Global Marketing Research: Gains, Gaps, and Guardrails

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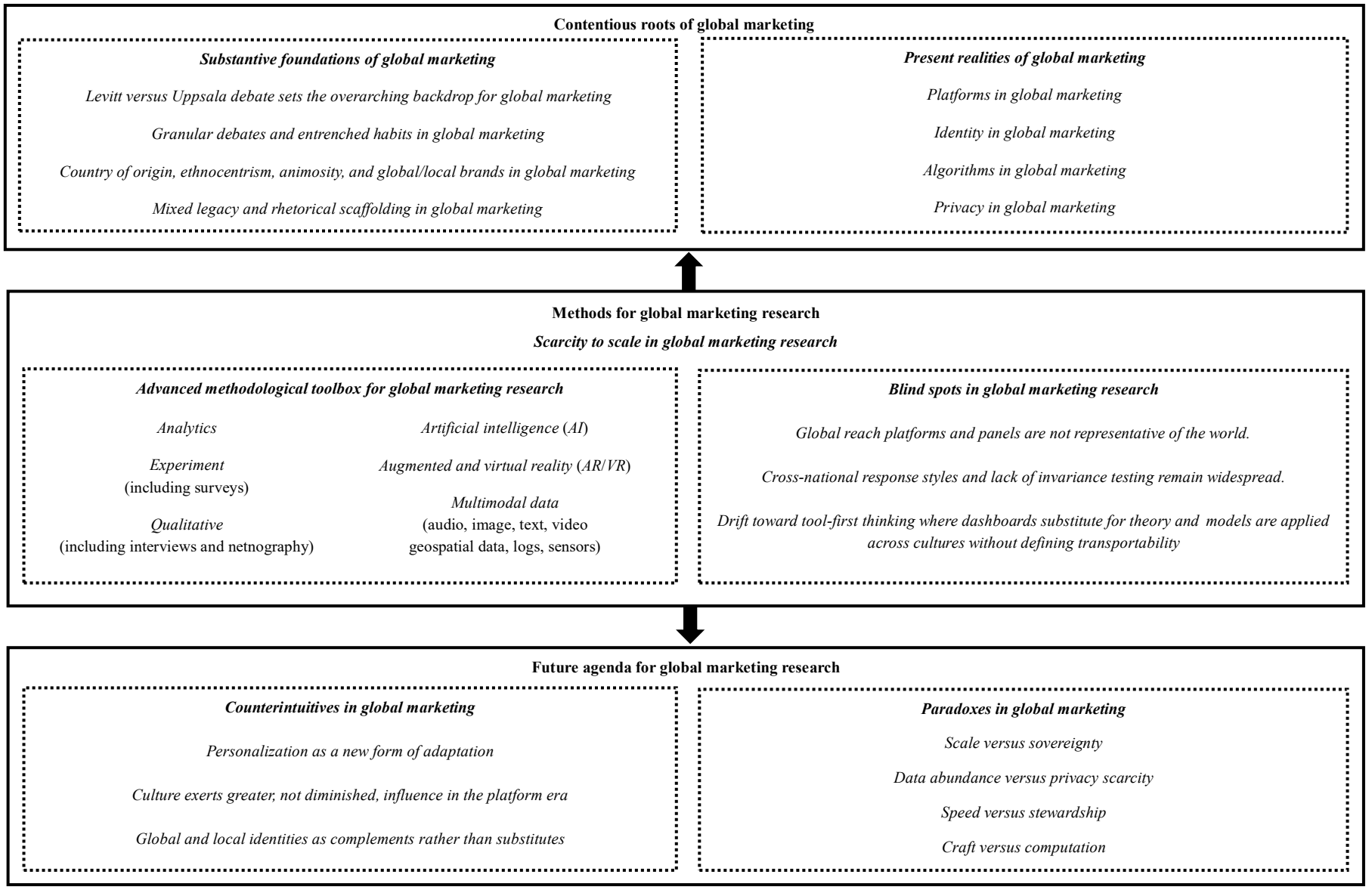
Graphical abstract



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Abstract

Global marketing research has grown up arguing with itself about standardization versus adaptation, global versus local brands, culture as constraint versus culture as resource, and methods that generalize across markets versus those that do not. While these arguments have advanced the field, they have also fostered settled habits of thinking. In response, this editorial takes a deliberately critical stance in its narrative review that revisits the field's familiar arguments and default assumptions in order to highlight where accepted wisdom is fragile and to propose a forward agenda. To this end, the *Journal of Global Marketing* is inarguably the right venue for this conversation, as its mission is to advance research that addresses international marketing challenges and strategies worldwide.

Keywords

Global marketing, International marketing, Globalization, Localization, Standardization

1. Introduction

Early global marketing thinking encouraged marketers to imagine a converging world, as Theodore Levitt (1983) seminally argued that technology would pull demand into common shapes and reward standardized offerings at scale, thereby catalyzing a generation of research on cross-border brand building (Quelch & Deshpande, 2004), product policy (Kotabe, 1990), and the cost versus quality trade-offs of global scope (Fawcett et al., 2000), which, in turn, set the stage for debates for decades to come. Yet, the most useful legacy of Levitt (1983) is, arguably, not the prediction of convergence but, rather, the invitation to take technology as a force that pushes demand toward convergence across markets and, by implication, to keep reassessing how new technologies reconfigure differences as much as similarities. Subsequent research largely embraced the first half of that invitation, as reflected in reviews that treat globalization and technology as forces driving cross-market demand convergence (e.g., Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2003), while the second half has remained underdeveloped, with recent reviews still pointing to fragmented evidence on how digital technologies reshape heterogeneity across markets (e.g., Silva et al., 2024).

While Levitt's (1983) convergence logic treated globalization and technology as forces that smooth out demand across countries, the process views of internationalization started from cross-market differences and experiential learning (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977, 2009). The Uppsala internationalization process model (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977), in particular, cast foreign expansion as an incremental learning process in which firms build experiential knowledge in psychically closer markets and then deepen their commitments as uncertainty falls, and its revised model three decades later shifted attention to network positions and the liability of "outsidership" (i.e., lacking an insider position in relevant business networks) (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009), a move that brought market structure and relationships to the center, as access to foreign opportunities and the ability to reduce uncertainty are now treated as contingent on network membership and position. Hence, if Levitt (1983) put technology on the demand side, Uppsala put relationships on the supply side (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977, 2009), and both, arguably, are indispensable. However, neither tradition anticipated how digitally mediated markets would make "distance" (i.e., perceived differences and frictions between home and foreign markets) multi-dimensional in new ways (e.g., algorithmic, cultural, logistical, regulatory), each with different elasticities to firm action, a shift that demands a stronger theory of contingency in global marketing.

Against this overarching backdrop, the present editorial takes a deliberately critical stance toward global marketing research. The aim is to revisit familiar arguments and default oppositions in order to ask what they got right, where they misled, and how they now sit in markets that are digitally mediated, privacy constrained, and identity saturated. The discussion first traces how the field's contentious roots shaped its core debates, then examines how present-day platform, identity, and regulatory realities complicate those debates, and, finally, evaluates the methodological gains and blind spots that define current practice. The goal throughout is to move from describing tensions to specifying when and how global marketing research can offer theory and tools that remain credible across countries rather than only within a narrow band of markets.

2. Contentious roots of global marketing

2.1. Global marketing was (historically) born in a fight

From the start, global marketing's central quarrel of "whether firms should standardize or adapt" has never fit the complexity of markets. Levitt's (1983) clarion call for globally standardized offerings in his article on the globalization of markets remains the line we love to quote, if only to knock down. While Levitt (1983) saw converging preferences and scale economies pushing firms to sameness across borders, the immediate and enduring rebuttal was that his generalization was both empirically thin and managerially naïve. Douglas and Wind's (1987) work on the myth of globalization, in particular, argued that heterogeneity, infrastructure, and institutional realities made simplistic standardization as likely to destroy value as to create it. Therefore, the field's first major normative debate was anchored in a convenient simplification of globalization rather than its messy reality.

The next wave tried to settle the fight with framework.[1] Zou and Cavusgil's (2002) conceptualization of global marketing strategy made an important move to stop treating standardization and adaptation as mutually exclusive ends and theorize the configuration–coordination–integration of marketing activities across countries. That reframe, where global marketing is approached as an alignment problem spanning what to standardize, what to adapt, and how to coordinate, remains one of the most useful integrative lenses we have. Yet even here, outcome evidence proved slippery, as meta-reviews and integrative assessments repeatedly documented mixed, contradictory, and context-contingent links between standardization choices and performance (Szymanski et al., 1993; Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2003). The upshot, therefore, is a double lesson that the old dichotomy is inadequate and that the contingencies that matter for performance remain stubbornly resistant to generalization.

Consumer research further pushed the envelope. Work on cross-national segmentation, measurement invariance, and response styles raised the bar for what counted as credible evidence. Steenkamp and Baumgartner's (1998) piece on measurement invariance and Baumgartner and Steenkamp's (2001) work on response styles disciplined cross-country claims by making it unacceptable to compare constructs across nations without first establishing that the measurement instrument (e.g., questionnaire) functions equivalently across them. This shift was not methods for methods' sake but, rather, the methodological groundwork for serious cross-national theory.

Equally formative were streams on country of origin, ethnocentrism, and animosity to explain brand globalness. Verlegh and Steenkamp's (1999) meta-analysis, for instance, showed that the general country-of-origin signal has a stronger impact on perceived product quality than on purchase intention, a reminder not to overclaim what an origin label can do, while a more recent meta-analysis that decomposes country of origin into country of brand, design, manufacture, and parts finds that these

[1] See Lim (2026b) on theory and theory development, where framework (or model) theory is a part thereof.

partitioned cues jointly exert a moderate positive effect on consumer behavior and influence purchase intention more strongly than brand or product evaluations, with country of brand emerging as the most influential component (De Nisco & Oduro, 2022). Meta-analytic work on consumer ethnocentrism similarly shows that ethnocentric tendencies systematically raise domestic product judgments and willingness to buy while lowering judgments of foreign products, with effect sizes conditioned by cultural context, economic development, and sample characteristics (Guo & Zhou, 2017), and that levels of consumer ethnocentrism themselves are a near-universal phenomenon shaped by culture and by the interaction of economic and ethnic diversity rather than by globalization or economic threat alone (Balabanis & Siamagka, 2022). Parallel evidence on animosity comes from Klein et al.'s (1998) animosity model of foreign product purchase, which, unlike Shimp and Sharma's (1987) CETSCALE (consumer ethnocentrism scale construction and validation), shows that hostility toward a specific country reduces willingness to buy its products independently of perceived product quality, as well as from a meta-analytic integration that documents a negative association between consumer animosity and product quality judgments and shows that animosity reduces willingness to buy and actual buying both directly and indirectly through quality perceptions (Shoham et al., 2016). This body of work, in turn, has moved global marketing beyond simple "Made in ___" effects and toward a layered account in which country cues, moral obligations to support domestic products, and grievances against specific nations shape brand choice through distinct pathways.

Where earlier work treated national cues as properties of countries, branding research examined how "global" and "local" could be built into brands themselves. Alden et al.'s (1999) seminal work on global consumer culture positioning showed that "globalness" itself can be marketed while subsequent studies charted the joint, and often antagonistic, roles of perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness. Steenkamp and De Jong (2010), in particular, demonstrated that attitudes toward global and local products are not the two ends of a single stick, since consumers can, and often do, favor both, which undercuts the common assumption that global identity necessarily cannibalizes local preference.

These classical streams leave a mixed legacy. On the one hand, they taught the field to value contingency, to respect measurement, and to treat identity and meaning as the main drivers of cross-country outcomes. On the other hand, they entrenched habits of thinking in paired opposites. Reviews on global marketing strategy still organizes inquiry under the heading of "standardization versus adaptation" and treats this as a central way of reviewing the literature, even as they conclude that findings are contradictory and fragmented (Eze et al., 2024; Mandler et al., 2021). Recent work argues that this long-standing dualism frames global marketing strategy as a trade-off when, in practice, standardization and adaptation are constituted in the pursuit of relational fit across markets (Poulis, 2024). Global and local brand research likewise continues to structure systematic reviews around global and local brands as the primary categories for organizing results (Rodrigues et al., 2024) and publishes focal studies that position evaluation problems as "global versus local brands" even while showing that evaluations hinge on home-country bias and price thresholds rather than a simple global–local split (Winit et al., 2014). Globalization and consumer behavior scholarship similarly remains anchored in convergence–divergence narratives, with recent work proposing a comprehensive framework for the global convergence of consumer spending grounded in convergence–divergence–crossvergence theory (Ozturk & Cavusgil, 2019) and parallel contributions warning that stories of a unified global consumer culture can become "fairy tales" in a polarizing world (de Mooij, 2019) and that the future trajectory of globalization and global brands is uncertain (Steenkamp, 2019). The paradox, therefore, is that the accumulated evidence already points beyond simple toggles and toward configurations (interactions), yet the rhetorical scaffolding of global marketing still invites scholars to take sides instead of theorizing how these forces work together.

2.2. Present-day realities that complicate global marketing

Global markets in the 21st century are mediated to a significant degree by digital platforms, which now serve as key venues for cross-border interaction and value creation (Mandler et al., 2024; Nambisan et al., 2019), rather than by mass, one-to-many broadcast media (e.g., print, radio, television) (Herrera, 2008) and organized (national) retail systems (Shin, 2020; Wortmann, 2011) that structured global marketing in the late 20th century. Global audiences today, therefore, have become individually addressable at scale, where creative and media execution are continuously tuned by algorithms in artificial intelligence (AI) enabled (Ford et al., 2023), data-driven (Akter et al., 2021), and programmatic advertising (Ciuchita et al., 2023) and rule-making power now sits not only with states but also with digital platform firms whose governance decisions and market power shape cross-border frictions and regulatory responses (Gawer & Bonina, 2024; Meyer et al., 2023). Against this backdrop, three present-day realities matter for global marketing research.

First and foremost, identity in global consumption is now multi-level and hybrid rather than simply "global versus local." Steenkamp and De Jong's (2010) global investigation shows that attitudes toward global products and attitudes toward local products are distinct constructs that are only moderately related and have different value-based antecedents and consequences, which means consumer orientation is a portfolio rather than a single axis. Özsomer's (2012) closer look at perceived brand globalness and local iconness further demonstrates that perceived brand globalness can move with or against local cultural meaning, since globalness and local iconness are positively related in an emerging market and negatively related in advanced markets. A systematic review of perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness then synthesizes this literature and argues that perceived brand globalness should be conceptualized as combining both perceived wide market reach and global symbolism and that research needs to engage explicitly with hybridization and glocalization rather than treat global and local as opposites (Liu et al., 2021). Most recently, work on revising perceived brand globalness proposes an extended conceptualization that adds a distinct global brand symbolism dimension beyond broad market reach and shows empirically that this symbolic layer is central to how consumers experience globalness (Jadach & Tłuczak, 2025). These contributions, in turn, point to identity constellations that combine global, local, and hybrid symbolic meanings, which for global marketing research implies that perceived brand globalness, perceived brand localness, and their cultural symbolism should be modelled as interacting layers rather than as a simple global–local switch.

Next, algorithms are not neutral to identity. Lambrecht and Tucker's (2019) study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) career ads, which ran the same gender-neutral campaign across 191 countries on a major social media platform, found that men received about 20% more ad impressions than women even though the ad was targeted equally at both genders and women were at least as likely to click when they did see it. The skew arose because younger women were a more expensive audience to reach and the ad-delivery algorithm optimized cost-effectiveness, so a campaign intended to be neutral produced systematically unequal exposure along gender lines that could not be explained by cross-country differences in gender inequality or interest in STEM (Lambrecht & Tucker, 2019). Related audit evidence on Facebook shows that ad-delivery optimization can generate significant skew in who sees employment and housing ads along gender and racial lines, even under neutral targeting parameters (Ali et al., 2019). Hence, even when advertisers specify inclusive audiences, platform optimization can produce disparate reach across identities. This shift has a direct implication for global marketing research, wherein part of what used to be conceptualized as cultural segmentation now occurs inside platform mechanics, since exposure patterns emerge from the interaction of algorithms, bidding environments, and local market conditions rather than only from

explicit segmentation decisions. The task for global marketing research is, therefore, to explain when and why these algorithmic equilibria amplify or dampen identity-based differences across countries.

Last but not least, privacy rules are now part of the marketing production function. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a comprehensive European Union (EU) regulation that harmonizes data protection law across member states and sets strict requirements for how organizations collect, process, store, and transfer personal data of individuals in the EU and European Economic Area (EEA) (Wörsdörfer, 2024). In this regard, GDPR altered data-sharing architectures, not just firm incentives, with evidence from *Marketing Science* and *Management Science* showing that websites reduced their use of third-party web technology providers (Peukert et al., 2022) and that market concentration in web technology and data-vendor markets increased, with large vendors losing relatively less and gaining share (Johnson et al., 2023). That is to say, if regulation changes *who* can target *whom* across *which* sites, cross-country differences in privacy regimes belong in the theory, not only in the backdrop of context, wherein context, in this sense, is a source of theoretical leverage rather than a footnote, since comparative work can abstract principles from contextual variation and use them to refine and extend theory (Venkatesh, 2025).

3. From scarcity to scale in methods for global marketing research

Early work relied on ethnographies, individual interviews, focus groups, and surveys, often fielded in a small set of developed markets where access and budgets allowed (Donthu et al., 2021). Computational limits and scarce data constrained ambition and, in many cases, enforced groundedness, so that the most careful efforts blended qualitative depth with quantitative checks (Hanson & Grimmer, 2007). As firms expanded from the late 1980s through the early 2000s, projects reached more emerging markets and confronted language diversity, with translation and equivalence problems flagged as central methodological challenges in cross-cultural marketing research (Malhotra et al., 1996; Steenkamp, 2001), unreliable and sometimes outdated official statistics and sampling frames in many less-developed countries (Malhotra et al., 1996), and rural access problems such as poor road infrastructure and limited transport that constrained access to markets and respondents in rural areas (Magesa et al., 2014, 2020), and thus, in the process, learned the hard way that insights that arrive late are not insights at all, a lesson that fueled the appetite for the digital methods that followed.

The present toolkit emerged to meet those pressures. Cloud data pipelines (e.g., Amazon Web Services, Google Cloud, Snowflake; Anitha et al., 2025), online survey platforms (e.g., Amazon MTurk, Prolific, Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey; Kumar, 2024), and social listening systems (e.g., Brandwatch, Talkwalker; Dahish et al., 2025) now make it feasible to field instruments across dozens of countries in days and to mine streams of user content for sentiment, topics, and trends. Text mining has also emerged as a mainstream capability in marketing, with clear guidance on how to transform natural language into measures and how to validate them for prediction and explanation (Herhausen et al., 2025). Used well, the upside is clear: wider cross-country reach at lower marginal cost and more opportunities to observe behavior as it unfolds rather than only through self-reports.

Yet, the global digital context both enables and distorts. Internet and social media use continue to grow in absolute terms, yet a large usage gap persists, and that gap is steepest where infrastructure and income constraints limit effective use even when coverage exists (Jamalova, 2024; Tsetsi & Rains, 2017; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2014). Non-probability online panels remain common and fast, but careful comparisons show that estimates from opt-in samples often diverge from those drawn from probability panels, both in point estimates and in the strength and sometimes direction of relationships between variables (Brüggen, 2016; Jäckle et al., 2024; Yeager et al., 2011). These facts matter for anyone tempted to generalize across countries or to claim global patterns from what is, in practice, a convenience frame. Therefore, while improved coverage and enhanced weighting are beneficial, they cannot salvage fundamentally flawed designs, as rigorous initial planning inarguably outperforms retrospective adjustments.

4. Reflections and ways forward

4.1. In relation to global marketing

A pragmatic way to chart the future of global marketing is to identify the counterintuitives and paradoxes that global marketers encounter and to investigate how they can be empirically tested rather than left as mere rhetoric (Lim, 2026b).

4.1.1. Counterintuitives in global marketing

Three counterintuitives in global marketing are arguably worth putting on the table for consideration.

A counterintuitive that is noteworthy is that *personalization represents a new form of adaptation*, which, under optimal conditions, can enhance returns to a standardized brand core by leveraging tools that localize messages without eroding shared identity. The tension here is that the very tools that localize messages more finely may strengthen the case for keeping the brand itself more standardized. Notably, work on international corporate social media already treats personalization as a third strand next to standardization and adaptation, with firms maintaining a common brand identity while varying content and interaction patterns across markets (Hatzithomas et al., 2016). Recent works of standardization versus adaptation further point out that digital marketing and platform tools push firms toward hybrid strategies, where a shared global brand platform is combined with localized executions (Eze et al., 2024), while AI-enabled personalization in advertising increasingly shows that tailoring content at the individual level raises perceived relevance and, through relevance, trust and perceived usefulness, strengthens engagement and purchase intention, including in emerging digital markets such as Vietnam (An & Ngo, 2025). These developments, in turn, signal an emerging pattern in which a standardized symbol set and promise provide the stable core while algorithmic systems personalize copy, creative executions, and placements around that core for specific people in specific places. The strategic problem for global marketing, therefore, becomes choosing which elements of identity, value proposition, and visual language must remain invariant so that personalization can do its work without eroding brand meaning.

Another counterintuitive is that *culture may matter more, not less, in the platform era*, wherein the puzzle is that the very infrastructures that claim to be borderless are learning and locking in cultural differences. While early optimism about global platforms assumed they would flatten differences (Levitt, 1983; Ozturk & Cavusgil, 2019), the evidence instead shows persistent and sometimes widening heterogeneity. A cross-cultural study of youth adoption of innovative digital marketing, for instance, finds that national cultures still play an important role in shaping how younger consumers perceive and use digital marketing tools and concludes that this role is especially pronounced in less industrialized and less technologically developed countries (Boustani & Chammaa, 2023). Work on digital marketing strategy across cultures in Southeast Asia similarly shows that algorithmic bias and local media structures shape which content is actually seen and that content integrating specific cultural elements such as local language, symbols, and values produces higher engagement and better marketing performance for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia and Malaysia (Mardatillah et al., 2025). Research on AI and big data in global marketing further warns of a "cultural blind spot" when global user-generated content is treated as a culturally monolithic resource and, in turn, proposes an AI-powered "cultural intelligence" framework that explicitly models how cultural values structure online expression and that improves predictive accuracy over culturally blind models (Lee, 2025). These insights, in turn, imply that platform algorithms learn from culturally structured behavior, so responses to the same nominal campaign are likely to diverge, not converge, across markets.

Global marketing research, therefore, needs designs that treat platform effects and culture as interacting forces rather than assuming that digital delivery naturally washes out context.

A further counterintuitive, and one that many marketers still resist, is that *global and local are complements more often than substitutes*. The intuitive view is that leaning into global identity must dilute local resonance, yet the empirical record points in the opposite direction. A global investigation into attitudes toward global and local products shows that attitudes toward global products and attitudes toward local products are distinct constructs, only moderately related, with different value-based drivers and consequences, which implies portfolio-like consumer orientations rather than a single global–local continuum (Steenkamp & De Jong, 2010). Work that examines perceived brand globalness and local iconness across emerging and advanced markets finds that perceived brand globalness and local iconness are positively related in an emerging market but negatively related in more mature markets, indicating that globalness can reinforce rather than dilute local cultural meaning in some contexts (Özsomer, 2012). Systematic reviews of perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness synthesize this literature and argue that perceived brand globalness combines perceived wide market reach and global symbolism and that future work needs to engage explicitly with hybridization and glocalization instead of treating global and local as opposites (Liu et al., 2021). Cross-cultural evidence in the Global South shows that perceived brand localness and perceived brand globalness both feed into brand authenticity, which, in turn, predicts brand attitudes and downstream behavioral intentions such as purchase intention, willingness to pay a price premium, and word of mouth in emerging markets like China and Pakistan (Safeer et al., 2022). Complementary work on the relational value of perceived brand globalness and localness shows that both perceived globalness and perceived localness have positive effects on consumer–brand identification in mature and emerging markets and that these relational effects interact and vary with brand origin, which means that the relational payoffs of localness are stronger for foreign brands and the relational payoffs of globalness are stronger for domestic brands (Sichtmann et al., 2019) while experimental research on willingness to pay for global brands shows that consumers are willing to pay more for global brands only as long as perceived globalness improves brand attitudes, not when it clashes with local meanings or value anchors (Davvetas et al., 2015). The resulting implication, therefore, is that perceived globalness and perceived localness should be managed jointly as interacting levers, not treated as an either–or decision, and global marketing research should model their joint configuration and mediating mechanisms, not just their separate main effects.

4.1.2. Paradoxes in global marketing

Four paradoxes in global marketing are arguably deserving of attention and pursuit.

One paradox concerns *scale versus sovereignty*. The efficiency logic of digital scale pushes firms toward common cloud architectures, global ad-tech stacks, and unified brand platforms that can be leveraged across countries while the sovereignty logic of data, content, and competition policy pushes in the opposite direction toward jurisdiction-specific rules for infrastructure, code, and data. The EU explicitly frames the Digital Markets Act (DMA), the Digital Services Act (DSA), and the GDPR as instruments that strengthen "digital sovereignty" by asserting control over data protection, platform conduct, and gatekeeper power across the single market (Naas et al., 2025) while China has similarly built a comprehensive framework for cross-border data transfers through its Cybersecurity Law (CSL), Data Security Law (DSL), and Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL), including security assessments and data-localization expectations for certain categories of personal information (Tan & Gu, 2025). Mapping exercises show that the number of explicit data-localization measures has risen sharply and that more restrictive data regimes are associated with lower volumes of trade and weaker

productivity growth (Cory & Dascoli, 2021; González et al., 2022). The paradox is that the very architectures that make global marketing efficient are the ones most exposed to heterogeneous sovereignty claims. Therefore, the question for global marketing is not whether to standardize or adapt in the abstract but, rather, how to decompose data architectures and value propositions into modules that can be standardized globally and modules that must remain local because institutions, not preferences, set the binding constraints.

A second paradox sits in the tension between *data abundance versus privacy scarcity*. Digital trade has grown rapidly, with United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and World Trade Organization (WTO) estimates showing that digitally deliverable services now account for more than half of global services exports, with the share rising to around 60% in recent years even as services trade overall contracted during the pandemic (UNCTAD, 2023; WTO, 2023). In Asia, digitally deliverable services exports more than tripled between 2005 and 2019 (Liberatore, 2022) and the region is now the world's second-largest trader of such services after the EU (UNCTAD, 2025). On the surface this looks like data abundance. Yet, the subset of data that can be legally linked across contexts for fine-grained targeting is shrinking. Analyses of data-restrictiveness indices and data localization policies show that restrictions on cross-border data flows have more than doubled in recent years and that a one-unit increase in data restrictiveness is associated with significant reductions in traded output and productivity (Cory & Dascoli, 2021; González et al., 2022). Causal evidence on privacy regulation in Europe demonstrates that cookie-driven restrictions reduced the effectiveness of online display advertising, especially on general-content sites where alternative targeting is difficult (Goldfarb & Tucker, 2011). The paradox, therefore, is that digital channels generate ever more data, yet the pool of cross-context personal data that can legally be used for targeting is becoming more constrained in high-enforcement jurisdictions. The relevant question for global marketing is no longer whether personalization "works" but, rather, which forms of personalization remain effective under divergent privacy regimes and which creative and media strategies perform well when only contextual or on-site signals are available.

A third paradox arises from the trade-off between *speed versus stewardship*. Born-global firms have shown that international demand can be generated very quickly by young, resource-constrained companies that leverage advances in information and communication technologies, production, and logistics to sell in multiple foreign markets from or near founding, a pattern documented well before today's platform economy (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004), while more recent evidence from large e-commerce marketplaces likewise indicates that when search, discovery, and transaction are mediated by global digital platforms, small sellers can reach foreign buyers rapidly and that further reductions in frictions such as language barriers via machine translation yield additional export gains (Brynjolfsson et al., 2019). Yet, those same models are now central targets for regulators concerned with consumer protection, dark patterns, fair competition, product safety, and tax leakage. The EU's DMA and DSA create new obligations for very large online platforms around due diligence, transparency of recommender systems, and treatment of business users, and they are explicitly presented as part of a new rulebook for the digital single market (Naas et al., 2025). China's recent tightening of cross-border data transfer rules and enforcement actions against firms mishandling customer data further illustrate how quickly regulators can move to reshape practices when perceived risks are high (Reuters, 2025). The paradox is that the very tactics that generate speed, from aggressive promotions and granular A/B testing to traffic arbitrage and small-parcel cross-border logistics, are also those most likely to attract regulatory scrutiny. Treating compliance purely as a cost misses the strategic issue and, importantly, the more pointed question for global marketing research is arguably which data architectures, decision rights, and organizational routines allow firms to move quickly while building consumer protection

rules, customs requirements, and platform obligations into the capability set rather than bolting them on as a late-stage constraint.

A fourth paradox reflects the tension between *craft versus computation*. On the demand side, AI has already reduced some classic frictions in cross-border marketing. Causal evidence from a large e-commerce platform shows that the introduction of machine translation between English and Spanish increased cross-border trade, thereby providing evidence that AI-driven translation can lower language barriers and raise exports (Brynjolfsson et al., 2019). WTO (2024) similarly argues that AI-driven translation and information retrieval can reduce trade costs by making information more accessible across languages. On the supply side, creative development itself is being computed, wherein experimental work demonstrates that visual advertising content produced by generative AI can match or even outperform human-created content on key consumer response metrics while also reducing production time and cost (Hartmann et al., 2025). The paradox is that the same AI systems that promise to scale creative work and shrink some types of distance are trained on historically situated data and constrained by jurisdiction-specific content and data rules. In this regard, a single creative brief rendered by an AI system under different training sets, language regimes, and platform policies may not only shift in tone and wording but also in cultural fit and symbolism. The task for global marketing research is, therefore, to design cross-country experiments that hold the core creative idea constant while varying AI versus human production, available data, and regulatory conditions, and to test whether computation narrows cultural gaps in impact or, instead, amplifies locally embedded biases and policy-driven divergence.

4.2. In relation to methods for global marketing research

4.2.1. Advanced methodological toolbox with new blind spots in global marketing research

Digital platforms have changed both the inputs to our research and the pace at which answers are expected. Marketing analytics now routinely integrate structured and unstructured data from clicks, images, surveys, text, and transactions (Wedel & Kannan, 2016), as well as a wide range of internal and external data sources such as customer databases, online forums (e.g., Quora, Reddit), review platforms (e.g., Tripadvisor, Trustpilot, Yelp), and social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube), and recent work presents a knowledge map of these analytics and their use in marketing (Basu et al., 2023). Used well, these tools enable larger and more granular cross-country samples, richer behavioral traces linked over time, and, in some settings, near real-time inference. In that world, such capabilities should operate as baseline rather than aspiration, as what limits progress is no longer data access but the quality of the questions, designs, and theories that organize the work.

The field also deserves credit for pushing the experimental toolkit into online and field contexts that reach very large audiences, often across markets. Large-scale advertising experiments on social networks, for instance, show that commonly used observational methods, even when they condition on rich demographic and behavioral data, often fail to recover the causal lift estimates obtained from randomized tests (Gordon et al., 2019). Work on the economics of ad measurement further demonstrates that many advertising effects are small relative to sales noise and that credible estimates, therefore, require surprisingly large samples, even when firms are spending heavily (Gordon et al., 2021; Lewis & Rao, 2015). Guidance on the econometrics of randomized experiments in digital settings makes the same point from the design side, namely that assignment, compliance, interference, and heterogeneity are not technical footnotes but choices that determine what an experiment can credibly say and that these issues become more acute when experiments span varying institutional and socio-cultural environments rather than a single market (Athey & Imbens, 2017). The lesson here is not to retreat from experiments but to adapt them for real heterogeneity by building power, reporting assignment and

compliance transparently, and anticipating context differences and spillovers at the design stage rather than explaining them away afterwards (Viglia et al., 2021). Hence, if experiments are to anchor causal understanding in global marketing, they must adapt to the realities of cross-market heterogeneity. Designs should treat manipulation translation as construct translation, anticipate different priors, and assess manipulation checks that respect local norms.[2] Sampling frames must be constructed to reflect device access and platform use, especially where mobile data costs and internet speeds differ by income and region. Pre-registration and transparent reporting should become routine, including ex-ante plans for attrition analyses by country and device, cross-language equivalence tests, and inference procedures that allow for treatment effect heterogeneity by culture. When good experiments disagree across countries, the right instinct is not to average them away but to learn the mechanism that makes them diverge.

Qualitative work evolved as well. Netnography established an online-native approach that preserves the logic of ethnography while relocating it to digital communities, and recent guidance treats it as a systematic, multi-stage method rather than an anecdotal scrape of online posts (Kozinets & Gretzel, 2024). Inarguably, it is no longer enough to run a few focus groups across countries and call the result "global insight,"[3] rather, serious qualitative work now inhabits the forums, platforms, and social spaces where global consumers actually live online, follows interactions over time, and reports the interpretive procedures that link observed talk and practice to higher-order brand and cultural meanings (Kozinets, 2015).

Yet, several blind spots emerge and persist. First, much of the speed comes from platforms and panels that are global in reach, yet uneven in who they represent, with evidence from online labor markets showing that opt-in samples can be demographically skewed and behaviorally atypical even when they look large and diverse on paper (Goodman & Paolacci, 2017). For global marketing, that means a "worldwide" sample drawn from a handful of platforms is not a window onto the world but a narrow slice whose biases need to be audited, reported, and, where possible, corrected. Second, cross-national response styles still distort simple means and many studies that boast worldwide samples do not test invariance at all. Steenkamp and Baumgartner's (1998) framework for multi-group invariance still defines the minimum standard for common factor models and newer procedures extend invariance testing to the composite models used in variance-based structural equation modelling (Henseler et al., 2016). Third, there is a visible drift toward tool-first thinking. Dashboards are not a substitute for theory and models that fit one culture often fail quietly in another when published studies do not spell out what transportability would mean for their constructs and relationships (i.e., whether those constructs and paths are expected to hold, and under what conditions, across contexts). The state of the insights industry worsens the temptation, as recent estimates put its size well above $100 billion in annual turnover, fueled as much by research software and reporting platforms as by classical fieldwork (Palacio, 2024). That economic growth invites an overemphasis on speed and polish over comparative credibility. The remedy is to raise the standards for what counts as global evidence by making sample and panel audits part of routine reporting, treating invariance and response-style diagnostics as default rather than optional, and stating explicitly how far key constructs and relationships are expected to generalize across contexts, so that claims about global patterns rest on design and evidence rather than on the reach of a recruitment platform.

[2] See Lim et al. (2025) on considerations for informed marketing and guidelines for data collection and analysis in a globalized world.

[3] See Lim (2026a) on data saturation versus theoretical saturation.

4.2.2. Other methodological suggestions forss global marketing research

Current fascination with AI for qualitative and quantitative research is understandable. Chat agents that can act as synthetic interviewers or survey enumerators, meeting tools that draft summaries, translation models that handle dozens of languages, and automated coding features in qualitative and mixed-methods software all promise to compress the time between data collection and insight. Yet, the evidence is, at best, mixed. A recent study of AI-assisted qualitative coding finds that large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT and Gemini fail to produce codes that are high quality, credible, or consistent, and struggle, in particular, with non-normative communication and context-dependent meaning, leading to superficial categories and unjustified interpretive leaps (Friedman et al., 2025), while wider reviews of LLM use in research highlight persistent problems of bias, hallucination, and opacity that directly threaten the validity of both qualitative interpretations and quantitative text-based measures (Anthis et al., 2025; Huang et al., 2025). The temptation, therefore, is to treat AI as a way to scale analysis without confronting its blind spots, especially in low-resource languages and culturally specific contexts. These limitations, however, are not reasons to avoid AI, rather, they are reasons to earn trust by pairing AI with cultural fluency, domain knowledge, and, more importantly, human judgment, and by designing studies that compare AI-assisted outputs with carefully grounded human analysis rather than assuming that automation is neutral.

Augmented and virtual reality (AR, VR) also open doors to study choice and evaluation in rich contexts while logging precise behavioral and physiological responses. Recent research points to strong potential in presence-rich retail settings (Du et al., 2022; Erensoy et al., 2024), yet cautions that VR experiences do not inherently improve outcomes unless scenarios are carefully designed for the task (Uysal et al., 2025). In this regard, AR and VR are not "better media" in general but, rather, powerful design levers whose value depends on how well their affordances match what a given culture, segment, and task require. Hence, future research should leverage immersive environments to manipulate theoretically grounded affordances such as control, diagnosticity, and social and spatial presence, then test whether those affordances operate similarly across countries or cultures rather than assuming that the same scenario means the same thing everywhere. For example, cross-country experiments can expose consumers in different markets to the same global brand environment rendered in VR while systematically varying local cues, sustainability signals, or service scripts, and then estimate where and why responses diverge. Researchers should also treat accessibility, privacy, and data intensity as part of the design space, as VR commerce work flags that the behavioral data collected in immersive environments raise distinctive privacy risks (Hassanin et al., 2025) and human–computer interaction studies show that default VR interaction schemes can systematically exclude users with different abilities (Pococke et al., 2025). The right way to import AR and VR into global marketing, therefore, is to start from theory about what an environment affords and what local consumers value, build scenarios that manipulate those affordances with cultural care, and then report explicitly when immersion creates real insight and when it merely adds spectacle.

Multimodal data is also rapidly becoming the norm rather than the exception in global marketing. Consumers do not only write reviews but also upload images, short videos, and voice clips and interact with brands through audio-visual streams (Grewal et al., 2021). Recent work argues that audio, image, and video data contain latent insight into consumers and markets, yet many researchers remain unsure how to turn such data into interpretable marketing knowledge (Wang et al., 2024). Audio and visual (A/V) analytics research likewise notes that businesses now routinely collect rich A/V traces across touchpoints but still lack clear frameworks for when and how to use them, which means many firms leave potential customer insight and decision support on the table (Lu et al., 2022). Methodological reviews of natural language processing (NLP) in marketing explicitly flag multimodal representation

learning as a promising next frontier, using architectures such as contrastive language–image pre-training (CLIP) to fuse image, text, and video, but also acknowledge that applied multimodal examples in marketing remain rare and that the literature has only started to explore these possibilities (Hartmann & Netzer, 2023). Work that takes a step back from specific models stresses that multimodal data offer real promise for understanding experience but also pose substantial theoretical and methodological challenges, including how to link modes to constructs, how to design culturally sensitive coding schemes, and how to validate multimodal measures against behavior (Yu & Cheng, 2025). The implication for global marketing research is not simply to "join modalities" but to do so under explicit theory about what each mode is supposed to capture, to test whether multimodal representations are comparable across cultures and languages, and to resist the temptation to collapse distinct constructs into a single engagement or sentiment score. Hence, the teams that will be rewarded in the near future are those that can move fluidly across audio, image, text, and video (including body language and facial expressions), and even across geospatial data, logs, and sensors, while auditing bias and error at each step, not those that accept black-box multimodal outputs at face value because the dashboard looks impressive.

5. Conclusion

Global marketing's early fights were productive, but they belong to another era (Table 1). Questions that matter now require theory that treats platforms, privacy, identity, and other emerging dynamics as causal mechanisms rather than background settings. The most useful global marketing theories in the next decade will, arguably, show when a standardized core plus localized participation outperforms heavy standardization or heavy adaptation, when global identity complements rather than cannibalizes local affinity, and how algorithm design and regulation reshape the feasible set for building and sustaining brands across borders.

The argument is not for incremental tightening of old debates. The challenge is to be more marketing than before, with sharper focus on how messages, meanings, and mechanisms generate cross-country demand under real constraints. Brands already make high-stakes decisions on modular creative, identity-targeted storytelling, and privacy-constrained media buys. If global marketing scholarship does not supply theory with cross-country validity, platform engineers and policy analysts will define the choices by default. The task ahead is to ensure that the next generation of global marketing research moves beyond describing a platform-mediated world to diagnosing where leverage truly sits and prescribing how firms should act within those constraints.

[Insert Table 1]

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Table 1. Overview of global marketing research

Locus	Main question or tension	Legacy view / habit in the field	Argument, critique, or reflection	Implication	Further reading
Panel A. Substantive foundations for global marketing					
Levitt versus Uppsala debate sets the overarching backdrop for global marketing	• How should global marketing think about convergence versus heterogeneity in an increasingly digitally mediated world?	• Levitt: technology drives preference convergence and rewards standardized offerings; much subsequent work treats globalization and technology mainly as convergence forces. • Uppsala: firms internationalize incrementally, starting in psychically close markets, building experiential knowledge and gradually escalating commitment.	• Levitt's enduring contribution is the injunction to take technology seriously as a driver of demand similarity, but the field has focused on convergence and under-theorized how technologies also reconfigure differences. • Uppsala foregrounds heterogeneity, learning, and networks, but neither Levitt nor Uppsala anticipated digitally mediated markets in which "distance" becomes multi-dimensional (algorithmic, cultural, logistical, regulatory) with different elasticities to firm action. • Stronger contingency theory for global marketing is needed.	• Build theories that integrate technology and networks as causal mechanisms, not just context. • Model "distance" as a vector of dimensions with different responsiveness to firm actions and policy, rather than as a single geographic or psychic metric.	Levitt (1983), Johanson and Vahlne (1977, 2009), Silva et al. (2024), Theodosiou and Leonidou (2003).
Granular debates and entrenched habits in global marketing	• What did early debates on standardization versus adaptation and global versus local actually achieve, and where did they mislead?	• Dominant framing: "standardization versus adaptation" as a binary strategic choice. • Levitt's call for standardization contended and then rebutted by Douglas and Wind. • Zou and Cavusgil's global marketing strategy framework recast the problem as configuration–coordination–integration, but empirical evidence on performance effects remains mixed.	• Early fights were anchored in a convenient simplification of globalization (Levitt's strawman) rather than its messy reality. • Classical work added real value by forcing attention to heterogeneity, infrastructure, institutions, and by raising methodological standards (segmentation, invariance, response styles), but the field entrenched habits of thinking in paired opposites (standardization versus adaptation; global versus local; convergence versus divergence) even as evidence repeatedly shows context-contingent and interaction effects.	• Design studies that explicitly model interactions between strategic levers and context (institutions, category, development level). • Treat global marketing strategy as an alignment and relational fit problem across markets, not a toggle.	Baumgartner and Steenkamp (2001), Douglas and Wind (1987), Levitt (1983), Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998), Szymanski et al. (1993), Theodosiou and Leonidou (2003), Zou and Cavusgil (2002).
Country of origin, ethnocentrism, animosity, and global/local brands in global marketing	• How do national cues and identity shape brand outcomes beyond simple "Made in ___" effects?	• Early work treated country-of-origin effects, ethnocentrism, and animosity as largely separate streams. • Extant branding work often treated global and local brands as opposites.	Meta-analytic evidence shows: • General country-of-origin signals affect perceived quality more than purchase intent; partitioned origin cues (brand, design, manufacture, parts) jointly shape behavior, with country of brand especially influential. • Ethnocentrism reliably increases domestic preferences and depresses foreign ones, with levels shaped by culture and diversity rather than "globalization" alone.	• Treat country cues, ethnocentrism, and animosity as distinct mechanisms that jointly shape brand choice. • Model PBG and PBL as interacting layers, not ends of one continuum. • Study how globalness and localness feed into authenticity, identification, and	Alden et al. (1999), Balabanis and Siamagka (2022), Davvetas et al. (2015), De Nisco and Oduro (2022), Guo and Zhou (2017), Klein et al. (1998), Liu et al. (2021), Özsomer (2012), Safeer et al. (2022), Shimp and Sharma (1987), Shoham et al. (2016), Sichtmann et al. (2019), Steenkamp and De Jong (2010), Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999).

				• Animosity reduces willingness to buy independently of quality perceptions. • Perceived brand globalness (PBG) and perceived brand localness/local iconness (PBL) often co-exist and interact; attitudes toward global and local products are distinct, only moderately correlated, and jointly predictive.	willingness to pay in different institutional and socio-cultural contexts.	
Mixed legacy and rhetorical scaffolding in global marketing	• Why does the field keep reverting to binary framings despite evidence for configurations?	• Reviews and frameworks still organize around dualisms: standardization versus adaptation, global versus local brands, convergence versus divergence.	• The accumulated evidence already points beyond simple toggles toward configurations and interactions, but the rhetorical scaffolding of the field continues to invite scholars to "take sides" instead of theorizing how forces work together.	• Structure around joint configurations (e.g., PBG × PBL, standardization × adaptation, culture × platform) rather than dichotomies. • Explicitly articulate and test interaction hypotheses rather than merely documenting mixed main effects.	de Mooij (2019), Eze et al. (2024), Mandler et al. (2021), Ozturk and Cavusgil (2019), Poulis (2024), Rodrigues et al. (2024), Steenkamp (2019), Winit et al. (2014).
Panel B. Present realities of global marketing						
Platforms, identity, algorithms, and privacy in global marketing	• How have digital platforms, algorithmic systems, and privacy regimes reshaped the terrain of global marketing?	• Earlier global marketing assumed broadcast media, national retail systems, and relatively stable regulatory backdrops. • Segmentation and targeting were explicit marketer choices.	• Digital platforms mediate cross-border interaction and value creation. • Audiences are individually addressable at scale; creative and media are tuned by algorithms in AI-enabled, data-driven, and programmatic advertising. • Rule-making power now also sits with platform firms, whose governance and market power shape cross-border frictions and regulatory responses. • Identity is multi-level and hybrid; algorithms learn from and amplify identity patterns. • Privacy rules have moved from background to part of the marketing production function.	Build models that: • Treat identity as a portfolio of global, local, and hybrid meanings. • Locate part of segmentation inside platform algorithms and bidding environments. • Treat cross-country differences in platform governance and privacy as core theoretical variables, not mere context.	Akter et al. (2021), Ali et al. (2019), Ciuchita et al. (2023), Ford et al. (2023), Gawer and Bonina (2024), Herrera (2008), Jadach and Tłuczak (2025), Johnson et al. (2023), Lambrecht and Tucker (2019), Liu et al. (2021), Mandler et al. (2024), Meyer et al. (2023), Nambisan et al. (2019), Özsomer (2012), Peukert et al. (2022), Shin (2020), Steenkamp and De Jong (2010), Venkatesh (2025), Wörsdörfer (2024), Wortmann (2011).
Panel C. Methods for global marketing research						
Scarcity to scale in global marketing research	• How did the methodological toolkit evolve from small-scale, rich-context studies to today's digital, high-volume approaches?	• Early work relied on ethnography, individual interviews, focus groups, and surveys in a small set of developed markets. • Computational limits and scarce data constrained ambition but also enforced groundedness through careful mixing of	• The digital toolkit (e.g., cloud data pipelines, online survey platforms, social listening, text mining) emerged in response to speed, coverage, and cost pressures; offers wider cross-country reach at lower marginal cost and more opportunities to observe behavior as it unfolds. • Global digital context both enables and distorts, as usage gaps persist and opt-in	• Combine the reach of digital tools with front-loaded design discipline: sampling frames that reflect infrastructure and usage realities, explicit coverage diagnostics, and a willingness to trade "more data" for better-designed data when	Anitha et al. (2025), Brüggen (2016), Dahish et al. (2025), Donthu et al. (2021), Hanson and Grimmer (2007), Herhausen et al. (2025), Jäckle et al. (2024), Jamalova (2024), Kumar (2024), Magesa et al. (2014, 2020), Malhotra et al. (1996), Steenkamp (2001), Tsetsi and Rains (2017), van Deursen and van Dijk (2014), Yeager et al. (2011).

			qualitative and quantitative approaches. • Expansion into emerging markets surfaced translation, equivalence, poor official statistics, and rural access problems.	panels often yield biased estimates relative to probability-based samples. • Design quality cannot (always) be patched after the fact by weighting alone.	studying cross-country phenomena.	
Advanced methodological toolbox and new blind spots in global marketing research	• What does the "advanced toolbox" genuinely add, and where are its blind spots for global work?	• Marketing analytics now integrate many data types and sources. • Field experiments on platforms have become common. • Traditional international qualitative work often meant a handful of focus groups or interviews in a few countries. • Netnography was sometimes treated as light-touch scraping of online content.	Advanced methodological toolbox: • Analytics: integrated data and platform logics enable larger, more granular cross-country samples and, in some settings, near real-time inference; the real constraint is no longer access to data but the quality of questions, designs, and theory. • Experiments: large-scale digital experiments show that observational methods often mis-estimate advertising lift, that many ad effects are small relative to noise and thus need large *N*, and that assignment, compliance, interference, and heterogeneity are design choices, not footnotes; in cross-country work, translation is construct translation; priors differ; sampling frames must reflect device and platform access; pre-registration and transparent reporting should become routine; disagreements across countries should be mined for mechanisms, not averaged away. • Qualitative: credible qualitative global work now means inhabiting the forums and platforms where consumers live, following interactions over time, and disclosing interpretive procedures; netnography, for instance, has matured into a systematic, multi-stage method that relocates ethnographic logic into digital communities Blind spots: • Global reach platforms and panels are not representative of "the world." • Cross-national response styles and lack of invariance testing remain widespread. • Drift toward tool-first thinking where dashboards substitute for theory and	• Position experiments as central but demanding tools for global marketing: adequate power, explicit heterogeneity modelling, manipulation checks that respect local norms, device- and platform-aware sampling, and ex ante plans for invariance and attrition. • Raise the bar for what counts as "global evidence": routine sample/panel audits, invariance and response-style diagnostics as default, and explicit statements of how far constructs and models are expected to generalize. • Treat netnography and other qualitative tools as theory-building engines.	Athey and Imbens (2017), Basu et al. (2023), Goodman and Paolacci (2017), Gordon et al. (2019, 2021), Henseler et al. (2016), Kozinets and Gretzel (2024), Kozinets (2015), Lewis and Rao (2015), Lim et al. (2025), Palacio (2024), Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998), Viglia et al. (2021), Wedel and Kannan (2016).

				models are applied across cultures without defining transportability. • The booming insights industry, powered by software and reporting, amplifies the temptation to prioritize speed and polish over comparative credibility.		
Artificial intelligence (AI) for global marketing research	• How should global marketing researchers use AI in qualitative and quantitative work?	• Excitement around chat agents, automatic summarization, translation, and automated coding often assumes AI can cheaply scale "analysis."	• Evidence is mixed. • Large language models (LLMs) like ChatGPT and Gemini struggle to produce qualitative codes that are high-quality, credible, and consistent, especially for non-normative and context-dependent communication, leading to superficial categories and unjustified inferences. • Bias, hallucination, and opacity are threats to both qualitative interpretation and quantitative text-based measures.	• Use AI as an assistant, not an analyst. • Pair with cultural fluency and domain knowledge, design studies that benchmark AI-assisted outputs against grounded human analysis. • Stay cautious in low-resource languages and culturally specific contexts.	Anthis et al. (2025), Friedman et al. (2025), Huang et al. (2025).
Augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR) in global marketing research	• What role should AR/VR play in future global marketing research?	• AR/VR often promoted as inherently superior or more engaging media.	• AR/VR opens doors to study choice and evaluation in rich contexts with fine-grained behavioural and physiological logging. • Strong potential in presence-rich retail settings, but VR only improves outcomes when scenarios fit the task and reduce uncertainty. • More immersion does not automatically mean better results. • AR/VR are design levers, whose value depends on how well their affordances match local culture, segment, and task. • Accessibility, privacy, and data intensity are integral to the design space.	• Use AR/VR to manipulate theoretically grounded affordances (control, diagnosticity, social/spatial presence) and test whether they operate similarly across countries. • Design cross-country VR experiments that vary local cues and scripts while holding global brand environments constant.	Du et al. (2022), Erensoy et al. (2024), Hassanin et al. (2025), Pococke et al. (2025), Uysal et al. (2025).
Multimodal data in global marketing research	• How should global marketing approach the rise of multimodal data (e.g., text, image, audio, video, sensors)?	• Text analytics has diffused widely. • Image, audio, and video are often treated as add-ons or left to platform black boxes.	• Multimodal data are already the norm: consumers post images, short videos, and voice content; brands interact via audio-visual streams. • Image and A/V data contain latent insight and can improve prediction (e.g., review helpfulness) relative to text alone, but applied multimodal marketing examples remain rare. • Multimodal analytics pose real theoretical and methodological challenges: linking modes to constructs, designing culturally sensitive coding, validating measures against behavior,	• Move beyond "joining modalities" for its own sake. • Specify what each mode is meant to capture, test whether multimodal representations are comparable across cultures and languages and cultures. • Refrain from oversimplification (e.g., collapsing distinct constructs into single	Grewal et al. (2021), Hartmann and Netzer (2023), Lu et al. (2022), Wang et al. (2024), Yu and Cheng (2025).

				and assessing cross-cultural comparability of representations.	"engagement" or "sentiment" scores).	
Panel D. Future agenda for global marketing research						
Counterintuitives in global marketing	• Which counterintuitive patterns deserve systematic testing?	• Personalization as a new form of adaptation. • Culture exerts greater, not diminished, influence in the platform era. • Global and local identities as complements rather than substitutes.	Three counterintuitives: • Personalization is the new adaptation and, under the right conditions, can increase returns to a standardized brand core, given that algorithmic systems localize messages around a shared identity. • Culture may matter more, not less, in the platform era, given that platforms often amplify differences as algorithms learn from culturally structured behavior and local media structures. • Global and local are often complements, not substitutes, as globalness and localness can both build authenticity, identification, and willingness to pay, with their relative weight depending on context.	• Design cross-country studies and experiments that explicitly test which brand elements must remain invariant for personalization to work, how platform algorithms and culture interact, and how PBG and PBL can be jointly managed to build authenticity and value in different markets.	An and Ngo (2025), Boustani and Chammaa (2023), Davvetas et al. (2015), Eze et al. (2024), Hatzithomas et al. (2016), Lee (2025), Liu et al. (2021), Mardatillah et al. (2025), Safeer et al. (2022), Sichtmann et al. (2019), Steenkamp and De Jong (2010), Özsomer (2012).
Paradoxes in global marketing	• What paradoxes define global marketing in a platformized, privacy-constrained world?	• Tendency to treat tensions (scale versus sovereignty, data abundance versus privacy scarcity, speed versus stewardship, craft versus computation) as one-off constraints rather than structuring paradoxes.	Four paradoxes: • Scale versus sovereignty: digital scale pushes toward global architectures; data and platform sovereignty push toward local rules and localization; question becomes how to modularize architectures and value propositions where institutions, not preferences, are binding. • Data abundance versus privacy scarcity: digital trade and data volume are booming, but legally linkable cross-context personal data shrink as data restrictions and privacy enforcement rise; the real question is which personalization strategies remain viable under divergent privacy regimes. • Speed versus stewardship: born globals and platform sellers can scale quickly, but the same tactics attract regulatory scrutiny; compliance must be treated as capability, not overhead. • Craft versus computation: AI translation and generative creative reduce some frictions and can match or beat human content on some metrics, but are trained on situated data and governed by local policies; AI may collapse or amplify cultural distance depending on training, data, and rules.	• Use these paradoxes as organizing questions for future work: explicit modularization of architectures under sovereignty constraints; field experiments on privacy-robust personalization; studies of compliance routines as strategic capabilities; cross-country experiments that hold creative ideas constant while varying AI vs human production, data availability, and regulatory constraints.	Brynjolfsson et al. (2019), Cory and Dascoli (2021), Goldfarb and Tucker (2011), González et al. (2022), Hartmann et al. (2025), Knight and Cavusgil (2004), Naas et al. (2025), Tan and Gu (2025).