



MAPPING THE GLOBAL RESEARCH ON COMPETITIVENESS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

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Abstract

Develop a concept that enables proprietors of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to enter international markets more environmentally consciously, building upon the author's blueprint. A systematic literature review (SLR) investigates the complexity associated with the Internationalization of SMEs. The author complies with the following procedure: retrieve metadata from the top 35 papers tagged with the keywords internationalization, competitive advantage, and SMEs in Scopus (April 2024), sort the articles by citation count, and select reviews and SMEs as the focus of the discussion. Key players and determinants of competitive advantage for the Internationalization of SMEs are subsequently identified through bibliometric visualization and qualitative data analysis software (Biblioshiny, R Studio). The findings uncover the primary theories of Internationalization, prominent authors, reviews, and sources, and supplement Werner's determinant with several illustrative tables and graphs. The findings mentioned above demonstrate the growing significance of theories concerning competitive progress. Much work remains to be done regarding the Internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), specifically about the factors contributing to a company's success in foreign markets and its establishment in the domestic market. For the future successful Internationalization of SMEs, a contribution to science is an update on pertinent topics and the identification of specific trends and gaps, including inter-theoretical integration, discourse variables, strategic fit versus opportunism, network theories concerning niche marketing, born-glocal strategies, and disruptive technologies.

INTRODUCTION

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are prominent in many countries' economies. Still, they are often treated the same when it comes to credit risk as other businesses (Malakauskas & Lakstutiene, 2021). In recent years, several studies have been conducted on the Internationalization of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). While there is ample evidence of their growing involvement in global trade, much of the research still centers around the strategies and factors that drive the international expansion of large corporations. Organizations encounter intense global economic conditions, leading to several sustainability and strategic expansion obstacles. It is closely related to the interconnectedness of international markets and the diverse array of alternatives now accessible to clients (Rastogi, L., Yazdifar, H., Alam, A., Eskandari, R., & Bahloul, M. A.;2019). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are integral to national economic systems. However, the convergence of SMEs and

multinational corporations (MNCs) in the competitive arena is relatively recent. Etemad et al. noted that competition in international markets had historically been confined to large corporations, while smaller businesses operated on a local or regional scale (2001, p. 481). Undoubtedly, this assertion is no longer valid for various reasons, including the fact that the world has become more globalized and competitive, requiring SMEs to seek survival opportunities beyond their national borders (Lee et al., 2012).

Several studies have been conducted to develop conceptual and empirical research from the perspective of Porter's theory of competitiveness and competitive advantage (1985) (Kamp & Parry, 2017; Man et al., 2002). Competitiveness has been a subject of ongoing development across three levels: enterprise, industry, and country. This topic has garnered significant interest from business researchers, as evidenced by the works of Bharadwaj et al. (1993) and Goldberg et al. (2003). Organizations that innovate their products will have the capacity to generate exceptional value for their clientele and sustainably attain superior performance. Additionally, Karabulut (2015), Musa and Adamu (2017), and Rajapathirana and Hui (2017) supported the notion that product innovation holds significant potential as a means for organizations to attain a competitive edge. According to the research conducted by He et al. (2019), the knowledge of EMNEs, precisely their technological expertise that fosters innovation, has significantly facilitated their effective international expansion.

SMEs beat the competition when they integrate operations with their business plans. Compared to businesses with stagnant or declining sales, O'Regan et al. (2006a, b) have found that high-growth companies pay more attention to external variables such as strategic orientation, their operating environment, and the use of e-commerce. SMEs must create programs to enhance their skills and abilities since they frequently come into contact with new products and procedures (Fuller-Love, 2006). They can gain a competitive edge by strengthening their internal and external capabilities (Lai-Yu, 2001). According to Corbett and Campbell-Hunt (2002), businesses should concentrate their efforts and assets on developing novel products and catering to specific markets. According to Singh et al. (2006), SMEs should exercise flexibility when formulating their plans. Despite their resource scarcity, SMEs can aggregate flexibility and agility by creating industry portals, according to Chou and Hsu (2005).

There are at least two reasons that make this study so important. First, by knowing the research development on competitive advantage and SME internationalization, this study can identify the research gap and current issues that researchers worldwide widely discuss. Second, this paper might benefit other researchers by proposing potential topics for further study. Using

the bibliometric analytical technique by Pritchard (1969), this study collected all publications related to competitive advantage for SMEs to get Internationalization from Scopus.com. Our study focuses on bibliometric analysis of the competitive advantage and Internationalization of SME literature with a modern approach using statistical software, namely VOSviewer. The essential things discussed in this bibliometric analysis are related to co-authorship and co-occurrence using VOSviewer software that focuses explicitly on competitive advantage and SME internationalization.

RQ1: How has the literature of the research on the competitive advantage and the Internationalization of small businesses had on Scopus?

RQ2: Which writers, groups, and countries are the most important?

RQ3: What are the most critical areas in competitive advantage and Internationalization of small businesses from the scope?

RQ4: What are the most critical issues when discussing small businesses' competitive edge and going global?

RQ5: What suggestions should be made for how related literature should grow?

METHOD

The SLR method helps researchers reach their goals by collecting data on specific topics in a planned and organized way (Tranfeld et al., 2003). We use an SLR to examine the entrepreneur, not just their sociodemographics or human and social capital. We then connect these personal aspects to the growth of small and medium-sized businesses. Much research has shown that entrepreneurs have an impact on the development and success of small and medium-sized enterprises (Acedo & Galan, 2011; Bloodgood et al., 1996; Castaldi, 1986; Johnston & Czinkota, 1985; Julien et al., 1997; Westhead et al., 2002; Zuchella et al. 2007). That is why we chose to focus on their needs.

A systematic review and a conventional survey are two popular techniques for conducting literature reviews. The latter is distinct from the former due to its standardization, scientific nature, transparency, and reproducibility. A systematic literature review facilitates the search for publications according to specific eligibility criteria, evaluates current knowledge, and produces trustworthy conclusions and suggestions for academics, practitioners, and policymakers. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) (Page et al., 2021); Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, and Analysis (SALSA) (Grant & Booth, 2009); Protocol, Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, analysis, and Reporting

(PSALSAR) (Mengist, Soromessa, & Legesse, 2020); Cochrane, the Campbell Collaboration, the Collaboration for Environmental Evidence (CEE) (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020); Quality of Reporting of Meta-analysis (QUOROM) (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006); and other systematic review guides supplied by various authors (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003; Y. Xiao & Watson, 2019).

We did the three things that Linnenluecke et al. (2020) said to do. First, we made the review process and decided which publications would be included and which would be left out. Next, we did a thorough review of the studies. Finally, we finished by evaluating, extracting, and assembling all our data. For the systematic literature study, the first step was to plan for what would happen next. The picture is Figure 1. The Review Protocol commences with a literature search to define terms that will identify the dataset with the most papers to address the research questions. Articles pertinent to this study were gathered and organized from the online databases Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-Expanded), Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), and Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&H CI) provided by Thomson/Reuters-ISI. These databases contain many academic publications and bibliographic details on authors, affiliations, and citations (Ferreira et al., 2022; Veiga & Diogo, 2022). The search was conducted in Scopus for articles published up to 2021, using the terms "SME," "small and medium enterprises," "internationalization," "globalization," and "competitive advantage" in the title, keywords, or abstract. This search yielded 35 articles. The database search was conducted in April 2024.

Descriptive analysis of 35 publications using statistical and analytical approaches. We utilized the bibliometric method of co-citation analysis to examine publications on "SMEs & Internationalization" due to their high citation frequency, which may suggest shared concepts and central themes within the field of knowledge. Articles related to this theme were mapped using network and graph theory analysis conducted with UCINET version 6.554 software (Borgatti et al., 2002) and Biblioshyni R Studio. A hierarchical cluster analysis was conducted on all articles used in the co-citation analysis to group related articles into distinct sets. The co-citation network was utilized to display the groupings. A factor analysis uses the principal components method and varimax rotation to provide further insights into the research on "SME and Internationalisation." The publications were examined for commonalities and grouped into various FinTech categories. Software options for bibliometric analysis include Vosviewer, Histcite, Pajek, Gephi, CiteSpace, and Bibliometric R (Barroso & Laborda, 2022; Kaur, Singh,

& Singh, 2021). The study utilized Mendeley, Bibliometric R, and Excel to conveniently classify and analyze the data.

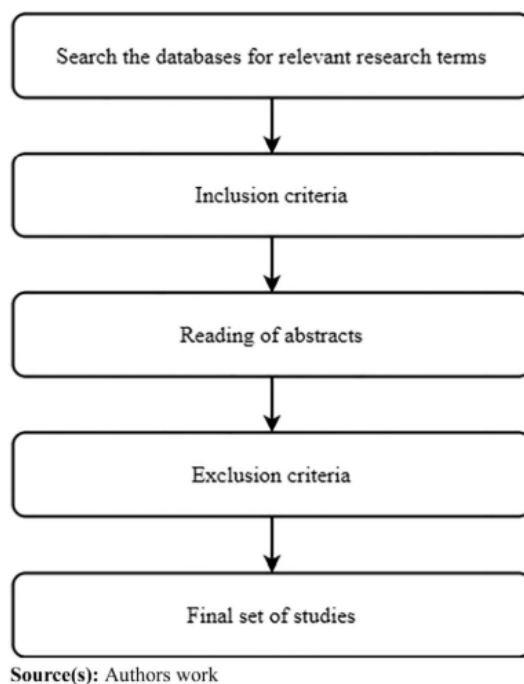


Figure 1. Review Protocol

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

Research papers on competitive advantage and SME internationalization gathered from the Scopus database still needed to be completed. Table 1 displays 35 research publications distributed across all years. Numerical expressions are used in this area to describe databases utilized for bibliometric analysis or earlier studies on related issues. Previous articles are also displayed in Figure 2. The years with the highest number of papers published are 2023 (6 articles), 2019 (4 articles), and 2007 (4 articles). The 35 papers examined received 644 citations, averaging 18.4 citations per article. The top five papers with the highest number of citations are:

Figure 2 displays the yearly changes in the quantity of published articles and quotes.

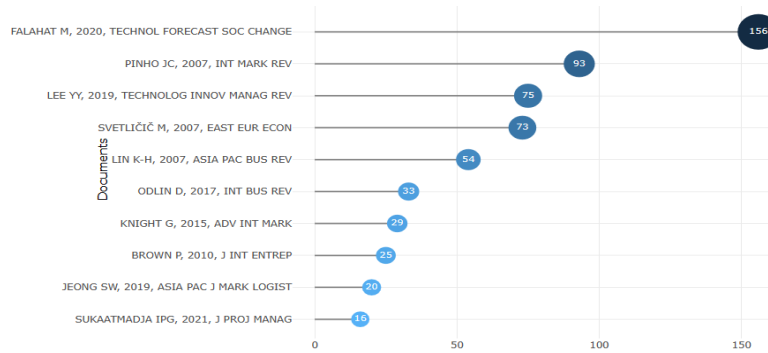


Figure 2. Citation article

The top five papers with the highest number of citations are:

1. Falahat M.; Ramayah T.; Soto-Acosta P.; Lee Y.-Y.(2020). SMEs internationalization: The role of product innovation, market intelligence, pricing, and marketing communication capabilities as drivers of SMEs. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*. 152. (156 citations)
2. Pinho J.C. (2007). The impact of ownership: Location-specific advantages and managerial characteristics on SME foreign entry mode choices. *International Marketing Review*. 24(6). 715 – 734. (93 citations)
3. Lee Y.Y.; Falahat M.(2019). The impact of digitalization and resources on gaining competitive advantage in international markets: The mediating role of marketing, innovation, and learning capabilities. *Technology Innovation Management Review*. 9(11). 26-38. (75 citations)
4. Svetličič M.; Jaklič A.; Burger A. (2007). Internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises from selected Central European Economies. *Eastern European Economics*, 38(4), 36–65. (73 citations)
5. Lin K.-H.; Chaney I. (2007). The influence of domestic interfirm networks on the internationalization process of Taiwanese SMEs. *Asia Pacific Business Review*. 13(4), 565–583. (54 citations)

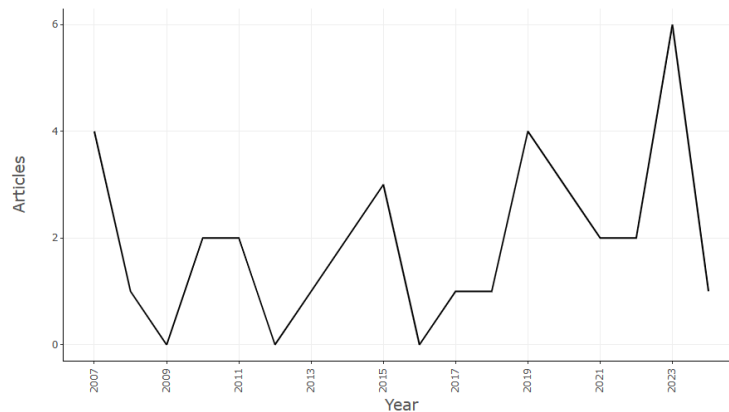


Figure 3. Article per year

We found documents per year by source from 2017 to 2023. As can be seen in Figure, Management Decision of 2 papers. The proceedings of a conference on knowledge have two documents. Electronic Commerce Research and Application and Financial Innovation both have 14 articles. These were the prominent journals on this topic. It was noticed that Management Decision has two articles.

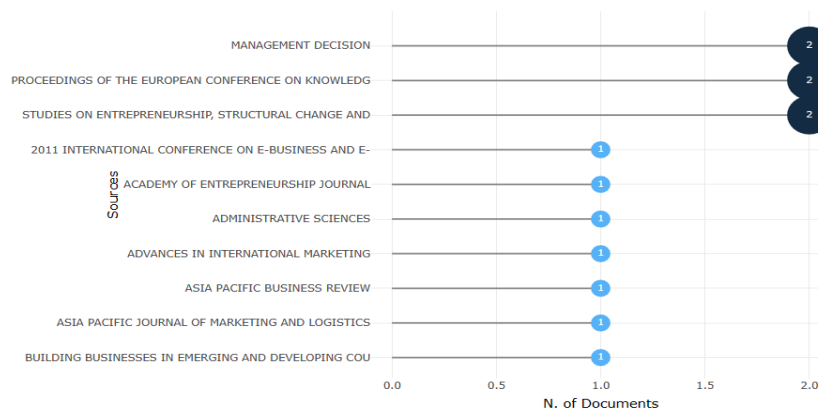


Figure 4. Documents per year by source. Source: Author's Contribution

Author Wise Publication and Author Network

Figure 5 shows the articles by the author and author network; most authors still have one article. Writers need to improve future scholars interested in this topic. Prospective researchers gain valuable insights by examining the works of this distinguished author. It aids in comprehending issues more effectively and reflecting on their study methods.

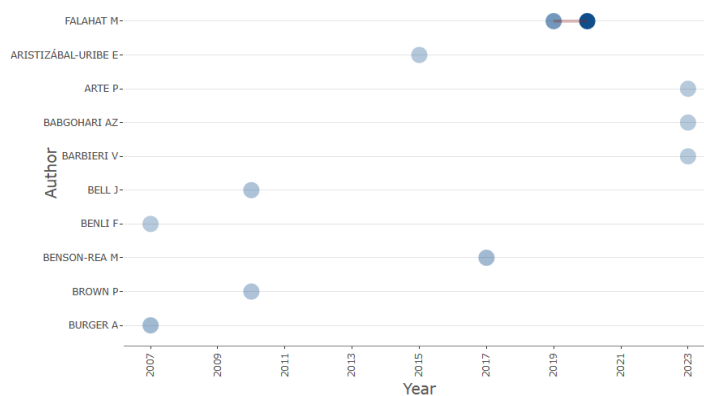


Figure 5. Documents by Author. Source: Author's Contribution

Leading countries and international scientific collaborations

World Map

The Scopus database shows the top 10 countries with the highest productivity in researching healthcare management within a sustainable development framework. These countries are Indonesia (12 articles), Malaysia (11 articles), Portugal (9 articles), The UK (7 articles), India (6 articles), Austria (5 articles), USA (5 articles), Italy (4 articles), China (3 articles), and Colombia (3 articles).

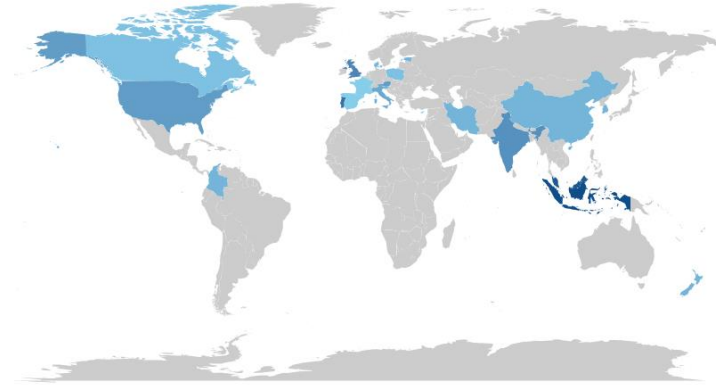


Figure 6. Network visualization of worldwide co-authorship

Analysis Trend

The study analyzes the frequency of words in the document collection. It identifies words occurring between 0 and 100 times, listing the top 40 words and presenting a comparison in a blue table diagram—an analysis of each word's usage and its significance regarding competitive advantages, Internationalization, and SMEs. The word "competition" has the highest frequency of occurrences in the study, exceeding six times, and is deemed most significant based on a dark blue line diagram. The terms "small and medium-sized enterprises" and "competitive advantage" occur more than five times in the following sequence.

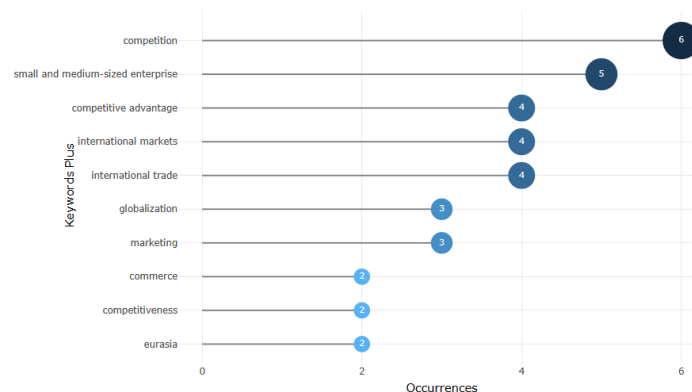


Figure7 Most Relevant Words

CONCLUSION

With bibliometric analysis, researchers can examine the most frequently used keywords, countries, organizations, financial sponsors, and authors and countries in the literature about a specific problem. The researchers are utilizing each of these characteristics in their current study. By conducting bibliometric analysis, scholars gain insights into emerging trends and patterns within the fields of study. It is the foundation for developing novel statistical frameworks, writing tools, and theories. In the past decade, bibliometric analysis has gained considerable traction, and numerous studies have been published employing this approach. He assists in comprehending the critical elements of a specific research topic. By analyzing citations and co-citations, we can identify significant authors and nations researching the Internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Similarly, these two items satisfy the initial two aims of this study. It was discovered that the ramifications of FinTech are fraught with controversy, which is consistent with a more extensive and protracted discourse concerning the function of finance in society and the economy and which geographical proximity must not be overlooked. That an intense fusion of finance and technology, which the Covid-19 pandemic may have accelerated, has further complicated and elevated this controversy. Research gaps in the FinTech domain can be identified by utilizing co-occurrence analysis. Additionally, the third objective is accomplished, and there is considerable opportunity to achieve Internationalization in SME competition, international marketing, and competitive advantage.



Figure 8. Most Relevant Words

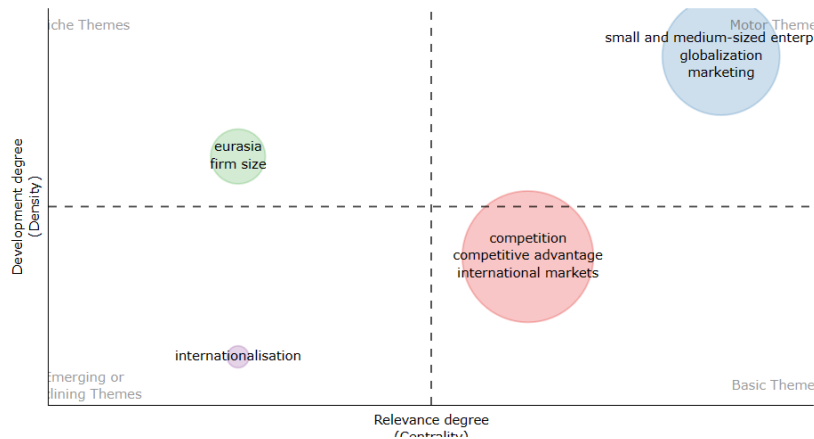


Figure 9. Thematic Map

Limitations

This study report exclusively utilized data from the Scopus database and did not include publications from other reputable journals not included in Scopus. We concentrate on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and the process of Internationalization. Many interdisciplinary journals have published research articles in all domains not covered by this study. We utilized Vosviewer and Biblioshiny software exclusively for co-citation analysis, co-occurrence analysis, and network diagrams despite the availability of numerous alternative software choices.

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