

Unveiling the landscape of social media marketing in social science studies: A bibliometric analysis using VosViewer and Biblioshiny

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Received: 27.11.2023

Accepted: 01.12.2023

Published: 28.12.2023

Abstract: In recent years, social media marketing has evolved into a ubiquitous phenomenon, influencing the dynamics of business-consumer relationships and becoming an indispensable facet of modern marketing strategies. This positive trend led to a growing number of publications in the field of social media marketing, especially in social science studies. Thus, it is impeccable for the researcher to study this particular matter. The objective of this study is to identify the pattern of past research on social media marketing in social science studies, specifically its research status and the most up-to-date (emerging) topics in this field. This research offers a visual analysis of 1747 research articles listed in the Scopus database in the years 2009–2023. The bibliometric analysis using Vos Viewer and Biblioshiny presents the current research status, including annual scientific production, most cited articles, most cited authors, most active source title, co-authorship analysis, co-occurrence analysis and co-citation analysis on social media marketing in social science studies. The outcomes of this study are expected to benefit researchers specializing in consumer behaviour by offering them insights into the current research landscape and serving as a valuable reference for future investigations.

Keywords: Social media marketing, Bibliometric analysis, Vos Viewer, Biblioshiny, Knowledge mapping

Paper type: Research paper

Introduction

Social media marketing (SMM) has gained popularity in recent years due to the growing adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs) worldwide (Mohamed Sadom et al., 2023). With an increasing number of people searching for information on products and services and sharing their experiences online, social media marketing has become one of the essential marketing strategies for the company (Dwivedi et al., 2021). According to (Statistica, 2023), Facebook has the largest social media advertising market share at 16%, while the use of TikTok for businesses has increased by 46.98% year-

over-year, making it the fastest-growing channel among businesses. It has been identified that 81% of individuals hold the view that social media has elevated the standards for business accountability (Belle Wong, 2023). To capitalize these changes in consumer behaviour, many industries and brands are gearing towards improving their social media marketing efforts for their businesses. For instance, the healthcare industry has better used its social media channels (namely Facebook, YouTube and microblogs) to build in-depth relationships with the public and specific communities and types of patients, thus boosting their revenue (Hung et al., 2023). In addition, many restaurants and fine dining establishments keep posting more appealing visual content on their social media accounts to attract consumers to revisit their restaurants (Chan et al., 2023). Also, luxury fashion brands such as Louis Vuitton better present their content in various forms (e.g., pictures, text, stories, videos etc.) to increase the sharing, commenting, and liking of their product offerings (Moedeen et al., 2023).

With this increased relevance of social media marketing for businesses, the current body of knowledge has ascertained the notion of social media marketing in depth and breadth in various industries (Aljuhmani et al., 2023; Dowin et al., 2023; Ibrahim and Aljarah, 2023). Also, it is noted that the study of social media marketing, especially in the context of social science and consumer behaviour, has increased significantly in recent years, with emerging new trends (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Zahay, 2021). Since there has been an increase in scholarly interest from both theoretical and practical standpoints, especially in recent years (Belle Wong, 2023; Mohamed Sadom et al., 2023), there is evidently much room for on-going and up-to-date exploration of bibliometric analysis for the ‘continuously growing’ social media marketing field. Therefore, this study aims to fill the research gap. To fulfil the identified gap, the objective of this present research is to identify the pattern of past research on social media marketing in social science studies, specifically on its research status and the most up-to-date (emerging) topics in this field.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: The literature review was elaborated. The methodology and data analysis section, which included the material and methods, results and discussion is presented. Finally, the implication, limitation and future research directions were outlined.

Literature Review

A significant body of literature on social media marketing has delved into the key issues of marketing and management aspects (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Felix et al., 2017). Recent studies on social media marketing literature from social science perspectives mostly focus on the intrinsic and extrinsic factors for enhancing customer-brand relationships, value co-creation, and behavioural intention. For instance, perceived value, emotional pleasure, and flow experience in online social media marketing (Zhang et al., 2023), social media marketing and trust (Azhar et al., 2023; Mohamed Sadom et al., 2023; Sohaib and Han, 2023), social media message characteristics, and user experience (Hwang et al., 2018; Kang and Park, 2018) were suggested to play an important role in increasing purchase intention and behaviour. Past literature also relates social media marketing to the marketing performance of new ventures (Venciute et al., 2023), marketing and firm performance (Tafesse and Wien, 2018), value co-creation (Hasan et al., 2023), human need satisfaction (Zhu and Chen, 2015) and employee recruitment (Felix et al., 2017).

Different authors defined social media marketing in different ways, which are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Definition of social media marketing in past studies

Variable	Definition	Sources
<p>Social media marketing (SMM)</p>	<p>“Social Media Marketing or SMM is the practice of using social media channels to promote business products or services”.</p> <p>Social media marketing includes the elements of interaction, entertainment, trendiness, word-of-mouth (WOM), and customization.</p> <p>Social media marketing is the incorporation of social media into a marketing strategy, with an emphasis on utilizing a company's website as the central platform to meet the online expectations of customers.</p> <p>“Social media marketing is defined as the creation of specific messages or content on social networking services (e.g., blogs, YouTube, Facebook) to attract the attention of consumers and achieve marketing goals”.</p> <p>“Social media marketing refers to any marketing strategy that uses social media in order to disseminate brand-related content and monitor consumer interactions with the brand”.</p> <p>“Social Media Marketing (SMM) is a proponent of traditional and digital marketing communication tools that monitor and facilitate customer communication, collaboration and interaction with a company, its brands and other customers, and drive their</p>	<p>America Marketing Association (AMA) (2023).</p> <p>Kim et al. (2012)</p> <p>Constantinides, E. (2014).</p> <p>Chawla and Chodak (2021)</p> <p>Sohaib and Han (2023)</p> <p>Haudi et al (2022)</p>

	<p>engagement”.</p> <p>“Social media marketing is related to relationship marketing, where the firms need to shift from “trying to sell” to “making connections” with the consumers”.</p> <p>“SMMEs can be defined as a process that uses social media platforms to communicate and create brand information that strengthens customer–brand relationships”.</p> <p>SMMAs as “a stimulus factor [that] create[s] a secure exchange of relationships between consumers and businesses and strengthen[s] social connections between followers and brands” (p. 11).</p> <p>“SMM can be defined as a social and manageable process that aims to enhance customer engagement in the products offered by the business (Chan and Guillet, 2011). It enables two-way interactions and value co-creation from user-generated content”</p>	<p>Erdoğmuş and Cicek (2012)</p> <p>(Aljuhmani et al. 2023).</p> <p>Ibrahim et al. (2021)</p> <p>Han et al. (2023)</p>
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Source: Compiled by authors

Methodology

Bibliometric analysis refers to an advanced computer-assisted review methodology that is scientifically designed to identify essential research topics or authors and reveal their interconnections and involves comprehensively examining the publications associated with a specific subject or field (Han et al. 2020). To perform an effective bibliometric analysis, it is of utmost importance to gather high-quality literature from a reliable and solid database (Zhang and Quoquab, 2022). Thus, Scopus, which is considered one of the scientific publishing research databases that is widely used by researchers all over the world, is relevant to achieving the study objective (Sa’dom et al., 2023). In contrast to Web of Science,

Scopus offers approximately 20% broader coverage, whereas Google Scholar provides results with varying levels of precision and accuracy (Falagas et al., 2008; Mesdaghinia et al., 2015).

According to the Scopus database, the total number of literature items retrieved with the search string 'social media marketing' from 2009 to 2023 is 2490. After the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the number of usable documents for analysis is 1747. This research only considered social science and management studies in the English language. The aim of this research is to identify a pattern of studies of social media marketing from business and marketing perspectives. The detailed search information is summarized in Table 2. The search process was completed on November 1, 2023.

Table 2. Summary of searching details

Criteria	Description
Source website	Scopus
Years	2009-2023
Searching terms/ searching strings	“Social media marketing”
Inclusion criteria	Business Management and Accounting, Social Sciences, Art and humanities Language: English
Exclusion criteria	Economics, Econometrics and Finance, Computer Science, Decision Sciences, Engineering, Environmental Science, Psychology, Energy, Medicine, Mathematics, Agricultural and Biological Sciences, Health Professions, Materials Science, Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics, Earth and Planetary Sciences, Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology, Nursing, Neuroscience, Multidisciplinary, Immunology and Microbiology, Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy, Chemical Engineering
Sample size	1747
Reference size	2490

Then, the data were uploaded into VOSviewer software and Biblioshiny for the bibliometric analysis (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017; Sa’dom et al., 2023). This study used VosViewer and Biblioshiny software for several reasons. VosViewer is suggested as one of the bibliometric software that offers good clarity in visual mapping and is able to create a visualization network that researchers can use directly (Markscheffel and Schröter, 2021; Zhang et al., 2023). While Biblioshiny is a “well-developed tool for conducting science mapping bibliometric analysis and has various options for analysis and visualization” (Moral-Muñoz et al., 2020).

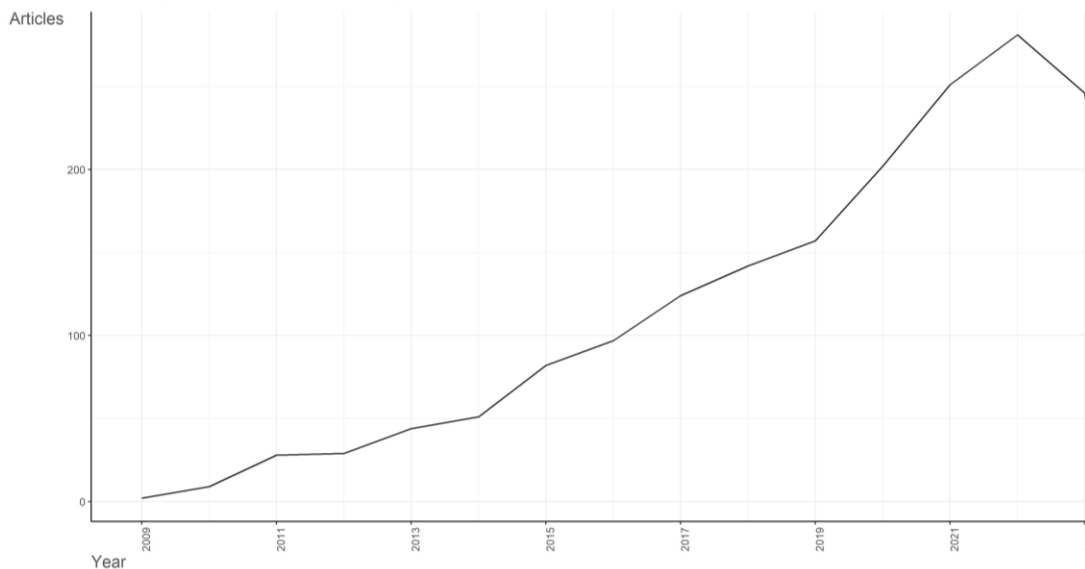
Results and Discussion

This study presents the results of the analyses of the publication materials from Scopus-indexed documents and journals. The bibliometric analysis includes annual scientific production (2009–2023), most cited articles, most cited authors, most active source title, co-authorship analysis, co-occurrence analysis, and co-citation analysis.

Annual scientific production

Figure 1 shows annual scientific production, or the number of research articles published during 2009–2023 based on their level of relevance to the social media marketing theme in the field of social studies. There has been an upward trend since 2009 to 2022 and a slight decrease in 2023. Specifically, the number of scientific publications has steadily increased from 2 (in 2009) to 281 (in 2022). This could be due to the increased adoption of social media marketing by marketers since the introduction of Facebook in 2006, which has led to increased interest in the growing scientific research on that field (Mohamed Sadom et al., 2023; Statistica, 2023). Despite the slight decrease in the number of published papers in 2023 compared to 2022, research in social media marketing is expected to continue to rise in the future. With the proliferation of social media for business in recent years (Hung et al., 2023), it could be forecasted that more articles will be published in the social media marketing field from the perspective of social studies.

Figure 1. Annual scientific production (2009-2023)



Most cited articles

Figure 2 and Table 3 illustrate the top 10 most cited documents in the field of social media marketing from the perspective of social science. As depicted in Figure 2 and Table 3, the highly cited articles are ‘Networked Narratives: Understanding Word-of-Mouth Marketing in Online Communities’ by Kozinets et al. (2012) with 1289 citations, followed by ‘Popularity of Brand Posts on Brand Fan Pages: An Investigation of the Effects of Social Media Marketing’ by De Vries et al. (2012) with 1247 citations, and ‘Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brands’ by Kim et al. (2012) with 1184 citations. This showed that these articles are three of the most impactful pieces of research on the social media marketing field in social science, based on the Scopus database from 2009–2023.

Figure 2. Most cited documents

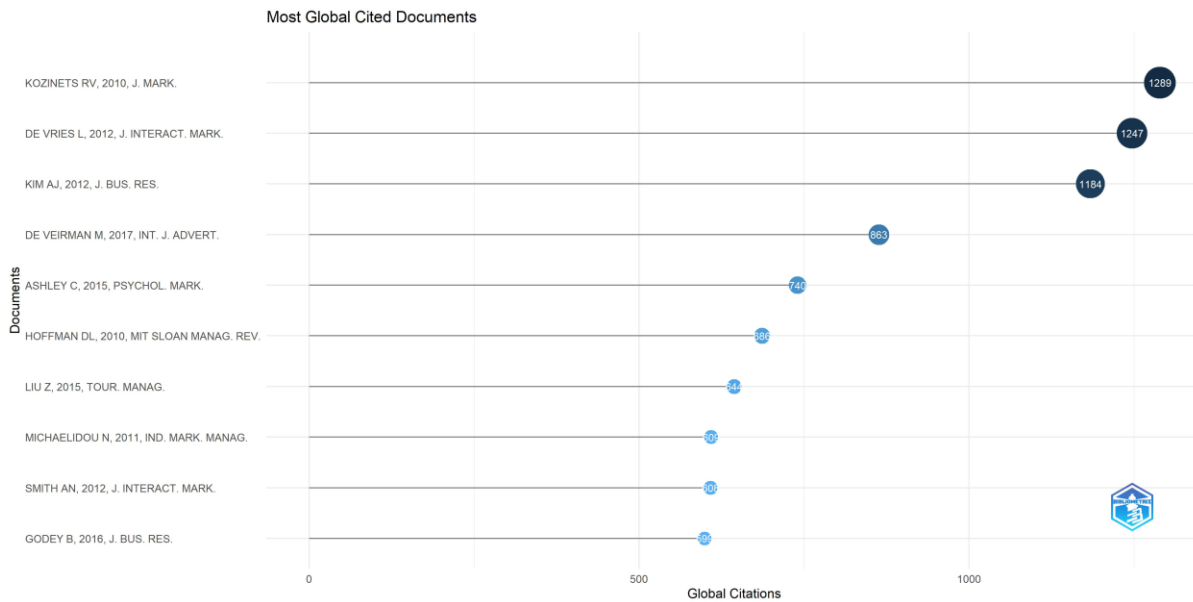


Table 3. Highly cited articles

No.	Authors	Title	Year	No. of citation
1	Kozinets, R. V., De Valck, K., Wojnicki, A. C., & Wilner, S. J.	Networked Narratives: Understanding Word-of-Mouth Marketing in Online Communities	2012	1289
2	De Vries, L., Gensler, S., & Leeflang, P. S.	Popularity of Brand Posts on Brand Fan Pages: An Investigation of the Effects of Social Media Marketing	2012	1247
3	Kim, A. J., & Ko, E	Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand	2012	1184
4	De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L	Marketing through Instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude	2017	883
5	Ashley, C., & Tuten, T.	Creative Strategies in Social Media Marketing: An Exploratory Study of Branded Social Content and Consumer Engagement	2015	740
6	Hoffman, D. L., & Fodor, M.	Can You Measure the ROI of Your Social Media Marketing?	2010	686
7	Liu, Z., & Park, S.	What makes a useful online review? Implication for travel product websites	2015	644
8	Michaelidou, N., Siamagka, N. T., & Christodoulides, G.	Usage, barriers and measurement of social media marketing: An exploratory investigation of small and medium B2B brands	2011	609

9	Smith, A. N., Fischer, E., & Yongjian, C	How Does Brand-related User-generated Content Differ across YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter?	2012	608
10	Godey, B., Manthiou, A., Pederzoli, D., Rokka, J., Aiello, G., Donvito, R., & Singh, R	Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: Influence on brand equity and consumer behavior	2016	599

Most cited authors

Figure 3 depicts the authors’ production over time for the 10 most productive authors based on the total citations (TC) and number of articles per year. Whereas, Table 4 showed the Top 10 of highly cited articles, which was determined by the total number of citations. Dwivedi Y.K with 7 articles and 272.92 citations, has the highest number of total citations based on the 2009–2023 data from Scopus. It indicated that this author is among the most influential researchers or authors in this field.

Figure 3. Authors’ production over time

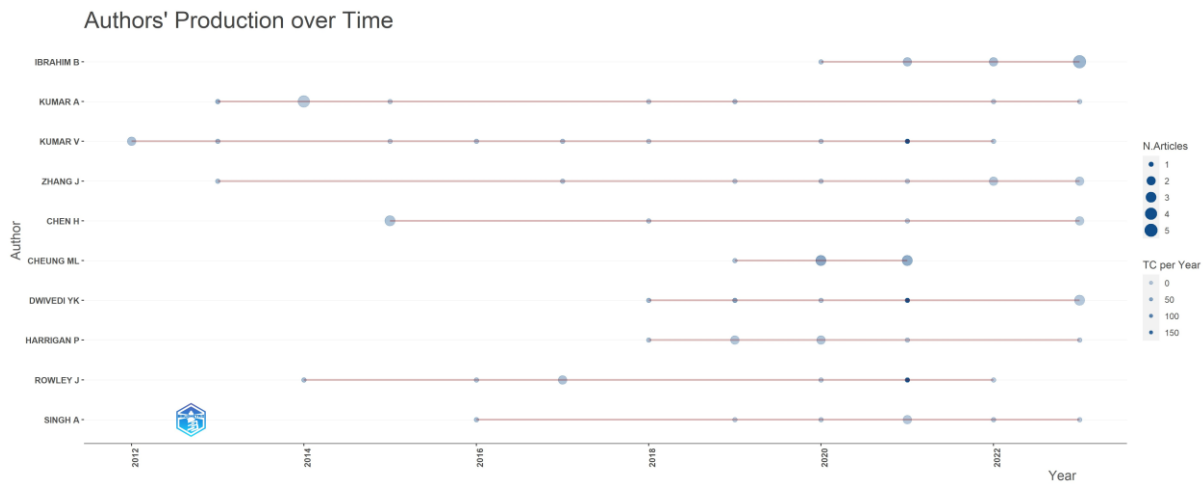


Table 4. List of the highly cited authors

No.	Authors	Total citations (TC)	No. of articles
1	Dwivedi Y.K	272.92	7
2	Kumar V.	254.5	10
3	Rowley J.	228.66	7
4	Cheung M.L	104.68	7
5	Ibrahim B.	77.17	10
6	Kumar A.	63.4	10
7	Zhang J.	46.32	9
8	Singh A.	24.45	7
9	Chen.H	22.73	7
10	Harrigan P.	20.71	7

Most relevant sources/ most active source title

Figure 4 and Table 5 demonstrate the top 10 most relevant sources or most prolific journals for the social media marketing field. The data illustrates that the *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, with 62 publications, has the highest number of publications, followed by *Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science*, with 46 publications, and *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, with 35 citations, according to the Scopus data based in the range of 2009–2023. It revealed that the stated sources and journals are among the largest contributors to the social media marketing literature worldwide.

Figure 4. Most relevant sources

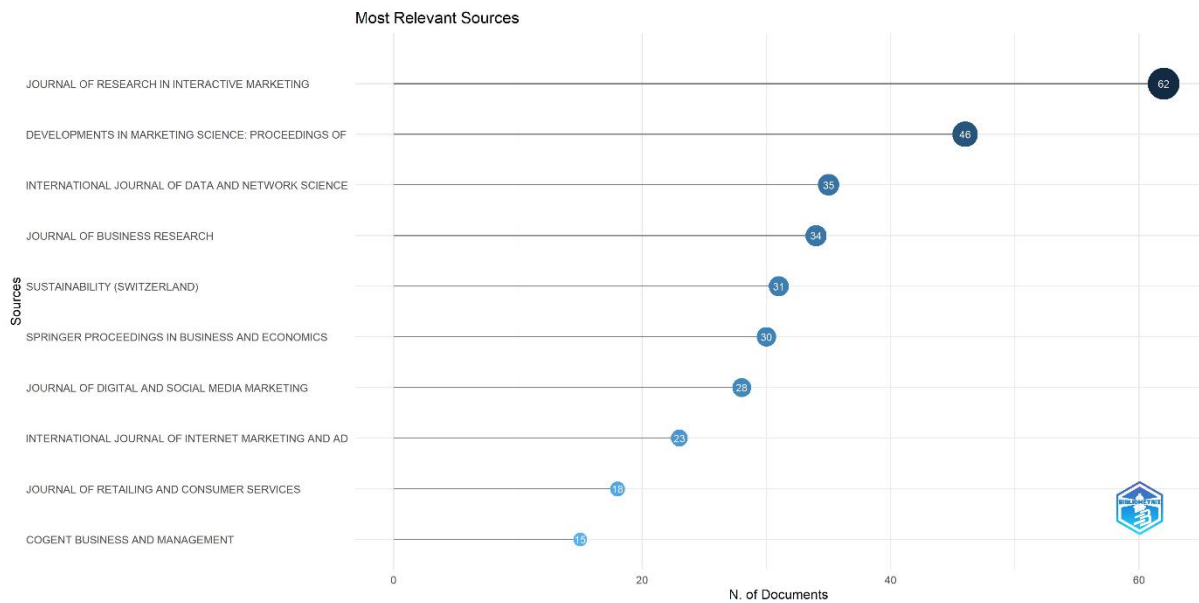


Table 5. Top ten most prolific journals

No.	Source title	No. of publication	Percentage
1	<i>Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing</i>	62	19.25
2	<i>Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>	46	14.29
3	<i>International Journal of Data and Network Science</i>	35	10.87
4	<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	34	10.56
5	<i>Sustainability (Switzerland)</i>	31	9.63
6	<i>Springer Proceedings in Business and Economics</i>	30	9.32
7	<i>Journal of Digital and Social Media Marketing</i>	28	8.70
8	<i>International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising</i>	23	7.14

9	<i>Journal of Retailing and Customer Services</i>	18	5.59
10	<i>Cogent Business and Management</i>	15	4.66
		322	

Co-authorship analysis

Co-authorship can be considered a common metric for evaluating the scientific interactions and relationships between authors and countries. Co-authorship is suggested as one of the most effective methods of scientific collaboration among the various bibliographic methods (Ullah et al., 2022). Generally, co-authorship analysis is used to analyze the collaboration in co-authorship research. Figure 5a demonstrates the co-authorship relations among authors. As shown in Figure 5a, Cheung m.l.; pires g.d., rosen Rosen have the highest number of citations, with 136 citations from the three documents. It indicates that this author is one of the most prominent authors with the highest impact and scientific interactions among other authors across the field.

Figure 5a. Co-authorship_authors

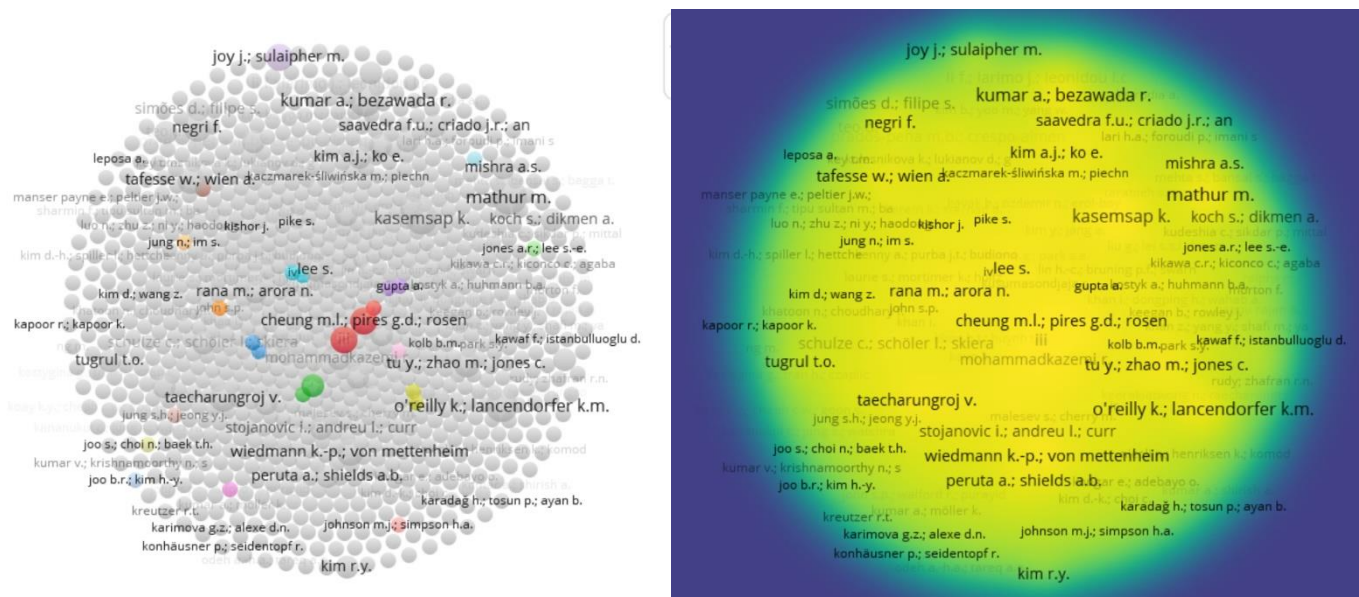
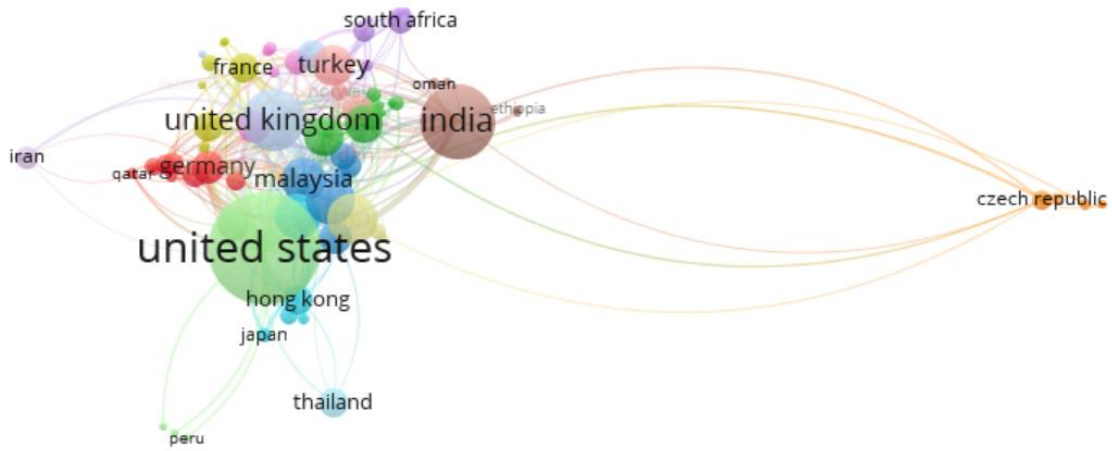


Figure 5b illustrates the co-authorship relations among countries. As depicted in Figure 5b, the United States produced 454 documents with 17881 citations, followed by India (202 documents) with 3695 citations. It indicates that the United States and India are the two most prominent countries in the field of social media marketing. Also, the United Kingdom and China contribute 141 documents and 96 documents, respectively.

Figure 5b. Co-authorship_countries



Co-occurring/ Co-occurrence analysis

By applying the method of co-occurrence analysis, high-frequency keywords have been identified and categorized into 7 clusters corresponding with the areas of research interest in the field. Table 6 shows the interpretation of the co-occurrence clusters displayed in Figure 6. According to the visual mapping, the size of nodes manifests the frequency of a keyword's occurrence, while lines show relationships among keywords. As shown in Figure 6, social media marketing and social media are the most frequent keywords, with a number of co-occurrences of 723 and 557, respectively. It is befitting the themes of the field of interest, which focuses on social media marketing in social science studies. The top 10 keywords based on the number of occurrences are illustrated in Table 7.

Figure 6. Co-occurrence networks of high frequency keywords

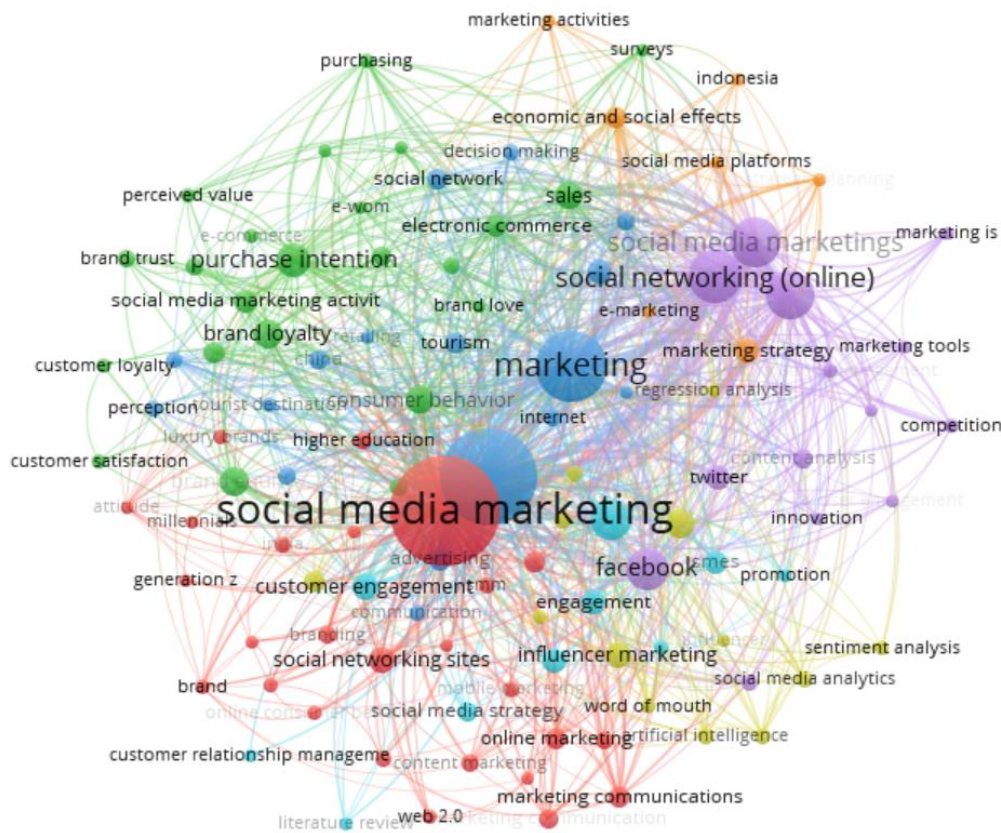


Table 6. The interpretation of co-occurrence clusters displayed in Figure 2.

Cluster	No. of items	Color	Label/ keywords
1	26	red	social media marketing, attitude, brand, brand management, branding, consumer engagement, content marketing, generation z, higher education, India, interactivity, internet marketing, luxury brands, marketing communication, marketing communications, millennials, mobile marketing, online consumer behavior, online marketing, purchase intentions, relationship marketing, social media advertising, social networking sites, technology acceptance, web 2.0
2	23	green	brand awareness, brand equity, brand image, brand love, brand loyalty, brand trust, consumer behavior, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, e-commerce, e-worm, electronic commerce, electronic word of mouth, e-worm, perceived value, purchase intention, purchasing, sales, social commerce, social media marketing activities, structural equation modelling, surveys, trust
3	17	blue	advertising, article, China, communication, consumption behavior, decision making, human, humans, internet, marketing, perception, retailing, social media, social network, sustainability, tourism, tourist destination
4	14	yellow	Artificial intelligence, consumer behavior, covid-19,

			electronic word-of-mouth, influencer, influencer marketing, influencers, Instagram, machine learning, regression analysis, sentiment analysis, social media analytics, user-generated content, word of mouth
5	14	purple	commerce, competition, content analysis, design/methodology/approach, Facebook, information management, innovation, marketing is, marketing tools, social media marketings, social networking (online), twitter, user engagement, YouTube
6	10	light blue	customer engagement, customer relationship management, digital marketing, engagement, entrepreneurship, literature review, promotion, SME's, social media strategy, social networks
7	7	orange	e-marketing, economics and social effects, Indonesia, marketing activities, marketing strategy, social media platforms, strategic planning

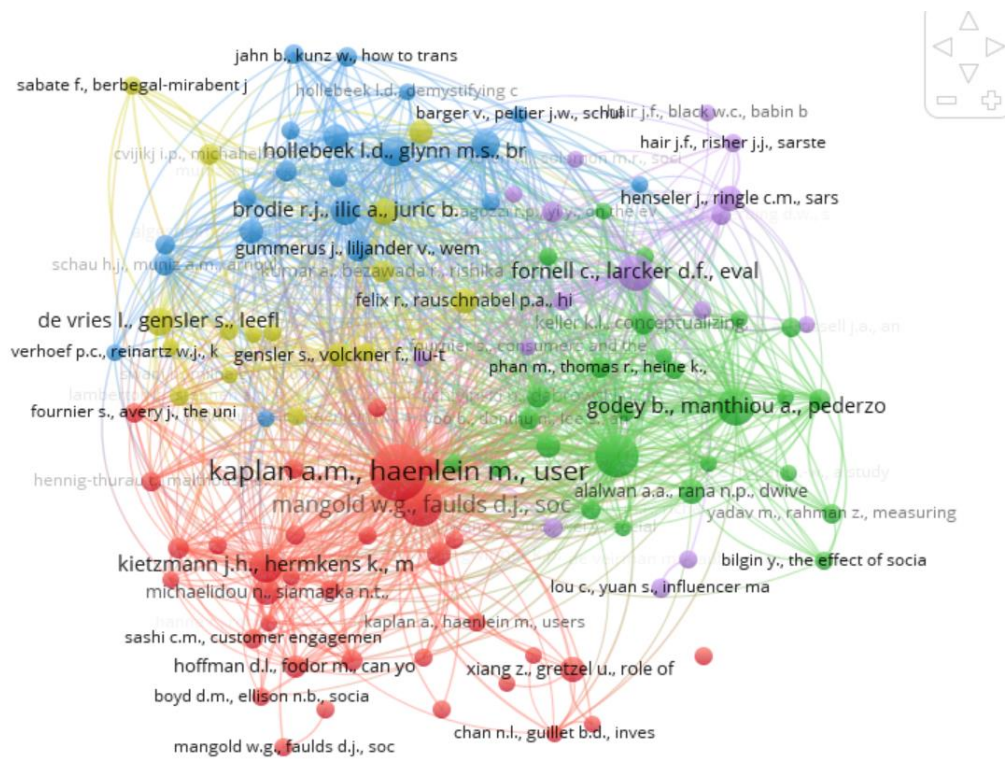
Table 7. Top 10 keywords based on the number of occurrences

Rank	Keyword	Occurrences
1	social media marketing	723
2	social media	557
3	marketing	311
4	social networking (online)	175
5	social media marketings	156
6	commerce	141
7	Facebook	105
8	digital marketing	103
9	purchase intention	71
10	consumer behavior	47

Co-citation analysis

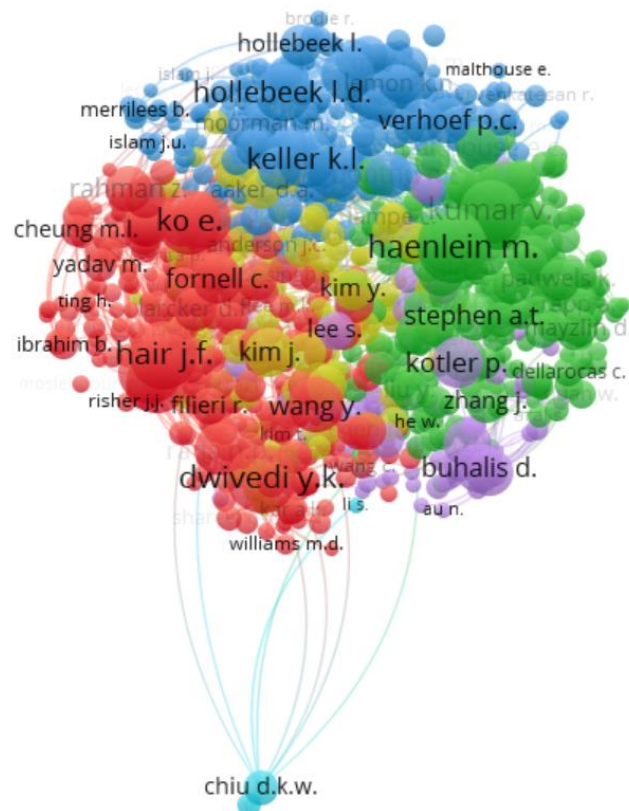
Co-citation analysis has the capability to recognize those authors who have made significant contributions to a specific subject (Zhang and Quoquab, 2023). “In the co-citation network analysis, the journals, articles, and authors of a specified research field with the highest citation frequency can be found. The higher the citation frequencies of an article, a journal, and an author, the more important it is” (Zhang et al., 2023). Co-citation analysis offers an overview of publications that have been collectively referenced in other works, emphasizing the connections or interactions between two articles. (Huang et al., 2022). The cited references are indicated by the names of the authors in the VosVivewer result’s mapping. As shown in Figure 7(a), Kaplan a.m., haeinlein m. has the highest number of citations and link strengths, with 225 citations and a total link strength of 1193. It indicates that this cited reference has the highest impact and responses among other references.

Figure 7a. Co-Citation_cited ref_network visualization



As depicted in Figure 7b, Dwivedi, Y.K with the highest number of citations (486) and total link strength (39624), is the most contributing author with the highest impact and interaction in the field of social media marketing.

Figure 7b. Co-Citation_ cited authors_network visualization



Implication, limitation and future research direction

This study provides a holistic and comprehensive bibliometric analysis for scholars that specialized in social media marketing for social science. Particularly, this study contributes to a better understanding of the definition and concept of social media marketing from the perspective of social science and visually illustrates and mapping the annual scientific production (2009–2023), most cited articles, most cited authors, most active source title, co-authorship analysis, co-occurrence analysis, and co-citation analysis. The output of this research may assist researchers in seeing the status of the research and will provide them with a general grasp of the direction that research will trend in the future.

This study considered only “social media marketing” as the search keyword. Future studies can consider expanding the research scope by adding more keywords and relating them to the company and/or government policies. Also, this study applied both Biblioshiny and VosViwever for the bibliometric analysis. Instead, future studies can consider using different software, like CiteSpace, etc. to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of interest. Lastly, this research employed bibliometric analysis. However, future studies may explore the option of employing systematic literature review (SLR) analysis to comprehensively summarize and gain a better understanding of the patterns and trends from the previous studies.

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