



Ethics and marketing responsibility: A bibliometric analysis and literature review

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ABSTRACT

The study of Ethics and Marketing Responsibility focuses on ethics' role in shaping marketing practices within organizations. It examines the impact of ethical considerations on marketing strategies and evaluates the effectiveness of responsible marketing in fostering trust and loyalty among consumers. The study aims to identify the ethical challenges for responsible marketing practices. A bibliometric study on Ethics and Marketing Responsibility is essential as it provides valuable insights into the trends and developments in the field of ethics and marketing responsibility. Such a study helps us understand this subject's significance in the current academic and business landscape. This bibliometric study with a literature review emphasizes balancing business objectives with ethical principles and highlights the benefits of promoting responsible marketing initiatives within modern organizations. In the 21st century, ethical concerns related to 'relationship marketing,' 'social marketing,' 'sustainable marketing,' 'cause-related marketing,' and 'marketing strategy' arise as a warning to the globe. The results also support the trend for this emerging concept. Analyzing the patterns in the publication and citation data provides a comprehensive overview of the research trends and hotspots in the field. The study implies that academicians and researchers should pay greater attention to the rapidly developing world to fulfill the organizations' service and marketing promises. This focus should promote business development and trust among all the stakeholders.

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1. Introduction

Ethics and Marketing Responsibility are increasingly essential topics in business as companies strive to balance their commercial goals with their moral and social obligations. The impact of unethical marketing practices has been well documented in several high-profile cases, which have raised awareness of the need for companies to take a more responsible approach to their marketing activities (Athwal et al., 2019; Fan, 2005; Goworek, 2011). For example, the deceptive marketing tactics used by tobacco companies for decades to promote smoking have had devastating health consequences for millions of people (Hoek, 2015). In recent years, tech companies have come under fire for failing to protect users' data and spreading misinformation through their platforms (Jing & Murugesan, 2019; Marsden et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the

fast-fashion industry has been criticized for damaging the environment and its poor working conditions in manufacturing countries (Binet et al., 2019; Niinimäki et al., 2020). These cases demonstrate the need for companies to take a proactive approach to ethics and marketing responsibility and consider their actions' long-term consequences. By incorporating ethics and marketing responsibility into their strategies, companies can avoid negative publicity and build a more sustainable and trusted brand. This literature explores the importance of ethics and marketing responsibility and provides guidance for companies looking to create more responsible and effective marketing campaigns.

Fundamentally, ethics is a tool that assists people in thinking critically and independently to make thoughtful moral decisions. The study of moral behavior in marketing is known as "Ethical Marketing" (Kristjánsson, 2021; Nyamekye et al., 2022; Tokarski, 2009; Vitolla et al., 2021). The discipline of marketing ethics is embedded within a broader context that starts with applied ethics and includes engineering, law, and medicine (Costantini & Romano, 2022; Kim, 2022). The marketing domain is under the umbrella of applied ethics and addresses issues related to business management, i.e. finance, accounting, human resources, analytics and

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many more (Laczniak & Shultz, 2021). Several researchers traditionally dealt with ethical challenges in marketing, such as selling, promoting, and product safety (Hermann, 2022; Martínez et al., 2021). However, in this article, the exclusive focus is on marketing ethics and the difficulties that scholars and practitioners of the field encounter in the future. Based on the fact that a search for a text expressly focusing on marketing ethics will most likely yield publications from the last decade, it may appear logical to conclude that marketing ethics is a new, emerging field of interest (e.g. Laczniak & Murphy, 1991; Smith & Quelch, 1993; Stöttinger & Schlegelmilch, 1998; Whysall, 2000; Schlegelmilch & Öberseder, 2010; Laczniak & Murphy, 2019; Nadeem & Al-Imamy, 2020; Carrington et al., 2021; Fernandes et al., 2022). By the late 1970s, there was evidence of growing concern about various facets of marketing ethics, including marketing research (Akaah, 1990; Elbanna et al., 2020; Ho et al., 2012; Khan et al., 2020), as well as in connection to newly emerging issues of concern, like corporate social responsibility (Christofi et al., 2021; Gross & Verma, 1977; Kolk, 2016; Li et al., 2020) and social marketing (Appel et al., 2020; Chen & Lin, 2019; Laczniak et al., 1979). At this time, efforts were also made to empirically assess marketers' ethical behavioral patterns and attitudes (Casali & Perano, 2021).

Although the claims made above that interest in marketing ethics has a long history, there is a compelling case that interest in this field is significantly higher today than ever. Several arguments may be made in order to explain this. First, a broader backdrop of a growing concern for business ethics, in general, can be used to frame a discussion of marketing ethics. Second, there have been specific defenses to the marketing environment in recent years. However, there are implicit aspects of marketing activities that raise ethical questions. Numerous purported ethical concerns in marketing management are described in the literature (Gaspar et al., 2022). For instance, unclear questions about whether the desired outcome for society is consistent with the ethical standards and values that the business organization upholds and demands.

Additionally, the impact that the marketers' character and moral compass have on the ethical standards and principles that the firm adopts at a particular time may give rise to ethical challenges. There are several other research gaps found in the field of ethics and marketing responsibility, e.g. Integration of Ethics into Marketing Strategy (Melewar et al., 2017), Consumer Perception of Ethical Marketing (Arli et al., 2018), Measuring the Effectiveness of Ethical Marketing (Behera et al., 2022) and Cross-Cultural Differences in Ethical Marketing (Tuncel, 2022). These research gaps highlight the need for further exploration and investigation into the field of ethics and marketing responsibility to better understand the complex relationships between these concepts. This bibliometric evaluation identifies the key scientific creation trends in the study under investigation. Furthermore, it enables scholars to provide insights about the organization of the area, as well as its social networks and topic interests (Donthu et al., 2021). When the researchers' purpose is to review a specific line of study, the information known as "science mapping," which includes information on the structure and dynamics of scientific domains, is crucial. According to Mukherjee et al. (2021), the primary benefit of using bibliometric approaches is that they provide a quantitative level of rigor into the previously subjective process of evaluating literature. This study contributes to knowledge expansion by presenting the analyses above and conclusions, focusing on research challenges and proposing ideas for future academic investigations. A company is believed to acquire a specific set of values at its inception. These particular values, such as how to manage stakeholder relationships, are influenced by the business concept, the product, the organization's corporate structure, and other elements, but the values of the company are primarily determined by the founder, who is the

businessman himself (Rovelli et al., 2021; Tokarski, 2009; Vallaster et al., 2019). What do sincere supporters mean when they call for marketing to behave socially responsibly to generalize beyond the organizational interests? Marketers should act in the right way from a social viewpoint, that is, in the best interests of society or to serve the public interest or common good; this will bring value to the business (Kamila & Jasrotia, 2023). Based on almost 50 years of primarily normative testimony in the literature, including the publications described in this study (also, e.g., Lavidge, 1970; Karpatkin, 1999; Laczniak & Shultz, 2021; Ferrell & Ferrell, 2022; Kamila & Jasrotia, 2023).

Therefore, all that marketing can ask is to serve the social interest rather than acting in the greater society's best interest. Marketers may only attempt to serve the social or public interest as they perceive it, assess it, or decide it subjectively because it appears that businesses cannot access a ready system through which society transmits unambiguous moral principles (Michaelson, 2021; Rattanani, 2022, pp. 381–392). This is a truth-seeking challenge since it implies handing over a portion of the function of public choice to unelected, unqualified officials known as marketing managers. So-called "socially responsible" marketing intrinsically depends on the marketer making a public welfare decision, and any subsequent behavior actualizes a unilateral, fat-type policy created privately. It is, therefore, the undemocratic construction by corporate leaders of a degree of socioeconomic tyranny; this is the dictatorial variety known as oligarchy or even the economic meaning of fascism. Delegating some public policy decisions to private interests (i.e., the right to decide what is best for society) establishes a level of socioeconomic dictatorship (Christensen, 2018; Kamila & Jasrotia, 2023; Raj et al., 2022). Oligarchy and fascism are both economic forms of authoritarianism. Any voluntary act of perceived social responsibility by the organization is obligatory to fulfill the stakeholder's interest, even if the latter overtone is accidental (Cragg, 2002; Hsieh, 2007).

Previous research has gathered several hypotheses and investigations better to understand the relationship between marketing management and ethics. The subject's intricacy has resulted in a broad range of uncoordinated outcomes. Although various research streams have been established, the complexity of the field suggests that a more comprehensive knowledge of how marketing in business management affects ethics has yet to be offered. Away from its institutional, social, political, and cultural macro-context, ethical entrepreneurship is sometimes seen as abstract and de-contextualized. This may help to partially explain why, at least for now, research on the nascent intersection of the two domains is still in its infancy (Harris et al., 2009; Muñoz & Cohen, 2018; Vallaster et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2021). Ultimately, the relationship between marketing and ethics is multilevel. Marketing responsibility research can be advanced by paying more attention to the appropriate context and the cross-level mechanisms that connect ethical marketing responsibility and context.

Combining a bibliometric analysis with a literature review, this article aims to provide an overview of the past, present, and future research orientations on ethics and marketing responsibility. While earlier studies (such as Whysall, 2000; Murphy, 2002 p:165-185; Nill & Schibrowsky, 2007; Schlegelmilch & Öberseder, 2010; Smith & Murphy, 2012; Tsalikis & Fritzsche, 2013; Javalgi & Russell, 2018; Gaughan & Javalgi, 2018; Kadic-Magljajic et al., 2019; Chatterjee et al., 2021) have attempted to analyze this intersection by literature studies alone, this study uses the bibliometric analysis to disclose statistical patterns and provides an informative overview of critical topical perspectives within the field related to ethics and marketing responsibility. Given this context, this study aims to analyze, evaluate, and critically synthesize the present state of research on the joint internationalization of marketing

responsibility. This is done to find gaps in existing research and establish potential future study subjects. To begin mapping the topic of collaborative internationalization in responsible marketing, the researchers first analyzed and categorized the most recent studies into many distinct but connected subject areas. Second, this study integrates the latter to create a comprehensive framework that explains the essential antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes and their interrelationships. This is accomplished through the use of a cluster-based method.

Extensive research using various current publications is necessary to examine the rising relevance of addressing ethical problems when developing a marketing strategy. According to the researchers, there is a need for more study in this sector. As a result, a bibliometric study is necessary to thoroughly examine the multifaceted realities of marketing responsibility from its beginning to the current day. Because there has yet to be any previous bibliometric research on marketing responsibility, this study will pave the way for future research. This study proposes some research questions based on the contributions to this issue and the creation of this framework to expand on how the papers in this issue contribute. Most of these questions pertain to the general idea. Marketing and ethical responsibility should be considered while developing profit-oriented marketing channel plans and performance. This study proposes considering ethics and marketing responsibility in all decisions.

The research questions are as follows.

RQ1. What are the overall research publication outputs related to 'ethics and marketing responsibility'?

RQ2. What are the refinement and Co-word analysis of 'ethics and marketing responsibility'?

RQ3. Which research publications are highly cited in 'ethics and marketing responsibility'?

RQ4. Is any relation between highly scientific production and highly cited journal research related to 'ethics and marketing responsibility'?

RQ5. What are the top publication countries/regions, sources and authors related to 'ethics and marketing responsibility'?

This study first illustrates some background about ethics and marketing responsibility. In the methodology part, we go for primary keywords and search results, and then the refinement of initial results occurs. In the descriptive statistics section, we gather some information (such as - year-wise data, journal contribution, country-wise segregation and contribution). Then we proceed toward the data analysis part. We use bibliometric analysis for the current study. With the help of the Scopus database, biblioshiny and VOSviewer, we target keyword statistics, citation analysis, globally most cited documents and co-citation analysis. With the help of the above-stated tools, a keyword cluster has been formed. Then by analyzing the clusters, we approach a literature review to get a clear picture of the current research that explains 'ethics and marketing responsibility.

Section 3 presents the bibliometric analysis, including performance analysis and science mapping, and interprets the results. Section 4 contains the debate, and subsequent sections reveal the paper's conclusion, ramifications, and limits.

2. Ethics and marketing responsibility

Over the past sixty years, marketing ethics has been the subject of extensive scholarly study. The marketing ethics literature before roughly 1970 was regarded as primarily descriptive (Hunt & Vitell,

1986). The current state of marketing ethics research and analysis is still relatively strong. A five-volume collection of 90 (already published) journal papers on marketing ethics was put together in 2012 (MacQuillin, 2022; Murphy, 2017; Smith & Murphy, 2012). The majority of academic research generated on the topic of marketing ethics is currently deemed "positive" and empirical. This is because the majority of the study was conducted in the past. This sort of analysis exposes empirical regularities and statistical patterns across essential variables. This is a critical tactic. Academics researching marketing and seeking to raise ethical standards need reliable data.

Morality is the practical application of ethics since it transforms the abstract concept of ethics into something more concrete and helpful to society. Realistic standards of conduct and action norms are what morality entails. In conclusion, it displays a set of societal moral standards (Place, 2019; Yeh et al., 2020). It is evident by discussing the terms ethics and morality that while they are linked, their definitions only partially coincide. Literature frequently critiques the need for more accurate definitions of terms, which can lead to misunderstandings or incorrect conclusions (Vadera & Pathki, 2021). However, since they are frequently used interchangeably, the practice has shown that it can be challenging to distinguish between ethics and morality. Making a distinction between the words is crucial from a scientific perspective since it allows for a thorough discussion of ethics as a whole and a much more focused explanatory approach that considers many levels and perspectives (Blumenthal-Barby & Burroughs, 2012). Even if many scientific discoveries have been made by concentrating on particular problems, it will be necessary to discuss how ethics and marketing responsibility should be created, controlled, and assessed in the future.

2.1. Evolution of ethics in marketing and responsibility

After more than three decades of study, the field of marketing responsibility often faces ethical challenges that need to be addressed for future directions. Our bibliometric analysis of the conceptual framework of marketing ethics validates and expands the results of earlier studies regarding the breadth of their reach and the impartiality of their assessment. To be more precise, our study reexamines responsible marketing ethics research. Most existing evaluations often focus on a single area of business ethics and use subjective and narrative methodologies to choose and arrange the evaluated contributions. Several narrative evaluations on ethical marketing decision-making trends have been produced over time (e.g., marketing ethics as a course, adoption of ethics in a corporate atmosphere, pharmaceutical challenges, and importance of social responsibilities (Abratt & Sacks, 1989; Dunfee & Robertson, 1988; Schlegelmilch & Houston, 1989; Singhapakdi et al., 1994; Smith & Quelch, 1991)). From 1998 to 2008, the marketing ethics literature highlighted several new challenges as several continents introduced industries and technological revolutions (e.g., global business responsibility, strategic dimension of responsibility business, consumer loyalty from responsibility, sustainable marketing, cause-related marketing and adoption of CSR (Quazi & O'Brien, 2000; Iyer, 2001; Saeed et al., 2001; Salmones et al., 2005; Daub & Ergenzinger, 2005; Berglind & Nakata, 2005; Pirsch et al., 2007)). In recent times the globe witnessed several technological and economic challenges in terms of business growth (e.g., corporate environment, ethical responsibility, responsible financial performance, sustainable liability, ethical marketing, socially responsible attitude, effects of CSR and buying behavior, ethics and supply chain management, responsible tourism management and CSR and ethical sustainability (Balmer et al., 2011; Eltantawy et al., 2009; Fraj-Andrés et al., 2009; Gonzalez-Padron, 2016; He & Lai,

2014; Jasrotia et al., 2021; Kim, 2010; Luchs et al., 2010; Luque & Herrero-García, 2019; Molz, 2018; Mulchandani et al., 2022; Yani-de-Soriano et al., 2012).

3. Research methodology

A thorough analysis of a few chosen publications considerably adds to the collection of existing material. We employ a two-step research approach to promote a thorough understanding of the context and multilevel links between Ethics and Marketing Responsibility. The bibliometric analysis shows the direction in which the study field is evolving, whereas the literature review summarises the current state of the literature.

The proper keyword selection is essential for literature reviews. The process has five parts: screening, assembling, organizing, drafting, and presenting the outcomes (Dhamija & Bag, 2020; Kamila & Jasrotia, 2023). In the current study, a similar approach has been taken to find various topics based on chosen keywords, followed by a projection of future work scope concerning ethics and marketing responsibility.

3.1. Primary keywords and search results

In the beginning, we proceeded with a random range of specific keywords that included “corporate social responsibility,” “csr,” “social responsibility,” “corporate responsibility,” and “corporate ethical responsibility.” In the next step, each of these keywords is merged with “marketing” and various groupings encompassing (1) corporate social responsibility AND marketing, (2) CSR AND marketing, (3) social responsibility AND marketing, (4) corporate responsibility AND marketing (5) corporate ethical responsibility AND marketing. Several researchers used similar types of keywords to fill the literature gap on marketing and ethical responsibility (e.g., Amoako et al., 2021; Brunk & De Boer, 2020; De Madariaga & Valor, 2007; Hansen et al., 2011; He & Harris, 2020; Luchs et al., 2010; Schamp et al., 2019; Thompson, 2013; Van de Ven, 2008). Marketing is a technique to increase the visibility and reputation of the organization. This work demonstrates how this strategy has been beneficial, particularly regarding responsible marketing dimensions.

An organized literature assessment is conducted by choosing a database from the list of options. Science Direct, Web of Science, and Scopus are the most well-known online databases. We choose the Scopus database for the current piece of work, as this is one of the significant databases widely covering topics across the globe in the context of social science research, and it is convenient for us to go through (Kumar, Sureka, & Colombage, 2020; Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016; Singh et al., 2020a, 2020b, 2021a, 2021b; Srivastava et al., 2020).

The abstraction of articles from Scopus resulted in 8634 articles for each respective combination, i.e., corporate social responsibility AND marketing (1842 articles), CSR AND marketing (1144 articles), social responsibility AND marketing (3325 articles), corporate responsibility AND marketing (2052 articles) corporate ethical responsibility AND marketing (271 articles). This extraction covers published articles till August 31st 2022. Further, we focus on fully published and press articles, excluding book chapters and editorial and conference articles. The total allotment of articles concerning selected keywords is shared in Table 1. Contributing author(s), publication year, article source, article affiliation, and abstracts of papers are all provided for identified articles (see Table 2).

3.2. Refining of initial results

The next stage involves applying specific filters to the results of

the initial search (Subject- ‘Business, Management and Accounting,’ ‘Economics, Econometrics and Finance,’ ‘Social Sciences,’ ‘Environmental Science’ and ‘Arts and Humanities’; Document Type- Article; Source- Journals; Language- English). A figure of 4889 articles, i.e., corporate social responsibility AND marketing (1112 articles), CSR AND marketing (682 articles), social responsibility AND marketing (1710 articles), corporate responsibility AND marketing (1223 articles), corporate ethical responsibility AND marketing (162 articles) is generated in CSV Excel format. The current work focuses on Ethical Marketing Responsibility and its close connection with other related terms. All the results have been checked thoroughly to avoid duplicates, and the outliers have been checked.

According to our research, the Scopus search turns up some duplicate articles as the search criteria mix many similar-meaning keywords. As a result, we avoid duplicate entries from the journals in the Scopus database. As suggested by Valderrama-Zurián et al. (2015), we added the logical operator “OR” in the Scopus database search (Table 3). The database shows a total of 1886 articles related to our study.

3.3. Descriptive statistics

Based on data from the Scopus database and relevant to ethical marketing responsibility and related fields, descriptive statistics explain the concentration of articles as yearly publication, journal-wise publication, top countries producing scientific research, and subject classification. The yearly publishing of works on marketing responsibility is described in detail (refer to Fig. 1). A significant amount of articles was contributed in 2021 (169 articles) and 2022 (158 articles as of August 31st, 2022). The data indicate that the author(s) are interested in researching and contributing to ethical marketing responsibility. The bibliometric criteria assess the publication output and the quality of publications. The number of publications is counted, but an article's overall number of citations determines its quality (Kamila & Jasrotia, 2023; Singh et al., 2020). Citation analysis is one of the most often used methods for obtaining quality research themes (Kumar, Sureka, & Colombage, 2020). Fig. 1 shows the citation of articles associated with a yearly publication based on data from the Scopus database and pertinent to ethical marketing responsibility and related disciplines. The annual publication and citation of works on marketing responsibility are fully covered (refer to Fig. 1).

Concerning journal-wise contribution of articles, we provided a list of the top 20 journals that have published articles based on ethics, marketing and responsibility in the previous years, ranking them according to journal contribution of articles (Fig. 2). The data will significantly help researchers working on marketing responsibility and other interested parties. The Journal of Business Ethics (JBE) has 78 articles, SUSTAINABILITY (SWITZERLAND) has 68 articles, the JOURNAL OF BUSINESS RESEARCH (JBR) has 48 articles, the EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF MARKETING (EJM) has 36 articles, and the list goes on. These are the most contributing journals that consider work relating to ethics and marketing responsibility (Fig. 2).

For researcher(s) and academician(s), region or country-wise segregation of articles gives an intriguing statistic (s). The top-performing countries in scientific production which have made significant contributions to ethics and marketing responsibility-related research are listed in this section (Table 4; Fig. 3).

Countries with the most publications published are The USA (1214), The UK (358), China (294), Australia (251), Spain (236), India (160), Italy (138), South Korea (130), Germany (121), and so on (Refer Fig. 3 and Table 4 Till August 31st, 2022). Due to the global demand for research in ethics and marketing responsibility, this

Table 1
Primary search results.

Keywords	Search results (no. of articles)
Corporate Social Responsibility AND Marketing	1842
CSR AND Marketing	1144
Social Responsibility AND Marketing	3325
Corporate Responsibility AND Marketing	2052
Corporate Ethical Responsibility AND Marketing	271
<i>Total</i>	8634

Source: Scopus database, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

Table 2
Filtered results.

Keywords	Search results (no. of articles)
Corporate Social Responsibility AND Marketing	1112
CSR AND Marketing	682
Social Responsibility AND Marketing	1710
Corporate Responsibility AND Marketing	1223
Corporate Ethical Responsibility AND Marketing	162
<i>Total</i>	4889

Source: Scopus database, Till August 31st 2022, and author's collection.

Table 3
Search Criteria to remove duplicates.

Search Criteria Filtrations	Number of Articles Found
TITLE-ABS-KEY (corporate AND social AND responsibility AND marketing) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (CSR AND marketing) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (social AND responsibility AND marketing) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (corporate AND responsibility AND marketing) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (corporate AND ethical AND responsibility AND marketing) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE, "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "BUSI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "SOCI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "ECON") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "ENVI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "ARTS")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))	1886

Source: Scopus database, Till August 31st, 2022, and authors' collection.

Annual Scientific Production

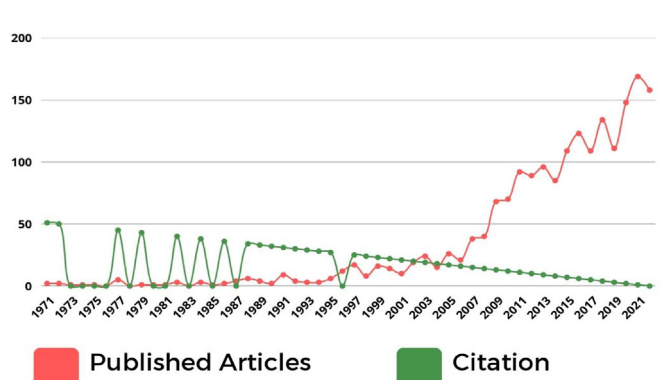


Fig. 1. Annual Scientific Production and Citation progress. Source: Scopus database; bibliometrix; biblioshiny tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

analysis may be a revelation for other researchers and nations. In addition, Table 5 shows Country wise citation demand and average article count to reflect the increasing demand for research related to marketing responsibility. The USA secured the top with a total count of 24,691 citations, and the average article citation for The USA is 61.12. Other countries are contributing to the field of marketing responsibility.



Fig. 2. Most Relevant Sources. Source: Scopus database; bibliometrix; biblioshiny tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

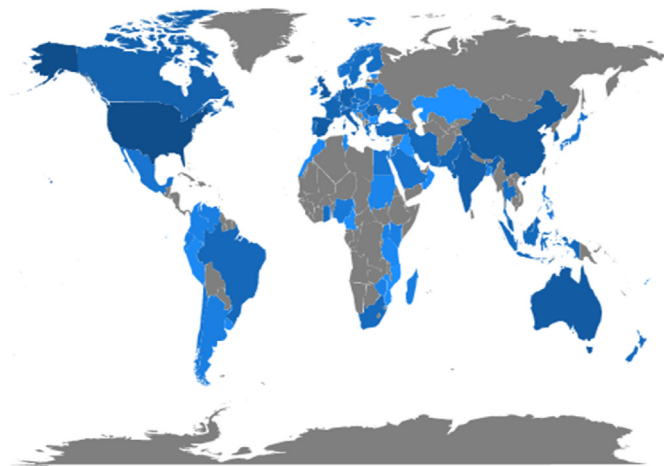


Fig. 3. Country Scientific Production. Source: Scopus database; bibliometrix; biblioshiny tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

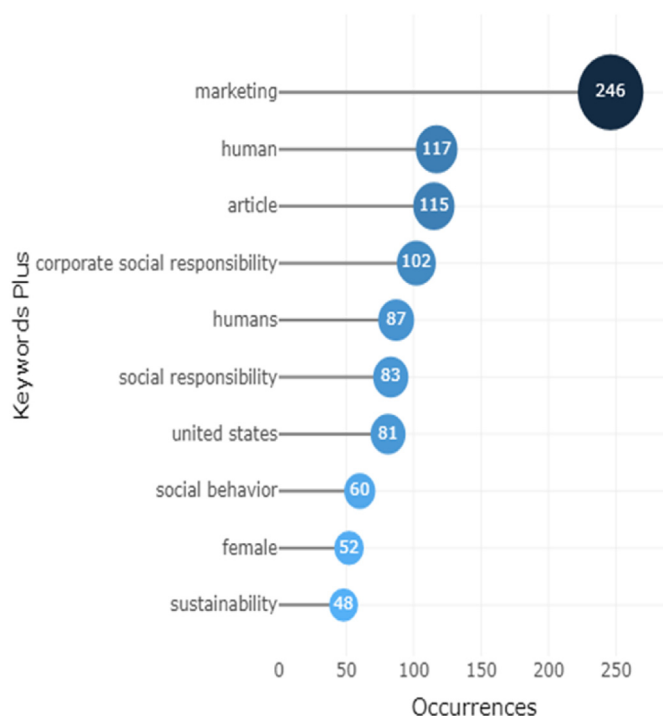


Fig. 4. Most Frequent Words Source: Scopus database; bibliometrix; biblioshiny tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

Table 4
Top Countries in Scientific Production.

Region	Freq
USA	1214
UK	358
CHINA	294
AUSTRALIA	251
SPAIN	236
INDIA	160
ITALY	138
SOUTH KOREA	130
GERMANY	121

Source: Scopus database; bibliometrix; biblioshiny tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

Table 5
Most cited countries.

Country	TC (Total Count)	Average Article Citations
USA	24,691	61.12
UNITED KINGDOM	4823	38.28
AUSTRALIA	2951	32.79
SPAIN	2402	40.03
CHINA	2136	23.73
CANADA	1925	46.95
INDIA	1403	28.06
NETHERLANDS	1137	63.17
KOREA	1135	22.25
FRANCE	826	31.77

Source: Scopus database; bibliometrix; biblioshiny tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

4. Data analysis and findings

4.1. Bibliometric analysis

Bibliometric analysis is possible with several available software; we choose “biblioshiny: the shiny app for bibliometrix” as this entails wide acceptance (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). It can analyze information from Scopus, Web of Science, or any other program. The current study aims to analyze and interpret a large amount of data for a literature review, and biblioshiny is the best tool for this. This software is advantageous over competing programs because it can create files in the required format. The following subsections will cover the author's influence, the most globally cited documents, keyword data, and the most popular search terms concerning ethics and marketing responsibility.

4.1.1. Keyword statistics and most commonly searched words

One of the critical components of search engines is keywords. The proper keyword selection is crucial for obtaining more contributions. Following is a list of the top search terms where marketing responsibility is the primary keyword. Top-listed keywords' frequency of occurrence is revealed via analysis. The terms marketing (246), human (117), article (115), corporate social responsibility (102), humans (87), and others have been highlighted (Fig. 4; Fig. 5).

4.2. Network analysis

Network analysis is the central presentation of the citation matrix for the chosen field of study, marketing responsibility. Reviewing citation analyses makes it clear to interested parties what work is being done and is commonly accepted by audiences. By understanding the citation patterns of the work, one can trust the trustworthiness of the work, as indicated by citation analysis. First, we used the Scopus database to fulfill our search criteria; next, we used the bibliometrix tool with the support of RGui (64-bit). Results include citation analysis, co-citation analysis, cluster analysis and co-occurrence network. The tool “biblioshiny” creates fascinating node and edge visualizations. Edges display citation linkages, and nodes indicate published publications.

4.2.1. Citation analysis

Citation analysis is a vital tool for scientific mapping that relies on the premise that citations indicate the intellectual linkages between publications from one article referring to another (Appio et al., 2014). The number of citations an article receives in this study determines the effect of that publication. The methodology allows for identifying the most influential papers in a given study area. The goal of citation analysis is to comprehend and evaluate

the contributions made by authors to a given area of research. It makes it easier to rate and evaluate work published in reputable publications. Network analysis can be used to examine the frequency of citations for each publication. The method, as mentioned earlier, finds the most influential work and the level of reader acceptance. Based on an examination of the citations from previous years, we identified the top 10 authors in this article (Fig. 6; details in Table 7).

With 3991 citations, Kollmuss (2002) is now in the lead. The fundamentals of marketing responsibility are discussed, and how it relates to environmental responsibility. With 2265, 2256, 1733, and 1081 citations, respectively, Davenport (1998), Brown (1997), Luo (2006), and Becker-Olsen (2006) are next in Marketing Responsibility, Corporate Social Responsibility AND Marketing, CSR AND Marketing, Social Responsibility AND Marketing, Corporate Responsibility AND Marketing, and in Corporate Ethical Responsibility AND Marketing are among the work areas that have been contributed (Table 6).

4.2.2. Co-citation analysis

Co-citation analysis is a slightly different subject to comprehend and analyze. It indicates a single-step citation matrix for authors, domains, journals, and keywords. We looked at this network to emphasize the connection between author collaboration and the network of co-citations between the authors. In contrast to the cooperative network in Fig. 7, the co-citation network displays the relationship between the cited references (Hjørland, 2013). The co-citation network links two publications together when they appear simultaneously in the references of another article (Singh et al., 2021). The size of the co-citation network and the spacing between points reflect the time since the co-citation was made.

The study team chooses how co-citation analysis will be used because it may be used with many combinations, such as authors and domains, journals and keywords. However, every conceivable combination has been taken into account in this paper. This co-

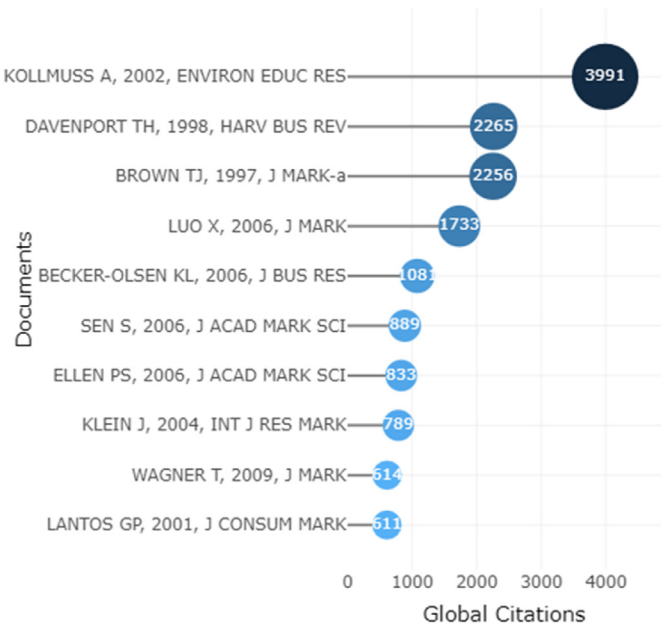


Fig. 6. Most Global Cited Documents. Source: Scopus database; bibliometrix; biblioshiny tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

citation analysis applied to journal publications which can offer an analytical composition of a specific topic of knowledge, in this case, marketing responsibility, to authors reveals societal and ethical linkage or connectedness of work among writers. A robust network analysis tool called the VOS Viewer (Valenzuela et al., 2017; Van Eck & Waltman, 2010) was used to perform the coupling and co-occurrence of keyword analysis to thoroughly explore and examine the intellectual structures of the targeted

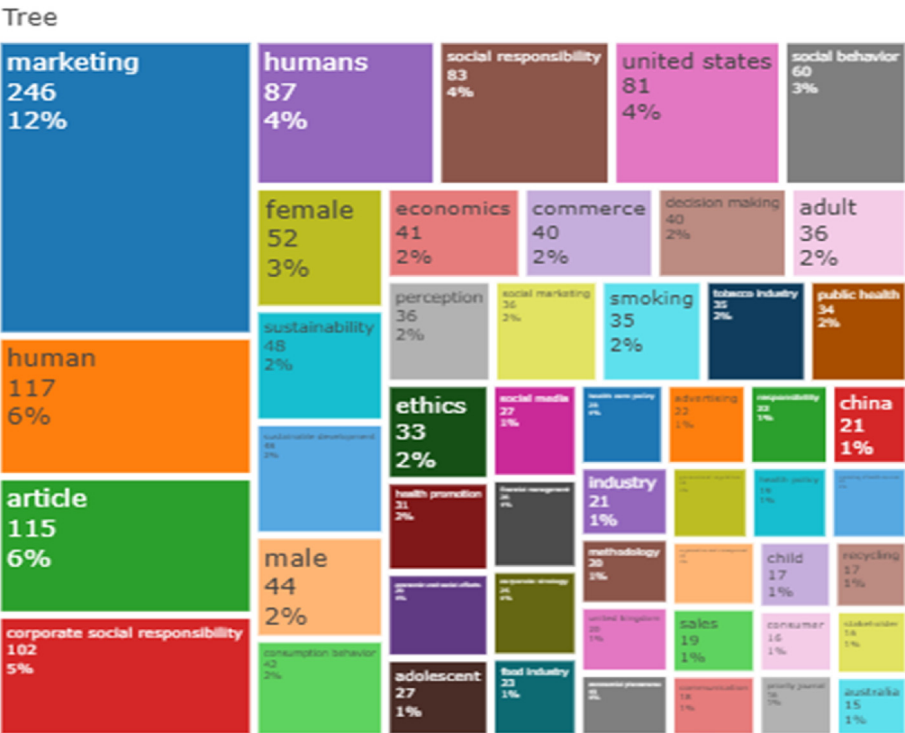


Fig. 5. Frequently used Word Tree Map. Source: Scopus database; bibliometrix; biblioshiny tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

Table 6

The keyword co-occurrence for different knowledge cluster.

Keywords	Occurrence	Total link strength
<i>Cluster 1: Ethics and Relationship Marketing</i>		
consumer behavior	31	44
corporate image	20	25
corporate reputation	25	33
corporate social responsibility	550	445
customer loyalty	25	39
customer satisfaction	24	36
relationship marketing	23	27
<i>Cluster 2: Ethics and Social Marketing</i>		
advertising	52	69
ethics	64	85
marketing	120	131
social marketing	52	55
social media	38	45
social responsibility	151	133
<i>Cluster 3: Ethics and Sustainable Marketing</i>		
CSR	120	101
environment	23	35
green marketing	57	69
innovation	28	30
sustainability	110	123
sustainable development	33	41
<i>Cluster 4: Ethics and Cause-Related Marketing</i>		
cause-related marketing	94	100
consumer behavior	36	49
corporate social responsibility (CSR)	66	37
India	20	28
purchase intention	25	24
cause-related marketing	94	100
consumer behavior	36	49
<i>Cluster 5: Ethics and Marketing Strategy</i>		
business ethics	27	42
marketing strategy	26	37
stakeholders	23	37
business ethics	27	42
marketing strategy	26	37

Source: Scopus database; bibliometrix; biblioshiny tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

research field. With the help of VOSviewer, we created a co-citation network among authors in this study. We limit the minimum number of citations of a cited reference to 20. The VOSviewer identified 98,658 cited references, of which 53 meet the threshold.

Table 7

Top 20 Publications assigned to three clusters.

Cluster	Author/Authors'	Year	Citation
Cluster 1: Ethics and Relationship Marketing	Kollmuss, A., and Agyeman, J.	2002	3991
	Davenport, T. H.	1998	2265
	Sen, S.	2006	889
	Ellen, P.-S.	2006	833
	Klein, J., and Dawar, N.	2004	789
	Wagner, T., Lutz, R. J., and Weitz, B. A.	2009	614
	Bhattacharya, C. B., Korschun, D., and Sen, S.	2008	546
Cluster 2: Ethics and Social Marketing	Simmons, C. J., and Becker-Olsen, K. L.	2006	429
	Luo, X., and Bhattacharya, C.	2009	486
Cluster 3: Ethics and Sustainable Marketing	Luchs, M. G., Naylor, R. W., Irwin, J. R., and Raghunathan, R.	2010	559
	Vlachos, P. A., Tsamakos, A., Vrechopoulos, A. P., and Avramidis, P.-K.	2008	499
	Lee, K.	2008	458
	Brown, T. J., and Dacin, P. A.	1997	2256
Cluster 4: Ethics and Cause-Related Marketing	Luo, X., and Bhattacharya, C.-B.	2006	1733
	Becker-Olsen, K. L., Cudmore, B. A., and Hill, R. P.	2006	1081
	Manaktola, K., and Jauhari, V.	2007	570
	Nan, X., and Heo, K.	2007	495
	He, H., and Harris, L.	2020	426
	Walsh, G., and Beatty, S. E.	2007	511
	Lantos, G. P.	2001	611

Source: Scopus database; bibliometrix; biblioshiny tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

4.2.3. Keywords co-occurrence and cluster analysis

Data clustering is the grouping of items with similar traits. Put another way; it gathers articles from the same field in a single location (Singh et al., 2021). In the current study, data clustering was accomplished utilizing network analysis in VOSviewer. We set the limit to the minimum number of occurrences of a keyword to '20'; the result shows that out of 4733 keywords, 28 meet the threshold. The arrangement of nodes and edges indicates the cluster analysis procedure. A specific cluster is represented by its densely interconnected nodes, which set it apart from other connected nodes and clusters (Fig. 8). The VOSviewer separates the 28 items into 5 clusters, 226 links. The summary of the top 5 cluster statistics, which include the frequency and overall link strength of the chosen terms, are shown in Table 6. Following that, these knowledge clusters are explored using cognition, in which the keywords for each cluster are arranged logically to reveal the topics of the previous studies.

4.3. Connection of keywords on ethics and marketing responsibility: identifying certain contextual aspects

The threshold was set at 20; thus, a term had to appear at least 20 times in article keywords to be featured in Fig. 8 and Table 6. According to the study, "corporate social responsibility" appears 550 times in the text, which is the most often used term. Recalling that the co-occurrence of keywords measures the most popular keywords and those that appear in the same articles more frequently (Kraus et al., 2020; Vallaster et al., 2019; Vuong et al., 2021), this visualization further suggests that the link of this term is significantly vital.

4.4. Review of the literature: relating various degrees of ethics to marketing responsibility

The ensuing literature study demonstrates the diversity of ethics and marketing responsibility research, with the emergence of five main clusters.

4.4.1. Cluster 1: Ethics and relationship marketing

The focus of Cluster 1 is on whether or not ethical marketing responsibility exhibits different traits from relationship marketing. Investigation of ethical beliefs and behaviors is essential

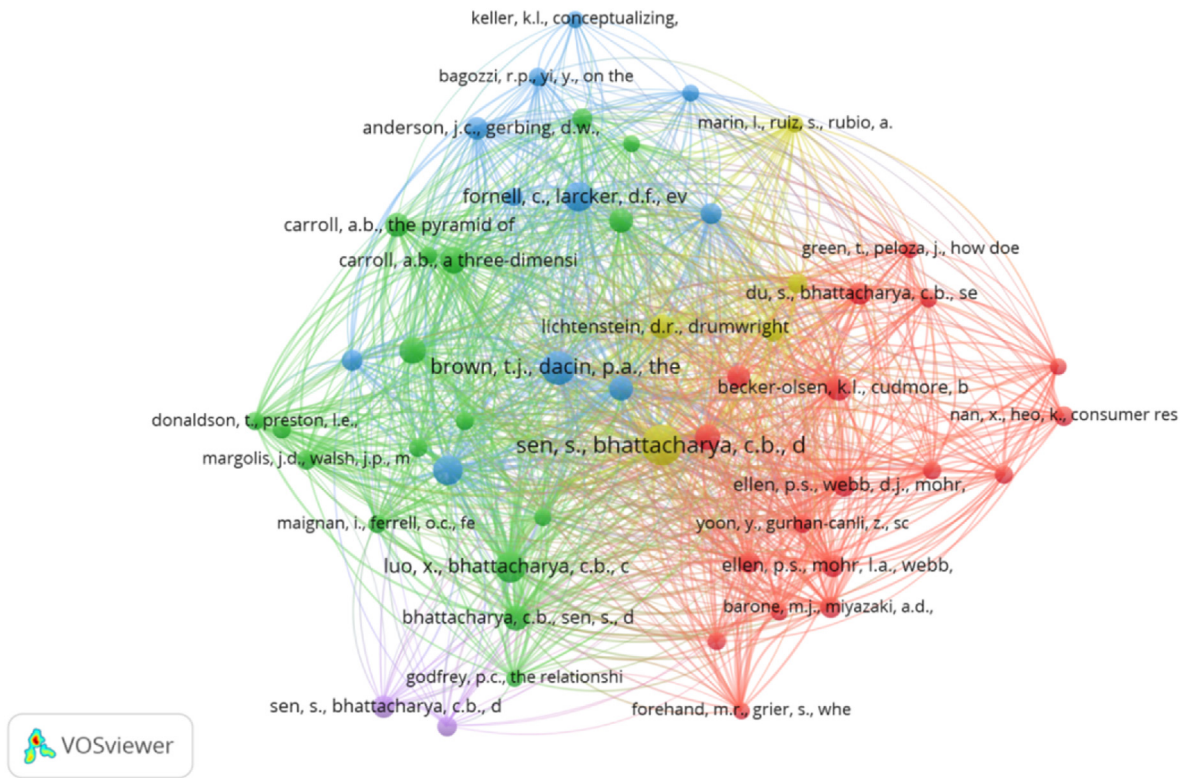


Fig. 7. Co-citation network of contributing authors. Source: Scopus database; VOSviewer tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

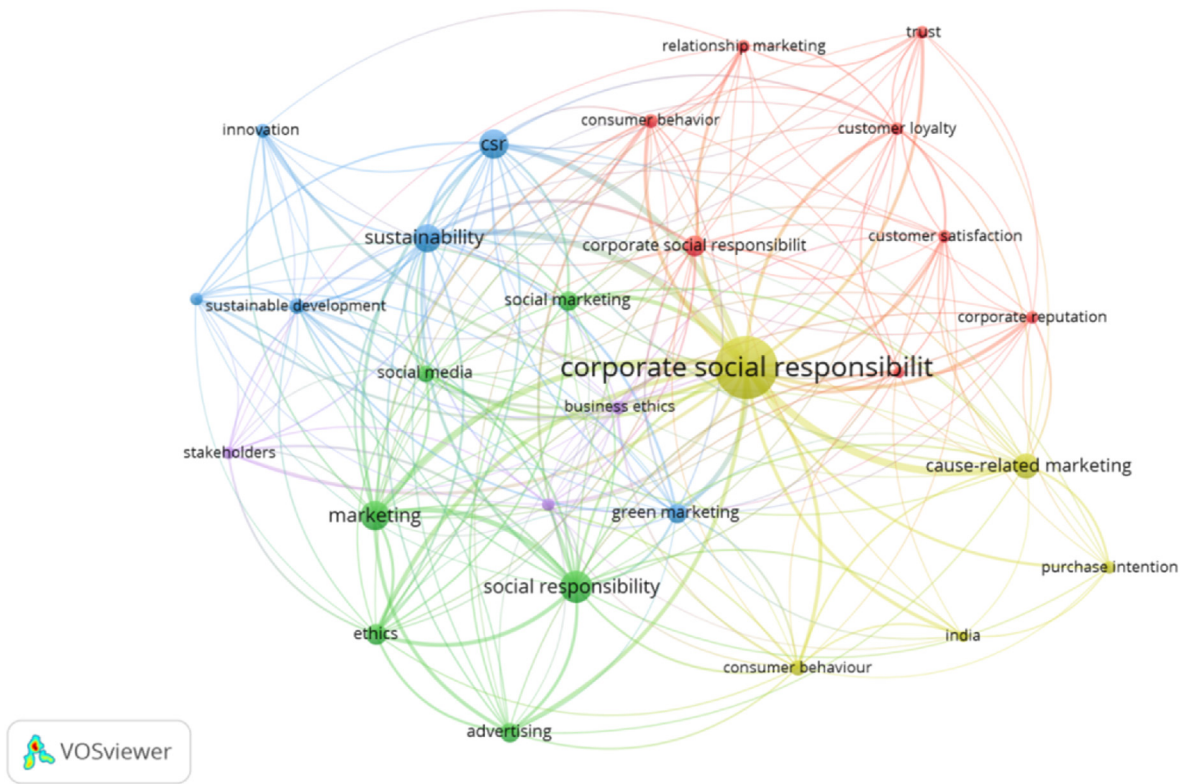


Fig. 8. Cluster combinations and their analysis. Source: Scopus database; VOSviewer tools, Till August 31st 2022, and authors' collection.

concerning relationship marketing, which this section discusses. [Ghauri and Cateora \(2009\)](#) admit that all emerging business trends promote cultivating long-term business connections. [Abela and Murphy \(2008\)](#) conclude that having a relationship with the

customer is a method that may be used to convince businesses to resolve and minimize ethical tension as well as avoid the emergence of unethical behavior (Wagner et al., 2009). In addition, Sheth and Parvatiyar (2002) discovered that relationship marketing constituted a significant shift in marketing strategies. It shifted the emphasis away from an organization's market share and onto the needs and wants of customers as customer retention and commitment. The occurrence has shown that merging the ideas of ethics with relationship marketing may stretch a company's moral boundaries. Following the discussion of ethical issues, the issue of what variables ultimately influence these decisions is brought up. Ethical marketing practices should be an integral aspect of every organization's marketing strategy and should be included during the planning and operation phase (Davenport, 1998). The collaboration and cooperation between the supplier and the client, which adds meaningful value to their business relationship, give the relationship marketing approach its distinctive quality and make it stand out from other marketing strategies. In addition, Abela and Murphy (2008) say that ethical marketing practices should be an essential part of every organization's marketing plan and that these practices should be considered during the planning process. As a result, the customer relationship setting places a greater emphasis on human beings than transaction-based marketing (Laczniak & Murphy, 2006; Murphy et al., 2007; Perret & Holmlund, 2013). The core ethical concepts such as trust, dedication, diligence, and loyalty (Murphy et al., 2007) have been gathered as significant components in relationship marketing (Perret & Holmlund, 2013). Relationship marketing is distinguished from transactional and product-based marketing because it emphasizes contacts or interactions between all stakeholders (Bhattacharya et al., 2008). Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) examined relationship marketing by beginning with an individual's point of view. Specifically, they pointed out that it is possible to evaluate 'actively caring' productivity with the assistance of personal control and sympathy. The operation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an essential factor for the ethical relationship module, which can positively influence relationship marketing (Ellen et al., 2006; Klein & Dawar, 2004; Sen, 2006). The literature shows that marketers have a variety of traits that give them the appropriate sensitivity for making moral choices in the appropriate circumstances.

4.4.2. Cluster 2: Ethics and social marketing

In academia, the criteria ought to be formulated somewhat otherwise. Conceptual frameworks and insights, as well as careful research studies on all aspects of the basic practitioner approach, are provided by academics (Rothschild, 1999). Social marketing is ethically neutral, meaning that they are neither good nor bad; instead, they are merely strategies that can be employed to achieve any goal (Brownlie et al., 2009). A particular social marketing campaign can have more or less of a positive impact, more or less of a negative impact, can treat people with more or less respect, can include or exclude beneficiaries in ways that are more or less, and can operate with more or less transparency and honesty. Ethical principles guide the definition of "social marketing" and are also full of concepts relevant to ethics, such as benefit, social good, effectiveness, equity, and sustainability. Professions typically develop formal codes of ethics to provide members with greater clarity regarding expected ethical behavior (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2009). Both procedural ethics and ethics-in-practice are required, and there is a reciprocal relationship between the two. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) stated that neither procedural ethics nor ethics-in-practice alone is sufficient to ensure that researchers participate in ethical behavior. This argument also appears to be relevant to the practice of social marketing. In social marketing, practitioners' ethical conundrums are discussed in several previous

studies (for example, Brenkert, 2002; Donovan & Henley, 2010). The result shows that many are neglected in the aspect of social marketing (Spotswood et al., 2012). The Related research focuses on ethics in social marketing is being discussed further.

The practice of social marketing can be utilized in any circumstance where there is a need to address a socially problematic individual behavior for a specific group of people. This opens up a wide range of possibilities for social marketing. It is most commonly considered "final consumers," such as adolescents who smoke or moms who must have their children inoculated. However, as will be discussed further on, it is essential to be aware that a social marketing strategy can also be used to change behavior in other vital individuals whose cooperation is required for programs to be effective (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006). Media members, potential partners, financiers, policymakers, legislators, and even an organization's personnel could be considered to fall under this category (Gordon et al., 2006). These target populations can be influenced by using the guiding principles and overarching themes of an effective social marketing campaign (Andreassen, 2002).

4.4.3. Cluster 3: Ethics and sustainable marketing

The traditional interpretation has been superseded with time by the more prevalent virtuous concept in sustainable marketing, which focuses mainly on projected economic outcomes (Ramboarisata & Gendron, 2019). This brief assessment of the ethical foundations of sustainable marketing has been designed to use several principles and methodologies that can contribute to relevant research on sustainable marketing. Sustainable marketing is the process of organizing, carrying out, and managing the creation, assessment, pricing, promotion, and distribution of goods in a way that gratifies the following three requirements: (1) meeting customer needs, (2) achieving organizational objectives, and (3) being eco-friendly (Fuller, 1999) which can contribute to the business success for an extended period.

There has been significant criticism that marketers have been complicit in supporting unsustainable consumption habits. This criticism comes when economies worldwide are collapsing, and unethical business actions are coming to light (James, 2007). In addition, questionable environmental product claims have not benefited the cause of protecting the environment (Cone and Myhre, 2000). It is abundantly clear that extensive environmental damage has been caused by continuous consumption, marketing, manufacturing, processing, discarding, and polluting (Jasrotia et al., 2022), which has led to the speculation that "a sustainable future is not achievable while disregarding the key contributors to ecological degradation – population growth and high consumptive lifestyles" (Bandura, 2007). The usefulness of marketing arises not only from the structural conditions of the field but also from characteristics that may be found within the discipline's fundamental ideas and practices. The theoretical approach to marketing, which predominates today, tends to mean that less attention is paid to the effect of marketing as a social institution of significant importance and impact. This, in turn, has unquestionably significant repercussions for sustainability (Luchs et al., 2010).

Marketing ethics is responsible for marketing sustainability. Concerning matters of sustainability, customers continue to demonstrate a lack of awareness, understanding, trust, and even, in some circumstances, apathy (Chatzidakis et al., 2007; Szmigin et al., 2009; Vlachos, 2008). Furthermore, most sustainability initiatives have been implemented upstream to modify the structural conditions that embed consumer behavior. These initiatives include norms, incentives, legislation, environmental design, and technological advancement; the more ingrained the habits, the greater the need for interventions upstream (Verplanken & Wood, 2006). First and foremost, these have focused on technological fixes,

developing new technology, and encouraging industries and businesses to become more sustainable. One example is the “choice editing” strategy for white goods to eliminate energy-inefficient household appliances and light bulbs (Lee, 2008). The researchers call for more research on this subject, focusing on revisiting prior ethical methods with a particular focus on independent ethical business practices.

4.4.4. Cluster 4: Ethics and cause-related marketing

According to Staples (2004), customer relationship management (CRM) cultivates relationships between businesses and charitable organizations. Crane (2000) makes the hypothesis that customer relationship management (CRM) is a blend of corporate strategy and citizenship and that it is becoming an activity that is a “must-do” for the 21st century. CRM campaigns can be different depending on the type of non-profit partnerships formed and the nature of the ties between businesses and the marketing partners they use. Similarly, the partnership can take several forms depending on the nature of the cause, the amount of territory covered by the cause, and the duration of the program (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Singh & Dhir, 2019). According to Hemphill (1999), customer relationship management (CRM) is a form of corporate assistance for a charitable organization that takes the form of an expensive marketing and advertising campaign designed to raise awareness not only of the firm but also of the charitable organization (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006).

Through their research, Barron and Yechiam (2002) show that customer relationship management (CRM) can have more significant effects than customer-centered bonuses when advertising a product. In their research, Smith and Higgins (2000) take an unfavorable stance on CRM. They believe that it provides a reason that can counterbalance the guilt associated with luxury purchases and that it can add additional good connections to a purchase made daily. On the other hand, Andreassen (1996) posits that CRM is not about marketing but finding innovative ways to improve people's lives. Both the charitable organization and the cause benefit from the free publicity and awareness that CRM generates among the public. As a direct result, it could boost the number of volunteers an organization has in the short term (Docherty & Hibbert, 2003; Nan & Heo, 2007). The senior employees of the companies offering managerial assistance might also aid the non-profit organization if they choose to do so for the organization's reputation. CSR links to corporate performance through reputation. Reputations indicate organizations' performance meeting stakeholder expectations (Nan & Heo, 2007). Fombrun and Shanley (1990) believe that a good reputation can help enterprises charge premium rates, access capital markets, and recruit better candidates and investors. Their study found that a company's reputation improves with its social contribution. The above discussion shows that marketing involves promoting and building a company's brand. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, marketing is tricky. Most expect ad expenditure to decline in 2020, and almost all face changes in media outlets and messaging. Their survey of advertisers shows that COVID-19 causes anxiety and uncertainty. Many business activities to boost public welfare during the crisis appear to be motivated by ethical principles rather than cost-benefit analyses. Businesses prioritize community well-being over short-term profits (He & Harris, 2020). Customers and staff like this and think corporations should do more. Firms must respond with sensitivity and intelligence if the pandemic continues to spread. The contributions in this cluster frequently take a much broader approach to ethics and marketing, considering the benefits they provide to societal advancement and economic growth.

4.4.5. Cluster 5: Ethics and marketing strategy

Socially responsible marketing includes business with social duty. It is “commonly understood relationships, obligations, and duties” related to the corporate impact on society. What is “commonly accepted” may vary throughout societies and over time within a society. Business ethics is a more organized discipline than social responsibility; thus, it provides a solid foundation for ethical marketing strategies.

This research has improved our understanding of marketing ethics and social responsibility. Only some academic papers propose how marketing managers might apply their understanding of these areas to construct an actionable approach to marketing ethics (Laczniak & Murphy, 2019). Though necessary, only some of these attempts integrate marketing and ethics into strategic ethical marketing planning (Laczniak & Murphy, 2019). Creating and maintaining sustainable relations between supplier (company) and buyer (consumer) needs a critical assessment of ethical conduct with the proper adoption of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Lantos, 2001). Companies and customers seek reputable companies. Koul et al. (2022) contend that as customers become familiar with a provider through repeated purchases, they rely less on themselves for information and guidance, resulting in cheaper costs, and the trust factor increases over time (Walsh & Beatty, 2007).

Corporate reputation is a strong-willed process in which a corporation advertises its main features to constituents to optimize its economic and non-economic status. Strategy research seeks a morally sustained competitive edge for business growth (Mahon, 2002). The concept of ethical marketing strategy is based on the premise that a favorable public opinion of an individual or organization would positively affect public attitudes and behaviors (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Lantos, 2001). An implicit assumption is that all stakeholders have a standard set of values (ethical conduct) and may have comparable impressions of the organization. Most authors who have described ethical marketing strategy agree collectively, as their definitions focus on a specific stakeholder group's ability to perceive and correctly interpret “what a corporation stands for.” Such presumptions frequently undervalue the significance of a crucial group of stakeholders—customers, who may view a service provider differently than other stakeholders like stockholders, rivals, and employees. Integrating ethical values into corporate strategy is also thought to affect an organization's image. The literature demonstrates that CSR helps firms gain a competitive edge and differentiate themselves from competitors (Lepoutre & Heene, 2006). Even though most research in this field has focused on CSR in reputable organizations, several authors have contributed to its growth by studying the chances marketers and businesses have to engage in these activities and behavior.

5. Discussion

The current study evaluates the concept of ethics in marketing responsibility and associated literature. The association between bibliometric analysis and literature review thoroughly describes the field's past and contemporary research and can provide a foundation for upcoming contemporary challenges. We uncovered an analytical format (Bibliometrix and VOSviewer), followed by ethics and marketing responsibility literature. Both clusters share textual patterns and subjects. Key subjects reinforce keyword analysis findings, which showed a similar tendency. However, the cluster forms show that ethics and marketing responsibility have at least five unique dimensions of inquiry. It is crucial to comprehend the current state of ethics and marketing responsibility with its

potential reach. This study attempts to uncover the literature on ethics and marketing responsibility followed by an analytical format (Bibliometrix and VOSviewer).

Prolonged investigations will allow academicians and interested parties to analyze the pros and cons of marketing responsibility. Short-term, everything looks beneficial, but the long term has terrible repercussions. The ethical dimension in marketing responsibility is trendy. This can affect all sectors/industries if the organizations need to complete their proper application. Ethical issues concerning marketing harm societies, organizations, and individuals. If a company engages in unethical tactics, its efforts for business growth may fade away quickly. To explore issues related to ethics and marketing responsibility, we limit our study to areas such as business, management, accounting, social sciences, economics, econometrics, finance, and arts and humanities. The researcher seeks to advance knowledge by compiling analytic data with the academic literature on ethical challenges in marketing responsibility. In other words, gathering the publications will not be helpful unless we make essential findings. We looked at authors' ethics, marketing responsibility, sources, and publication countries/regions.

We first looked for primary keywords and search results for a broad region of ethics and marketing responsibility. With the help of the Scopus database and a combination of related keywords, initially, we got 8634 results. After further refinement and limitation, we got 1886 results for our study. In the part of descriptive statistics, we use the above 1886 results. The results show that substantial articles were contributed in 2021 (169 articles) and 2022 (158 articles as of August 31st, 2022). The findings show that the authors are particularly interested in learning more about ethical marketing responsibility and contributing to it in the 21st century. Thus we intend to address Research question 1 (RQ 1), and the results recommend the overall publication outputs of research related to 'ethics and marketing responsibility.'

In the data analysis part, we use a bibliometric study with the help of the Scopus database, bibliometrix, biblioshiny and VOSviewer. The results are shown in graphical form in this piece of work. The result of 'Keyword statistics and Most commonly searched words' shows the terms 'marketing' used 246 times and secured top in the search list, 'human' used 117 times, 'article' used 115 times, 'corporate social responsibility' used 102 times, and so on. In the Co-citation part, with the help of VOSviewer, we created a co-citation network among authors in this study. We limit the minimum number of citations of a cited reference to 20. The VOSviewer identified 98,658 cited references, of which 53 meet the threshold. Thus we tried to meet the Research Question 2 (RQ 2) analysis related to 'ethics and marketing responsibility.'

In response to Research Question 3 (RQ3), we aim to identify the Journal wise contribution of articles; the Journal of Business Ethics (JBE) has the highest of 78 articles relating to ethics and marketing responsibility and in the network analysis part of the citation analysis shows that with 3991 citations, Kollmuss (2002), is leading for highly cited research in our study.

While examining the relationship between the highly scientific production and highly cited journals concerning 'ethics and marketing responsibility' (RQ4), we identified that the most cited journals are Environmental Education Research, with 3991 citations on an article published in the year 2002, and Harvard Business Review with 2265 citations on an article published in the year 1998. In comparison, the Journal of Business Ethics has published most articles on 'ethics and marketing responsibility' with 78 articles and Sustainability Journal with 68 articles.

The top-performing country in scientific production which have made significant contributions to ethics and marketing responsibility is The USA, with 1214 articles; due to the global

demand for research in ethics and marketing responsibility, this analysis may be a revelation for other researchers and nations. In the citation measurement, The USA secured the top with a total count of 24,691 citations, and the average article citation for The USA is 61.12. Other countries are in the process of contributing to the field of marketing responsibility. Thus Research Question 5 (RQ 5) has been addressed.

Data clustering is the assembling of objects having related characteristics. Put another way, it assembles articles from the same field in a single spot. In the current study, network analysis in VOSviewer was used to cluster the data. The results show that out of 4733 keywords, 28 meet the minimum requirement of 20 occurrences per keyword. The arrangement of nodes and edges illustrates the cluster analysis technique. A particular cluster can be distinguished from other connected nodes and clusters by its closely-knit network of nodes. We got 5 clusters to strengthen our study to identify the trends of ethics and marketing responsibility.

Marketing responsibility is a dynamic concept that reflects a social discussion on the moral duty of organizations towards all the stakeholders and the social impact of their actions, yet being open to many different ethical points of view. This also includes essential topics, as shown in several clusters like 'ethics and relationship marketing,' 'ethics and social marketing,' 'ethics and sustainable marketing,' 'ethics and cause-related marketing,' and 'ethics and marketing strategy.' After going through a cluster-wise literature review, we found that the research demonstrates that marketers possess various characteristics that allow them the required sensitivity for making moral decisions under the right conditions. The researchers urge more studies on this topic, emphasizing reconsidering earlier ethical approaches and focusing on independent ethical business practices. Businesses must respond with tact and wisdom if the pandemic spreads further or any uncertainty continues. The articles in this cluster-wise analysis typically tackle the topic of ethics and marketing from a much broader perspective, considering the advantages they offer for societal advancement and economic growth. Although most of the research in this area has concentrated on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in well-established companies, many writers have studied the opportunities that marketers and businesses have to participate in these activities, which has helped advance the topic in the future.

The bibliometric study on ethics and marketing responsibility found that there has been a significant increase in research on the topic over the last decade. This supports the growing recognition of the importance of ethics in marketing. However, compared to other studies in the field, our findings showed a greater focus on corporate social responsibility and less attention given to individual ethical decision-making in marketing. This disparity suggests a need for more research on the personal ethical considerations of marketing professionals. In light of these findings, businesses must prioritize ethical decision-making and take responsibility for their actions in the market. Future research should aim to fill the gap in our understanding of individual ethical decision-making in marketing and its impact on the industry (see Table 8). Understanding the relationship between ethics and marketing responsibility is essential for creating a responsible and sustainable marketing environment.

5.1. Theoretical contributions

This research has several theoretical significance. First, it adds fresh ideas on ethics and marketing responsibility to the current literature on business implementation. Second, the study highlighted research gaps in existing literature through cluster analysis. Third, the research examined the main settings and terms employed in earlier studies on ethical marketing responsibility.

Table 8

Future research direction, Source: Compiled by the authors.

Clusters on Ethics and Marketing Responsibility Topic	Future Research Directions
Ethics and Relationship Marketing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consumer Privacy and Data Protection: As technology advances, consumer data becomes more valuable, and the need for ethical management and protection of this data is becoming increasingly important. Future research in this area could focus on developing ethical frameworks for collecting, using, and storing consumer data in relationship marketing. 2. Customer Centricity: There is a growing trend towards customer-centric marketing, which prioritizes the needs and desires of the customer. Future research in this area could focus on understanding how organizations can effectively balance their goals with the customers in relationship marketing. 3. The Impact of Artificial Intelligence and Automation: The increasing use of AI and automation in marketing leads to ethical concerns, such as algorithmic bias and the loss of personalization. Future research in this area could focus on understanding the ethical implications of AI and automation in relationship marketing and developing best practices for their use. 4. Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability: Organizations are under increasing pressure to act socially responsibly and sustainably. Future research in this area could focus on understanding the role of relationship marketing in promoting corporate social responsibility and sustainability and the impact of these efforts on customer loyalty and trust.
Ethics and Social Marketing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ethical considerations in AI and big data: As AI and big data become increasingly integrated into social marketing strategies, researchers will likely focus on the ethical implications of these technologies, such as data privacy and algorithmic bias. 2. Sustainability and environmental responsibility: In the coming years, social marketing researchers may focus on how companies and organizations can promote sustainable practices and minimize their environmental impact while still achieving marketing goals. 3. Social media and digital technology: As social media and digital technology continue to evolve, researchers will focus on understanding the ethical and social implications of these platforms and technologies, including the impact on privacy, information dissemination, and community building.
Ethics and Cause-Related Marketing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The intersection of technology and ethics: With the increasing use of technology in marketing and advertising, it is essential to explore how ethical considerations play a role in developing and implementing cause-related marketing campaigns. This includes examining data privacy, algorithmic bias, and transparency in using personal information. 2. The impact of cause-related marketing on marginalized communities: Research is needed to understand the potential consequences of cause-related marketing on marginalized communities and to develop best practices for avoiding adverse impacts. This includes considering cultural sensitivity and power dynamics and ensuring that campaigns are representative and inclusive. 3. Measuring the effectiveness of cause-related marketing: There is a need for further research to determine how to measure the impact of cause-related marketing campaigns effectively and to understand the factors that contribute to their success. This includes developing metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of campaigns and exploring the relationship between cause-related marketing and consumer behavior.
Ethics and Marketing Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The role of ethics in marketing strategy development: Research is needed to explore how ethical considerations are incorporated into the development of marketing strategies and how they impact decision-making. This includes examining the trade-offs between ethical considerations and business objectives and the role of ethical leadership in promoting ethical practices. 2. The impact of marketing strategies on vulnerable populations: There is a need for research to understand the potential consequences of marketing strategies on vulnerable populations, such as children, the elderly, and marginalized communities. This includes examining issues such as exploitation, manipulation, and cultural sensitivity. 3. The intersection of ethics and sustainability: As companies increasingly prioritize sustainability, exploring the ethical considerations involved in marketing sustainable products and services is essential. This includes understanding the impact of marketing on consumer behavior and the role of transparency in promoting responsible practices. 4. The relationship between ethics and digital marketing: With the increasing use of digital channels in marketing, research is needed to explore the ethical implications of these channels and how companies can promote responsible practices. This includes examining issues such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the use of artificial intelligence. 5. The role of regulation in promoting ethical marketing practices: Research is needed to understand the effectiveness of existing regulations in promoting ethical marketing practices and the potential for new regulations to address emerging ethical concerns. This includes exploring the trade-offs between regulation and innovation, the impact of regulations on small businesses, and the role of industry self-regulation.

Fourth, future research approaches toward sustainability have been outlined based on comparison data. Theoretically, this article addresses ethical aspects of marketing responsibility, including who has contributed, what has been researched and existing work's strengths and drawbacks. This article's clustering and themes are also unique. Cluster 1: 'ethics and relationship marketing,' Cluster 2: 'ethics and social marketing,' Cluster 3: 'ethics and sustainable marketing,' Cluster 4: 'ethics and cause-related marketing,' and Cluster 5: 'ethics and marketing strategy. The interdependence of clusters shows that more than focusing on one issue is required. All connected regions or challenges must be handled jointly, and understanding these links is crucial.

5.2. Managerial contributions

This study can help managers understand the causes, actions, and outcomes of innovation implementation in the context of ethical obligation in marketing management with the perspective of long-term growth. The information offered here will aid

businesses in recognizing components that promote responsiveness as well as those that obstruct ethical marketing practices. Using this review, management may adopt strategic goals for long-term organizational performance based on intelligent decision-making. Ethical marketing responsibility provides uniform benefits across sectors, industries and countries. Managers must conduct surveys to determine if ethical marketing responsibility improves or destroys. Deep thought is needed to determine if ethics and marketing responsibility contribute to organizations and if it hinders intellectual business growth. Policymakers must consider each cluster's future scope.

5.3. Limitations of the study and future research directions

The present study has evident limitations when undertaking a theoretical examination. Since we only selected a portion of the Scopus database, the dataset may be skewed due to the selection criteria. Our focus was on scholarly works written in English, leaving out studies that might have been novel and fascinating. SDG

12, Responsible Consumption and Production, is one of the most applicable and straightforward methods for businesses to implement the UN SDGs into their operations. With ethical responsibility, consumption and production are essential to all stakeholders, including product creation, supply chain management, and responsive business management. Our study focused on ethics and marketing responsibility, so the study area was restricted to “Business, Management and Accounting,” “Social Sciences,” “Economics, Econometrics and Finance,” and “Arts and Humanities.” Future studies may also perform their research on other topics of interest. However, the main findings of this bibliometric analysis and literature review can be used to direct future research, including some novel applications in several different academic domains.

6. Future scope

There are surprisingly few thorough literature reviews, even though marketing ethics research has grown significantly over the past 30 years, with improved depth and breadth of coverage and more publications in esteemed academic journals. Two challenges are deciding which contributions to the subject to consider carefully and the vague and disputed description of the scope of ethical problems related to product marketing. According to Whysall, in 2000, the field was separated into numerous marketing sub-disciplines, such as marketing research, advertising, pricing, and so forth (Tsalikis & Fritzsche, 2013). By collecting more information from other relevant scientific databases, including Web of Science, Google Scholar, PubMed, and EBSCO host, future studies should broaden the scope of this investigation and improve its results based on the crucial insights from this analysis. Future research direction is essential in a research article because it provides a roadmap for future work in the field. It helps to identify gaps in the current knowledge and to suggest new avenues for exploration. It also allows the researchers to build on their work and advance the field (Singh & Dhir, 2019). Here are a few future research directions which can be addressed in the future.

We believe that by drawing attention to the moral issues surrounding marketing responsibility, researchers and academicians will pay more attention to the fast-changing and techno-centric world. For future research, it is further suggested to investigate the relationship between responsible marketing and sustainable production and consumption (SDG-12) of the UN development goals, behavioral concerns and marketing ethics, among many more.

7. Conclusion

The present study contributes to previous research by giving information on state-of-the-art and identifying trends, gaps, and research possibilities through the selection and content analysis of the most recent and pertinent publications published in this field. The current research contributes to the ethics and marketing responsibility literature by assessing the factors that impact consumers' behavioral intention and usage behavior. The study delivers its significance from the social studies perspective and displays that the current research scenario focuses on ethics and marketing responsibility. The current study offers insights to future researchers into high-impact journals and journals publishing articles in the area. The study also provides insights into authors who contribute the most in the area and the prominent countries in publishing in marketing responsibility and ethics. The study results have also indicated a significant rise in the number of articles published in the area, indicating the growing requirement and scope.

Author contributions

All authors whose names appear on the submission 1) Made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; 2) Drafted the work or revised it critically for important intellectual content; 3) Approved the version to be published; and 4) Agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Compliance with ethical standards

Ethical approval

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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