

## Social marketing - The evolution of studies in Brazil

### Marketing social - A evolução dos estudos no Brasil

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#### ABSTRACT

The social marketing is a topic that has been much discussed at the moment, gaining more and more prominence in the discussions among researchers of the subject. This is a subject that has caused many disagreements among marketing researchers. For this reason, the present research was carried out, whose objective is to identify the evolution of social marketing studies in Brazil. Therefore, was carried out this bibliometric study, using a quantitative approach and is characterized as a descriptive, empirical, longitudinal and non-probabilistic sample. The research, based on data collected in the ANPAD and SPELL databases, showed that studies on social marketing in Brazil are not still fully consolidated, requiring more exploration by the authors, given that the theme presents itself as an open field for new investigations. The results also point to the difficulty, on the part of the researchers in the subject, to carry out the methodological classification of their researches, which makes their comprehension and cataloging difficult. Unlike commercial marketing studies, which have evolved over the years, research on social marketing has stagnated in conceptual questions and in the search for an absolute definition for the theme, letting the wave of innovation pass that occurred.

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#### RESUMO

O marketing social é um tema que vem sendo muito discutido atualmente, ganhando cada vez mais destaque nas discussões entre os estudiosos do assunto. Trata-se de um assunto que tem causado muitas divergências entre os acadêmicos da área do marketing. Esse foi o motivo da realização da presente pesquisa, cujo objetivo foi identificar a evolução dos estudos sobre marketing social no Brasil. Para tanto, realizou-se este estudo bibliométrico que se utiliza de abordagem quantitativa e se caracteriza como pesquisa descritiva, de natureza empírica, com corte temporal longitudinal e amostra não probabilística. A pesquisa, realizada com base em dados coletados nas bases de dados ANPAD e SPELL, evidenciou que os estudos sobre marketing social no Brasil ainda não estão totalmente consolidados, carecendo de maior exploração por parte dos autores, haja vista que o tema se mostra como um campo aberto a novas investigações. Os resultados também apontam dificuldade, por parte dos pesquisadores no assunto, em realizar a classificação metodológica de suas pesquisas, o que dificulta sua compreensão e catalogação. Diferentemente do que aconteceu com os estudos sobre marketing comercial, que evoluíram ao longo dos anos, as pesquisas sobre marketing social se estagnaram em questionamentos conceituais e na busca de uma definição absoluta para o tema, deixando passar a onda de inovação que ocorria.

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**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Bibliometria; Estudos brasileiros; Marketing social.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In today's world, society's engagement in actions that seek the well-being of all are increasingly visible. This increase in achievements of programs aimed at the common good has been gaining more space in recent years, either by the intention of really helping others or simply by the fact that those who practice such an act may gain some advantage in the future by such achievement. The fact is that many of these actions are related to social marketing.

According to Silva, Minciotti and Gil (2013), social marketing was consolidated during the 70's as the application of marketing techniques to the planning and implementation of social causes, aiming at cognitive changes, value, behavior or action. According to these authors, social marketing can be understood as an approach that uses market knowledge and techniques, adapting them and placing them at the service of the promotion and diffusion of social innovations in search of the well-being of society.

In Brazil, it is possible to observe the frequent use by the media of the term social marketing to define the performance of companies with regard to social actions. It is becoming standard practice for companies to associate their name with social causes in order to improve their image with the public.

After several published studies on social marketing, we could see an increase in the use of marketing tools and techniques to influence behaviors with social objectives. The heart of the question remains who can and who cannot use social marketing, how to use it (ethics) and what can be called social marketing. It is a topic of great importance for society and that comes, day after day, consolidating as a current topic and interest of all.

In view of the importance of the social marketing theme, the present bibliometric study has the objective of ascertaining how the subject has been discussed by researchers over time, based on the articles of the National Association of Postgraduate and Research in Administration (ANPAD) and Scientific Periodicals Electronic Library (SPELL). With this, it will be possible to know the agenda of studies on social marketing in Brazil which the main researchers of the subject are. To do so, the following sections on marketing and society, the origin of social marketing, its general characteristics and its presence in Brazilian studies, are described in addition to explaining the applied methodology, the analysis and discussion of the results found in the study and also conclusions about what was presented.

## 2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This section is intended to address social marketing theory. The relationship between marketing and society, the emergence and main characteristics of social marketing and, finally, the presence of social marketing in Brazil will be discussed.

### 2.1 Marketing in society

The initial questions between marketing and society go back to the 1950s, when the mainstream marketing emphasized its managerial vision. It was there that Wiebe (1951) built the critique in which fraternity or rational thought could be negotiated as soap. The author's inference is that the strength of television at the time could motivate receptivity to social goals.

In the 1960s, events occurred that substantially altered American culture, such as baby-boomer growth, the Vietnam War, the consumer rights charter, and the Watergate scandal. These events led marketing scholars to question whether the American consumer model was socially acceptable and good.

Lazer (1969) emphasizes that marketing should not be limited to satisfying only the objectives of the company, but also, the opportunities of society in a comprehensive way. In this sense, consumers can develop beyond consumer needs, that is, in a holistic way. According to this author, social

marketing must assume the responsibilities of an institution of social control, aimed at influencing the lifestyle of people in favor of the wishes of society.

It is common for certain organizations to make use of their economic capacity to market themselves and broaden the consumer network through an intense advertising campaign. In these campaigns, the consumer is faced with the need to consume the product that was once divulged, associating it with success and social well-being. This occurs, for example, with consumers in constant exchanges of handsets, vehicles and others, without, many times, in fact, a real need.

The business environment sees greater and better results and traditional marketing proves to be an efficient tool for maximizing results. Therefore, the strength of marketing in obtaining financial results is noted. In this sense, Luck (1969) shows that marketing is in the market and that social well-being depends on the success of business activities and not on non-profit entities. However, several authors, such as Kotler and Levy (1969), advocate an extension of the concept of marketing, not limiting its application to the business environment.

In 1971, Kelley's editorial established a synergy with Lazer (1969) and emphasized that consumers have broader needs than those of immediate consumption, that is, they are concerned with societal well-being and business must, therefore, societal demands of changes in the environment. Following this reasoning, Kassarijian (1971) proposes to include the ecological issue in the marketing strategy to control emissions of polluting gases. From this perspective, we can mention, for example, campaigns aimed at preserving the environment, recovering rivers and lakes, endangered species, reducing pollution and the effects of gases such as CO<sub>2</sub> on the atmosphere, global warming, among others.

## 2.2 The emergence of social marketing

The precursors of social marketing were Kotler and Zaltman (1971). These authors were in favor of using marketing concepts to promote causes. The term social marketing is defined by them as the development of mechanisms to stimulate the acceptance of social ideas involving considerations of planning, pricing, communication and distribution of products and marketing research.

Social marketing should comprehend not just communication, but also marketing as a whole. It should not be derived from business activities, should not develop profit, but should have, as a perspective, social goals (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). With this, social marketing has begun to use information, tools and technique from marketing, such as market analysis, advertising, propaganda, public relations and press advertising, among others, not aimed at selling products and making profit, but at social well-being.

The use of commercial marketing techniques by social marketing can be observed, for example, in campaigns to prevent sexually transmissible diseases during carnival, and campaigns to prevent traffic accidents during festive periods. It is noted in these examples that the government, through analyzing the behavior of the population at certain times of the year, observed risk factors for the society. Given this, campaigns were promoted, which were publicized through advertising and propaganda, aimed at reducing the risks to society.

According to Lazer (1969), social marketing is a marketing area that aims at social gains by means of marketing concepts and techniques. It also consists in determining the consequences of marketing policies, actions and decisions. Luck (1974) uses the expression of "semantic forest", because he thinks that the Internet lacked social socialism or that what existed is only one of the impacts of marketing in society.

Social marketing can be seen as a marketing area with "micro" dimensions, which can be used by government agencies without perspective of profit, following a rule of how to proceed in executing it (Hunt, 1976).

Re-reading the concept of social marketing, Kotler and Roberto (1992) argue that social marketing aims to change behavior. On the other hand, Andreasen (1994) argues that companies with a profit-making purpose that practices actions for a better social well-being cannot be considered a social marketing activity.

Over the years and after several published studies on social marketing, it has been possible to see an increase in the use of marketing tools and techniques, such as the analysis of society's behavior, advertising and propaganda, to influence behaviors with social goals. The heart of the question remains who can and who cannot use social marketing, how to use it (ethics) and what can be called social marketing.

### 2.3 General characteristics of social marketing

In defining social marketing, Kotler and Zaltman (1971) aimed at ensuring the transition from traditional marketing to social marketing. The basic discussion for both authors in the 1970s was the possibility of articulating the marketing mix with social actions.

According to Mendes (2009), social marketing has the primary function of influencing changes in behavior and attitudes of people through the use of traditional marketing techniques. In this way, social marketing is observed from the knowledge of the behavior of individuals to the use of mass vehicles to promote content that stimulates such changes. Based on this, it is possible to verify the dimension proposed by social marketing and, consequently, the promotion of social objectives. In this perspective, all the knowledge of individuals is used in order to modify their beliefs, values and attitudes.

As Mendes (2009) points out, social marketing had already settled in the 1980s and the focus now would be the development of programs capable of articulating it with traditional marketing. As a result of this process, several models aimed at social campaigns have emerged, obtaining the most varied results, from the most positive to the most disastrous.

Social marketing is related to the social welfare of individuals and society. From the exposition by Kotler (1978) and Andreasen (2002), social marketing contributes with postures aimed at preventing harm and preserving actions considered positive for the good functioning of society.

In this sense, social marketing has its contribution concerning the promotion of health, education and the environment. With planned and coordinated attitudes, individuals can be attracted to certain social, environmental and other causes. For example, raising people's awareness that water consumption can rationally benefit future generations results in tangible and intangible gains.

According to Kotler (1978), Boone and Kurtz (1998) and Kotler and Armstrong (1998), there are four types of change, ranging from the easiest to the most complex. They are: "cognitive change," "change of action," "behavior change," and "change of value." According to Mendes (2009), it appears as a change more likely to provide changes in behavior the so-called "cognitive change" according to which the intention is to inform the population about a certain subject or idea. The "action change" seeks to induce a number of people to take a certain action (eg, to combat the dengue mosquito). At the third level is a "behavior change" that seeks to induce people to change certain aspects of their behavior towards their greater "well-being" (eg anti-alcohol campaigns). In the fourth and last level is the "change of value" that seeks to change the values and beliefs of a population.

Mendes (2009) also emphasizes that some of these changes are essential for the good development of society. It is emphasized that social marketing allows a variety of ways of knowing the behavior of individuals, finding, in this way, ways to promote the desired change. Based on the aforementioned argument, we have as examples the campaigns against alcohol and drugs that preach the possible problems caused by the consumption of these substances, alerting the population against the possible risks.

### 2.4 Social marketing in Brazil

In the last decades there have been numerous changes in the political, economic, social and cultural scenario of several countries, mainly due to globalization. In addition, the advancement of technology has contributed to increased competitiveness. People have also changed and have taken a different stance from companies for greater transparency and commitment to social well-being and the environment.

Brazil is a multicultural country and this miscegenation is explained by the influence of blacks, whites and Indians, that is, it is known as a racial triangle (Da Matta, 1981). Brazil is also a developing country and, due to this socioeconomic condition, there are great challenges to overcome.

Currently, the Brazilian population is more politicized, critical and with a more conscious attitude. According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Consumer Protection (IDEC) (2004), the consumer, besides the price and quality of the product / service, is also attentive to the most diverse aspects related to the behavior of companies, such as respect for human rights, labor rights, ethics, promotion of social welfare and respect for environmental preservation standards.

With this, the transparency of organizations in relation to these aspects is now observed by the consumer so that companies are evaluated and judged based on their actions towards society and the environment. Once organizations are committed to environmental and social issues, a number of benefits can be obtained, for example, by improving the organization's institutional image (IDEC, 2004).

In the 1980s, nonprofits emerged, establishing a partnership with private companies. In this perspective, private for-profit companies started to worry about social development with projects in several areas. Thus, it is necessary to mention social responsibility.

According to Carrol (1999), the concept of social responsibility has been constructed since the 1950s, but it was in the 1960s that the literature on social responsibility developed, so that the topic was discussed in a comparative way. Already in the 1970s, definitions on the subject became more specific, with alternative emphases such as corporate social responsibility, for example. In the 1980s there were fewer definitions for the subject, but more empirical research was observed. The 1990s were marked by the pressure of civil society to adopt a more responsible attitude towards society, with which social responsibility became a strategic issue for companies.

Social responsibility is defined by Ashley (2002) as an organization's commitment to affect society positively in relation to its goal. The concept of social responsibility in Brazil began to be used by companies in the 1990s.

According to the Ethos Institute (2015), companies that implement social responsibility can achieve various results, such as enriching the image of the institution and the brand, greater consumer loyalty, ability to recruit and maintain talent, flexibility and capacity adaptability and longevity. Egri et al. (2004) find it extremely important that there is a process that prioritizes and targets the preservation of the environment, cultural heritage, the promotion of human rights and the construction of an economically prosperous and socially just society. Richers (2000) calls for the expression community marketing, which would involve social, cultural and ecological marketing. According to the author, community marketing refers to what the individual values above the consumption of goods.

Finally, the fact is that Brazil is a continental country and possesses vast natural patrimony. Numerous efforts have been made to ensure environmental preservation and one of the ways to achieve this goal is through social and, above all, environmental responsibility. In this sense, social marketing finds its position within this contemporary Brazilian challenge. Thus, after a brief report of the theory that permeates the subject social marketing, the following are evidenced the methodological procedures that were used to carry out this research.

### 3 METHOD OF RESEARCH

The present study consists of a bibliometric survey. In this research, Borschiver and Guedes (2005) point out that it allows the mapping and generation of relevant information about the object of study through statistical and mathematical instruments. Machado (2007) defends the idea that bibliometry consists in the use of mathematical tools in the study of the production of means of communication as books, articles, among others.

Ribeiro, Moraes, Barros and Silva (2010) add that this technique provides a technical apparatus for quantitative analysis, allowing the reduction of imminent subjectivity to indexing and retrieval of information and the generation of knowledge in a certain subject area.



In this sense, it is believed that this methodology was the most adequate for the accomplishment of this study, since the objectives of both are in agreement with each other, that is, both bibliometrics and the present research aim to analyze how information and knowledge in a given subject has been produced and developed over time. In this case, the subject matter is social marketing in Brazil.

For this, this bibliometric study was characterized as a quantitative study of an empirical nature, carried out in two electronic databases: National Association of Postgraduate and Research in Administration (ANPAD) and Scientific Periodicals Electronic Library (SPELL). It also consisted of a descriptive survey, with longitudinal temporal cut and non-probabilistic statistical sampling. The choice of the ANPAD and SPELL databases was due to their relevance in the academic world and to the fact that they contain a large number of articles published in their databases, produced by the most diverse authors, dealing with subjects of different natures and using diverse methodological procedures.

It should be noted that the articles found on the ANPAD website consist of articles presented in four different congresses (3E's, EMA, EnANPAD, EnAPG), and the articles found on the SPELL website are those published in several academic journals in the area of administration and marketing. Thus, some articles were found in both sites, however they were computed twice, since they were published twice in different ways (in congress and in magazine).

Therefore, the study consisted in the search for articles published with the theme of Social Marketing on the ANPAD websites ([www.anpad.org.br](http://www.anpad.org.br)) and in the SPELL database ([www.spell.org.br](http://www.spell.org.br)). For the accomplishment of the search the terms "social marketing" and "*marketing social*" (in Portuguese) were typed in the search fields of both sites. Only articles published between the years 2006 and 2015 were selected. After selecting the articles found within the proposed filters, they were analyzed under the following aspects: a) year of presentation; b) language of publication; c) number of authors; d) type of study (theoretical, empirical or theoretical-empirical); (e) the approach used (qualitative, quantitative or qualitative); f) classification as to means (field research, laboratory research, telematics, documentary, bibliographic, experimental, ex post facto, participant research, action research, case study); g) classification for purposes (exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, methodological, applied, interventionist); h) theme of the article.

The choice of aspects to be analyzed was based on the data collection instrument used in the study by Ribeiro et al. (2010). This instrument was used as reference because it is believed that it contemplates the analysis of the most relevant aspects regarding the evolution and quality of studies in a given subject.

It should be noted that, unlike the study by Ribeiro et al. (2010), in the present research, the analysis that refer to the temporal cut and also to the type of sample used were not performed. This exclusion was due to the fact that most of the articles checked do not mention the moments in which the data were collected, thus, there is no way to identify whether the temporal cut is transverse or longitudinal. Nor is the way of choosing the sample mentioned, making it impossible to identify its type (simple random, systematic, stratified, conglomerate, non-probabilistic).

In order to carry out the classification of the analyzed articles regarding the means and ends, the definitions of the methodological procedures established by Vergara (2003) were used as references, considering that this work defines them in a clear and objective way, facilitating the research framework. Moreover, it is believed that the main methodological classifications of research are addressed by the author.

Thus, in this topic it was possible to describe the methods and the criteria used in the accomplishment of the present research. The results and discussions will be presented after the analysis above mentioned.

#### 4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This section discusses the main findings in the analysis of articles on social marketing found in ANPAD and SPELL databases.

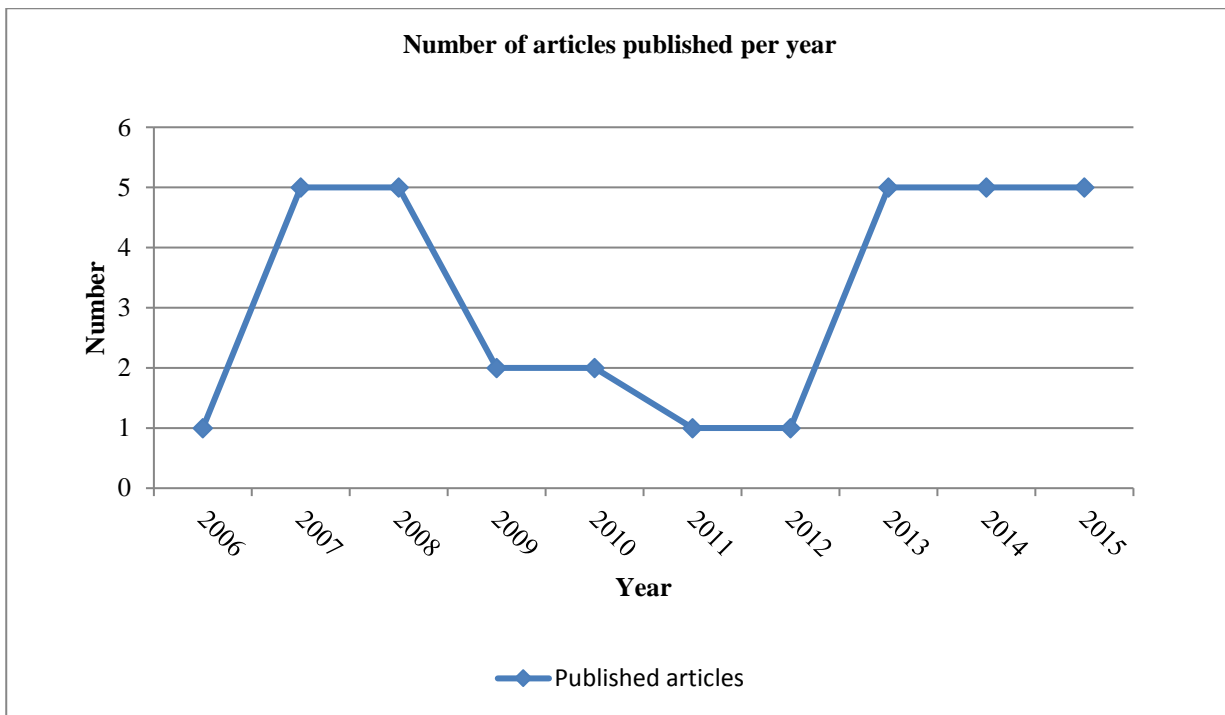
After searching the two electronic databases, 32 articles were selected. There are 18 found in the SPELL database and 14 in the ANPAD database. These articles were presented in 18 different publication media, between congresses and journals, showing that social marketing is a topic that has been widely diffused in the academic world, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** - Number of articles published by congresses and journals

Data base	Congress and periodical literature	Number of publications	Percentage (%)	
ANPAD	3E's	1	3,125	
	EMA	4	12,5	
	EnANPAD	7	21,875	
	EnAPG	2	6,25	
	Administração Pública e Gestão Social	2	6,25	
	Caderno Profissional de Administração da UNIMEP	1	3,125	
	Desenvolvimento em Questão	1	3,125	
	Gestão e Sociedade	1	3,125	
	Revista Alcance	1	3,125	
	Revista Brasileira de Estratégia	1	3,125	
SPELL	Revista Brasileira de Marketing	4	12,5	
	Revista Capital Científico Eletrônica	1	3,125	
	Revista de Administração de Empresas	1	3,125	
	Revista de Administração e Inovação	1	3,125	
	Revista de Administração Pública	1	3,125	
	Revista de Ciências da Administração	1	3,125	
	Revista de Gestão de Tecnologia e Sistemas de Informação	1	3,125	
	Revista de Negócios	1	3,125	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: created by the authors.

Figure 1 shows the evolution of the number of articles in social marketing published in the last ten years. It can be seen that there was an evolution from 2006 to 2007, however, since then, there was a drop in production in the following years, and a new growth was only observed from 2012 to 2013, from there the number of publications stagnated. We observed that, in the years of 2011 and 2012, less publications occurred, one in each year. On the other hand, the years 2007, 2008, 2013, 2014 and 2015 presented the maximum number of publications, totaling five articles per year. The greatest fluctuations from year to year were between the years of 2006 and 2007 and also between the years of 2012 and 2013.



**Figure 1** – Number of articles published per year  
Source: created by the authors.

Regarding the language of publication of the articles, we observed that, of the 32 articles analyzed, 31 were published in Portuguese and only one was published in English. International studies on social marketing have not been presented in Brazil, as shown in Table 2. It would be interesting to note the greater presence of foreign studies in Brazil, because in this manner there would be greater approximation between national and international researchers, which, in turn, would contribute to the advancement of investigations into the subject. Moreover, a closer relationship between authors from different parts of the world could contribute to the mitigation of divergences that still exists in relation to the theme of social marketing.

**Table 2** - Languages of publications

Language	Number of publications	Percentage (%)
Portuguese	31	96,875
English	1	3,125
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: created by the authors.

Regarding the authors of the studies analyzed, Table 3 shows the predominance of collective authorships, that is, most articles have more than one author. Only two articles were written by only one person. Two were performed by five individuals. The others were made by two, three or four researchers.

**Table 3** - Number of authors per publication

Number of authors per article	Number of publications	Percentage (%)
1	2	6,25
2	18	56,25
3	3	9,375
4	7	21,875
5	2	6,25
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: created by the authors.



It should be noted that 60 different authors were counted, whose names appeared 85 times. Table 4 shows the number of publications per author, especially Francisco Giovanni David Vieira, with seven publications and Agnaldo Keiti Higuchi, with six publications. These were the authors with the most publications among the articles selected, evidencing a very productive partnership between the two, since five publications presented their names concomitantly.

**Table 4** - Number of publications per author

Author	Number of publications	Percentage (%)
Francisco Giovanni David Vieira	7	8,24
Agnaldo Keiti Higuchi	6	7,06
Édson Coutinho da Silva	4	4,71
Patrícia Soares Azoline Corrêa	3	3,53
Ricardo Teixeira Veiga	3	3,53
Ane Grazielle Gomes de Freitas	2	2,35
Caissa Veloso e Sousa	2	2,35
Daniel Carvalho de Rezende	2	2,35
Fernando Bins Luce	2	2,35
Gustavo Schneider	2	2,35
Rosemeri Schneider de Oliveira	2	2,35
Sílvio Augusto Minciotti	2	2,35
Autores com somente um artigo publicado	48	56,47
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: created by the authors.

It should be pointed out that the authors, at the time of publication, belonged to the most diverse institutions, but it was not possible to carry out a more detailed analysis of these institutions because, in many articles, this information was not made available. was not presented in this study, in addition, it was observed that, in some cases, there was alternation of researchers between institutions.

With regard to the types of research used, as shown in Table 5, we can observe the predominance of the empirical studies on the theoretical ones. We computed 21 empirical articles against 11 theoretical publications.

**Table 5** - Distribution of study types

Study type	Number of publications	Percentage (%)
Empirical	21	65,62
Theoretical	11	34,38
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: created by the authors.

It is important to emphasize that the analysis regarding the approaches used, the classifications of the studies how much to the means and also the classifications regarding the ends were only realized in those articles whose type of study was used the empirical one. For the accomplishment of the framework, the topic of the methodological aspects of each of the selected articles was analyzed.

Regarding the approaches used, the researchers preferred the qualitative approach, since it was used in most articles analyzed. We highlight the four studies found using the quali-quantitative approach. These studies highlight the importance of triangulation (blend of approaches) and reinforce the idea of complementarity between qualitative and quantitative approaches. Table 6 discusses how the approaches were distributed among the objects of analysis.

**Table 6** - Distribution of methodological approaches

Approach	Number of publications	Percentage (%)
Qualitative	11	52,38
Quantitative	6	28,57
Quali-quant	4	19,04
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: created by the authors.

Regarding the classification of the researches regarding the means, it was observed the predominance of the case study and of the field research. According to Vergara (2003), the case study consists of deep and detailed study, limited to one or a few units (people, families, products, companies and even a country). On the other hand, the field research, according to the same author, refers to an empirical investigation carried out in the place of occurrence of the phenomenon to be studied.

It should be noted that, due to the fact that the classifications of the means are not exclusive, certain studies analyzed were classified by their authors as to means in more than one methodology. However, for the purposes of this research, it was chosen to fit them into only one type. Therefore, those articles that were classified in more than one methodological modality, by the authors themselves, in this research, were framed in only one type, being chosen that technique predominant in the research, which makes a closer approach of its objective.

However, it is necessary to inform about the other modalities mentioned by the authors found in the analysis, being: bibliographic research, documentary research and survey. These modalities did not appear in the statistics of this research because it was believed that they were only used as a complementary form in the articles analyzed and were therefore not characterized as the predominant type of research in these studies. In this way, the classification of the researches regarding the means, is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7** - Classification of means

Classification of means	Number of publications	Percentage (%)
Case study	12	57,14
Experimental	1	4,76
Field research	7	33,33
Telematics	1	4,76
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: created by the authors.

Regarding the classification for the purposes, a situation similar to the one verified in the classification regarding the means was observed, that is, certain studies were framed by its authors in more than one methodological modality. Therefore, in the present research, such studies were classified only in that methodology predominant in the article, which makes a closer approach of its objective.

This fact, as evidenced in Table 8, was verified the presence of only two types of research: descriptive and experimental. The preference of the social marketing researchers in Brazil for the descriptive research (71.43% of the empirical researches) was verified, which, according to Vergara (2003), does not care to explain how or why a certain phenomenon happens, but only in describe its characteristics.

**Table 8** - Classification as to purposes

Classification as to purposes	Number of publications	Percentage (%)
Descriptive	15	71,43
Experimental	6	28,57
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: created by the authors.

In this context, it is important to note that, in many of the articles analyzed, the authors did not classify the purposes and the means by their authors, thus, for the purposes of this research, in these articles, this classification was performed based on the analysis of its elements, such as the objective, the theoretical reference and the way the data were analyzed.

In relation to the themes addressed in the articles, to analyze them, six groups were created, which cover all the issues encountered. Figure 2 shows the theme groups created and the themes covered by them.

Thematic Groups	Coverage
Environmental	It addresses the influence of social marketing on environmental issues.
Social and Business marketing	It includes relationships and comparisons between social marketing and for-profit companies, highlighting the influence of social marketing on the image and the promotion of these companies.
Social marketing in third sector	It discusses innovations and the influence of social marketing on third sector organizations.
Origin, history and concepts	It discusses the origins of social marketing, makes an account of what has been studied on the subject up to now (state of the art) and defines the concepts of social marketing, differentiating it from other themes related to marketing and society.
Social marketing practices	Describes ways to use social marketing.
Health	It addresses the influence of social marketing on issues related to people's health.

**Figure 2** – Thematic Groups  
Source: created by the authors.

From the establishment of thematic groups, it was possible to carry out the framing of the articles analyzed according to the subject addressed in each one of them, thus, the distribution of articles by topics addressed is evidenced in Table 9, which reveals that health is a a topic of great interest on the part of researchers in social marketing, as well as the conceptualization and study of the evolution of social marketing over time.

**Table 9** - Classification for purposes

Thematic Group	Number of publications	Percentage (%)
Environmental	4	12,5
Social and business marketing	6	18,75
Social marketing in third sector	2	6,25
Origin, history and concepts	8	25,0
Social marketing practices	4	12,5
Health	8	25,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: created by the authors.

It should be noted, therefore, that the use of social marketing in the analyzed articles is in accordance with the promotion of social causes, defended by Kotler and Zaltman (1971), considering the considerable number of studies whose main theme was health and to the environment. This finding is also in line with the one established by Kassarijan (1971), which proposes the inclusion of ecological issues in the marketing strategy.

Moreover, the expressive amount of theoretical articles dealing with the origin, history, and concept of social marketing ratifies the thinking of Spotswood, French, Tapp, & Stead (2012) and Schneider & Luce (2014), that while commercial marketing has evolved in recent years studying consumer behavior, social marketing has stagnated in conceptual questions and in the search for an absolute definition, letting go of the wave of innovation that occurred.

In this section, it was possible to identify a panorama of how social marketing studies have behaved in Brazil during the last ten years, being verified the number of published studies, their means of publication, their authorship, methodological classifications and the topics addressed. It was also

possible to notice that studies on social marketing in Brazil are predominantly published in Portuguese, most of them have more than one author, most studies are empirical, use a qualitative approach, case study and field research, and characterized as descriptive. The main themes covered in these studies refer to the influence of social marketing on issues related to the health of the person and also in the discussion about the origins of social marketing and the definition of its concepts.

The final considerations on the information found will be presented below.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the results obtained, it is possible to say that the study in social marketing in Brazil is not yet fully consolidated. Although Schneider & Luce (2014) state that social marketing arose more than 40 years ago in 1971 with Kotler & Zaltman; already maturing in an international context, to the point where it falls outside the mainstream of marketing and has a specific infrastructure, with magazines, congresses, symposia, courses and even specific research institutes for social marketing (also in international level), it is possible to perceive that, in contrast to what happens in other parts of the world, in Brazil, studies in the area are still few, especially if compared to the number of studies related to marketing in general. However, in spite of the few studies, the existence of a network among Brazilian researchers has been observed, since articles of certain authors have been frequently observed, being referenced by other researchers, either by convergence or divergence of thoughts.

The considerable number of researchers found, at first, can convey the idea of many researches, however, the high index of collective authors evidences that the number of publications found in the analyzed period is low when compared to the amount of studies produced on the commercial marketing. In the same sense, the various means of publication where social marketing studies were found suggest a high index of publications, however, the fact that there are few publications in a magazine or congress, contradicts this idea and allows to say that social marketing is a promising theme, but which can still be better explored by Brazilian researchers.

With regard to the methodological procedures used, the predominance of qualitative studies shows the subjective character of social marketing. Researchers are more concerned with understanding subjective social marketing than statistically. There was also a shortage of explanatory and exploratory studies, signaling that the researchers in the subject are not trying to explain or unveil new phenomena related to social marketing, but only to describe those phenomena already known.

The lack of clarity or even the lack of methodological classification in some studies indicates the difficulty of the researchers or even the lack of attention of some to this classification, which, in turn, causes difficulty in the cataloging and interpretation of their research.

Finally, it is believed that the objective of this study was reached. Among its main contributions is the identification of the panorama of studies on social marketing in Brazil and the main Brazilian researchers, as well as the main themes addressed in social marketing by these authors. The research also contributes to the enrichment of the collection on social marketing studies, and may even stimulate and serve as a basis for other studies.

The main limitations of the present study are precisely the lack of clarity in the classification of the studies analyzed, which may have compromised its framework in this research and, consequently, influenced its final result, as well as the fact that only two databases were used in the research.

In view of the above, it is suggested to carry out new bibliometric surveys on social marketing, taking databases different from those used in this study, as reference in order to know more about the panorama of social marketing studies in Brazil. It is also suggested to carry out similar research in other countries in order to compare how studies on social marketing have been behaving in other parts of the world. With this, it will be possible to draw a parallel between national and foreign studies.

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