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Innovación y desarrollo de productos turísticos

Opportunities for academic tourism from the Marketing Mix in Higher Education: A bibliometric analysis

Oportunidades para el turismo académico desde el Marketing Mix en la Educación Superior: Un análisis bibliométrico

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Abstract

The topic of marketing mix in higher education has gained relevance due to its wide diversity. An example is how it can contribute to increasing opportunities from the perspective of academic tourism. This research aims to determine the main terms that are shaping the marketing mix in the university sector by conducting a bibliometric analysis. A selection of 103 documents from Scopus was analyzed using the VOSviewer software. The analysis maps show that the connection between the marketing mix and higher education is indisputable, gaining relevance in the last 10 years. Confirming the 5-cluster structure that allows for the design of marketing strategies focused on social marketing, gender, decision-making, sustainable development, and strategic planning to reach the largest possible audience. Although the terms obtained refer to the 7Ps, only price and promotion and the term e-learning, which is related to product and place, coincide. Therefore, physical evidence, people and processes need to be addressed more directly, confirming the opportunity to delve deeper into the study, design and application of the marketing mix for higher education. Furthermore, these results can be used as a reference for government, local and university managers when addressing the importance of academic tourism and marketing mix in the decision-making processes for specific higher education institutions.

***Keywords**: Marketing Mix, Higher Education Institutions, 7Ps, Academic Tourism and Decision-Making Processes.*

Resumen

El tema del marketing mix en la educación superior ha ganado relevancia debido a su amplia diversidad. Un ejemplo es el incremento de las oportunidades desde la perspectiva del turismo académico. Esta investigación se centra en determinar los principales términos del marketing mix en la educación superior; mediante un análisis bibliométrico. Para ello, una selección de 103 documentos de Scopus fue analizada usando el software VOSviewer. El análisis de los mapas muestra que la conexión entre el marketing mix y la educación es innegable, ganando relevancia en los últimos 10 años. Se confirmó la estructura de 5 clústers que permiten el diseño de estrategias de marketing basadas en el marketing social, género, toma de decisiones, desarrollo sostenible y planificación estratégica para alcanzar un mayor público. Aunque los términos obtenidos en relación a las 7Ps, solamente coinciden con el precio, la promoción y el e-learning, el cual está relacionado con el producto y la promoción. Por lo que, los téminos de evidencia física, personal y proceso necesitan ser abordados más directamente, confirmando la oportunidad de profundizar en el tema del marketing mix para la educación superior. Además, estos resultados pueden ser usados como una referencia para los directivos universitarios, gubernamentales y locales al abordar la importancia del turismo académico y el marketing mix en el proceso de toma de decisiones para instituciones de educación superior.

***Palabras Claves:** Marketing Mix, Instituciones de Educación Superior, 7Ps, Turismo Académico y Proceso de toma de decisiones.*

Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have transformed their management practices due to the globalization that society has witnessed over the past 30 years. Currently, a continuous increase in internationalization processes can be observed, which has led to an increase in the number of educational markets and a diversification of student needs. Furthermore, there has been a drastic reduction in government-allocated funds and an increase in HEIs. Therefore, it is increasingly necessary to attract and optimize resources linked to each of the university processes. The marketing of academic services and products is a fundamental activity that has become central to meeting the needs of their counterparts and maintaining long-term relationships. Therefore, universities have been forced to adopt different marketing practices.

One example is the need to increase academic tourism opportunities in Cuban HEIs, which are characterized by various opportunities and strengths, such as national identity, music, nature, and gastronomy.

To this end, the Cuban Ministry of Higher Education, through the university processes. Specifically, the internationalization process has defined a set of policies and guidelines that allow Cuban universities to carry out a series of activities and strategies that increase their chances of generating income through academic tourism and simultaneously achieve an international positioning that contributes to the development of HEIs.

HEIs have increasingly adopted strategies from the business sector. According to (MOCAN (MANIU) and MANIU, 2015) keeping up with sustainable development has required dealing with internationalization, massification, commercialization, and understanding of its stakeholders.

Today, the benefits of applying business marketing concepts to drive the development of HEIs are undeniable (Abdullah, 2006), helping to achieve a better positioning, reputation, and image in society. Most universities recognize the need to promote themselves through marketing practices and concepts due to the competitive environment surrounding them. (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006)

When universities offer their services to their clients through methods and strategies tailored to their expectations, they gain information to make decisions and set the price of their programs and services. This requires the use and implementation of concepts and tools that are the most basic elements of the marketing mix. (Ivy, 2008)

The marketing mix (Ivy, 2008) are the set of controllable tools that an institution uses to interact with its various target markets. In the case of HEIs, they can influence the demand for the educational services and products offered. Tangible products have traditionally operated under the 4Ps model (Product, Price, Place and Promotion). In contrast, the services sector, which includes universities, uses a model and approach based on the 7Ps (Product, Price, Place,

Promotion, Physical Evidence, Person, Process) more appropriate to meet the needs of students, the university community, stakeholders, and society. This marketing mix was first proposed by authors Booms and Bitner in 1981, who recognized the need to add another 3Ps to this mix due to the specificities of services marketing and the growing demand for their commercialization.

Mastering each of its aspects is essential to designing the most effective operational marketing plans in the higher education environment. Several studies have focused on addressing the broad topic of the marketing mix. This is the case of (Dally and Sinaga, 2021; Ho and Hung, 2008; Ivy, 2008; Lau, 2016; Pardiyono et al., 2022).

According to (Ivy, 2008) that conducted research in South African institutions addressing the relationship between the 7Ps and the preference factors of students interested in Master of Business Administration (MBA) postgraduate programs, concluded that press advertising, e-marketing, accommodation, exchange programs, technologies, programs, payment, flexible tuition approaches, duration, reputation of academic staff, online information and enrollment processes were the factors most considered when designing the marketing mix.

According to (Lau, 2016), who proposed adding Productivity and Quality to this mix, forming the 8Ps, where a multiple regression was performed to determine the relationships between variables in 890 questionnaires, and had favorable results to support his research hypothesis. The authors (Pardiyono et al., 2022) investigated the marketing mix behavior and its relationship with external and internal marketing among university students in West Java Province, Indonesia. The research concluded that place, product, price and promotion have a positive effect on external marketing and physical evidence, people and processes show a positive effect on internal marketing.

It is worth noting that the diverse university environment, characterized by the particularities of regions, countries, societies and institutions, makes the topic of the marketing mix highly diverse, adapting to the particularities for its design and implementation. Reaching the intended audience and attracting them to its products and services will depend on this. This research, based on the need to continue to delve deeper into the topic, considers it appropriate to propose the following research objective:

To determine the main aspects and terms that shape the marketing mix in higher education, using a bibliometric analysis that will reveal the most prevalent relationships, clusters and trends on the topic.

To fulfill the previous objective, a search for documents was carried out in the scientific database “SCOPUS” that addressed the topic of the marketing mix in higher education. The metadata obtained was subsequently analyzed and interpreted using the VOSviewer software, allowing the following research questions (RQ) to be developed:

RQ1. What are the key terms and words that are determining the marketing mix in the higher

education environment?

RQ2. What are the most prevalent relationships, clusters and trends in the marketing mix in higher education?

The research will conduct a bibliometric analysis to provide an updated overview of the topic by 2025. At the same time, the results of this research could serve as a guide for government executives and university administrators in their decision-making processes when designing the most appropriate marketing mix to achieve better results under an applied marketing approach in HEIs.

This paper is structured into 5 sessions. Section 1 for the introduction, followed by the literature review in Section 2 and the material and methods in Section 3. Section 4 presents the results and their discussion. The conclusions are addressed in Section 5.

Literature Review

Higher education has undergone a wide variety of changes in recent decades (Alves and Raposo, 2010), highlights the competitiveness that emerges among institutions and requires the adoption of strategies tailored to the needs of society. In this regard, the marketing mix is a widely used factor for marketing university products, services, and institutions. It allows each element to be tailored to the needs of students, potential clients, the university community, and society.

According to (Ivy, 2008) the marketing mix is the measurable elements that an institution uses to respond to the demands of various target markets. It includes the activities that HEIs plan and executes to influence demand for their services. Traditionally, the 4Ps model has been used by institutions dedicated to marketing tangible products.

While the services sector, which includes education, has opted for the 7Ps approach to meet needs. It focuses primarily on: product, price, place, promotion, person, physical evidence, and process. (Ivy, 2008)

According to (Lau, 2016, p. 5): “In the 1980s, Booms and Bitner propose to add three elements (Participant, Physical Evidence and Process) to McCarthy’s 4Ps strategy and become the 7Ps strategy. In the early stage, 7Ps strategy has been preliminarily accepted by the education institutions as they are like the services industries”.

It is recognized that overtime modifications have been made to this model with the intention of improving it for the higher education sector. In the case of (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2007 in Lau, 2016) that proposed to add another P (Productivity and Quality) to this set to form a marketing mix of 8Ps.

Product elements refer to the programs offered by higher education institutions. Price determines the fees required to access these services. Place refers to where, when, and how the

programs offered are available. Promotion is the way to publicize and detail the main features and benefits of the services offered. For example: WOM, storytelling, advertising, public relations, student fairs with potential university students, and open houses. (Lau, 2016)

Today, the digital space is gaining increasing importance due to the preference of current generations of students, the so-called Digital Natives. Therefore, university websites, social media, virtual tours, online search and AI must be used carefully to meet the needs of potential customers.

Concerning the remaining 3Ps, (Lau, 2016) explains that people are professors, administrative staff, managers and clients. It is essential to have staff with knowledge, attitude, skills and a positive presence for the university community. Processes are related to the activities necessary for customer service. Agile, efficient and accessible procedures are required. Furthermore, physical evidence is linked to the tangible products necessary to implement the services offered. For example: technological equipment, buildings, platforms, teaching materials and facilities.

The eighth element of the marketing mix is productivity and quality. According to (Lau, 2016, p. 10): "Refers to the relations between outputs and inputs (…) arguing that productivity in higher education requires measuring the effectiveness and efficiency. Measuring effectiveness includes how well the higher education institutions meet the students' expectations, such as gaining specialized knowledge, job placement and career guidance".

It is considered an aspect worth considering, as the higher education sector increasingly focuses on indicators that respond to this P to meet needs and simultaneously achieve more trusting and lasting relationships with the university community and society.

Nowadays, universities have had to integrate social responsibility into each of their marketing strategies, since its importance for students and the community on issues related to the environment, recycling, care for vulnerable communities, gender equity, among many others, has been confirmed. According to (Sheau-Ting et al., 2013) Social marketing applies marketing concepts to social issues. It employs marketing principles and techniques to influence its target audience, voluntarily transforming the behavior of individuals, groups, or society as a whole. Special attention should be paid to the social aspect, where the greatest number of elements of the marketing mix should be related, in order to contribute to mitigating the problems affecting society.

A consumer-focused trend used in higher education is the 4Cs model. According to (Wasmer et al., 1997) this model focuses on the elements of concept, cost, channel, and communication. The elements of the concept position the products and services offered in terms of consumers. In this case, students, professors, stakeholders, the university community, and society. Cost refers to the prices of the programs and services offered, but with a customer-focused approach and how to contribute to their benefit. An example is the aid that can be offered to students

during their higher education journey. Channel refers to how the services offered will be delivered, which is very similar to the previous 7Ps model. Finally, communication is closely linked to the channels used from a marketing perspective and the reciprocal communication established with its counterparts.

The previous 4Cs model has also been modified over time to better integrate into the field of higher education, due to the continuous transformations that are being led by society. There is a new trend related to the use of the 4Cs, but with the terms customer, cost, convenience, and communication. The emergence of these new terms demonstrates the students' perspective, integrated into the organization's vision to achieve mutually profitable relationships. (Hung and Yen, 2022).

The authors of this research consider that the marketing mix and the most appropriate model to use in higher education are highly diverse and depend on a range of social, regional, demographic, personal and identity factors. However, the literature has shown that these marketing mixes are increasingly focused on the benefits of students, the university community and society.

By conducting a literature review on the marketing mix, we identified the terms and trends that have been used in the education sector, specifically in HEIs. This allowed us to design a research methodology based on a bibliometric analysis that will provide greater clarity and detail on the topic. Consequently, it is considered appropriate to address this methodology in the next section.

Materials and Methods

The research carries out a bibliometric analysis on the marketing mix in higher education. According to (Pritchard, 1969 in Jain and Rao, 2024) the bibliometric analysis is the collection of statistical data related to the literature on a topic or discipline to identify current and most relevant trends in a research topic. This allows for suggesting lines of research conducted over time and future studies. (Ye et al., 2021 in Jain and Rao, 2024)

According to Jain & Rao (2024), the most used bibliometric instruments include mapping research by author and co-occurrence of words that explain the structure and evolution of scientific research and its themes over time and the relationship between common groups. The research searches for the most representative documents in the Scopus database, dated May 7, 2025. In the first step, the terms "marketing mix" and "higher education" or "university" or "college" are introduced. Obtaining a total of 202 documents distributed as follows: Articles (147), Conference Paper (26), Book Chapter (9), Review (10), Conference Review (1), Book (5), Retracted (1), Note (2) and Editorial (1).

After searching for documents, it is decided to exclude documents of type: Book Chapter (9),

Review (10), Conference Review (1), Book (5), Retracted (1), Note (2) and Editorial (1). A total of 29 documents were eliminated, representing 14.35% of the initial total. It was decided not to delimit the search by time, as analysis from the first publication to the present ensures the greatest information yield and a more precise bibliometric mapping, yielding 173 documents. However, it was found that a group of documents did not fit the topic and were related to other independent sectors of higher education. This led to a review of each abstract to discard them. At the end of this inclusion and exclusion process, 103 documents were selected for analysis (see table 1).

Table 1. Search Criteria and Article Selection

Criteria	Exclude	Include
Search date: May 7th, 2025 Database: Scopus Search Term: "marketing mix" AND "higher education" OR "university" OR "college"		202
Period: 1986-2025		202
Type of document: Articles		147
Type of document: Conference Paper		26
Type of document: Book Chapter	9	
Type of document: Review	10	
Type of document: Conference Review	1	
Type of document: Book	5	
Type of document: Retracted	1	
Type of document: Editorial	1	
Type of document: Note	2	
Eliminated documents that belong to other topics	70	
Final documents	**99**	**103**
Documents for the final analysis		**103**

Source: Designed by the authors

In the Scopus database, the 103 documents were analyzed using the platform's analytical capabilities and information was extracted on the number of publications per year, documents by author and document by country. We decided to exclude documents published in 2025 due to the small number of articles published, which corresponds perfectly with the search date. Therefore, it was considered that including the year 2025 in the analysis would have biased the results and their interpretation. (See Figures 1, 2, and 3)

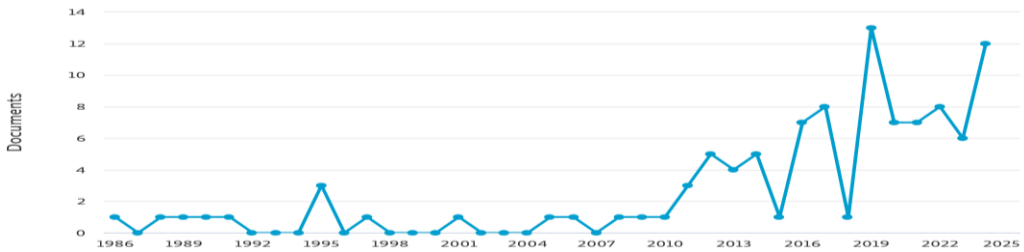

Figure 1. Publications by year.

Source: From Scopus database.

Figure 1 shows that the first publication on the marketing mix was published in 1986. It addressed the role of textbooks in the marketing mix to help educators and administrators increase student satisfaction. In subsequent years, there was not a significant number of publications on the topic. Beginning in 2010, there was increased interest from researchers, with 2019 and 2024 marking the peak number of published documents. There is a trend of growth and decline in subsequent years, but it is evident that researchers continue to show interest in the topic. Therefore, the highest number of publications has been reached in the last five years, despite the difficult period of COVID-19, confirming the relevance of the topic.

In the case of documents published by author, Figure 2 shows that the top 10 authors each have two publications, with no marked dominance in this regard.

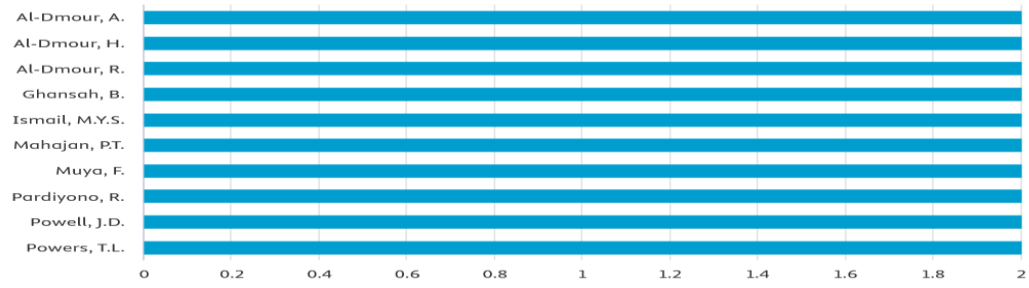

Figure 2. Documents by authors. Source: From Scopus database.

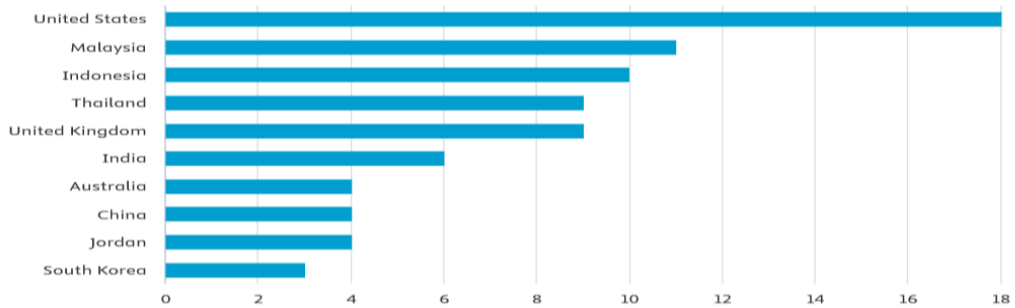

Figure 3. Documents by country. Source: From Scopus database.

Figure 3 shows that the United States (US) leads the way in this type of research with 18. However, other English-speaking countries also dominate the top 10, such as the United Kingdom (UK), Canada and Australia. It was found that the Asian region, represented by Malaysia, Thailand, China and South Korea, has significantly increased the number of publications focused on the marketing mix, reflecting the importance that marketing has acquired in higher education over the past 25 years in this region.

After conducting this analysis in the Scopus scientific database on document publications by year, author, and country, the 103 documents were selected and exported in RIS format. Indicators (citation information, bibliographical information, abstract and keywords, funding details and other information) were taken into account, which will allow for a more detailed structure of the bibliometric data.

In the analysis of the file exported in RIS format from the Scopus scientific database. VOSviewer software was used, which is a tool for bibliometric analysis that facilitates the mapping of co-occurrences between keywords. It allows you to view and interpret the results obtained from the search for "marketing mix" and "higher education" or "university" or "college". The data obtained facilitates a deeper and more detailed exploration of the themes, connections and interrelationships.

Configuring the search type in the creation of a map based on bibliometric data. The data reading option makes it possible to read files in RIS format. It was decided to perform a keyword-based co-occurrence analysis. The co-occurrence domain of all the keywords discovered in the mapped articles was 557 identified keywords. This led to setting the number of co-occurrences of a keyword to 3 to obtain a clearer analysis of the metadata, given that the number of documents exported from Scopus was relatively low (103). With the previous search pattern, 35 co-occurrences were identified.

In the next step, the terms to be analyzed were verified to check for duplicates or terms of no interest. It was decided to eliminate five terms because they were repeated or did not fit the study's interests: humans, article, human experiment, universities and university students. This resulted in a representation of 30 keywords with their respective co-occurrences.

The next section analyzes the results obtained in the VOSviewer software, based on the visual graphics and the co-occurrence of terms.

Results and Discussions

This section analyzes and discusses the results of the 103 documents processed with the free software VOSviewer, which facilitated the mapping of co-occurrences between keywords and terms. The most frequently used terms and keywords are presented below.

Marketing, Students, Marketing Mix, Higher Education, Human, Commerce, Education, Student, University, Social Marketing, Economics, Marketing Strategy, Sustainable Development, Strategic Planning, Female, Male, United States, Innovation, Price, Decision Making, e-Learning, Service Marketing Mix, Social Networking (Online), Study Abroad, International Students, Promotion, People, Social Media, Research and Jordan.

The general mapping of identified terms and keywords, as well as their interrelation, gave rise to the formation of different clusters. It can be seen that the formation of 5 clusters: Cluster 1 with 10 items, Cluster 2 with 8 items, Cluster 3 with 5 items, Cluster 4 with 5 items and Cluster 5 with 2 ítems. The green cluster is identified by terms related to the human dimension (gender, student, decision making). The red cluster refers to marketing and its strategies, planning, innovation, study abroad, e-learning, sustainable development and economics. Additionally, the

purple cluster refers to how the marketing mix relates to the term of research, maintaining a close relationship with marketing in higher education. (See Figure 4)

The yellow cluster is identified with the terms higher education, service marketing mix, promotion and price, directly referring to different elements of the marketing mix. The remaining cluster, the blue one is primarily related to commercial terms in higher education, social media, social networking (online) and international students. (See Figure 4)

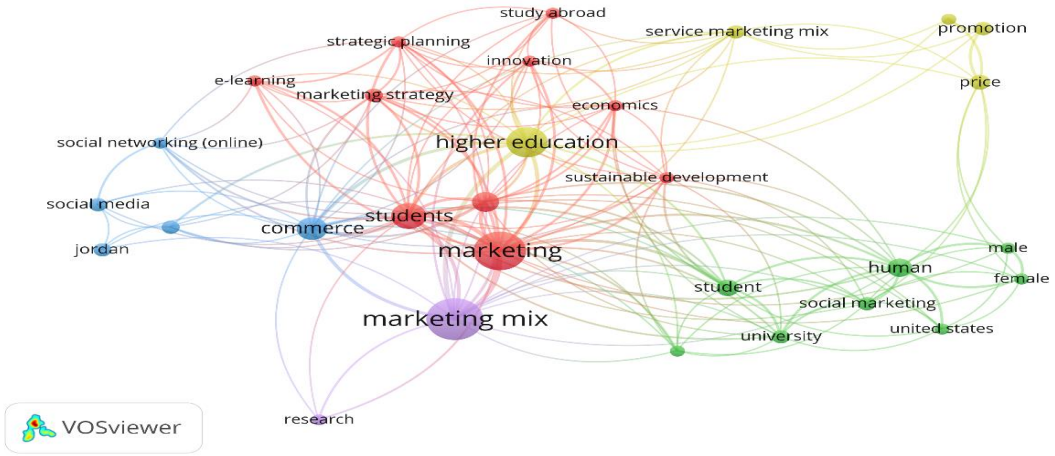

Figure 4. Occurrence Keywords of Marketing Mix. Source: VOSviewer 2025.

Regarding the evolution of terms and keywords over time, an increase in this type of study has been observed since 2014. First, addressing essential educational topics such as innovation, economics, research and study abroad. Secondly, terms related to the marketing mix and higher education, gender, the human dimension, students, strategic planning, strategic marketing, social media and commerce are highlighted. In recent years, we have continued to explore terms such as e-learning, social networking and social media. But more recently, we have also addressed other topics such as price, promotion, social marketing and international students. (See Figure 5)

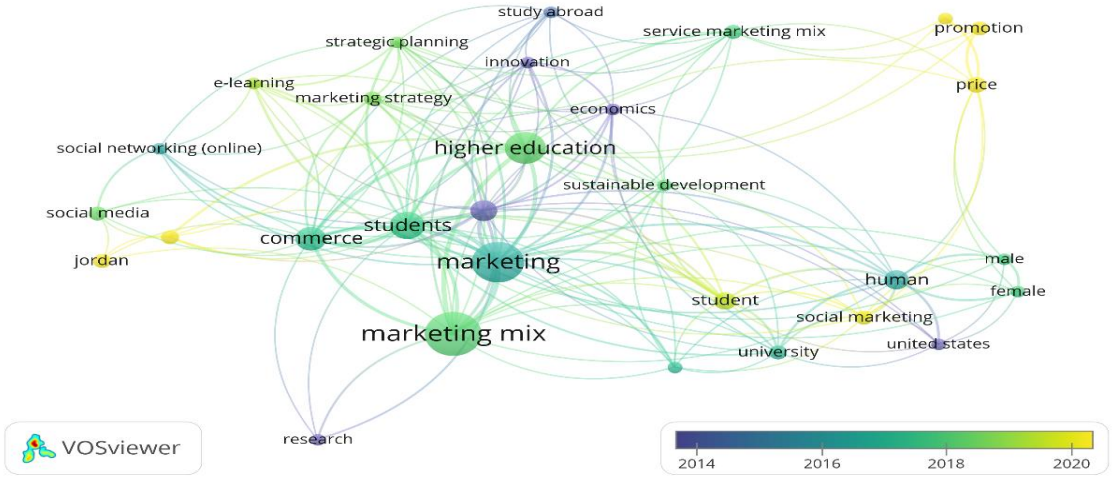

Figure 5. Occurrence Keywords throughout time. Source: VOSviewer 2025.

The following figures present the interrelationship of the most used terms on marketing, specifically in the case of marketing mix in higher education. (See Figures 6, 7, 8 y 9)

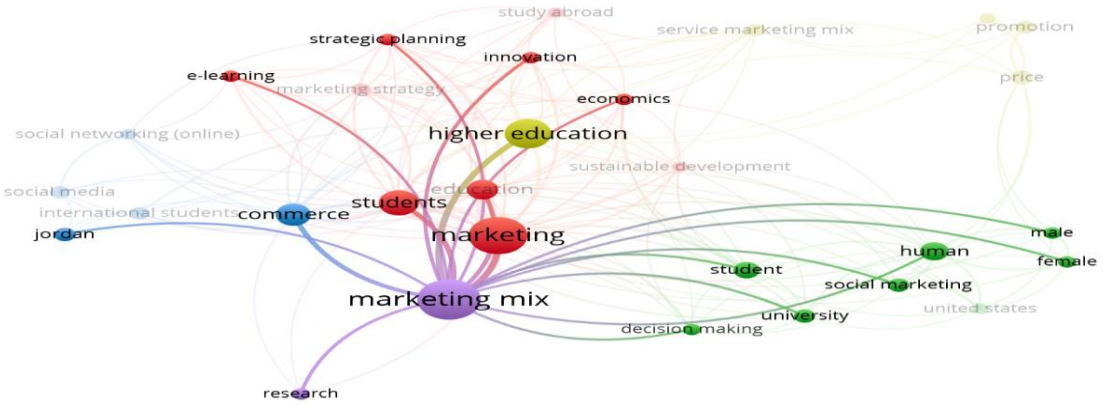

Figure 6. Prominent Co-occurrence linked with Marketing Mix. Source: VOSviewer 2025.

Figure 6 shows the interrelationship of the marketing mix with the five identified clusters. It directly impacts its application in higher education: strategic planning, innovation, economic aspects, students and e-learning. It is also related to terms of the human dimension, gender and decision-making. Another important interrelationship is observed in the areas of commerce and research, as each element of the marketing mix must constantly be transformed and adapted to meet the needs of potential customers.

Figure 7. Prominent Co-occurrence linked with Higher Education. Source: VOSviewer 2025.

Figure 7 shows how Higher Education terms and keywords are increasingly related to aspects of marketing, the marketing mix, decision-making, commerce and international students. From a strategic and operational perspective, they are interrelated with terms such as strategic marketing, innovation, strategic planning, e-learning, economic aspects, price, promotion, sustainable development and the necessity of studying abroad. This refers to important elements of the 7Ps of the marketing mix for the higher education sector.

Figure 8. Prominent Co-occurrence linked with Students. Source: VOSviewer 2025.

Figure 8 analyzes the interrelationship with the term of "students", which in turn is related to the five identified clusters. This demonstrates the need to apply the marketing mix to meet their needs. It is important to note how students increasingly relate to terms such as sustainable development, social networking, and social marketing. Research should take these factors into account, as they determine decision-making processes when designing marketing strategies and elements of the marketing mix. Furthermore, terms such as e-learning and social media are highlighted as relevant aspects for new generations of students.

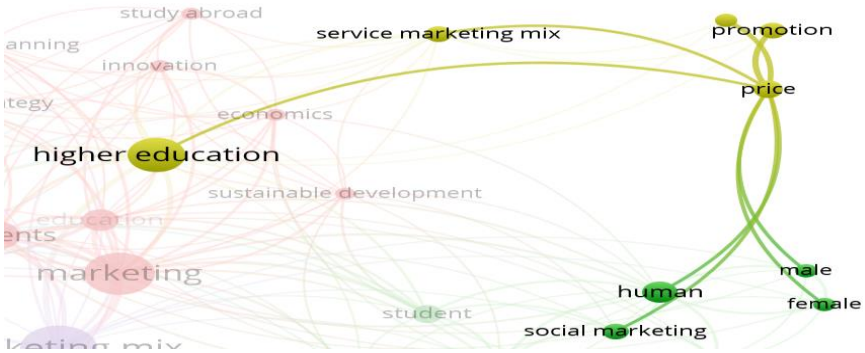

Figure 9. Prominent Co-occurrence linked with Promotion and Price. Source: VOSviewer 2025.

In Figure 9, the terms "promotion" and "price" show a weak relationship with other terms. This is directly related to gender and the social marketing dimension. The marketing recommended for higher education should take gender differences into account, as this is a highly considered aspect of the marketing mix.

Findings

The subsection interprets and discusses the results, as well as the findings obtained from the Scopus database search and their analysis using VOSviewer software. Since 2010, there has been a growing interest in the topic, with a growing and decreasing trend in subsequent years. However, the highest number of publications has been reached in the last five years, confirming the relevance of the marketing mix in higher education. The US is at the forefront of this type of research, and English-speaking countries predominate among the top 10, such as the UK,

Canada and Australia. However, the Asian region, represented by Malaysia, Thailand, China and South Korea, has seen a considerable increase in the number of publications, demonstrating the importance of marketing for this region over the last 25 years.

The analysis maps show that the connection between the marketing mix, gender, decision-making, students and higher education is indisputable. The results of 30 key terms are closely related to the marketing mix and its strategic and operational vision in the field of higher education. These include human dimension, decision-making, gender, price, promotion, service marketing mix, innovation, strategic marketing, strategic planning, sustainable development, commerce, students, social networking, social media and social marketing. All of these terms are distributed in five clusters with 30 items.

Regarding the evolution of terms over time, research over the last five years increasingly refers to their interrelationships with social marketing, price, promotion, students and gender. Furthermore, regarding the study of international students, e-learning and social media. Three terms began to be studied simultaneously in 2016 and are closely related to the marketing mix: strategic planning, service marketing mix and strategic marketing.

The specific analysis of the marketing mix term demonstrated a direct relationship with the five identified clusters, directly impacting higher education, commerce, human and student elements. Higher education terms and keywords are interrelated with marketing, marketing mix, decision making, commerce and international students. Addressing, from a strategic and operational dimension: the marketing strategic, innovation, strategic planning, e-learning, economic aspects, price, promotion, sustainable development and the necessity of study abroad, all important elements of the 7Ps of the marketing mix.

The term Students is related to the five clusters, demonstrating their interrelation with marketing. Furthermore, students increasingly relate to terms such as sustainable development, social networking and social marketing. These factors, which determine decision-making for the design of the marketing mix, must be considered. Likewise, e-learning and social media are relevant terms for new generations of university students. Interestingly, the terms “promotion” and “price” show a weak interrelationship. These terms are directly related to gender and the dimension of social marketing, affirming the need to take gender differences into account in the application of strategic and operational marketing.

Conclusions

The search on the Scopus database identified the first publication on the topic in 1986. Since 2010, an increasing number of papers have been published, with a growing and decreasing trend in successive years. The US maintains a dominant position in the number of publications, reaching 18 articles. However, the Asian region has significantly increased the number of

publications focused on the topic of the marketing mix.

Data processing in VOSviewer software demonstrates that the connection between the marketing mix and higher education is indisputable. Therefore, 30 terms related to the topic were identified, distributed across five clusters, with a notable tendency to relate to the students, economics, decision making, commerce, social networking (online), marketing strategic, planning, price and promotion. Furthermore, special attention must be paid to the gender of students, as analysis shows a tendency to increasingly consider them.

The evolution of the terms over time shows that in recent years more marketing mix research has been developed, considering the students and mobility, e-learning, commerce, strategic planning, promotion, social media, price, gender and social marketing. It is noted that the decision-making process in higher education is closely related to the marketing mix, influenced by the terms: human dimension, social marketing, sustainable development and commerce. Regarding the term students, it is increasingly being linked to sustainable development, social networking and social marketing. Likewise, e-learning and social media are relevant aspects for new generations of students.

Future Research and Limitations

The 7Ps del marketing mix is the most appropriate model for the educational field and the relationship with academic tourism. Although the terms obtained generally refer to each of them, only price and promotion coincide, which in turn have reached their greatest relevance after 2020. Furthermore, the term e-learning could be related to product and place. This suggests that physical evidence, people and processes need to be addressed more directly. It is considered opportune to continue to delve deeper into the study, design and application of the marketing mix for higher education and increased opportunities for academic tourism.

This research has a limitation that could be addressed in the future. Despite covering a broad period (1986–2025), a relatively low number of publications up to the year 2000 were obtained. Therefore, it is recommended that other databases such as WOS, EBSCO, Taylor and Francis, Google Scholar, Emerald and Insight be added to the search to verify this period.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare do not exist any conflict of interest.