Mapping The Trends: Bibliometric Insights Into Social Media Influencer Marketing

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ABSTRACT:
The purpose of this study is bibliometric analysis of social media influencer marketing articles published in the journals indexed in the SCOPUS database between 2014 and 11th June, 2024. Emerging from the domain of social media, social media influencers (SMIs) engage in activities that earn them identification and appreciation from their audience. In bibliometric analysis, a review of social media influencer marketing using Scopus database has been done. For the analysis of the existing literature in the field of social media influencer marketing, we have used bibliometric analysis techniques using VOSviewer software. The bibliometric analysis enables a detailed understanding of the body of knowledge and its various aspects like co-citations, co-occurrence, co-authorship, etc. The results show that the United states placed first in the publishing trend. The most influential journal is the International Journal of Advertising and the most influential organization is Nanyang Technological University, Singapore on the basis of the maximum number of citations. The most used keywords are social media; influencer marketing; social media influencers, etc. The publishing trend indicated that the analysis in the field of social media influencer marketing is in the growing stage.

Keywords: *Social media influencers, Social Media, Influencer Marketing, Bibliometric Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

The word "influencer" has had deep roots in English speech since the mid-16th century. This word has achieved widespread popularity in the marketing industry as it has become associated with social media in the last fifteen years. In recent years, the term has become an altogether for a certain type of career that is at the heart of an escalating but profitable industry.

Social media has provided a forward-looking platform for influential individuals to connect with their followers in varied ways (Bastrygina and Lim, 2023; Lim and Rasul, 2022; Wang, 2021). Emerging from the domain of social media, social media influencers (SMIs) engage in activities that earn them identification and appreciation from their audience (Koay et al., 2022; Tafesse and Wood, 2021). SMIs create and post digital content on various social media platforms. The SMIs vary from ordinary online users in a way that they specialize in particular domains and have an above-average ability to influence their audiences' decisions (Vrontis et al., 2021). Despite their recent rise in the field of social media, influencers have recently come to the cutting edge because they are key to understanding our current society.

The main objective of this paper is to show the studies carried out on influencers in social media. For this purpose, we have extracted the documents from the Scopus database and examined them with bibliographic analysis.

Methodology

For the analysis of the existing literature in the field of social media influencer marketing, we have used bibliometric analysis techniques. The bibliometric analysis enables a detailed understanding of the body of knowledge and its various aspects like co-citations, co-occurrence, co-authorship, etc. (Singh and Bashar, 2021), it also helps in describing the data in the form of major contributions, most prolific author, most influential organisation, production during a particular period, key word growth etc. (Chen, 2017; Smyrnova-Trybulska et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2013).

The SCOPUS database has been used for literature articles in the field of social media influencer marketing. This is the most used database for bibliometric analysis together with the Web of Science as the secondary database. We took a combination of keywords "influencer marketing" OR "social media influencer marketing" OR "social media influencer" OR "digital influencer" OR "online influencer" OR "online opinion leader" OR "insta famous" OR "vlogger" OR "blogger" OR "influencer endorsement" to extract

most suitable articles in this context and the period was defined as 2014 to 11th June, 2024. Several searches were done to get the data from 2014 to 2024.

Inclusion criteria

From an initial search using the above keywords, a total of 3347 articles were found, which were further analysed by the authors to keep the most appropriate articles on social media influencer marketing.

- Articles published between years 2014 and 11th June, 2024.
- Articles written in English language.
- Articles in subject area of social sciences; business, management and accounting; arts and humanities; psychology; decision sciences; and multidisciplinary were included.
- Document type includes articles only.
- Source type includes journal.
- Articles in the final publication stage were included

After applying the above criteria the resulting data of 1462 documents was extracted in CSV format for further processing and analysis.

Analysis

All documents were downloaded in CSV format. First, a descriptive analysis of the evolution of publications, countries of origin, and authors' subjects was carried out, which is provided by the Scopus platform itself. Secondly, a bibliometric analysis was carried out to represent the situation of the discipline and its state of development. There are many softwares for bibliometric analysis and one of them is VOSviewer. This is a free software developed by Eck and

Waltman and it has a potent function in co-occurrence analysis and co-citation analysis. We have used VOSviewer for this article to make co-authorship networks and co-citation networks.

Results and Analysis
A.Descriptive

Most of the documents are concentrated in the last six years (2019-2024), accounting for approximately 88% of everything published to date. In fact, since 2018 the growth of publications is almost exponential, accelerating every year. Thus, in the last year 2023, 370 documents were published, representing 25% of the total (see Fig. 1). There are currently 214 documents in 2024 alone, and that number is anticipated to rise soon.
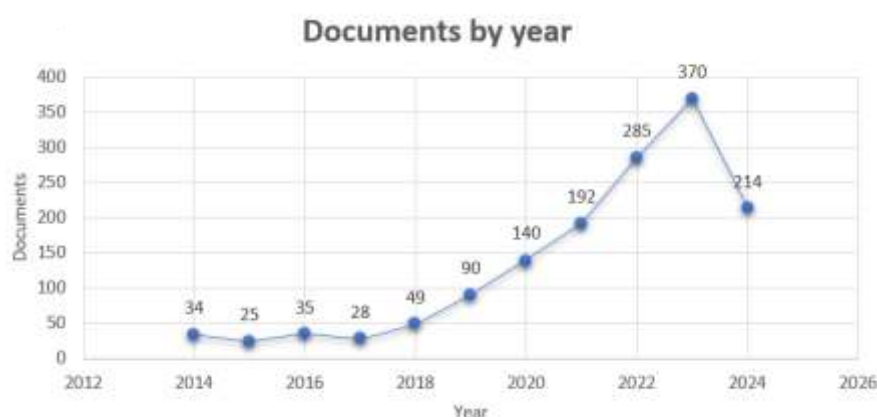

Fig 1. Evolution of the number of documents published in SCOPUS on social media influencer marketing

Source: Scopus Database

There is a great diversity of nationalities (82 different countries) and a significant number of authors are concentrated in Anglo-Saxon countries, among the top four being the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia (see Fig. 2). In any case, the United States alone stands out with 387 documents.
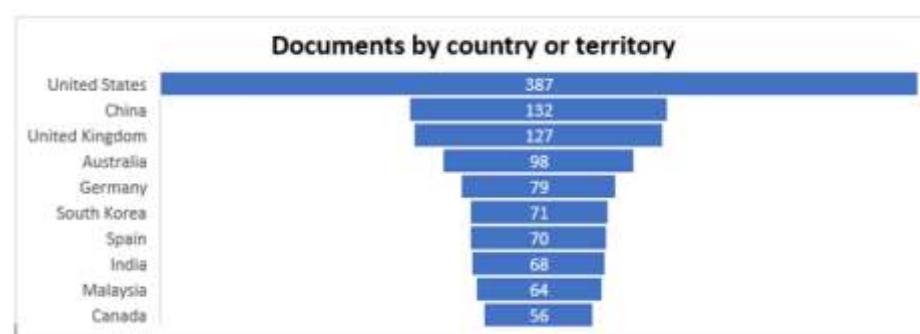

Fig. 2. Ranking of countries according to number of documents published in SCOPUS on social media influencer marketing

Source: Scopus Database

It is also worth noting the diversity of scientific subjects involved in this topic and from very different fields of expertise such as computer science, social sciences, economics, and medicine (see Fig 3). However, both "social sciences" business, management and accounting" together consists of around 53% of the total

documents (29.3% and 23.5%, respectively). If we add "computer sciences", "arts and humanities" and "Economics, Econometrics and Finance", also occupies a very prominent place.
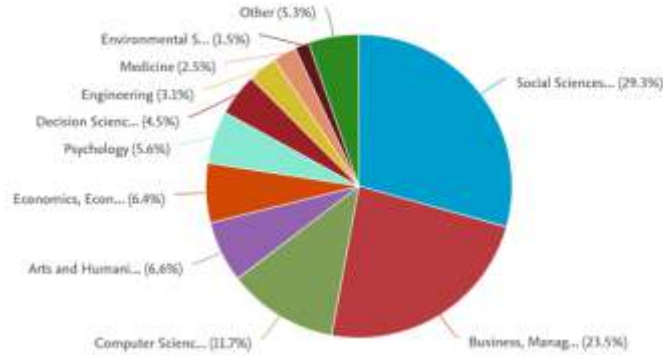

Fig 3. Subject area of retrieved documents

Source: Scopus Database

Table 1 depicts country wise citation analysis that appears to have a wide range of distributions. The number of citations for papers by country as a unit of analysis reflects the level of interest in a particular area of study. With 11745 citations and 387 publications, the United States topped the list, making it the most significant country in terms of its contributions to the corpus of existing knowledge in pertinent fields. Australia and the United Kingdom were next with 3461 and 3310 citations, respectively.

Table 1. Most Influential Countries/Territories contributing to the existing body of knowledge in the field of social media influencer marketing

S.No.	Country	Documents	Citations
1.	United States	387	11745
2.	Australia	98	3461
3.	United Kingdom	127	3310
4.	Belgium	35	2365
5.	South Korea	71	2296
6.	Netherlands	40	2073
7.	Singapore	24	2033
8.	France	40	1832
9.	Hong Kong	41	1545
10.	China	132	1485

Source: Vosviewer software

Table 2 provides a thorough summary of the organizations that have contributed to the amount of knowledge already available on social media influencer marketing. The most influential organization, with 1042 citations, is the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. It is followed by Department of Communication Sciences, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium with 582 citations, and Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore with 226 citations respectively.

Table 2. Top 10 most productive organizations in social media influencer marketing research

S.No.	Organizations	Documents	Citations
1.	Nanyang Technological University, Singapore	6	1042
2.	Department of Communication Sciences, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium	8	582
3.	Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore	4	226
4.	Ucsi Graduate Business School, Ucsi University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	4	194
5.	Fore School of Management, New Delhi, India	4	160
6.	The University of Texas at Austin, United States	4	142
7.	University of Florida, Gainesville, Fl, United States	4	62
8.	Business School, Sichuan University, Chengdu, China	4	51
9.	Faculty of Management, Prague University of Economics and Business, Prague, Czech Republic	4	22
10.	Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong	5	8

Source: Vosviewer software

Table 3 gives statistics about the periodicals that have contributed to the study of social media influencer marketing. With 3301 citations, the International Journal of

Advertising leads the field. It is followed by the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services with 2868 citations, and the Journal of Business Research with 2014 citations.

Table 3. Top 10 Most Productive Journals on social media influencer marketing

S.No.	Organizations	Documents	Citations
1.	International Journal of Advertising	34	3301
2.	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	45	2868
3.	Journal of Business Research	35	2014
4.	Journal of Interactive Advertising	32	1732
5.	Computers in Human Behavior	23	1385
6.	Social Media and Society	24	976
7.	Journal of Marketing Management	16	970
8.	Celebrity Studies	9	827
9.	Psychology and Marketing	18	816
10.	Journal of Advertising	11	764

Source: Vosviewer software

B. Co-citation analysis

Co-citation is a measure of similarity for documents that uses citation relationship; it is the occurrence of two documents that are being cited together by the third document (Boyack and Klavans, 2010; Van Eck and Waltman, 2019a). Co-citation analysis is performed by using VOSviewer which presents the data set in clusters according to similarities of objects, the links to other clusters and their strength is also useful to understand the similarities of the literature group and their intellectual connections (Smyrnova-Trybulska et al., 2018; VOSviewer, 2015). The VOSviewer output for the co-citation network (Fig 4) is generated by keeping minimum number of citations of a cited reference as 30, out of 72640 cited references only 64 met the threshold and considered for the co-citation analysis. The network contains 4 clusters with 64 items, 1905 links, and a link strength of 14681.
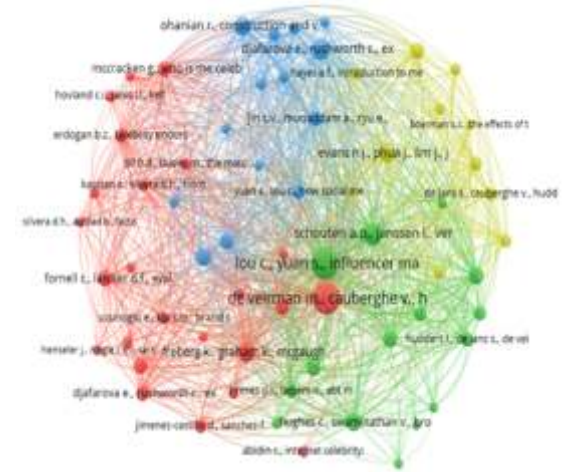

Fig 4. Co-citation analysis for identifying research streams in social media influencer research

Source: Vosviewer software

C. Keywords and Co-occurrence Analysis

During the period 2014-2024, the most used keywords were social media (435); influencer marketing (369); social media influencers (191), etc. In summary, as expected, the most used word is "social media". Table 4 shows the most occurring keywords and along with the above-mentioned keywords, "marketing", "Instagram", and "human was also seen rising.

Table 4. Trends in Keywords

keywords	Occurrences	keywords	Occurrences
social media	435	social media marketing	43
influencer marketing	369	source credibility	42
social media influencers	191	commerce	41
marketing	134	authenticity	40
instagram	122	economic and social effects	38
social media influencer	111	adult	37
human	95	trust	34
influencers	85	blogs	34
influencers	85	blogs	34
influencer	84	credibility	33
purchase intention	77	Internet	32
article	65	perception	31
article	65	perception	31
social networking (online)	57	parasocial relationship	30
humans	55	consumption behavior	30
youtube	54	persuasion knowledge	30
female	53	human experiment	29
male	46	covid-19	29
advertising	43	parasocial interaction	27

Source: Vosviewer software

The co-occurrence analysis where the minimum number of occurrences of a keyword is 25 shows the result of four clusters (see Fig. 5). The size of the words in the word cloud represents the frequency of those words around social media influencer marketing. Influencer marketing research has given birth to certain new words like trust, commerce, economic and social effects, and human experiment which signifies the area is growing and attracting researchers from across.
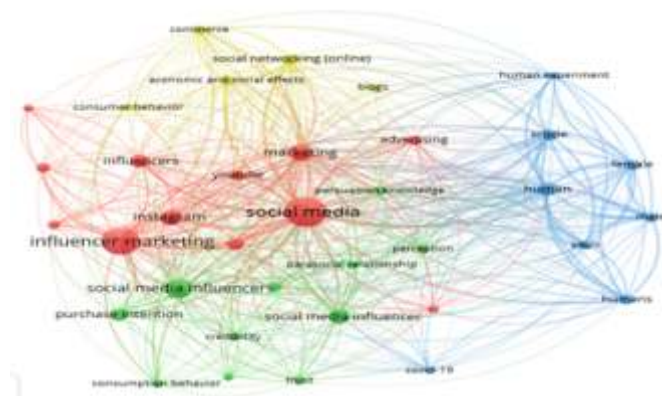

Fig 5. Co-occurrence analysis of keywords
Source: Vosviewer software

D. Co-authorship Analysis

Co-authorship analysis is used to understand the collaborations of authors in conducting research studies together, the co-authorship network is very useful in envisioning the social structure of the researchers globally (Smyrnova-Trybulska et al., 2018). Each node element in the network (Figure 6) is representing a country and the line connecting two nodes represents their collaboration. For this purpose, we selected the 24 countries with at least 20 documents (see Fig. 6). In any case, the United States occupies the central position of co-authorship with authors from other countries, especially the United Kingdom (21 collaborations) followed by China (15 collaborations) and Australia (20 collaborations). However, the collaborations between the United States and China are creating links between East and West.
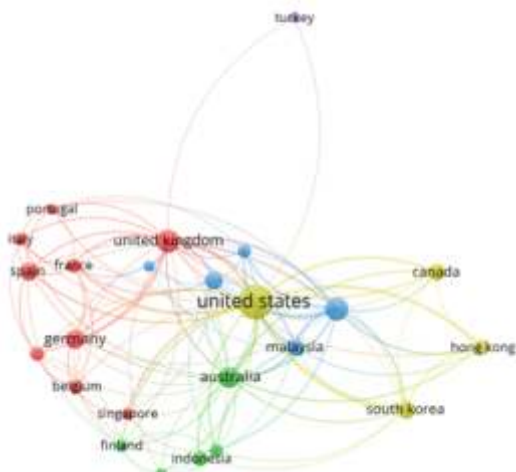

Fig 6. Co-authorships by most relevant nationalities
Source: Vosviewer software

Discussion and Conclusion

The realisation of those consumers spending progressively more time on social media platforms has driven organisations to focus on SMI marketing. In particular, many organisations chose to engage SMIs for advertising given their increasing number of followers and expertise in their specific domain. This study suggested a comprehensive journey through the vast terrain of academic inquiry surrounding social media influencer marketing.

The bibliometric analysis indicates that the publishing trend in the field of social media influencer marketing has increased in recent years. Using VOSviewer software, top contributors to the field have been identified. The analysis used author, subject area, country, and keywords as its units of analysis. The most influential journals are the International Journal of Advertising, Journal of Retailing And Consumer Services, and Journal of Business Research. The departments or organisations that have made the largest contributions are Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Department of Communication Sciences, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium, and Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information. The countries leading in this field of study include United States, followed by Australia, the United Kingdom, Belgium, South Korea, Netherlands based on maximum citations. The most popular keywords are social media, influencer marketing, social media influencers, and marketing on the basis of their occurrence.

Limitations

There are some limitations of this study which are important to be addressed. The first limitation of this study is that only the Scopus database in the study has been used and other databases (such as WoS and Google Scholar) were excluded. The second limitation is the years of publication as only

the articles between 2014 to 2024 were considered. We could have considered the articles before 2014 as well.

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