

Analysis of the Evolution of Digital Marketing in Ibero-America during the 2015-2020 Period

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Abstract

This paper seeks to analyze the evolution of scientific production based on one of the most revolutionary aspects of marketing in recent years. Digital marketing has become one of the most effective tools when transmitting a message to a receiver and the research that has been done around it has had a significant growth since its inception. The study analyzes the Digital Marketing variable based on the data provided by Scopus according to the volume of production in Ibero-American countries, in the period 2015-2020 to obtain more updated information and measure the trend in terms of growth and impact of research under the aforementioned variable. Scopus yields a total of 361 research works after applying the related search filters, which are subjected to a bibliometric analysis distributing these works in different analysis parameters such as authors, country of origin, year of publication and area of knowledge, within which an analysis with a bibliographic approach is also performed with the purpose of knowing the position of different authors and the impact of their publications.

Keywords

Digital marketing; Ibero-America; Scientific production; Impact of publications

1. Introduction

Marketing is the tool used by organizations to identify the needs and desires of customers. It delimits the market, that is, it provides the company with a fragmented vision of that market to know more in depth the details of its potential consumers. The purpose of this is to provide the product or service with characteristics related to the needs or requirements of consumers. The main objective of marketing is to generate value to the organization through the total satisfaction of its customers that generates a close relation-

ship with them. Marketing is defined as a social and administrative process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through the creation and exchange of products and value with others (Kotler & Armstrong, 2003) .

The marketing strategies designed by the organization to obtain valuable information from the market where it operates have been evolving as globalization has allowed shortening physical distances through the use of the Internet and digital media. Every day there are more and more users of this network through which they perform countless activities in their daily lives. In the same way, more and more advanced devices are designed for the use of the Internet that make it easier to obtain information in real time about almost any topic that the consumer demands. Social networks are a clear example of how nowadays you can interact with more people regardless of their location on the globe, which has undoubtedly been a great opportunity to design positioning strategies through them. Social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, among others, have become a driving platform not only for old brands but also for emerging brands, launching themselves to a significant number of potential consumers who currently have more and more to say in advertising campaigns. The opposite was the case in the past, when companies had the possibility of even hiding customer dissatisfaction. Today, the exposure in the different media allows a certain transparency in the opinion of consumers regarding certain products and services, so that companies are more and more concerned with the generation of value through the total satisfaction of their customers.

Therefore, companies have sought to investigate in depth the use of social networks as a mechanism to boost their marketing strategies in the new digital era, which implies in that sense, the objective of this research, to answer the question: How has been the evolution of digital marketing in Ibero-America during the period 2015-2020?

2. General Objective

To analyze, from a bibliometric and bibliographic perspective, the production of high impact research papers on the Digital Marketing variable in the period 2015-2020.

3. Methodology

The methodological objective of this research is to perform a bibliometric analysis of the Digital Marketing variable of the scientific production published in high impact journals indexed in the Scopus database, which allows through the design of graphs and tables to quantitatively interpret the distribution of such research, so that from a bibliographic approach, to know the position of different authors regarding the management of digital marketing, describing through qualitative analysis the characteristics of certain papers taken from the search results in the aforementioned platform.

3.1 Methodological design

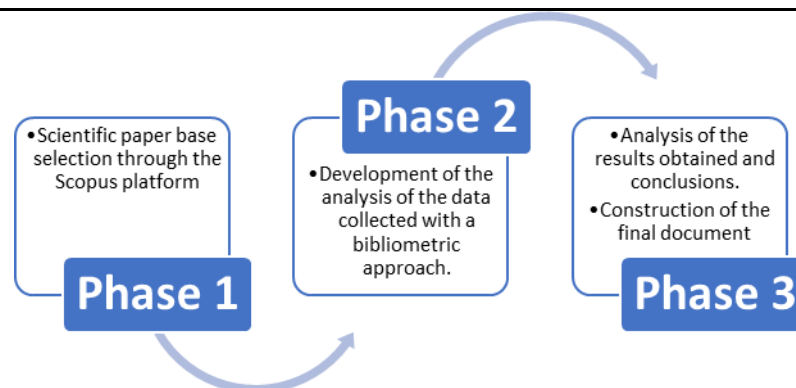


Figure 1. Methodological design.

Source: (Viloria, Vargas, & Garcia, 2019)

The present research was developed through the completion of the three phases listed in Figure 1 and detailed below:

3.1.1 Phase 1: Database Selection

The first phase consists of the selection of papers or research articles that will be part of the analysis to help in the solution of the research question and the fulfillment of the objective. The search filters for the selection of the material to be analyzed are the following.

- Research papers (articles, conference papers, books, book chapters, among others) whose variable of study is Digital Marketing.
- Research papers published within the period 2015-2020.
- Research papers published in Latin American countries.

The application of Phase 1 resulted in a total of 361 documents that will be classified for further analysis as indicated in Phase 2.

3.1.2 Phase 2: Bibliometric Analysis

Once the 361 papers resulting from the application of phase 1 were identified, they were classified using the Analyze Search Results tool offered by Scopus as part of its mechanisms for analyzing information. This classification consists of analyzing the information from different study groups, for example, authors, country of origin of the publication, year of publication and area of knowledge to which the research work belongs.

Once the information is organized by means of graphs and/or tables, the analysis was performed from the bibliometric approach, which would also allow to analyze through examples, citing some papers, the position of the authors regarding the use of digital marketing.

3.1.3 Phase 3: Conclusions and construction of the final document.

After classifying the information as indicated in phase 2, the analysis of the results was performed from a bibliographic approach for the construction of the conclusions through

the discussion of results, ending this research with the writing of the final document.

4. Discussion of results

4.1 Results of the bibliometric analysis of the Digital Marketing variable.

After applying the search filters in the Scopus database, 361 research papers published in high impact journals during the period between 2015 and 2020 were identified. The following is a breakdown of the analysis criteria.

4.1.1 Annual variation in publications

The growth of publications has been increasing at all times in each annual interval. Graph 2 shows that 2020 was the year with the highest number of publications regarding digital marketing.

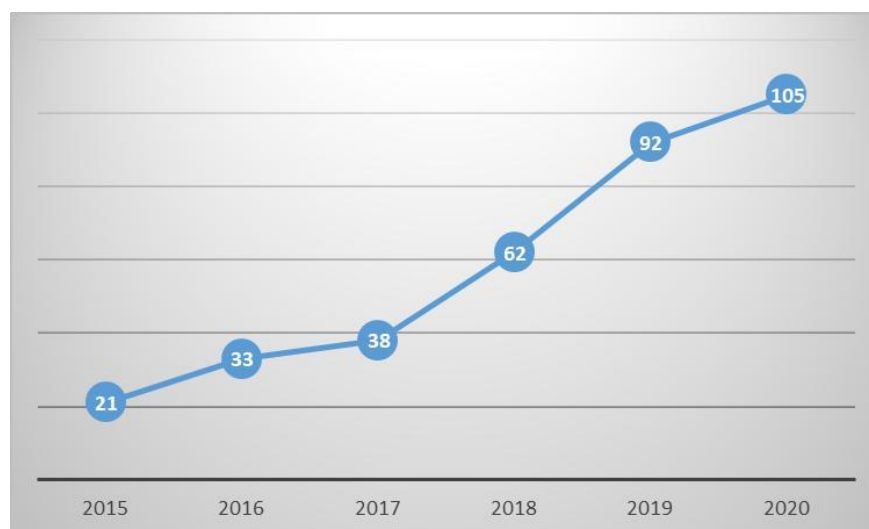


Figure 2. Distribution of articles by year

Source: Own elaboration (2021), based on data provided by Scopus database.

Graph 2 shows the total number of research papers published annually, and as mentioned, this growth has been sustained, always showing an increase with respect to the previous year. The least significant variation occurs between 2016 and 2017 where 33 and 38 researches were registered respectively, that is, only 5 more papers. The figure continues to increase until reaching 105 records in 2020. By the nature of the variable under study, it is concluded that as the years go by, technological advances facilitate motivate the work of companies to focus their marketing strategies through the use of digital platforms, which year after year have more subscribers and these in turn increase their use due to multiple factors, for example the virtualization of the vast majority of labor occupations due to the pandemic that began in 2019 and that currently still suggests a greater use of digital media for the fulfillment of different functions and reduce the multiplication of active cases of Covid-19.

One of the researches with the greatest impact is "Tourism analytics with massive us-

er-generated content: A case study of Barcelona" (Marine-Roig & Anton Clavé, 2015). which aims to measure the usefulness of big data analysis against the positioning of cities like Barcelona with respect to the demand for tourism services, through the design of marketing strategies based on the usefulness of digital media. The level of positioning of tourist agencies that, through the use of digital tools, manage to improve their recognition policies in the market is analyzed. Thus, the authors of this paper show how a company in the tourism sector can take advantage of these tools to achieve a good level of positioning in the market, since through the use of digital platforms they can reach a larger audience. This research was published in 2015 and to date has 146 citations in different works of different areas and in different countries.

4.1.2 Distribution of research papers according to their country of origin.

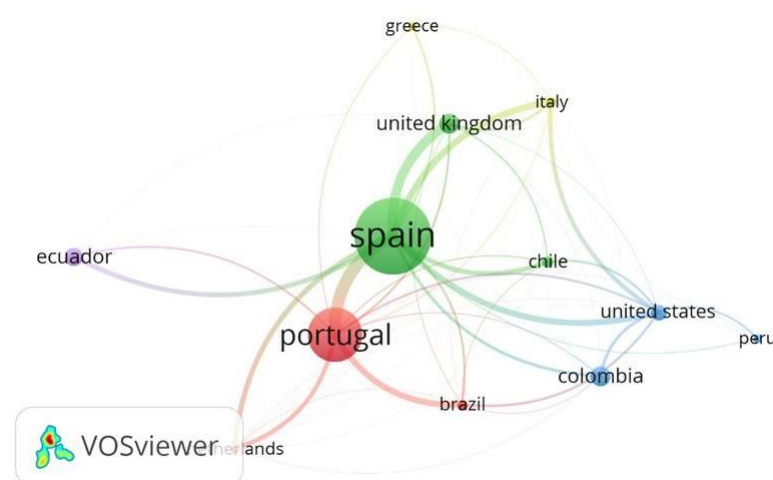


Figure 3. Distribution of articles by country of origin

Source: Own elaboration (2021), based on data provided by Scopus database through the VOSviewer tool.

Spain leads the production of research papers related to the study of Digital Marketing within the Ibero-American countries, showing a strong relationship with countries such as Portugal and the United Kingdom. The latter, although it is not part of the Ibero-American countries, registers an important number of publications shared with Spanish authors. An example of this is the publication "Understanding the convergence of markets in online sports betting". (Lopez-Gonzalez & Griffiths, 2018). whose objective is to explore the integration of the online betting industry within the digital and gaming sectors, analyzing the behavior of the market through digital platforms to identify growth opportunities. Said publication was conducted in 2018 and has 31 citations.

The same case is presented between Colombia and the United States that by cooperating in different research works, reflects the relationship with this second country that in turn

participates in studies with authors affiliated to institutions in Argentina, Chile and Peru. An example of the above is the journal paper entitled "The digitization of health care re-tailing (Rosenbaum, et al., 2017). which aims to generate information on the impact that digitization technology has on manufacturers of retail consumer goods.

COUNTRY	Number of publications	COUNTRY	Number of publications
Spain	203	Lithuania	2
Portugal	114	New Zealand	2
Colombia	22	Norway	2
United Kingdom	21	Uruguay	2
Ecuador	19	Venezuela	2
United States	15	Belgium	1
Chile	9	Costa Rica	1
Brazil	8	Croatia	1
Italy	7	Cuba	1
Netherlands	6	Dominican Republic	1
Peru	6	Estonia	1
Greece	55	Germany	1
Argentina	4	Guatemala	1
Mexico	4	Hong Kong	1
Australia	3	Iran	1
France	3	Malaysia	1
Turkey	3	Morocco	1
Canada	2	Poland	1
China	2	Qatar	1
Finland	2	Saudi Arabia	1
Indonesia	2	Slovenia	1
Japan	2	Sweden	0

Table 1. Distribution of papers by country of origin

Source: Own elaboration (2021), based on data provided by Scopus database.

Table 1 shows the number of publications by country of origin, including those that, although they do not belong to the Ibero-American community, have active participation in the preparation of documents with authors affiliated to institutions in the countries included in this research.

4.1.3 Distribution of research papers by authors.

Figure 4 shows the relationship that exists between authors who have conducted the most research under the Digital Marketing variable. The graph places the author Gonçalves, Ramiro as the author with the highest participation in research works in the aforementioned thematic, with a total of 6 studies published in high impact journals, within which the article "A theoretical analysis of digital marketing adoption by startups" stands out. (Gonçalves, et al., 2018) . This study focuses its efforts on highlighting the benefits that startups obtain by taking advantage of every tool that technological advances allow them, and looking at digital marketing as the perfect ally when it comes to getting new customers and building loyalty with current ones.

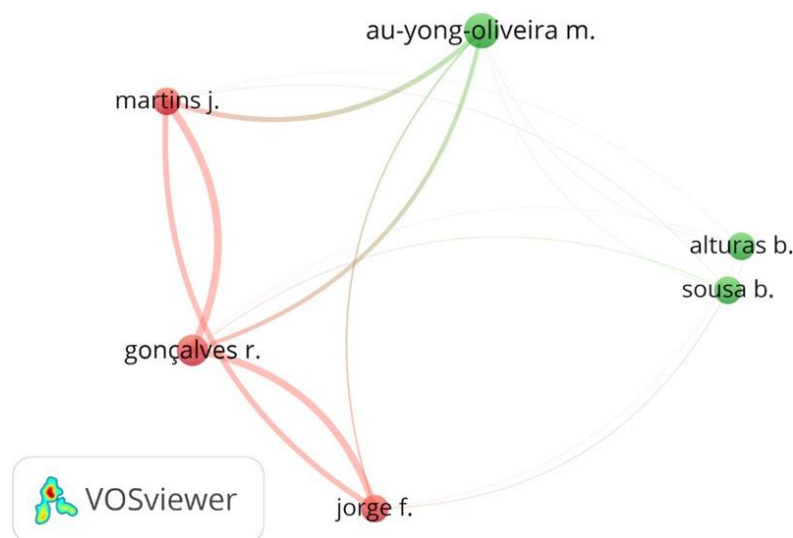


Figure 4. Distribution of articles by authors.

Source: Own elaboration (2021), based on data provided by Scopus database through the VOSviewer tool.

Among the authors of the aforementioned paper, there is Martins, José; who in turn also reaches an important participation in the previous graph, showing a direct correlation with Gonçalves, as shown by his participation in the aforementioned paper. Martins, of Portuguese origin, registers a total of 5 research works where important aspects of digital marketing are studied. At the other end and keeping the same proportion in terms of participation in the creation of scientific studies is Jorge, Filipa Eira author of Portuguese nationality who also has 5 research papers on digital marketing, for example the one named "The determinants of tourism products online shopping by Spanish consumers" (Jorge, et al., 2020) whose purpose is to know relevant aspects such as the risk associated with online shopping and the perceived usefulness of travel agencies against digital marketing tools, determinants to take into account when Spanish consumers decide to purchase tourism products and/or services through digital platforms.

4.1.4 Distribution of research work by area of knowledge.

Computer Science is the area of knowledge that carries out the most research on digital marketing, since it is a topic so close to technology, followed by the social sciences, which allows to conclude that the study of consumer behavior is perfectly integrated through variables that can be measured by means of technological tools.

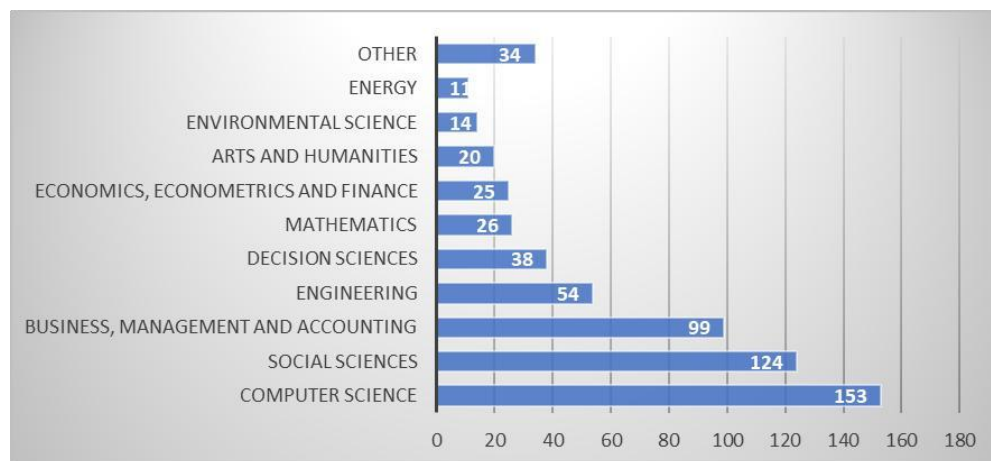


Fig 5. Distribution of articles by area of knowledge.

Source: Own elaboration (2021); Based on data provided by Scopus database.

In third place, with a total of 99 research papers, is Business, Administration and Accounting, which also happens to be an area directly related to the creation of marketing strategies, since among its functions is precisely to build close relationships with the current consumer, obtain new ones, and attract those of the competition, therefore, it is an area always interested in the creation of mechanisms that allow a close relationship with customers. Engineering and Decision Sciences are in fourth and fifth place with 54 and 38 respectively. It should be noted that the total number of documents registered by each area of knowledge in the graph does not coincide with the total of 361 research papers identified after applying the search filters in the Scopus database, since it should be taken into account that a research paper can integrate not only one but two or more disciplines by mixing topics that are relevant to the different areas of knowledge, as is the case of the paper entitled "Information technology and marketing: an important partnership for decades" (Graesch, Hensel-Börner, & Henseler, 2020) where disciplines such as marketing and computer science make their contributions to meet the objective of this work is to demonstrate the impact of technology in marketing in the past, present and its future potential. It validates the contribution of information systems to the creation of positioning strategies.

5. Conclusions

After analyzing the information provided by the Scopus database with respect to the digital marketing variable, it is concluded that its study, practice and feedback constitute a key element for the development of positioning strategies for any company in the market, regardless of sector or geographical location. New technologies open an important path for any organization that wishes to expand its market niche, which currently has consumers with a decision-making power unprecedented in the history of commerce in general, since their perception of any product or service is a determining factor in the decision-making process at the organizational level. It is no longer just a matter of placing a good for consideration of the public, but a constant accompaniment that goes from advice to after-sales services, issues that find a great ally in the use of digital tools or platforms such as social networks that provide accurate information about the customer's perception of the good or service offered.

The research concerning the study of digital marketing, from a bibliographic and bibliometric perspective, represents an important material for the development of other researches that allow to develop more and more the use of digital platforms by organizations since it places the author in what moment he is in front of techniques and tools currently used. The diversity offered by the digital universe allows the development of innovation for the sake of a healthy and lasting construction of the customer-organization relationship, which is the cornerstone of any marketing strategy applicable to any economic sector since, as analyzed in the development of this research work, the interdisciplinarity found in the execution of articles and other documents susceptible of analysis, indicates the relevance it has for any organization.

Cultural diversity in Latin American countries represents a challenge for any organization inside or outside the community, therefore, the development of efficient and effective market studies that allow to know in detail the needs and desires of consumers is vital for the survival of the company. Digital platforms such as the most used social networks today, are an important source for the collection of valuable information when designing strategies and decision making, its analysis through big data tools allow in the same way a better organization and processing of such data that when evaluated and studied, become raw material for the design and implementation of marketing strategies aimed at the target audience.

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