



# Mapping the Intellectual Structure of MSME Marketing Research: A Bibliometric Analysis of Global Literature

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## Abstract

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in economic development, employment generation, and innovation. The increasing adoption of digital technologies has transformed marketing practices, making marketing a key determinant of MSME competitiveness and growth. This study presents a bibliometric analysis of global research on MSMEs and marketing using data retrieved from the Scopus database. Following the PRISMA framework, 728 publications published between 2000 and 2026 were analyzed using VOSviewer. The findings indicate a significant growth in MSME and marketing research, particularly after 2017, with publication output peaking in 2024 and 2025. Indonesia emerged as the most influential country in terms of total citations, while several developed economies demonstrated higher citation impact per publication. Four major research themes were identified: digital marketing and technology adoption, entrepreneurial orientation and performance. Additionally, strong international collaborations highlight the increasing globalization of MSME marketing research. The study provides a comprehensive overview of the intellectual structure and evolution of MSME marketing research and offers directions for future investigations.

**Keywords:** MSMEs, Marketing, Digital Marketing, Bibliometric Analysis, Entrepreneurship, Market Orientation, Digital Transformation, Sustainability & VOSviewer

## 1. Introduction and Literature review

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) constitute one of the most significant sectors of the global economy, contributing substantially to employment generation, economic growth, innovation, and social development. In developing economies, particularly in countries such as India, Indonesia, and China, MSMEs serve as vital engines of economic progress by fostering entrepreneurship, enhancing industrial output, and supporting regional development. The increasing globalization of markets, rapid technological advancements, and changing consumer behavior have compelled MSMEs to adopt innovative marketing strategies to sustain competitiveness and ensure long-term growth.

Marketing has emerged as a critical success factor for MSMEs, enabling businesses to identify customer needs, create value, establish brand presence, and achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Traditionally, MSMEs relied on conventional marketing methods; however, the widespread adoption of digital technologies has transformed the marketing landscape. Digital marketing tools, social media platforms, e-commerce channels, and data-driven marketing strategies have provided MSMEs with new opportunities to expand market reach, improve customer engagement, and enhance business performance. Consequently, scholarly interest in understanding the relationship between MSMEs and marketing has increased significantly



over the past two decades.

Existing studies have examined various dimensions of MSME marketing, including digital marketing adoption, market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation, social media engagement, branding, marketing innovation, customer relationship management, and sustainable marketing practices. Researchers have also explored the role of technological capabilities, information technology adoption, and digital transformation in strengthening the marketing performance and competitiveness of MSMEs. Furthermore, recent studies highlight the growing importance of sustainability, resilience, and inclusive development in shaping contemporary MSME marketing strategies.

The literature on MSMEs and marketing highlights the growing significance of marketing strategies, technological adoption, and innovation in enhancing the performance and competitiveness of MSMEs. MSMEs are recognized as key contributors to economic development, employment generation, and innovation. Studies have shown that MSMEs significantly contribute to GDP, exports, and sustainable development while simultaneously facing challenges related to financing, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability (Shelly et al., 2020). Access to finance remains a critical concern, and the importance of government support and policy interventions in improving financial accessibility has been emphasized (Malhotra et al., 2007). Furthermore, the adoption of alternative financing mechanisms beyond conventional bank credit has been suggested as a means of supporting MSME growth (Maiti, 2018).

Technological advancements have increasingly become a catalyst for MSME development. Fintech adoption has been found to improve access to financial services (Purnamasari et al., 2020), while digital technologies such as e-commerce and social media have been shown to positively influence MSME performance by supporting business strategies (Armiani et al., 2021). Similarly, organizational and environmental enablers play a significant role in strengthening MSME resilience and sustainability, highlighting the importance of adaptability in dynamic business environments (Sindhvani et al., 2022).

The literature further underscores the transformative role of digital marketing in MSME performance. Digital marketing and market orientation have been identified as significant contributors to improved marketing performance, particularly during challenging business conditions (Ikramuddin et al., 2021). Likewise, digital marketing enables MSMEs to access new markets, understand consumer behavior, and effectively disseminate product information (Quenby & Ikaningtyas, 2023). Digitalization also presents opportunities for growth while requiring MSMEs to strategically adapt to evolving technological environments (Barus et al., 2023).

Market orientation and innovation have emerged as important determinants of marketing success. Market orientation positively influences marketing performance, while competitive advantage strengthens this relationship (Dahmiri et al., 2024). Similarly, the integration of digital marketing and product innovation significantly improves MSME marketing outcomes (Salsabilla et al., 2024). Effective utilization of information technology has also been found to enhance competitiveness and operational efficiency in increasingly globalized markets (Asikin et al., 2024).

Overall, the reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that digital marketing, technological adoption, market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation, innovation, and sustainability practices are critical drivers of MSME marketing performance and competitiveness. Despite the growing volume of research, the literature remains fragmented across disciplines, countries, and thematic areas. Consequently, a comprehensive bibliometric analysis is necessary to systematically examine publication trends, influential contributors, collaboration

patterns, and emerging research themes within the MSME marketing domain, thereby providing a clearer understanding of the field's intellectual structure and future research directions.

## 2. Research Methodology

The data for this study were retrieved from the Scopus database on April 10, 2026, due to its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed scholarly publications and citation data. The search was performed using the Advanced Search option in Scopus with the following search string: TITLE-ABS-KEY (("Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises" OR "MSMEs" OR "MSME" AND ("marketing" OR "digital marketing" OR "marketing strategies" OR "brand management"))

The search query was carefully constructed to capture literature related to both MSMEs and marketing by incorporating a broad range of synonymous terms associated with micro, small, and medium enterprises as well as various dimensions of marketing. The use of the Boolean operator AND ensured that only publications addressing both domains simultaneously were retrieved. To maintain the quality and relevance of the dataset, the search was restricted to documents published between 2000 and 2026, available in the final publication stage, and classified as articles, book chapters, or conference papers.

Following data retrieval, the records were exported from Scopus and consolidated into a single database. The screening and selection process was carried out in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. The initial search yielded 867 documents. The dataset was first examined for duplicate records and data inconsistencies. During this process, six duplicate publications were identified and removed.

Subsequently, a systematic screening process was undertaken using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Publications written in languages other than English, records lacking abstracts or complete bibliographic information, and studies not directly related to MSMEs and marketing were excluded. To enhance the accuracy of the selection process, a manual review of titles and abstracts was conducted.

A two-stage screening procedure was adopted. In the first stage, document titles were reviewed to eliminate studies that were clearly outside the scope of the research. In the second stage, abstracts were examined to assess their relevance to MSMEs and marketing. This approach ensured that only publications closely aligned with the objectives of the study were retained for analysis.

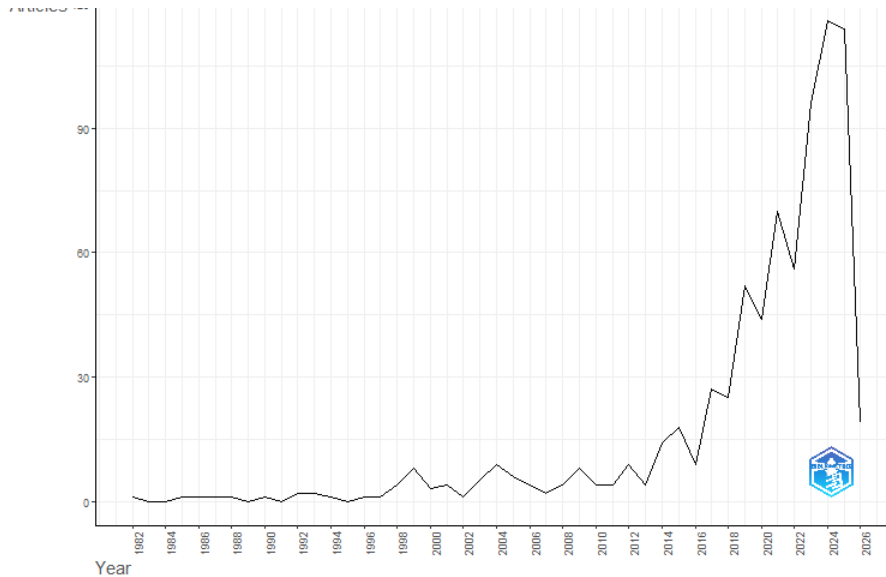
Overall, 133 documents were excluded from the dataset. Of these, 18 publications were removed because they were non-English sources (R<sub>1</sub>), 35 records were excluded due to missing abstracts or incomplete information (R<sub>2</sub>), and 80 studies were eliminated because they were not directly related to the research domain of MSMEs and marketing (R<sub>3</sub>). The majority of the excluded records belonged to the third category.

After completing the identification, screening, and eligibility assessment stages, a final dataset of 728 publications was retained for bibliometric analysis. The adoption of the PRISMA framework ensured transparency, consistency, and replicability throughout the document selection process. The complete screening procedure is presented through a PRISMA flow diagram illustrating the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

The final dataset was analysed using VOSviewer software. These bibliometric tools facilitated the examination of publication trends, influential authors, leading journals, collaboration networks, citation structures, keyword co-occurrence patterns, and thematic developments. The analysis provided valuable insights into the intellectual structure, research evolution, and emerging themes within the field of MSME marketing.

### 3. Data Analysis

#### A) Annual Scientific Production



The analysis of annual scientific production provides insights into the growth and development of research related to **MSMEs and marketing** over time. The dataset shows that the earliest publication in this area appeared in **1982**, indicating that scholarly interest in this topic began more than four decades ago. However, during the initial years from **1982 to the late 1990s**, the number of publications remained very limited, with only one or two articles published in most years. This suggests that research on MSME marketing was relatively underexplored during the early stages.

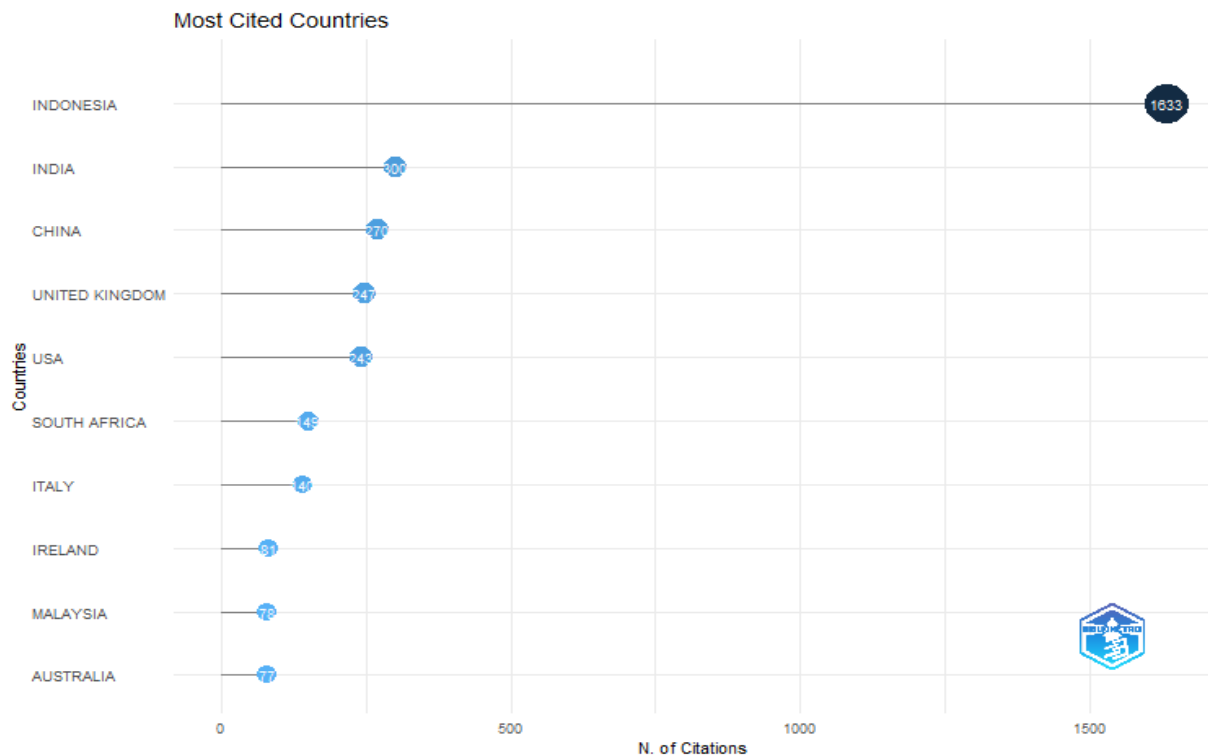
A gradual increase in publications can be observed beginning in the **late 1990s and early 2000s**. For example, the number of articles increased to **8 publications in 1999**, followed by fluctuations in the early 2000s. Although the growth during this period was moderate, it indicates a gradual rise in academic attention toward MSMEs and marketing-related issues. A more noticeable growth trend emerges after **2014**, when the number of publications increased to **14 articles**, followed by **18 articles in 2015**. This period marks the beginning of a stronger research interest in MSME marketing, possibly influenced by increasing recognition of the role of MSMEs in economic development, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

The most significant growth in research output occurs after **2017**, when the number of publications increased sharply. The number of articles reached **27 in 2017** and **25 in 2018**, followed by a substantial rise to **52 publications in 2019**. Although there was a slight decline in **2020 (44 articles)**, the research output continued to grow rapidly in subsequent years. The peak of scholarly production is observed in **2024 with 116 publications**, closely followed by **114 publications in 2025**, indicating a substantial expansion in research activity related to MSMEs and marketing. This sharp increase demonstrates the growing relevance of MSMEs in global economic discussions, digital marketing transformations, and entrepreneurial development.

The lower number of publications recorded in **2026 (19 articles)** is likely due to the fact that the year is still ongoing at the time of data collection, and additional publications may appear later.

Overall, the analysis of annual scientific production indicates that research on MSMEs and marketing has experienced **significant growth, particularly in the last decade**, reflecting the increasing academic and practical importance of marketing strategies for MSMEs in the modern business environment.

## B) Most Cited Countries



The analysis of **most cited countries** provides insights into the geographical distribution and academic influence of research related to MSMEs and marketing. The results indicate that several countries have contributed significantly to the citation impact of publications in this field.

Among all countries, **Indonesia** records the **highest total citations (1633)**, with an **average of 6.2 citations per article**. This suggests that Indonesia has a substantial number of publications in the MSME and marketing domain, reflecting strong research engagement with MSME-related issues, which are particularly relevant in developing economies.

**India** ranks among the prominent contributors with **300 total citations** and an **average of 6.2 citations per article**, indicating consistent research output and growing scholarly interest in MSME marketing within the country. Similarly, **China** has accumulated **270 total citations**, with a higher **average citation rate of 15.9 per article**, demonstrating a relatively stronger impact of individual publications.

Developed economies such as the **United Kingdom (247 total citations; 27.4 average citations per article)** and the **United States (243 total citations; 20.2 average citations per article)** show a comparatively higher citation impact per article. This indicates that although the number of publications may be smaller, the research produced in these countries tends to receive significant academic attention and influence.

Several other countries also demonstrate notable citation performance. For example, **Italy** records **140 total citations** with an **average of 35 citations per article**, while **Ireland** shows an even higher **average citation rate of 40.5**, suggesting that studies from these countries have strong scholarly influence. In addition, countries such as **Bangladesh (50 average citations)** and **Uganda (45 average citations)** show high average citation rates, which may be attributed to a smaller number of highly influential publications.

Countries like **Malaysia, Australia, South Africa, and the Philippines** also contribute to the literature with moderate citation impact, highlighting the global interest in MSME and marketing research across both developed and developing economies.

Overall, the results demonstrate that research on MSMEs and marketing is **globally distributed**, with strong contributions from **Asian, European, and African countries**. While some countries lead in total citation volume, others show higher **average citation impact**, indicating the presence of influential studies shaping the academic discourse in this field.

### **C) Clusters by Document Coupling**

The bibliographic coupling analysis studies the intellectual dependencies between the documents based on the identification of the publications that contain similar references. Similar sources are pooled together in documents, and this implies that the documents cover similar research themes. The analysis carried out based on the Walktrap clustering algorithm determines four major clusters and shows the central streams of research of the literature on MSMEs and marketing.

Cluster 1: MSME Development based on Digital Marketing and Technology.

The former cluster comprises some of the recent publications like Daud (2022), Wiguna (2025), Rizkita (2025), and Wulandari (2026). These reports are dedicated mainly to digital marketing activities, using data to make decisions, e-commerce, and the use of technology among MSMEs.

The availability of journals on the topic of data science, innovation, and technological management implies that this cluster focuses on the importance of digital platforms, information systems, and online networks in enhancing the performance of marketing and competitiveness of MSMEs. The normalized local citation score of Daud (2022) is a relatively high element that suggests that this publication is an influential one in this thematic category.

Cluster 2: MSME Performance and Entrepreneurial Orientation.

The second group is the studies that focus on entrepreneurship, organizational performance,

and strategic management in MSMEs. The notable publications are Tjahjadi (2020; 2022), Octasylya (2022), Sultan (2020), and Suliyanto (2019).

According to this cluster, entrepreneurial orientation, innovation capability, and strategic marketing practices are important aspects of improving the performance of MSMEs. High citation indexes of articles like Tjahjadi (2020) and Suliyanto (2019) imply that these two articles have a significant role in advancing the theoretical pool of the MSME marketing investigation.

Cluster 3: Marketing Innovation and Digital Transformation.

The third cluster includes such publications as Kumar (2024), Pandya (2024), and Syaifullah (2021). This cluster involves digital transformation, interactive technologies, and marketing innovation in the MSME sector.

The studies in this category tend to investigate new and emerging technologies, including mobile technologies, information systems, and digital platforms of communication that facilitate marketing innovations and interaction with customers. The availability of the journals involving industrial marketing and e-commerce indicates that the research stream links the marketing practices of MSME to the overall technological changes.

Cluster 4: Sustainability and Inclusion of MSMEs.

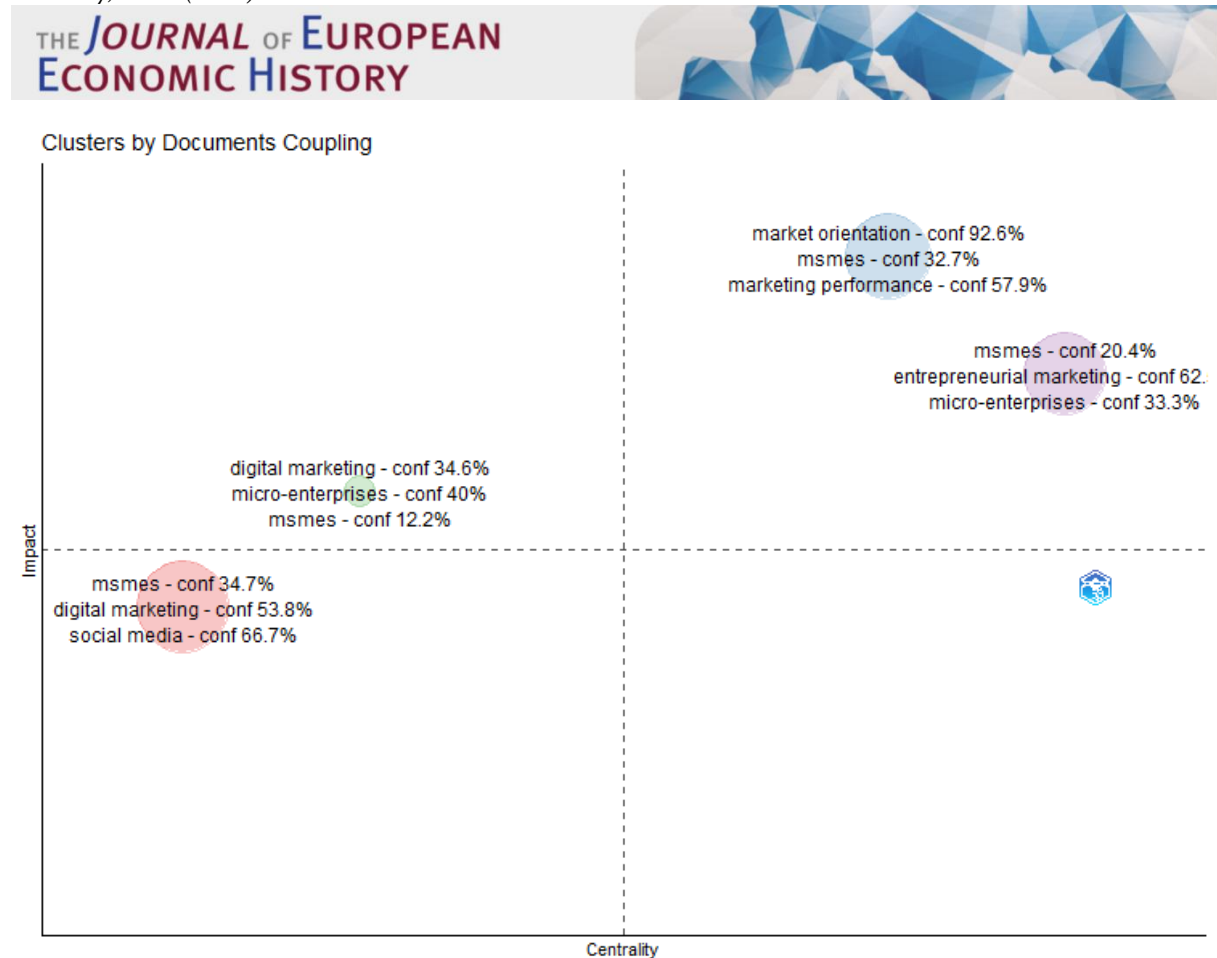
The fourth cluster comprises of the studies that are associated with sustainability, inclusive entrepreneurship as well as socioeconomic development of MSMEs. Some of the influential publications in this cluster are Gao (2023), Sudjatmoko (2023), and Syapsan (2019).

The cluster shows an increasing attraction towards sustainable business operations, stakeholder involvement, and socially responsible marketing policies by the MSMEs. The repeated emergence of journals that focus on sustainability and entrepreneurship shows that researchers are starting to examine the way MSMEs enhance sustainable economic growth and empower the community.

In general, the bibliographic networking indicates that the literature regarding MSMEs and marketing is organized according to the four research streams that interrelate to each other:

- Technology and digital marketing among MSMEs.
- Business performance and entrepreneurial orientation.
- Technological revolution and marketing creativity.
- Inclusive development and sustainability of MSMEs.

The fact that digital technologies, strategic management tactics, and sustainability are becoming the dominant factors in MSME marketing research are proven by these clusters. The availability of various intertwined clusters also corresponds to the multidisciplinary character of the discipline, which combines the experience of marketing, entrepreneurship, innovation management, and development research.



#### D) International Collaboration Network (World Collaboration Map)

Among the most salient ones, collaboration is observed between Indonesia and Malaysia, indicating that there is a most active collaboration (30) between the two countries. It shows that the research collaboration between these two nations is very strong, which can be explained by their close economic systems and the role of MSMEs in the country's economies. Indonesia exhibits the collaboration as well with a variety of other countries e.g. China (5 collaborations), Philippines (4), Australia (3), and the United States (3) which indicates its participation in the international research networks.

On the same note, India demonstrates that there are several collaborative ties between itself and other countries such as Italy (3 collaborations), the United Kingdom (2), the United States (2), Saudi Arabia (2), the United Arab Emirates (2) and Jordan (2) and the Czech Republic (2). Through these interactions, it is suggested that Indian scholars are increasingly interacting with researchers in the developed and developing economies with respect to MSME marketing research.

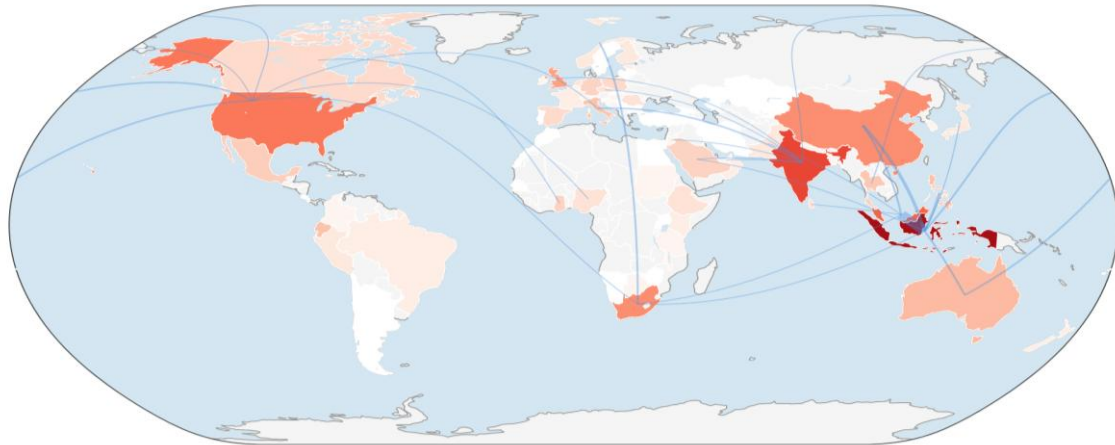
The United States also reveals the wide range of international partnerships with such countries like Australia (3 collaborations), Italy (2), Nigeria (2), South Africa (2), and Thailand (2) among other nations. This means that the United States is a major research destination in the world linking researchers in various parts of the world.

Moreover, Malaysia is partnering with a total of 3, 2, 2 and 2 countries such as China, Pakistan, South Africa and Sri Lanka respectively showing its increasing interest in studies related to MSME and entrepreneurship.

There is also the collaboration network that reveals partnerships between European nations including Czech Republic and Slovakia, Poland and Slovakia, and Estonia and Lithuania, which

show regional cooperation in research in Europe. Equally, regional collaboration between African nations, Ghana, Nigeria, Botswana, Malawi, and South Africa is an indication of growing scholarly work on MSME in developing areas.

Altogether, the collaboration network proves that the research about MSMEs and marketing is becoming globalized, and there are close ties between Asian nations, European countries, and emerging economies.



#### 4. Conclusion

The present bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution and intellectual structure of research on MSMEs and marketing. The findings reveal a substantial increase in scholarly interest over the past two decades, particularly with the emergence of digital technologies and their applications in MSME marketing. The analysis demonstrates that marketing strategies, digital transformation, technological adoption, entrepreneurial orientation, and sustainability have become central themes within the literature.

The review highlights that digital marketing has emerged as a critical driver of MSME competitiveness and performance by enabling businesses to expand market reach, improve customer engagement, and enhance operational efficiency. Furthermore, technological innovations such as fintech, e-commerce platforms, social media marketing, and information technology have significantly contributed to MSME growth and resilience. The study also identifies the importance of market orientation, entrepreneurial capabilities, product innovation, and sustainable business practices in strengthening marketing performance and long-term competitiveness.

The bibliometric findings indicate increasing international collaboration and growing research contributions from both developed and developing economies, reflecting the global relevance of MSMEs in economic development. Despite the rapid growth of the literature, the field remains fragmented across disciplines and thematic areas. Therefore, this study contributes by mapping the intellectual landscape of MSME marketing research and identifying the major research streams, influential contributors, and emerging trends that have shaped the development of the field.

#### 5. Future Directions

The findings of this study suggest several avenues for future research. First, future studies may explore the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain, augmented reality, and big data analytics on MSME marketing performance and customer engagement. As digital transformation continues to reshape business environments, understanding the adoption and effectiveness of these technologies among MSMEs will become increasingly important.

Second, more research is needed to examine sustainable and green marketing practices within MSMEs, particularly in the context of environmental responsibility and circular economy initiatives. The integration of sustainability and marketing represents an emerging research area with significant practical implications.

Third, future studies may investigate the role of digital capability, entrepreneurial orientation, innovation capability, and customer experience as mediating and moderating variables influencing MSME marketing success. Comparative studies across countries, industries, and business sectors could also provide deeper insights into contextual differences in marketing strategies and performance outcomes.

Fourth, researchers may focus on the challenges faced by MSMEs in adopting advanced digital technologies, particularly in developing economies where financial, technological, and infrastructural constraints remain significant. Longitudinal studies examining the evolution of digital marketing practices and their long-term impact on business performance would further enrich the literature.

Finally, future bibliometric studies may incorporate multiple databases such as Web of Science, Dimensions, and Google Scholar to provide broader coverage and a more comprehensive understanding of the global research landscape on MSMEs and marketing.

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