the themes of adaptation and the use of Hofstede's theory. Interestingly, the themes of standardization and contingency are old, suggestingthat there has been no update or progress on these themes.

Table 7. Themes and average year of publication.

Cluster	Theme	Average Year of Publication
1	Consumer's Response/ Behavior	2005
2	Adaptation	2003
3	International Advertising Review	2009
4	Standardization	1998
5	Contingency	1996
6	The Use of Hofstede's Theory	2003

4.2.2 Co-Occurrence Analysis

Unlike other VOSviewer analyses that use publications as the unit of analysis, co-occurrence analysis employs keywords to reveal the substantive content of publications (Donthu et al., 2021). This approach is based on the assumption that keywords frequently appearing together reflect similar thematic structures (Zupic & Čater, 2015). Accordingly, co-occurrence analysis is often used to complement bibliographic coupling or co-citation analyses by enriching the interpretation of identified clusters and themes (Donthu et al., 2021).

In this study, author keywords were selected as the unit of analysis because they consist of terms chosen by researchers to represent the central themes of their work (Burton et al., 2020). A minimum occurrence threshold of three was applied to balance comprehensiveness and noise reduction; this threshold is sufficiently low to capture emerging niche topics (e.g., social media) while excluding idiosyncratic terms with limited analytical relevance. From 558 unique author keywords, 23 met this criterion.

A full counting method was used to construct the co-occurrence matrix in VOSviewer. Keyword similarity was normalized using the association strength index. Subsequently, the

VOS clustering and layout algorithms were applied to position and group keywords in a two-dimensional space, resulting in five thematic clusters (Figure 6).

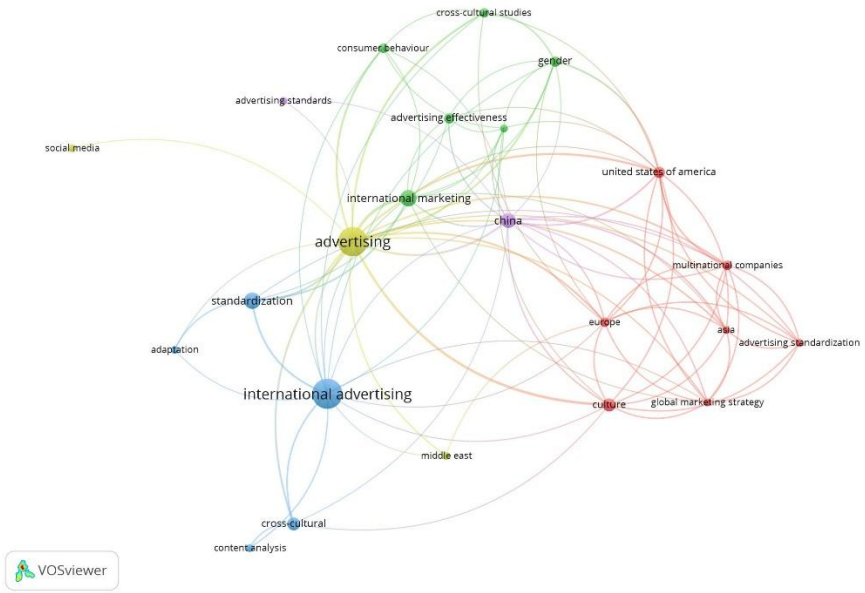


Figure 6. Co-occurrence analysis results from VOSviewer.
Cluster 1= red, cluster 2= green, cluster 3= dark blue, cluster 4= yellow, and cluster 5= purple.

The keywords with the highest occurrence are thematic keywords in this field, namely international advertising, advertising, and international marketing. The next frequently appearing keywords include standardization, culture, advertising effectiveness, consumer behavior, adaptation, content analysis, and global marketing strategy. Interestingly, keywords based on location, such as US, Europe, Asia, China, and Thailand, also frequently appear in international advertising studies. This indicates that studies on the impact or effectiveness of international advertising are often conducted in various locations. However, the contingency perspective is not prominently reflected in the frequently used keywords. According to the average year of publication, the most recent keywords were adaptation, social media, and advertising standardization. These three keywords are commonly used in international advertising.

This analysis also resulted in five thematic clusters. Through content analysis based on keywords in each cluster that match those listed in the publication, the themes in each cluster will be identified. In cluster 1, the research explains how local culture affects international business, including international advertising activities, thus requiring adaptation. In Cluster 2, the central theme is to study how consumer behavior responds to international advertising. In cluster 3, research emphasizes cross-cultural studies on the impact of international advertising. Cluster 4 studies examine the role of social media use by global companies in delivering international advertising. In the last cluster, cluster 5, the theme that is often discussed is standardization.

Table 8. Keywords based on clusters, occurrences, and average year of publication.

No.	Keyword	Cluster	Occurences	Average Year of Publication
1	International Advertising	3	39	2012
2	Advertising	4	38	2008
3	International Marketing	2	12	2005
4	Standardization	3	12	2009
5	China	5	10	2011
6	Culture	1	8	2014

No.	Keyword	Cluster	Occurences	Average Year of Publication
7	Cross-Cultural	3	8	2011
8	United States Of America	1	6	2009
9	Advertising Effectiveness	2	5	2010
10	Gender	2	5	2007
11	Europe	1	4	2007
12	Multinational Companies	1	4	2010
13	Consumer Behaviour	2	4	2012
14	Cross-Cultural Studies	2	4	2008
15	Advertising Standardization	1	3	2015
16	Asia	1	3	2012
17	Global Marketing Strategy	1	3	2011
18	Thailand	2	3	2013
19	Adaptation	3	3	2017
20	Content Analysis	3	3	2014
21	Middle East	4	3	2008
22	Social Media	4	3	2016
23	Advertising Standards	5	3	2007

Similar to bibliographic coupling analysis, co-occurrence analysis can also identify clusters based on the year of publication. Table 9 explains the results of the analysis for each cluster from the co-occurrence analysisalong with the average year of publication.

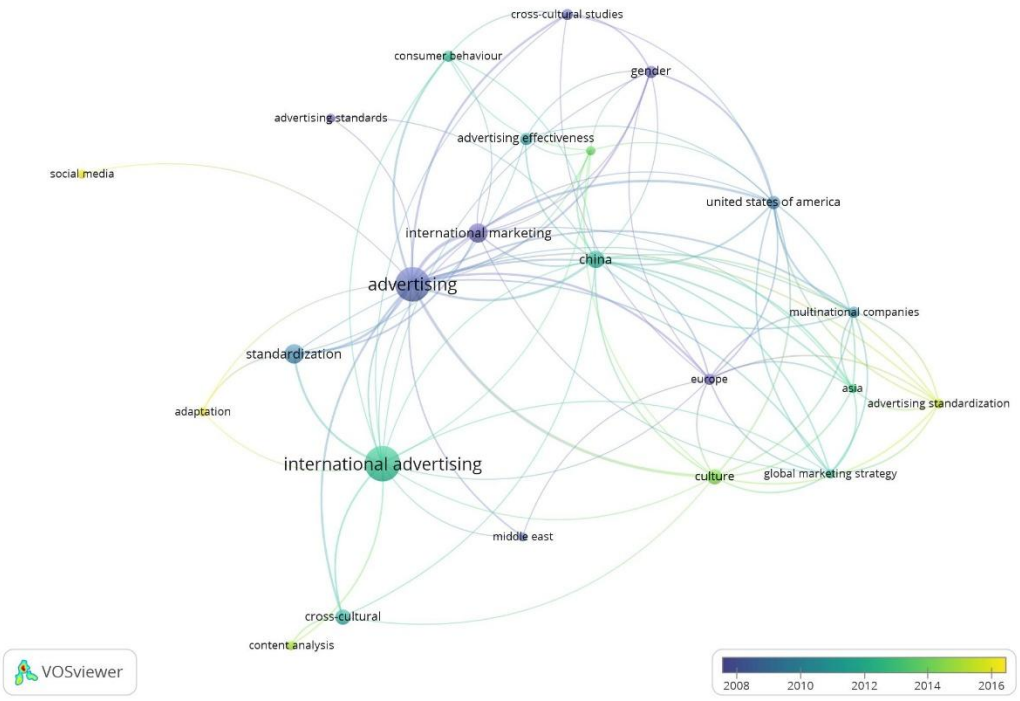


Figure 7. VOSviewer co-occurrence analysis by year of publication.

Table 9. Cluster, theme, and average year of publication based on co-occurrence.

Cluster	Keyword	Total Occurences	Average Year of Publication	Main Theme	Reference
1	Culture, United States Of America, Europe, Multinational Companies, Advertising Standardization, Asia, Global Marketing Strategy	31	2011	Culture/ Adaptation	Dou et al. (2010), Fam & Grohs (2007), Jiang & Wei (2012)
2	International Marketing, Advertising Effectiveness, Gender, Consumer Behaviour, Cross-Cultural Studies, Thailand	33	2009	Consumer Response/ Behavior	Dahlén et al. (2013), Hassan Fathelrahman Mansour & Mohammed Elzubier Diab (2016), Liu et al. (2009)
3	International Advertising, Standardization, Cross-Cultural, Adaptation, Content Analysis	65	2012	Cross-Cultural Study	Diehl et al. (2016), Mikhailitchenko et al. (2009), Zubcevic & Luxton (2011)
4	Advertising, Middle East, Social Media	44	2010	Social Media	Kamal & Chu (2012), Okazaki & Taylor (2013), Rice & Al-Mossawi (2002)
5	China, Advertising Standards	13	2009	Standardization	Fastoso & Whitelock (2007), Jiang & Wei (2012)

The cluster with the highest occurrence is cluster 3, which has a cross-cultural study theme, followed by cluster 4 (social media) and cluster 2 (consumer behavior/response). Meanwhile, the clusters with the most recent research are cluster 3 (cross-cultural study), cluster 1 (culture/adaptation), and cluster 4 (social media).However, two perspectives in the field of international advertising science, namely standardization and adaptation, are themes that have not been updated for a long time, with average publications in 2009 and 2011.

Conclusion

Annual publication trends indicate that scholarship on international advertising peaked between 2007 and 2013, followed by a decline and a subsequent recovery from 2020 to 2023. Research output reached its highest level in the 2000s (63 publications) before declining slightly in the 2010s (58 publications). Moreover, the geographic distribution of the literature reveals a pronounced concentration, with the United States dominating the field (108 publications), followed by the United Kingdom at a considerable distance (23 publications).

To map the intellectual structure and evolutionary trajectory of the field, this study employed two science mapping techniques using VOSviewer: bibliographic coupling and co-occurrence analysis. These analyses identify key thematic structures and their temporal development (Figures 8 and 9). Although the themes and average publication years differ across the two methods because of variations in analytical units and computational algorithms, the

methods complement one another in providing a more comprehensive synthesis (Chang et al., 2015). The findings indicate that contemporary scholarship remains firmly grounded in the tripartite paradigm established by Agrawal (1995) and Melewar and Vemmervik (2004), namely the standardization, adaptation, and contingency perspectives. Nevertheless, the field is undergoing gradual renewal through the emergence of cross-cultural empirical studies, as previously advocated by Taylor (2002, 2005). In addition, recent developments have incorporated digital channels, particularly social media (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013), thereby laying the foundation for a transition toward Globally Integrated Marketing Communications (GIMC) paradigms.

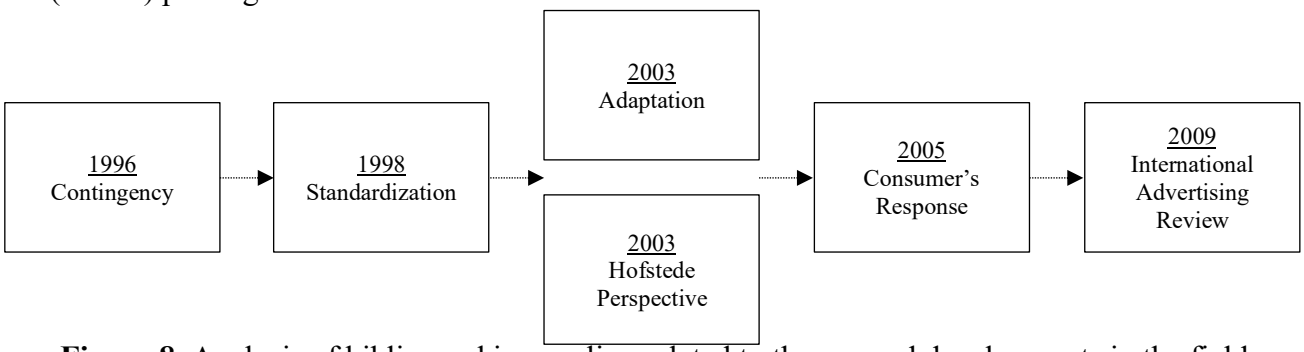


Figure 8. Analysis of bibliographic coupling related to themes and developments in the field of international advertising science.

The integration of performance metrics and science mapping provides a clear direction for future research. The stagnation of research themes reflects the post-2013 decline in annual publication output, suggesting that reduced research activity has constrained theoretical innovation. Nonetheless, opportunities for theoretical renewal remain. Emerging themes related to digital environments and GIMC represent promising avenues for advancing the field. Furthermore, given the geographic imbalance in the existing literature, considerable potential exists for expanding research in underrepresented regions, particularly Asia and Africa.

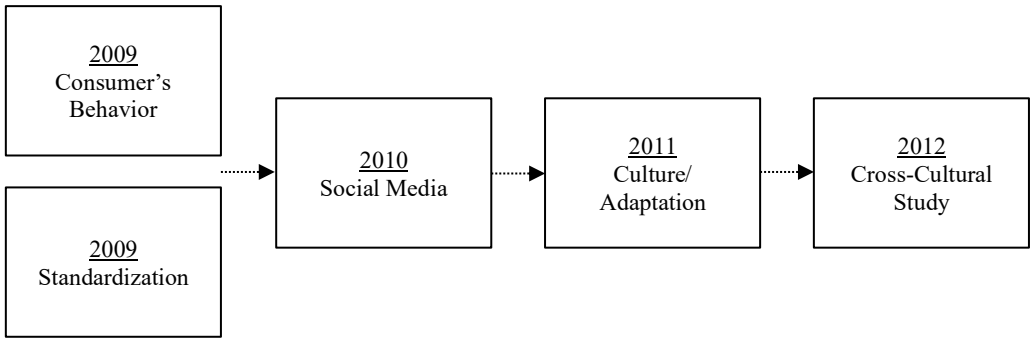


Figure 9. Co-occurrence analysis of themes and developments in the field of international advertising science.

Implication

Managerial Implications

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this bibliometric synthesis provides strategic guidance for multinational enterprises (MNEs) and global marketing practitioners operating across international markets. First, practitioners should adopt strategic flexibility through hybrid campaign designs rather than relying on rigid standardized or localized approaches. Because absolute standardization is relatively uncommon and difficult to implement due to persistent socio-cultural barriers, managers should employ a contingency-based approach. This approach involves standardizing core brand elements, such as overarching brand positioning or corporate

social responsibility values, to maintain brand consistency and achieve economies of scale, while adapting tactical elements, including slogans, visual symbols, and linguistic styles, to local market conditions.

Second, managers should utilize localized consumer insights to enhance campaign effectiveness and minimize negative consumer responses. The thematic mapping of consumer behavior suggests that audiences interpret promotional messages through culturally embedded perspectives shaped by gender roles, social norms, and linguistic nuances. Accordingly, gender-role portrayals in global campaigns should be carefully aligned with the cultural characteristics of the target market to support favorable consumer responses.

Finally, organizations should utilize social media platforms as a central mechanism for implementing GIMC strategies. Digital platforms enable MNEs to maintain a coherent global brand identity while simultaneously facilitating real-time, interactive, and localized consumer engagement. This integration enables firms to address the standardization–adaptation dilemma in the digital era by balancing global operational efficiency with local market relevance.

Directions for Future Research

To revitalize the field and address the theoretical stagnation identified by previous scholars (Fastoso & Whitelock, 2007; Ryans et al., 2003), this study proposes several directions for future research. First, scholarship should move beyond the long-standing binary debate between standardization and adaptation. As the bibliometric mapping identifies both perspectives as mature yet conceptually static clusters, future empirical studies should focus on testing more robust contingency frameworks. Such frameworks should examine the interaction between internal organizational capabilities and external environmental factors to clarify the conditions under which varying degrees of advertising standardization are most effective, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of strategic implementation.

Second, future research should address the geographic imbalances identified in the performance analysis, which demonstrates a strong dominance of US-centric literature (108 publications). Scholars should expand empirical investigations into emerging economies, particularly in underrepresented regions across Asia and Africa. The application of established cross-cultural frameworks, such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions, may help explain how different consumer groups interpret global and local advertising appeals across diverse socio-economic contexts.

Third, the integration of digital media into mainstream international advertising theory represents an important research frontier. As co-occurrence mapping identifies "social media" as a highly contemporary thematic node, future studies should incorporate GIMC principles into digital communication frameworks. In particular, researchers should examine how the interactive, borderless, and user-generated characteristics of digital platforms influence global brand equity and challenge conventional sender-oriented communication models.

Finally, consistent with the methodological concerns raised by Taylor (2002, 2005), the field requires more systematic cross-national and interdisciplinary collaboration. Future studies should prioritize equivalent cross-national datasets, rigorous content-analysis methodologies, and experimental designs to examine the boundary conditions of advertising standardization across different levels of product involvement and media platforms.

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