



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
MODERN TRENDS IN
SOCIAL SCIENCES
(IJMTSS)
www.ijmtss.com



A GLOBAL RESEARCH TREND ON FRANCHISEE IN FRANCHISING LITERATURE REVIEW: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Hien Thi Thao Bui^{1*}, Manimekalai Jambulingam²

¹ Taylor's Business School, Taylor University, Selangor, Malaysia
Email: buihithaohien@sd.taylors.edu.my

² Taylor's Business School, Taylor University, Selangor, Malaysia
Email: manimekalai.jambulingam@taylors.edu.my

* Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 23.06.2022

Revised date: 04.07.2022

Accepted date: 15.08.2022

Published date: 01.09.2022

To cite this document:

Hien, T. T. B., & Jambulingam, M. (2022). A Global Research Trend On Franchisee In Franchising Literature Review: A Bibliometric Analysis. *International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences*, 5 (21), 30-48.

DOI: 10.35631/IJMTSS.521003

This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



Abstract:

Franchising has become a worldwide international business activity. Companies have moved from conventional business models to multinational ones since the beginning of the twenty-first century to leverage their profitable performance and improve their competitive edge. Franchising is the best method for businesses to broaden into new areas. Franchisees play an important role in supporting franchise companies in expanding into new markets by providing valuable resources. This paper aims to provide an overview of academic research on franchisees in the franchise literature. An extensive bibliometric analysis, including bibliometric performance analysis and a graphic mapping of the references in this area, was carried out to achieve this. This research investigates journals, documents, authors, organizations/institutions, and countries. The study employs various bibliometric metrics, such as the number of publications and citations to conduct the franchisee research. In addition, the VOS viewer is used to map the bibliographic content graphically. The graphical analysis uses co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence. The findings of both studies are consistent, indicating that the United States is the most influential country in franchisee research, as it is home to the most influential authors and institutions in the field. Furthermore, the field's global growth has been observed and is expected to continue. Our study is insightful and complimentary since it covers most of the important aspects of franchisee research.

Keywords:

Franchisee Performance, Bibliometric, Franchise Literature

Introduction

For many decades, franchising has been studied due to globalization and technological advancements, forcing organizations/ companies to rapidly expand geographically due to the vast number of foreign rivals in the global marketplace (Bretas & Alon, 2020). Franchising is a popular and effective method of conducting and expanding business operations. When aiming to expand, a company starts a franchise process by issuing licenses to independent franchisees, granting them the right to conduct business operations under the franchisor's brand name (Chaudey & Fadaio, 2010). The number of business organizations opting for international franchising is increasing rapidly, demonstrating the improved success rate of franchising operations over recent years due to both the strategic approach established by franchisees and the advent of globalization, which has provided new opportunities for businesses willing to operate across national borders (Alon et al., 2012; Kerdpitak & Jermittiparsert, 2019). Obtaining franchise licenses offers significant advantages as the licensing organization already has a well-established structure and reputation but does not guarantee success for franchisees (Welsh et al., 2011).

Many scholars, especially in recent decades, have focused on franchisee performance and activities, confirming a substantial growth in the discipline as franchisees play an essential role in the franchise system and ensure franchise stability globally (Watson et al., 2020). The exponential growth in franchisee research is mainly due to the accumulated empirical evidence pointing to the positive contribution of the franchisee to relevant academic and franchising outputs, such as franchisees' innovative activities can ensure franchise network consistency (Colla et al., 2019), or franchisee personality traits affect the financial and relational performance of franchise system (Watson et al., 2020), franchisee entrepreneurial capacity (López-Fernández & López-Bayón, 2018). A study by (Michael and Combs, 2008) analyzed 88 restaurant chains to determine several factors to reduce franchisee failures, such as contract design and strategic building resources. A study by (Nijmeijer et al., 2014) conducted a systematic review to examine the nature of franchising. They provided the framework on how franchising works, including ownership structure, business format design, contract design, the behavior of the franchisor and franchisees, and the age and size of their systems and units. Most recently, Dada (2021) explored franchisee failure by systematic review based on the evidence that there has been no synthesis of the empirical evidence to systematically understand the factors that increase the likelihood of franchisee failure.

It is noticed that the number of publications on franchisees continues to increase, and it becomes crucial to learn more about the most prolific and prominent academic researchers, as well as the leading journals and universities in this field. Although some studies have been conducted on this topic, not all of them clarify which universities do more on franchisee research. In this paper, researchers conduct deeper analysis to determine the top publications that are the most prominent and active universities worldwide in franchisee research and which universities publish the most related to franchisee research. To achieve the objectives, this research uses bibliometric analysis from (Pritchard, 1969; Robert N. Broadus, 1987) to quantitatively analyze the materials developed in franchisee performance research between 1968 and 2022. We obtained the data by considering all articles published in present academic journals in the Scopus, first filtering by keyword franchisee, with no years limited. They were filtered by eighteen research areas of Scopus related to business, management, accounting, economics, econometrics, and finance perspectives, presenting the information with the university affiliation of the authors. Bibliometric analysis is a technique for evaluating a research area's status quo and growth patterns and predicting its future trajectory using

computational, quantitative, and other calculation methods (Zupic, 2015). Bibliographic techniques are often used to map the patterns in various research fields (Eck & Waltman, 2014). However, no bibliometric analysis of franchisee research has been published to date. This study aims to fill that gap by conducting bibliometric research using Scopus's most widely used citation index.

To summarize, this research will focus on four research objectives to achieve the research's goals:

Research Objective 1: Overview of franchisee research from the beginning of the franchise literature review.

Research Objective 2: What are the broad patterns in this field of study?

Research Objective 3: What are the main areas of research?

Research Objective 4. How have scientific priorities changed over time in franchisee research?

The analysis implication adds to the understanding of franchisees and their relations to various topics, allowing researchers to do new studies on the franchisee topic. The study methods and materials are described in the second section. The results and bibliometric analyses are presented in section three, and the discussion is concluded in section four. To conclude, the future research direction will be given.

Method Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative analysis approach that uses mathematical and computational methods. It can be carried out by gathering the bibliographic data of other scholars in a particular area, where such scholars conveyed their thinking by citations or writing (Zupic, 2015). It is considered that bibliometric analysis helps analyze topics of concern in fields and provides insight for potential researchers (Eck & Waltman, 2014). Bibliometric research reflects on the performance of articles in specific areas and describes the complexities of the fields in ways that a summary article would not provide (Durieux & Gevenois, 2010). Bibliometric analysis is performed using various data sources, including WoS, Scopus, PubMed, DBLP, and Google Scholar. However, citation information is not included in the DBLP and PubMed (Bretas & Alon, 2021). These two sources are not popular in Business Management Areas so that they will be excluded from this research. Citation metrics in Google Scholar datasets are unreliable. For example, an undergraduate thesis citation can be counted against a paper's citation statistics. The Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), founded by Eugene Garfield in Philadelphia in 1956, created the WoS citation database (www.webofknowledge.com), and Thomson Reuters Corporation eventually formed WoS (Bretas & Alon, 2021). Scopus (www.scopus.com) - which belongs to Elsevier, has an abstract and citation database launched in 2004. According to Glänzel & Schoepflin (1999), even though WOS has historically been the primary source of scientific evaluation, Scopus has recently emerged as a viable alternative to WOS due to its similar functionality and coverage of over 60 million documents in all scientific fields.

This study used only one data source: Scopus, as the primary source of bibliometric records. Data were downloaded in April 2022. The search in the Scopus database included only journal papers with the term 'franchisee' in the title, abstract, and keyword lists. The study also considered papers that contain the term "franchisee failure," "franchise* performance," and "franchise* satisfaction." All research articles in languages other than English, such as Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, and French, were omitted from this bibliometric analysis, and only papers

published in English were included. The search criteria together with the Boolean expression, are shown below:
Scopus

**TITLE-ABS-KEY (*franchisee*) AND (LIMIT-
TO (DOCTYPE, "*ar*")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE, "*j*")) AND (LIMIT-
TO (LANGUAGE, "*English*")).**

The list of articles was sorted by years (oldest to latest) in which the oldest is 1968, and the latest is April 2022.

Once we had completed the search process, the records were subjected to bibliometric analysis. A total of 855 documents were found in this query string.

(Anna Andres, 2009) pointed out that a general overview of a particular research area is useful when applied to the bibliometric analysis. Two principal bibliometric method approaches involve a performance analysis and a science or bibliometric map (Glänzel & Schoepflin, 1999). The performance analysis assesses the impact of scientific production research citations by the different researchers interacting in research.

The bibliometric methods enable researchers to base their findings on bibliographic aggregations produced by other scientists who exhibit their views by citing, collaborating, and writing. When these data are aggregated and analyzed, it is possible to provide insights into the structure of the field, social networks, and current interests (Durieux & Gevenois, 2010).

This study exported the bibliographical information of 855 articles to analyze using VOSviewer version 1.6.11. The study provides a graphical analysis of the bibliographic data via the VOSviewer software (Eck & Waltman, 2014). Four bibliometric techniques are demonstrated using VOSviewer software, such as co-citation analysis and bibliographic coupling co-words, co-occurrence of keywords, and co-authorship (Sen, 1996; Tijssen and Raan, 2016). When two documents receive a citation from the same third document, this is referred to as a co-citation. Bibliographic coupling occurs when two studies refer to the same third document. Co-citation analysis applies to authors, while the bibliographical coupling applies to institutions, countries, and regions. Co-authorship quantifies the extent to which the most productive sources collaborate or co-author. The occurrence of keywords analysis is used to examine the conceptual structure of a research field by analyzing the keywords contained in the documents. The graph is visualized as a network of elements, with the size of the circle representing the element's importance and the network connections representing the element's proximity to other elements. The location of the circles and their colors are used to group the items. VOSviewer included objects of interest in this research, such as countries of publication and author keywords. Each item in VOSviewer could be connected to links, and each link is assigned a value to indicate the strength of the relationship between the items. It is believed that relationships with greater strength tend to have a higher strength value ((Glänzel & Schoepflin, 1999). Additionally, a link strength indicator in the co-authorship analysis indicated the total number of publications between the two linked countries. On the other hand,

the link strength in the co-occurrence analysis of keywords indicated the volume of research conducted using the two linked keywords concurrently (Eck & Waltman, 2014)

Results and Findings

Overview of Research Findings

There were 855 research articles published in 53 years from 1968 to 2022. Figure 1 shows the growth of publication trends in franchisee research. The first research on franchisees was in 1968 with the title: "the art of managing a franchise" by two authors Mockler, R.J, and Easop, H.E. There was little research on franchisees from 1968 to 1993. From 1993 onwards, the number of publications in franchisee has been increasing steadily. It is believed that scholars had paid attention to franchisees' perspectives. There has been an exponential growth in interest in the field, with a significant increase in both citations and the number of publications. The annual growth rate increased rapidly in 2011 when publications were almost five times more than publications in 2005. The position of bubbles in Figure 1 represents the number of publications for a particular year. From 2013 to 2020, the number of publications remained constant, around 40-50 papers per year. Among 855 papers, as of 2021, only 158 research articles (take approximately 18%) have public open access for readers, 38 research articles for gold access (approximately 2.4%), and 121 research articles for green access (approximately 14%).

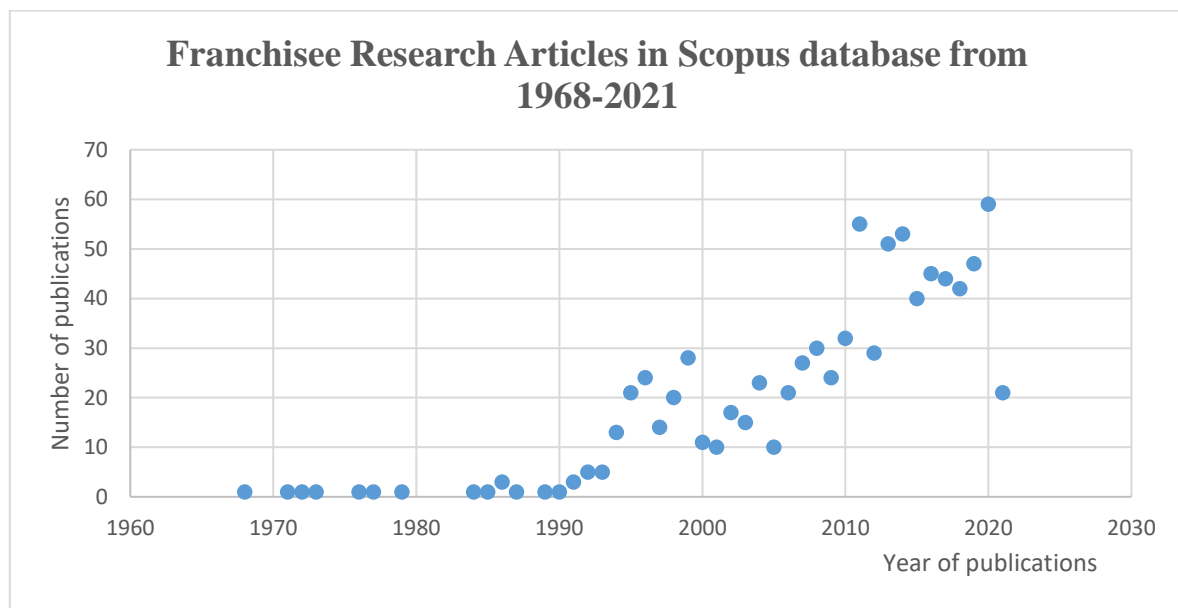


Figure 1: Franchisee Research Articles From 1968-2021

However, some researchers pointed out that franchisee perspectives have paid little minimum attention; hence, they encouraged more research on franchisee literature (Dada, 2021). The subject area analysis indicated that the concerns of management are the primary attention in franchisee research trend, where the followings are the top five rankings of subject area as analysed from Scopus: Business, Management and Accounting (697 research papers); economics, econometrics, and finance (182 articles); Social sciences (149 articles); Decision Sciences (55 articles and Computer Science (37 articles). The minority of research papers focused on the engineering area (32 articles); environmental science (24 articles); mathematics (17 papers); ... That results can be seen that franchisee research focuses not only on business

management but also on multidisciplinary areas such as environmental science, medicine, mathematics, arts, and humanities. In addition to that, the rise of research on franchisee perspectives is likely to depend on the development of the global franchise system as well as the critical role of the franchisee in the system as franchisees are entrepreneurs who have the market knowledge and can become bridges to connect the franchisor's brand name and local customers. In the Covid-19 pandemic era, the franchising industry is one of the most devastating industries; however, the franchise system survival depends mainly on franchisee performance in the local market. Overall, the journals cover several research areas, still with implications for business and management. This may reveal how the theme of franchisee research interests several research streams and has probably promoted the cross-fertilization of diverse fields. Figure 2 depicts the research areas from 1968-2021 with more than ten published articles. Among the most relevant areas, there is, Business, Management and Accounting area with approximately 53.1%, followed by Economics, Econometrics, and Finance area with accounted for 14% and Social Sciences with 11.5%.

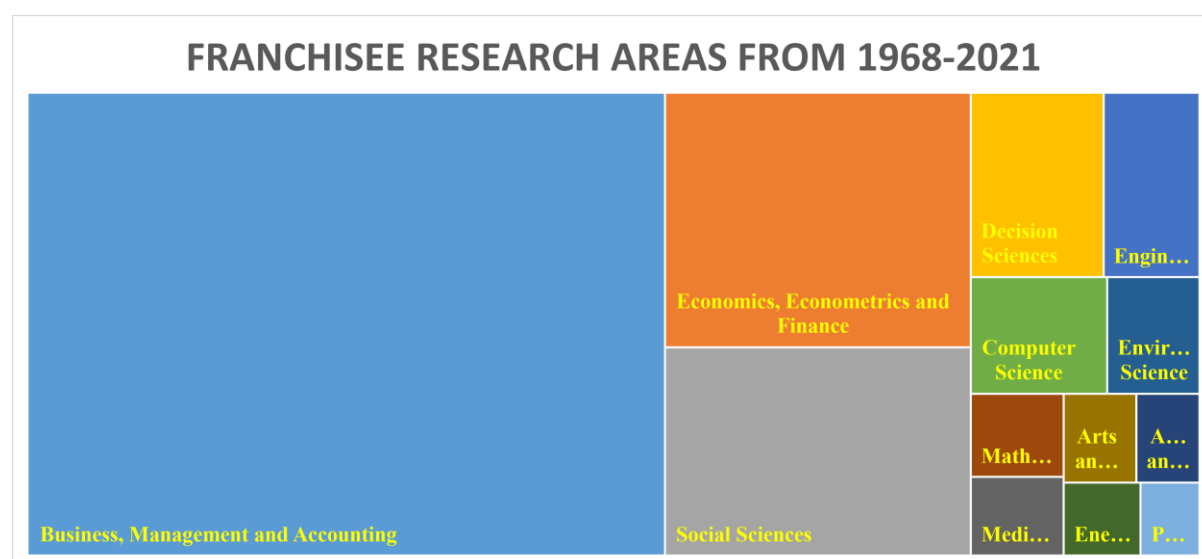


Figure 2: Franchisee Research Areas From 1968-2021.

Core Journals and Publications

The 855 articles in the database were published in 35 journals which the minimum number of documents of a source is 5. The journals with a high number of documents are presented in Table 1. Two journals stand out in core journals on franchisee research: Journal of Business Venturing and Journal of Small Business Management. Each of these two journals accumulates around 5.1% of all publications in the Scopus database. However, articles published in the Journal of Business Venturing have been cited nearly two times with 2046 citations compared to the Journal of Small Business Management with 729 citations. Journal of Marketing Channels ranks first with 48 documents and 526 citations, covering 5.6% of total publications in franchisee research. However, that journal was removed from the Scopus list with the coverage from 1991 to 2017.

The top three journals with the highest citations (Journal of Business Venturing, Journal of Small Business Management, and Journal of Business Research) are high reputed journals in Business and Management Research. Both journals are from well-known publishers (Elsevier, Taylor & Francis, Wiley – Blackwell, Sage, and Emerald).

According to the 2020 CiteScore report, eight out of the top ten journals had a CiteScore of 5 or higher. Based on (Hans and Rachel, 2016), the impact is critical for assessing a journal's performance over time and making decisions regarding its future. It is helpful to collect metrics to enable informed decision-making on whether to submit articles/manuscripts to these journals.

Table 1: Core Journals on Franchisee

Journal	Publishers	Cite Score 2020	Documents	Citations
Journal of Marketing Channels	Taylor & Francais	No longer listed in Scopus	48	526
Journal of Business Venturing	Elsevier	13.3	25	2046
Journal of Small Business Management	Wiley - Blackwell	6.4	20	729
Journal of Business Research	Elsevier	9.2	22	646
Journal of Retailing	Elsevier	11.8	20	265
International Small Business Journal	Sage	8.0	16	583
International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management	Emerald	4.6	16	163
Service Industries Journal	Taylor & Francais	6.4	16	214
Entrepreneurship: theory and practice	Wiley - Blackwell	17.7	14	323
European Journal of Marketing	Emerald	4.7	13	251

Table 2 presents the most influential articles in research on franchisees. The publications address various topics ranging from the study of knowledge management in a franchise organization, transaction costs related to franchisee performance, and control modes in the franchise system. Some articles discuss managerial control and find out that brand name value is an important determinant to maintain the value of their brand and became the most valuable resource for the franchisee to enter into franchise agreements. Collectively, the content of these studies aligns well with the four lines of development of franchisee research such as franchisee factors (personalities and behaviours, knowledge...), franchisor factors (management strategies, franchisor personalities), the interaction between franchisors and franchisees, and transaction costs. Notably, nearly all the top publications were from the Journal of Business Venturing, which has top 05 research papers with high citations.

Table 2: Top Articles with High Citations

Titles	Journal	Year	Total Citations
Cooperative arrangements among entrepreneurs: An analysis of opportunism and communication in franchise structures	Journal of Business Research	1996	153
A model of trust and compliance in franchise relationships	Journal of Business Venturing	2011	138
Antecedents and effects of free riding in the franchisor-franchisee relationship	Journal of Business Venturing	2007	129
Entrepreneurial failure: The case of Franchisees	Journal of Small Business Management	2008	120
The challenge of autonomy and dependence in franchised channels of distribution	Journal of Business Venturing	1999	114
The effect of financial resource availability and system size on ownership redirection in franchised channels of distribution	Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics	1998	112
Influence of franchisee selection criteria on outcomes desired by the franchisor	Journal of Business Venturing	1999	109
The Effect of Franchisors' Communication, Service Assistance, and Competitive Advantage on Franchisees' Intentions to Remain in the Franchise System	Journal of Business Management	2004	108
Consensus in franchise organizations: A cooperative arrangement among entrepreneurs	Journal of Business Venturing	1996	100
Contractibility and ownership redirection in franchising: A property rights view	Journal of Retailing	2006	96

Leading Authors, Institutions, and Countries/Territories

The 855 articles in the dataset have been published by 1313 authors affiliated with 42 institutions in 60 countries worldwide. Table 3 depicts the authors leading the research on the franchisee in franchise literature research. Only authors with five or more publications or fewer publications but have a high rate of citations were included in the list. Frazer L. appeared the most prolific author with the highest publications and citations, followed closely by Weaven S. More generally, the results show that a cadre of researchers generates research on the franchisee. The Griffith University from Australia with the top 03 papers was the university with a higher number of publications in the field. Oxford Brooks University followed them from the United Kingdom with 02 papers among the top ten publications. Most institutions in the ranking are from Australia, France, Austria, the United States, and the United Kingdom, where the franchising industry is well developed and already establishes a well-structured franchise system. It is noticed that no universities in South America, the Middle East, or Southeast Asia are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Leading Authors in Franchisee Research

Author	Institution	Country/Territory	Documents	Citations
Frazer L.	Griffith University	Australia	30	477
Weaven S.	Griffith Univ	Australia	29	514
Perrigot R.	Univ Rennes	France	21	256
Windsperger J.	Univ Vienna	Austria	21	385
Dant R.P.	Boston University	United States	18	1044
Watson A.	University of Hertfordshire	England	13	220
Brookes M.	Oxford Brookes Univ	England	11	258
Altinay L.	Oxford Brookes University	England	11	280
Grunhagen M.	Eastern Illinois University	United States	10	113
Grace D.	Griffith University	Australia	9	197

Uncovering where this expertise is located provides another fascinating insight into the current status of research on the franchisee. Table 4 presents the institutions leading the development of research on the franchisee. Only institutions with three or more publications are listed. The result shows that among 1447 organizations, only 05 meet the thresholds. Griffith University in Australia was the institution with the highest number of publications, with 37 citations. The United States followed by Boston University with the highest number of citations (190 citations). The United States, with 308 documents, is a leading researcher in this field and accounted for nearly 64% of total publications with 7822 citations in the database. Other English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and other countries in Europe also play central roles in franchisee research. These developed economies enjoy better resources and infrastructure for research with a long franchising industry history and better funding access than other countries.

Table 4: Top Organizations/Institutions In Franchisee Research

Organization	Country	Documents	Citations
Oxford Brookes University	United Kingdom	3	91
Griffith University	Australia	6	37
University of Vienna	Austria	3	90
Rennes University	France	3	40
Boston University	United States	3	190

These developed economies enjoy better resources and infrastructure for research with a long franchising industry history and better funding access than other countries.

Figure 5 illustrates the top ten countries where franchisee research perspectives have been considered. The franchising industry played an essential role in the United States and contributed \$670 billion of economic output to the U.S. economy in 2020 and is predictably to grow by 7% in 2021 (IFA, 2021). Hence, the U.S has been the country that pays attention most to franchisee research, represented in dark green color with 308 research papers. Another country in North America is Canada (29 papers), ranked in the top ten countries with franchisee research publications. Followed by the U.S in franchisee research, there are six European countries such as the United Kingdom (94 papers), France (52 papers), Germany (25 papers), Spain (62 papers), and Austria (26 papers). Three Asia countries among the top ten countries – which have developed franchise systems are Australia (90 papers), India (31 papers), Taiwan (22 papers), and South Korea (30 papers).

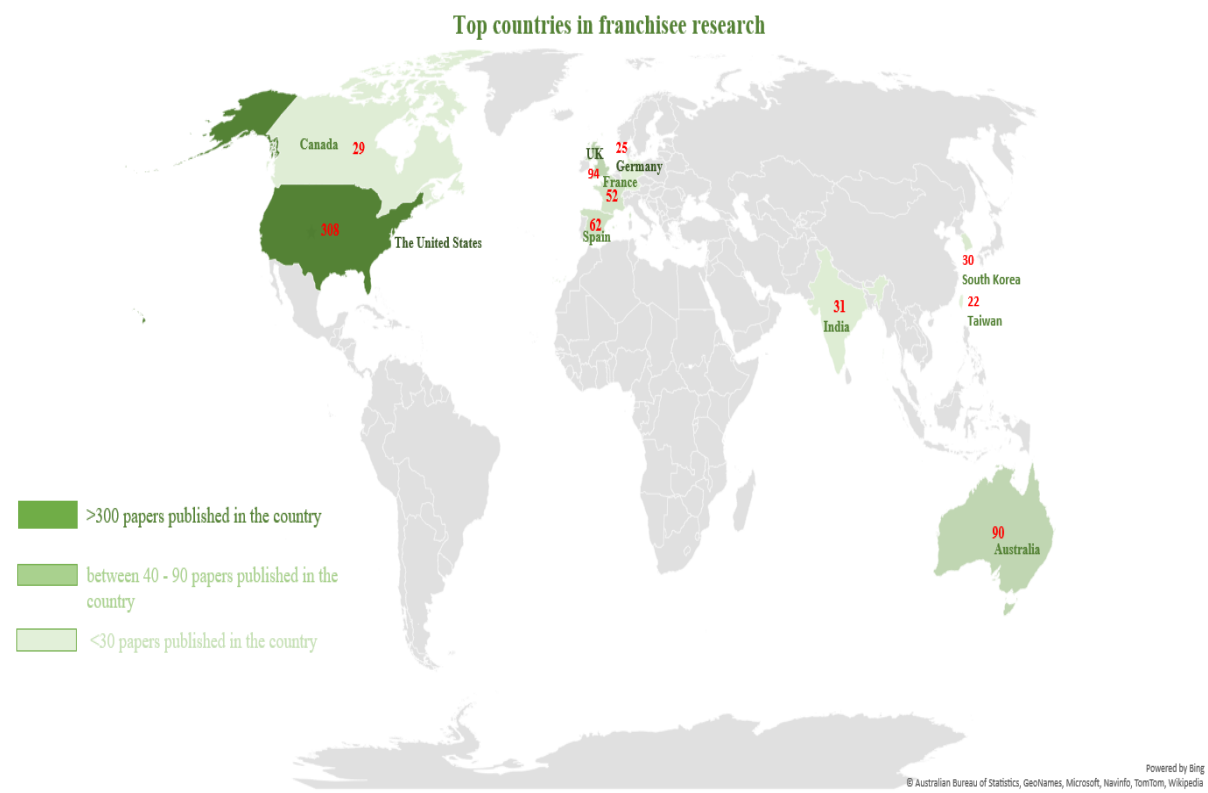


Figure 5: Top Ten Countries in Franchisee Research.

Source: The Map Was Powered by Bing in Microsoft Excel.

Collaborative Networks Between Authors, Institutions, and Countries/Territories

A series of co-authorship analyses were performed to examine patterns in the scientific collaboration between authors, institutions, and countries on franchisee research. Figure 6 presents the collaborative networks between authors with five or more publications in the dataset ($n = 42$). Items unrelated to others were not included in this bibliometric analysis. The results show several scientific collaboration networks among researchers in the franchisee field (i.e., clusters). These networks are composed of five or seven researchers and frequently include a leading researcher (largest node) who serves the connecting node among other researchers. The figure's red, yellow, blue and green clusters occupy a central position and are well connected with all other clusters on the map. The author Lorelle Frazer is the most cited author in franchisee research (the most prominent blue nodes). Some other highly cited authors

in the Scopus database were Weaven, S., Perrigot R., and Windsperger J.. Figure 6 shows how several of the most productive authors of franchisee research have contributed substantially to the franchising literature since many of them coincide with the most productive authors in business management fields. The co-citation links analyzed in Figure 6 occur within different nodes and between all of the nodes, demonstrating the journal's multidisciplinary character. For example, authors such as Thaichon P., Weaven S., Quach S., Bodey K., Merrilees B., Frazer L. were co-cited by papers related to "female franchisee and franchising sector growth" in 2020. Six authors included Grace A; Frazer L; Weaven S; Perkins H; Shao W; Nyadzayo M, were co-cited in "franchisee advisory councils" and "justice" in the franchising industry topics related to franchisee perspectives.

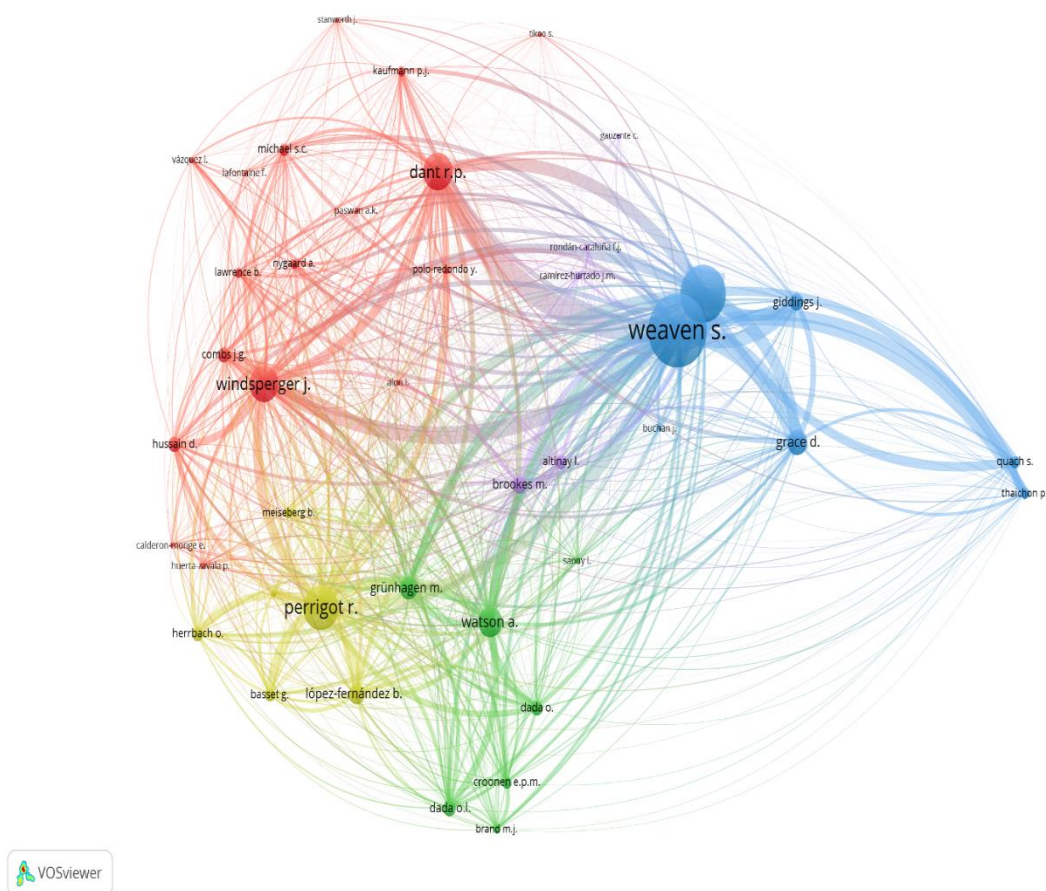


Figure 6: Research Collaborations Between Authors.

Figure 7 shows the bibliographic research coupling between countries with five or more publications in the dataset (n=25). The results show the United States at the center of franchisee research. The United States maintains connections with all other countries on the map, especially with Australia and the United Kingdom belonging to the red cluster and green cluster in European regions such as France, Spain, and Germany. Other Asian countries such as Hongkong, China, Malaysia, Indonesia appear far from all other clusters, indicating weak ties with other countries in their networks. There is no surprise that the United States is the most well-developed franchising industry. Hence, it plays a crucial contribution to franchisee literature.

Moreover, in developed countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom, European countries have a long history of franchising with strong franchise distribution networks, attracting lots of attention from academic scholars. In the franchisee area, the region that had the highest publication rate was from United States (308 documents), followed by the United Kingdom (94 documents), Australia (90 documents), Spain (62 documents), France (52 documents), South Korea (30 documents). Southeast Asia countries are not contributing much to franchisee literature; hence, more research is required for these regions.

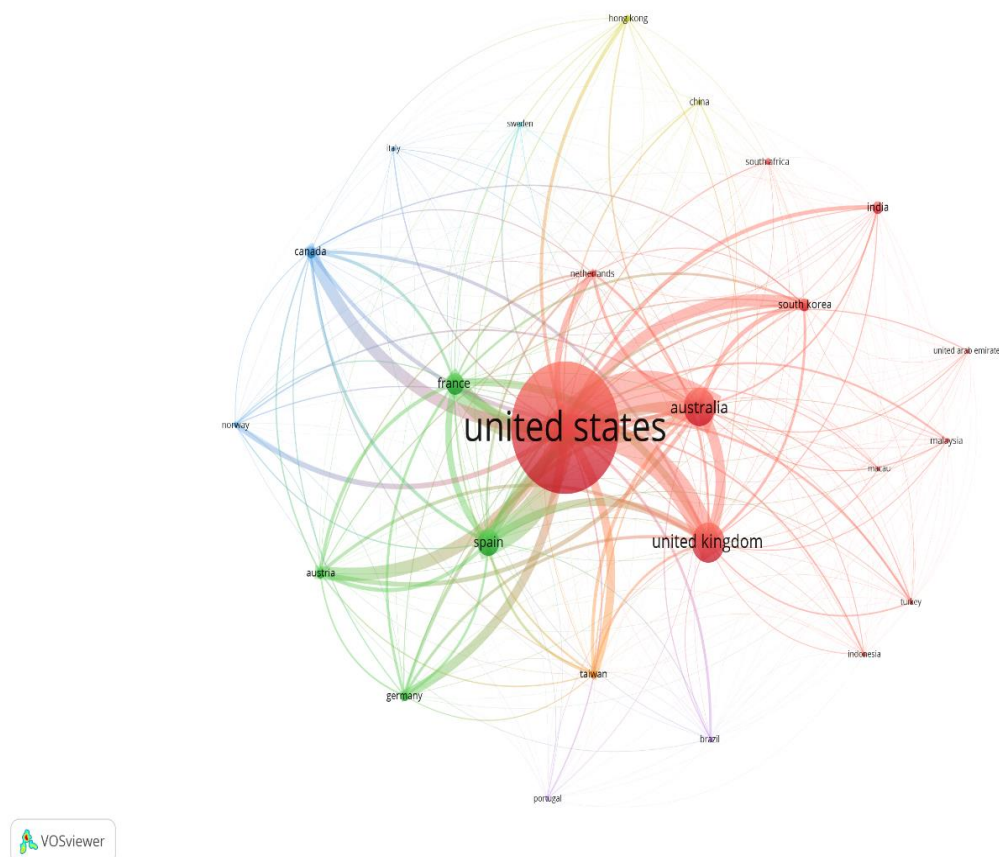


Figure 7: Top Countries in Franchisee Research.

Research collaboration provides scholars with opportunities to share knowledge, experiences, approaches, and resources. It is regarded by many as an indicator of quality or as a means to achieve quality research outputs. Others have argued that research collaboration contributes to research productivity and the capacity building of emerging scholars. Overall, results in this study show that research collaboration exists in franchisees at the individual, institution, and country level.

Figure 8 represents the results considering the minimum number of documents of an organization is 3. The result shows that of the 1447 organizations, 5 meet the thresholds. The Scopus database and publications analyzed data in the journal between 1986 and April 2022. In Figure 7, the Boston University from the United States and Center for Business Studies – Vienna University were top organizations in franchisee research before 2006. After that, Rennes School of Business from France and the Department of Hospitality Management -

University of New Hampshire State was the most productive organization from 2008-2012. From 2014 onwards, Griffith University – Australia has led in franchisee research with several authors such as Senyard J., Thaichon P., Grace D., Quach S.

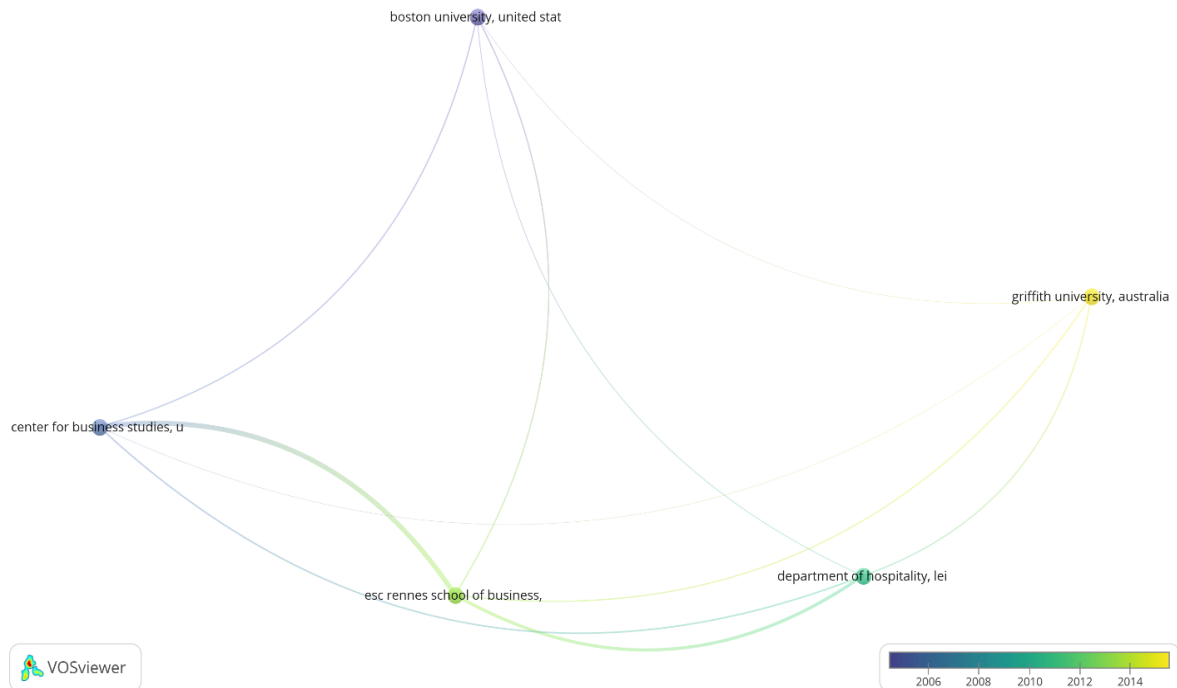


Figure 8: Bibliographic Coupling of Institutions in Franchisee Research.

Disciplines Underlying the Foundations of Franchisee Research

A co-citation review was performed and analyzed to investigate the disciplines in franchisee research. The evaluation included only articles with at least 20 citations ($n = 203$). Items that were unrelated to the others were not included in this research. The nodes on the map show publications that publish field-related studies, and the size of the nodes shows the number of co-citation relationships with other journals. The color of the node determines the cluster to which the journal has been assigned. Journals in the same cluster have more extraordinary co-citation relationships, are more likely to be semantically linked, and may be viewed as underlying information fields (i.e., disciplines).

In Figure 9, the results show that research on franchisees emerges from research conducted in four interrelated disciplines. Interestingly, each core journal in franchisee research falls into a different cluster. The blue cluster includes the Journal of Business Venturing, the Journal of Small Business Management, and other management and marketing journals. The green cluster contains the Strategic Management Journal, International Marketing Review, Organization Science and other journals on entrepreneurship. The red cluster comprises the Small Business Journal and other economics and corporate finance journals. The yellow cluster contains journals such as the Journal of Marketing, European Journal of Marketing, and other marketing management and service research. To sum up, the four top journals in franchisee research from

1986 to date were Strategic Management, Journal of Business Venturing, Journal of Small Business Management, and Journal of Marketing from reputed publishers.

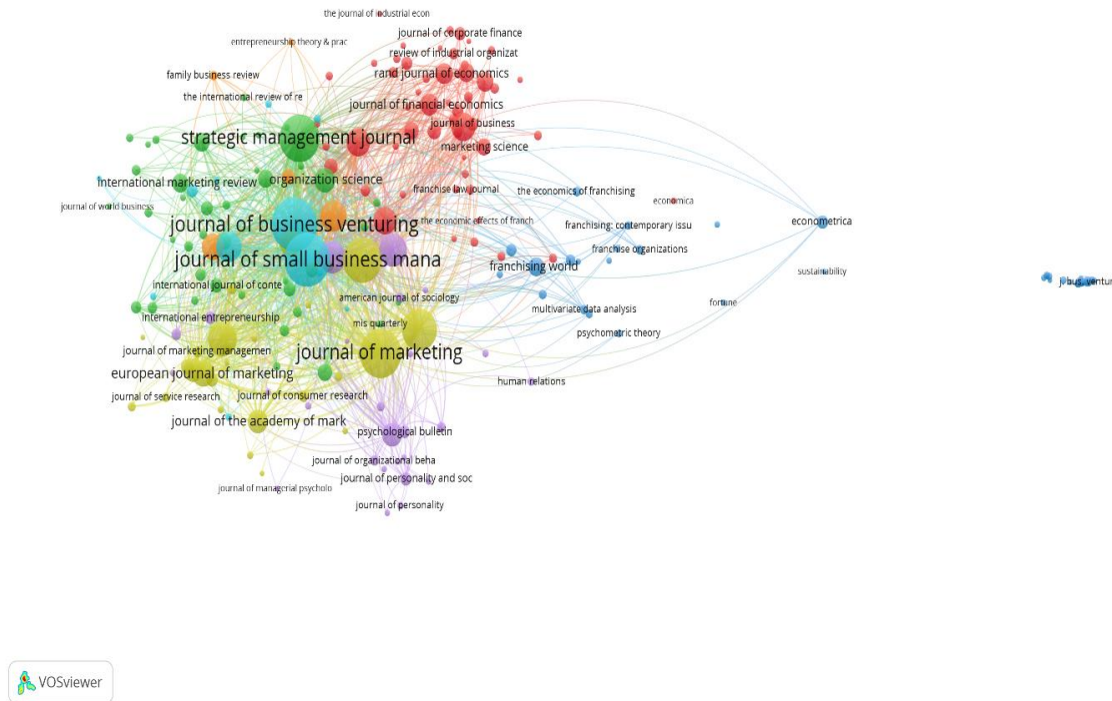


Figure 9: Top Journals in Franchisee Research.

Topical Foci of Research on Franchisee Research

The co-occurrence of author keywords has been used to create a graphical representation of the most popular study subjects (Donthu et al., 2021). Figure 10 depicts the average publication year of articles in which a term occurs regularly. The general themes or topical foci of franchisee research were discovered through a co-occurrence review of keywords in the title, abstract, and keyword list of publications in the Scopus dataset. The study considered keywords with five or more occurrences (n=74). Items that were unrelated to the others were not included in this research. The node's size on the map indicates the number of times the keywords appear. Keyword clusters can be viewed as general research topics in the area and are represented by the color of the nodes.

Co-occurrence analysis of keywords in the title, abstract, and keyword list of the publications in the dataset was conducted to reveal the general themes or topical foci of franchisee research. Only keywords with five or more occurrences were considered in the analysis ($n = 74$). Items that are not related to others were not included. In the map, the node's size denotes the keyword's occurrence. The proximity of two nodes and the thickness of the line connecting them indicate the co-occurrence strength between pairs of keywords. The color of the nodes represents keyword clusters, which frequently contain co-occurring words and can be interpreted as broad research topics in the field. Four general themes seem to summarize the topical foci of interest in franchisees from 1968 to date.

First, there appears to be a general interest in franchising contexts, as denoted by frequently co-occurring words such as social franchising, small business, restaurants, training, relationships, and knowledge transfer (red cluster). A second topical area focuses on the franchise system, including relationship, innovation, international franchising, internationalization, and autonomy (green cluster). Third, research on franchisees has also looked at the role of relational norms between franchisors and franchisees, as indicated by keywords such as trust, relationship marketing, commitment, satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, franchisor-franchisee relation, and relationship quality (blue cluster). Fourth, another area of interest relates to franchisee entrepreneurship and other management strategies such as compliance, contracts, monitoring, cooperation, pricing, and strategy (yellow cluster).

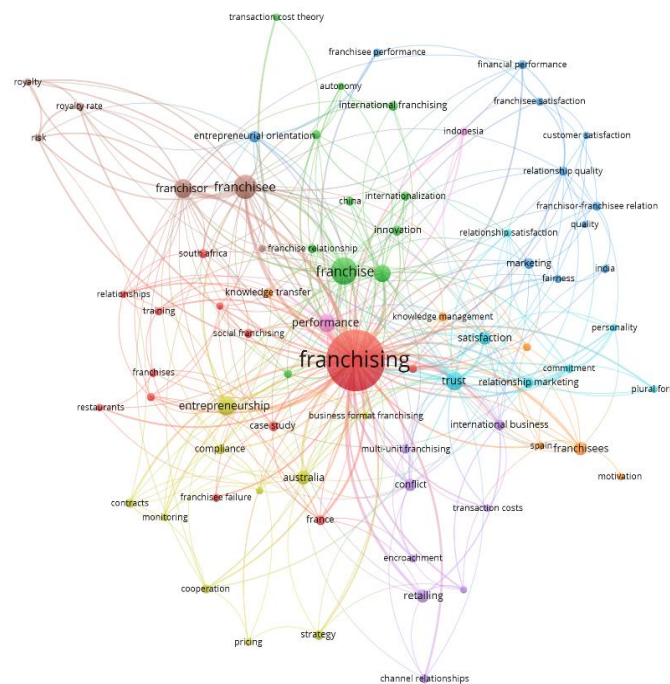


Figure 10: Top Keywords in Franchisee Research

The top keyword in each period is franchising; it shows that research articles identify with the broad theme of the journal in terms of understanding the franchisee's role in the general franchise system.

Figure 11 describes the evolution of the topical foci of research on franchisees from 1968-2021. In this figure, bluish nodes represent popular (i.e., frequently used) keywords at the beginning of this period, while yellowish nodes account for more recent popularity. A few interesting insights emerge from the analysis. First, popular keywords during 1968-2012 tend to fall into the clusters related to knowledge management, channel relationships, monitoring, contracts, royalty rate, and relationship marketing. Second, attention to franchisees began from 2012 to 2016. International franchising, autonomy, trust, satisfaction, royalty rate, and issues related to entrepreneurial orientation, financial performance, and relationship quality had just begun in mid-2014. In the last decade, the entrepreneurial orientation topic has been predominantly addressed in the franchisee literature and linked with franchisee performance, general franchise performance, and franchise relationships. It is important to note that even though the

entrepreneurship area was developed around mid-2014, entrepreneurial orientation has attracted scholars' attention in recent years. Moreover, the franchisee perspectives in emerging markets are hot topics and the future trends in franchise literature. Therefore, these issues offer high potential research opportunities, especially in franchisees' internal assets such as entrepreneurial orientation, market orientation, and intellectual capital in emerging markets

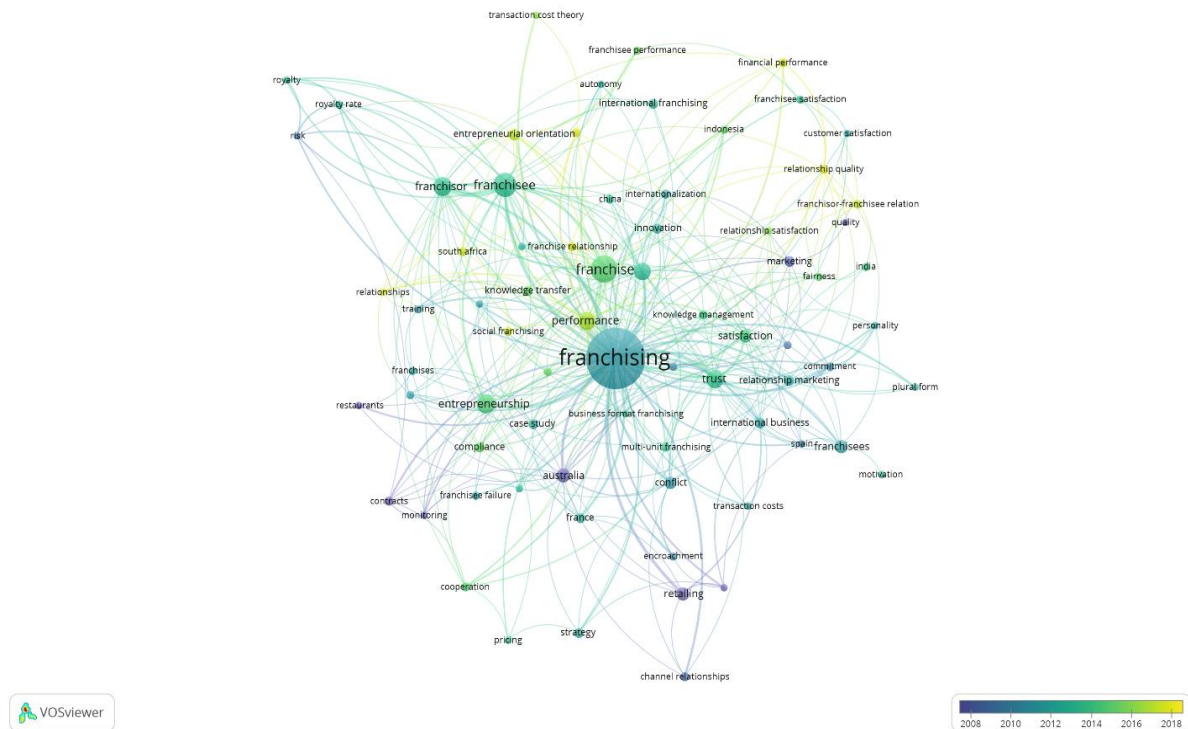


Figure 11: Evolution of The Topical Foci Of Research

Discussion and Conclusions

The franchisee research was reviewed bibliometric, with 855 related documents selected from the Scopus database between 1968 and April 2022. The researchers used co-citation and co-word analyses and a ground-breaking visualization of the co-word network to investigate the theoretical foundations, network structure, and thematic evolution in this research field. It was able to complete an update, review additional research, expose the field's theoretical foundations, and demonstrate the development of the major themes in the information area using science maps. Additionally, it added a quantitative component to previous literature reviews conducted using bibliometric methods, enhancing our understanding of this rapidly growing field of knowledge, and validating prior findings, such as franchisee research's core research themes. Franchisee research is well-established in the franchising literature, with articles in leading journals. Before comprehensive research on franchisee personalities and entrepreneurship, the early foundations of this research field were anchored in the adjacent body of franchisee literature from other disciplines such as marketing and management, which focused on franchisor-franchisee interaction. Apart from influential conceptual papers and literature reviews that helped integrate the field's knowledge base, the majority of foundational papers examined the consequences, relationships, transaction costs, and effect of franchise management strategies on franchisee efficiency and franchisee success or success failure. These findings benefit researchers in this field and general readers interested in learning more about franchisees.

Additionally, they assist practitioners and business owners/franchisors in comprehending a pervasive phenomenon they encounter daily in the franchise relationship. Further, the findings indicate potential areas for future research, such as applying market orientation and other franchisor management techniques, as well as hot and emerging topics. The thematic evolution map, which highlights emerging and hot topics, can be used in future bibliometric studies in any field of study.

Limitations and Future Research

As previously stated, no bibliometric review can provide an accurate picture of the field's development and current state. This study is not an exception. Its findings are limited in scope because the search strategy used to compile the corpus of franchisee research may have omitted some relevant studies. Future research may consider expanding on this study's findings by utilizing alternative databases (e.g., Web of Science, ERIC, PsycINFO, and PubMed) and including publications other than articles (e.g., book chapters, conference proceedings, literature). Additionally, mappings from other bibliometric software such as biblioshiny should be conducted in the future to examine the structure of knowledge in the franchisee field, including categories other than those considered in this study. Despite these limitations, we believe that this study provides a thorough review of the franchisee literature, providing exciting insights into the field's development and current state, as well as the barriers to our understanding, measurement, and development of franchisees in franchising contexts. This research hopes to bring a conclusive and comprehensive overview of the most important facts of the franchisees' research.

Additionally, this research focuses on the broad theme of franchisees rather than specific aspects of franchisees such as failure or success. Future research should focus on particular aspects of the franchisee, especially on entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation when franchisees are bound by contracts/ agreements with the franchisor and need to follow the guidelines of the franchise management system.

References

- Alon, I., Ni, L., & Wang, Y. (2012). Examining the determinants of hotel chain expansion through international franchising. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(2), 379–386. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2011.06.009>
- Anna Andres. (2009). *Measuring Academic Research: How to Undertake a Bibliometric Study* - Ana Andres - Google Books. Woodhead Publishing Limited.
- Bretas, V. P. G., & Alon, I. (2020). The impact of COVID -19 on franchising in emerging markets: An example from Brazil. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, 39(6), 6–16. <https://doi.org/10.1002/joe.22053>
- Bretas, V. P. G., & Alon, I. (2021). Franchising research on emerging markets: Bibliometric and content analyses. *Journal of Business Research*, 133, 51–65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JBUSRES.2021.04.067>
- Chaudey, M., & Fadairo, M. (2010). Contractual design and networks performance: Empirical evidence from franchising. *Applied Economics*, 42(4), 529–533. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00036840701704428>
- Colla, E., Ruiz-Molina, M. E., Chastenet De Gery, C., Schultz, M., Deparis, M., & Lemmet, L. (2019). Understanding franchisee performance: The role of the franchisee's autonomy, affective commitment to the network and innovativeness. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 47(7), 733–751. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-10-2017-0232>

- Dada, O. (2021). Curbing franchisee failure: A systematic review of the empirical evidence. *Journal of Small Business Management*.
- Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Mukherjee, D., Pandey, N., & Lim, W. M. (2021). How to conduct a bibliometric analysis: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 133, 285–296. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.04.070>
- Durieux, V., & Gevenois, P. A. (2010). Bibliometric Indicators: Quality Measurements of Scientific Publication 1. <https://doi.org/10.1148/Radiol.09090626>, 255(2), 342–351. <https://doi.org/10.1148/RADIOL.09090626>
- Eck, N. J. van, & Waltman, L. (2014). Visualizing Bibliometric Networks. *Measuring Scholarly Impact*, 285–320. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-10377-8_13
- Glänzel, W., & Schoepflin, U. (1999). A bibliometric study of reference literature in the sciences and social sciences. *Information Processing & Management*, 35(1), 31–44. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4573\(98\)00028-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4573(98)00028-4)
- Hans Zijlstra, & Rachel McCullough. (2016, December 7). CiteScore: a new metric to help you track journal performance and make decisions. <https://www.elsevier.com/connect/editors-update/citescore-a-new-metric-to-help-you-choose-the-right-journal>
- IFA. (2021, February 18). Economic Outlook for Franchising - International franchise association 2021. Report. <https://www.franchise.org/franchise-information/franchise-business-outlook/franchise-business-economic-outlook-2021>
- Jan van Eck, N., & Waltman, L. (n.d.). Software survey: VOSviewer, a computer program for bibliometric mapping. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-009-0146-3>
- Kerdpitak, C., & Jernsittiparsert, K. (2019). Investigating the role of intellectual capital on the performance of pharmaceutical firms in Thailand. *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy*, 10(2), 244–252. <https://doi.org/10.5530/srp.2019.2.33>
- López-Fernández, B., & López-Bayón, S. (2018). Antecedents of early terminations in franchising: franchisor versus franchisee cancelations. *Small Business Economics*, 50(4), 677–695. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-017-9889-z>
- Michael, S. C., & Combs, J. G. (2008). Entrepreneurial failure : the case of franchisees. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 46(1), 73–90.
- Nijmeijer, K. J., Fabbriotti, I. N., & Huijsman, R. (2014). Making Franchising Work: A Framework Based on a Systematic Review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 16(1), 62–83. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12009>
- Pritchard. (1969). Stastical bibliography or bibliometrics. *Journal of Documentation*, 25(4), 348–349.
- Robert N. Broadus. (1987). Early approaches to bibliometrics - Broadus - 1987 - *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* - Wiley Online Library. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 38(03), 127–129.
- Sen, S. K. (n.d.). For What Purpose are the Bibliometric Indicators and How Should They Work. 1999–2006.
- Tijssen, R. J. W., & Raan, A. F. J. Van. (2016). Mapping Changes in Science and Technology: Bibliometric Co-Occurrence Analysis of the R&D Literature. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0193841X9401800110>, 18(1), 98–115. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193841X9401800110>
- Watson, A., Dada, O. (Lola), López-Fernández, B., & Perrigot, R. (2020). The influence of entrepreneurial personality on franchisee performance : A cross-cultural analysis. *International Small Business Journal : Researching Entrepreneurship*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242613494866>

- Welsh, D. H. B., Hayes, C. A., & Raven, P. V. (2011). Hope Among Franchise Leaders: why hope practical relevance to franchising - an exploratory study. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 28(2), 134–142.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/cjas.204>
- Zupic, I. and C. (2015). Bibliometric Methods in Management and Organization. *Organization Research Methods*, 18(3), 429–472.