Perceived Brand Globalness and Localness: A Bibliometric Analysis

Postrzegana globalność i lokalność marki – analiza bibliometryczna

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of the article is to establish the current state of research on the perceived brand globalness/localness (PBG/PBL) dichotomy. It analyses and assesses the changes in the research problems and identifies the areas upon which PBG/PBL research is currently focused.

Research Design & Methods: The research method used in the article is bibliometric analysis, supplemented by content analysis of literature selected from the Scopus database. A four-step procedure was used to collect data and conduct bibliometric analyses: stage 1 – searching and identifying primary literature, stage 2 – review of the literature (screening), stage 3 – data export, stage 4 – bibliometric analysis supplemented by a content analysis of the literature. In addition, a co-occurrence analysis of keywords was carried out using VOSviewer.

Findings: The research on PBG/PBL issues is concentrated in five main areas: 1) brand value signaling, 2) PBG/PBL interaction, 3) PBG impact on purchase intentions, 4) PBL impact on purchase intentions, and 5) the effect of country of origin/consumer ethnocentrism on consumer

preference for foreign (global) vs. domestic (local) brands. The study also examines changing trends in PBG/PBL research.

Implications/Recommendations: Recent world events including the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and trade wars have slowed globalisation. Since buying behaviour is visibly changing under the influence of socio-economic factors, there is a need for further research to verify consumer preferences *vis-à-vis* global/local brand positioning.

Contribution: The review and analyses performed enrich the existing literature on PBG/PBL, while the findings presented can serve as a starting point for further research.

Article type: original article.

Keywords: perceived brand globalness, perceived brand localness, bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer, Scopus database.

JEL Classification: M30, M31, D12, F23.

STRESZCZENIE

Cel: Celem artykułu jest ustalenie aktualnego stanu badań dotyczących zjawiska postrzeganej przez konsumentów globalności/lokalności marki (PBG/PBL). Autorzy skupili się na analizie i ocenie charakteru zmian w podejmowanych problemach badawczych, a także na określeniu obszarów, wokół których koncentrują się obecnie prace poświęcone tematyce PBG/PBL.

Metodyka badań: Zastosowaną metodą badawczą była analiza bibliometryczna, uzupełniona o analizę treściową literatury wyłonionej z bazy Scopus. W tym celu przeprowadzono czteroeta-pową procedurę: etap 1 – wyszukiwanie i identyfikacja literatury podstawowej, etap 2 – przegląd literatury (*screening*), etap 3 – eksport danych, etap 4 – analiza bibliometryczna uzupełniona analizą treści literatury. Przeprowadzono także analizę współwystępowania słów kluczowych z wykorzystaniem programu VOSviewer.

Wyniki badań: Badania poświęcone zagadnieniom PBG/PBL skupiają się w pięciu głównych obszarach: 1) sygnalizacja wartości marki, 2) interakcja PBG/PBL, 3) wpływ PBG na intencje zakupu, 4) wpływ PBL na intencje zakupu oraz 5) wpływ kraju pochodzenia/etnocentryzmu konsumenta na preferencje konsumentów wobec marek zagranicznych (globalnych) vs. krajo-wych (lokalnych). Ponadto zmieniają się trendy w badaniach dotyczących zjawiska PBG/PBL.

Wnioski: Ostatnie wydarzenia na świecie, takie jak pandemia COVID-19 czy inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę, a wraz z nią wojny handlowe przyczyniły się do spowolnienia procesów globalizacyj-nych. Ponieważ zachowania nabywcze ulegają widocznym zmianom pod wpływem czynników społeczno-ekonomicznych, istnieje potrzeba prowadzenia dalszych badań weryfikujących prefe-rencje konsumentów wobec globalnego/lokalnego pozycjonowania marek.

Wkład w rozwój dyscypliny: Dokonany przegląd oraz przeprowadzone analizy wzbogacają literaturę poświęconą tematyce PBG/PBL, a zaprezentowane ustalenia mogą stanowić punkt wyjścia do dalszych badań dotyczących poruszanego zagadnienia.

Typ artykułu: oryginalny artykuł naukowy.

Słowa kluczowe: postrzegana globalność marki, postrzegana lokalność marki, analiza biblio-metryczna, VOSviewer, Scopus.

1. Introduction

Progressive globalisation over the past few decades has contributed to the emergence of a global consumer culture, which has become an important determinant of how companies operate in the market (Steenkamp 2019). The rapid development of telecommunications technologies, widespread access to the Internet and the growth of transnational corporations have contributed to increased cultural homogenisation (Goliszek 2015). In these processes, the behaviour and attitudes of buyers are also changing. Globalisation favours those organisations that have managed to establish themselves in the minds of buyers as global brands, symbolising the values of global consumer culture (Özsomer & Altaras 2008). These phenomena require appropriate positioning of one's brand in the market to create a specific image among consumers, one that stands out from the competition and is attractive to the final consumer. Although a global brand can be considered from an organisation's perspective (supply-side perspective) (Reformat 2017), Steenkamp, Batra and Alden (2003, p. 54) argued that a global brand benefits only when buyers view it as global – available in many markets and widely perceived by buyers as a global brand. Emphasising the demand perspective, they introduced the term "perceived brand globalness" (PBG), which has been widely adopted in the literature (Steenkamp, Batra & Alden 2003, Liu *et al*. 2021).

While globalisation processes have intensified exceptionally in recent decades, recent global events including Brexit, trade wars, widening support for protectionist trade policies and protection of domestic production have slowed globalisation (Carvalho, Luna & Goldsmith 2019). As these processes grew as the 21st century progressed, the coronavirus pandemic hit in 2020, affecting nearly every country in the world (Albertoni & Wise 2020), then Russia invaded Ukraine. The changes these two events have brought on have contributed to a new perspective on the problem of perceived brand localness and also the positioning of the product in the market.

There are two competing views in the literature regarding the conceptualisation of perceived brand localness (PBL) (Liu *et al*. 2021). First, a local brand is one that has a limited geographic reach (Dimofte, Johansson & Ronkainen 2008, Punyatoya 2013). Özsomer (2012, p. 73) suggests a different approach in defining local brands, calling them "local icons". She defines a local icon as the degree to which a brand symbolises the values, needs and aspirations of a local community (country) (Özsomer 2012). In more recent studies, researchers have argued that PBL and PBG are not opposing constructs but separate and complementary concepts (Xie, Batra & Peng 2015, Kolbl, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic & Diamantopoulos 2019, Sichtmann, Davvetas & Diamantopoulos 2019, Liu *et al*. 2021).

The PBG/PBL dichotomy is important, as previous research shows that global/local brand positioning has consequences in the evaluation of brand quality

and prestige (Akram, Merunka & Shakaib Akram 2011), brand extension (Sicht-mann & Diamantopoulos 2013), purchase intentions (Halkias, Davvetas & Diaman-topoulos 2016) and perceived brand authenticity (Safeer *et al*. 2022). The purpose of the article is to establish the current state of research on this dichotomy. It analyses and assesses the changes in the research problems and identifies the areas upon which PBG/PBL research is currently focused.

2. Research Methodology

The research method used in this article was bibliometric analysis, supplemented by content analysis of the literature. These methods are commonly used in works on the state of the art in a wide variety of areas, including, but not limited to, issues of prosumption (Shah *et al*. 2020), corporate social responsibility (Ejdys 2016) and digital marketing (León-Castro *et al*. 2021). The bibliometric analysis process adapted the various steps previously proposed by Ejdys (2016) and Karakose *et al*. (2021). The four-step procedure presented in Table 1 was used to collect data and conduct the bibliometric analyses.

Table 1. The Research Procedure

Stage	Description
STAGE 1 Searching and identifying the primary literature	Selecting a basic collection of literature in the Scopus database. Records identified through Scopus database ($n = 215$)
STAGE 2 Screening	Literature review (content analysis of titles, abstracts, and in-depth content analysis of entire publications). Creation of the final database. Record after exclusion ($n = 81$)
STAGE 3 Data export	From the 81 records received, full data were exported from the Scopus database, including citation information, bibliographical information, abstracts and keywords
STAGE 4 Bibliometric analysis	A bibliometric analysis supplemented by a content analysis of the literature was performed

Source: the authors.

Stage 1. Searching and identifying the primary literature

This stage involved selecting a core list of articles on PBG/PBL issues from the Scopus database using the keywords "brand globalness", "brand foreignness", "brand nonlocalness", "brand globality", "global branding", "brand localness", "brand iconness" and "local branding". Scopus is a broad, scientific database containing information on scientific papers published in a wide variety of fields, and is often used in literature reviews (Echchakoui 2020). The keywords presented above are commonly used to identify papers on PBG/PBL issues and have been previously

proposed by Kashif and Udunuwara (2021) and Liu *et al.* (2021). The keywords were used to search for titles, abstracts, and keywords (searches were conducted in January 2023). Only records covering documents published in scientific journals were analysed. In addition, the search was limited only to documents classified as scientific articles written in English, so book chapters, reviews and conference proceedings were excluded. No publication timeframe was specified, and no limits were applied to the subject areas in which publications were classified. The Scopus database query used is shown in Figure 1.

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("brand globalness" OR "brand foreignness" OR "brand nonlocalness"
OR "brand globality" OR "global branding" OR "brand localness" OR "brand iconness"
OR "local branding") AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE, "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar"))
AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))

Fig. 1. Search String
Source: the authors.

The search criteria outlined above correspond to the objectives of this article and the search process used ultimately yielded a primary database of 215 records.

Stage 2. Screening

The next step was to conduct a cursory review of the literature (screening), consisting of selecting and doing a preliminary evaluation of the collection. A content analysis of titles, abstracts and an in-depth content analysis of entire articles was performed. This step identifies papers that are truly relevant to the research area under analysis (Klimas, Stańczyk & Sachpazidu-Wójcicka 2020). Ultimately, 81 records addressing PBG/PBL issues were identified.

Stage 3. Data export

From the 81 records, full bibliometric data including citation information, bibliographical information, abstract and keywords, funding details and other information were exported to an aggregate CSV file.

Stage 4. Bibliometric analysis

The data obtained from the Scopus database was subjected to bibliometric analysis and content analysis. A time series analysis (reflecting the number of publications identified in the Scopus database) and identification of scientific journals with the highest number of papers addressing PBG/PBL issues were done. A co-occurrence analysis was also conducted. For this purpose, keyword association intensity maps were developed using VOSviewer version 1.6.18 for all 81 publications extracted from the Scopus database. VOSviewer is software widely

used for bibliometric analysis and is particularly useful for visualising and mapping research areas (Ejdys 2016, Shah *et al*. 2020, León-Castro *et al*. 2021, Jadach 2022, Zema & Sulich 2022). The mapping process using VOSviewer software included:

1) extracting terms whose recurrence in bibliographic descriptions was a minimum of 3. Thus, from the 285 terms initially identified in the database, 26 that occurred a minimum of 3 times were obtained;

2) removing keywords indicating only the research methodology that is part of the abstracts required by the journals or indicating only the location of the research, e.g.: "cluster analysis", "India". In this way, 24 keywords were obtained;

3) developing a map of the intensity of links between the 24 keywords selected from among all 81 publications covering PBG/PBL issues.

3. Results and Discussion

The first step of the bibliometric analysis was a time series analysis that shows the number of publications identified in the Scopus database. A detailed distribution of publications on PBG/PBL issues by year is presented in Figure 2.
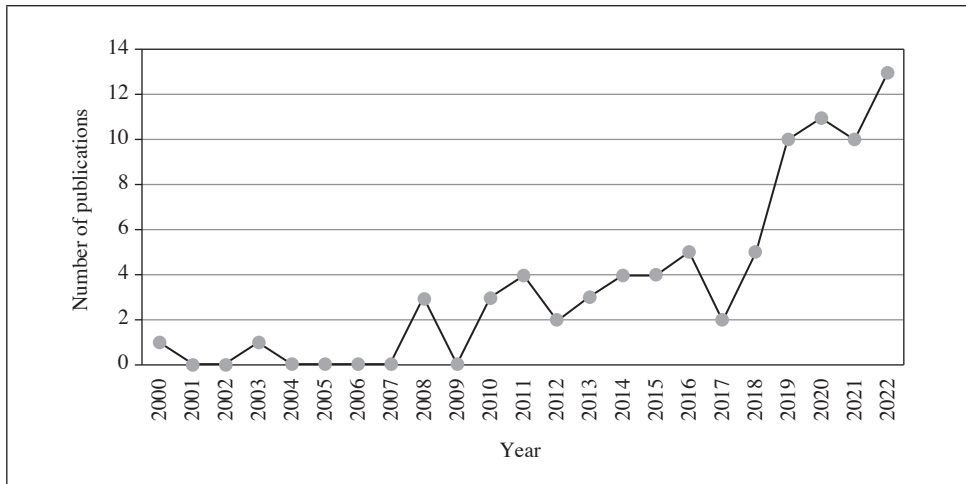

Fig. 2. Number of Publications on PBG and PBL Issues in the Scopus Database
Source: the authors.

Figure 2 shows that researchers' interest in PBG/PBL issues has increased in recent years. Although the time frame of the publication is not specified, the first record in which one of the keywords used appeared came from a paper entitled "Effects of Brand Local and Nonlocal Origin on Consumer Attitudes in Developing Countries" by Batra *et al*. (2000). In this pioneering paper, the researchers

examined whether consumers in emerging countries preferred brands perceived as non-local (foreign) over their local counterparts. Beyond that paper, of the 81 records included in the Scopus database, more than half are articles published in the years 2019–2022, suggesting interest in the topic has risen. A useful feature of the Scopus database is its filters, which allow users to categorise articles according to keywords. We also checked the proportions of papers on PBG and PBL. We discovered a large disproportion: the majority of papers were on PBG, while papers that addressed PBL focused on the broader relationship between PBG and PBL. It is worth noting that the first article relating to PBL, by Swoboda, Pennemann and Taube (2012), appeared only in 2012.

The next step in the bibliometric analysis was to identify the journals in which the largest number of papers on PBG/PBL were published. A total of 81 articles were published in 37 journals. Table 2 lists the ten journals where PBG/PBL issues were covered the most.

Table 2. List of Scientific Journals with the Highest Number of Publications on PBG/PBL Issues

No.	Journal	Publications	SJR[a]
1	*Journal of International Marketing*	15	1.992
2	*International Marketing Review*	10	1.329
3	*Journal of Business Research*	9	2.316
4	*Journal of International Consumer Marketing*	4	0.646
5	*Journal of Brand Management*	3	0.942
6	*Journal of Global Marketing*	3	0.663
7	*Journal of International Business Studies*	3	4.390
8	*Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*	2	0.799
9	*Journal of Product and Brand Management*	2	0.999
10	*Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*	2	4.433

[a] Data showing journals' SJR rates for 2021.

Source: the authors, based on data from the Scopus database.

The Journal of International Marketing published the most articles (15), with an SJR of 1.992 (2021) (publisher: American Marketing Association). This is followed by journals such as *International Marketing Review* (10) and *Journal of Business Research* (9). These first three journals contain more than 40% of the 81 papers.

In order to identify the areas of research on which PBG/PBL articles focus, a map of the intensity of links between the 24 most frequent keywords was developed. The map is presented in Figure 3.
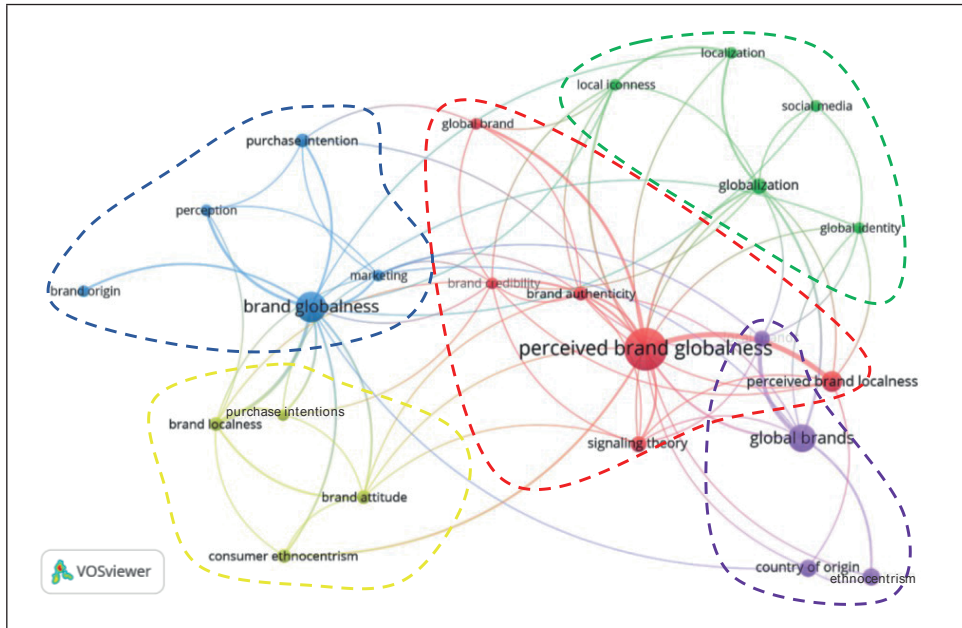
Fig. 3. Map of the Intensity of Links between Keywords Searched in the Scopus Database
Source: the authors.

As Figure 3 shows, the main areas of PBG/PBL research are centered around the five main clusters identified and sorted by the VOSviewer software. Note that the larger the circles, the more frequently the keywords in question were used, and the smaller the distances between keywords, the higher the number of co-occurrences. Among all 81 publications, the most frequently used keywords were "perceived brand globalness", "brand globalness" and "global brands". This confirms previous findings that the majority of articles are devoted to PBG, while those devoted to PBL issues are in the minority. A detailed set of keywords by cluster is also presented in Table 3, which complements the data visualised in Figure 3. It should be mentioned that VOSviewer ranks clusters by number of keywords (Zema & Sulich 2022).

As both Figure 3 and Table 3 show, the first research area, which we have named "brand value signaling", includes publications relating to the impact of PBG/PBL on brand credibility and brand authenticity. Both constructs derive from signaling theory, which suggests that "brands as credible and consistent signals of product quality can reduce perceived risk" (Özsomer & Altaras 2008, p. 9). The works of Özsomer and Altaras (2008), Özsomer (2012), Mandler, Bartsch and Han (2020), Srivastava, Dey and Balaji (2020), Safeer *et al*. (2022), among others, belong in this

area. To uncover the main findings in this area, we performed a content analysis of articles. One noteworthy observation comes from Safeer *et al*. (2022), according to which PBG/PBL positively influence brand authenticity and, consequently, attitudes towards brands. On the other hand, research by Mandler, Bartsch and Han (2020) found that in globalised markets, PBG is a weaker signal of brand credibility than PBL, while in globalising markets, both PBG and PBL have equal strength.

Table 3. The Keywords Grouped in the Clusters Shown in Figure 3

Cluster	Colour	Cluster Name	Keywords
1	red	signaling brand value	brand authenticity, brand credibility, global brand, perceived brand globalness, perceived brand localness, signaling theory
2	green	interplay between pbg and pbl	global identity, globalisation, local iconness, localisation, social media
3	blue	purchase intention global brand	brand globalness, brand origin, marketing, perception, purchase intention
4	yellow	purchase intention local brand	brand attitude, brand localness, consumer ethnocentrism, purchase intentions
5	purple	country-of-origin effect and consumer ethnocentrism	country of origin, ethnocentrism, global brands, local brands

Source: the authors.

The second research area (interplay between PBG and PBL) is mainly focused on understanding the interaction between PBG and PBL and determining the marketing implications thereof. This area includes articles analysing the issue of global and local brand positioning in the face of the conflicting forces of globalisation and a resurgent local consumer culture. In addition, a group of scholars researching this area, have signaled that PBG is not the opposite of PBL – rather they are constructs that can complement each other (e.g., Liu, Tsai & Tao 2020, Tsai *et al*. 2021) and even create "culturally mixed symbolic products" (Guo, Heinberg & Zou 2019, p. 79).

The third and fourth research areas are closely related (global brand purchase intention/local brand purchase intention). In both areas, researchers focus on examining the impact of PBG/PBL on consumers' behaviours and intentions – especially purchase intentions (e.g., Akram, Merunka & Shakaib Akram 2011, Winit *et al*. 2014, Halkias, Davvetas & Diamantopoulos 2016). Since purchase intention does not develop in isolation but is a stage of the decision-making process, some research also considers other stages of the purchase process preceding the formation of intention, such as brand attitude (Tasoluk *et al*. 2015, Baek *et al*. 2017).

The fifth research area (country-of-origin effect and consumer ethnocentrism) focuses on whether and how the country-of-origin effect/consumer ethnocentrism affects preference for foreign (global) vs. domestic (local) brands. Consumer ethnocentrism in these studies is mainly taken into account as a moderating variable and tends to lead to a weakening of the positive effects of PBG (Akram, Merunka & Shakaib Akram 2011, Huaman-Ramirez, Albert & Merunka 2019, Vuong & Khanh Giao 2020). In addition, there is a group of studies that look at the potential benefits of brands as a result of country-of-origin associations (Halkias, Davvetas & Diamantopoulos 2016, Lee, Chae & Lew 2020).

In order to identify recent trends, a map (overlay visualisation) was developed (see Fig. 4). Such maps are a useful for verifying trends in research, as they make it possible to classify scientific papers using a time scale (Shvindina 2019).
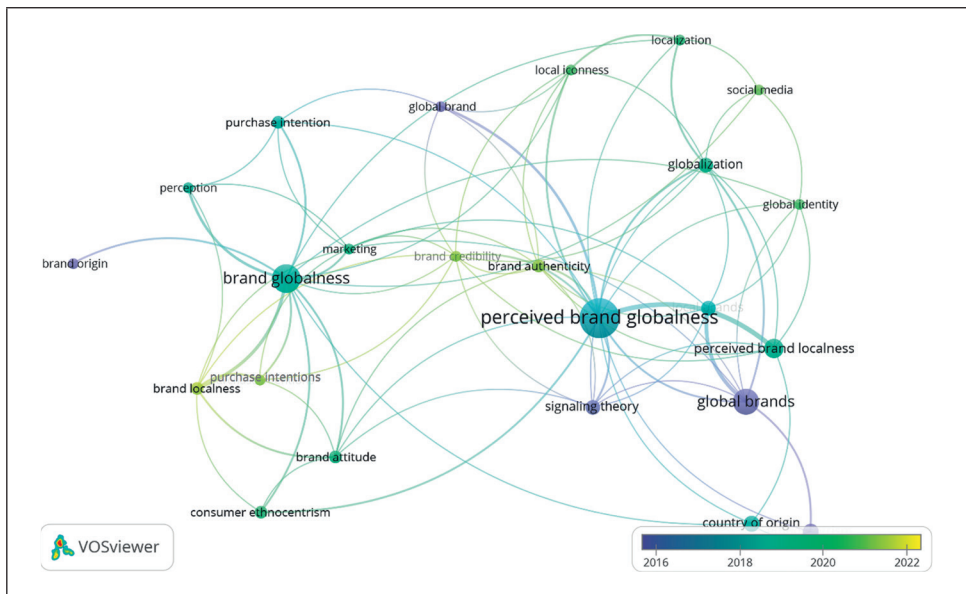

Fig. 4. Keyword Link Intensity Map with Overlay Visualisation
Source: the authors.

As can be seen in Figure 4, individual keywords take on a certain colour depending on the year of publication. In the example under analysis, the purple and blue colours indicate the oldest publications, which mainly focus on the PBG phenomenon – "global brands", "perceived brand globalness", "global brand". Because research on PBG issues also considers moderating factors and preceding phenomena, the analysis includes publications devoted to "brand orgin" and

"signaling theory". Subsequently, the authors' research was extended to PBL (green), as indicated by the keywords "perceived brand localness" and "local brands". It can be concluded that the articles on PBL are more a part of broader considerations in the context of interaction with PBG. In contrast, the most recent research (marked in light green and yellow) is a continuation of research on PBL – keywords such as "local iconness" and "brand localness" appear in this area. It is worth noting that the area of research centered around "local iconness" is clearly distant from the rest of PBL research, perhaps suggesting different research approaches. In contrast, more recent research focuses on brand credibility, brand authenticity, attitudes and purchase intentions. At the same time, the first works to look at social media issues in the context of global/local brand identity are emerging.

4. Conclusions

A brand is a valuable corporate resource that is used today to create needs and influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Baran 2017, p. 9). Because one of the key challenges for companies operating in foreign markets is to create an optimal brand portfolio, positioning individual brands in both global and local dimensions is essential. This article was intended to present the current state of research on brand perceived globalness/locality. The results of our analysis allows us to formulate four important conclusions, which are presented below.

First, research on PBG/PBL issues is concentrated in five main areas: 1) brand value signaling, 2) PBG/PBL interaction, 3) PBG impact on purchase intentions, 4) PBL impact on purchase intentions, and 5) the effect of country of origin/consumer ethnocentrism on consumer preference for foreign (global) vs. domestic (local) brands. As many as two clusters (3 and 4) are focused on the impact of PBG/PBL on purchase intentions. According to a study by Steenkamp, Batra and Alden (2003), PBG is positively correlated with perceived brand quality and perceived brand prestige, which boost the likelihood of a purchase or purchase intentions. Numerous studies have confirmed these findings (Özsomer & Altaras 2008, Akram, Merunka & Shakaib Akram 2011, Xie, Batra & Peng 2015, Hussein & Hassan 2018). The interest in this topic is well understandable, as buyers' declared purchase intentions are among the most critical information used by marketing managers in assessing the effectiveness of marketing activities and forecasting future sales (Morwitz 2014).

Secondly, developing an intensity map (overlay visualisation) allowed us to observe and identify changing trends in PBG/PBL research. Initially, researchers' interest was focused on PBG, but then expanded to include PBL. Recent studies concern brand credibility, brand authenticity and their marketing consequences, i.e. attitude and purchase intention. In addition, the first academic papers have been written on the issue of social media in the context of the global/local brand. Moreover, as noted by Liu, Tsai and Tao (2020), in the initial phase, the authors treated

PBG as the opposite of PBL. Recent findings of researchers indicate that PBG is not the opposite of PBL, but these constructs can complement each other, which is even observed hybridisation of brands (Özsomer 2012). Through their involvement, global brands can fit into local tastes and modes of consumption.

Third, there has been a significant increase in the number of papers written about PBG/PBL issues in recent years, with more than half of the 81 articles we identified in the Scopus database published in the years 2019–2022. Of the 81, the majority addressed PBG, while those that looked at PBL tended to focus on the relationship between PBG and PBL. This may be an interesting direction for future research. The positive effects of PBL have already been observed in the literature. For example, Xie, Batra and Peng (2015) found that foreign retailers benefit more from PBG, and domestic retailers more from PBL. Mandler, Bartsch and Han (2020), on the other hand, suggest that in a globalised market (Germany), PBG is a much weaker signal of brand credibility than PBL; in a globalising market (South Korea), PBG and PBL are equally important. And Safeer *et al.* (2022) emphasise that both PBG and PBL positively influence perceptions of brand authenticity and attitudes toward the brand.

Fourth, regarding the number of published articles on PBG/PBL issues, three journals – *Journal of International Marketing*, *International Marketing Review* and *Journal of Business Research* – led the way, publishing over 40% of the PBG/PBL papers. The present article looks at the contemporary challenges for companies developing an optimal portfolio of brands (global vs. local). Indeed, over the past few decades, globalisation has been one of the most important forces shaping markets. Recent world events including the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and trade wars have slowed globalisation. Since buying behaviour changes demonstrably under the influence of socioeconomic factors, there is a need for further research to verify consumer preferences on global/local brand positioning.

5. Limitations and Further Research Directions

The research has several limitations. First, only publications included in the Scopus database were used in the bibliometric analysis. Although the Scopus database is commonly used in such analyses (Zema & Sulich 2022), the use of other databases, e.g. Web of Science or others, could have enriched the study with valuable research articles focused on PBG/PBL. Furthermore, only academic articles published in English were analysed (book chapters, reviews, and conference proceedings were excluded). Expanding the bibliometric analyses to include these forms could bring additional essential insights and enrich the literature review. Extending the bibliometric analysis to include literature published in Polish would also be helpful. This will be a challenging task, as the generation of linkage and

cluster maps using VOSviewer has limitations – for example, a single map can be generated from a single database. In addition, including articles written outside of English would involve the risk of duplicating keywords.

A critical finding of our research is that most articles are dedicated to PBG. In contrast, articles on PBL issues are less numerous and usually appear as part of a broader consideration of the relationship between PBG and PBL. Future research should look more closely at how brand localness can influence buyers, as research evidence suggests that local brands can also effectively attract consumer attention (Xie, Batra & Peng 2015, Mandler, Bartsch & Han 2020).

Most research on PBG/PBL focuses on brand value signaling, PBG/PBL interaction, the impact of PBG and PBL on purchase intentions, and the role that consumers' country of origin/ethnocentrism plays on consumer preference for foreign (global) vs. domestic (local) brands. Future research could be supplemented with other variables, such as consumer cosmopolitanism and brand loyalty, or include demographic factors such as age or place of residence. For instance, cosmopolitan consumers who are open to the world may prefer brands with foreign or global origins. Conversely, consumers living in urban areas with easy access to a wide range of foreign brands and an easier means of travelling abroad thanks to proximity to airports may show a higher preference for global brands. These lines of research may bring exciting insights to the discussion of PBG/PBL issues. In addition, purchasing behaviour changes under the influence of socioeconomic factors, so there is a need for further research to verify consumer preferences for global/local brand positioning. Indeed, as Moroz (2007) points out, success in building a brand's competitive advantage requires constantly responding to changes in the brand's environment

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