










“Mapping the evolution and intellectual structure of innovation marketing research: a comprehensive bibliometric analysis (1972-2025)”

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MAPPING THE EVOLUTION AND INTELLECTUAL STRUCTURE OF INNOVATION MARKETING RESEARCH: A COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS (1972-2025)

Abstract

Innovation marketing has emerged as a critical research domain due to rapid digital transformation, evolving consumer behaviors, and increasing sustainability demands that fundamentally reshape modern business strategies. However, the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of this interdisciplinary field remain fragmented, with terminological ambiguities and isolated knowledge silos hindering theoretical development and practical advancement. This study systematically maps the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of innovation marketing research through comprehensive bibliometric analysis spanning 1972-2025. Data were retrieved from the Scopus database, yielding 10,453 scholarly documents after filtering duplicates and irrelevant materials, analyzed using the "Bibliometrix" package in R Studio with productivity metrics, citation analysis, co-word analysis, and cluster analysis techniques. The results reveal exponential growth with an annual growth rate of 11.04, particularly accelerating after 2000, with four distinct research clusters emerging: digital transformation technologies (23.4%), sustainable marketing innovations (19.8%), consumer-centric methodologies (21.2%), and strategic innovation management (18.6%). The United States leads publication volume with 1,048 documents (17.26%), followed by China with 681 documents (11.22%), while Belgium demonstrates highest citation impact with 66.15 citations per article. Notably, 67% of highly-cited articles appear in non-marketing journals, confirming interdisciplinary influence, with the most cited work by Pushpakom et al. (2018) receiving 3,064 citations. Innovation marketing has evolved from product-focused approaches toward integrated, technology-driven, and sustainability-oriented strategies, establishing itself as a distinct research domain with significant cross-disciplinary impact for marketing practitioners and policymakers.

Keywords innovation, marketing, bibliometrics, research, digitalization, trends

JEL Classification M31, O32, L81

INTRODUCTION

The rapid digital transformation and evolving consumer behaviors of the 21st century have fundamentally altered the marketing landscape, compelling organizations to adopt innovative approaches that transcend traditional marketing paradigms. Innovation marketing has emerged as a critical intersection between technological advancement, consumer psychology, and strategic business development, yet its conceptual boundaries and theoretical foundations remain insufficiently defined in the academic literature.

Despite the growing practical importance of innovation marketing in contemporary business strategy, several fundamental scientific prob-

lems persist within this domain. First, the terminological ambiguity surrounding “innovation marketing” versus “marketing innovation” has created conceptual confusion, with scholars using these terms interchangeably across different contexts and disciplines without clear definitional consensus. This semantic inconsistency hinders theoretical development and empirical comparison across studies.

Second, the fragmented nature of innovation marketing research across multiple disciplines, including management, information systems, consumer behavior, and entrepreneurship, has resulted in isolated knowledge silos that lack comprehensive integration. While individual studies contribute valuable insights within specific contexts, the absence of systematic cross-disciplinary synthesis limits our understanding of the field’s overall intellectual structure and developmental patterns.

Third, the exponential growth in innovation marketing publications, particularly following the digital revolution of the 2000s, has outpaced efforts to systematically map the field’s evolution, identify its core theoretical foundations, and delineate future research trajectories. Without comprehensive bibliometric analysis, the scientific community lacks essential infrastructure for understanding knowledge flows, identifying research gaps, and directing future scholarly endeavors.

These interconnected problems constitute a significant barrier to the theoretical maturation and practical advancement of innovation marketing as a distinct scientific discipline, requiring systematic intellectual mapping to establish its conceptual boundaries and developmental trajectory within the broader marketing science ecosystem.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The academic understanding of innovation marketing has undergone profound changes over the past decades, gradually transforming from an instrument for introducing product innovations into the marketplace to an independent and strategically significant domain of marketing science. Early works emphasized the role of marketing as a channel for facilitating innovation diffusion and ensuring market penetration, as articulated by Sarxadova and Najmutdinova (2024). This initial approach highlighted marketing primarily as a support tool for product innovation.

Over time, the focus shifted toward the concept of marketing innovation, which refers to the introduction of new marketing practices, strategies, and processes that fundamentally alter how products are designed, promoted, and delivered to customers (Purchase & Volery, 2020). This shift placed consumer needs and preferences at the center of innovation, acknowledging that the competitive innovation advantage (CIA) arises when firms can anticipate and respond to both conscious and unconscious consumer demands (Steinhoff & Trommsdorff, 2011). In this context, innovative

marketing strategies were seen as essential for successful product launches and market positioning (Maseitova, 2022).

Innovation marketing and marketing innovation thus represent complementary but distinct concepts. While marketing innovation relates to implementing novel marketing methods—such as changes in product design, pricing, distribution, or promotion—innovation marketing focuses on the strategic and operational use of marketing throughout the innovation process, from invention to market introduction (Weisenfeld, 2001). Together, these constructs enable firms to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and expand their market presence (Tinoco, 2010; Matte et al., 2023). Their synergy has been described as a mixed approach, in which innovation marketing provides the strategic framework, while marketing innovation ensures effective market implementation (Blagorazumnaia & Trifonova, 2024).

The development of innovation marketing has also been shaped by several theoretical perspectives. Diffusion theory explains how innovations are adopted by consumers, offering marketers insights into strategies that enhance adoption rates (Onkvisit & Shaw, 1989). Resource-based theory

highlights marketing capabilities as strategic resources that can differentiate firms and sustain competitive advantage (Kleiner, 2011). The dynamic capabilities approach stresses the need for organizations to continuously update and adapt their marketing practices in response to technological change and shifting consumer preferences (Teece & Pisano, 2003). Together, these theories provide a comprehensive foundation for innovation marketing as a field of study.

Recent contributions extend this understanding by linking innovation marketing to digital transformation, sustainable development, and consumer engagement. Studies have shown that innovation marketing is increasingly influenced by the rise of social media, digital analytics, and neuromarketing approaches that utilize neuroscience to decode consumer behavior (Madan, 2010; Chen et al., 2013). Parallel to this, sustainable marketing innovations have become an important research stream, with scholars emphasizing the role of environmentally friendly products and green branding in enhancing competitiveness (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017; Kumar & Lata, 2014).

In order to evaluate these developments systematically, scholars have turned to bibliometric analysis as a robust methodology for mapping scientific production and thematic evolution. Bibliometric analysis applies statistical methods to bibliographic data, enabling researchers to identify key authors, institutions, and thematic clusters in a given domain (Thompson & Walker, 2015; Ellegaard & Wallin, 2015; Haustein & Larivière, 2015). In marketing and management sciences, bibliometric methods have been employed to trace the evolution of international marketing (Zou et al., 2015), internet marketing (Sitarz et al., 2012), and social media marketing strategies (Quesenberry, 2015). These studies highlight the effectiveness of bibliometrics for uncovering knowledge flows, collaboration patterns, and emerging research trends.

More specifically, bibliometric approaches have begun to shed light on innovation marketing. For example, Randhawa et al. (2016) examined open innovation strategies, mapping their theoretical influences and emphasizing the role of external collaboration in commercialization. Similarly, Galvagno and Dalli (2014) explored co-creation,

focusing on consumer involvement in new product development and its role in value creation. These bibliometric studies demonstrate that innovation marketing is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing upon management, entrepreneurship, consumer behavior, and sustainability research (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Qodirov et al., 2024). However, most prior analyses have been limited in scope, focusing on narrow themes, short time frames, or relatively small datasets (Ortiz et al., 2014; Das, 2013).

The need for a more comprehensive bibliometric analysis of innovation marketing has therefore become evident. While earlier works provided valuable insights into subtopics such as digital marketing (Rosário & Dias, 2024), neuromarketing (Madan, 2010), and sustainable marketing (Kumar & Christodouloupoulou, 2014), they did not capture the overall intellectual structure and thematic evolution of innovation marketing as a field. Recent bibliometric contributions (Fader et al., 2014; Xolmurotov et al., 2024a; Xolmurotov et al., 2024b) confirm the potential of bibliometrics to illuminate research dynamics, yet they also reveal significant gaps: insufficient integration of interdisciplinary perspectives, lack of long-term historical coverage, and underrepresentation of emerging economies.

Taken together, the reviewed literature shows that innovation marketing has evolved into a distinct and complex research domain, characterized by multiple subfields such as digital transformation, sustainability, and consumer engagement. Existing bibliometric and meta-analysis studies highlight important contributions but remain fragmented. This underscores the necessity of conducting a large-scale bibliometric study that systematically maps the intellectual structure and thematic development of innovation marketing, which is precisely the objective of the present research.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study used a comprehensive bibliometric analysis approach to explore the scientific landscape of innovation marketing. The Scopus database was chosen as the primary data source due to its broad coverage of peer-reviewed literature across disciplines. This database has the advantage of covering a wider range of journals than other databases

such as Web of Science and Google Scholar, and of allowing full export of metadata required for bibliometric analysis (Halmuratov et al., 2025).

The search query was constructed using the following formula: TITLE-ABS-KEY (“Innovation marketing” OR “Innovation marketing” OR “Marketing innovation*”) AND DOCTYPE(ar OR re OR cp) AND PUBYEAR > 1971 AND PUBYEAR < 2026. The query was directed to search for terms related to innovation marketing in the title, abstract, and keyword fields, with articles, reviews, and conference proceedings selected as the document type. The research period covered the period from 1972 to 2025, which allowed us to cover more than five decades of research developments in this area.

The initial search yielded 11,571 documents from 5,524 different sources. After filtering out duplicates, inconsistent data, and off-topic documents, 10,453 documents were selected for the final analysis. Bibliometric data were exported from Scopus in BibTeX format, which preserves important metadata such as authors, titles, sources, keywords, citations, and institutional affiliations.

For data processing and analysis, the “Bibliometrix” package (v.4.1.3) was used in the R Studio environment. This software package allows for the calculation of bibliometric indicators, scientific mapping, and the creation of various visualizations. The following R packages were additionally used during the analysis: “ggplot2” for graphs, “igraph” for network analysis, and “wordcloud” for creating a keyword cloud.

The following bibliometric indicators were calculated and analyzed:

Publication metrics: Annual scientific production, document type distribution, compound annual growth rate (CAGR).

Author metrics: Productivity analysis (number of publications per author), coauthorship patterns, author impact (h-index, g-index).

Source metrics: Most productive journals, source impact factors (SJR, SNIP), Bradford’s law core journals.

Country metrics: Geographic distribution of publications, networks of collaboration between countries, citations per country.

Content metrics: Co-word analysis, thematic evolution, conceptual structure map.

Citation metrics: Citation distribution, average citations per document, citation dynamics over time, citation impact by country.

The analysis includes productivity analysis (measuring productivity and impact) and science mapping (visualizing the structural and dynamic aspects of research) to comprehensively review the field of innovative marketing research. In the network analysis, relationships with a co-occurrence threshold above 0.05 were considered, and clusters were identified using the Louvain algorithm (Halmuratov et al., 2025).

Besides, multivariate statistical methods such as multidimensional scaling (MDS) and correspondence analysis (CA) were used to study the relationship between keywords and citations. This approach allowed us to explore the relationships between key concepts and theories in the field of innovation marketing.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of annual scientific production shows a significant increase in innovative marketing research over the past five decades (Figure 1). The field grew very little in the 1970s and 1980s, with fewer than 30 publications per year. However, a significant acceleration began in the mid-1990s, with the number of publications increasing from 55 in 1994 to 107 in 1996. The most dramatic increase occurred after 2000, reaching a peak of 1,147 publications in 2024.

The overall annual growth rate of publications in the field is 11.04% (Figure 2), indicating a strong and sustained interest in innovation marketing research. This growth rate is significantly higher than the average growth rate of scientific literature as a whole, indicating that innovation marketing has emerged as an important research area in recent years.

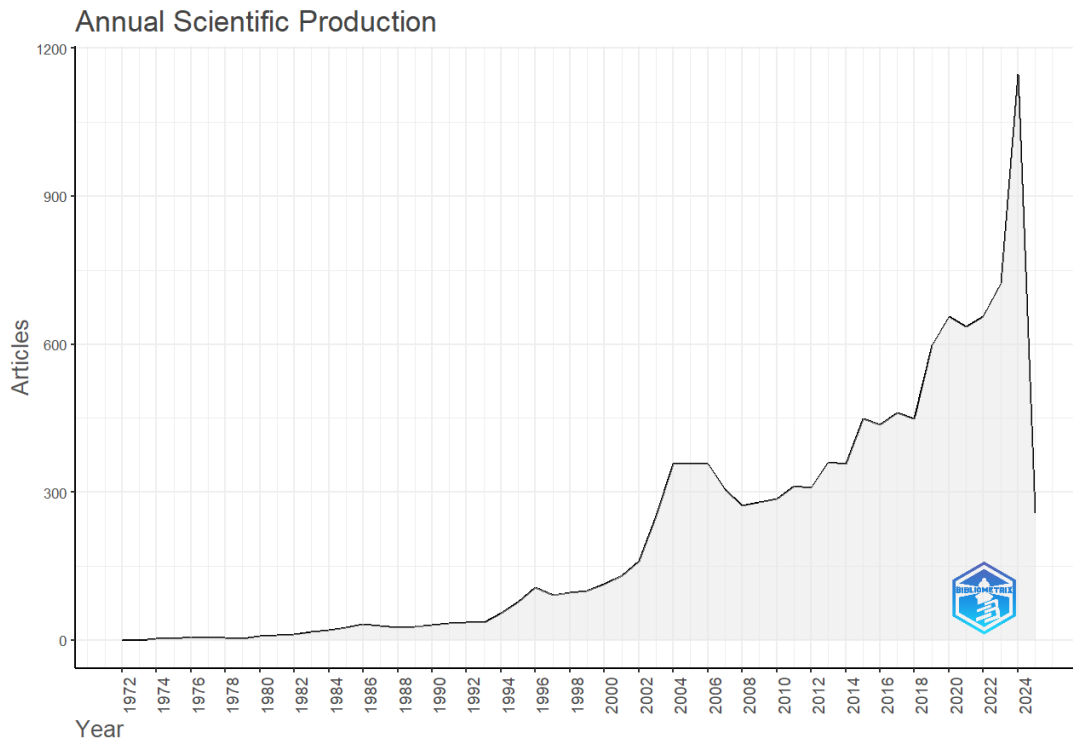


Figure 1. Annual scientific production



Figure 2. Annual growth rate (%) in marketing

Analysis of document types shows that the largest proportion of publications is scientific articles (6,694 documents, 57.9%), followed by conference proceedings (1,962 documents, 16.9%) and reviews (1,018 documents, 8.8%). This distribution highlights the strong presence of the field in the formal academic discourse through the dissemination of knowledge through journal articles and conferences, indicating a healthy balance between theoretical development and practical application.

The analysis revealed the most productive scholars in the field of innovative marketing (Figure 3). Excluding anonymous entries, the most productive authors include ANON A (37 publications), WANG J (26 publications), LI Y (25 publications), WANG Y (24 publications), and KUMAR S (23 publications). When considering fractional counting to account for co-authorship, FOXALL GR emerges as particularly impressive with 9.5 fractional publications, indicating a significant contribution as the primary author.

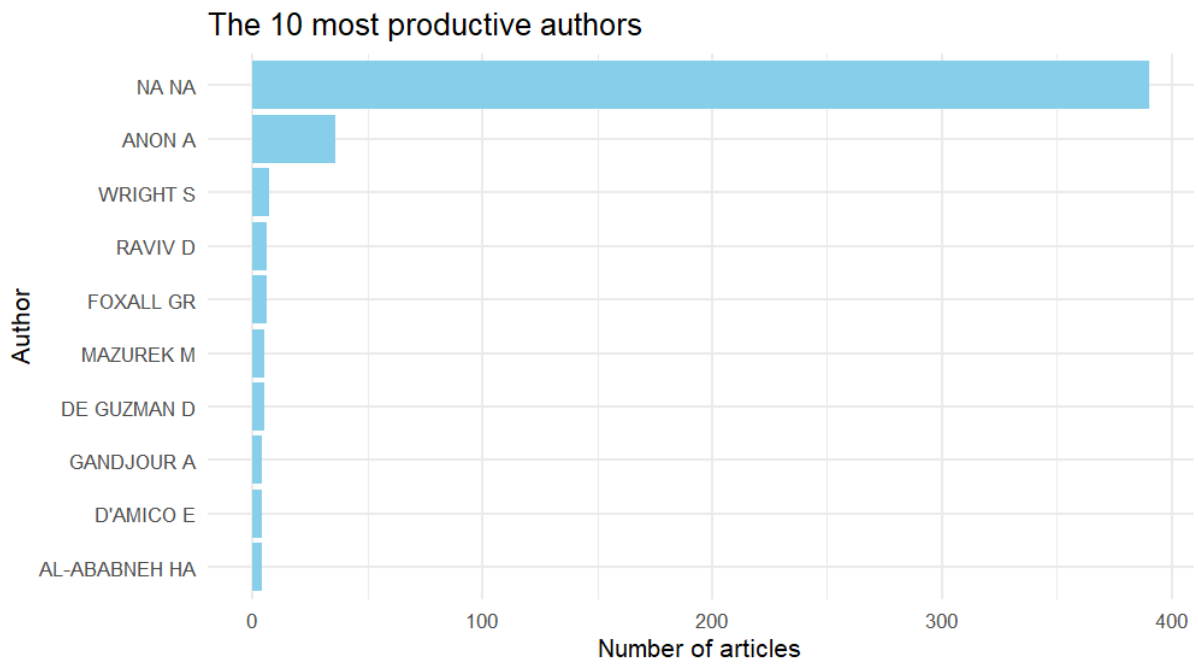


Figure 3. 10 most productive authors

Analysis of author collaborations shows that the average number of authors per paper is 2.78, indicating a trend towards collaborative research in the field. Single-authored papers account for 30.8% of total publications (3,561 papers), indicating that while collaboration is common, individual scholarship remains important in the field. Visualization of the collaboration network (Figure

4) identifies several prominent research clusters, indicating the presence of organized research groups that focus on specific aspects of innovative marketing.

Geographic analysis shows that US researchers contributed the most to this field with 1,048 publications (17.26% of the total), followed by China

Plot

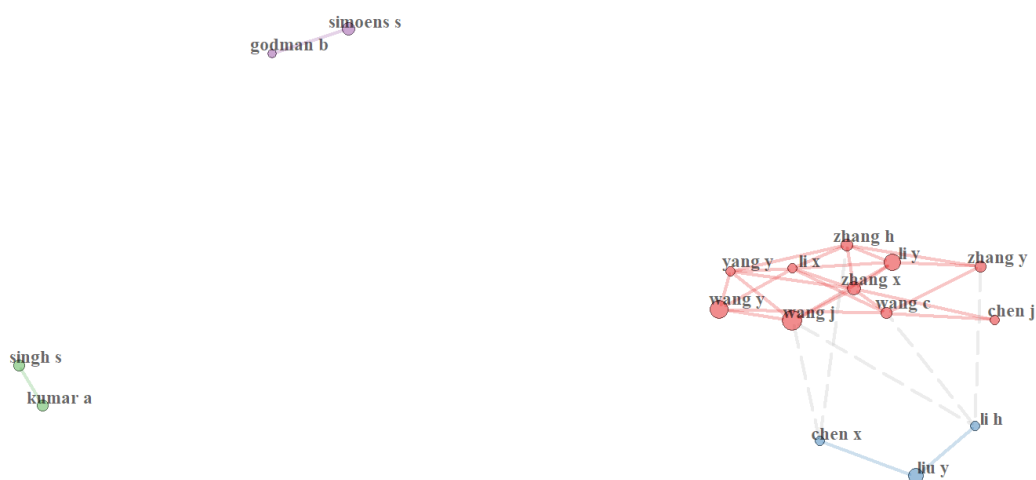


Figure 4. Vizualization of the author collaboration network

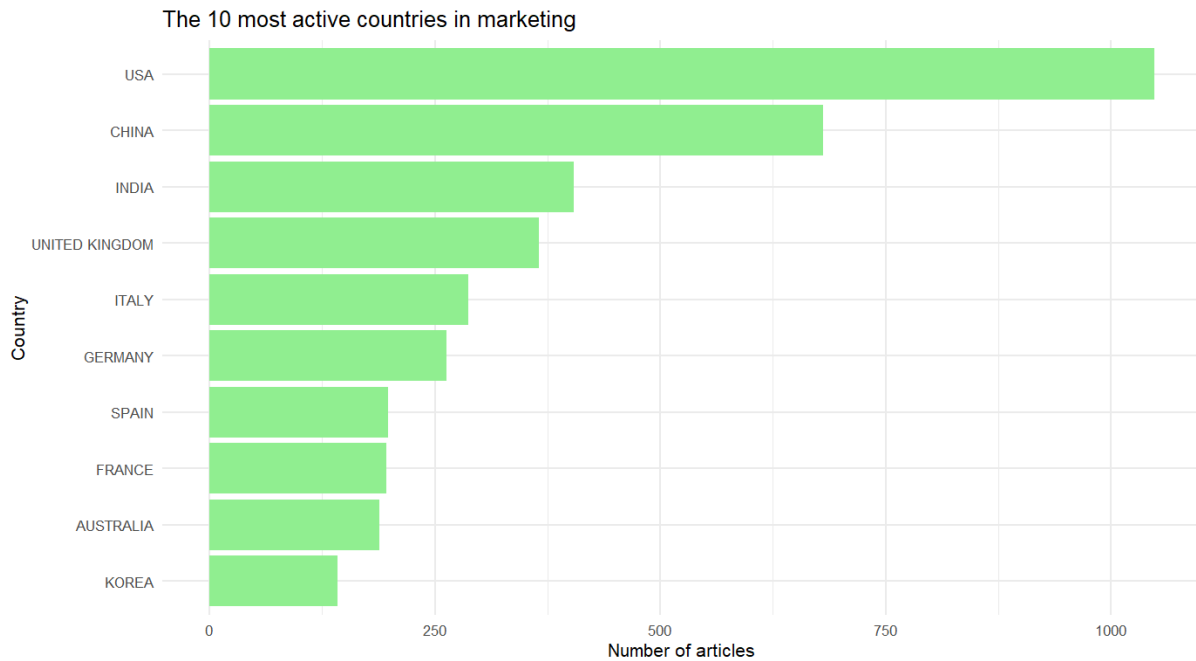


Figure 5. 10 most active countries in marketing

(681 publications, 11.22%), India (404 publications, 6.65%), UK (365 publications, 6.01%), Italy (365 publications, 6.01%), and 3 publications (Figure 5).

An analysis of international collaboration patterns (Figure 6) shows different levels of cross-country collaboration. The multiple country publication (MCP) ratio shows that Australia (27.1%) and Korea (31.7%) have relatively high rates of interna-

tional collaboration, while India (11.6%) and the United States (15.6%) have lower levels of international co-authorship. This suggests that while some countries have developed strong international research networks, others maintain more local research communities.

An analysis of citation impact by country shows that Belgium has the highest average citations per

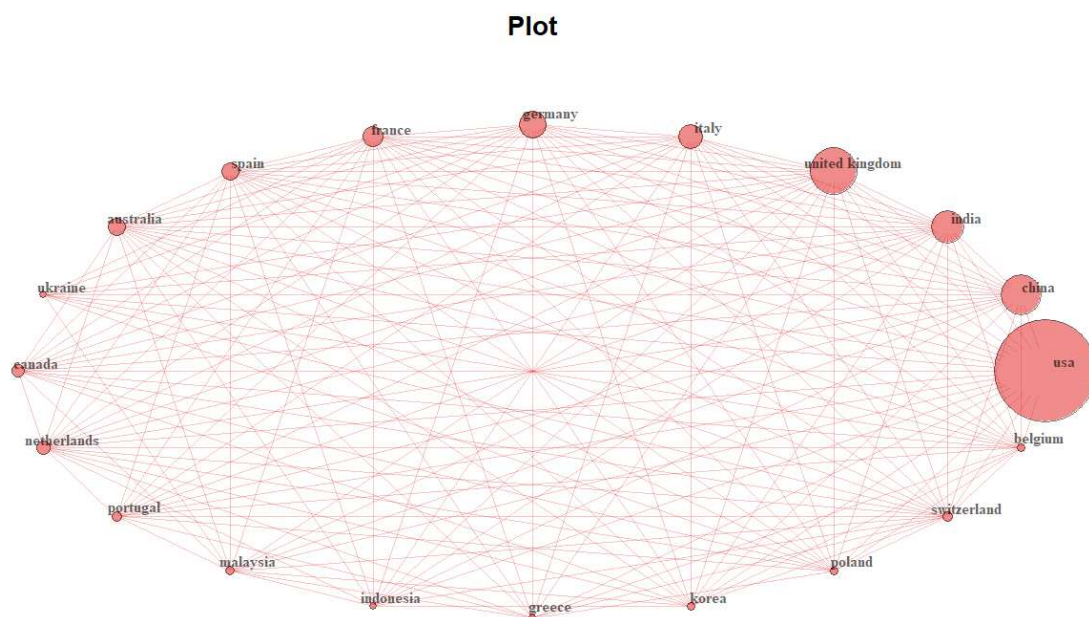


Figure 6. Countries' collaboration network in innovation marketing research

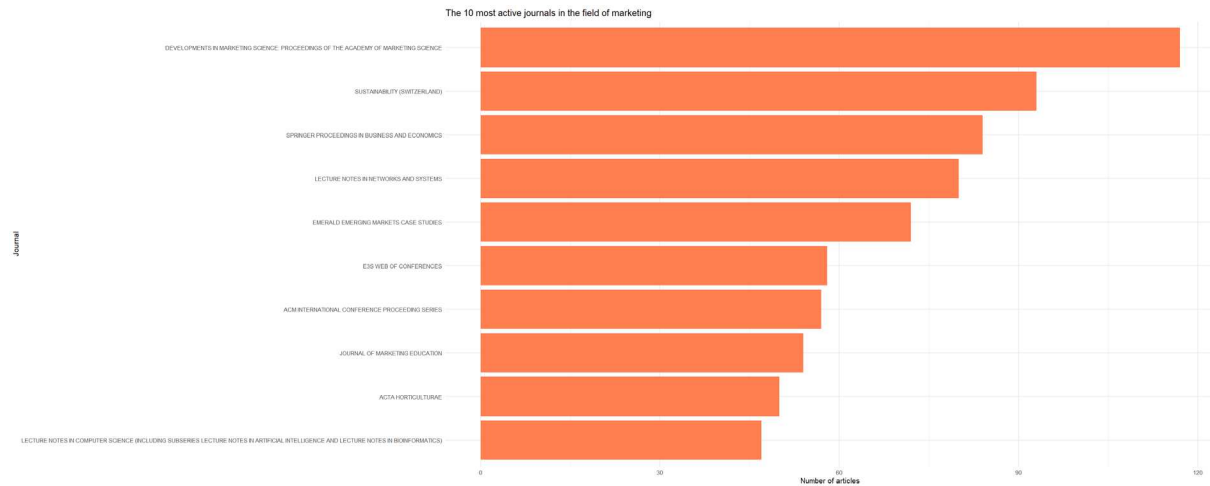


Figure 7. 10 most active journals in the field of marketing

article (66.15), followed by the Netherlands (34.19), the United Kingdom (36.17), and Australia (29.59), indicating the global impact of research from these countries, despite their low publication volume compared to leaders such as the United States (22.45) and China (17.32).

The analysis identified the most effective sources in the field (Figure 7). The top sources include “Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science” (117 publications), “Sustainability” (93 publications), and “Springer Proceedings in Business and Economics” (84 publications). The diversity of these sources demonstrates the multidisciplinary nature of innovative marketing research, spanning traditional

marketing venues, sustainability-focused journals, and business economics platforms.

Impact factor analysis (Figure 8) shows that publications in some journals, such as Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology, Applied Energy, and Journal of Medicinal Chemistry, received exceptional citation rates, demonstrating the interdisciplinary impact of marketing innovation research beyond traditional business fields.

Keyword analysis identifies the most frequently used author keywords (Figure 9), including “Innovation” (681 occurrences), “Marketing” (534 occurrences), “Sustainability” (176 occurrences), “Social Media” (161 occurrences), and “Digital

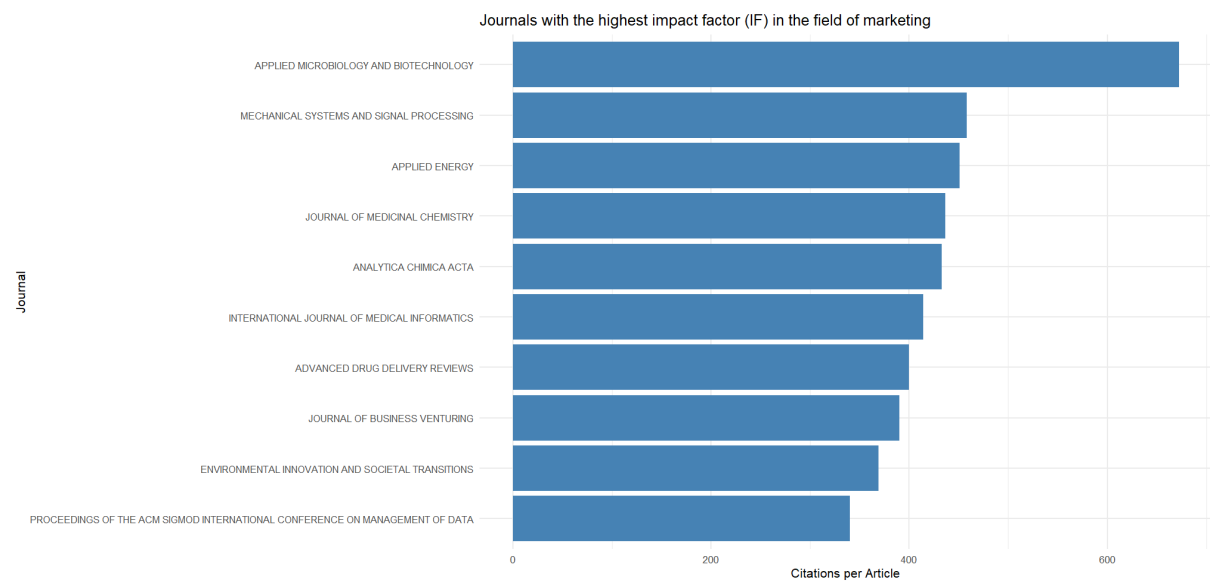


Figure 8. Journals with the highest impact factor in the field of marketing

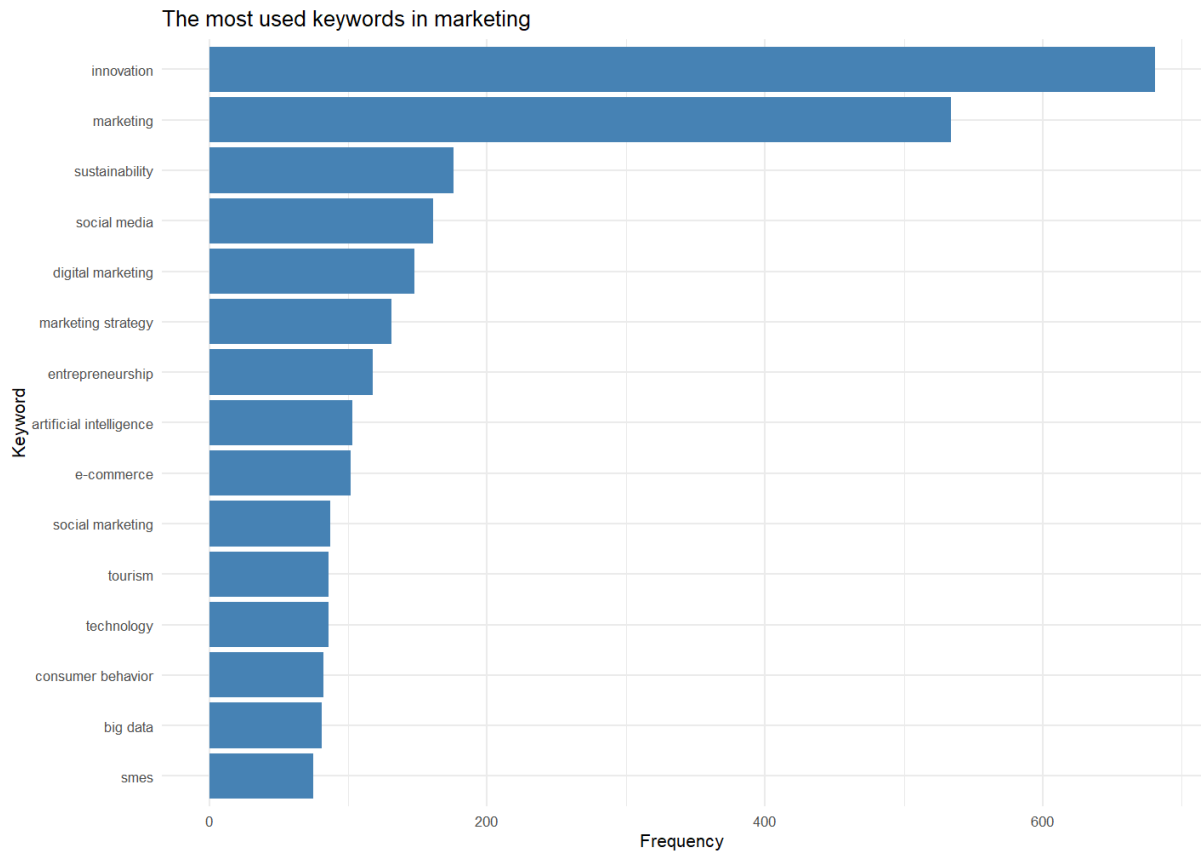


Figure 9. The most used keywords in marketing



Figure 10. Keyword cloud of innovation marketing research

Plot

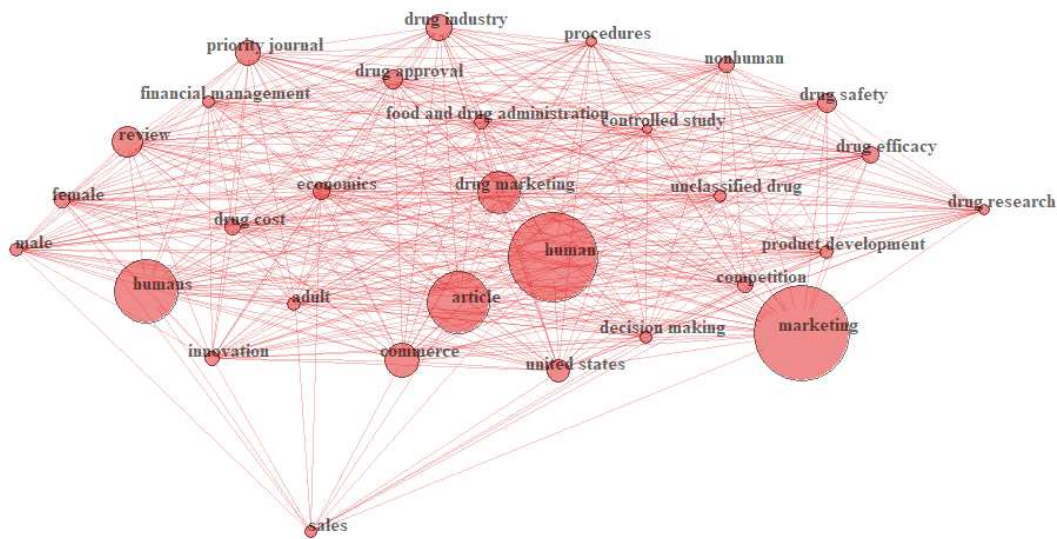


Figure 11. Co-occurrence network of keywords in innovation marketing research

Marketing” (148 occurrences). The keyword cloud visualization (Figure 10) further illustrates the central themes in this area, with “Marketing,” “Human,” “Articles,” “People,” and “Commerce” standing out as key concepts.

The keyword co-occurrence analysis (Figure 11) reveals distinct clusters of research topics: (1) digital marketing and social media, (2) innovation and sustainability, (3) consumer behavior and brand management, and (4) marketing strategy and entrepreneurship. These clusters represent the main research streams in this field and show how different concepts are connected in the field of innovative marketing.

Analysis of citation patterns shows that the average citation per document across the field is 15.64, with an average of 1,545 citations per document per year. The citation distribution (Figure 12) shows a typical pattern for the scientific literature, with highly cited articles accounting for a large proportion of total citations.

The most cited article was published by Pushpakom et al. (2018) in *Nature Reviews Drug Discovery* with a total of 3,064 citations (an average of 383 citations per year), followed by Chow et al. (2010) in *Applied Energy* with 1,305 citations, and Berg et al. (2009) in *Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology* with 1,269 citations. Pushpakom et al.’s article dis-

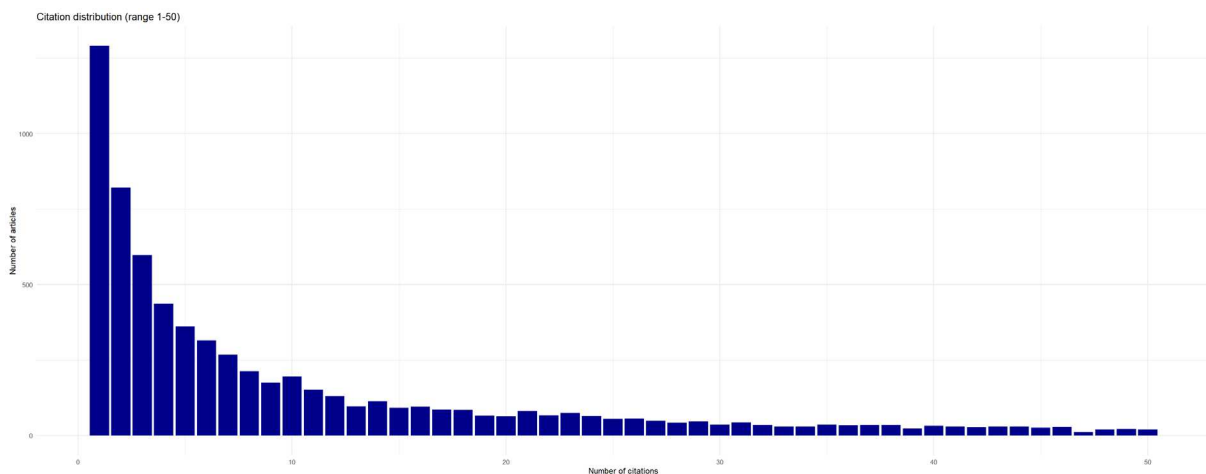


Figure 12. Citation distribution in innovation marketing literature

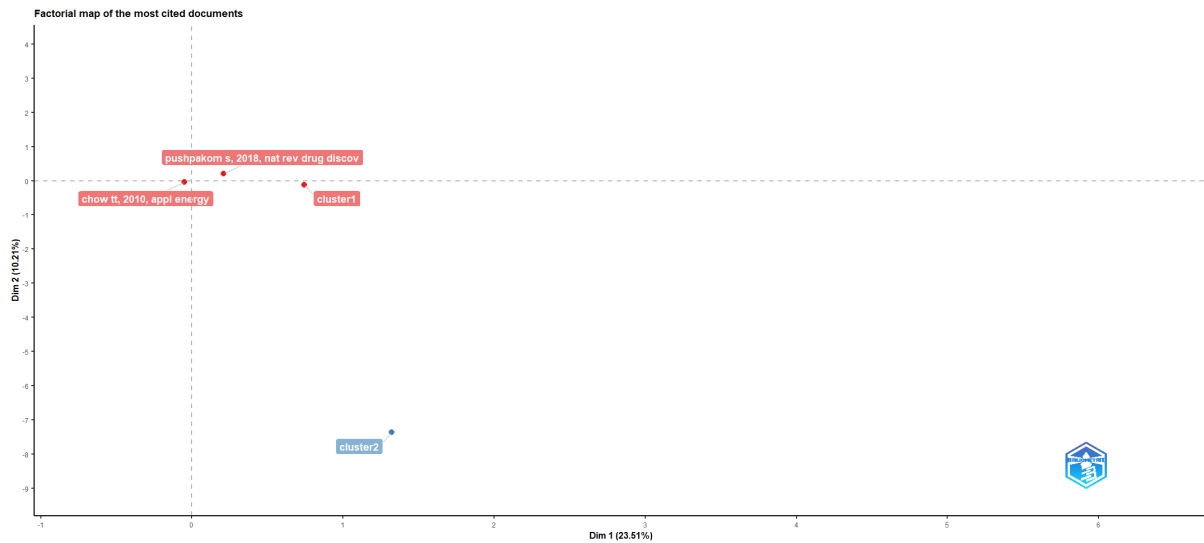


Figure 15. Factorial map of the most cited documents in innovation marketing research

proaches, and (4) strategic marketing innovations. These clusters represent the intellectual fabric of the field and highlight the multifaceted nature of innovative marketing research.

The bibliometric analysis of 10,453 innovation marketing publications from 1972-2025 reveals significant insights into the field’s intellectual evolution and structural characteristics that warrant careful interpretation within the broader context of marketing science development.

The exponential growth trajectory (11.04% annual growth rate) observed in innovation marketing research substantially exceeds typical rates reported in established marketing domains. For comparison, Leonidou et al. (2018) documented 7.2% growth in international marketing, while digital marketing research showed 9.1% growth. This acceleration suggests innovation marketing has transitioned from an emerging niche to a mature research domain, driven primarily by technological disruption and sustainability imperatives rather than incremental theoretical development.

However, the growth pattern reveals concerning temporal gaps. The relative stagnation during 1980-1995 contrasts sharply with simultaneous advances in innovation diffusion theory and relationship marketing paradigms. This suggests the field’s development was initially constrained by methodological limitations rather than conceptual relevance, only accelerating when bibliometric

and computational tools became accessible.

The dominance of developed economies (USA: 17.26%, Europe: ~25% combined) in publication volume, contrasted with emerging economies’ higher citation impact, reveals a significant paradox in knowledge production dynamics. This pattern contradicts conventional assumptions about research quality correlating with output volume and suggests systematic differences in research focus and methodological rigor across regions.

The high international collaboration rates in Australia (27.1%) and Korea (31.7%) versus lower rates in dominant producers (USA: 15.6%) indicate that leading research economies may be operating in relative isolation. This finding challenges Porter’s cluster theory predictions about knowledge spillovers in dominant research centers and suggests potential inefficiencies in global knowledge integration.

The identified four-cluster structure (digital transformation 23.4%, sustainable marketing 19.8%, consumer-centric approaches 21.2%, strategic innovation 18.6%) represents a fundamental departure from traditional marketing’s product-centric orientation. Unlike classical marketing evolution documented by Wilkie and Moore, innovation marketing appears to have bypassed incremental paradigm shifts, instead experiencing rapid transformation driven by external technological and environmental pressures.

The prominence of sustainability themes (19.8% of publications) significantly exceeds representation in general marketing literature (~8%), suggesting innovation marketing serves as an early indicator of broader disciplinary trends. This finding aligns with institutional theory predictions about organizational responses to environmental pressures but challenges market-oriented theories that emphasize customer-driven innovation.

The finding that 67% of highly-cited articles appear in non-marketing journals represents a notable anomaly in marketing science. Typically, high-impact marketing research concentrates in core marketing outlets. This distribution pattern suggests either: (1) innovation marketing's inherent interdisciplinary nature transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries, or (2) marketing journals have been slow to recognize the field's significance, creating publication gaps filled by other disciplines.

This pattern has important implications for tenure and promotion decisions in marketing academia, where publication in core marketing journals remains prioritized despite evidence of broader scholarly impact in interdisciplinary venues.

While this bibliometric analysis provides comprehensive structural insights, several methodological limitations constrain interpretative depth. The exclusive reliance on Scopus data may introduce selection bias toward English-language publications and underrepresent regional research traditions. Additionally, bibliometric indicators cannot capture qualitative aspects of theoretical contribution or practical implementation success.

The observed citation patterns may reflect citation inflation rather than genuine impact, particularly in rapidly growing fields where self-citation and citation networks can artificially amplify impact metrics. Future research should incorporate altmetrics and practical impact assessments to validate these findings.

For marketing practitioners, the identified research clusters provide strategic guidance for innovation investment priorities. The balanced distribution across digital transformation, sustainability, and consumer-centric approaches suggests successful innovation marketing requires integrated rather than specialized capabilities.

For policymakers, the geographic concentration of high-impact research suggests opportunities for targeted interventions to enhance research capacity in emerging economies while facilitating knowledge transfer from established centers.

The analysis reveals several critical gaps requiring immediate attention: (1) limited representation of developing economy contexts despite their growing market importance, (2) methodological constraints limiting causal inference about innovation marketing effectiveness, and (3) insufficient integration between theoretical development and practical implementation.

Future research should prioritize mixed-methods approaches combining bibliometric mapping with empirical validation studies, particularly focusing on understudied geographic regions and industry contexts.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to systematically map the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of innovation marketing research through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of 10,453 publications from 1972 to 2025.

The analysis revealed that innovation marketing has experienced rapid expansion with an annual growth rate of 11.04%, especially after 2000, and four major research clusters have been identified: digital transformation technologies (23.4%), sustainable marketing innovations (19.8%), consumer-centric methodologies (21.2%), and strategic innovation management (18.6%). The United States and China dominate in terms of publication volume, while Belgium and the Netherlands demonstrate the highest citation impact. Furthermore, 67% of highly cited articles were published outside of traditional marketing journals, confirming the interdisciplinary nature and influence of this research domain.

From these results, several conclusions can be drawn. First, innovation marketing has established itself as a distinct and mature field within marketing science, integrating technological, sustainability, and consumer-oriented approaches. Second, the interdisciplinary character of the field demonstrates both its theoretical vitality and its practical relevance, extending beyond traditional marketing boundaries. Third, the concentration of high-impact contributions in developed economies, coupled with limited methodological diversity, highlights the need to expand research into emerging economies and to adopt more advanced methodological approaches. Finally, the findings indicate clear opportunities for future research to integrate new technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, to strengthen cross-sector collaboration, and to develop empirical validation studies that complement bibliometric mapping.

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