



Franchising research on emerging markets: Bibliometric and content analyses

Vanessa P.G. Bretas^{a,b}, Ilan Alon^a

^a School of Business and Law, University of Agder, Post Box 422, 4604 Kristiansand, Norway

^b PPGA, ESPM, Rua Dr. Alvaro Alvim 123, São Paulo - SP, Brazil

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Franchising
Emerging markets
Developing markets
Bibliometric analysis
Literature review

ABSTRACT

This study reviews the franchising literature on emerging markets. We used the Bibliometrix R-package and VOSviewer software to perform a bibliometric analysis of 297 articles between 1989 and 2020 obtained from the Scopus database. We combined bibliometric coupling, historiographic citation, keyword co-occurrence, and conceptual thematic analysis, with a content analysis of the most cited articles based on total global and local citations. We identified two main research clusters: international franchising and social franchising. This article provides a deep understanding of the intellectual and conceptual structure of the academic field. It complements existing qualitative reviews and attempts at characterizations, and suggests future research directions.

1. Introduction

Franchising can be described as a contractual relationship between two legally independent entities, a franchisor and a franchisee, in which the franchisee pays fees to the franchisor for the right to sell products or services using its brand and business system (Castrogiovanni, Combs, & Justis, 2006; Dant & Grünhagen, 2014). The franchising system has been growing steadily as both a commercial and social organization model worldwide. Its economic and social impacts include outputs and job creation, economic modernization, the development of entrepreneurship, and the alleviation of social problems (Alon, 2004; Naatu & Alon, 2019).

According to the survey on the economic impact of franchising conducted by the World Franchise Council in 2017, 2 million franchised businesses were responsible for approximately 19 million jobs globally. The United States, the pioneer in the consolidation and diffusion of modern franchises, is one example of the economic relevance of the franchising sector. In 2019, franchising created 8.434 million jobs and generated \$787.5 billion of revenue in the country (FASA, 2020; International Franchise Association, 2020).

The potential growth of the franchising model and its impact on income, employment, and the achievement of social goals is most noticeable in emerging and developing markets (Alon, Welsh, & Falbe, 2010; Elango, 2019; Naatu & Alon, 2019). Dant and Nasr (1998) identified three major global trends that have affected the growth of the franchising model in these countries: 1) the decline of communism in

Eastern Europe and Russia, 2) the increasing prospects for stability in areas previously characterized by war or civil unrest, such as South Africa and the Middle East, and 3) the reduction in protective trade barriers in countries such as China, India, and Brazil.

For instance, the franchise concept came to China in the early 1990s. By 2016, China had nearly 4500 franchise and retail brands, and almost 330,000 units. India had almost 1800 brands and 100,000 units, and Brazil had 3039 brands and 142,593 units. In Brazil, the franchising sector revenue registered a growth of 36% from 2014 to 2018, according to the Brazilian Franchising Association. Brazilian franchisors are responsible for 1.3 million direct jobs in the country (ABF, 2020; Alon, 2006b).

Several reviews about the general franchising literature have been published (Alon, Apriliyanti, & Henríquez Parodi, 2020; Combs, Michael, & Castrogiovanni, 2004; Dant & Grünhagen, 2014; Dant, Grünhagen, & Windsperger, 2011; Elango, 2019; Fried & Elango, 1997; Jell-Ojobor & Windsperger, 2014; Lafontaine, 2014; Rosado-Serrano, Paul, & Dikova, 2018). Nevertheless, these reviews do not consider or emphasize the growing relevance of franchising in emerging and developing markets. Only in the last decades has the need for more studies about franchising in these areas started to be reflected in the academic research (Baena, 2012b; Dant & Grünhagen, 2014; Dant et al., 2011). To date, there have been relatively few studies that have explored the expansion of this particular topic. They provided an initial understanding of the field, identifying the characteristics of emerging countries in terms of economic development, growth, and market potential

E-mail address: vanessab@uia.no (V.P.G. Bretas).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.04.067>

Received 4 April 2020; Received in revised form 23 April 2021; Accepted 25 April 2021

Available online 5 May 2021

0148-2963/© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Elsevier Inc. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

for franchisors from developed economies (Alon & Welsh, 2001; Welsh & Alon, 2001, 2002; Welsh, Alon, & Falbe, 2006).

These previous works made essential contributions. However, other fundamental developments in the global scenario are leading to new configurations involving these countries. The increase in global trade, cross-border integration, and China's rise as a world power paved the way for the international expansion of franchisors headquartered in emerging markets. At the same time, the uneven distribution of gains from free trade hurt the losers of globalization, such as some developing countries (Meyer, 2017; Rodrik, 2011; Stiglitz, 2002). In addition to its role in creating employment and alleviating poverty, these recent changes in the global economy have enhanced the importance of franchising as a resilient business format influencing local development in poor and emerging countries, especially after the 2008 economic crisis.

Thus, given the growing importance of franchising in light of the shifts in the international environment, we must determine how these movements are reflected in academia and explore the state of franchising research in contemporary scholarly debates. For instance, is the acknowledged importance of the theoretical Goldilocks' debate (Cuervo-Cazurra, 2012) concerning emerging economies' specificities explored in the franchising research? We aim to fill this void by examining how the research about franchising in emerging and developing countries has evolved, considering changes in these countries' role in the global economy.

Our goal is to describe the evolution of the field and identify its patterns, challenges, and new directions. To do so, we conduct bibliometric and content analyses. The bibliometric approach, which involves the aggregation of large amounts of bibliographic data, makes the study less susceptible to judgment bias and the idiosyncrasies of the reviewers reflected in qualitative reviews (Elango, 2019; Vogel & Güttel, 2013; Zupic & Čater, 2015). We seek to identify the research clusters, how they evolved, and the trends for future research using the Bibliometrix package in the R and VOSviewer software, as well as the content analysis approach.

The paper is organized as follows. In the next section, we introduce the methodology and data extraction process. Then, the results of the bibliometric analysis are presented, outlining the most influential journals, articles, institutions, and authors. We also note the research clusters revealed, the historical evolution of the field, and the conceptual structure of the literature. After that, we identify four research categories through the content analysis of the most cited articles, coupled with the bibliographic techniques. Finally, we present future research directions for studying franchising in emerging and developing markets based on the previous analyses.

2. Methodology

2.1. Bibliometric and content analysis methods

There are different types of qualitative and quantitative literature review methods. Examples include systematic literature reviews, meta-analyses, bibliometric analyses, and content analyses (Apriliyanti & Alon, 2017; Gaur & Kumar, 2018; Maditati, Munim, Schramm, & Kummer, 2018; Zupic & Čater, 2015). This study employs a combination of bibliometric analysis techniques (bibliographic coupling, citation and historiographic citation analysis, keyword co-occurrence, and conceptual thematic mapping) and the content analysis method to explore our research questions.

Bibliometric analysis techniques are based on a quantitative approach designed to identify, describe and evaluate published research. Using transparent, reproducible search and review processes increases the reliability of the results and reduces the subjective bias of the literature reviews (Garfield, 1979; Maditati et al., 2018; Zupic & Čater, 2015). The content analysis is useful for summarizing the trends in the literature, identifying "hot spots" and "blind spots" and obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of the articles reviewed (Gaur &

Kumar, 2018; Sassmannshausen & Volkmann, 2018). In other words, the content analysis enables the identification of the most developed (hot spots) and the less developed topics (blind spots) within the literature that, combined with other bibliometric techniques, suggest future research avenues. According to Gaur and Kumar (2018), the potential of content analysis lies in its combination with other methods.

For the data analysis and visualization, we used the Bibliometrix package in the R and VOSviewer version 1.6.12. First, we present a performance citation analysis of the most relevant studies, authors, journals, and institutions in the field. After that, we utilize bibliographic coupling to describe the intellectual structure and evolution of the literature. Bibliographic coupling analyzes the similarity between two documents using the number of references shared by them (Elango, 2019; Sanchez-Famoso, Maseda, Iturralde, Danes, & Aparicio, 2020; Zupic & Čater, 2015). For bibliographic coupling, we use the Bibliometrix R louvain clustering algorithm and association normalization. For visualization, we use the R packages ggraph and graphlayouts, and Kamada-Kawai layout. To reveal the chronological evolution of the most relevant citations, historiographic direct citation analysis is carried out using Bibliometrix R (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

We explore the thematic structure of the field through an analysis of the co-occurrence of the authors' keyword using VOSviewer software (Donthu, Kumar, Ranaweera, Sigala, & Sureka, 2021; Emich, Kumar, Lu, Norder, & Pandey, 2020). We also use Bibliometrix R-package to create a conceptual thematic map, illustrating how the research streams are positioned in terms of centrality and density (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Zupic & Čater, 2015). Finally, we conduct a content analysis to increase the understanding of the intellectual and conceptual structures that emerged using the previous techniques (Gaur & Kumar, 2018), identify the literature's theoretical lenses and trends, and suggest avenues for future research (Alon, Anderson, Munim, & Ho, 2018).

2.2. Data extraction process

The basis for this review is a collection of bibliographic data from the Scopus database. The two main bibliographic databases are Clarivate Analytics' Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The WoS database has narrower coverage than Scopus. Scopus covers over 20,000 peer-reviewed journals, including those published by Elsevier, Emerald, Taylor and Francis, Springer, Informa, and Inter-science. Web of Science includes only ISI indexed journals, and is limited to 12,000 journals (Fahimnia, Sarkis, & Davarzani, 2015; Yong-Hak, 2013).

Therefore, Scopus is more suitable for mapping smaller research areas that would be insufficiently covered by other databases (Zupic & Čater, 2015), which is the case for the literature about franchising in emerging and developing markets. Furthermore, several articles about emerging and developing markets are published in local journals. The Scopus database has more indexed journals from these countries. For instance, there are 1954 journals from BRICS countries indexed in Scopus and only 434 in Web of Science (Elsevier, 2020; Web of Science Group, 2020). We adopted a two-stage data extraction approach, following Alon et al. (2018), Apriliyanti and Alon (2017), and Fettscherin, Voss, and Gugler (2010). Table 1 shows the detailed data search and extraction process.

First, we developed a keyword search in the Scopus database and executed it in January 2020. We considered a combination of the following search terms: (1) "franchis*", in order to capture all variations of the term such as franchising, franchisor, franchisee, franchisor, franchise, franchiser; "AND" (2) emerging or developing market, econom*, countr*. However, some studies contributed to the literature using data from specific countries or regions. To capture these articles, we used a combination of the terms in (1) that mentioned China or Brazil or Russia or India or Africa or Latin America or BRICS. After refining the search by including only documents and only studies written in English,

Table 1
Keyword search in Scopus.

Step	Keyword search	# Articles
1	((("franchis*" AND ((("emerging" AND ("market*" OR "econom*" OR "countr*")) OR ("developing" AND ("market*" OR "econom*" OR "countr*"))))))	305
2	((("franchis*" AND ((("emerging" AND ("market*" OR "econom*" OR "countr*")) OR ("developing" AND ("market*" OR "econom*" OR "countr*")) OR "china" OR "brazil" OR "brasil" OR "russia" OR "india" OR "africa" OR "latin america" OR "brics"))))	741
3	(((((("franchis*" AND ((("emerging" AND ("market*" OR "econom*" OR "countr*")) OR ("developing" AND ("market*" OR "econom*" OR "countr*")) OR "china" OR "brazil" OR "brasil" OR "russia" OR "india" OR "africa" OR "latin america" OR "brics")))) AND (LIMIT-TO(DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO(LANGUAGE, "English") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "Portuguese") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "Spanish"))	487
4	After initial analysis of 487 articles, we excluded articles with the terms "enfranchisement", "franchise value", "suffrage", "democrac*", "sport", "game", "cinema", "religion" and articles that are not related to the franchising model	297

Portuguese, or Spanish, we were left with 487 articles for consideration in the first stage. The language filter was applied to enable the full comprehension of the articles in the second stage of data extraction process.

The second stage consisted of a detailed examination of the articles. First, we read the abstracts to check whether the articles identified in the first stage were suitable for the analysis (López-fernández, Serrano-bedia, & Pérez-pérez, 2016). We removed duplicate documents and the articles with the terms "enfranchisement", "franchise value", "suffrage", "democrac*", "sport", "game", "cinema", or "religion" that are related to other meanings of the term franchise, such as the right to vote in a country's elections, a set of films, video games, sports teams, and religious units. We also excluded articles that were not related to the franchising model utilized for commercial or social purposes, for instance, articles from the fields of politics, veterinary medicine, physics and astronomy, mathematics, and chemistry. If the abstract did not provide enough information to verify these conditions, we read the complete work to check it. As a result of this process, we were left with 297 studies for bibliometric analysis.

After the data extraction process for the bibliographic analysis, we selected key articles based on total global and local citations for the content analysis. Using this approach that is based on previous bibliometric studies allowed us to identify the leading research categories and streams, trends, and suggestions for future studies (Alon et al., 2018; Maditati et al., 2018). Articles with more than 10 total global citations and at least one local citation were selected. After applying the selection criteria, 31 articles were identified. We conducted a comprehensive reading and assessment of the articles, and developed a concept matrix as part of the coding process (Alon et al., 2018; Maditati et al., 2018; Sanchez-Famoso et al., 2020). The matrix contained the main information about the articles (title, authors, year of publication), research sub-themes (categories and streams), the scope of the study (purpose and research questions), type and methodology, theories, key findings, and future research suggestions. We adopted these coding categories following the suggestions of Gaur and Kumar (2018) for literature reviews focused on research themes with a narrow scope.

Along with the studies identified in the bibliometric database extraction process, we added other relevant publications such as books and important local journals not indexed in Scopus to make the analysis more comprehensive. For instance, the book series about franchising in emerging markets edited by Welsh and Alon was the first structured investigation of this field, making a significant contribution to the analysis (Alon & Welsh, 2001; Welsh & Alon, 2001, 2002). The book chapter about micro franchising (Nunes, Silva, Fadairo, & Saes, 2019),

the book series about the internationalization of Brazilian franchise chains (Rocha et al., 2014; Rocha, Spers, Borini, Bretas, & de Melo, 2016; Rocha et al., 2018; Rocha, Borini, Spers, Khauaja, & Camargo, 2012), and other relevant local articles (Bretas, Rocha, Spers, & Melo, 2020; Cantoni, Rocha, Galhanone, & Righetti, 2019) also provided additional pertinent insights.

3. Bibliometric analysis

The bibliometric analysis can be developed through different techniques, such as citation, co-citation, and bibliometric coupling. The choice of the method depends on the goal of the investigation. Citation analysis provides information about the influence of the publications, usually presenting lists of the most cited studies, authors, or journals as a measure of their importance. Co-citation analysis assumes that the analyzed articles build their research on similar articles previously published. It reflects the frequency with which two papers are cited together by other works. Bibliographic coupling reveals the connection between documents based on overlapping bibliographic references. It considers documents despite their citations, reflecting the production in the field and capturing more recent contributions (Vogel & Güttel, 2013; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

We conducted a citation analysis to show the most relevant journals, articles, institutions, and authors, and bibliographic coupling to identify the interconnections of the literature. Bibliographic coupling is more suitable than co-citations in this case because it can be used for new publications that are not cited yet, emerging fields, and smaller subfields (Zupic & Čater, 2015). Moreover, to complement the analysis, we also verified the historical evolution of the citations and the conceptual structure of the field through keyword co-occurrence and a conceptual thematic map.

3.1. Initial data statistics

The final sample of 297 articles was written by 737 authors and published in 214 journals, with an average citation level per document of 9.61. The oldest articles were published in 1989. Most of the authors wrote multi-authored documents (652 authors). Fig. 1 illustrates the yearly publication on franchising in emerging and developing markets. The annual growth rate of publications in this field was 7.87%. The production level was quite low until 2006, when the first qualitative review article was published (Welsh et al., 2006). The output before 2006 was 60 publications, but from 2006 until January of 2020 it spiked to 237, representing 79.8% of the total number of publications.

The number of funded research studies also increased from 2006 onwards (Fig. 1). The funded articles published from 2006 until January of 2020 represent 94.1% of all of the financed production in the area. The participation of funded research in the total output increased from 3.3% (1989–2005) to 13.5% (2006–2020). These figures show an

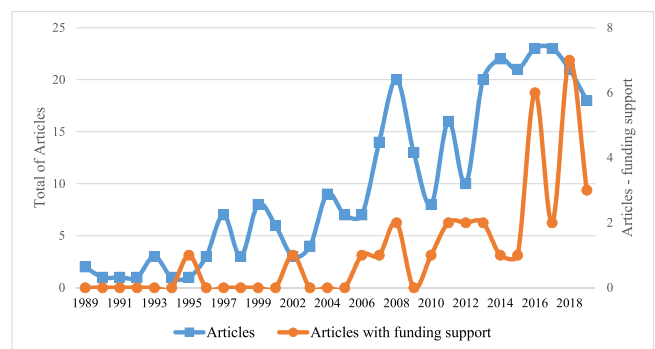


Fig. 1. Annual scientific production and funded research (number of articles per year).

increasing interest in the research on franchising in emerging and developing markets and the growing relevance of funding to this knowledge field.

3.2. Most relevant journals, articles, institutions, and authors

The bibliometric citation analysis revealed the most relevant journals, articles, relevant institutions, and impactful authors. Table 2 outlines the top journals that published studies about franchising in emerging and developing markets. Since franchising is an interdisciplinary topic, the journals belong to various academic areas such as international business, management, health, and hospitality. Of the 215 journals, two journals published more than eight articles about the subject: *Journal of Marketing Channels (JMC)* (nine articles), and *Health Policy and Planning (HPP)* (eight articles). In terms of impact (h-index), these two journals had the most substantial impact, followed by the *Journal of Small Business Management and Global Health Science and Practice*.

Table 3 reports the 20 most relevant articles about franchising in emerging and developing markets. They had the most significant impact in terms of the total local citations (TLC) and total local citations per year (TCL/t). The most influential paper in this literature is [Welsh et al. \(2006\)](#). The majority of the most influential articles discuss international franchising or social franchising.

The three most relevant institutions that publish research on franchising in emerging and developing markets in terms of the number of contributions are the University of California (eight articles), Fu Jen Catholic University (seven articles), and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (six articles). Most of the institutions producing research about the topic are headquartered in developed countries. However, there are a number of institutions from developing and emerging countries as well. Among the 20 most relevant institutions (Table 4), 8 are universities and institutions from emerging and developing countries (China, South Africa, Ghana, and Singapore), and 12 are universities and institutions from developed countries (the United

Table 2
Ranking of 20 most productive and influential journals (sorted by publication).

Rank	Journal	Publications	h_index	Total Citations
1	Journal of Marketing Channels	9	5	57
2	Health Policy and Planning	8	6	191
3	Journal of Small Business Management	4	4	209
4	Global Health Science and Practice	4	4	94
5	International Journal of Entrepreneurship And Small Business	4	2	7
6	Espacios	4	0	0
7	Textile Outlook International	4	0	0
8	Journal of Business Research	3	3	50
9	Bmc Health Services Research	3	3	34
10	Journal of Global Marketing	3	3	15
11	Bulletin of The World Health Organization	3	2	64
12	Latin American Business Review	3	2	15
13	Plos One	3	2	9
14	Thunderbird International Business Review	3	1	4
15	Public Enterprise	3	1	3
16	China Business Review	3	1	2
17	Asian Case Research Journal	3	1	1
18	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2	2	102
19	International Journal of Emerging Markets	2	2	56
20	Journal of Services Marketing	2	2	34

Table 3
Ranking of top 20 articles (sorted by TLC/t).

Rank	Author and year	TLC/t	TLC	TGC/t	TGC
1	Welsh et al. (2006)	1.69	22	7.77	101
2	Stephenson et al. (2004)	1.07	16	2.73	41
3	Pereira et al. (2015)	1.00	4	2.50	10
4	Aliouche and Schlenrich (2011)	0.88	7	5.38	43
5	Baena (2013)	0.83	5	1.50	9
6	Ngo et al. (2010)	0.78	7	2.00	18
7	Thurston et al. (2015)	0.75	3	2.75	11
8	Doherty et al. (2014)	0.60	3	3.00	15
9	Baena (2012a)	0.57	4	4.14	29
10	Huntington et al. (2012)	0.57	4	1.43	10
11	Wang et al. (2008)	0.55	6	1.27	14
12	Alon (2004)	0.53	8	3.13	47
13	Agha et al. (2007)	0.50	6	1.33	16
14	Grünhagen et al. (2010)	0.44	4	1.44	13
15	Duvall et al. (2014)	0.40	2	9.80	49
16	Prata et al. (2005)	0.36	5	4.00	56
17	Agha, Gage, and Balal (2007)	0.33	4	1.83	22
18	Baena (2009)	0.30	3	1.80	18
19	Grünhagen et al. (2012)	0.29	2	2.14	15
20	Pine et al. (2000)	0.26	5	2.89	55

TLC/t Average local citations received per year; TLC Total local citations received; TGC/t Average global citations received per year; TGC = Total global citations received

Table 4
Most relevant institutions (sorted by publications).

Affiliations	Publications	Country
University of California	8	United States
Fu Jen Catholic University	7	China
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	6	United Kingdom
Rollins College	5	United States
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	5	China
University of Ghana	5	Ghana
University of Oklahoma	5	United States
University of Washington	5	United States
Beijing Normal University	4	China
Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health	4	United States
Shanghai Jiao Tong University	4	China
Tulane University	4	United States
Universidad Europea de Madrid	4	Spain
University of Limpopo	4	South Africa
University of Pretoria	4	South Africa
Duke University	3	United States
Eastern Illinois University	3	United States
International Food Policy Research Institute	3	United States
National University of Singapore	3	Singapore
Northwestern University	3	United States

States, the United Kingdom, and Spain).

The country with the most prominent scientific production is the United States (156 articles), followed by the United Kingdom (57 articles), China (41 articles), India (37 articles), South Africa (35 articles), and Brazil (28 articles). The most cited country is also the United States, with 1235 total citations, followed by the United Kingdom (276 citations), China (199 citations), India (77 citations), Ghana (70 citations), and Spain (69 citations). These findings show that there are more contributions from institutions in developed countries, although China has the second most significant number of universities among the 20 most relevant institutions (Fu Jen Catholic University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Beijing Normal University, and Shanghai Jiao Tong University).

Table 5 presents the most impactful authors in the field. Alon, Baena, Dant, and Wall are the authors with the most significant contributions. The first three researchers have backgrounds in commercial franchising, while Wall's research focus is on social franchising. In terms of total citations, Dant has the highest number, followed by Alon.

Table 5
Most impactful authors (sorted by publications).

Rank	Author	Current affiliation*	Publications	h_index	Total Citations
1	Alon, I.	University of Agder	7	5	210
2	Baena, V.	European University of Madrid	6	5	77
3	Dant, R. P.	University of Oklahoma	5	4	216
4	Wall, K.	University of Pretoria	5	1	6
5	Chakraborty, N. M.	Metrics for Management	4	3	43
6	Montagu, D.	University of California	4	2	66
7	Bhagwan, J.	South African Water Research Commission	4	1	2
	Ive, O.	Amanz' Abantu Services	4	1	2
9	Grünhagen, M.	Eastern Illinois University	3	3	36
10	Zhu, M.	University of International Business and Economics	3	3	35
11	Terry, A.	The University of Sydney	3	3	26
12	Chen, X.	Virginia Commonwealth University	3	3	22
13	Perrigot, R.	University of Rennes	3	2	88
14	Thurston, S.	Population Services International	3	2	62
15	Agha, S.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	3	2	40
16	Hoffman, R. C.	Salisbury University	3	2	39
	Preble, J. F.	University of Delaware	3	2	39
18	Dutt, V.	Sambodhi Research and Communications	3	2	18
19	Goodman, C.	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	3	2	11
20	Nuccio, O.	Marie Stopes International	2	2	60

* Information gathered on Google Scholar and ResearchGate platforms.

3.3. Bibliographic coupling

Fig. 2 shows the network of bibliographic couplings within the field of franchising in emerging and developing markets. The nodes symbolize the documents, and the edges represent bibliographic couplings.

Two main clusters dominate the field, and one smaller subgroup is attached to both. Based on the bibliographic coupling results and an analysis of the articles' content in each cluster, we identified the predominant research categories. We labeled the first cluster (Number 1) "international franchising". The documents in this cluster address two main research categories. The first is related to the specific research streams of international franchising, investigating topics associated with the international expansion of franchisors from or to emerging and developing markets. Examples include the market selection process

(Aliouche & Schlenrich, 2011; Baena, 2012; Baena & Cerviño, 2014; Melo, Borini, & Ogasavara, 2019), choice of entry and international governance mode (Jell-Ojobor & Windsperger, 2017; Preble & Hoffman, 2006), and comparisons between domestic and international franchisors (Melo et al., 2015).

The second category consists of articles that deal with emerging and developing markets as context. In other words, the studies in this category analyze the main aspects of emerging and developing countries, describe their opportunities and challenges, identify the possible domestic impact of international franchising, and provide cross-cultural comparisons of the internal dynamics of franchising. Examples include articles that evaluate the economic, social, and cultural effects of international franchising in emerging and developing countries (Alon, 2004; Grünhagen, Witte, & Pryor, 2010), the dynamics of the

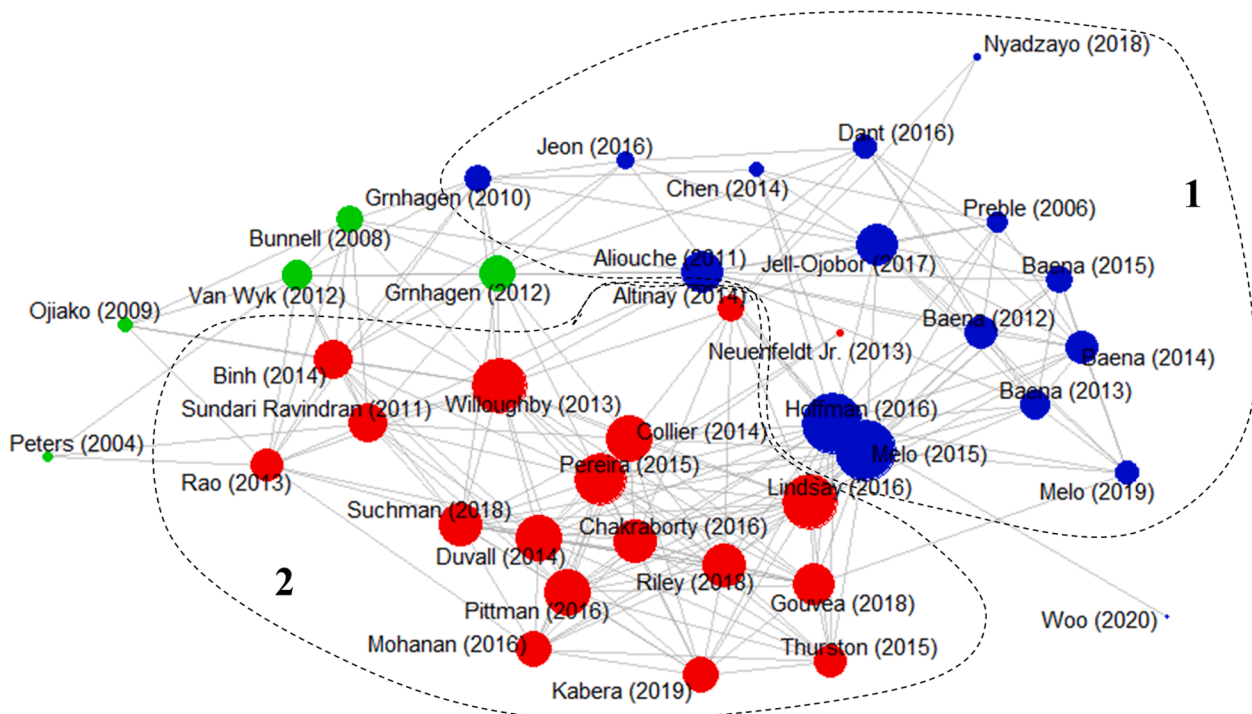


Fig. 2. Bibliographic coupling showing linkages across articles. 1 = International Franchising cluster, 2 = Social Franchising cluster.

relationship between the franchisor and the franchisee in these countries (Doherty, Chen, & Alexander, 2014), brand equity and loyalty (Chen & Su, 2014; Nyadzayo, Matanda, & Rajaguru, 2018), and cross-cultural comparisons of plural forms of decisions (Dant, Perrigot, & Cliquet, 2008).

The second cluster (Number 2) is called “social franchising”. The documents in this cluster can be divided into two main research categories that accord with Naatu and Alon (2019) conceptual framework of social franchising: (1) motivations for and performance evaluations of social franchising programs in emerging and developing countries (Chakraborty, Mbondo, & Wanderi, 2016; Duvall, Thurston, Weinberger, Nuccio, & Fuchs-Montgomery, 2014; Munroe, Hayes, & Taft, 2015; Pereira et al., 2015; Sundari Ravindran & Fonn, 2011) and (2) modes of operation of social franchising programs. Social franchising networks can be developed by international private sector non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government or public–private partnerships, or through “stand-alone” or fractional models (Ngo, Alden, Hang, & Dinh, 2009). This category includes documents that discuss these configurations (Ngo et al., 2009, 2010; Suchman, Hart, & Montagu, 2018).

3.4. Historiographic citation analysis

The historiographic citation analysis provides a chronological map of the most relevant citations resulting from a bibliographic dataset (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). From our results, which appear in Fig. 3, it is possible to understand the evolution of the literature about franchising in emerging and developing markets.

The historical direct citation map reveals that the most relevant articles were published between 1998 and 2018. Furthermore, the two main clusters identified previously, international franchising and social franchising, have evolved in parallel in the last 20 years. As Fig. 3 illustrates, there are three main research streams in international franchising cluster, which we denoted as A, B and C. In this cluster, Welsh et al. (2006) article is of particular importance because it provides a literature review about franchising in emerging markets that connects all of the research categories in this cluster.

Stream A is related to studies that consider emerging and developing countries as context, including articles that present characterizations of emerging and developing markets and discuss the economic, social, and cultural impacts of international franchising in these countries. Examples include studies by Alon and Banai (2000), describing and presenting franchising opportunities in Russia, and Pine, Qiu Zhang, and Qi (2000), characterizing the Chinese market.

Stream B is related to the category denoted in the bibliographic coupling as specific research about international franchising. This stream has articles that consider the macro and micro level factors influencing the selection of the markets to enter, the mode of doing so, and the international governance modes. Examples include studies by Alon (2006a), Baena (2009), and Aliouche and Schlenrich (2011) that investigate the importance of factors such as GDP per capita, population size, market risk, and uncertainty, and the franchisor’s international experience for decisions about markets to enter and the methods of doing so.

Stream C includes articles that consider the relationships and partnerships between the franchisor and franchisee in the international context and make cross-cultural comparisons of the domestic contexts (Altinay, Brookes, Yeung, & Aktas, 2014; Dant & Nasr, 1998; Doherty et al., 2014; Xiao, O’Neill, & Wang, 2008).

We identified two research streams in the social franchising cluster that we labeled A and B. Stream A consists of studies about family planning and health services. These studies consider the adoption of social franchising to provide healthcare and family planning services in emerging and developing markets. Examples include articles by Stephenson et al. (2004), Ngo, Alden, Pham, and Phan (2010), and Prata, Montagu, and Jefferys (2005). Stream B consists of studies that deal with technology and development (Brewer et al., 2005; Kuriyan, Ray, & Toyama, 2008). These studies consider the franchising model a method for making technology available and creating jobs through entrepreneurship in emerging and developing markets, thereby promoting their development.

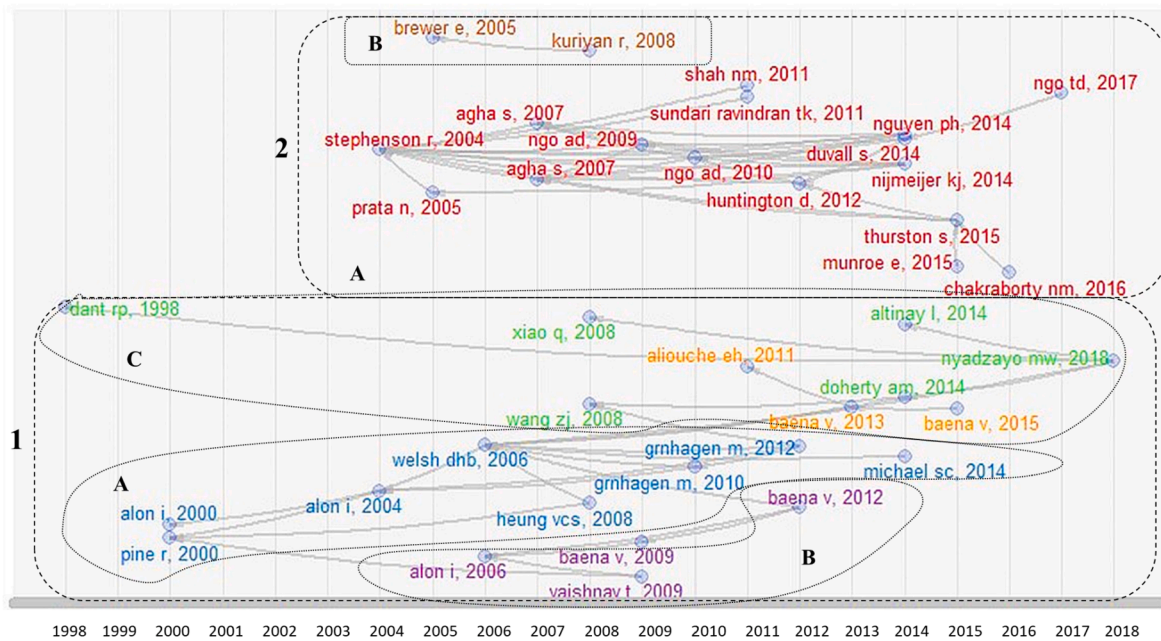


Fig. 3. Historiographic direct citation network. 1 = International Franchising cluster, A = Emerging and developing countries as context, B = Specific research about international franchising, C = Franchisor-franchisee relationship. 2 = Social Franchising cluster, A = Family planning and health services, B = Technology and development.

3.5. Keyword Co-occurrence analysis

To reveal the thematic structure of the field, we conducted a keyword co-occurrence analysis. Keywords are indicators of the article’s most important terms, expressing the research fields’ intellectual themes and structure (Donthu et al., 2021; Emich et al., 2020). Fig. 4 shows the keyword network between 1989 and 2020, considering all keywords that appear together in at least five articles. The proximity and thickness of the lines connecting two keywords indicate how frequently they co-occurred, and the size of a node indicates the frequency of its occurrence as a keyword (Donthu, Gremler, Kumar, & Pattnaik, 2020; Donthu, Kumar, & Pattnaik, 2020; Strozzi, Colicchia, Creazza, & Noè, 2017).

The network indicates three clusters. The two largest clusters comprise 88% of the most relevant keywords. These two main clusters are related to the ones identified in the previous analyses. Cluster 1 contains a set of terms linked to international franchising research, such as “China”, “India”, “South Africa”, “internationalization”, and “international business”. Cluster 2 incorporates terms linked to social franchising, such as “developing countries”, “health care service”, “health quality”, and “family planning”.

Table 6 presents the temporal evolution of keywords in four time periods (1989–1996, 1997–2004, 2005–2012, 2013–2020) to illustrate the most common and emerging themes (Donthu et al., 2021; Pattnaik, Kumar, & Vashishtha, 2020). Between 1989 and 2004, themes related to specific industries, such as “hotel industry” and “clothing industry,” started to appear but did not attract scholarly attention in the following periods. Other frequent themes discussed during this period involve research on emerging and developing countries as host markets, especially China and India, with continuing prominence in the academic field.

Between 2005 and 2012, themes such as economic development and health-related topics started to appear. Other themes often appearing during this period are “company information,” “organization and management” and “branding”, demonstrating a move towards transversal organizational and marketing topics. Post-2013 research reflects the persistent influence of international franchising topics. A variety of new topics related to social franchising such as “health care quality” and “family planning” emerged in this last period, as did other regions of

analysis such as “Kenya” and “Latin America”.

3.6. Conceptual thematic map

We plotted the most relevant topics in the field that we identified through the authors’ keywords on a two-dimensional thematic map (Fig. 5). The map indicates the strength of their internal (density) and external associations (centrality). It has four quadrants: high density and centrality (type 1), low density and high centrality (type 2), high density and low centrality (type 3), and topics with low values on both axes (type 4) (Grivel, Mutschke, & Polanco, 1995; López-fernández et al., 2016).

The research topics in quadrant type 1, with high internal and external associations, are considered mainstream themes in the literature. Topics related to international franchising and entrepreneurship are located in this quadrant. The relevance of these topics in this specific literature is related to the role of emerging and developing countries as potential markets. Emerging markets consist of the largest and most dynamic markets for international franchisors, considering their population, per capita income, urbanization rates, and income distribution. These countries have used global franchising as a tool for entrepreneurial development (Alon, 2004, 2006a; Alon, Toncar, & McKee, 2000; Baena, 2012; Welsh & Alon, 2001).

In contrast, the research topics in quadrant type 4, with low values of density and centrality, are weakly developed or emerging themes to be further developed. The main topic in this cluster is social entrepreneurship. Given our previous analyses presented in this study, we can conclude that this research stream is isolated from other topics in the field. It might be more connected to other areas such as health, considering the types of institutions and journals that publish these studies. For instance, some of the most relevant journals in this literature are *Health Policy and Planning* and *Global Health Science and Practice*. Their themes might have stronger ties with topics from other knowledge fields.

In quadrant type 2, with low density and high centrality, we see topics that are basic and transversal. Thus, in this cluster, there are general topics related to franchising, such as characteristics of the model, plural forms, and franchisor-franchisee relationships (Dant et al.,

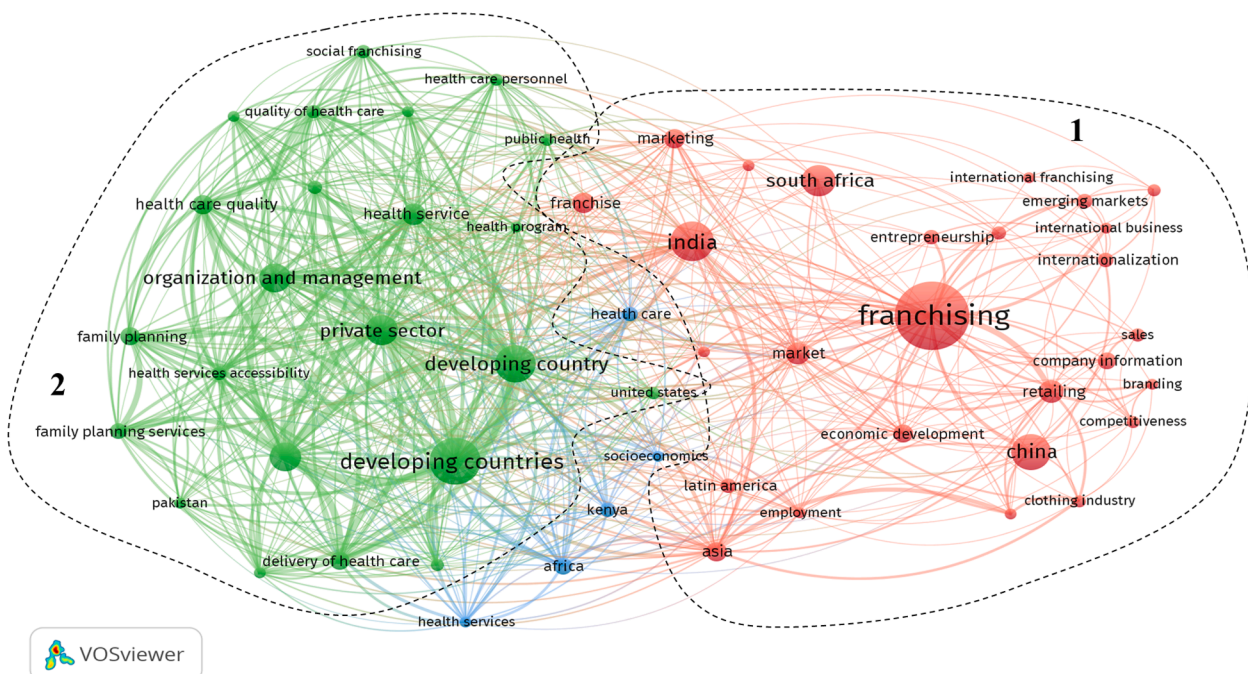


Fig. 4. Keyword co-occurrence analysis. 1 = International Franchising cluster, 2 = Social Franchising cluster.

Table 6
Temporal evolution of keywords between 1989 and 2020 (number of occurrences).

Keyword	1989–1996	1997–2004	2005–2012	2013–2020	Total
Franchising	5	8	27	30	70
Developing countries/country	7	6	8	44	65
India	3		9	20	32
China		6	10	15	31
South Africa	2		5	15	22
Organization and management			6	16	22
Private sector			6	14	20
Health care delivery			5	14	19
Health service			5	13	18
Franchise			5	11	16
Market		5		8	13
Retailing			8	5	13
Economic development			6	5	11
Health care quality				11	11
Delivery of health care				9	9
Internationalization				9	9
Kenya				8	8
Latin america				8	8
Asia	2		5		7
Company information			7		7
Emerging markets				7	7
Family planning				7	7
Africa			6		6
Branding			6		6
Family planning services				6	6
Health care personnel				6	6
Social franchising				6	6
United states				6	6
Clothing industry		5			5
Entrepreneurship				5	5
Health program				5	5
Health services accessibility				5	5
International business				5	5
Public health				5	5
Quality of health care				5	5
Hotel industry	2				2

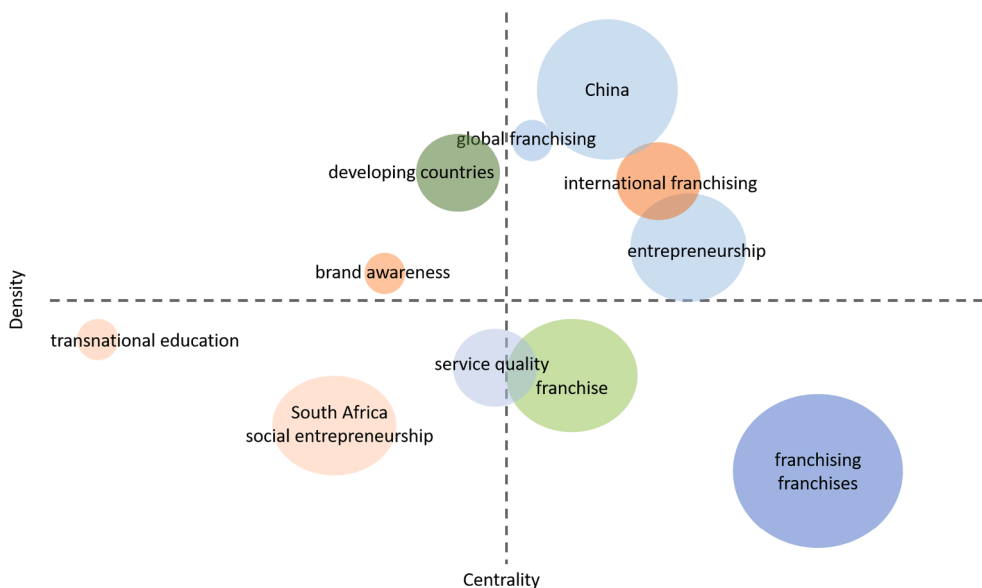


Fig. 5. Conceptual thematic map.

2008; Doherty et al., 2014). Finally, in quadrant type 3, with high density and low centrality, there are articles about specialized themes such as brand construction and awareness (Chen & Su, 2014; Nyadzayo et al., 2018; Rocha et al., 2018).

4. Content analysis

4.1. Research categories and streams

Table 7 provides information about the 31 articles identified based on citations criteria, following previous bibliometric studies (Alon et al.,

Table 7
Analysis of 31 most influential articles (TGC \geq 10 / TLC \geq 1).

Category	Stream	Articles	Type of analysis	Method	Theories	
<i>International franchising (IF)</i>						
Specific IF streams	Market selection (macro–micro level factors)	Alon (2006a)	Quantitative	Descriptive statistics	N/A	
		Aliouche and Schlenrich (2011)	Quantitative	Composite measures with weighting factors	Transaction cost theory Uppsala model OLI paradigm	
	Baena (2012a)	Quantitative	Regression	Transaction cost theory		
Entry and governance modes		Preble and Hoffman (2006)	Conceptual / Descriptive	N/A	Resource-based theory	
		Baena (2009)	Quantitative	Regression	Transaction cost theory	
International franchise partnerships		Dant and Nasr (1998) Xiao et al. (2008)	Quali-Quanti Quantitative	In-depth study / MANOVA Descriptive statistics / X2-tests	Agency theory Agency theory Resource-based theory Upper echelon theory	
Emerging and developing markets as context	Market characterization	Alon and Banai (2000)	Conceptual / Descriptive	N/A	Macromarketing Agency theory	
		Pine et al. (2000) Welsh et al. (2006) Wang et al. (2008)			N/A Stakeholder theory N/A	
	Economic, social and cultural effects	Alon (2004)	Conceptual / Descriptive	N/A	Macromarketing	
		Tsai et al. (2007)	Quantitative	Factor analysis / Importance – Performance analysis	Service quality	
	Domestic dynamics and cross-cultural comparison	Grünhagen et al. (2010)	Grünhagen et al. (2010)	Qualitative	Focus group	Consumer agency
			Grünhagen et al. (2012)	Quantitative	MANOVA / ANOVA	Consumer agency
		Altinay et al. (2014)	Qualitative	In-depth interviews	Power dependence Social exchange	
		Doherty et al. (2014)	Qualitative	In-depth interviews	Agency theory Institutional theory	
		Dant et al. (2008)	Quantitative	MANOVA / ANOVA / Regression	Agency theory Resource constraint Signaling	
<i>Social franchising (SF)</i>						
Motivations and performance	Family planning and health services	Stephenson et al. (2004)	Quantitative	Regression	N/A	
		Agha et al. (2007)	Quantitative	Logistic regression		
		Agha et al. (2007)	Quantitative	Regression		
		Huntington et al. (2012)	Quantitative	Regression		
		Duvall et al. (2014)	Quali-Quanti	In-depth study / Descriptive statistics		
	Thurston et al. (2015)	Quali-Quanti	In-depth study / Descriptive statistics			
	Pereira et al. (2015)	Quantitative	Difference-in-difference			
	Munroe et al. (2015)	Quali-Quanti	Holm's method / Non-parametric test			
	Technology and development	Brewer et al. (2005)	Christensen et al. (2010)	Conceptual / Descriptive Quantitative	N/A Regression	N/A Entrepreneurship
Operation modes	Public-private partnership	Prata et al. (2005)	Quantitative	Descriptive statistics	N/A	
	Public-private partnership / Fractional model	Ngo et al. (2009)	Qualitative	Interviews / Focus group / Semistructural observations	Macromarketing	
		Ngo et al. (2010)	Quantitative	Logistic regression	N/A	

2018; Maditati et al., 2018). We divided the two major clusters, international franchising, and social franchising, into categories and research streams. We also indicated the type of study, method, and theories used.

We also coupled the content analysis of the most cited articles with papers identified through bibliographic techniques and other types of relevant references to make the study more comprehensive. Four research categories emerged when we combined the bibliometric and content analyses. The cluster of international franchising is composed of articles about (a) specific international franchising streams and (b) emerging and developing countries as context. The articles about social franchising can be divided into (c) social franchising motivations and

performance and (d) the modes of operation of social franchising. Fig. 6 illustrates the resulting research framework of the field.

4.1.1. Specific international franchising streams

The first category in the international franchising cluster (a) covers studies about franchising in emerging and developing markets with regard to three topics: 1) the macro and micro determinants of market selection, 2) entry and governance modes, and 3) international franchise partnerships. These categories align with Rosado-Serrano et al. (2018) general international franchising research categories. Most of the articles on the three topics deal with franchisors from developed countries

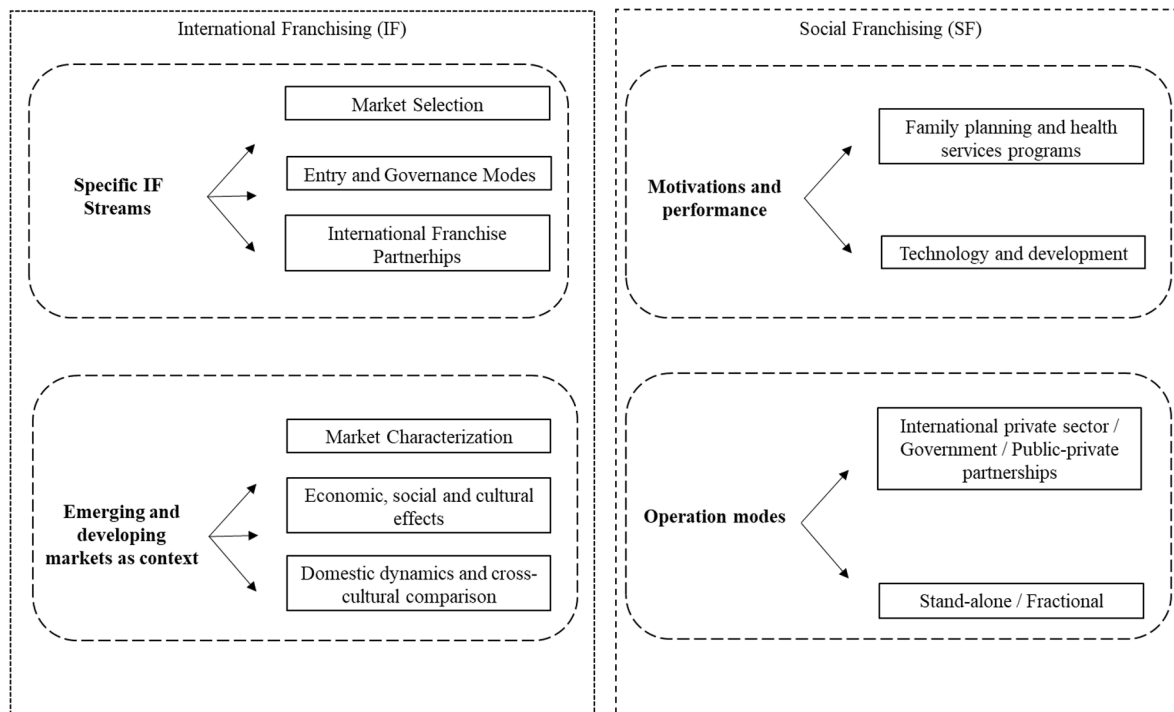


Fig. 6. Research framework – Franchising in Emerging and Developing Markets.

operating in emerging and developing countries, with some exceptions involving franchisors from emerging and developing countries expanding abroad. A few studies explore the effect of aspects of emerging economies such as the institutional environment on the decisions of franchisors headquartered in these countries to internationalize. Also, few articles debate the suitability of existing theories in explaining their choices (Aguiar, Luppe, & Nascimento, 2017; Alon, Yehekel, Lerner, & Zhang, 2013; Melo et al., 2015; Melo et al., 2019).

The research stream dealing with market selection investigates the macro and micro level factors that might affect the franchisor's decisions about the destination countries. Alon (2006a) evaluated the economic potential of the emerging markets according to their population, GDP per capita, urbanization level, and income distribution. He found that Brazil, Russia, and Mexico outranked China and India as the markets with the largest economies for service franchising. Aliouche and Schlenrich (2011) developed an index of international franchise expansion that ranks countries according to their attractiveness to US-based franchisors. Finally, Baena (2012a) analyzed possible determining factors that drive the international franchising expansion of Spanish franchisors into emerging markets.

Previous literature reviews have recognized the study of the entry and governance modes as one of the main areas of interest in the international franchising literature. Researchers have identified company-owned outlets, direct franchising, area development, master franchising, and franchising joint ventures as the leading governance modes in international franchising (Jell-Ojobor & Windsperger, 2014; Rosado-Serrano et al., 2018). The studies are concerned with the adequacy and the costs and benefits of the various entry and governance modes, as well as the host market's conditions. Most studies consider the similarities and differences between the home and host countries as important factors in deciding how to enter and govern a franchise in emerging and developing markets (Baena, 2009; Preble & Hoffman, 2006).

Research about international franchise partnerships covers the process of selecting an international partner and the relationships between cross-border franchisors and franchisees. Local partners are essential to the success of international operations because of their knowledge about local practices, regulations, and customer preferences (Rosado-Serrano

et al., 2018). In their study of prospective Chinese franchisees Xiao et al. (2008) indicated that they had a great deal of knowledge about and interest in franchising, affected mainly by their educational background and industry experience.

International franchising relationships face a specific set of challenges due to cultural differences, language barriers, and business practices. For example, monitoring is a significant challenge for international franchisors. Dant and Nasr (1998) investigated U.S. based franchisors' monitoring techniques for evaluating the performance of their franchisees in the Middle East and Africa. They found that the extent of competition that franchisees face is an incentive. However, the age of the relationship is a disincentive for the exchange of information between franchisees and franchisors.

4.1.2. Emerging and developing countries as context

The second research category in the international franchising cluster (b) covers studies about three topics: 1) market characterizations, 2) the possible impacts of international franchising, and 3) domestic franchising dynamics and cross-cultural comparisons.

The articles that provide market characterizations are descriptive and highlight the main aspects, opportunities and challenges of emerging and developing countries as potential host markets (Wang, Zhu, & Terry, 2008), usually for franchisors from developed countries (Alon & Banai, 2000; Pine et al., 2000; Welsh et al., 2006).

The studies that consider the economic, social, and cultural effects of international franchising discuss the potential positive and negative impacts of international franchisors operating in emerging and developing countries. Welsh and Alon (2001) and Alon (2004) argued that emerging markets have used global franchising as a tool for economic and entrepreneurial development, employment creation, and global integration. Welsh et al. (2006) pointed out the positive effects on local development but also noted some adverse effects, such as the displacing of local businesses.

Grünhagen et al. (2010) investigated the impact of U.S. franchisors in Egypt, focusing on the consumers' acceptance of and reactions to international brands. They demonstrated that the franchising's effects are broad and complex. Grünhagen, Dant, and Zhu (2012), Tsai, Shih, and

Chen (2007), Dant, Jeon, Mumdzhev, and Windsperger (Jean), Mumdzhev, N., & Windsperger, J. (2016), and Jeon, Meiseberg, Dant, and Grünhagen (Jean), Meiseberg, B., Dant, R. P., & Grünhagen, M. (2016) also investigated the consumer perspective, analyzing the impact of U.S. franchising brands on consumer behavior in several emerging economies.

The articles that discuss domestic franchising dynamics and cross-cultural comparisons cover topics such as the relationship between the franchisor and the franchisee, location choices, and plural forms of decisions in the local, internal context of emerging and developing countries. Altinay et al. (2014) evaluated the antecedents of the development of the franchise relationship from the perspective of Chinese and Turkish franchisees, highlighting the role of performance and communication. Doherty et al. (2014) analyzed the franchising relationship in China, focusing on aspects of power, control, support, and conflict. Dant et al. (2008) compared the plural form of decisions in Brazil, France, and the United States, revealing that plural forms are used almost three times more often in France and Brazil than the United States.

4.1.3. Social franchising motivations and performance

The first research category in the social franchising cluster (c) identified in the bibliometric and content analyses is related to the motivations and performance evaluation of social franchising programs. Social franchising can be described as the application of business-format franchising to achieve social benefits. In other words, it is a market-based approach derived from commercial franchising adopted to organize, improve and provide quality-assured services and products of social importance, especially to low- and middle-income countries (Alon, 2014; Naatu & Alon, 2019; Pereira et al., 2015).

The studies in this category can be divided into two streams: family planning and health services programs, and technology and development. Although the model can be applied in both developed and developing countries, in the latter countries, social franchising exists predominantly in the health sector (Alon, 2014; du Toit, 2014). Among the articles that investigate motivations and performance, the majority are related to social franchising for health, family planning, or reproductive health. For instance, Stephenson et al. (2004) examined the associations between franchise membership and family planning and reproductive health outcomes in Pakistan, Ethiopia, and India. Agha, Karim, Balal, and Sosler (2007) analyzed the impact of a reproductive health franchise on client satisfaction in Nepal. Huntington, Mundy, Hom, Li, and Aung (2012) evaluated the motivations of providers to join or remain within a social franchising network.

The second stream includes studies that consider franchising as a mechanism for technology diffusion and the economic development of emerging and developing countries. One of these methods is the use of the micro franchising model, defined as the establishment of small businesses with minimal start-up costs. Alon (2014) considered social and micro franchising the third generation of franchising, after the first generation (product distribution) and the second (business-format franchising). Christensen, Parsons, and Fairbourne (2010) analyzed the potential of micro franchising to act as an employment incubator, comparing the monthly profits of micro franchisees and stand alone businesses in Ghana. Brewer et al. (2005) studied the role of information and communications technology (ICT) in addressing the needs of developing regions. They found that franchising is a successful way to deploy large-scale ICT projects in emerging and developing countries.

4.1.4. Social franchising operation modes

The second research category in the social franchising cluster (d) covers the studies that investigate the modes of operation in social franchises. As mentioned before, social franchising networks can be developed by international private sector non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government, or public-private partnerships. Their modes of operation include government ownership. Some components of private sector social franchise models, such as franchising fees and

royalties, are usually not applied because other stakeholders might view them as inappropriate. Moreover, the franchise arrangements may either be stand alone, in which the agreement is related to the entire franchisee operation, or fractional, in which only some of the goods or services provided by the franchised clinics are part of the branded franchisor-franchisee agreement (du Toit, 2014; Ngo et al., 2009).

Prata et al. (2005) assessed the use of social franchising to supplement government programs in the delivery of public health services in 22 sub-Saharan African countries. They concluded that the limited human resources available to governments necessitated a strategy of greater involvement with the private sector, and social franchising provided a possible solution to this problem. Ngo et al. (2009) evaluated the fractional social franchise model of reproductive health services through community public health clinics adopted in Vietnam. They found that the adaptation of the social franchise model to the public sector context could improve the quality of reproductive health care services significantly. Finally, Ngo et al. (2010) documented that the government social franchise model adopted in Vietnam increased the use of reproductive health and family planning services.

4.2. Theoretical underpinnings

As Table 7 indicates, the research about franchising in emerging and developing markets uses various theoretical lenses. The core theories adopted in the most cited articles are agency theory (Alon & Banai, 2000; Dant & Nasr, 1998; Dant et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2014; Xiao et al., 2008), transaction cost theory (Aliouche & Schlenrich, 2011; Baena, 2009; 2012), resource-based theory (Dant et al., 2008; Preble & Hoffman, 2006; Xiao et al., 2008), and macro marketing (Alon & Banai, 2000; Alon, 2004; Ngo et al., 2009).

Some theories are utilized in specific research streams. For instance, service quality and consumer agency are used in three articles about the economic, social, and cultural effects of international franchising on local consumers (Grünhagen et al., 2010, 2012; Tsai et al., 2007).

Other theoretical lenses applied are the Uppsala model, the OLI paradigm, and the power dependence, social exchange, entrepreneurship, upper echelon, institutional, and signaling theories. However, some articles, particularly those in the social franchising research cluster, are descriptive and do not mention or use the concepts of any particular theory.

5. Future research directions

We maintain that research would benefit from future investigations into the four categories we identified in our analysis: specific international franchising streams, emerging and developing countries as context, social franchising motivations and performance, and social franchising operation modes.

5.1. Research agenda for specific international franchising streams

Our review shows that most articles about specific international franchising streams, such as market selection, entry and governance modes, and international partnerships, analyze franchisors from developed countries operating in emerging and developing countries. Studies about the internationalization of firms headquartered in emerging and developing economies into other emerging countries or into developed economies have appeared more recently in the literature. However, the research in this area is rather limited (Nielsen, Hannibal, & Larsen, 2018; Wright, Filatotchev, Hoskisson, & Peng, 2005).

Due to their increased relevance in international business, future research needs to focus on the decision-making processes of franchisors headquartered in emerging and developing countries. These markets tend to have environmental uncertainties rooted in their lesser economic development and weaker institutional settings. They might face a liability of origin due to lack of reputation and legitimacy in international

markets. Home country conditions might prompt companies headquartered in these countries to follow particular paths of international expansion. These paths might affect the speed at which they can internationalize, and their entry modes, geographical scope, and location decisions (Cuervo-Cazurra, 2012; Mukherjee, Makarius, & Stevens, 2018; Ramamurti, 2012; Scalera, Mukherjee, & Piscitello, 2020).

We suggest two future research issues for further exploration in this context. First, it is important to understand the country-of-origin effects on the host countries' partners, employees, and customers' perceptions. In other words, scholars should explore the host countries' stakeholders' impressions about the reputation of emerging and developing franchisors. Are stakeholders willing to work with or buy from these companies, especially when the host markets are in developed countries? Do perceptions about the company's reputation affect decisions about internationalizing? Signaling theory can be useful for addressing these questions (Mukherjee et al., 2018). The case of a Brazilian franchisor that expanded its operations to Europe in 2008 can illustrate this type of challenge that companies in emerging and developing markets face. At the beginning of the operation, local workers were unhappy about being controlled by Brazilian owners (Bretas, 2016).

Second, future studies should try to determine whether factors in the Western, developed context are relevant to emerging countries. What aspects differ between franchisors in emerging and developing economies and those in developed economies? Does the home country's institutional environment influence their behavior and decisions about international expansion with regard to location/market selection, geographical scope, and entry modes? Do the existing theories explain their choices (Cuervo-Cazurra, 2012)? Does the franchising model enable these firms to overcome the liabilities of emergingness (Scalera et al., 2020), such as the lack of reputation, information asymmetry, financial resources, distribution capacity, and technology?

5.2. Research agenda for emerging and developing markets as context

Our analysis shows that research about emerging and developing markets has been focused on their growing market potential, the possible impact of international franchising, and domestic franchising dynamics. Most empirical articles investigate samples or cases from a single country (Baena, 2009, 2012a; Grünhagen et al., 2010, 2012; Tsai et al., 2007; Xiao et al., 2008). In general, there is relatively little comparative research on multinationals headquartered in emerging markets (Scalera et al., 2020).

Future research could conduct cross-national investigations involving franchise companies from emerging and developing markets. Comparative studies can improve our understanding of the similarities and differences between them and companies in developed countries. Dant et al. (2008) suggested expanding the literature about comparative international franchising by exploring legal, economic, and social issues across countries. Lafontaine (2014) and Grünhagen et al. (2012) also recommended research about franchising with cross-national data. Cross-national research is useful for comparing the context of emerging and developing economies and that of developed countries and highlighting the differences between countries classified as emerging and developing markets. Although these countries share some attributes, there are essential specificities and various institutional characteristics (Nielsen et al., 2018) that need to be analyzed further.

5.3. Research agenda for social franchising motivations and performance

As the temporal evolution of the keywords and the thematic map illustrate, the most recent period indicates the growth in social franchising topics as an emerging theme. A deeper look at articles through content analysis reveals that these studies are predominantly descriptive, characterizing the existing programs and their results. From 13 articles within the social franchising cluster, 11 do not use any theoretical lens (Table 7). These articles report the outcomes of specific

institutions engaged in social franchising projects, such as SEWA's nurse and paramedic franchise, the Nepal Fertility Care Center, Sun Quality Health, and Marie Stopes International. Nevertheless, they do not provide in-depth discussions about the long-term effects of social franchising on development, local wealth creation, knowledge diffusion, the effect on stakeholders, and other big picture issues. There is a need for broader and more structured studies using theoretical lenses that might help explain the tenets of social franchising (Naatu & Alon, 2019).

Micro franchising is another topic that is usually studied as a social franchising model that needs additional investigation. Most studies characterize micro franchises as base-of-the-pyramid, market-oriented businesses, uniting the goals of creating profits and alleviating poverty (Alon, Mitchell, & Munoz, 2010; Christensen et al., 2010; Kistruck, Webb, Sutter, & Ireland, 2011; Naatu & Alon, 2019). However, a debate that has recently emerged is whether micro franchising is a business model that is socially oriented, with a concomitant focus on profit and alleviating poverty (Christensen et al., 2010), or whether the employment and income opportunities created are simply the unintended consequences of the expansion of profit-oriented franchises. Evidence from Brazil shows that micro franchising has been adopted to expand into areas that are difficult to reach or have logistical problems (Nunes et al., 2019). Moreover, a case study with Brazilian micro franchisees underscored the franchisors' opportunistic behavior (Melo, Borini, & Cunha, 2014; Nunes et al., 2019). Thus, to understand the phenomenon fully, it is crucial to explore the motivations on both sides in greater depth and the possible adverse effects of micro franchising.

5.4. Research agenda for social franchising operation modes

The performance of social franchising models depends on their operation structure. They can be developed by international private sector non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government, or public-private partnerships. In all cases, financing is a major concern for social franchising programs. Their viability and long-term sustainability depend on the resources obtained from several sources, such as donations and public funding.

Several scholars have identified the need for more research about new alternatives and types of financing to scale-up social franchising programs and make them cost-effective, diversify the sources of funding and reduce the dependence on donations (Huntington et al., 2012; Pereira et al., 2015; Stephenson et al., 2004; Thurston, Chakraborty, Hayes, Mackay, & Moon, 2015). Future research can examine financing malfunctions (for instance, in the donation process), other possibilities of financing, successful and unsuccessful cases, and the potential positive impacts in terms of socio-economic development.

6. Conclusions

Using a sample of 297 articles from the literature about franchising in emerging and developing markets, we investigated the intellectual and conceptual structure of the field, identified the most influential research perspectives, and proposed a future research agenda. As a result of a bibliometric analysis through bibliographic coupling, historiographic citation, keyword co-occurrence, and conceptual thematic mapping, we revealed two main clusters of articles, those on international franchising and social franchising.

Specific research categories emerged by coupling the bibliometric techniques with a content analysis. In the international franchising cluster, we found two research categories: (a) studies about specific streams of international franchising and (b) studies about emerging and developing countries as context. In the social franchising cluster, two other research categories emerged: (c) social franchising motivations and performance and (d) the modes by which social franchising operate. We established that most of the articles analyze the franchising in emerging and developing countries from the point of view of developed countries, even though Chinese universities are gaining prominence in

the number of articles produced. Another finding was that several articles, particularly in the social franchising cluster, are descriptive and do not mention or use the concepts of any theories.

Despite the growing attention in the academic and managerial literature about franchising, there have been relatively few previous attempts to fully understand the extent of the literature about franchising in emerging and developing markets. This article provides an important complement to the existing qualitative reviews and attempts to characterize the market. Moreover, we seek to advance the literature by suggesting future research on the international expansion of franchisors based on emerging or developing economies, country-of-origin effects on reputation and decision-making processes, cross-national investigations, financing alternatives for social franchising models, the effects of social franchising on the development of these countries, and more structured studies using theoretical lenses to explain the tenets of social franchising.

This study is not free of limitations. The Bibliometrix package in R software does not include certain pre-processing options, such as the removal of duplicate documents. According to Moral-Muñoz, Herrera-Viedma, Santisteban-Espejo, and Cobo (2020), pre-processing features are underdeveloped in bibliometric tools. In this study, we adopted the two-stage data extraction approach to overcome this limitation, removing the duplicate documents. The data extraction process also helped us deal with limitations regarding the quality of the abstracts. If the abstract did not provide enough information to verify the adequacy of the article in the analysis (for instance, works not related to the franchising model utilized for commercial or social purposes), we read the entire work to check it.

In addition, we analyzed studies from the Scopus database, but some relevant studies produced in emerging and developing countries may not be part of international databases. We also acknowledge that relevant articles in languages other than English, Portuguese, and Spanish were not considered due to the authors' limitations in reading abstracts and full articles in other languages. Future research can expand this study to include articles written in languages from other emerging and developing countries. We added other relevant publications such as books and executive insights to make the analysis more comprehensive. Thus, our study does provide insights into the literature about franchising in emerging and developing markets.

Funding

This work was supported in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brasil (CAPES) - Finance Code 001.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

References

- ABF. (2020). Números do Franchising mostrando o desempenho do setor. ABF. <https://www.abf.com.br/numeros-do-franchising/>.
- Agha, S., Gage, A., & Balal, A. (2007). Changes in perceptions of quality of, and access to, services among clients of a fractional franchise network in Nepal. *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 39(3), 341–354. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002193200600174X>.
- Agha, S., Karim, A. M., Balal, A., & Sosler, S. (2007). The impact of a reproductive health franchise on client satisfaction in rural Nepal. *Health Policy and Planning*, 22(5), 320–328. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czm025>.
- Aguiar, H. de S., Luppe, M. R., & Nascimento, P. T. de S. (2017). Brazilian franchisor: Entry and operation of internationalized franchise. *Internext*, 12(3), 16–30. <https://doi.org/10.18568/1980-4865.12316-30>.
- Aliouche, E. H., & Schlenrich, U. A. (2011). Towards a Strategic Model of Global Franchise Expansion. *Journal of Retailing*, 87(3), 345–365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2011.01.004>.
- Alon, I. (2004). Global Franchising and Development in Emerging and Transitioning Markets. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 24(2), 156–167. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0276146704269320>.
- Alon, I. (2006a). Executive insight: Evaluating the market size for service franchising in emerging markets. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 1(1), 9–20. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17468800610644979>.
- Alon, I. (2006b). Master international franchising in China: The case of The Athlete's Foot. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 4(1), 41–51. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJESB.2007.011430>.
- Alon, I. (Ed.). (2014). *Social Franchising*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137455840>.
- Alon, I., Anderson, J., Munim, Z. H., & Ho, A. (2018). A review of the internationalization of Chinese enterprises. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 35(3), 573–605. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-018-9597-5>.
- Alon, I., Apriliyanti, I. D., & Henriquez Parodi, M. C. (2020). A systematic review of international franchising. *Multinational Business Review, ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print)*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MBR-01-2020-0019>.
- Alon, I., & Banai, M. (2000). Executive Insights: Franchising Opportunities and Threats in Russia. *Journal of International Marketing*, 8(3), 104–119. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jimk.8.3.104.19634>.
- Alon, I., Mitchell, M. C., & Munoz, J. M. (2010a). Microfranchising in less developed countries. In I. Alon (Ed.), *Franchising Globally: Innovation, Learning and Imitation* (pp. 155–180). UK: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230289857_9.
- Alon, I., Toncar, M., & McKee, D. (2000). Evaluating Foreign-Market Environments for International Franchising Expansion. *Foreign Trade Review*, 35(1), 1–11.
- Alon, I., & Welsh, D. H. B. (2001). *International franchising in emerging markets: China, India, and other Asian countries*. Cch Incorporated.
- Alon, I., Welsh, D. H. B., & Falbe, C. M. (2010b). Franchising in emerging markets. In I. Alon (Ed.), *Franchising Globally: Innovation, Learning and Imitation* (pp. 11–35). UK: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230289857_2.
- Alon, I., Yeheskel, O., Lerner, M., & Zhang, W. (2013). Internationalization of Chinese Entrepreneurial Firms. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 55(5), 495–512. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tie.21566>.
- Altinay, L., Brookes, M., Yeung, R., & Aktas, G. (2014). Franchisees' perceptions of relationship development in franchise partnerships. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 28(6), 509–519. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-09-2013-0240>.
- Apriliyanti, I. D., & Alon, I. (2017). Bibliometric analysis of absorptive capacity. *International Business Review*, 26(5), 896–907. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2017.02.007>.
- Aria, M., & Cuccurullo, C. (2017). bibliometrix: An R-tool for comprehensive science mapping analysis. *Journal of Informetrics*, 11(4), 959–975. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2017.08.007>.
- Baena, V. (2009). Modeling Global Franchising in Emerging Markets: An Entry Mode Analysis. *Journal of East-West Business*, 15(3–4), 164–188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10669860903435921>.
- Baena, V. (2012a). Market conditions driving international franchising in emerging markets. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 7(1), 49–71. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17468801211197879>.
- Baena, V. (2012b). *Master Franchising as Foreign Entry Mode: Evidences from the Spanish Franchise System*. International Scholarly Research Notices.
- Baena, V. (2013). Insights on International Franchising: Entry Mode Decision. *Latin American Business Review*, 14(1), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10978526.2013.780453>.
- Baena, V., & Cerviño, J. (2014). International Franchising Decision-Making: A Model for Country Choice. *Latin American Business Review*, 15(1), 13–43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10978526.2014.871214>.
- Bretas, V. (2016). As influências da seleção de parceiros e dos relacionamentos na dinâmica de expansão internacional: Um estudo de caso múltiplo em redes de franquias [ESPM]. <http://tede2.espm.br/handle/tede/233>.
- Bretas, V. P. G., Rocha, T. V., Spers, E. E., & Melo, P. L. de R. (2020). Governance modes in international franchise networks: Partner selection and relationships. *Revista Brasileira de Marketing*, 19(1). <https://doi.org/10.5585/remark.v19i1.17139>.
- Brewer, E., Demmer, M., Du, B., Ho, M., Kam, M., Nedeveschi, S., ... Fall, K. (2005). The case for technology in developing regions. *IEEE Computer Society*, 38(6), 25–38. <https://doi.org/10.1109/MC.2005.204>.
- Cantoni, A. D., Rocha, T. V., Galhanone, R. F., & Righetti, M. L. (2019). International marketing strategies adopted in the franchise internationalization process: A multiple case study in the apparel industry. *REMark*, 18(2), 19.
- Castrogiovanni, G. J., Combs, J. G., & Justis, R. T. (2006). Resource Scarcity and Agency Theory Predictions Concerning the Continued Use of Franchising in Multi-outlet Networks. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 44(1), 27–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-627X.2006.00152.x>.
- Chakraborty, N. M., Mbondo, M., & Wanderi, J. (2016). Evaluating the impact of social franchising on family planning use in Kenya. *Journal of Health, Population, and Nutrition*, 35. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41043-016-0056-y>.
- Chen, Y.-M., & Su, C.-T. (2014). Brand equity heterogeneity among strategic groups in service franchising. *The Service Industries Journal*, 34(9–10), 867–884. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2014.905924>.
- Christensen, L. J., Parsons, H., & Fairbourne, J. (2010). Building Entrepreneurship in Subsistence Markets: Microfranchising as an Employment Incubator. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(6), 595–601. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.03.020>.
- Combs, J. G., Michael, S. C., & Castrogiovanni, G. J. (2004). Franchising: A Review and Avenues to Greater Theoretical Diversity. *Journal of Management*, 30(6), 907–931. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jm.2004.06.006>.
- Cuervo-Cazurra, A. (2012). Extending theory by analyzing developing country multinational companies: Solving the Goldilocks debate. *Global Strategy Journal*, 2(3), 153–167. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2042-5805.2012.01039.x>.

- Dant, R. P., & Grünhagen, M. (2014). International Franchising Research: Some Thoughts on the What, Where, When, and How. *Journal of Marketing Channels*, 21(3), 124–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1046669X.2014.917012>.
- Dant, R. P., Grünhagen, M., & Windsperger, J. (2011). Franchising Research Frontiers for the Twenty-First Century. *Journal of Retailing*, 87(3), 253–268. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2011.08.002>.
- Dant, R. P., Jeon, H. J., Mumdzhev, N., & Windsperger, J. (2016). A Cross-National Comparison of Brand Perceptions of Global Franchise Chains in the BRICS. *Journal of Marketing Channels*, 23(4), 196–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1046669X.2016.1224304>.
- Dant, R. P., & Nasr, N. I. (1998). Control techniques and upward flow of information in franchising in distant markets: Conceptualization and preliminary evidence. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 13(1), 3–28. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9026\(97\)00040-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9026(97)00040-2).
- Dant, R. P., Perrigot, R., & Cliquet, G. (2008). A Cross-Cultural Comparison of the Plural Forms in Franchise Networks: United States, France, and Brazil. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 46(2), 286–311.
- Doherty, A. M., Chen, X., & Alexander, N. (2014). The franchise relationship in China: Agency and institutional theory perspectives. *European Journal of Marketing*, 48(9/10), 1664–1689. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-04-2012-0199>.
- Donthu, N., Gremler, D. D., Kumar, S., & Pattnaik, D. (2020). Mapping of Journal of Service Research Themes: A 22-Year Review. *Journal of Service Research*, 1094670520977672. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670520977672>.
- Donthu, N., Kumar, S., & Pattnaik, D. (2020). Forty-five years of Journal of Business Research: A bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 109, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.10.039>.
- Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Ranaweera, C., Sigala, M., & Sureka, R. (2021). Journal of Service Theory and Practice at age 30: Past, present and future contributions to service research. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print). <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSTP-10-2020-0233>.
- du Toit, A. (2014). Social franchising as organizational format—an overview. In I. Alon (Ed.), *Social Franchising* (pp. 8–32). UK: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137455840_2.
- Duvall, S., Thurston, S., Weinberger, M., Nuccio, O., & Fuchs-Montgomery, N. (2014). Scaling up delivery of contraceptive implants in sub-Saharan Africa: Operational experiences of Marie Stopes International. *Global Health: Science and Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.9745/GHSP-D-13-00116>.
- Elango, B. (2019). A Bibliometric Analysis of Franchising Research (1988–2017). *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 28(2), 223–249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0971355719851897>.
- Elsevier. (2020). Content—How Scopus Works. <https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus/how-scopus-works/content>.
- Emich, K. J., Kumar, S., Lu, L., Norder, K., & Pandey, N. (2020). Mapping 50 Years of Small Group Research Through Small Group Research. *Small Group Research*, 51(6), 659–699. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496420934541>.
- Fahimnia, B., Sarkis, J., & Davarzani, H. (2015). Green supply chain management: A review and bibliometric analysis. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 162, 101–114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2015.01.003>.
- FASA. (2020). Franchising's massive contribution to global economic output. FASA Franchise Association of South Africa. <https://www.fasa.co.za/franchisings-massive-contribution-to-global-economic-output/>.
- Fetscherin, M., Voss, H., & Gugler, P. (2010). 30 Years of foreign direct investment to China: An interdisciplinary literature review. *International Business Review*, 19(3), 235–246. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2009.12.002>.
- Fried, V. H., & Elango, B. (1997). Franchising Research: A Literature Review and Synthesis. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 35(3), 68.
- Garfield, E. (1979). Is citation analysis a legitimate evaluation tool? *Scientometrics*, 1(4), 359–375. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02019306>.
- Gaur, A., & Kumar, M. (2018). A systematic approach to conducting review studies: An assessment of content analysis in 25 years of IB research. *Journal of World Business*, 53(2), 280–289. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2017.11.003>.
- Grivel, L., Mutschke, P., & Polanco, X. (1995). Thematic mapping on bibliographic databases by cluster analysis: A description of the sdoc environment with solis. *Journal of Knowledge Organization*, 22(2), 70–77.
- Grünhagen, M., Dant, R. P., & Zhu, M. (2012). Emerging Consumer Perspectives on American Franchise Offerings: Variety Seeking Behavior in China*. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 50(4), 596–620. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-627X.2012.00368.x>.
- Grünhagen, M., Witte, C. L., & Pryor, S. (2010). Effects of US-based franchising in the developing world: A middle-eastern consumer perspective. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 9(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.289>.
- Huntington, D., Mundy, G., Hom, N. M., Li, Q., & Aung, T. (2012). Physicians in private practice: Reasons for being a social franchise member. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 10(1), 25. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1478-4505-10-25>.
- International Franchise Association (2020). Franchise Business Economic Outlook 2020. <https://www.franchise.org/franchise-information/franchise-business-outlook/franchise-business-economic-outlook-2020>.
- Jell-Ojabor, M., & Windsperger, J. (2014). The Choice of Governance Modes of International Franchise Firms—Development of an Integrative Model. *Journal of International Management*, 20(2), 153–187. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2013.09.001>.
- Jell-Ojabor, M., & Windsperger, J. (2017). Determinants of the governance structure of the international franchise firm: A case study analysis in the automotive rental industry. *International Marketing Review*, 34(6), 814–884. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-10-2015-0208>.
- Jeon, H. J., Meiseberg, B., Dant, R. P., & Grünhagen, M. (2016). Cultural Convergence in Emerging Markets: The Case of McDonald's in China and India. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 54(2), 732–749. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12168>.
- Kistruck, G. M., Webb, J. W., Sutter, C. J., & Ireland, R. D. (2011). Microfranchising in Base-of-the-Pyramid Markets: Institutional Challenges and Adaptations to the Franchise Model. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 35(3), 503–531. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2011.00446.x>.
- Kuriyan, R., Ray, I., & Toyama, K. (2008). Information and Communication Technologies for Development: The Bottom of the Pyramid Model in Practice. *The Information Society*, 24(2), 93–104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972240701883948>.
- Lafontaine, F. (2014). Franchising: Directions for Future Research. *International Journal of the Economics of Business*, 21(1), 21–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13571516.2013.864124>.
- López-fernández, M. C., Serrano-bedia, A. M., & Pérez-pérez, M. (2016). Entrepreneurship and Family Firm Research: A Bibliometric Analysis of An Emerging Field. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 54(2), 622–639. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12161>.
- Maditati, D. R., Munim, Z. H., Schramm, H.-J., & Kummer, S. (2018). A review of green supply chain management: From bibliometric analysis to a conceptual framework and future research directions. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 139, 150–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resconrec.2018.08.004>.
- Melo, P. L. D. R., Borini, F. M., Oliveira, M. D. M., Jr, Parente, R. C., Melo, P. L. D. R., Borini, F. M., ... Parente, R. C. (2015). Internationalization of Brazilian Franchise Chains: A Comparative Study. *Revista de Administração de Empresas*, 55(3), 258–272. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020150303>.
- Melo, P. L. de R., Borini, F. M., & Cunha, J. A. C.d. (2014). Percepções de valor e elementos estruturantes das microfranquias. *Revista de Administração Contemporânea*, 18(3), 328–350. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac20141685>.
- Melo, P. L. de R., Borini, F. M., & Ogasavara, M. H. (2019). Latin American franchise internationalization: The impact of institutional environment. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 61(2), 217–228. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tie.21975>.
- Meyer, K. E. (2017). International business in an era of anti-globalization. *Multinational Business Review*, 25(2), 78–90. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MBR-03-2017-0017>.
- Moral-Muñoz, J. A., Herrera-Viedma, E., Santisteban-Espejo, A., & Cobo, M. J. (2020). Software tools for conducting bibliometric analysis in science: An up-to-date review. *El Profesional de la Información*, 29(1). <https://recyt.fecyt.es/index.php/EPI/article/view/epi.2020.ene.03>.
- Mukherjee, D., Makarius, E. E., & Stevens, C. E. (2018). Business group reputation and affiliates' internationalization strategies. *Journal of World Business*, 53(2), 93–103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2017.12.003>.
- Munroe, E., Hayes, B., & Taft, J. (2015). Private-Sector Social Franchising to Accelerate Family Planning Access, Choice, and Quality: Results From Marie Stopes International. *Global Health: Science and Practice*, 3(2), 195–208. <https://doi.org/10.9745/GHSP-D-15-00056>.
- Naatu, F., & Alon, I. (2019). Social franchising: A bibliometric and theoretical review. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 25(5), 738–764. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2019.1584777>.
- Ngo, A. D., Alden, D. L., Hang, N., & Dinh, N. (2009). Developing and Launching the Government Social Franchise Model of Reproductive Health Care Service Delivery in Vietnam. *Social Marketing Quarterly*, 15(1), 71–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15245000802632417>.
- Ngo, A. D., Alden, D. L., Pham, V., & Phan, H. (2010). The impact of social franchising on the use of reproductive health and family planning services at public commune health stations in Vietnam. *BMC Health Services Research*, 10(1), 54. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-10-54>.
- Nielsen, U. B., Hannibal, M., & Larsen, N. N. (2018). Reviewing emerging markets: Context, concepts and future research. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 13(6), 1679–1698. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJoEM-10-2017-0416>.
- Nunes, R., Silva, V.-L. S., Fadaio, M., & Saes, M. S. M. (2019). Why Adopt Microfranchising? Evidence from Brazil on an Organizational Innovation Designed to Face New Challenges. In J. Windsperger, G. Cliquet, G. Hendrikse, & M. Srecković (Eds.), *Design and Management of Interfirm Networks: Franchise Networks, Cooperatives and Alliances* (pp. 75–89). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-29245-4_5.
- Nyadzayo, M. W., Matanda, M. J., & Rajaguru, R. (2018). The determinants of franchise brand loyalty in B2B markets: An emerging market perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 86(C), 435–445.
- Pattnaik, D., Kumar, S., & Vashishtha, A. (2020). Research on trade credit – a systematic review and bibliometric analysis. *Qualitative Research in Financial Markets*, 12(4), 367–390. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRFM-09-2019-0103>.
- Pereira, S. K., Kumar, P., Dutt, V., Haldar, K., Penn-Kekana, L., Santos, A., & Powell-Jackson, T. (2015). Protocol for the evaluation of a social franchising model to improve maternal health in Uttar Pradesh. *India. Implementation Science*, 10(1), 77. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-015-0269-2>.
- Pine, R., Qiu Zhang, H., & Qi, P. (2000). The challenges and opportunities of franchising in China's hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 12(5), 300–307. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596110010339670>.
- Prata, N., Montagu, D., & Jefferys, E. (2005). Private sector, human resources and health franchising in Africa. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 83, 274–279. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0042-96862005000400011>.
- Preble, J. F., & Hoffman, R. C. (2006). Strategies for Business Format Franchisors to Expand into Global Markets. *Journal of Marketing Channels*, 13(3), 29–50. https://doi.org/10.1300/J049v13n03_03.
- Ramamurti, R. (2012). What is really different about emerging market multinationals? *Global Strategy Journal*, 2(1), 41–47. <https://doi.org/10.1002/gsj.1025>.

- Rocha, T. V., Borini, F. M., Spers, E. E., Khauaja, D. M. R., & Camargo, M. A. (2012). *Aspectos Mercadológicos e Estratégicos da Internacionalização das Franquias Brasileiras* (Vol. 1–1). ESPM.
- Rocha, T. V., Borini, F. M., Spers, E. E., Ogasavara, M. H., Khauaja, D. M. R., Camargo, M. A., & Melo, P. L. D. R. (2014). Stages of Internationalization of Brazilian Franchises. *ESPM*.
- Rocha, T. V., Spers, E. E., Borini, F. M., Bretas, V. P., Melo, P. L. de R., Ogasavara, M. H., Khauaja, D. M. R., & Camargo, A. (2016). Global mindset na internacionalização das franquias brasileiras. *ESPM*. <https://repositorio.usp.br/item/002906089>.
- Rocha, T. V., Spers, E. E., Borini, F. M., Bretas, V. P., Melo, P. R., Ogasavara, M. H., & Camargo, M. A. (2018). *A marca na internacionalização das franquias brasileiras* (Vol. 1). ESPM.
- Rodrik, D. (2011). *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Rosado-Serrano, A., Paul, J., & Dikova, D. (2018). International franchising: A literature review and research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, 85, 238–257. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.12.049>.
- Sanchez-Famoso, V., Maseda, A., Iturralde, T., Danes, S. M., & Aparicio, G. (2020). The potential of internal social capital in organizations: An assessment of past research and suggestions for the future. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 58(1), 32–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472778.2019.1659672>.
- Sassmannshausen, S. P., & Volkman, C. (2018). The Scientometrics of Social Entrepreneurship and Its Establishment as an Academic Field. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 56(2), 251–273. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12254>.
- Scalera, V. G., Mukherjee, D., & Piscitello, L. (2020). Ownership strategies in knowledge-intensive cross-border acquisitions: Comparing Chinese and Indian MNEs. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 37(1), 155–185. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-018-9616-6>.
- Stephenson, R., Tsui, A. O., Sulzbach, S., Bardsley, P., Bekele, G., Giday, T., & Feyesitan, B. (2004). Franchising Reproductive Health Services. *Health Services Research*, 39(6), 2053–2080.
- Stiglitz, J. E. (2002). *Globalization and Its Discontents*. Norton.
- Strozzi, F., Colicchia, C., Creazza, A., & Noè, C. (2017). Literature review on the ‘Smart Factory’ concept using bibliometric tools. *International Journal of Production Research*, 55(22), 6572–6591. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207543.2017.1326643>.
- Suchman, L., Hart, E., & Montagu, D. (2018). Public-private partnerships in practice: Collaborating to improve health finance policy in Ghana and Kenya. *Health Policy and Planning*, 33(7), 777–785. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czy053>.
- Sundari Ravindran, T. K., & Fonn, S. (2011). Are social franchises contributing to universal access to reproductive health services in low-income countries? *Reproductive Health Matters*, 19(38), 85–101. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080\(11\)38581-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080(11)38581-3).
- Thurston, S., Chakraborty, N. M., Hayes, B., Mackay, A., & Moon, P. (2015). Establishing and Scaling-Up Clinical Social Franchise Networks: Lessons Learned From Marie Stopes International and Population Services International. *Global Health, Science and Practice*, 3(2), 180–194. <https://doi.org/10.9745/GHSP-D-15-00057>.
- Tsai, M.-C., Shih, K.-H., & Chen, J. C. H. (2007). A comparison of the service quality of fast food chain franchises. *International Journal of Services and Standards*, 3(2), 222–238. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSS.2007.012930>.
- Vogel, R., & Güttel, W. H. (2013). The Dynamic Capability View in Strategic Management: A Bibliometric Review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(4), 426–446. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12000>.
- Wang, Z. J., Zhu, M., & Terry, A. (2008). The Development of Franchising in China. *Journal of Marketing Channels*, 15(2–3), 167–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10466690802014021>.
- Web of Science Group (2020). Web of Science Master Journal List. Web of Science Group, a Clarivate Company. <https://mjl.clarivate.com/>.
- Welsh, D. H. B., & Alon, I. (2001). *International franchising in emerging markets: Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cch Incorporated.
- Welsh, D. H. B., & Alon, I. (2002). International franchising in emerging markets: North America, the Pacific Rim, and other countries. Cch Incorporated.
- Welsh, D. H. B., Alon, I., & Falbe, C. M. (2006). An Examination of International Retail Franchising in Emerging Markets. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 44(1), 130–149.
- Wright, M., Filatotchev, I., Hoskisson, R. E., & Peng, M. W. (2005). Strategy Research in Emerging Economies: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(1), 1–33. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00487.x>.
- Xiao, Q., O’Neill, J. W., & Wang, H. (2008). International hotel development: A study of potential franchisees in China. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 325–336. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2007.10.006>.
- Yong-Hak, J. (2013). Access powerful cited reference searching and multidisciplinary content. 2.
- Zupic, I., & Čater, T. (2015). Bibliometric Methods in Management and Organization. *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(3), 429–472. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114562629>.

Vanessa P. G. Bretas is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway, and holds a Ph.D. from ESPM, São Paulo, Brazil. She earned a bachelor’s degree in International Relations and a master’s degree in International Business. Her research focuses on franchising, entry modes, international business and emerging markets. She has worked with several sector associations on various research projects, including the Brazilian Franchising Association.

Ilan Alon is Professor of Strategy and International Marketing at the School of Business and Law at the University of Agder. He holds a Ph.D. from Kent State University (USA). He is a researcher in the field of international business with a focus on internationalization, modes of entry, political risk, cultural intelligence, and emerging markets. His publications have appeared in journals, such as Harvard Business Review, Management International Review, International Business Review, Journal of International Marketing, and International Marketing Review. His books are published by Palgrave, Routledge, McGraw-Hill, and others. He consulted USAID on franchising development in emerging markets, and international franchisors, such as Darden (USA), Duhan (Croatia) and Illy (Italy) on international franchising development. He is also Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Emerging Markets and the European Journal of International Management.