Guest editorial: Systematic literature reviews in international marketing: from the past to the future and beyond

Research output, as measured by the number of papers published in academic databases (Delaney and Tamás, 2018; Greyson *et al.*, 2019; Van Dinter *et al.*, 2021), continues to grow exponentially (Lim *et al.*, 2022), making a timely review and systematic overview of the state-of-the-art in a particular research domain more challenging (Xiao and Watson, 2017; Palmatier *et al.*, 2018). On the one hand, the growing volume of research makes it ever harder for researchers (Kraus *et al.*, 2020) to keep track of past and current findings in a specific discipline and across disciplines (Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020; Fisch and Block, 2018), therefore placing scientists in danger of becoming decoupled from the discourse with which they are engaged (Gusenbauer, 2019; Shaffril *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, the world is in need of new ideas (Van Dinter *et al.*, 2021) to address its growing issues (Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020). In this context, it is generally agreed today that analysis of academic outlets builds opportunities (Vrontis and Christofi, 2019; Burgers *et al.*, 2019; Lim *et al.*, 2022) for the periodic assessment of the professional literature (Delaney and Tamás, 2018) aligned to the discipline's interest(s) (Greyson *et al.*, 2019), purpose(s) (Van Dinter *et al.*, 2021) and value(s) (Kraus *et al.*, 2020). From such specified reasons, different techniques have burgeoned in the literature over the years to address these concerns, and one of them is conducting a systematic literature review (SLR).

Applying scientific mapping techniques (Xiao and Watson, 2017), SLR studies systematically (Lim *et al.*, 2022) and empirically (Vrontis and Christofi, 2019) review a large volume of literature. Reviewing a large volume of literature enables researchers to observe (Shaffril *et al.*, 2021) which areas are burgeoning (Burgers *et al.*, 2019) and which areas require fresh attention (Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020). Further, through the knowledge maps, researchers are enabled access to a large number of topics (Lim *et al.*, 2022; Van Dinter *et al.*, 2021). This map contributes to a holistic view and lays the foundation for synthesizing the research field across the disciplines (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003) which also assists researchers in visualizing the topical (cor)relations (Greyson *et al.*, 2019), such as which topics are associated/explored (Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020; Fisch and Block, 2018) and which remain ripe for future investigations (Xiao and Watson, 2017), and defining a niche that enables the development of new research (Tranfield *et al.* 2003). Furthermore, it can help researchers to invent new theories (Palmatier *et al.*, 2018). The development of new theoretical constructs may lead to new research directions in the field (Shaffril *et al.*, 2021) and may contribute to the broader debate (Palmatier *et al.*, 2018).

Without doubt, this is particularly important for specialized fields such as international marketing (IM) and international business (IB) due to a relatively limited number of systematic reviews in these fields (Gaur and Kumar, 2018; Palmatier *et al.*, 2018; Paul, 2017). In this respect, scholars have contributed to this special issue by providing ideas and directions for academics to undertake novel research, instead of doing repetitive and recycled types of research. Simultaneously, apart from engaging in different thematic topics within the broad field of IM, they indicated the trendiness, the degree of hotness and coldness of IM topics. The specific special issue attracted great interest and a vast number of submissions. This is the second part of this issue to be published in the IM Review, and it includes nine systematic

review papers that would reveal a substantial road map for opening a new stream for future studies.

Rondi *et al.* conducted the first SLR of family multinationals, i.e. firms owned by one or more families that engage in foreign direct investments (FDIs). Building on the examination of past and current research, the authors develop an integrative framework and identify directions to advance this area of research. In doing so, the authors provide an integrative account of current knowledge, develop a reconciling framework and identify directions for future research.

Civitillo *et al.* draw attention to the nonprofit sector and present a bibliometric-systematic literature review (B-SLR) with the aim of exploring whether and how relevant studies about nonprofit organizations (NPOs) have so far investigated the fruitful effects that can be generated by proactive governance, management and marketing of their intellectual capital –particularly when considering its extension to social capital – with relation to the promotion of corporate reputation. The findings show that, according to a quantitative (more bibliometric) perspective, the scientific interest on this specific issue has not always been constant and methodical, while three themes (institutional scope, human resources and operational functioning) have so far mostly been analyzed according to a qualitative (and therefore more systematic) perspective.

Correlating the most demanding topics in contemporary marketing research, big data and customer relationship management (CRM), Del Vecchio *et al.* provide a comprehensive structured literature review (SLR) of the articles published in journals from 2013 to 2020 dealing with models and processes of big data for CRM from an IM perspective. Authors present a conceptual multilevel framework that is built around four coordinated sequences of actions relevant to "why," "what," "who" and "how" big data is implemented in CRM strategies, thus supporting the conception and implementation of an internationalization marketing strategy.

Parameswar *et al.* provide global researchers with direction by proposing a global research agenda on global alliance termination. Employing a bibliometric analysis of the literature on alliance termination, authors identified a total of 69 research papers from the Scopus database and proposed a model for future research agenda. The bibliometric analysis provides a precise snapshot of the state of the literature on global alliance termination. The research agenda developed provides a direction for further academic research that links alliance termination not only to the pre-alliance termination phase but also to the post–alliance termination phase that is nascently explored in the literature.

Diaz *et al.* applied a bibliometric approach by using science mapping analysis to visualize and reveal the evolution of smart and digital technologies and their relationship with different themes within marketing journals. By combining science maps with performance indicators, the results of this study suggest that new technologies are related to eight main topics within marketing journals: implementation-completion, perceptions, behavior, market competition, adoption-diffusion model, social media, competitive advantage and disruptive technology. Additionally, by analyzing IM and IB journals, the findings highlight six thematic areas: perceptions–eWOM relationship, innovative foreign markets, performance determinants, Japan, industrial research and China. This study contributes theoretically to developing and describing a framework for research in smart and digital technologies in the general marketing and IM/IB fields. It adds a coherent perspective on the points of contact in marketing evolution, where smart technology has a meaningful role. This study outlines the changing questions surrounding the touchpoints as well as emerging research topics.

Makrides *et al.*'s study is the first to systematically collate and scrutinize the state-of-the-art research on consumer cosmopolitanism (CCOS) from an IM perspective. In doing so, it provides a roadmap for future research with reference to theory, context and methodology

based on the research inconsistencies and knowledge gaps identified, contributing toward the development of this research area. The authors systematically reviewed 44 journal articles and found that CCOS research is a rapidly growing research stream in the IM field. However, at the same time, the results reveal a lack of coherent and consistent conceptual underpinning, conflicting empirical findings regarding the profile and behavior of cosmopolitan consumers, persistent knowledge gaps, as well as methodological and contextual weaknesses.

Dang and Raska take a holistic view of the cross-cultural differences of eWOM behavior. The authors present a comprehensive review of how national cultures affect eWOM behavior by drawing upon prior research, and they provide directions for future research contributions. An analysis of 52 peer-reviewed journal articles on both eWOM and national cultures shows that national cultures, primarily Hofstede's dimensions, influence the willingness of individuals to share eWOM, how they write eWOM and the extent to which they use eWOM to make decisions. Although the reviewed studies have provided insightful implications for marketing theory and practice, this paper has identified a number of important questions that warrant future research attention.

In order to underscore the academic and managerial relevance of the field, Dubiel and Mukherji systematically review and critically examine the IM and innovation management research on new service development (NSD) in the context of emerging markets (EM), focusing on an 11-year period, 2010–2020. Their analysis of 36 journal articles reveals that NSD research is a dynamic field with an increasing number of quantitative, multi-country, and multi-method studies, encompassing a variety of geographical settings and industries. Doing justice to this vibrant field of research and its managerial importance, authors create an overview of existing empirical studies to serve as a repository of knowledge on NSD for both academics and practitioners. Further, they offer a thematic and temporal overview of the content of existing studies with some promising avenues for future research.

In the last article of this special issue, Serrano-Arcos *et al.* provide an overview on the topic of consumer affinity. The authors synthesized the extant literature to yield a consolidated image of its current status, as well as a research agenda that raises new questions for the academic community. In doing so, they aim to shed new light on the concept of consumer affinity based on a comprehensive systematic review of the literature, provide a critical analysis of previous research in terms of conceptual, methodological and substantive issues and problems and offer avenues for future research.

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