

A Bibliometric Analysis of MSMEs and Marketing: Mapping Research Trends, Thematic Structures and Emerging Directions

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Abstract

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have become very essential in the economic growth in terms of job creation, innovation and inclusive growth. As digital technologies continue to spread, marketing activities in MSMEs have changed dramatically and there has been a rise in academic interest in this field. The paper provides a bibliometric analysis of the MSME marketing research to investigate the development of the research field, topical changes, and new tendencies. The Scopus database was searched through a structured search strategy and screened through the PRISMA 2020 framework to extract data, narrowing the dataset to 728 documents. Co-occurrence analysis, thematic mapping, treemap analysis, and additional bibliometric analyses were conducted using tools such as VOSviewer and Biblioshiny. The results suggest that there has been a significant rise in research publications especially since 2015, as reflected in the themes of digital marketing, innovation and business performance. Four thematic clusters were identified: digital marketing practices, MSME performance and innovation, industrial development, and socioeconomic contributions. The findings also highlight the growing importance of sustainability and technological innovations, such as artificial intelligence and big data, in MSME marketing research. Despite the expanding body of literature, a clear disconnect remains between traditional and digital marketing perspectives. The study is valuable since it offers a thorough analysis of the literature, identifies research gaps, suggests areas for future study and policy development.

Keywords: digital marketing, e-commerce, marketing strategy, micro-enterprises, MSMEs, social media marketing

1. Introduction and Literature review

The expanding body of literature on MSMEs and marketing makes it both essential and challenging to synthesize this dispersed knowledge base (Alfarizi & Widiastuti, 2023). Bibliometric analysis, a quantitative approach that uses statistical methods and network-related approaches to scientific production, offers a methodical way to identify the development of research domains, the identification of new themes and an emphasis on future research paths.

Growing application of bibliometric analysis in marketing, management, and entrepreneurship studies demonstrates its value in providing unbiased, repeatable, and comprehensive information regarding academic environments. Bibliometric methods have helped in MSMEs and marketing research to identify the common themes that are prevalent in the field; these are digital transformation, social media use, entrepreneurial marketing, and marketing capabilities, driven by technological innovations and changing consumer behavior (Nursanti et al., 2024).

Although the volume of research is growing, a comprehensive bibliometric mapping of the intersection between MSMEs and marketing is still limited. The available research focuses on a specific subdomain, such as digital marketing among SMEs, ERP adoption among MSMEs, or MSME technology adoption patterns (Tungkup, 2021). There are few studies that adopt a broader marketing perspective, leading to a limited understanding of the field as a whole.

The literature on Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and marketing has grown dramatically in recent years, particularly with the emergence of digital technologies, social networks and data-driven marketing. Bibliometric and systematic research indicates that this field is developing at an accelerated rate, particularly since the year 2015, as more and more scholarly focus is directed towards the concept of digitalization, innovation, and performance (Rahmansyah et al., 2024).

There is a significant body of literature explores the adoption of digital marketing by MSMEs. Bibliometric studies of large volume of publications (e.g. hundreds of publications over several decades) indicate a severe upsurge in the volume of research output on digital transformation, e-commerce, and business adaptation in the post-pandemic environment (Genaro & Rifiyanti, 2023).

The main themes consistently identified across these studies are customer engagement, brand awareness and cost efficiency, which underscore the significant contribution of digital marketing to the competitiveness of MSMEs. Empirical studies also show positive correlation between digital marketing capabilities and business performance such as financial and sustainable performance. According to bibliometric reviews, there are thematic clusters that are recurrent including adoption behavior, innovation, customer engagement and return on investment. Research indicates that social media networks have a great impact on customer relations, sales and the brand image (Setiadi et al., 2024).

Several factors are widely reported as determinants of social media adoption, namely perceived usefulness, ease of use, and technological compatibility. These findings highlight social media's strategic relevance as a marketing tool for MSMEs. Another significant stream of research focuses on digital transformation and adoption of technology. The bibliometric research on this field shows that the volume of research is growing rapidly, especially in the COVID-19 context. Advanced technologies in research clusters comprise artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain, and Internet of Things (IoT), as well as themes such as dynamic capabilities and knowledge management (Pellegrino & Abe, 2022).

Although these studies offer valuable insights into technology advancements, they tend to view the digital transformation in a wider organizational or industrial aspect and not specifically on the marketing of MSMEs. Moreover, some of the studies have conducted research based on marketing-related themes in the MSME studies, with the main theoretical viewpoints being market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial marketing, and marketing capabilities. Bibliometric reviews of the SME marketing literature demonstrate that digital marketing is becoming a major and rapidly growing subfield. The combination of the marketing strategy and technological tools has turned out to be the center of the recent research. The concept of sustainability has been receiving more attention and research has been carried out to associate digital marketing practices with sustainable business performance. The COVID-19 pandemic has also been cited as one of the greatest catalysts, boosting the rate of digital adoption and redefining marketing strategies (Martínez-Peláez et al., 2023).

Moreover, technological innovations such as artificial intelligence and big data analytics are also becoming significant elements of MSME marketing research (Prayoga et al., 2024). Despite the richness of the present literature, there are still several research gaps. First, the majority of bibliometric literature is fragmented since it concentrates on distinct subfields of digital marketing, social media, or technology adoption research rather than an integrated view of MSMEs and marketing as a unified research subject (Karyotaki, Drigas, & Skianis, 2022). Second, most studies prefer to focus on the technological or performance and little effort is made on the overall intellectual framework and thematic development of MSME marketing research. Third, extensive mapping is absent which integrates conventional marketing concepts (e.g., market orientation, strategy) and new digital as well as technological trends. Lastly, the multidisciplinary nature of the field is often overlooked in the present bibliometric studies. In this context, the present study aims to address these gaps by systematically mapping and

analysing the intellectual structure as well as thematic development of MSME marketing research. The objectives of the study are as follows:

- a) To analyse the growth, evolution, and key contributors in MSME marketing research using bibliometric techniques.
- b) To identify major thematic areas and map keyword co-occurrence patterns within the MSME marketing literature.
- c) To identify emerging trends to guide future research directions in MSME marketing.

2. Research Methodology

The Scopus database was used to extract articles on MSMEs and marketing on March 9, 2026, which involves retrieving bibliographic and citation information. On the Scopus website, the following string was input in the advanced search option: TITLE-ABS-KEY (("Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises" OR "MSMEs" OR "MSME" OR "MSME" OR "micro small medium enterprises" OR "micro-enterprises" OR "small-scale industries" OR "SSIs" OR "independent businesses") AND ("marketing" OR "digital marketing" OR "marketing strategy" OR "branding" OR "brand management" OR "market orientation" OR "social media marketing" OR "online marketing" OR "relationship marketing" OR "marketing")) AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR < 2027 AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ch") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "cp"))

The search string was designed to retrieve relevant literature from the Scopus database by focusing on terms related to both MSMEs and marketing within the title, abstract, and keywords of documents. It incorporates multiple synonyms along with key marketing-related terms ensuring comprehensive coverage of the topic. The use of the AND operator ensures that only studies addressing both MSMEs and marketing are included. To maintain relevance and quality, the search was limited to publications from 2000 to 2026, including only final-stage documents. Additionally, the results were restricted to specific document types, namely articles, book chapters, and conference papers, thereby ensuring the inclusion of high-quality and scholarly sources suitable for bibliometric analysis.

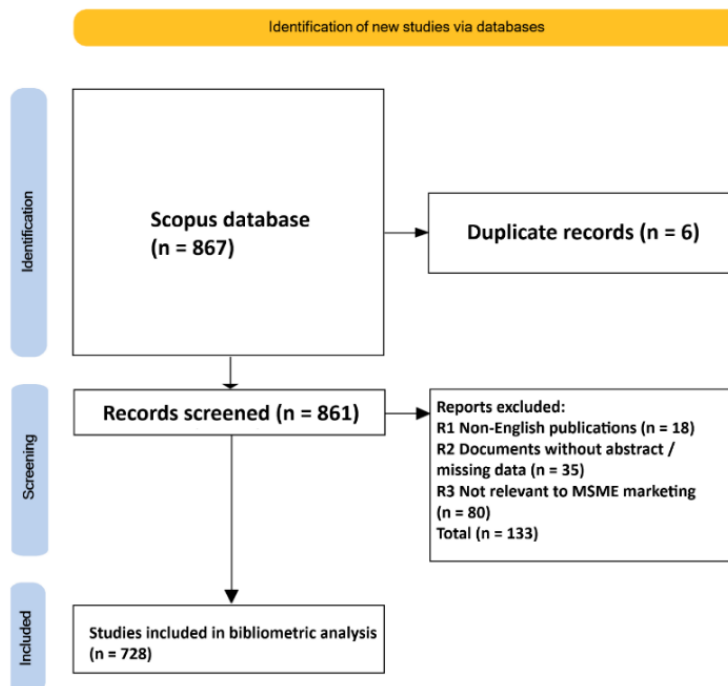


Figure 1: PRISMA Framework (Source: R biblioshiney)

After retrieving the data from the Scopus database, the screening and selection process was conducted following the PRISMA framework. The original dataset included 867 documents, which were exported and compiled into a single dataset. Duplicate records were identified and removed, resulting in the elimination of 6 duplicate entries. Another check was made to make sure that the data was accurate and consistent in the dataset. Screening phase was initiated by a pre-filtering process, during which the documents that were not found to fit the inclusion criteria were filtered. In particular, non-English publications, lack of abstracts or missing data, and studies not relevant to MSMEs and marketing were excluded. The screening was done manually, that is by going through the titles and abstracts of each document to make sure that it was relevant and aligned with the research objectives. The two-stage screening strategy was implemented. The first step consisted of filtering out unrelated papers based on their titles. The second step involved analysing the abstracts in order to reduce the number of unrelated documents by excluding papers not focusing on either micro, small, and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) or marketing. The use of this manual procedure allowed for increasing the level of accuracy and appropriateness of the final dataset. In total, 133 papers were filtered out as follows: R1-Non-English sources (n = 18); R2 – documents without abstracts or missing data (n = 35); and R3 – papers outside the scope of MSMEs and marketing (n = 80). The majority of the excluded documents (R3) were identified as unrelated. After completing the identification and eligibility assessment stages, a final dataset of 728 documents was retained for bibliometric analysis. Such a process allows ensuring the transparency, consistency, and replicability of the research as per PRISMA 2020 recommendations. The PRISMA flow chart shows the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages performed in order to select a final set of documents.

Finally, the extracted data were subsequently analysed using bibliometric tools such as VOSviewer and Bibliometric. These techniques facilitated the identification of the intellectual structure, and emerging research trends within MSME marketing literature.

3. Data Analysis

A) Most Relevant Authors

The review of most of the prominent authors emphasizes the most active researchers in the field of MSMEs and marketing. The findings show that various researchers have made a substantial contribution to the development of literature in this field by presenting numerous publications and collaborating in conducting research.

The authors that have the highest output in the dataset include Novandari W and Suliyanto who have six articles each.

Following them, Purwaningsih E, Siswanto J and Soewarno N contributed five articles each, which implies that they were actively involved in the MSME and marketing research.

Four publications have also been made by several other authors such as Ekawati NW, Saputra J, Singh S, Suroso A and Tjahjadi B. These are a significant number of authors who have been recurring contributors in the field development and have provided consistent output via research.

Moreover, many of the authors have made two or even three contributions, indicating that the research on MSMEs and marketing involves a diverse academic community. The fact that there are numerous authors, who have less number of publications, indicates that the sphere is still developing, with researchers from various institutions and countries actively contributing.

In general, the results indicate that some authors have become key contributors, although the nature of research on MSME marketing is often collaborative and globally dispersed due to increasing interest in the field. The diversity of authors also demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of the field, including the views on marketing, entrepreneurship, innovation, and small business management.

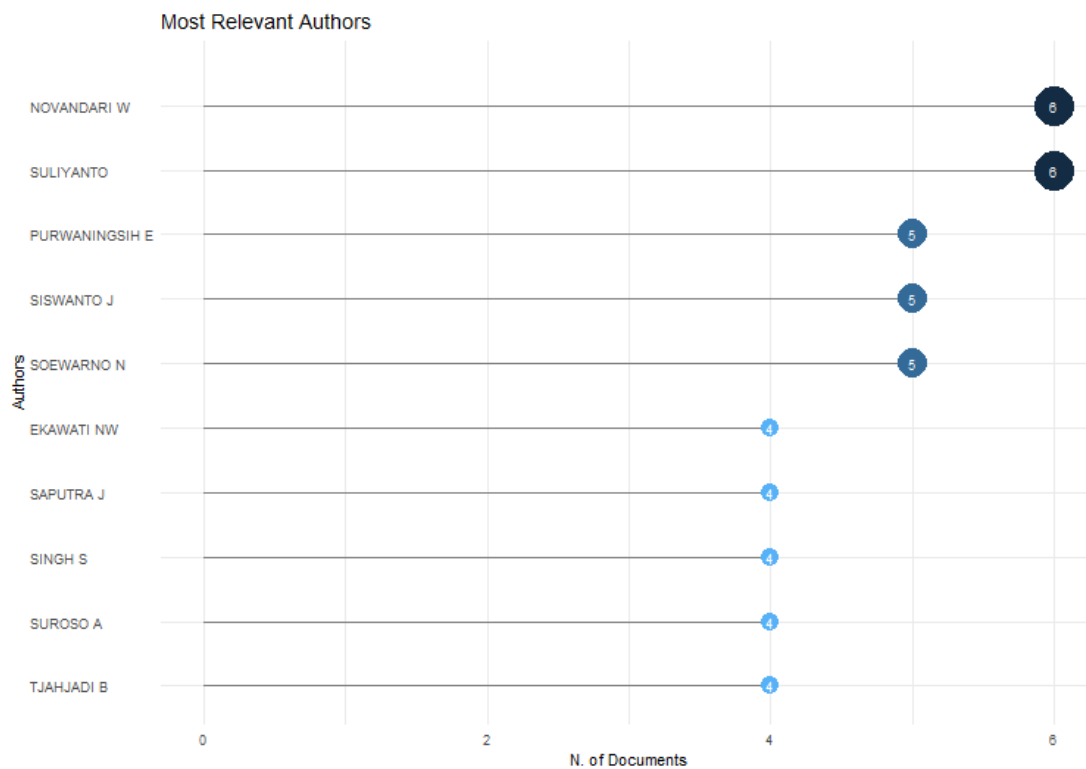


Figure 2: Most Relevant Authors (Source: R biblioshiny)

B) Treemap Analysis

The treemap analysis of the keywords gives the overview of the most common keywords in the literature on MSMEs and marketing.

The findings indicate that the most frequent word that occurs with the frequency of 152 is marketing, which means that marketing-related strategies and practices are the focus of the study on MSMEs. This makes the importance of marketing activities in enhancing visibility, competitiveness, and development of small businesses very clear.

MSMEs are used 101 times and micro-enterprises 89 times, indicating that a significant amount of the research is specifically about micro level enterprises in the larger MSME sector. The findings are indicative of the significance of micro and small enterprises to the economic growth and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Some of the keywords connected with digital technologies and online business practices also appear prominently. As an example, terms such as digital marketing (n=72; n represents the number of occurrences or frequency of a keyword), social media (n=41), electronic commerce (n=34) and e-commerce (n=27) show that digital platforms are now a dominant theme in MSME marketing research. These terms indicate that researchers are paying more attention to the role of digital tools in assisting MSMEs to increase their market presence, engage more customers and optimize business outcomes.

The additional keywords that appear with a relatively high frequency are: innovation (n=49), marketing strategy (n=37), market orientation (n=34) and competition (n=27) with more focus on the MSME marketing strategies. Based on these key words, majority of the studies concentrate on the importance of innovative practices and strategic marketing to improve competitiveness and the long-term sustainability.

Some keywords that correspond to business results that were found in the treemap analysis are business performance (n=26), marketing performance (n=26) and sales (n=26). It means that many studies are dedicated to the discussion of the efficiency of marketing strategies on performance and development of organizations.

performance of organizations among MSMEs. The presence of above themes further indicates a strong research focus on the role of innovation and strategic orientation in enhancing the competitiveness as well as long-term sustainability of MSMEs.

Cluster 3: Small-Scale Industry and Industrial Development.

The third cluster, identified by the term small scale industry with a cluster frequency of 187 and deals with the structural as well as technological dimensions of MSME. Some of the themes in this cluster are small scale industry (35), SMEs (18), finance (13), information technology (10), ICT (7), rural economy (7), and supply chain management (5). This cluster reveals that a part of the literature focuses on industrial, technological, and financial aspects of MSMEs, especially regarding the aspect of production systems, use of technology, and the rural economic development.

Cluster 4: Small Business and Socioeconomic Development.

The fourth cluster, which is also labelled as the small business, has a cluster frequency of 232, and it brings out the socioeconomic role of small enterprises. The major keywords in this cluster are small business (15), micro enterprises (14), India (12), employment (8), agriculture (8), economic development (7) and empowerment (7). The focus of this cluster is on the larger socioeconomic role of MSMEs especially on employment, rural development, and alleviating poverty.

In conclusion, Marketing clusters indicate high centrality thus revealing that it has a great influence in the research network. In the same way, the MSME development cluster is highly connected, indicating that the literature on innovation, sustainability and performance is a major part of the research. Conversely, the clusters that are concerned with the small-scale industries and small business offer a complementary viewpoint with industrial development and the socioeconomic effects.

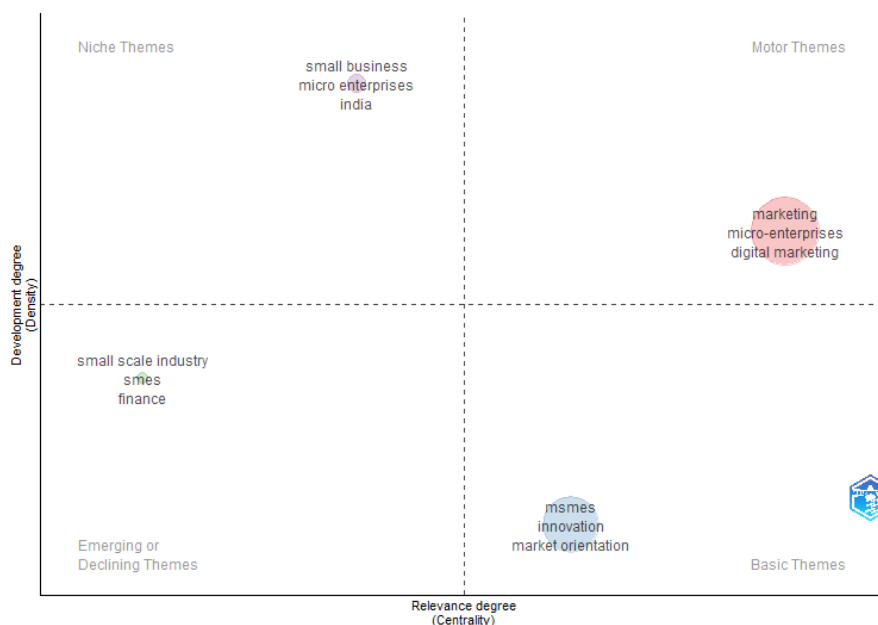


Figure 4: ThematicMap (Source: R biblioshiney)

D) Co-occurrence of All Keywords

The co-occurrence network analysis enables us to understand the conceptual framework of the research in terms of the frequency of words and the degree of relationship between words. The findings indicate the most influential keywords and relations between them in literature.

The most prevalent word that comes out with the highest frequency of 152 and total number of links of 702 is the keyword ‘marketing’, which shows that it is the main theme linking the various research areas in the field. This

4. Conclusion

The study is a complete bibliometric analysis of MSMEs and marketing with a particular focus on the development, thematic organization and the trends in the field. The findings indicate that the literature has increased significantly particularly since 2015 with the increased significance of digital marketing, social media, and e-commerce in the growth of MSMEs. The thematic groups identified in the analysis comprise four main areas namely, digital marketing, MSME performance, industrial development, and socioeconomic contributions. The other critical aspect is that the results reveal that the significance of sustainability, digital transformation, and innovation as the core contributors to MSME competitiveness has been increasing. Although there is an increase in literature, the research still points to fragmentation in the areas of research and lack of integration between the old marketing theories and the new technology of the internet. Finally, the study offers the detailed mapping of MSME marketing research and advances the concept of the multidimensionality of marketing research.

5. Future Direction

There are a number of research directions that can be identified as far as conducting future researches are concerned. To begin with, additional studies are needed so as to empirically test the validity of the identified themes. In particular, the future researchers can examine the relationship between digital marketing, innovation, and the performance of MSMEs. Secondly, a comparative research can be conducted to examine the marketing strategies employed by companies operating in various countries. Thirdly, emerging trends in the use of advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence and big data analytics should be studied in the context of MSME marketing.

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