



Bibliometric Analysis of Product Differentiation Strategies: Global Research Trends

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Abstract. *This study analyzes global developments related to product differentiation strategies using a bibliometric approach. By analyzing scientific publications from various countries such as the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Indonesia. The data was collected from reputable databases such as Scopus and Google Scholar, with a publication time span between 2020 and 2024. Bibliometric methods are used to identify research trends, collaboration networks, and key topics within this field. The results of the analysis show a significant increase in the number of publications related to this topic in the last five years, focusing on trade, investment, pricing, development, spatial differentiation, differentiation strategy, product differentiation strategy, customer loyalty, performance, influence, vertical product differentiation, horizontal product differentiation, platform, cost, innovation, product quality, purchasing decision, brand trust, and brand image. The study provides comprehensive insight into the global product differentiation research landscape and identifies potential areas for future research.*

Keywords: Bibliometrics; Customer Loyalty; Global Literature Studies; Innovation; Product Differentiation.

1. INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasingly fierce, competitive and global business competition, product differentiation strategies are one of the keys for companies to achieve competitive advantage to be able to face the challenge of maintaining a position in the market. Product differentiation allows companies to offer unique value to customers, thereby differentiating themselves from competitors and increasing customer loyalty. One of the effective strategies to achieve competitive advantage is the product differentiation strategy, which is an effort to create a product that is unique and has added value compared to competitors' products. Differentiation strategies allow companies to create unique value through products or services that are difficult for competitors to imitate, thus attracting consumers who prioritize quality or innovation (Sudiantini et al., 2023). This strategy was first proposed by Michael Porter in the framework of Generic Competitive Strategies which includes three main strategies: differentiation, cost leadership, and focus (Porter, 1985).

Product differentiation strategies are one of the main choices for companies to create a sustainable competitive advantage (Martin et al., 2020). Differentiation can be achieved through innovation, technology, design, product quality, customer service, and sustainability aspects (Khan et al., 2021). As technology evolves and consumer preferences change, research on product differentiation strategies continues to grow, encompassing a variety of approaches

and methodologies. The bibliometric approach is an effective method to analyze the development of research in a field of science. By analyzing publication data, citations, and author collaborations, this approach can identify research trends, dominant topics, as well as maps of scientific collaboration in a global context. Therefore, this study aims to explore product differentiation strategies through a bibliometric approach, focusing on the global literature in the last five years.

Product differentiation can be realized through various aspects such as quality, design, features, technology, after-sales service, and branding. For example, tech companies like Apple have successfully implemented differentiation strategies by emphasizing design innovation and premium quality, which sets them apart from competitors' products. Likewise, in the education services sector, differentiation can be done through innovative curricula or unique teaching approaches.

The literature on product differentiation strategies has grown significantly in recent decades. However, with market dynamics constantly changing, especially in the last five years, it is important to understand how the focus of research in this area has transformed. The bibliometric approach offers a quantitative method for analyzing the scientific literature, identifying research trends, collaboration patterns, and emerging topics. By analyzing recent publications, we can get a comprehensive overview of the research direction and best practices in product differentiation strategies. In the past five years, the development of digital technology and increasing awareness of sustainability have changed the way companies implement product differentiation strategies (Hernandez & Kim, 2021). However, although there is a lot of research on differentiation strategies, thorough mapping is still needed to understand research collaboration trends, focuses, and patterns at the global level.

However, a comprehensive understanding of how product differentiation strategies are implemented globally is still limited. Therefore, this study aims to explore product differentiation strategies through a bibliometric approach, by reviewing the available global literature. The bibliometric approach allows for quantitative analysis of scientific publications, allowing for the identification of research trends, collaboration networks, and key topics in this field.

2. LITERATUR REVIEW

Product Differentiation Strategy Concept

Differentiation strategy is an approach that aims to create a product or service that is unique compared to competitors. According to Porter (1985), differentiation aims to build

customer loyalty by offering something that the market considers valuable. In the context of marketing strategy, the evolution of concepts such as product differentiation and market segmentation has been traced back to the early 20th century. The contributions of experts such as Theodore Levitt and Philip Kotler have been instrumental in laying the foundations of modern marketing strategies. In addition, the concept of market orientation emphasizes the importance of aligning organizational activities with customer needs and preferences in order to achieve competitive advantage. Bibliometric analysis has also been used to explore various aspects of market entry and export strategies, including entry time, path differentiation, performance outcomes, and the role of attitudes in decision-making (Yusuf, M., & Rahmawati, F, 2024). According to Li et al. (2020), product differentiation can include the following aspects: Product Innovation: Creation of new features that increase the added value of the product. Superior Quality: Offer products with better quality than competitors. Unique Design: An aesthetically appealing and functional design. Customer Service: Provide superior and responsive after-sales service

The Role of Innovation in Differentiation Strategies

Damanpour's research (1991) revealed that innovation plays an important role in encouraging product differentiation, which is one of the keys to business success in the midst of increasingly fierce competition. Innovation can be carried out in various forms, such as the development of new, more advanced technologies, the creation of unique and hard-to-imitate product features, or increased efficiency in the production process to provide added value for consumers. Through innovation, companies are able to create products or services that are superior to competitors, thereby increasing competitiveness in the market. A study conducted by Chesbrough (2003) adds a new perspective on the importance of an open innovation approach. In open innovation, companies not only rely on internal resources, but also involve collaboration with external parties, such as business partners, academics, and communities. This approach allows companies to accelerate the innovation process by leveraging expertise, technology, and insights from outsiders. This not only increases efficiency, but also opens up opportunities to create products or services that are more innovative and different from those already on the market. The combination of internal innovation and external collaboration gives companies flexibility in facing market challenges. By integrating strong internal resources and rich external insights, companies can create a more effective differentiation strategy. In addition, cross-border collaboration can also help companies understand the needs of diverse and ever-changing markets. Thus, innovation is not only a tool to create differentiation, but also a foundation for business sustainability in the dynamic modern era.

The Impact of Technology on Differentiation

Technology has become a key element in modern differentiation strategies, especially in the highly dynamic digital age. Christensen's (1997) research on disruptive innovation shows that companies that are able to take advantage of new technologies can often create a competitive advantage by presenting products or services that are different from competitors. Technology allows companies to offer solutions that are more relevant, efficient, and tailored to customer needs. For example, the application of artificial intelligence (AI) technology has opened up great opportunities in personalizing products and services, so that customers can experience more specific experiences according to their preferences.

In addition, technology also supports continuous innovation by helping companies respond to market changes more quickly and flexibly. With technology-based data analysis, companies can more accurately identify market trends and consumer behavior, allowing them to design more targeted differentiation strategies. For example, the use of AI in data analytics allows for the development of product features that suit the needs of specific segments, thereby increasing the product's attractiveness in the market. Thus, technology is not only a tool to improve operational efficiency but also a key driver in creating relevant and valuable innovations for consumers.

Global Research Trends

Bibliometric analysis of product differentiation research shows an increasing trend in the number of publications since 2020. The study identifies that the focus of research has shifted from traditional aspects of differentiation, such as quality and design, to modern aspects such as digital technology, sustainability, and customer experience. According to (Zhang et al., 2019, Pranata et al., 2022, Herniawan et al., 2023). In the last five years, several significant trends have emerged in product differentiation strategy research, including Technology-Based Innovation: Digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT), play an important role in supporting differentiation. The next trend is Sustainability and Social Responsibility, including Consumers paying more attention to environmental and ethical aspects in the products they choose. As well as trends with the theme of Customer Experience, the study covering Differentiation through personalized customer experiences is increasingly being researched.

Research by Zhang et al. (2020) shows that collaboration between countries is increasing, especially between developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Indonesia and China. This collaboration network supports the exchange of ideas and best practices in the

implementation of product differentiation strategies. The bibliometric approach offers a very effective method for analyzing the development of scientific literature in a particular field. Through this technique, researchers can map research trends, popular topics, and the evolution of thinking in the field. Bibliometric analysis provides a clear picture of the research areas that have been studied, as well as shows research gaps that still need to be explored further. This is very useful for researchers in identifying future research directions and deepening understanding of certain emerging topics.

In addition, bibliometric analysis also helps uncover patterns of collaboration between researchers in different countries and institutions, which can enrich academic networks at the global level. By looking at citation data, the number of publications, and author partnerships, researchers can identify research groups that have significant influence in their fields. Donthu et al. (2021) showed that through bibliometric analysis, researchers can gain insights into international collaborations that can accelerate scientific progress, improve research quality, and create new innovations that are broader in scope. This approach can also be helpful in evaluating the impact of scientific publications on the development of a discipline

3. METHODS

Data Collection For our bibliometric analysis, we selected leading academic databases known for their comprehensive coverage of research articles in the field of international marketing and related subjects from 2020-2024. This database includes Scopus, and Google Scholar with the help of Publish or Perish (PoP) software (Iskandar et al., 2021). The study generally uses the technique, 'Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses' (PRISMA) for a systematic review of articles included in the analysis and Bibliometric Analysis to create a knowledge map using VOSviewer software through co-citation analysis and co-authorship. In addition, the study also used MS Excel, Google Maps, Windows Text Document (Notepad), and Mendeley software.

The selection of this database ensures a diverse and comprehensive dataset, in accordance with our research objectives. Our search strategy involves using relevant keywords and Boolean operators to fetch articles related to Product Differentiation. The search string is designed to capture articles that provide insight into the chosen research theme. We conducted a search with the following keyword variation: "Differentiation Product". To ensure that we cover a large amount of relevant literature, we use the publication date range from the beginning of the creation of this database to the present day.

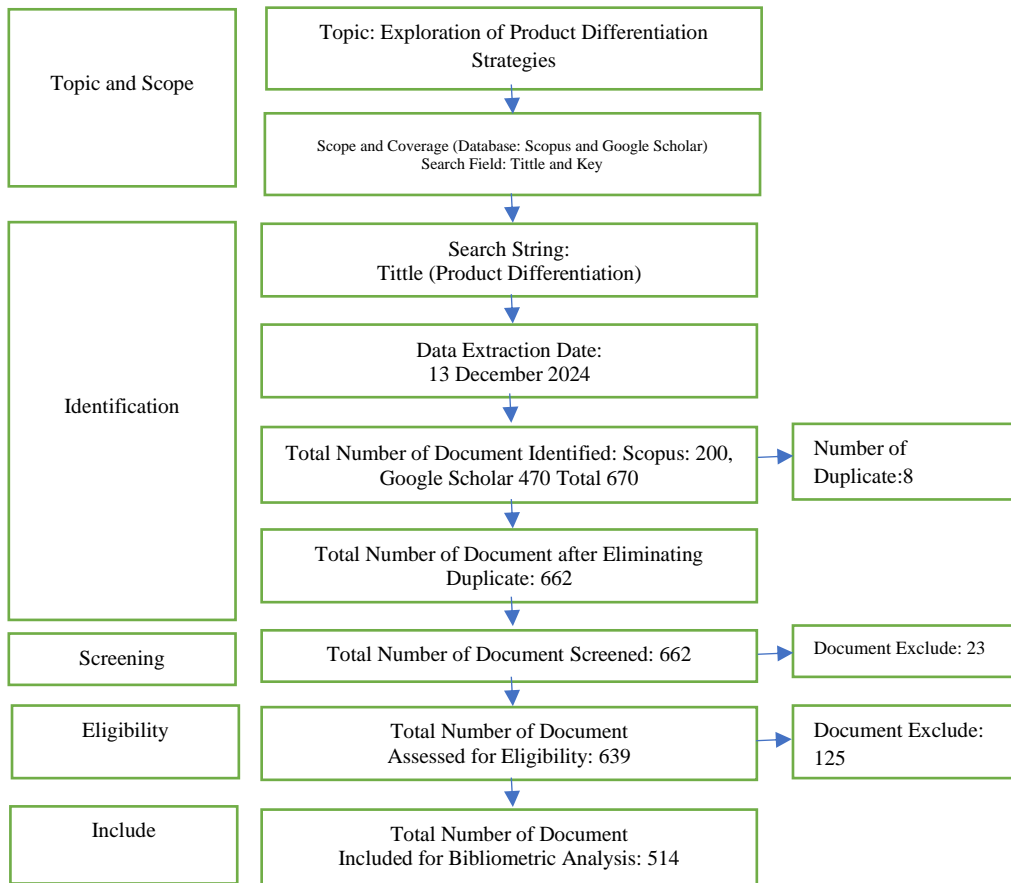


Figure 1. Data Collection Process.

Table 1 presents the research data metrics generated from bibliometric analysis in the publication period of 2020 to 2024, with a focus on product differentiation. There are a total of 200 articles from *Scopus* and 470 articles from *Google Scholar* that have been obtained, with a total of 3,757 citations. On average, each paper has been cited 12.86 times, while each author has an average of 458.47 papers related to them.

Table 1. Data Metrics.

Citation Metrics	Scopus	Google Scholar
Publication years	2020-2024	2020-2024
Citation years	4 (2020-2024)	4 (2020-2024)
Papers	200	470
Citation	1693	2064
Cites/year	423.25	516.00
Cites/paper	8.47	4.39
Cites/author	1693.00	1008.71
Papers/author	200.00	258.47
Authors/paper	1.00	2.39
h-index	20	20
g-index	33	37
hI, norm	20	13
hI, annual	5.00	3.25
hA-index	11	13

Source: Processed 2024.

In addition, the h-index generated from Scopus and Google Scholar is 40, indicating that there are 40 articles that are cited at least 40 times. The G-index, which is another indicator of the cumulative impact of research works, reached 70. As such, this metric provides a robust picture of the impact and contribution of product differentiation research over the period studied.

Data Analysis

Bibliometric analysis was carried out using specialized software, with the main focus on VOSviewer (Bizumuremyi et al., 2022; Iskandar et al., 2021; Rusmayadi et al., 2023). VOSviewer is a powerful tool for visualizing and analyzing bibliometric data, providing insights into co-authorship networks, citation patterns, and keyword co-occurrence.

The bibliometric approach is used to analyze the scientific literature quantitatively. This method involves collecting publication data from databases such as *Scopus* and *Google Scholar*, then analyzing it to identify publication patterns, author collaborations, and dominant research topics. Analysis tools such as VOSviewer or Bibliometrix are often used to visualize collaborative networks and topic maps in literature, a powerful and easy-to-use software that is widely known in the field of bibliometrics. VOSviewer specializes in building and visualizing bibliometric networks, including co-authorship networks, co-citation networks, and keyword co-emergence networks. Its ability to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the intellectual landscape of a research field.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 2 shows a map of the relationship between concepts in research on *product differentiation* and related topics. Different colors indicate thematic cluster divisions, while node sizes and line thicknesses indicate the frequency and strength of relationships between concepts. From figure 2, it can be analyzed based on the color cluster, namely the red cluster with the theme/topic of product and investment differentiation which includes the concepts of *trade*, *investment*, *pricing*, *development*, *spatial differentiation*, and *farm heterogeneity*. The research in this cluster focuses on the economic aspects of product differentiation, especially on the relationship between investment, price, and trade. It is relevant for the study of economic policy and international trade.

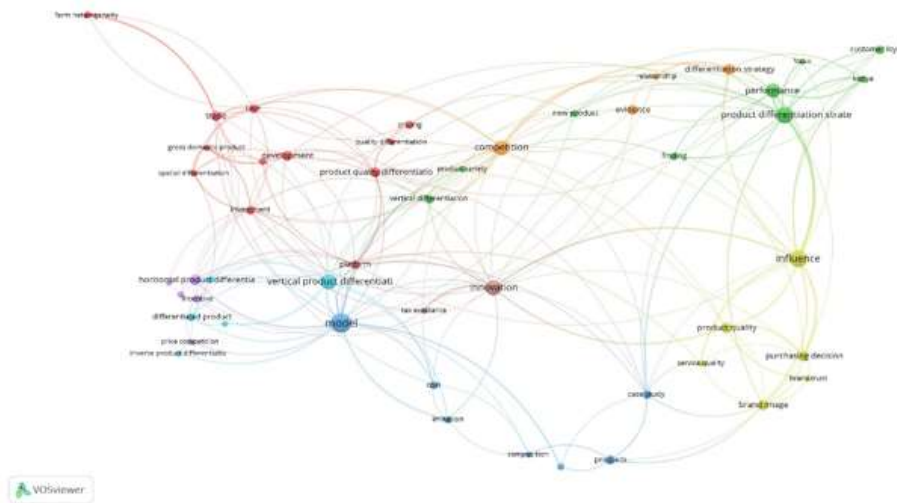


Figure 2. Economic Policy and International Trade.

Source: VOSviewer Processed Data, 2024.

Focus on economic sustainability and investment strategies for products with quality differentiation. The green cluster with the theme/topic of differentiation and customer loyalty strategy which includes the concepts of *differentiation strategy*, *product differentiation strategy*, *customer loyalty*, *performance*, and *influence*. The focus of the research on this cluster is how differentiation strategies affect customer performance and loyalty. It is relevant for the study of strategic marketing and customer relationship management (CRM). Highlighting the importance of differentiation strategies in creating competitive advantage and building customer loyalty in the digital age. Blue cluster with themes/topics of models and product innovations that include the concepts of *vertical product differentiation*, *horizontal product differentiation*, *models*, *platforms*, *costs*, and *innovation*.

This research focuses on the development of product differentiation models both vertically and horizontally, as well as the influence of innovation in reducing costs and creating added value. The importance of technological innovation and *platforms* in supporting differentiation strategies in the manufacturing and technology industries. The yellow cluster with the theme of influence and purchase decisions which includes the concepts of *influence*, *product quality*, *purchasing decision*, *brand trust*, and *brand image*. This cluster emphasizes the influence of product quality and brand trust on consumer purchasing decisions. Relevant for research on consumer behavior and branding strategies in the context of a competitive market. The network relationship between *differentiation strategy* and *performance* indicates that the implementation of an effective differentiation strategy contributes to improving organizational performance. The connection between *product quality* and *purchasing decision*

shows the importance of product quality as the main factor in consumer decision-making. The network relationship between *innovation* and *model*, shows that innovation is often implemented through the development of an effective product differentiation model.

Table 2. Cluster Mapping Results.

Cluster	Item	Total Items
1	Case, Development, Farm Heterogeneity, General Equilibrium and, Gross Domestic Product, Implication, Investment, Platform, Pricing, Product Quality Different, Quality Differentiation, Spatial Differentiation, Trade	13 items
2	Customers Loyalty, Finding, Focus, Kenya, New Product, Performance, Product Differentiation Strata, Product Variety, Vertical Differentiation	9 items
3	Case Study, Composition, Cost, Imitation, Model, Product, Service Differentiation	7 items
4	Brand Image, Brand Trust, Influence, Product Quality, Purchasing Decision, Service Quality	6 items
5	Article, Endogenous Product Different, Horizontal Product Different, Incentive, Price Competition	5 items
6	Cross Ownership, Differentiated Product, Inverse Product Different, Presence, Vertical Product Different	5 items
7	Competition, Differentiation Strategy, Evidence, Relationship	4 items
8	Innovation, Tax Avoidance	2 items

Source: Processed 2024.

Based on this analysis, several research gaps can be identified, namely the Influence of Differentiation Strategies on Business Sustainability, Digital Technology and Innovation Platforms, Brand Trust and Customer Loyalty. Recommendations for Further Research Focus on Digital Technology and Innovation, Sustainability-Based Differentiation, Cross-Industry Empirical Studies.

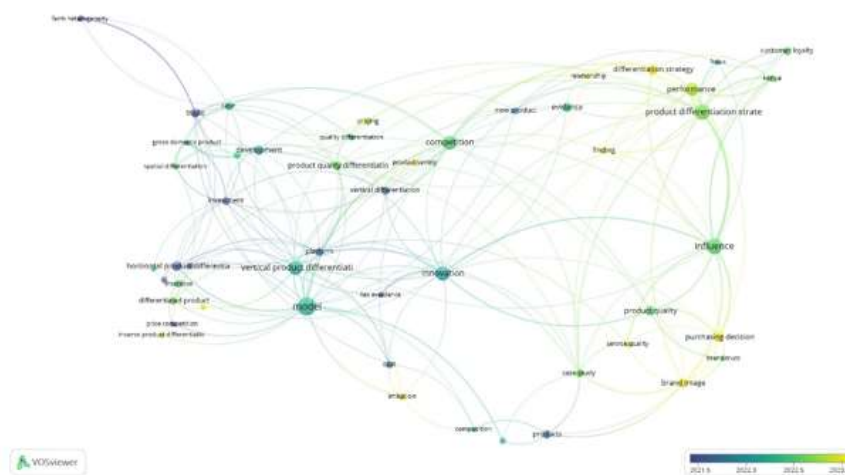


Figure 3. Overlay Visualization

Source: VOSviewer Processed Data, 2024.

Figure 3 is a *bibliometric visualization map* that shows the relationships between concepts related to *product differentiation* and similar topics. This overlay comes with a color

scale that shows the year of publication. These visualizations help to see the latest research trends and understand the development of the topic in recent years. Blue is a publication of 2021. The focus of research in this period tends to discuss economic and trade aspects in product differentiation, such as spatial differences and market heterogeneity. Demonstrate interest in macroeconomic analysis and the impact of differentiation on global investment and trade. Green is a publication in 2022.

The research in this cluster discusses competition and vertical differentiation strategies as well as the role of innovation. This topic is relevant to product development and pricing strategies in a competitive business environment. Focus on how companies can differentiate products to stay competitive in the market. And Yellow Color is a 2023 publication. This topic shows the latest research trends that focus on differentiation strategies to build customer loyalty and strengthen brand image. Emphasizing the importance of building brand trust and service quality in influencing customer purchasing decisions.

Table 3. Journal Year Data.

No.	Year	Sum
1.	2020	92
2.	2021	112
3.	2022	88
4.	2023	104
5.	2024	118
Total		514

Source: Processed 2024.

The number of publications related to Product Differentiation shows significant fluctuations from year to year, as illustrated in table 2 above. Within a certain period of time, there was a decrease in the number of publications from 112 in 2021 to 88 in 2022, which then increased to 104 in 2023 and 118 in 2024. This shows that the trend of product differentiation research is in great demand and increasing from year to year

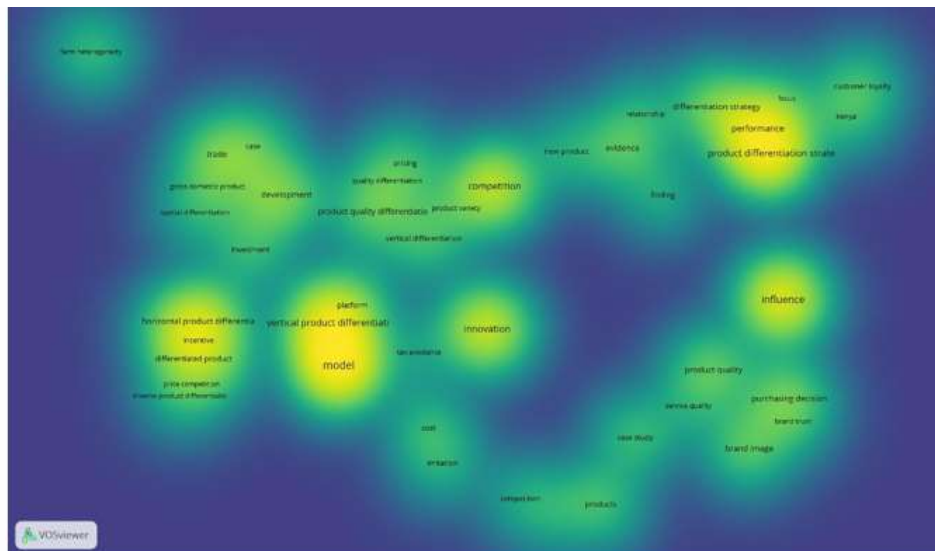


Figure 4. Density Visualization.

Source: VOSviewer Processed Data, 2024.

This figure shows the distribution of keyword density in research on *product differentiation* and related topics. These visualizations provide insight into the most frequently researched concepts or themes and have significant relevance in the latest literature. The color Yellow, indicates areas with high density, which means that this keyword often appears in research. Many studies discuss vertical differentiation models, i.e. differentiation based on product quality or features that are considered higher by consumers. This concept is closely related to the development of digital platforms as a means to differentiate products. This theme covers product differentiation strategies and their impact on business performance. The focus is on how these strategies can influence customer decisions and their loyalty. Green color, indicates areas with medium density. Innovation and competition are important themes in the development of product differentiation strategies.

The research discusses how innovation helps companies stay competitive through effective pricing strategies. The relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions is an important area of research. Effective product differentiation can build a positive brand image and increase customer trust. The color Blue, indicating areas with low compaction, indicates limited research on this topic. Although this theme is not often researched in the current literature, it is still relevant in the context of product differentiation at macroeconomic scale and international trade. Focus on cost aspects and tax avoidance strategies related to product differentiation policies.

Table 4. Top 10 Cites Journal.

No.	Year of Publication	Writer	Article title	Journal	Cites	Publisher
1.	2021	J Andersen	natural-resource-based view on product innovation: The influence of green product innovation and green suppliers on differentiation advantage in small Product line design and quality differentiation for green and non-green products in a supply chain	Technovation	240	Elsevier
2.	2020	B Shen, Y Cao, X Xu	An Improved PIII/PV=O-Catalyzed Reductive C–N Coupling of Nitroaromatics and Boronic Acids by Mechanistic Differentiation of Rate- and Product-Determining	International Journal of Production	156	Taylor & Francis
3.	2020	G Li, TV Nykaza, JC Cooper, A Ramirez.	encroachment and product assortment under vertical differentiation Measuring innovation and product differentiation: Evidence from mutual funds Capacity sharing, product differentiation and welfare The inverse product differentiation logit model	Journal of the	93	ACS Publications
4.	2021	T Zhang, X Feng, N Wang		European Journal of Operational Research	78	Elsevier
5.	2020	L Kostovetsky, JB Warner		The Journal of Finance	75	Wiley Online Library
6.	2020	J Chen, X Wang, Z Chu		Economic research-Ekonomska	56	Taylor & Francis
7.	2024	M Fosgerau, J Monardo		American Economic	54	pubs.aeaweb.org

8.	2021	DA Vignon, Y Yin, J Ke	Regulating ridesourcing services with product differentiation and congestion externality Partial outsourcing from a rival:	Transportation Research Part C: Emerging	52	Elsevier
9.	2021	P Mandal, T Jain	Quality decision under product differentiation and information asymmetry Monopoly with corporate social responsibility, product differentiation, and environmental R&D:	European Journal of Operational Research	45	Elsevier
10.	2021	C Wang	Implications for economic, environmental, and social sustainability	Journal of Cleaner Production	44	Elsevier

Source: Processed 2024.

Based on article data obtained from 2020 to 2024, Table 4 provides more information on the classification of articles related to Product Differentiation based on the number of the 10 journals with the highest citations. This analysis provides a more in-depth picture of the impact and influence of these articles in the Global Product Differentiation literature. From Table 4, we can observe that the most cited article is "*differentiation advantage*," written by J Andersen in 2021, with an impressive number of citations of 240 times. This shows that the concept of "*differentiation advantage*" has a great impact and has become an important reference in discussions on Global Product Differentiation. On the other hand, the last article on the list of 10 related articles "*Monopoly with corporate social responsibility, product differentiation, and environmental R&D: Implications for economic, environmental, and social sustainability*," written by C Wang in 2021, received 44 citations. This analysis provides insight into the significant difference in the number of citations between the most articles and the 10th article, highlighting the variation in the influence and relevance of the topic of Product Differentiation during the research period.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study provides a comprehensive overview of the development of literature related to product differentiation globally in the period 2020–2024. Through bibliometric analysis using the Scopus and Google Scholar databases, it was found that product differentiation is an important theme in the context of marketing, innovation, and business sustainability. Bibliometric metrics show research trends that are constantly evolving with an increasing number of publications and citations. Bibliometric visualization identifies four main clusters, namely (1) product differentiation and investment, (2) differentiation strategies and customer loyalty, (3) product models and innovations, and (4) the influence of product quality on purchasing decisions.

The research also highlights important themes such as digital technology-based differentiation strategies, product innovation, and economic sustainability. The relationship between concepts such as product quality with purchasing decisions, as well as innovation with the development of differentiation models, shows the relevance of product differentiation in building competitive advantage and customer loyalty.

Future research can delve into how digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, *IoT*, and *big data*, are used to create more efficient product differentiation models. Focusing on developing digital platforms to support differentiation strategies can make a strategic contribution in the era of digital transformation. Given the growing importance of environmental issues, further research can explore the relationship between differentiation strategies and business sustainability. The study can include an analysis of how eco-friendly innovations contribute to brand image and customer loyalty. The relationship between brand trust, product quality, and customer loyalty is an area that requires more in-depth exploration. Cross-industry empirical studies can provide insights into the effectiveness of differentiation strategies across different sectors. Current research tends to focus on specific topics such as investment, price, innovation, product quality, and brand trust. However, not many have explored the relationship between product differentiation strategies and multidisciplinary approaches, such as the influence of digital technology or sustainability aspects. Although bibliometrics have been used to identify trends, the results are still lacking in empirical studies on the real impact of product differentiation strategies on organizational performance across industries and business scales. Cross-sector analysis allows for the identification of unique factors that influence the success of product differentiation in a given industry. This research can also strengthen the relevance of product differentiation models in a global context. This research not only provides an in-depth understanding of the intellectual landscape of product

differentiation, but also offers a roadmap for future research. The strategic implications of these findings are expected to support more effective decision-making in product development, marketing, and business sustainability.

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