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## Article

# Fusing international business and marketing: A bibliometric study

Administrative Sciences

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*Suggested Citation:* Florido-Benítez, Lázaro; Aldeanueva Fernández, Ignacio (2022) : Fusing international business and marketing: A bibliometric study, Administrative Sciences, ISSN 2076-3387, MDPI, Basel, Vol. 12, Iss. 4, pp. 1-26, <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci12040159>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/275429>

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Concept Paper

# Fusing International Business and Marketing: A Bibliometric Study

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to provide an assessment of marketing on international business and to organize and classify the literature on marketing in order to clarify the importance of this tool and encourage future research in the projection of international business marketing (IBM) and the power of the ubiquity of this tool in the hands of the users. It is a bibliometric study, and this work focused on international business and marketing articles published in major international marketing, expansion, strategies, and business journals from 2000 to 2020; this topic is scattered across various journals and second data in many disciplines. The investigation reviewed and collected data on the specific paradigm of research that discusses, investigates, and evaluates the topic of IBM. The results showed a new paradigm applied to the topic of IBM and classified it into four first-order research streams: academic research, international business, international development strategies, and customers. The contribution of this study is important in order to identify new challenges and opportunities for marketers, researchers and international companies and in terms of disentangling existing contradictions, applying a new theoretical framework to make better future decisions by large companies, and providing a higher quality to new research in the context of IBM.

**Keywords:** international business marketing; bibliometric; universities; authors; disciplines; internationalization



**Citation:** Florido-Benítez, Lázaro, and Ignacio Aldeanueva Fernández. 2022. Fusing International Business and Marketing: A Bibliometric Study. *Administrative Sciences* 12: 159. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci12040159>

Received: 25 October 2022

Accepted: 4 November 2022

Published: 10 November 2022

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## 1. Introduction

The 21st century will possibly be marked in history as the era of technological disruption and mobile marketing, due to its digital transformation, evolution, and ubiquity in the international business framework. Digital marketing favors the entry of new actors and processes into international business—this irruption is beneficial for consumers because it disables established oligopolies and increases competition in all sectors (e.g., Microsoft Teams, ZOOM, Google Meet, Tencent Video, Tinder, Netflix, Amazon, Tesco, TikTok, amongst many others). These digital tools have taken control during the COVID-19 pandemic in sectors such as education, entertainment, communication, or grocery shopping online. [Vrontis et al. \(2020\)](#) claimed that ‘the driving force underlying change in today’s businesses is the consumer’. The marketing sector is in its transition of technological and business maturity, with the transformation of new product/service innovations and digital marketing strategies implemented by large technology companies that are transforming the daily life behaviors of the population. Following [Wittkop et al. \(2018\)](#), the internationalization of firms has been analyzed by considering observations in a pre-digital business environment. However, the applicability of the internationalization theories to digital ways of conducting business needs to be challenged. [Morochó and Lim \(2018\)](#) claim that artificial intelligence (AI) is used as a tool to improve 5G technologies and the convergence between these two will have a great impact in the development generation networks and digital marketing. AI and 5G provide new concepts and possibilities for communication and international marketing industry, as well as within academy research ([Mester 2016](#); [Pisarov and Mester 2020](#)). Notwithstanding, little is known on how to create value for

consumers and companies, how to boost the internationalization process (Penco et al. 2021), and how to respond to numerous important unanswered questions in conceptualizing and empirically researching international marketing capabilities (Morgan et al. 2018). This study considers the fact that a globalized economy, new technologies, active users in digital channels, and an international competitive environment are changing the international business paradigm.

Large companies must involve users in the design of their products, from their incubation to the final satisfaction survey of the products and services received. Makri et al. (2019) suggest how global–local identity is influencing consumers’ disposition toward global brands. This requires great challenges such as interaction with the customer, monitoring user actions, and offering and designing customized campaigns to ascertain the adequate return on investment as well as to customer retention. In this same line, Kumar and Mittal (2020) suggest that customized mobile experiences drive conversions, improve customer retention, and make the marketing campaign more impactful. For instance, Amazon, Burger King, Ryanair, and UBER platforms have considerably changed the digital market and user purchasing processes by providing more convenience to customers using an app in order for users to become prosumers (producers–consumers) and have greater control and availability of their most immediate needs. Following Verhoef and Bijmolt (2019), Perren and Kozinets (2018) aimed to provide to customers an added value, convenience, and higher quality at a lower cost level without major technological changes in the actual product. ‘The rapid internationalization of companies is conditioned by the acceleration of the globalization of the business environment’ (Douglas and Craig 1992).

Against this backdrop, the cornerstone and success of large companies lies mainly in creating innovative products and services projected through marketing activities. Following Andersson et al. (2020), these firms have built a competitive position by developing international niche products. They have also implemented a combination of proactive and reactive market orientation to facilitate the creation and delivery of value to customers. Digitization has opened powerful new ways for large companies to connect with global markets, resources, and partners and to pursue innovation and value creation at international business (Nambisan 2022). International business research focuses on the key decisions taken by firms while expanding their operations outside national boundaries (Kurt and Kurt 2020; Paul and Mas 2020; Srivastava et al. 2020). This increased attention on international business and marketing activities as we saw previously by large companies and researchers improves the literature review and the evolution of these two concepts.

A critical study is necessary to examine the relation between international business and marketing as a unified concept. There are no publications yet that provide a focused examination of this topic. Accordingly, we observe the proliferation of international marketing and international business as a concept, and its evolution on business and marketing literature review, but these two concepts have never been jointly analyzed. To fill this gap, the purpose of this study was to analyze the marketing on the international business framework and to organize and classify the literature on both disciplines, with the aim of staging the importance of this tool and conceptualizing it for future research, as well as proposing a new concept, international business marketing (IBM). To accomplish these goals, a comprehensive review of international business and marketing research published in academic publications was conducted in order to assess the state of marketing research. It is a bibliographic study, and the scientific literature on this topic focuses mainly on definitions and characteristics of international business and marketing, but it does not show the successful impact of this tool on multinational companies operating in all parts of the world. The search was carried out from 2000 to 2020 due to the Internet being democratized in this period, and international business and marketing activities have exploded thanks to internet and digital channels. If IBM can boast of anything, it is its ability to penetrate international business. The node concept IBM is based on the relationship and network theory (Hilmersson and Jansson 2012; Sandberg 2013). The following research questions were posed for this study:

RQ1: Why merge international business and marketing concepts?

RQ2: What are the key contributions of this study on the literature review?

RQ3: How important is IBM for companies and users?

RQ4: What are the key contributions of this study to the scientific community and business sector?

RQ5: What are the most prominent countries and universities on the IBM topic?

Internationalization has gone from being a growth strategy to a survival strategy (Puig et al. 2014). Da Rocha et al. (2012) found that as commitment to internationalization increases, further opportunities are expected to open up for the firm. It is likely that increased commitment leads to further risk acceptance and international investments, providing increased levels of success. Samiee (2020) claims that internationalization frees the firm from its strict reliance on the domestic market and at least temporary relief from its local competitors. Firms can instantly 'go global', targeting a specific market segment worldwide (Clark and Douglas 2001). Brenes (2000) discusses the necessity of expanding internationally, whether it is within the region or truly global, in order to sustain the business. Since 2000, we have seen an increase in research focusing on international marketing and related topics, since the process of globalization has gained momentum (Paul and Mas 2020), but a few theoretical gaps require our scholarly attention.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. International Business in the IBM Context

Research on international business has accumulated a body of knowledge that has helped in comprehending complex international management issues in different international contexts (Aldeanueva and Jiménez 2021). International business is superfluous because globalization has meant that all business is to some degree international. Nowadays, it is impossible to find a product or service that does not have an international aspect to its customer base. International firms are responsible for approximately one-third of global trade (Collinson et al. 2020). On the contrary, Poulis and Poulis (2018) indicated that the identity, legitimacy, and sustainability of international business as a research field are at stake. International business is being overtaken by the evolution of industries and technology, and critical voices challenge its distinctiveness and value. Following this, Verbeke et al. (2018) suggest that international business researchers and companies urgently require access to better quality data, so as to improve its baseline knowledge on large multinational corporations and future research.

Some authors argue that international business consists of transactions that are devised and carried out across national borders to satisfy the objectives of individuals, companies, and organizations. International business is typically driven by four drivers: cost, market, environment, and competition (Collinson et al. 2020; Czinkota et al. 2021). However, international business seen from an export point of view is the process in which the firms gradually increase their international involvement or as the general outward movement of a firm's activities (Etemad 2004; Johanson and Vahlne 1977).

International business is located in an international competitive environment, no matter whether the market is domestic or foreign (Cherunilam 2020). Conversely, Leonidou et al. (2010) focused on sales and location, selling products and services via direct and indirect to overseas markets using the firm's production facilities in its home country. Firms improve their business opportunities in a globalized market (Ballesteros et al. 2017; Pombo and de la Hoz 2021). As stated by Benetti et al. (2021), the ability to negotiate internationally and across cultures has become vital for businesses.

In this study, we agree that the internationalization concept addresses a more inclusive term by Kahiya (2020) and Melin (1992) that embraces the ongoing development and change in the international firm in terms of scope, business idea, action orientation, organizing principles, nature of managerial work, dominating values, and converging rules. As stated by Pereira et al. (2019), mapping the past makes it possible to identify the major themes that have emerged to firstly adopt a forward-looking, future-research-oriented perspective

to help outline the next phase of interesting, rigorous, and relevant research in this domain, and secondly to provide a better understanding in terms of conceptual, managerial, and policy relevance that IBM research has to offer.

## 2.2. International Marketing as a Topic

The increasing in firms' international involvement, emergence of new foreign operation forms, and changes in marketing's roles put international marketing in the limelight as a boundary-spanning and fundamental interface with external environments and organizations (Gnizy 2019; Gnizy and Shoham 2014). There is an urgent need to consolidate, structure, and synthesize extant literature, especially in disciplines such as international marketing and international business (Christofi et al. 2021a). Poulis and Poulis (2018) suggest that international marketing is not international business for some scholars, whereas others place the actions of one type of organization within the scope of pure international business. Although the last decades have witnessed a burgeoning interest in this topic, the pertinent literature is still at the introductory stage and needs additional improvement (İpek 2021). In this paper, we aim to address these gaps, realities, and value-creating factors of the topic of IBM.

From the international marketing perspective, the definitions and approaches are different in the literature on this topic. Sheth (2020) claims that most of the research in international marketing is to identify cultural, infrastructural, and administrative factors and how they influence the marketing of products abroad. International marketing is the performance of business activities designed to plan, price, promote, and direct the flow of a company's goods and services to consumers of users in more than one nation for a profit (Cateora et al. 2020). International marketing activities of firms are very important in the world economy. A firm's decision to go international represents a strategic decision. Firms exhibit a greater degree of willingness to respond to attractive opportunities in international markets (Cavusgil and Godiwalla 1982), and De Búrca et al. (2004) define international marketing is the study of everyday marketing activities throughout the world. Following Gomes et al. (2020) and Chen et al. (2019) international firms need to be able to constantly adapt and reconfigure their resource base and operational mechanisms, as well as to rapidly adjust their international marketing choices to effectively enter new countries and exploit different market needs.

In international marketing, however, while expanding into foreign countries, firms need to reach a conclusion about the adjustment of international marketing strategy, including whether to standardize or customize their offerings in international markets (Osei et al. 2019). In conjunction with this and the increasing importance attached to the communication between firms and overseas customers in the international marketing literature, the standardization vs. adaptation debate emerged, which still occupies a significant place in the related body of research on marketing (Asseraf and Shoham 2019; İpek 2021; Katsikeas et al. 2020).

To close this subsection, we have included the marketing and digital marketing tool concepts to provide a better understanding of firms' marketing and strategies performances. According to the American Marketing Association, marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (American Marketing Association 2017). Kotler and Armstrong (2010) define marketing as a process that is used to regulate which products or services may be of interest to customers. Marketing is also responsible for determining the strategy to use in sales, communications, and business development. Zhygalkevych et al. (2022) suggest that marketing activities enhance international business, especially in social media platforms, and they also found that the most effective digital marketing tools for international business are artificial intelligence, conversational marketing, chatbots, personalization, video marketing, live shopping, social media stories, interactive content, omnichannel marketing, augmented reality and technology immersion, native advertising, green marketing, and mobile commerce. With the rapid growth of big data and the expansion of digital advancement in international marketing activities, an

increasing number of firms are trying to adapt big-data-based strategic orientation for staying competitive in the global market (Akter et al. 2021).

Marketing tools and approaches for communicating with customers have changed greatly with the emergence of digital channels. In fact, international marketing strategies are designed and adapted in digital channels by companies for triggering the purchase of their products and services by consumers across the globe. Digital marketing tools are used by companies to create, improve, innovative, distribute, and promote their products and services, such as advertising, publicity, discounts, QR codes, social media platforms, mobile marketing, loyalty programs, and digital channel tools (e.g., websites, apps, emails, or messages), amongst many others. Every company has its own marketing tools that are responsible for different strategies and aims. Angeloni and Rossi (2020) claim that digital marketing tools enhance the organizations' marketing efforts and reduce marketing costs, and these are crucial to achieving success in the internationalizations of companies (Chamboko-Mpotaringa and Tichaawa 2021; Magano and Cunha 2020).

### 2.3. Conceptualization of International Business Marketing (IBM)

Over the past two decades, many conceptual and empirical papers on the various aspects of market orientation have been published in various disciplines, including international management and international marketing (Javalgi et al. 2011). It is difficult to combine international business and marketing activities in one concept or keyword. Thus, the present study used a combination of both concepts to develop a representative concept of IBM, as well as the staging of these two criteria in this study. In international marketing and international business research, more than 300 articles addressing this issue have been published over a period of almost 50 years (Schmid and Kotulla 2011). Gomes et al. (2020) indicate that international firms operating in fast-changing and unpredictable environments need to be able to constantly adjust their international marketing choices to effectively enter new countries and exploit different market needs. The concept of organizational adaptation to international marketing involvement is multidimensional. It includes the adaptation of international marketing strategies and business, changes in the international orientation of organizational decision makers, and changes in the level of organizational commitment to international marketing activities (Buatsi 1986). An issue debated frequently in the international marketing and business literature centers on whether a business should pursue a strategy that is standardized across international markets to improve its commercial revenues (Szymanski et al. 1993). In this study, IBM is defined as the ability to manage promotion, sales, communication, and development of new products and services in an international competitive environment through marketing channel tools (e.g., digital marketing, mobile marketing, and social media, amongst many others) by companies, marketers, and organizations to globalize and facilitate the provision of the products and services offered.

According to Vrontis et al. (2020), amid a fast-changing business world, shaped by the technology-led socioeconomic revolutions, organizations across the typological and geographic spectrums seek marketing strategies that can help them adapt to and compete within this new international market. In the same line, Jansson (2007) claimed that the IBM in emerging country markets has provoked more turbulent, more uncertain, and riskier responses in these markets than Western mature markets, at the same time as their high growth makes for a lucrative result (Jansson and Sandberg 2008). An important part of the internationalization of firms is the entry mode choice of firms, which has been paid significant research attention (Morschett et al. 2010; Sandberg 2013). It will provide researchers and marketers with new ideas about IBM research, utilizing an integrated theoretical framework containing four first-order research streams to base research on.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### *Scope of the Study of International Business and Marketing Context*

This study focuses on international business and marketing articles published in major international marketing, expansion, strategies, and business journals from 2000 to 2020. This topic is scattered across various journals and secondary data in many disciplines. In addition, the temporal scope corresponds to the minimum time interval that covers all the dates and research paper periods mentioned in this study (Srivastava et al. 2020)—this temporary scope has a particular evolutionary purpose for companies in the international market through marketing tools such as digital marketing, digital platforms, mobile marketing, and other sales and communication channels. Marketing activity is linked to the use of new technologies, which is subject to continuous change, with the aim of improving company's relationships with consumers (Florido-Benitez 2020). This study collected data from the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) of Clarivate Analytics' Web of Science (Web of Science 2021). As noted by Yang and Zheng (2019), the Web of Science has strict standards for the selection, evaluation, development, and management of journals, containing more than 18,000 globally authoritative and influential academic journals. The literature search was limited to peer-reviewed journals and was based on the following keywords: 'international business' and 'marketing'.

A comprehensive review methodology is important for analyzing the state of a specific body of literature in a systematic way (Crossan and Apaydin 2010). Aligning with this principle, we chose to appropriately utilize a systematic literature review methodology. A systematic review methodology applies a specific protocol to search and critically analyze existing literature. Hence, systematic reviews have advantages over traditional literature reviews because they enhance the quality of the review methodology and findings by applying a transparent, scientific, and replicable procedure (De Menezes and Kelliher 2011). The systematic literature review method is the most common in the theoretical setting—this presents the section of a journal paper that provides the theoretical foundations and context of a research question and helps to bring the question into focus (Kitchenham and Charters 2007; Okoli 2015).

This study also mapped the bibliographic material graphically by using the VOSviewer version 1.6.16 (University Leiden, city of Leiden, Netherlands) (VOSviewer 2021). VOSviewer collects the data, building different maps with bibliographic coupling, co-citation analysis, and co-occurrence of author keywords. Bibliometric studies are very useful to obtain a general picture of the most significant issues occurring in a specific field and/or journal in order to quickly identify its most relevant and distinguishing issues (Merigó et al. 2015; Rialp et al. 2019). This study combines two different review methods to tackle our research questions. First, a bibliometric analysis in a quantitative approach (Donthu et al. 2021), and second, a systematic literature review in qualitative terms (Kraus et al. 2020). Indeed, bibliometric analysis and a systematic literature review method were employed by analyzing articles published between 2000 and 2020. The study provides an overview of articles, authors, the most influential journals, and themes of research (Bartolacci et al. 2020).

Rialp et al. (2019) suggest that bibliographic coupling measures the number of times two documents cite the same third document visualizing the most productive variables and similarity in the reference profile. According to Paul and Rialp (2020), many researchers and academics tend to select perhaps the most well-known bibliographic database from SSCI of WoS, which list academic journals for identifying potential sources for review. Furthermore, co-occurrence of author keywords measures the most frequent keywords (size of the circles) and those that appear in the same documents most frequently (Martínez-López et al. 2018). Afterwards it examines the universities with the highest number of publications in the journal followed by the countries. Moreover, the analysis considers the most influential (cited) documents of IBM and finally the most representative keywords and research themes.

The rationale for a focus on the major journals of marketing and international business is that publications in such journals are most likely to have the largest exposure to

international topic researchers and reflect state-of-the-art international topic research that generates a significant number of citations in the literature (Zou 2005). The full text of each article was reviewed to eliminate those that were not actually related to IBM. Ten articles were removed because the descriptors ‘international business’ and ‘marketing’ were not part of the title of the article, abstract, and keywords. For instance, the Journal of International Business Studies was confused with the two descriptors, but these articles did not show a relationship with our topic. The reviewing process yielded 258 IBM articles from 81 journals (excluding books, chapters, and conferences). The major IBM journals included in the present study are the International Marketing Review (21.32%), the International Business Review (6.98%), the Journal of International Business Studies (5.43%), the Journal of International Marketing (5.43%), the Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing (4.65%), the Journal of Business Research (4.65%), Industrial Marketing Management (3.88%), the European Journal of Marketing (3.88%), Management Decision (3.10%), and the European Journal of International Management (2.33%)—these are the top 10 academic journals in internationalization activity and represent about 62% of the total scientific production on the topic IBM (see Table 1 showing the topic IBM published in SSCI, 2000–2020). The journals shown in Table 1 state that they welcome papers based on qualitative as well as quantitative methodologies, so as long as they are ‘rigorous’ and appropriate (Welch and Piekkari 2017), the best assurance of quality is a lively, reflective, and open debate about the standards by which we as a research community judge that is warrantable knowledge.

**Table 1.** Articles on the topic of IBM published in SSCI (2000–2020).

| Journals  | Number Published | % Total     |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| International Marketing Review                        | 55               | 21.32%      |
| International Business Review                         | 18               | 6.98%       |
| Journal of International Business Studies             | 14               | 5.43%       |
| Journal of International Marketing                    | 14               | 5.43%       |
| Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing          | 12               | 4.65%       |
| Journal of Business Research                          | 12               | 4.65%       |
| Industrial Marketing Management                       | 10               | 3.88%       |
| European Journal of Marketing                         | 10               | 3.88%       |
| Management Decision                                   | 8                | 3.10%       |
| European Journal of International Management          | 6                | 2.33%       |
| Journal of World Business                             | 4                | 1.55%       |
| Journal of Services Marketing                         | 4                | 1.55%       |
| Journal of Business Ethics                            | 4                | 1.55%       |
| International Journal of Emerging Markets             | 3                | 1.16%       |
| Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics       | 3                | 1.16%       |
| Journal of International Management                   | 3                | 1.16%       |
| Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal   | 3                | 1.16%       |
| Inter. Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management | 2                | 0.78%       |
| Marketing Intelligence and Planning                   | 2                | 0.78%       |
| Journal of Marketing                                  | 2                | 0.78%       |
| Inter. Journal of Human Resource Management           | 2                | 0.78%       |
| Management International Review                       | 2                | 0.78%       |
| Service Industries Journal                            | 2                | 0.78%       |
| Academia: Revista Latinoamericana de Administración   | 2                | 0.78%       |
| Journal of Product Innovation Management              | 2                | 0.78%       |
| Business History                                      | 2                | 0.78%       |
| Chinese Management Studies                            | 2                | 0.78%       |
| Online Information Review                             | 2                | 0.78%       |
| Other journals *                                      | 53               | 20.67%      |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>258</b>       | <b>100%</b> |

Source: Own elaboration. \* These are the rest of the 53 journals published with an article on the topic of IBM.

Akaka et al. (2013) indicate that the complexity of international and global contexts has been a central concern for researchers who struggle to study a multitude of diverse



interactions in order to develop unifying theories that ‘synthesize’. This conundrum helps make researchers discover important findings, taking into particular consideration the countless transnational contexts that are of concern to academicians and practitioners (Katsikeas 2003). Rather, focusing on the contributions from 2000 to 2020 should render the results of this study more relevant to current researchers of IBM, marketers, and large companies focused on expanding products and services through marketing activities. Following this, Sheth (2020) notes that the research opportunities in international business marketing, and especially in international media and communication, are priceless.

#### 4. The Results of the Research

##### 4.1. Classification of Articles According to Disciplines and Four First-Order Research Streams of the Topic of IBM

The articles that are classified under this category attempt to lay the foundations of international business and international marketing and are mostly visionary works of art. This study critically evaluates the extant literature on our topic of research with the aim of increasing its coherence, quality, scope, impact, and international dimension (İpek 2021). We developed a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and multidimensional framework that organizes the existing literature within and across various disciplines and multiple levels of analysis (Christofi et al. 2021b). These articles are mainly conceptual, empirical, innovations, strategies, or exploratory in international context science. The main disciplines included in the results of the articles were as follows: Business, with 202 articles; Management, 82 papers; Economics, 8 articles; and Ethics, 5 articles; the rest of the categories were below 5 articles published in the context of IBM. The results in Table 2 show that internationalization was highly related to business, management, and the economy—three interrelated variables in the management and operation of companies, that is, the operating skeleton. Furthermore, these results display the multidisciplinary of IBM topic by area of knowledge.

These articles were fully read, analyzed, and classified by the research team. Each article was assessed by both researchers to decide its inclusion in four first-order research streams. Moreover, the following information was examined by type of paper (conceptual and empirical), key arguments, theoretical framework, and business and marketing topics. In the particular case of empirical articles, we also explored information relative to measurement, empirical methodology, sample features, and empirical results.

Following the traditional strategy–structure paradigm applied to international business by Gupta and Govindarajan (2000) and López-Duarte et al. (2016), the articles were classified in four first-order research streams (see Figure 1): academic research, international business, international development strategies, and customers. While the first stream shows the articles related to the conceptualization of IBM, evolution, innovation and future research and implications of the topic, the second stream deals with the choice of foreign market entry mode and universalization of brand, which is a key strategic decision for a firm seeking to grow internationally. The third stream gathers articles dealing with the corporate strategic decision to grow in an international context, customer segmentation, and selection of communication and sales channels (Brouthers and Hennart 2007; Florido-Benitez 2016b; Florido-Benitez and del Alcazar 2015), and the fourth and last stream shows the articles related to situational and demographic characteristics, experience, and customer satisfaction. These four frameworks are based on a literature review and classified studies of the period analyzed. An international business ecosystem is defined as the organisms of the business world, including stakeholders, organizations, and countries involved in exchanges, production, business functions, and cross-border trade through both marketplace competition and cooperation (Hult et al. 2020). Moon and Oh (2017) indicated that international companies wishing to expand into foreign markets through overseas distributors should invest in foreign direct investment modes, international joint ventures, and cobranding with a local firm, that is, reducing costs and possible errors in the transition of a company’s internationalization. Moreover, the relevant body of research was

commonly dominated by multidisciplinary disciplines, and [Alvargonzález \(2011\)](#) argue that the multidisciplinary approach is a common practice in strict sciences. In addition, the IBM structure has been seen as being of great importance in comprehending the path extending from IBM to future research by scholars and marketers.

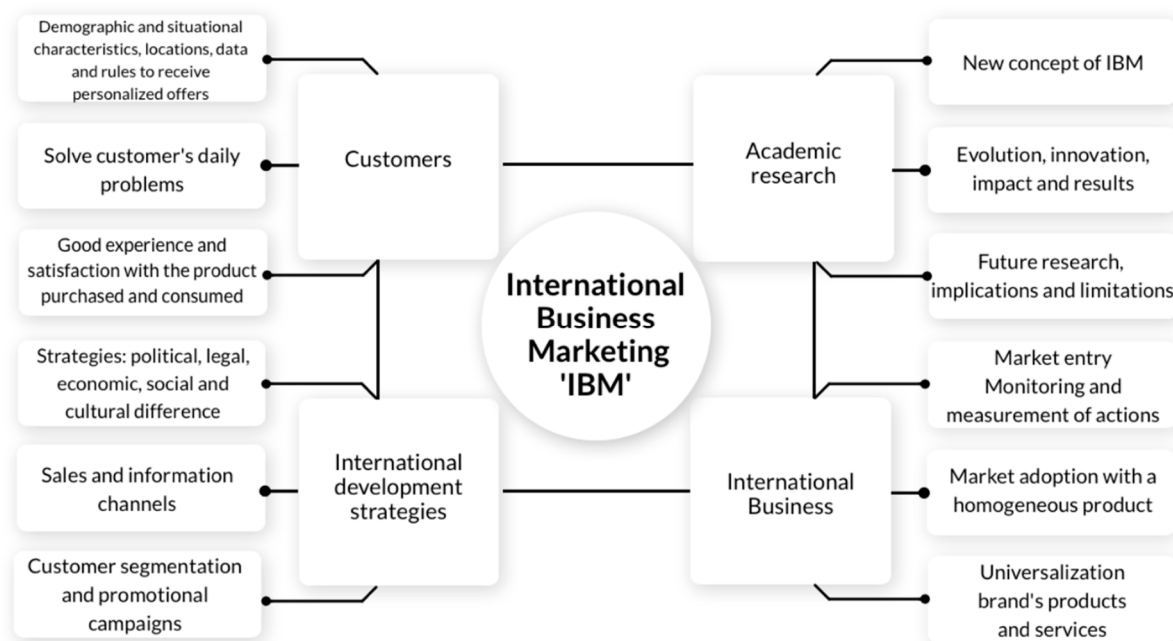
**Table 2.** IBM search results by disciplines.

| Disciplines                                  | No. Articles Published by Discipline * |
|--|--|
| Business                                     | 202                                    |
| Management                                   | 82                                     |
| Economics                                    | 8                                      |
| Ethics                                       | 5                                      |
| Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism      | 4                                      |
| Education and Educational Research           | 4                                      |
| Information Science and Library Science      | 4                                      |
| Operations Research and Management Science   | 4                                      |
| Engineering, Industrial                      | 4                                      |
| Social Sciences, Interdisciplinary           | 2                                      |
| Psychology, Applied                          | 2                                      |
| Engineering, Multidisciplinary               | 2                                      |
| Development Studies                          | 2                                      |
| History of Social Sciences                   | 2                                      |
| Computer Science, Information Systems        | 2                                      |
| Transportation                               | 1                                      |
| Area Studies                                 | 1                                      |
| Public Administration                        | 1                                      |
| Substance Abuse                              | 1                                      |
| Green and Sustainable Science and Technology | 1                                      |
| Anthropology                                 | 1                                      |
| Multidisciplinary Sciences                   | 1                                      |
| Environmental Studies                        | 1                                      |
| Engineering, Civil                           | 1                                      |
| Agricultural Economics and Policy            | 1                                      |
| Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence    | 1                                      |
| Engineering, Electrical and Electronic       | 1                                      |
| Education, Scientific Disciplines            | 1                                      |
| Communication                                | 1                                      |
| Forestry                                     | 1                                      |
| Materials Science, Paper and Wood            | 1                                      |
| Linguistics                                  | 1                                      |

Source: Own elaboration. \* There is more than one category in some disciplines.

As business-to-business marketing channels become more international in scope, communication in channels occur among a more diverse set of channel participants from different national cultures ([Rosenbloom and Larsen 2003](#)). [Rana et al. \(2021\)](#) provided a useful tool for evaluating the beneficial impacts offered by international markets. The integration of these four constructs (sources of beneficial impacts, operational efficiency, international marketing strategic choice, and beneficial outcome) into the model will help multinationals to better understand the factors influencing the assessment of beneficial impact analysis in the international market. [Cadogan \(2012\)](#) suggests that strategic orientations do not exist in isolation: firms can and do have multiple strategic orientations. Given that firms have finite access to resources, a major question that international marketing researchers need to address in the future is how businesses should manage their different strategic orientations. Scholars and management consultants alike refer to this breed of firms as ‘born global’ firms ([Cavusgil and Knight 2015](#))—young firms lacking organizational experience and capital ([Efrat and Shoham 2013](#)) that in recent years are substantial in number ([Moen 2002](#)). Following this, [Chung et al. \(2012\)](#) suggest that international business experience, consumer characteristics, the legal environment, cultural distance, and the nature of the products play a moderating role on marketing strategies of companies

(i.e., product, price, promotion, and place). A global market is positively and significantly associated with cultural distance and the adaptation of product, promotion, pricing, and distribution strategies to the foreign market (Sousa and Lages 2011).



**Figure 1.** Multidisciplinary approach to IBM in the 21st century. **Source:** Own elaboration based on data from results of the topic of IBM from WoS and a literature review.

Companies seek ways of introducing their products to international markets, and the international marketing environment poses a large number of opportunities and threats to foreign entrants. The cultural, political, and technological environments act as determinant factors in entrepreneurial success in global markets. A company that does not understand the culture of the country where the business is being transacted may come out with losses, for example, language could be a barrier, and lack of understanding of values of the host countries of dealings may be a hindrance. Another very critical issue is government regulation and environmental challenge; these have a lot to do with international transactions and earnings of entrepreneurs. Companies must consider government regulations that are prevalent in the country of operation so as to understand their limits for any dealings and align the business to the culture of the country (Agwu and Onwuegbuzie 2018; Moon and Oh 2017; Samiee 2020). In the end, all these variables need to be configured in digital marketing as clearly and securely as possible since they will condition the product purchased; along with having a satisfactory experience in an international context (Florida-Benitez 2016a, 2017), managers of companies need to be aware of the importance that certain demographic and situational characteristics play in the decision-making process of purchasing products and services, i.e., 'every country is different and requires different solutions to different problems'. Further growth may lead a firm to invest in the international marketing process (Paul and Mas 2020). Ogasavara et al. (2016) claim that innovation and international marketing resources mediate the effect of export experience on export market performance, and the authors unveil that this mediation effect is contingent on the strength of international business network ties. In this same line, Cadogan et al. (2016) suggest that the international business literature encourages firms to develop high levels of export entrepreneurial orientation and export market orientation to boost their sales performance in export markets.

#### 4.2. Authors and Top Individual Contributors to IBM Research

The 258 articles were authored by 662 researchers. Following the work of Lu (2003) and López-Duarte et al. (2016), we examined both the total and adjusted contributions by each author (the latter takes into account the number of different co-authors in an article). This data are very significant in the publication of articles on internationalization topics due to its complexity, multitude of variables, multidisciplinary content and areas, data collection from different countries, companies, and customer segmentation. Table 3 shows the top individual contributors to IBM research topic on the basis of the total contributions between 2000 and 2020 (minimum of two articles published by author). The researchers Cavusgil, S. T.; Hult, G. T. M.; Knight G. A.; Leonidou, L. C.; Chung, H. F. L.; Lages, L. F.; Griffith, D. A.; Kumar, V.; Cadogan, J. W., and Boehe, D. M. are the top 10 contributors in the IBM realm, each with three or more publications in the last 20 years.

Table 3. Top contributors to IBM research \* (2000–2020).

| Author                    | N° of Articles that Included the Topic of IBM ** | Rank | Authors' Universities ***                           | Location of Universities |
|---------------------------|--|------|---|--------------------------|
| Cavusgil, S. Tamer        | 8  | 1    | Georgia State University; Michigan State University | USA                      |
| Hult, G. Tomas M.         | 5  | 2    | Michigan State University; Florida State University | USA                      |
| Knight, Gary A.           | 5  | 3    | Florida State University                            | USA                      |
| Leonidou, Leonidas C.     | 4  | 4    | University of Cyprus                                | Cyprus                   |
| Chung, Henry F. L.        | 4  | 5    | Massey University                                   | New Zealand              |
| Lages, Luis Filipe        | 4  | 6    | New University of Lisbon                            | Portugal                 |
| Griffith, David A.        | 4  | 7    | Michigan State University                           | USA                      |
| Kumar, V.                 | 3  | 8    | Indian School of Business; Georgia State University | India; USA               |
| Cadogan, John W.          | 3  | 9    | Loughborough University                             | UK                       |
| Boehe, Dirk Michael       | 3  | 10   | University of Fortaleza; Uni. of Adelaide           | Brazil; Australia        |
| Shoham, Aviv              | 3  | 11   | University of Haifa                                 | Israel                   |
| Javalgi, Rajshekhar G.    | 3  | 12   | Cleveland State University                          | USA                      |
| Katsikeas, Constantine S. | 3  | 13   | Cardiff University; University of Leeds             | Welsh; UK                |
| Fastoso, Fernando         | 3  | 14   | University of Bradford                              | UK                       |
| Whitelock, Jeryl          | 3  | 15   | University of Bradford                              | UK                       |
| Moen, Oystein             | 3  | 16   | Norwegian University of Science and Technology      | Norway                   |
| Wilkinson, Ian            | 3  | 17   | University of New South Wales                       | Australia                |
| Sinkovics, Rudolf R.      | 2  | 18   | University of Auckland; University of Manchester    | New Zealand; UK          |
| Efrat, Kalanit            | 2  | 19   | Ruppin Academic Center                              | Israel                   |
| Harvey, Michael G.        | 2  | 20   | Southern Methodist University; Uni. of Mississippi  | US                       |
| Kiessling, Timothy S.     | 2  | 21   | Bilkent University; Bond University                 | Turkey; Australia        |
| Poulis, Konstantinos      | 2  | 22   | Middlesex University London; University of Essex    | UK                       |
| Poulis, Efthimios         | 2  | 23   | Middlesex University London; Uni. of East Anglia    | UK                       |
| Rialp-Criado, Alex        | 2  | 24   | Autonomous University of Barcelona                  | Spain                    |
| Czinkota, Michael R.      | 2  | 25   | Georgetown University                               | USA                      |
| Ral-Trebacz, Arkadiusz    | 2  | 26   | Dresden University of Technology                    | Germany                  |

Table 3. Cont.

| Author                  | N° of Articles that Included the Topic of IBM ** | Rank | Authors' Universities ***                           | Location of Universities |
|-------------------------|--|------|---|--------------------------|
| Eckert, Stefan          | 2  | 27   | Dresden University of Technology                    | Germany                  |
| Dittfeld, Marcus        | 2  | 28   | Dresden University of Technology                    | Germany                  |
| Azar, Goudarz           | 2  | 29   | Brunel Uni.London; Swedish Uni. of Agricultural     | UK; Sweden               |
| Kuivalainen, Olli       | 2  | 30   | Lappeenranta Uni. of Technology; Uni. of Manchester | Finland; UK              |
| Aykol, Bilge            | 2  | 31   | Dokuz Eylul University                              | Turkey                   |
| Cruz, Luciano Barin     | 2  | 32   | University of Montreal; University of Fortaleza     | Canada; Brazil           |
| Crick, Dave             | 2  | 33   | Victoria Uni. of Wellington; Birmingham City Uni.   | New Zealand; UK          |
| Robertson, Chris. J.    | 2  | 34   | Northeastern University                             | USA                      |
| Lages, Cristiana Raquel | 2  | 35   | University of Leeds; University of Reading          | UK                       |
| Venaik, Sunil           | 2  | 36   | University of Queensland                            | Australia                |
| Naidoo, Vik             | 2  | 37   | University of Auckland; Curtin University           | New Zealand; Australia   |
| Engelen, Andreas        | 2  | 38   | RWTH Aachen Uni; Technical Univ. of Darmstad        | Germany                  |
| Gronhaug, Kjell         | 2  | 39   | Norwegian School of Economics                       | Norway                   |
| Svendsen, Mons Freng    | 2  | 40   | Private company                                     | Norway                   |
| Haugland, Sven A.       | 2  | 41   | Norwegian School of Economics                       | Norway                   |
| Alexander, Nicholas     | 2  | 42   | Bournemouth University; Lancaster University        | UK                       |
| Myers, Hayley           | 2  | 43   | University of Surrey                                | UK                       |
| Hammervoll, Trond       | 2  | 44   | Harstad University College                          | Norway                   |
| Granot, Elad            | 2  | 45   | Cleveland State University                          | USA                      |
| Singhapakdi, Anusorn    | 2  | 46   | Old Dominion University                             | USA                      |
| Styles, Chris W.        | 2  | 47   | University of Sydney                                | Australia                |
| Kim, Daekwan            | 2  | 48   | Florida State University                            | USA                      |
| Weerawardena, Jay       | 2  | 49   | University of Queensland                            | Australia                |
| Xu, Shichun             | 2  | 50   | University of Tennessee                             | USA                      |
| Yalcinkaya, Goksel      | 2  | 51   | University of New Hampshire                         | USA                      |
| Madsen, Tage Koed       | 2  | 52   | University of Southern Denmark                      | Denmark                  |
| Aspelund, Arild         | 2  | 53   | Norwegian University of Science and Technology      | Norway                   |
| Welch, Catherine        | 2  | 54   | University of New South Wales                       | Australia                |

**Source:** Own elaboration. \* Based on total number of publications in the results of IBM topic from WoS. \*\* Minimum of two articles published per author. \*\*\* Some researchers work in two institutions.

There were 54 authors who contributed with a minimum of two publications on IBM from the period of 2000 to 2020. Following the work of [Czinkota \(1994\)](#), the advancement of international business and marketing theory is of interest to companies. International marketing provides the opportunity to accumulate foreign exchange reserves, improve national productivity, and enhance general quality of life. Researchers need to develop consolidated research designs and conceptualizations. Sometimes not enough effort is afforded to integrating the findings of previous empirical work in the real process of international companies and new research projects ([Katsikeas 2003](#)). [Cavusgil et al. \(2018\)](#) suggests that IBM scholars and practitioners should be better informed about megatrends to address pressing questions in international emerging markets.

In addition, Table 3 shows the university and country contributors to IBM research according to research results by researchers (minimum of two articles published by an author). Georgia State University, Michigan State University, and Florida State University were the top three institutional contributors with 13% of the total ranking of 54 researchers

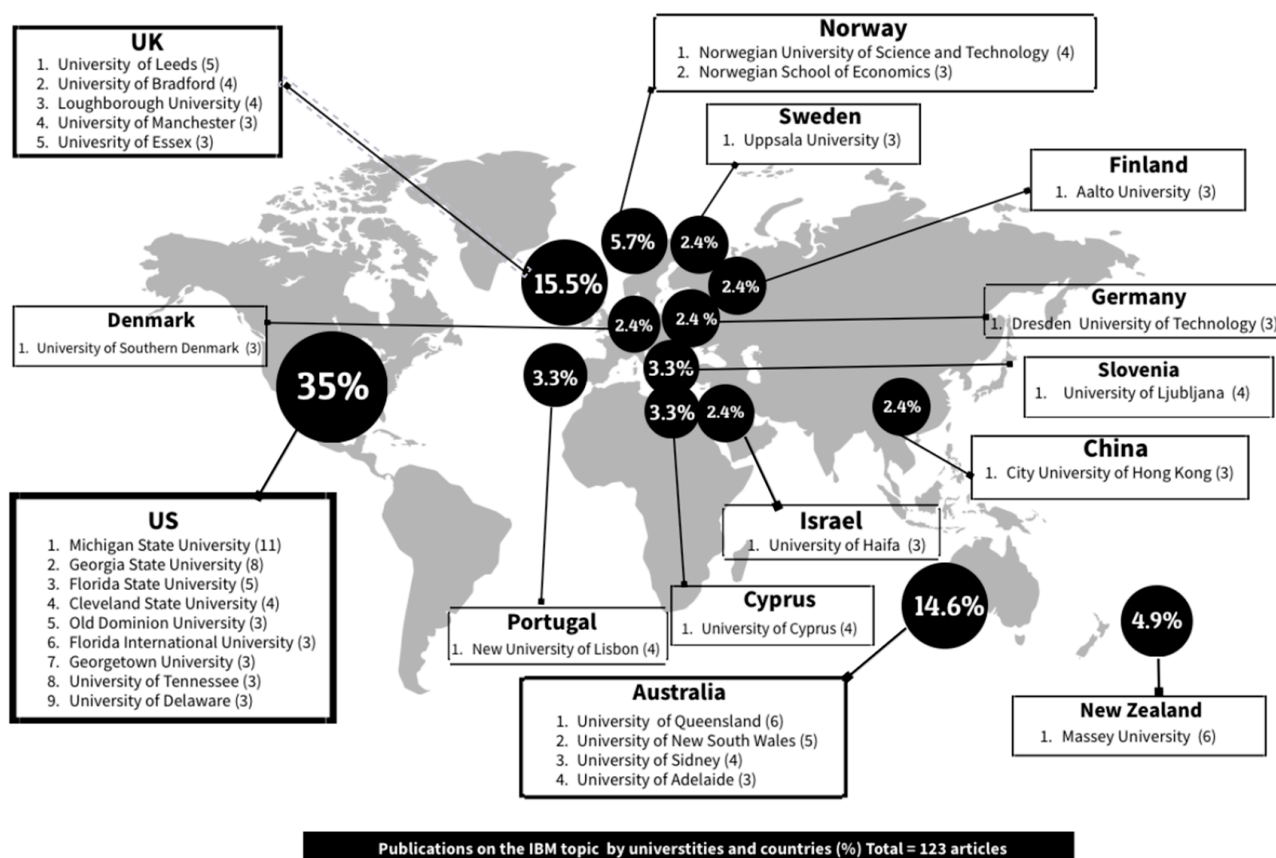
and 138 papers. The remaining 120 articles were written by one or more authors. The USA was the largest contributor to the publications on the topic of IBM in the world with 44 publications from 2000 to 2020, followed by the UK with 30 publications and Australia with 18 contributions. English is the predominant language for research on the topic of IBM. As noted by [Tenzer et al. \(2017\)](#), a fast-growing number of studies demonstrates that language diversity influences almost all management decisions in modern multinational corporations.

In concert with international business theory and methods, business researchers have the potential to develop and extend existing theory and to produce new or improved theory. The comparative method is part of the contribution that the study of IBM can make. The corpus of academic work on international business has been divided between quantitative studies and qualitative ones. Quantitative research has been largely cross-sectional in method, often using large-scale datasets. Qualitative research is more normally single-firm or industry focused and is more longitudinal ([Buckley 2009](#)). In this study, the results of the IBM topic search showed that the quantitative method was the most used for the topic of IBM at 51.16%, and the qualitative research obtained 48.84% (see Figure 2). The right choice of a suitable research methodology is a crucial decision to perform effective scientific research and is mainly based on linking research objectives to the characteristics of the available research methodologies ([Basias and Pollalis 2018](#)).



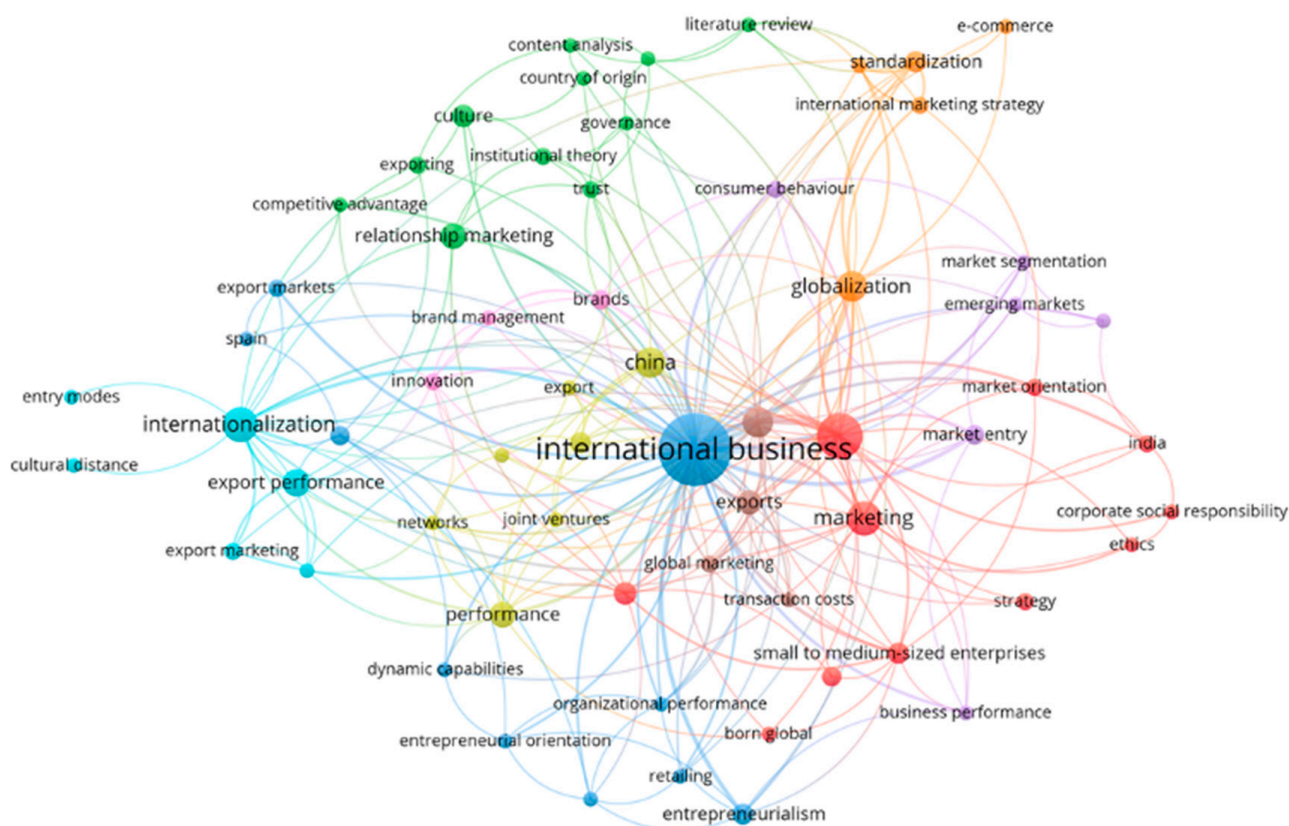
**Figure 2.** Methodology used in the 258 articles of the topic of IBM. **Source:** Own elaboration.

Figure 3 shows the diversity of universities where work on the topic of IBM has been published (a minimum of three papers published by university). The 123 articles were published in a wide variety of journals and reflect almost 20 years of research in this subject by universities, with Michigan State University, Georgia State University, and Florida State University in particular being the top three U.S. institution contributors to IBM by country, followed by the UK with its five universities, namely, the University of Leeds, the University of Bradford, Loughborough University, Manchester University, and the University of Essex, and where third place went to Australia and its four universities, namely, the University of Queensland, the University of New South Wales, the University of Sydney, and the University of Adelaide. The rest of the countries and their universities also contributed significantly to the topic of IBM, but with a smaller number of publications. These results show a wider interest of the academic community and journals in this field of inquiry. U.S. institutions were the most frequent contributors to IBM research in the current study's targeted journals. [López-Duarte et al. \(2016\)](#), [Kashif and Udunuwara \(2020\)](#), [Rana et al. \(2021\)](#), and [Zou \(2005\)](#) found that collecting international data is relatively more challenging and expensive. Cross-national collaboration could conceivably ease the data-collection task and foster synergy among researchers.



**Figure 3.** Number of publications of the topic of IBM by universities and countries (2000–2020). **Source:** Own elaboration.

Additionally, Figure 4 shows the co-occurrence of authors’ keywords in IBM articles considering a minimum threshold of three occurrences. The keywords ‘international business’, ‘international marketing’, ‘globalization’, ‘marketing’, and ‘marketing strategy’ were the most common keywords selected by the authors in the journals. It is clear that international business and international marketing are the queen and king on the international board—these two topics contribute substantially to increasing the number of articles in the most important research journals in the world. Following the work of Rialp et al. (2019), as mentioned above, international business, international marketing, marketing, internationalization, and globalization were the most common keywords in the journals. This verifies a traditional interest of researchers and contributors in explaining the performance of internationalized firms. Keywords referring to emerging economies and/or markets stand out. This information helps determine what the keywords are when searching for articles on IBM. Valenzuela et al. (2017) suggest that it is a good proxy of the keywords for any article related to international business. Given the orientation of journals, ‘international business’ is the most used keyword by the authors of the papers of this topic. Following this, we mapped the keywords graphically through the VOSviewer. To do so, we used co-occurrence analysis of the keywords provided by the authors.



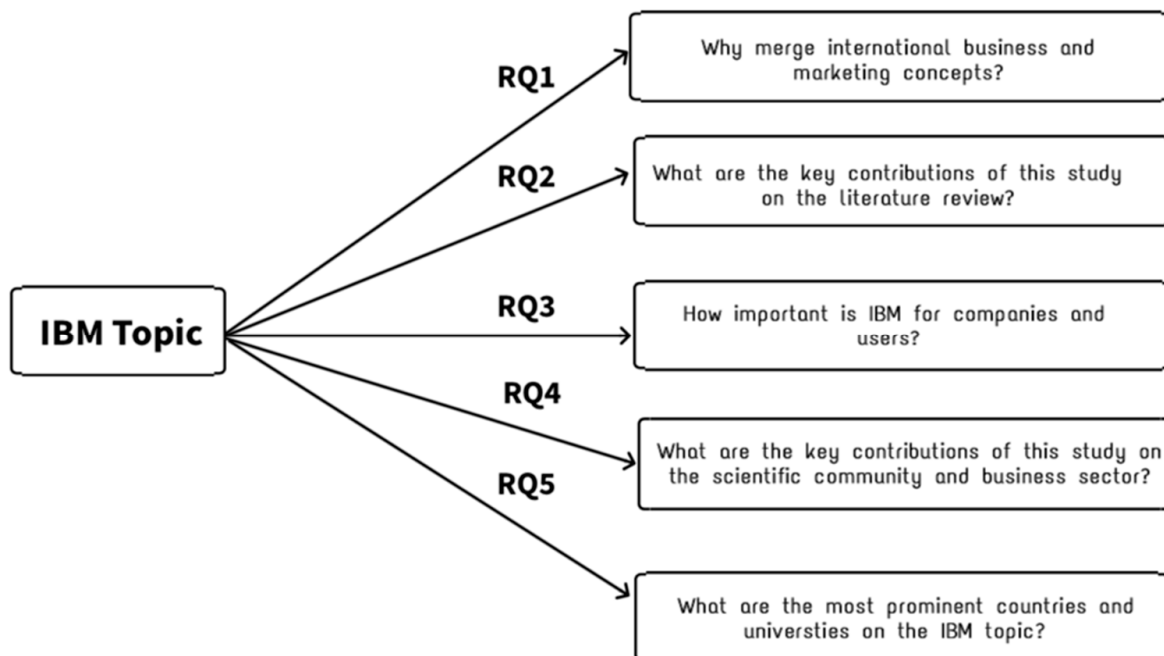
**Figure 4.** Co-occurrence of authors keywords of publications on IBM (2000–2020). **Source:** Own elaboration. Minimum of three keywords.

This study assessed the contributions and relevance of individual researchers, universities, and countries from 2000 to 2020, on the basis of their publications in the main international business, marketing, new technologies, expansion, and international strategies journals from SSCI data. The findings of this study offer researchers a unique view of this field and some directions for future research (see Figure 5). [Blackburne and Buckley \(2019\)](#) suggest that the international market entry by companies is a more complex process than suggested by theoretical models, which can often benefit from re-contextualizing and extension in order to retain their explanatory power. When analyzing interactions between firms and institutions, the co-evolutionary theory arises as a useful theoretical framework to address the dynamics of international evolution ([López-Duarte et al. 2016](#)). Figure 5 provides an overview of the findings of this study, showing the relevance of the topic of IBM on the scientific community and business sector.

**RQ1:** The outcome of the fusion of international business and marketing has been satisfactory for the scientific community and companies operating in the international market. After the refinement of the review between international business and marketing, this study consolidated an enhanced IBM model between international business and international marketing, contributing to developing a new topic in an inclusive way in the international market. Moreover, this is one of the unique studies that have attempted to investigate the theoretical relationship between two activities. Following the work of [Aithal \(2017\)](#), the goal of any international business organization is profit and sustainability. Companies follow a strategy to identify and encash all possible opportunities, which include low cost, product differentiation, high-tech products and services, international expansion, continuous value addition to products and services. In order to graphically visualize the most influential authors in IBM and see how they connect between each other, Figure A1 (Appendix A) maps the results by developing a co-citation analysis of authors, considering those authors with at least two citations and 100 representative connections (e.g., Cavusgil,

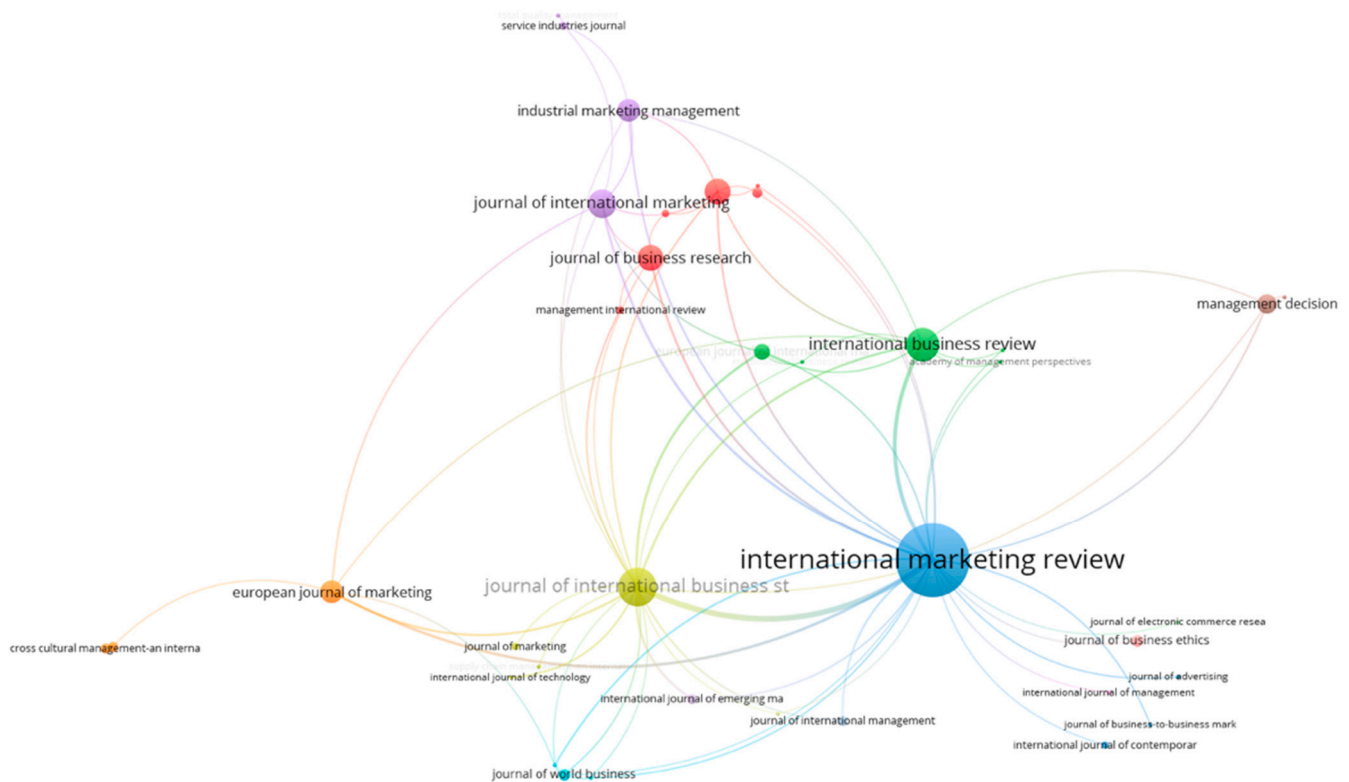


S.; Griffith, D.; Lages L.; Leounidou, L.; and Fastoso, F. lead the ranking of citations for the topic of IBM). Note that the size of the circle measures the number of citations that the author has received in terms of IBM.



**Figure 5.** Level of contribution and relevance of the IBM topic to the scientific community and business sector. **Source:** Own elaboration.

**RQ2:** The key contributions of this new subject on the literature review have shown a wide range of topics and multidisciplinary disciplines related to IBM, such as business, management, economics, ethics, hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism, technology, and transportation, among others. It is evident that issues related to internationalization/adaptation of companies continue to be a major research topic in the scientific community, marketers, and companies. This research has identified important factors from the literature on various domain areas of international marketing (e.g., digital marketing, mobile marketing, ubiquity, and communications), and a comprehensive and parsimonious IBM model developed for this research makes an important contribution to knowledge. [Doh \(2017\)](#) called for a stronger connection between international business academia and the real world, suggesting that international business researchers should address relevant phenomena. Along similar lines, [Buckley et al. \(2017\)](#) saw the future of international business in making sense and developing practical knowledge on society's grand challenge complex problems that are international, interdisciplinary, multi-level, and multi-stakeholder in nature, such as income inequality, resource scarcity, protectionism, gender inequality, and tax avoidance. Gaining recognition in mainstream international business research is key, as doing so would mean that the concerns of critical international business are discussed with those who account for most of the knowledge production in the field ([Dörrenbächer and Gammelgaard 2019](#)). Many journals are interested in the topic of IBM and the citations on it. [Figure 6](#) presents journals that have received at least one citation by other journals from 2000 to 2020 (a total of 258 articles). [Valenzuela et al. \(2017\)](#) suggest that the implementation of new technologies has revolutionized the emergence of new journals and specialized publications, and therefore is the easiest way to make publications possible. [Griffith et al. \(2008\)](#) claim that assessing the field of international business in terms of its influence of articles, dominant themes, and emerging themes provides great opportunities for companies and customers.



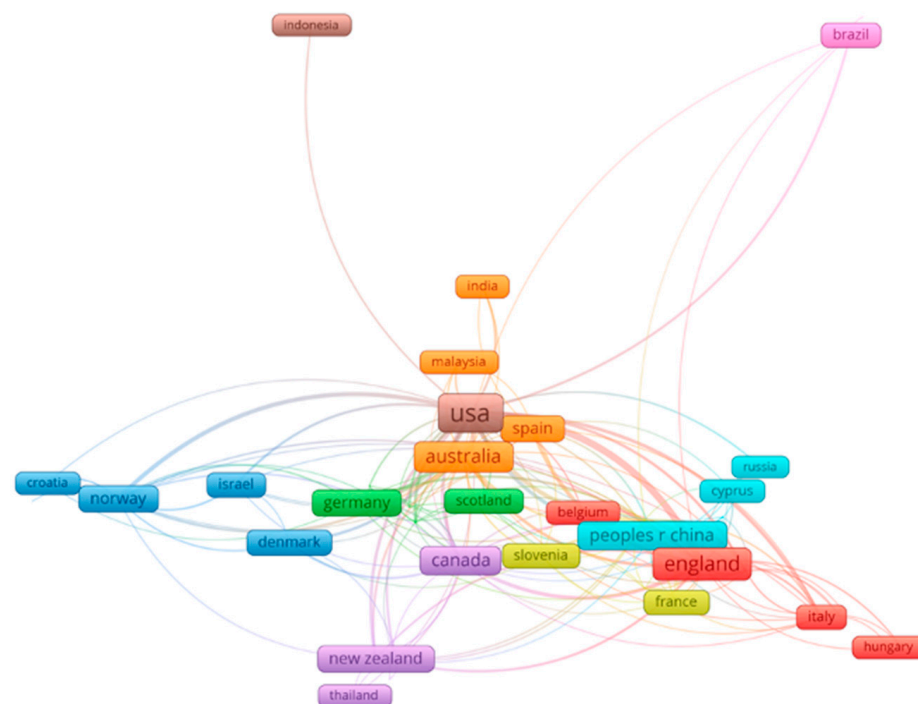
**Figure 6.** Citation of journals on the topic of IBM (2000–2020). **Source:** Own elaboration.

**RQ3:** The relevance of IBM to companies and users in the era of globalization of digital marketing activities is inseparable. This economic and ubiquitous marriage has been strengthened by digital devices. Let us take the international company Amazon as an example. Amazon’s ‘Prime Members’ club provides a number of benefits, including free shipping and access to music and other media content, in exchange for an annual membership change. It is particularly advantageous for frequent buyers (Buckley et al. 2018). Smartphones have facilitated marketing strategies and the introduction of new players in the international market, wherein users are part of the development and expansion of companies. According to Florido-Benitez (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic caused great changes in the personal and work life of the population. The safety and hygiene measures imposed by all the governments of the world have favored the interaction of consumers with companies through smartphones and certified the concept called ‘HuMobAp’. These users benefit from the efficiency and comfort offered by the International Mobile Marketing tool during the pandemic. This tool offers products and services within consumers’ homes through mobile devices, and consumers perceive this service as an opportunity to reduce transportation costs, time, and money. In addition, they avoid unnecessary risk of contagion, attend to their needs more quickly and efficiently, and maintain the comfort of not having to travel to a store.

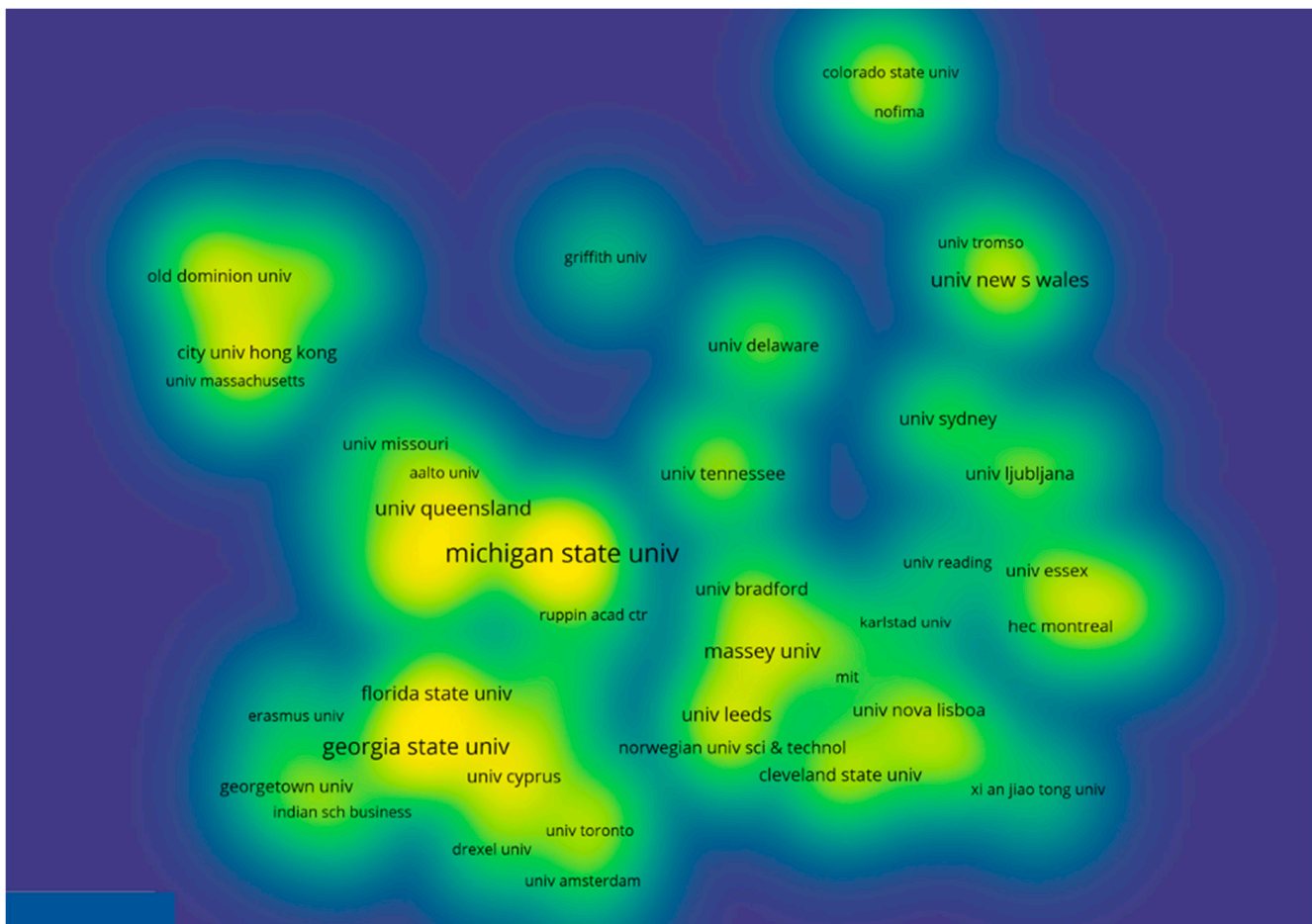
**RQ4:** The level of contribution of this study on the scientific community and business sector shows that the topic of IBM encompasses a strong interrelation in the international expansion of companies (in terms of country, region, segmentation, organization, digital marketing, and sales and communication channels). Regarding our specific topic of IBM, the international-context-related publications written by business, marketing, and management scholars; English language, communication, and sales scholars; or members of other disciplines are equally classified as IBM contributions as long as they integrate a multidisciplinary framework of areas of knowledge into the international business sector. We did not include stakeholders in our model—they are relevant in funding international ventures

such as venture capitalists. Asseraf and Shoham (2019) claim that there is an alignment across firms' decisions and stakeholders ranging from choice of a strategic approach to the decision to adapt or not, which should help to predict which venture is more promising and to improve the chances of successful entries into international markets.

**RQ5:** The level of contribution of the topic of IBM from countries and universities have shown that IBM research has been conducted by researchers from a large number of institutions in the sample of 258 articles in this study, especially in the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, China, and Germany (see Figures 7 and 8). In terms of the first 10 universities, the most important universities were in the USA, followed by the UK and Australia. The first institution in the ranking was Michigan State University with a total of 11 articles published on IBM, followed by Georgia State University with 8 studies published, and the University of Queensland and Massey University with 6 papers each. The results show the U.S. leadership in all levels of the topic of IBM, in terms of by country, journals, universities, and authors. This relationship between IBM and the influence and positioning of large American technology companies in the international market demonstrates the interest of this country in advancing in research, innovation, and development of new techniques in order to improve its economy and internationalize its companies. Zou (2005) suggests that on the basis of the names of individual contributors, it appears that there are proportionally more international scholars (e.g., scholars working in other countries or foreign-born scholars working in U.S. institutions) who have made significant contributions to international research. This shows that there is a wide institutional base that supports inquiries in this field. University research into the international business world is obliged knowledge exchange: companies and customers have a lot that universities and society can learn and benefit from. Klofsten et al. (2019) showed that from the viewpoint of the university, it is important that university leaders are able to internally define, visualize, and communicate the true meaning of an entrepreneurial university. For large companies, analyzing the international marketing environment is the first and most important task because the marketing environment has a direct impact on the production and business activities of each business (Tien et al. 2019).



**Figure 7.** Citation by countries on the topic of IBM (2000–2020). **Source:** Own elaboration.



**Figure 8.** Citation of universities on the topic of IBM (2000–2020). **Source:** Own elaboration.

We must not forget the role of universities and their teaching and learning about international marketing and business disciplines being very decisive for all activities and for the production of businesses, marketers, scholars, and the research community.

## 5. Conclusions

This study identified new challenges and opportunities for marketers, researchers, and international companies in terms of disentangling existing contradictions, applying a new theoretical framework to allow for better future decisions to be made by large companies, and to provide a higher quality to new research in the context of IBM. Moreover, the literature review showed that there is a strong relationship between international business and marketing, but not a merger between these two topics. There is no agreement on an explicit definition of IBM that captures the true nature of this topic. For this reason, this article is innovative in the new IBM concept and how it will possibly change the theoretical frameworks in future scientific research in the international area. Stemming from this integrative and comprehensive review, critical considerations are delineated under contextual issues, methodological implications, and a conceptual framework and research propositions (İpek 2021) in order to advance the ongoing understanding of IBM in the context of emerging market exporting firms and to help this line of research progress toward achieving maturity.

Finally, this research shows updated studies related to this topic in order for better understanding about our research and literature review, so that readers have the latest information and content in terms of international business and marketing and can read about their corresponding activities, business, and marketing tools. All these activities and tools are part of the topic of IBM and they enhance the IBM concept. We adapted

and contextualized the real situation of international business and marketing in the last 20 years. [Majaro \(2013\)](#) claims that many firms have accelerated the development of the international business dimension to their business operations through the stimulus of the international marketing activities.

## 6. Theoretical Implications

The current study has significant theoretical implications for the IBM field in several ways. First, the paper contributes to having a more global and understandable vision of companies in a highly competitive international context. In addition, this study expands the literature on IBM and favors new models in future research on this topic. Second, we identified the multidisciplinary approach of IBM induced by the new needs of consumers, a globalized market, and a scientific community that needs to provide answers to the redefinitions of the main elements in the internationalization processes, especially in this time of pandemic. Third, and lastly, we found relative importance among the factors that are affecting companies selling their products and services abroad through IBM (e.g., cultural, political, and economic situations; government regulations; technological environments; demographic and situational characteristics of customers; linguistic barriers; selection of communication and sales channels).

## 7. Limitations and Future Research

The scope and focus of our study entail some limitations, suggesting possible future research in this topic. Firstly, we had to omit books, chapters, and conference data from the SSCI in our search results because the major online databases do not list them. This might have excluded relevant contributions by international strategies, different international business and international marketing approaches and definitions, international scholars, and members of other disciplines who research on the subject area of international business but rely more on book publications than academics in business studies. Secondly, we only included English-language publications in our review. We did not include other languages in our search terms, such as French, Spanish, Chinese, Italian, Russian, or German, despite there being established business journals in these national languages ([Venard 2007](#)). We decided to limit our review to English-language material since no research team would be able to read all major world languages. Most importantly, 75% of articles in the social sciences are written in English, and the hegemony of English as a language of science is rising ([Hamel 2007](#); [Tenzer et al. 2017](#)). Nevertheless, this study does not show the SSCI citation count by authors, and we focused on the need to integrate the new IBM concept, the multidisciplinary nature of this topic, and the universities and countries that contributed to the improvement of this concept in the international context. Readers and young researchers can take on this new line of research in order to tackle a wider macro theoretical restructuring of IBM, with it serving as a springboard for future research in this area.

On the other hand, our new IBM topic and scientific input are focused on an extensive amount of literature (SSCI) that is based on four stages: academic research, international business, international development strategies, and customers (see [Figure 5](#)). We therefore recommend that future studies extend the scope of the research to several types of disciplines and companies in various industries (tourism, travel and leisure, education, digital television platforms, e-commerce, and others) and countries to test our findings. We argue that the new IBM topic and e-commerce are highly influenced by the scientific community and large companies, especially in this moment of pandemic, wherein the virtual environment is one of the most common cross-border platforms for offering of products and services through websites. Following the work of [Gomes et al. \(2020\)](#), future studies should seek to uncover how international marketing agility is connected to different measures of international performance, growth, productivity, or overall performance indicators, as well as depicting how international marketing strategies differ depending on the level of deployment of international marketing. Finally, IBM can inform various areas of the

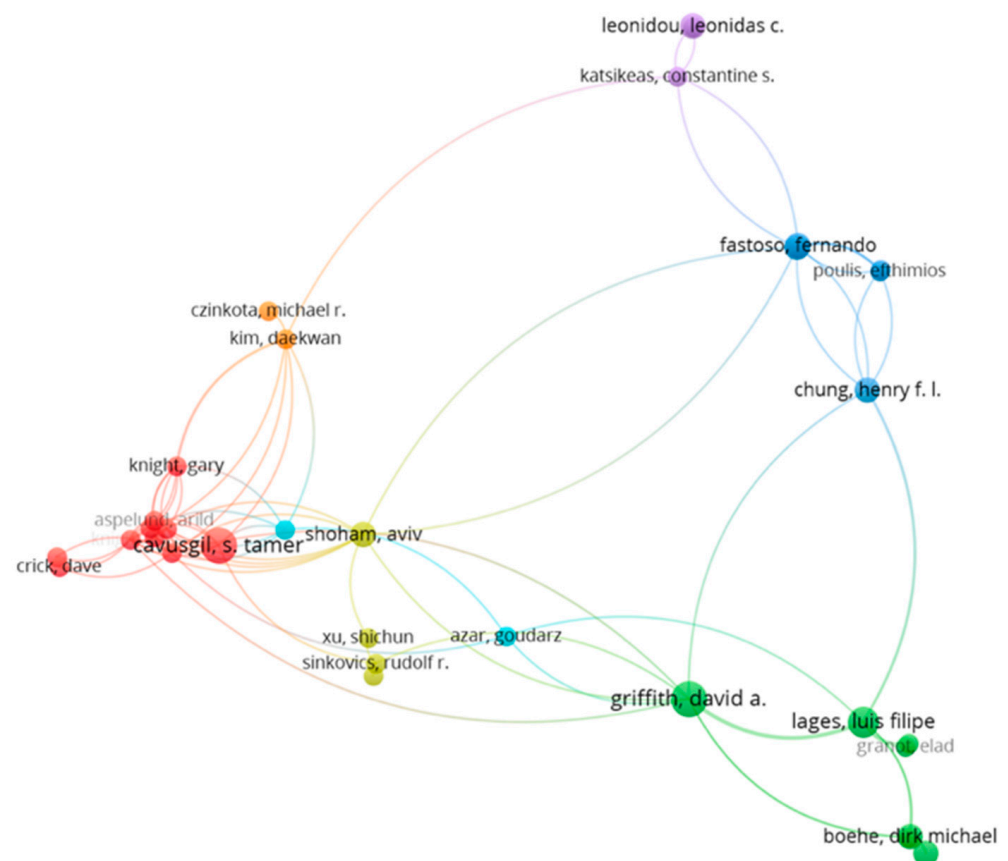
literature, such as branding and business globalization, marketing strategies, new channels and tools of marketing, and new challenges and opportunities for marketers and companies with the potential to generate new understandings in the IBM domain. Recommendations for future research were also provided, targeting opportunities for theoretical and empirical advancement of the field by taking specifically an international business approach.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; methodology, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; software, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; validation, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; formal analysis, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; investigation, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; resources, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; data curation, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; writing—original draft preparation, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; writing—review and editing, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; visualization, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; supervision, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; project administration, L.F.-B. and I.A.F.; funding acquisition, L.F.-B. and I.A.F. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no potential conflict of interest related to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## Appendix A



**Figure A1.** Citation of authors on the topic of IBM. Minimum of 2 articles by author and 1 citation.

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