Scientific Mapping for Advertising in Recent Decades: A Citesepace Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

This paper uses a Citesepace-based bibliometric analysis of 4,617 articles from the Social Sciences Citation Index in the Web of Science Core Collection database to understand how advertising research has developed and evolved. The analysis began with deep data collection and expansion. Then, the research moved from the macro-level toward the micro-level, enabling observation of the ways that, while advertising research might have produced comprehensive theoretical findings based on a wide range of research, the field lacks a unified research community. Finally, the paper suggests three future research directions based on the results of the analysis.

Keywords: Citesepace, Bibliometric analysis, Advertising

1. Introduction

For over a hundred years, advertising has described direct communication with consumers delivering information about a company’s products or services. However, technological developments have changed people’s lives and habits, leading traditional advertising approaches to fade away as more platforms have become available, from the traditional print, video, and television mediums, to the more modern Internet and mobile techniques.

Moreover, with the arrival of AI, and big data broadly supporting the app development, consumers do not need to identify products immediately—for example, they can take a screenshot for later—and advertisers do not need to win the consumer immediately; that is, big data is able to analyze the behavior and recommend the product later. Accordingly, Laczniak (2016) believed that advertising formats would become very diverse and different in the near future [24], while Kerr and colleagues (2020) discussed the drastic need to propagate a new definition of advertising due to advertising changing with the shifts in popular mediums [20]. Additionally, Daugherty and colleagues (2017) recognized research of online advertising as still being at an early development stage, requiring more attention from researchers [10].

Still, although O’Guinn and colleagues (2013), Stewart (2016), and Kerr and colleagues (2020) have all proposed new definitions of advertising, Dahlen and Rosengren (2016) noted that the unprecedented increases in the use of digital media mean revisions to such definitions require further consideration [34][45][20][9].

Elsewhere, Shelly and colleagues (2012) indicated that defining advertising demanded attending to seven different elements, including audiences, devices, media channels, messaging, advertising organizations, and message sources [41]. This suggests it is essential to clearly understand the evolution of each keyword associated with advertising.

2. Literature review

This paper conducted a bibliometric analysis to consider how each advertising keyword has evolved.

With the popularization of network applications and the rapid development of information technology, scholars began using software to present literature-based data in the form of scientific knowledge mapping. To ensure the research data is accurate, comprehensive, precise, and interpreted at a deep level, the bibliometric software Citesepace was used because it allows analysis and visualization of scientific literature. Philipp (2013) explained that bibliometrics uses statistical methods to trace relationships between academic journal citations [37]. Elsewhere, Mayr and colleagues (2014) defined bibliometric analysis as “the quantitative analysis of publications in a given field” [29]. A comprehensive bibliometric analysis of a specific topic can help researchers to better understand the knowledge base and the intellectual structure of a research field [41]. Additionally, the approach can be used to analyze articles in terms of keywords, authors, references, journals, institutions, countries, and even suggestions for future research [1].

Kotler and colleagues (2007) recognized that “advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or service by an identified sponsor.” [22] Although Kim colleagues conducted a bibliometric analysis of citations from key sources in advertising in 2008 [18], more than ten years have passed, and many things have changed, with technology having an accelerating influence on advertising’s impact.
Elsewhere, Fetscherin and colleagues (2012) conducted a citation meta-analysis on consumer brand relationships [27], indicating an approach analyzing current “hot topics”, and Fang and colleagues (2017) statistically analyzed 60 works of proven influence regarding online advertising [6]. The articles selected are of high quality but cannot grasp the overall change. For example, while Cui and colleagues (2018) conducted a bibliometric analysis using Citespace, they focused on social commerce [49]; Yoon (2019), meanwhile, analyzed how research on advertising within digital gaming has developed and evolved using the ISI Web of Science [16]. Additionally, although analyzing keywords has contributed to the keyword research field, it has not been sufficient to newly define advertising. Chang (2017) and Liu-Thompkins (2019) have both submitted studies to the most influential journals in the field identifying the proportion of research methods used and providing six distinct future directions for the field; however, specific keywords need to be further clarified, especially how the keywords have evolved [6][50]. Finally, although Donthu and colleagues (2020) proposed a bibliometric analysis in the International Journal of Advertising, the broader conditions of the journal landscape are unclear.

This led to the following research question:

RQ: How has advertising evolved in recent decades, according to the Social Sciences Citation Index in the Web of Science database?

3. Method

We collected data from the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) in the database of the Web of Science Core Collection (WOS) to assess the evolution of advertising research. We searched annual distribution statistics preliminary, see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Annual distribution statistics

Figure 1 shows that, between 2009 and 2019, the number of papers published on advertising has increased rapidly. Explosive growth began in 2016, with data from WOS showing 74,452 citations, with 17.62 average citations per item.

Given the tremendous amount of data, we searched the keyword “advertising” in three important related fields—business, management, and economic—between January 1st, 2009, and December 31st, 2019. This produced 4,617 articles, with the distribution of literature in major disciplines presented in Table 1.

| Field      | Volume | percent |
|------------|--------|---------|
| Business   | 2,895  | 71.4%   |
| Management | 793    | 19.6%   |
| Economic   | 799    | 19.7%   |

Table 1. Classification of literature

We then used Citespace to remove duplicates, resulting in 4,168 items; next, book chapters, early accesses, proceeding papers, and retracted publications were eliminated, leaving 4071 articles. These papers were used for analysis and visualization.

We also produced a table (Table 2) showing the top ten most-mentioned papers.

Table 2. The top ten most-mentioned papers

| Authors                | Total Citations | Average |
|------------------------|-----------------|---------|
| Trusov et al. (2009)   | 849             | 76.75   |
| Kozinets et al. (2010) | 678             | 65.36   |
| Vries et al. (2012)    | 487             | 62.56   |
| Servaes et al. (2013)  | 366             | 55      |
| Stieglitz et al. (2013)| 332             | 50.88   |
| Mollen et al. (2010)   | 339             | 36.36   |
| Godes et al. (2010)    | 311             | 27.67   |
| Lewellen et al. (2010) | 295             | 29.45   |
| Calder et al. (2009)   | 288             | 26.92   |
| Chintagunta et al. (2010)| 280           | 28.91   |

This showed that research by Trusov and colleagues (2009), Kozinets and colleagues (2010), and Godes and colleagues (2010) on word-of-mouth has had substantial influence [29][22][14]. Studies by Vries and colleagues (2012), Calder and colleagues (2009), and Chintagunta and colleagues (2010) on the effects of online advertising followed closely [12][3][7]. The rest of the list comprises the work of Servas and colleagues (2013) on customer awareness, that of Stieglitz and colleagues (2013) on emotions and information diffusion, that of Mollen and colleagues (2010) on consumer experience, and that of Lewellen and colleagues (2010) on asset pricing tests [38][46][31][25]. These studies were derived from cross-references regarding advertising or advertising effects.

This research constitutes our preliminary understanding of advertising research.

4. Data analysis

4.1 Framework of the knowledge base

The co-cited map was obtained by visualization software. Figure 3 indicates that it contains 157 nodes and 522 lines, with the average contour value S being 0.6189 > 0.5, indicating that the research clustering is convincing and features sufficient high efficiency. Observation of the network atlas indicates that the advertising-related research represents a typical initial state of research; that is, although there are few related research branches, clustering is robust and their intense mutual interpretation exists. This study found many clustering groups formed around the key nodes presented in Table 3. Given there were fewer clustering keywords for #3 and #6, we haven’t included those.
Table 3. List of related literature organized in clusters

| Cluster | Author | Article Description | Journal |
|---------|--------|----------------------|---------|
| #0 | Assessing Advertising Efficiency | | |
| #1 | Comparative Self-Report Measure | | |
| #2 | Moderating Role | | |
| #3 | | | |
| #4 | Online Advertising | | |
| #5 | Adolescent Responses | | |

Cluster #0 Assessing Advertising Efficiency: According to Figure 2, advertising efficiency is the first cluster to reach the threshold in the field of advertising research, with the main keywords being impact, model, information, price, market, sale, competition, media, and quality. Although there is a relatively large total amount of literature, centrality is generally limited, with a relatively close relationship with other clusters. The literature review for this field found that this group’s research mainly focused on social media, with the representative literature being Bleier and colleagues (2015) and Stieglitz and colleagues (2013)[2][46].

Cluster #1 Comparable Self-Report Measure: This cluster featured the main keywords for response, attitude, knowledge, and trust. Keith and colleagues (2009) and Okazaki and colleagues (2014) studied consumer “attitude” [19][42], demonstrating that the functions served by attitudes toward one consumer good can influence consumer preferences for other—albeit related—consumer good. This finding’s importance is underscored by its potential to inform the theoretical inquiry into marketing domains, domains such as brand extension, brand alliance, and corporate branding.

Cluster #2 Moderating Role: The main keywords for this cluster were advertising, strategy, performance, determinant, innovation, and promotion, with the representative literature being Seung and colleagues (2014), Boerman and colleagues (2017), Robert and colleagues (2010), and Sangkil and colleagues (2010). This research has focused on word-of-mouth; given the personal nature of “following” a favorite celebrity and their tweets, users may demonstrate substantial intent to purchase the celebrity’s endorsed products. This research has focused on word-of-mouth; given the personal nature of “following” a favorite celebrity and their tweets, users may demonstrate substantial intent to purchase the celebrity’s endorsed products.

Cluster #4 Online Advertising: The main keywords for this cluster were advertising effectiveness, involvement,
memory, brand, persuasion, television, and attention, with the representative literature being Marieke and colleagues. (2015), who showed that such resistance-neutralizing tactics were more effective when tailored to the specific resistance strategy adopted by particular consumers [27]. Meanwhile, Zhang and colleagues (2009) demonstrated that self-construal refers to how people perceive themselves to be linked with other people [49], with people who construe themselves as independent seeing themselves as distinct from the group, tending to place a high value on uniqueness and individual accomplishments. Elsewhere, Isabel and colleagues (2013) studied advertising spending and the attitudes of individuals toward advertising [16]. Most brand-equity studies have focused on the influence of advertising spending and the promotion frequency on brand equity. In contrast, this study also analyzes individual attitudes toward advertisements and nonmonetary promotions.

Cluster #5 Adolescent Responses: The main keywords for this cluster were consumer, social media, perception, consumer, Facebook, behavior, and consumption, with the representative literature is Trusov and colleagues (2009), Fleder and colleagues (2009), Robert and colleagues (2010), and Tucker (2014); those studies considered teenagers in the context of diverse social media [29][9][22].

4.2 Analyzing the evolutionary path of the research topic

The distribution and evolution of research topics can intuitively reflect changes in hot spots, research methods, and analysis perspectives for different time series. Keywords in the literature are often used to articulate a certain research topic; thus, the correlation between keywords can reveal the internal relationship between different research perspectives or methods.

As such, this paper uses a critical co-occurrence analysis to identify main research directions and hot spots within advertising research, consequently revealing the development of the thematic framework. The collinear network map—featuring keywords as nodes—was obtained by running the visualization software. This resulted in both the diagram of keyword evolution according to time zone—presented in Figure 3—and the list of keyword centrality of keywords—presented in Table 4.

This led to the identification of three main evolutionary paths: (1) Product placement → persuasion knowledge → motivation → children → sponsorship disclosure; (2) Media → social media → intention → Facebook; (3) Internet market → online advertising → intention.

Table 4 shows that this study screened path criticality according to the degree of centrality to identify has been split by the modifier scientifically.

| Year | Keyword            | Centrality |
|------|--------------------|------------|
| 2009 | model              | 0.06       |
| 2009 | advertising        | 0.14       |
| 2009 | impact             | 0.11       |
| 2009 | information        | 0.13       |
| 2009 | attitude           | 0.07       |
| 2009 | consumer           | 0.07       |
| 2009 | behavior           | 0.04       |
| 2012 | social media       | 0.07       |
| 2012 | online advertising | 0.01       |
| 2012 | Facebook           | 0.03       |
| 2012 | motivation         | 0.02       |
| 2012 | economics          | 0.02       |
| 2012 | design             | 0.02       |
| 2012 | children           | 0.01       |
| 2013 | women              | 0.07       |
| 2013 | food               | 0.04       |
| 2013 | sponsored search   | 0.03       |
Online advertising research was in its infancy between 2009 and 2012. This stage can be characterized by the introduction of the concepts of “consumer” (0.07), “attitude” (0.07), and “behavior” (0.04), with centrality being relatively high. Since 2012, specific research objects—such as Facebook—have produced in-depth studies on differentiation between women (0.07), children (0.01), and other consumers. Beginning in 2013, “purchase” (0.04) and “persuasion” (0.03) have dominated. However, the degree of centrality was relatively low, meaning advertising research had entered the branch expansion stage. Between 2016 and 2019, “social responsibility” (0.07) constituted the majority of research.

### 4.3 Analysis of hot topics

To address the limitations of the study by Fetscherin and colleagues (2012), we conducted an analysis of “hot topics.” Identifying research frontiers can provide researchers insight into trends and predict the direction of the field’s development. The research frontier can usually analyze the changes in occurrence times for words or phrases representing the research content. Compared with traditional high-frequency keyword analysis, emergent keywords are more suited to detecting sudden changes and emerging trends in the discipline’s development. When analyzing the emergent words, the visual analysis software extracts the mutated terms from the title, abstract, link words, and identifiers to reveal the changing trend and reflect its position on the frontier of advertising research. Combined with the emergence detection algorithm built into the software, the emergent terms were sorted to produce Figure 4’s representation of the 18 keywords responsible for the strongest citation bursts.

Column 1 shows the most cited keywords. Column 2 indicates that the greater the emergence intensity, the more often the keyword appears in the short term. Greater intensity often represents a short-term research hotspot during the period.

In Column 3, starting time refers to when the keyword’s sudden growth began and a large amount of research literature entered the field.

In Column 4, end time represents when the keyword stopped emerging and there was no longer a large number of studies, indicating a gradual decline in the trend.

Column 5 is a color band providing an intuitive visual display of the emergent situation. The length of the period is the span of literature. The red part represents the period when the corresponding keyword emerged.

The top 18 keywords were the most used in the advertising field. Five keywords continued being “hot” until 2019: social media, Facebook, persuasion knowledge, intention, and attention.

Following this step, we selected five keywords directly related to advertising and searched for them in the SSCI of the WOS database; we read those papers in search of elements to guide future research.

### 4.4 Analysis of the strongest citation bursts

Having identified the strongest citation bursts, we now consider representative papers for each category.

#### Social media

Within the advertising field of the SSCI in the WOS database, there were 366 articles using the social media keyword. The representative paper chosen was De Vries and colleagues (2012), citation 570, which showed that, in 2011, more than 50% of social media users followed brands on social media [12]. Companies were increasingly investing in social media, as indicated by the $4.3 billion of worldwide marketing spending on social networking sites. Managers were found to invest in social media to foster relationships and interact with customers and the low-level interactive brand post characteristics were not significantly related to the number of likes. The top position of a brand post was shown to be significant
and positively associated with the number of likes. Striking brand post characteristics were not significantly related to the number of comments. Neither other vivid and interactive brand post characteristics nor the content of the brand posts were observed to affect the number of words. Ultimately, this study indicated that the proportion of positive and negative comments compared to neutral comments was positively related to brand post popularity.

**Facebook**

Within the advertising field of the SSCI in the WOS database, there were 110 articles using the Facebook keyword. The representative paper chosen was Taylor and colleagues (2012), citation 281, which took place in the context of Internet advertising. Although several studies had measured the effectiveness of online banner advertising and consumer acceptance of online advertisements [11], this study was conducted in the context of more traditional websites—in which provider content is delivered to users through third-party advertising. Although the attitude toward a specific advertisement might be influenced by factors such as credibility, ad perception, preexisting attitude toward the sponsor, and the recipient’s mood, attitudes toward advertising, in general, were found to be more complex. In the context of Internet advertising, a third dimension of “function” might encompass hedonistic motives, social role and image, and product information. Implicit in each of these conceptualizations is an internal cost/benefit analysis on the part of the consumer. More importantly, each question was practically significant to advertising creators, media planners, and marketing theorists. Although the study of social media was still at an iterative stage, this study contributed to a unique understanding of the relationships that were examined; as was expected, it proposed as many new questions as it answered. Nonetheless, these results constitute a substantial contribution to the current understanding of the attitudes of younger SNS users to advertising.

**Persuasion Knowledge**

Within the advertising field of the SSCI in the WOS database, there were 183 articles using the persuasion knowledge keyword. The representative paper chosen was Goldfarb and colleagues (2011), citation 199, which surveyed customers regarding the products they considered private, confirming health and financial information as categories where privacy was considered substantially important [3]. The results suggested that substituting between contextual targeting and high visibility was significantly more common for privacy-related products, the negative effect of combining visibility and targeting was more pronounced in situations where privacy was essential. However, further questions concerning were raised regarding other triggers of privacy concerns for ad viewers. In general, academic marketing research has produced few studies regarding how and with what implications customer privacy concerns are triggered. This study highlights the need for a better understanding of the behavioral processes that generate consumer privacy concerns.

**Intention**

Within the advertising field of the SSCI in the WOS database, there were 538 articles using the intention keyword. The representative paper is Hartmann and colleagues (2012), citation 265, which considered how financial promotions negatively influenced perceived quality while nonmonetary promotions positively influenced both perceived quality and brand associations [36]. These findings indicate that managers should build brand awareness as a means of anchoring associations such as perceived value, personality, or quality.

**Attention**

Within the advertising field of the SSCI in the WOS database, there were 368 articles using the attention keyword. The representative paper chosen was Stieglitz and colleagues (2013), citation 413, which considered how, as microblogging services gained widespread popularity, users adopted them to share news, to promote political views, for marketing purposes, and to track real-time events. They found that, in terms of retweet quantity, the affective dimensions of political Twitter messages were significantly associated with retweet behavior [46].

5. Results and conclusions

The extant research is limited by it is specific keyword statistics, it is being too old, or its not explaining research “hot spots”. As such, this article compensates some of the shortcomings; that is, using visualization software, this paper visually analyzes the literature data surrounding advertising research based on articles stored in the WOS database between 2009 and 2019. Through its network map and discrimination between knowledge groups and their evolutionary process, it was wordy reached three conclusions.

First, a relatively complete research network has been formed in the research field. Key nodes and extant literature can serve as a basis for future research. The still co-citation links within the current research context are not sufficiently detailed or smooth, meaning further systematization and concretization are needed for future research. Proposing a new research direction and branch necessitates deeply probing and expanding inner knowledge.

Second, the research direction has shifted from the macro-level to the micro-level. The research in this field has moved from the early abstract theoretical basis, which considered significances, subjects, methods, and other analyses and arrived at specific research directions, considering concrete objects.

Third, the clusters within the co-occurrence network map for the research literature were largely dispersed, ultimately lacking critical central points. Consequently, it is clear that advertising research is relatively perfect as a theoretical field, involving a wide range of research; nonetheless, it lacks a unified research community. Thus,
researchers need to refine their research fields, strengthen exploration and cooperation in those fields, and review the results of the current research.

6. Future research

First, a future research path that should be explored is social media → consumer attitude → word-of-mouth → online advertising → teenagers. This path’s identification was based on the realization that in-depth research featuring age segmentation is necessary.

Second, in the current research context—given AI and other developments relevant for advertising—most scholars are combining different subjects with advertising and few researchers are attending to changes within advertising itself, such as the effect of changes in technology on the contemporary definition of advertising.

Third, given the previous two suggestions, it might be necessary to conduct a series of quantitative studies on countries that have extensively applied AI technology or other robust software; this would more fully meet the current market requirements for testing existing models in relation to advertising.

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