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Extended Abstract

A BIBLIOMETRIC STUDY OF THE LITERATURE ON ADVERTISING ETHICS

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the research impact of the landscape of advertising ethics, key research trends, and the state of knowledge in the domain of advertising ethics. The study is based on bibliometric analysis conducted using Biblioshiny. This study has analyzed relevant literature in the domain of advertising ethics using various techniques to examine publication patterns, citation networks, and authorship patterns, identifying the most cited and influential works, and highlighting seminal contributions and emerging research trends in the domain of advertising ethics.[1]

Keywords: Advertising Ethics, Bibliometric Analysis, Biblioshiny

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1. Introduction

The power wielded by advertising is enormous in modern-day marketing. However, this power comes with numerous ethical responsibilities too. Advertising demands an in-depth understanding of moral good and wrong due to its overt character. This paves the way for the need for understanding and learning the literature on the domain of advertising ethics. A common definition for advertising ethics followed by researchers in the domain is that of (Cunningham 1999), where advertising ethics is what is right or good in the conduct of the advertising function. However, the definition was refined by many researchers in various ways, due to its generic nature. For example, Schauster (2015) modified this definition to make it more precise by including "awareness of ethical problems, which includes an ability to ascertain moral qualities and subsequent ethical decision making". The diverse nature of ethics makes it very difficult to reach a consensus on what constitutes the domain of advertising ethics (Drumwright 2018). Thus, expanding the realm of ad ethics is driven by growing concerns about the ethical challenges in advertising across industries and media in the context of global marketing (Drumwright and Kamal 2016; Shabbir et al. 2019).

Using bibliometric analysis, this study attempts to understand the corpus of work on advertising ethics and identify the trends in this domain. This study aims to provide the research impact of the landscape, key research trends, and state of knowledge in the field of advertising ethics. Biblioshiny, a web-based app in the Bibliometrix package of R is used to conduct a bibliometric analysis in the domain of advertising ethics.

2. Methodology

The study topics are analyzed using bibliometrics, the most widely used method for tracing the knowledge structure of a research field (Goyal and Kumar 2021; Li, Wu, and Wu 2017). According to Lewis and Alpi (2017), bibliometric analyses can provide insights into the state

of a collection of works, characterize the strengths of an institution's scholarship and its patterns of citation and co-citation, and suggest possible schools of thought within the subject.

Research articles were selected from two widely acclaimed databases: Scopus and Web of Science. The keywords – "Advertising and Ethics" or "Advertisement and Ethics" or "Advertising Ethics" or "Advertisement Ethics" or "Ethical Advertising" or "Ethical Advertisement" or "Ethical and Advertising" or "Ethical and Advertising" – were used for the search. The period for the study was not limited to any period and the document types were limited to articles and review articles. The source type of articles was restricted to journals and the language was limited to English. The list of documents obtained from Web of Science was merged with the list of documents obtained from Scopus and then duplicate articles were removed which resulted in 3182 articles altogether. From the given 3182 articles, those from the journals that matched with the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) list of journals were selected. This filtration process resulted in 734 articles. To find the relevance of these articles and eliminate those that are not relevant to the study, coding was done independently by two coders. This final stage in the process of filtering yielded 233 articles.

3. Results

The period of the identified articles was found from 1979 to 2023 which means that the first relevant article from the domain was published in the year 1979. The date of the search was October 28, 2023. All the 233 articles were sourced from a total of 64 journals with 429 authors and 2711 references. The relevant research in this domain emerged in 1979 with 2 articles and gained popularity by 1994 with 9 articles. A peak in 2004 with 14 articles and a record of 19 articles in 2019 resulted in an annual growth rate of 3.73% over this period. In the journal-wise analysis, the Journal of Business Ethics is the most relevant source in the domain of advertising ethics with 46 articles from the identified 233 articles. The most relevant author is Waller D.

with 6 articles within the domain (including 2 single-authored articles) followed by Hoek J. (5 articles including 2 single-authored articles). In the case of author-wise analysis of citations, Gendall P. and Hoek J. are the most local cited authors with two citations each. The most frequent keywords that authors have used are advertising, ethics, advertising ethics, children, social responsibility, business ethics, marketing, and self-regulation.

Clustering by coupling was conducted and three clusters emerged - ethical challenges and dimensions of advertising, online platforms and strategies, and consumer perspectives and ethical judgments.

4. Implications and Conclusion

The study makes it easier for researchers in this domain to identify influential journals and research works. Understanding the various ethical challenges and dimensions of advertising ethics in Cluster 1 can guide managers and advertisers in developing codes of conduct and ethical guidelines for advertising campaigns. Insights from Cluster 2 regarding online platforms and strategies can help businesses refine their digital advertising approaches. The study also helps in acting as a foundation to provide valuable insights on advertising ethics through educational and training initiatives for managers.

The results of the analysis provide a foundation for further research aimed at elevating the standards for ethical behavior in advertising. To sum up, bibliometric analysis has shown to be a helpful framework for examining the literature on advertising ethics, providing an organized way to understand the field's comprehensiveness. This study contributes to the corpus of knowledge on advertising ethics by offering a discussion of the key concepts, themes, and trends.

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Endnote

[1]The previous working paper (no. WP 23-003) relied on morphological analysis which is a qualitative analysis framework that helps in the identification of research gaps through the distinction between explored and unexplored areas of the domain whereas the present working paper relies on bibliometric analysis that focuses on quantitative techniques to examine publication patterns, citation networks, and authorship patterns, identifying the most cited and influential works, authors, affiliations, and journals and highlighting seminal contributions and emerging research trends in the domain.