

A Bibliometric Analysis of Social Media Marketing and Consumer Behavior: Trends, Theories, and Future Directions

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Abstract: This review paper provides an in-depth bibliometric study of the academic field of social media marketing (SMM) and consumer behavior (CB) with the focus on the developments trends, thematic development, citation patterns, and key figures in this rapidly developing field. It finds a more than doubled research production rate, especially since 2017, depicting the soaring importance of social media platforms in determining consumer behavior and the marketing approach. The major research topics include but are not limited to: social media marketing, consumer behavior, purchase intention, social networking (online), which are the main topics of the discussion, with an growing focus on sustainability and ethical consumption. The paper also brings to the fore the work of some of the key authors such as Dwivedi, Yogesh K.; Jacobson, Jenna; and Filieri, Raffaele; who have influenced the theoretical and methodological framework in SMM and CB. Co-authorship and citation-network based analysis of publications demonstrate that it is an interdisciplinary research community consisting of collaboration and cooperation across North America, Europe and Asia. Thematic trends indicate the growing importance of emerging trends in the social media like influencer marketing, the influence of social media on consumer trust, and cross-cultural differences in the use of social media. The paper concludes by explaining some of the potential future research trends, such as how social media affects sustainability, psychological impacts of social-media marketing, and the increased role of artificial intelligence in online marketing. The results will be helpful both to researchers and practitioners, guiding future research on the depths of the digital marketing and consumer behavior in an ever-evolving global environment.

Keywords: Social media marketing, consumer behavior, bibliometric, citation network, social networking, influencer marketing, sustainability, consumer trust, cross-cultural engagement, artificial intelligence in marketing

1. Introduction

‘Social media marketing (SMM)’ (Adnan et al., 2020), has already become one of the essential pillars of modern business reality, which radically alters the methods of brand communication with the consumer. Due to the spread of such platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, companies receive unprecedented access to large dynamic populations. SMM involves using these communication tools to interact with customers, gain brand awareness, and provoke consumers to make purchasing choices or content sharing (Vasudevan & Senthilkumar, 2017). There is empirical research that supports the assumption that SMM is capable of performing both advertising functions and serving as an avenue to promote consumer engagement, trust, and loyalty (Achen, 2016). The increased use of digital platforms by end users and businesses highlights the relevance of SMM in the latest marketing approaches (Al-Hasan, 2024).



In line with this growing trend in the utilization of social media, the science of consumer behavior (CB) has been modified to reflect how the digital world affects decision-making. CB is a combination of psychological, emotional, and social aspects that determine the way people choose and buy and dispose of goods and services (Khan et al., 2025; Solomon, 2017). CB in the digital marketing environment is being increasingly influenced by online reviews, peer referrals, influencer recommendations, and personalized advertisements, all of which social media platforms are very good at (Keller & Siegrist, 2015). The concept of CB in the digital era has become a crucial area of knowledge to companies in need of formulating successful approaches that will appeal to their target audience (Amin et al., 2020; Arora et al., 2023; Gupta et al., 2018; A. H. Khan et al., 2025; Nittayoosakulchot & Pankham, 2025a).

Because of the complexity and high pace at which the two disciplines, social media marketing and consumer behavior, evolve, it is necessary to use systematic methods to chart the available academic literature. Bibliometric method, which involves statistical evaluation of academic journals, provides a potent means of combining extensive amounts of information and determining patterns, trends, and impactful input to the literature (Ausejo-Sánchez et al., 2024; Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, et al., 2021; Donthu, Kumar, Pattnaik, et al., 2021; Joshi et al., 2025; Pahari et al., 2024; Rawangngam et al., 2025). Bibliometric research has been helpful in tracing the evolution of the research topic, tracing the intellectual framework, and identifying important players (Donthu et al., 2021; Nayak et al., 2021). Using this methodology to the spheres of SMM and CB, the research will provide an in-depth analysis of the academic environment, shedding light on how these disciplines have changed throughout the years and overlapped with the overall study of digital marketing (Berestova et al., 2022; Gvili & Levy, 2018; Haba et al., 2023; Huhmann & Limbu, 2016; Lin et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2019).

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The research is aimed at offering a bibliometric review of existing academic materials concerning the topic of social-media marketing and consumer behavior with the following purposes to achieve:

1. To examine academic work in the field of SMM and CB, establishing the tendencies, leading works, and effective research papers.
2. To pinpoint the key research issues in the overlap of SMM and CB, to emphasize how the themes have changed over the years and what they bring to the current marketing practice.
3. To analyse trends and patterns of citations in the existing literature, to identify the active authors, journals, and articles that have contributed to the academic discussion of these domains.

Through the attainment of these goals, the study will be able to provide a clear picture in the current research on the SMM and CB, and will provide valuable information on future academic directions in these fields.

1.2. Research Questions

To facilitate the bibliometric analysis, this review aims to provide answer to the following research questions:

1.1 Which are the main research areas in SMM and CB and how they have changed with time?

- *Who are the authors and journals that have been of significant contribution in the area of SMM and CB?*
- *What has the literature on SMM and CB done to evolve with time, and what trends or changes in focus have taken place over the past few years?*

These questions will be answered due to the comprehensive bibliometric analysis that will allow investigating the major tendencies, authors, and publications that form the discourse in SMM and CB.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Academic Underpinnings of the Social Media Marketing (SMM).

Social media marketing (SMM) has become a central agenda in companies that aim to take advantage of the digital platform to increase brand awareness, create consumer touchpoints and influence consumer buying behaviour (An & Ngo, 2025; Cabosky, 2016; Jacobson et al., 2020; Mude & Undale, 2023; Salhab, 2024; Watanabe et al., 2021). The most significant aspect of social media in modern marketing practice is its ability to establish a two-way communication between the firms and the audiences they are targeted at, thus opening the opportunities of establishing a customized engagement (Adnan et al., 2020; Tuten and Solomon, 2017). The big five platforms facebook, instagram, twitter, and linkedin give marketers more accuracy than ever in demographic targeting, customer behaviour tracking, and real time interaction (Algharabat, 2017; Bhandari & Sharma, 2017; Do & Nguyen, 2025; Eitan, 2025; Gazal et al., 2019; Hima et al., 2025; Islam et al., 2024; Le et al., 2025; Mazeed et al., 2019; Rajathi & Dass, 2024; Shahina Begum & Israel, 2025).

The SMM theoretical basis is often based on the engagement theory, which explores the two-way interaction of the brand and consumers in the digital space. Brodie et al. (2013) point out that engagement theory highlights the importance of consumer in the co-creation of value by pragmatically connecting with the brands and other consumers. The fact that social media facilitates such interactions that enables firms to develop more substantive and deeper relationships with their clients (Cuevas et al., 2020; Ghouse et al., 2022; Giantari et al., 2025; Harwinda et al., 2024; Ibrahim, 2025; Kabir et al., 2024; Manyanga et al., 2024; Menon, 2021; Shanthi & Rajakumari, 2025; Silaban et al., 2022; Varga & Gabor, 2021; Wan et al., 2025; Wu & Long, 2024; Zhou et al., 2023). Additionally, the notions of trust and brand loyalty have been redefined in the digital environment where consumer trust is gradually being influenced by interactions over the Internet, word of mouth, and brand visibility (Athwal et al., 2019; Dougenik, 2022; Elhajjar & Itani, 2025; Jiang et al., 2024; Manyanga et al., 2024; Naini, 2025; Rana & Arora, 2022; Sahaf & Siddiqi, 2025; Sohaib & Han, 2023; Sumerta et al., 2019). Empirical studies indicate that when trust is built on social media, it creates more brand loyalty because consumers will be more willing to subscribe, promote, and recommend other brands that they trust (Nekmahmud et al., 2022; Sang, 2023; Santoso, 2023; Sohaib & Han, 2023).

One of the critical frameworks connected with CB in the digital age is *Stimulus/Organism/Response (S-O-R)* model which has been used to understand the impact of social media stimuli (e.g., brand posts, influencer endorsements) on consumer behaviour and emotions (Jani & Han, 2015). In this model, the stimulus is social media content, and it influences consumer organisms (i.e., psychological reaction, e.g. trust or engagement) and ultimately results in particular reactions (*viz.*, purchase, sharing of content, and brand recommendation) (Gómez et al., 2023; Jani & Han, 2015; Kananukul et al., 2015, 2015; Mathur, 2019).

2.2. Consumer Behaviour Digital Era.

The emergence of the social media has been dominantly transformed consumer behaviour especially in information seeking, brand rating and decision making to purchase (Afifah et al., 2022). Social media has made the interactional and dynamic nature of conventional consumer behaviour models, which are typically based on linear decision-making processes (e.g. awareness, interest, evaluation, purchase), more complex (Afifah et al., 2022; Gómez et al., 2023; Mathur, 2019; Sang, 2023; Santoso, 2023). Modern consumers have access to a wide range of information sources in the form of peer reviews, posts on social media, and recommendations by influencers, and this has changed the decision-making process into a more social networked process (Fokina et al., 2019; Gonçalves et al., 2024; Jacobson et al., 2020; Knuth et al., 2024).

The social media platform support the so-called eWOM process, during which consumers share their brand experiences, thus affecting the perception and behavior of their peers ((Ananda et al., 2019; Choi et al., 2025; Jain et al., 2020; Mim et al., 2022; Prasad, 2018). Also, the social identity theory assumes that consumer choices towards a brand are determined by the social groups to which they belong particularly on platforms where social validation is a decisive factor in the formation of perceptions (Bauer & Tian, 2024; Fakhreddin, 2025; Saboo et al., 2016; Wong, 2025). This understanding has led to the '*Consumers Online Brand Related Activities*' (COBRAs) concept which classifies the consumer behaviours of consuming, contributing and creating brand-related contents on the social media

(Cheung et al., 2021; Joshi et al., 2025). These practices put into the spotlight the aggressive consumerism in building brand identities and controlling the social circles.

Furthermore, social media has also created additional aspects of consumer behaviour, including those related to parasocial interaction, when consumers develop one-sided relationships with influencers and brands (Cabosky, 2016; Gonçalves et al., 2024; Hotkar et al., 2023; Knuth et al., 2024; Salhab, 2024). Such engagements are typified by emotional attachments that define the attitudes and behaviour of consumers towards the brands and potentially resulting in increased involvement and loyalty.

2.3. Past Bibliometric Research on Digital Marketing.

Bibliometric studies have been useful in mapping out the development of the research of digital marketing and social media marketing (SMM). The systematic review of big data has explored some of the major research topics, most prominent researchers, and new directions in the field. An example is a bibliometric research by Faruk (2021), which examined the process of digital marketing research development during 20 years, which revealed such significant themes as digital advertising, e-commerce, and consumer behaviour on social media. According to Faruk (2021), the number of publications has increased substantially after 2015 and there is a distinct change towards the empirical research that evaluates the efficacy of the digital-marketing strategies.

A specific bibliometric review of social media marketing by Rawangngam et al., (2025) examined Scopus publications and provided insights to the rise in the importance of influencer-marketing, social media analytics and AI-based marketing plans. The sources that were found by Shaheen (2025) to have the greatest impact included ‘*Journal of Interactive Marketing*’, ‘*Journal of Advertising Research*’, where the most powerful contributions are made by the research in the United States, China, and India.

Table-1: Summary of Major Finding of Recent Studies

Authors	Year	DOI	Summary of Findings
Nittayoosakulchot & Pankham, (2025)	2025	10.22105/jfea.2025.511836.1836	Digital marketing success in online supplements sector in Thailand is driven by constructs like perceived quality, value, brand image, and SMM activities, which significantly impacts customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions.
Dreist et al., (2025)	2025	10.1186/s40100-025-00367-5	Social media offers agricultural direct marketers in Germany significant opportunities, but many farmers lack strategy and technical expertise; authentic content improves consumer connection and social media success.
Yao et al.,(2025)	2025	10.1038/s41598-025-03336-6	‘Influencer attributes’ and ‘social satisfaction’ significantly influence purchase intentions in Chinese-social media, with social satisfaction mediating effects and product knowledge moderating them.
Eitan, (2025)	2025	10.1111/ijcs.70140	‘Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)’ and ‘Joy of Missing Out (JoMO)’ tactics differently affect consumer engagement on social media, with FoMO generating urgency and engagement but some skepticism, while JoMO fosters positive emotions and sustained engagement;

			combined tactics offer balanced outcomes.
Theodoridis & Gkikas, (2025)	2025	10.3390/app152111720	Predictive analytics in retail tourism reveal that short-video views and organic post reach are key performance indicators predicting social media user engagement with high accuracy, aiding strategic digital marketing decisions.
Anute et al., (2025)	2025	10.14419/th15e564	Emerging social media marketing trends like ‘influencer marketing’, ‘short-form-videos’, ‘AI-driven chatbots’, ‘live shopping’, and personalized ads significantly influence e-commerce consumer engagement and sales conversions.
Dondapati, A.	2025	10.1515/roms-2024-0121	Virtual influencer types (avatars vs composites) and ad appeal types (informational vs emotional) affect consumer purchase intent, mediated by perceived credibility and parasocial interaction; emotional appeals with avatar influencers yield greatest purchase intent.
Giang, G.; Nguyen Binh Phuong, D.; Tan, T.	2025	10.14505/tpref.v16.3(35).16	Social media marketing strategies positively impact continuance intention for cosmetics in Ho Chi Minh City via customer experience, brand awareness, attitude, and product satisfaction, with product satisfaction having the strongest effect.
Özkan, Y.; Çelik, O.	2025	10.69554/UTMS6464	For German automotive brands on Facebook in Turkey, shorter text, informative message cues, and vivid posts increase user engagement; hashtags and longer text reduce it, and emotional message cues boost sharing likelihood.
Al-Ababneh, H.A. et al.	2025	10.36956/rwae.v6i3.1603	Interactive digital ads with cultural alignment in Jordan strongly influence consumer behavior positively in organic agricultural products, with highest engagement and conversion rates; study identifies drop-off points in the purchase journey needing optimization.
Suhud, U. et al.	2025	10.5267/j.ijdns.2024.10.006	TikTok marketing activities effectively increase trust, reliability, and Muslim consumer purchase intention during live streaming sessions for apparel by enhancing credibility and consumer confidence in e-commerce.

Suhud et al., (2025)	2025	10.5267/j.ijdns.2024.9.003	TikTok marketing activities impact perceived innovativeness and enjoyment among Muslim consumers for apparel, with enjoyment influencing purchase intention more than innovativeness directly.
Andrade et al., (2025)	2025	10.1016/j.iemeen.2025.100293	Content marketing strategies on Instagram and TikTok influence electronic word-of-mouth; message format drives TikTok engagement, content attractiveness drives Instagram engagement, and celebrity endorsements increase likes/comments across both platforms.
Tong et al., (2024)	2025	10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105477	Virtual influencer characteristics including controllability, interactivity, parasocial relationship, product congruence, and source credibility impact Chinese Gen Z purchase intentions, moderated by brand equity and emotional attachment.

Source: Authors own compilation

All of the studies in *Table-1*, contribute to the growing complexity and increased focus on empirical research in social media marketing (SMM) and its interplay between it and consumer behaviour. These research points out the dynamic nature of the field that points out to the fast movement towards a highly personalized, influence-based as well as data-influenced paradigms of marketing.

It is on this basis of these formulations that the current study seeks to provide the in-depth examination of the co-evolutionary path of SMM and consumer behaviour and map out the future areas of interest in further academic research.

3. Methodology

The study follows a broad-based bibliometric approach in order to examine scholarly environment of SMM and CB. The method combines the performance assessment and scientific mapping thus, providing the possibility to make the systematic judgment of the current tendencies, the influential thinkers, the current research topic, and the cooperation dynamics in the field. Combining these methods, the research provides an organized discussion of the developmental path and changing profiles of SMM and CB studies, which reflects the knowledge of key spheres of academic interest in the field and future research directions.

3.1. Performance Analysis

The first step in the bibliometric process is performance analysis and involves quantification of the research output in terms of publications, citations and journal impact measurements (Giraldo et al., 2025; Joshi et al., 2025; Pahari et al., 2024; Phan et al., 2024). The main aim of the *Performance analysis* is to provide general evaluation of scholarly productivity related to SMM and CB, identify the most significant contributions, and discuss the citation tendencies.

3.1.1 Data Collection: The sources of data were the Scopus database that is considered to be one of the most comprehensive and reliable sources of academic literature. The search string that was used was:

"TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Social Marketing" AND consumer AND behavior) AND PUBYEAR > 2009 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND PUBYE Media

AR > 2009 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English"))"

This search found journal articles between the years 2010 and 2025 and focused on the overlap between SMM and CB. The data was then narrowed down by removing non-peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, and other types of document that might have provided a bias on the results.

3.1.2 Measures and Quantitative analysis.

The core metrics used to perform the analysis of the performance were the following:

- a) *Publication Trends*: The number of publications per year was analyzed to determine times of intense increase or decrease in the activity of research.
- b) *Citation Analysis*: Citation numbers of single articles, scholars as well as journals were evaluated as a way of determining the most powerful works in the discipline.
- c) *Authors and Affiliation Analysis*: The most active authors and the institutions that made a valuable contribution to the study of SMM and CB were determined.

The performance analysis provides a glimpse of the productivity and contribution of research in SMM and CB and highlights important publications, authors, journals, which have influenced the academic landscape.

3.2. Scientific Mapping

The next step of the methodology is focused on scientific mapping that involves the visualisation and exploration of the intellectual framework supporting the research in SMM and CB. Scientific mapping helps to identify the key themes of research, collaboration and new spaces in the field (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, et al., 2021).

a) Co-Authorship Network

In order to examine the relationship amongst authors and institutions, co-authorship network analysis was conducted. This analysis mapped relationships between researchers in terms of the co-authorship relationship, which gives an idea of the collaborative quality of the field (Donthu, Kumar, Pattnaik, et al., 2021, 2021; Pahari et al., 2024). The VOSviewer is a bibliometric network construction and visualisation tool that was used in the analysis. It allowed determining a highly densely connected set of authors and institutions and identifying clusters of collaboration (Donthu, Kumar, Pattnaik, et al., 2021).

b) Co-Occurrence Analysis of Keywords.

In order to identify the main research themes and changing trends in SMM and CB, the keywords co-occurrence analysis was conducted (Donthu, Kumar, Pattnaik, et al., 2021; Pahari et al., 2024). This is a methodology that measures the data number of times the keywords are used together in publications and builds networks based on such co-occurrences. VOSviewer was once again used to visualise these relationships and clarify the key themes including; consumer engagement, purchase intention, influence marketing, and social media advertising. The thematic map obtained provides the information on the evolution of the research themes and their interconnection.

c) Co-Citation Analysis

To examine the intellectual architecture of SMM and CB research, the co-citation analysis has been used. The method analyzes the number of times the two articles are referenced in the same publication, hence, identifying both supporting literature and the cornerstone articles in the field. The co-citation density map is a visualisation of the frequency of specific articles or authors to be co-cited which reveals clumps of powerful literature that form the core of the research environment (Cheung et al., 2024; Choudhary et al., 2019; Donthu, Kumar, Pattnaik, et al., 2021; Pahari et al., 2024; Tong et al., 2024).

d) Networks of Country and Institutional Collaboration.

A country collaboration network was created to determine the global collaboration patterns in SMM and CB (Pahari et al., 2024; Rawangngam et al., 2025). This overview identified the patterns of international collaboration and mapped the outputs of the research, per country. Equally, institutional collaboration was mapped to establish which institutions are at the forefront to lead research projects and establish collaborations.

3.3.Limitations of the Study

This review based research has few methodological weaknesses too. *To begin with*, the reliance on Scopus exclusively creates geographic and linguistic bias with the English-language journals indexed in Scopus being significantly overrepresented, non-English journals and region-specific journals are likely to be underrepresented. *Second*, bibliometric data can have missing or incorrect citation records or metadata, including author name variants, that can invalidate the quality of network analyses, including co-authorship and citation counts. *Thirdly*, the search query used can exclude relevant studies that use different constructs or words, thus limiting the level of comprehensiveness of the dataset. *Fourthly*, bibliometric analysis is not an assessment of the qualitative content or methodological rigor of the included articles, it only serves to shed some light on structural trends.

4. Results and analysis

This section demonstrates the major findings of the bibliometric analysis of the literature on the topic of social media marketing (SMM) and consumer behaviour (CB). It cannot be done without in deciphering the observed trends, patterns and interrelations that arise when bibliometric methodologies are put to play. Based on the information retrieved out of Scopus, the analysis outlines the development of the academic output in the respective fields, reveals the most effective researchers and journals, and uncovers emerging research trends. The findings provide quantitative and graphic representation of the academic scene which explains the growth and the intellectual framework of the SMM and CB research within the last ten years. Moreover, the insights also show how various thematic strands are interconnected which enhances the understanding of disciplinary development and shapes future research directions.

4.1. Performance Analysis

The sample that would be used in this study consists of 396 *peer-reviewed* journal articles written in the period between '2010 and 2025'. It contains 229 unique sources which are mostly academic journals and show the rate of increase of 35.57 per annum. The average age of documents is 3.11 years, and the articles have an average of 37.38 citations. In all publications, the total number of references is 3,015. There are 583 entries of Keywords Plus and 1,177 author-assigned keywords, including 1,205 authors. The average number of co-authors is 6.08, and in the total number of co-authors, international ones are 27.27%. The records that are included are all articles. This overview highlights the diverse and extremely cooperative nature of studies in the field of SMM and CB in the period under consideration.

4.1.1. Publication Trends in Research

The *Figure-1*, demonstrates the results of the annual academic production of articles in the fields of *Social Media Marketing (SMM)* and *Consumer Behaviour (CB)* between the years 2010 and 2025. The dataset explains various relevant trends and provides the information on the changing research environment within the past fifteen years. It shows that the production of research in this field increased significantly since 2017. The number of annual publications was low before 2017, as one article was documented in 2010, 2011, and 2012. After 2017, the trend increased exponentially, which is a sign of increased academic interest in SMM and CB. The highest rise was in 2023 and 2024 whereby the output increased to 79 and 96 articles, respectively.

The *Figure-1*, supports this trend by showing a sharp upward trend starting around 2017 and continuing sharply to the most recent years. This trend represents a massive growth in scholarly research regarding the influence of social media on consumer behaviour. The period of rapid development coincides with the global expansion of the social media platform and its ever-growing prominence in the marketing strategies.

One could attribute this increase to a number of factors:

- a) *Heightened use of social media in the marketing*: The rapid embracing of SMM by companies along with the growing popularity of digital marketing has resulted in a tidal wave of academic research studies over its effects on consumer behaviour (Ahmed et al., 2025; Fetais et al., 2023; Sahaf & Siddiqi, 2025; Yao et al., 2025).
- b) *Technological changes*: The emergence of new technologies, such as *machine learning*, *artificial intelligence* and *big-data analytics*, that have become the cornerstone of social media marketing, could have triggered further research (Bojanowska & Kulisz, 2020; Nittayoosakulchot & Pankham, 2025b; Ong & Leng, 2022; Shahina Begum & Israel, 2025).
- c) *Higher awareness of consumer behaviour in the digital sphere*: With the Social-Media changing the nature of consumer relations, understanding of how the platforms impact purchasing decisions has become a centre of scholarly attention (Adnan et al., 2020; Mas-Tur et al., 2016; Rossanty et al., 2024; Serrano-Malebran et al., 2023).

Moreover, the fact that the sphere of SMM and CB is continuing to grow annually, especially since 2020, shows that these domains are not only relevant but fast-changing, which is an academic corrective measure in regard to the new marketing paradigm. These domains are likely to go on increasing as the social media technologies, the user behaviour and marketing strategies continue to evolve.

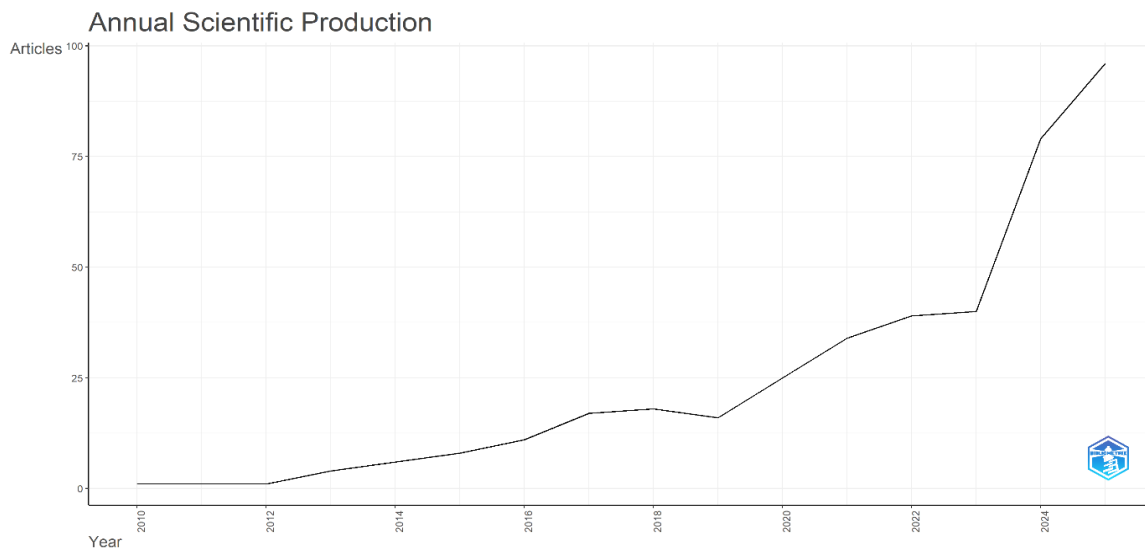


Figure-1: Annual Scientific production trend

Source: Researcher own compilation using Bibliometrix R studio

4.1.2. Analysis of Average citations

The Figure-2, represents the average yearly citations of the publications in the field of SMM and CB between 2010 and 2025. The number of citations has a high inter-annual variation. The mean number of citations per article during the first years (2010-2012) was exceptionally high with 2010 having an outlier with 1,499 citations. This anomaly is believably due to a small group of high impact early publications that artificially biased the average. This peak was followed by observable decrease in mean citations and this was a reflection of the annual decrease in the number of published and cited articles. This downward trend continued to 2016, at which point citation counts have leveled off and started to gradually increase, reaching a high point in 2021 with an average of 94.09 citations per article. Subsequently, the numbers of citation once again decreased, and in the last years (2023-2025) sharply, which can also be explained by the novelty of these publications and the limited timeframe of greatest citation accruals.

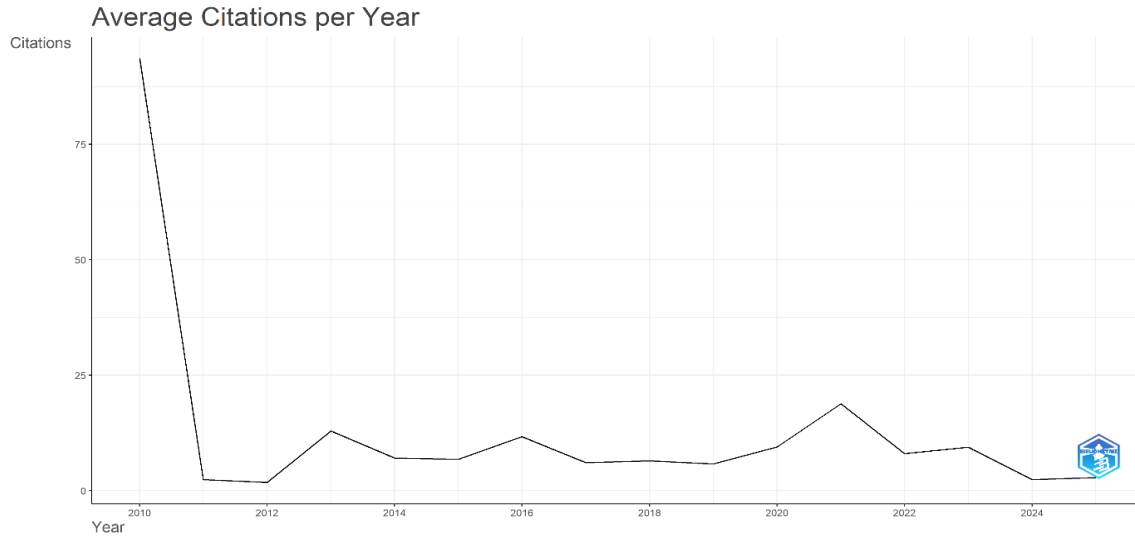


Figure-2: Annual Average citations trend

Source: Researcher own compilation using Bibliometrix R studio

4.1.3. Analysis of the Most Influential Journals

The Figure-3, shows the most relevant academic literature at the level of journals that carry out research on the topic of SMM and CB. The most prominent databases show the ‘*Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*’ and ‘*Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*’ have ten articles each. It is preceded by ‘*Sustainability (Switzerland)*’ and ‘*Cogent Business and Management*’ that have eight contributions in the field each. Seven articles were published in other periodicals including the ones published in the journal, ‘*Innovative Marketing*’, ‘*International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising*’ and ‘*Marketing Intelligence and Planning*’. This distribution demonstrates a tendency of the concentration of scholarship in well-established respected journals, which should emphasize their central role in the development of discourse in these fields of research.

The prevalence of these journals in the academic scene indicates the critical nexus of marketing, consumer behavior, and digital technologies. The reason why they have become the core of the discussion about SMM and CB is probably the high levels of peer-reviewing, huge readership, and high usage in the academic community. The growing interest in events like the journals of *sustainability (Switzerland)* and *Cogent Business and Management* can be interpreted as the tendency towards addressing the ethical and sustainability aspects of social media marketing, thus representing the current tendencies on consumer behavior and digital marketing studies. This understanding can guide the researchers to the potentially fruitful places to make submissions in the future and clarify the loci of innovative discourses in this fast changing discipline.

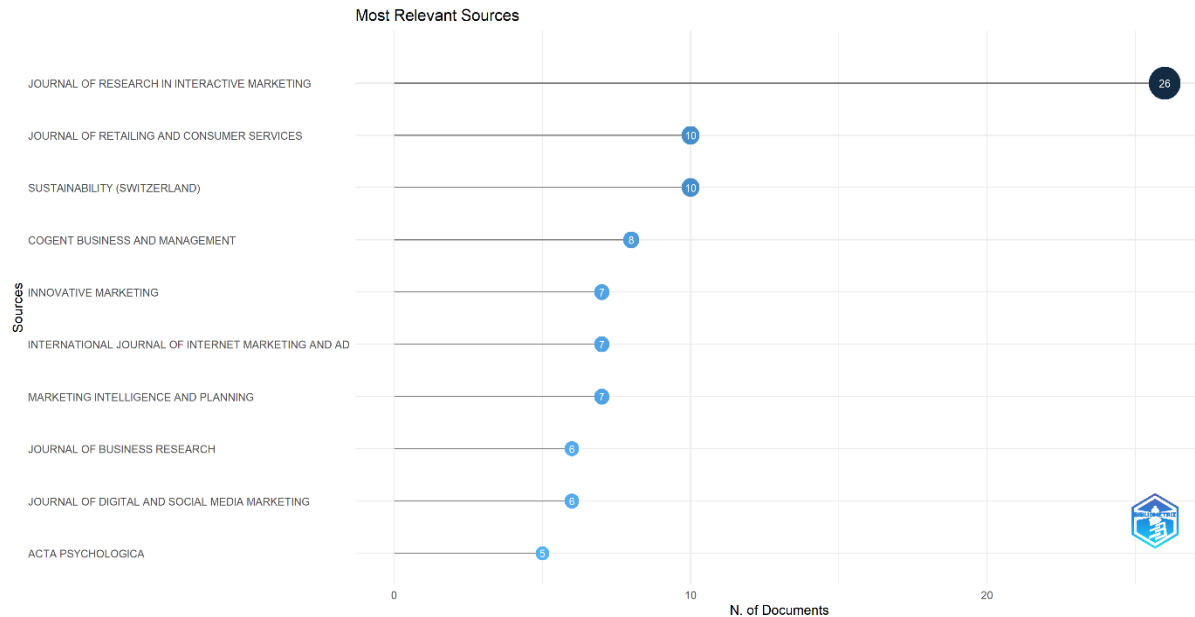


Figure-3: Most Relevant Sources

Source: Researcher own compilation using Bibliometrix R studio

4.1.4. Country Scientific Production Analysis

The Country Scientific Production map (*Figure-4*), is a visual representation of distribution of research output in consumer behaviour (CB) and social media marketing (SMM) in different countries. It demonstrates vividly the concentration of scientific (scientific) production in certain areas, which is extremely strong in North America, Europe, and even in some parts of Asia. The USA representative of the scientific output is the leading country in the chart, which is expressed by the greatest darkest shade of the map, thus, indicating the most active research in the fields of SMM and CB. This finding is in tandem with the fact that the USA is leading in digital marketing innovation and research. Besides, there are European countries, in particular, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France, which demonstrate significant scientific contributions, represented by medium and dark blue colors. These countries have an important part in developing academic language on the topics of digital marketing, consumer behaviour, and their correlations. China and India are doing well in terms of research output and this is why they are showing dark colors of blue, which signify their growing significance in the field. These nations are emerging as significant players in the international research spectrum especially with the digital platforms and e-commerce booming business environments in these parts of the world. As can be seen in the map, there are also a number of other countries in the world that make significant contributions to the field, but on a smaller level of research output. On the whole, the map shows that the United States and Europe are still the core zones of SMM and CB study; however, the growing role of Asia, particularly, China and India is the key factor in transforming the world research network. This geographic distribution of studies also indicates a phenomenon of increasing globalisation of the SMM and CB studies with more and more varied contributions to the field arising around the globe.

Country Scientific Production

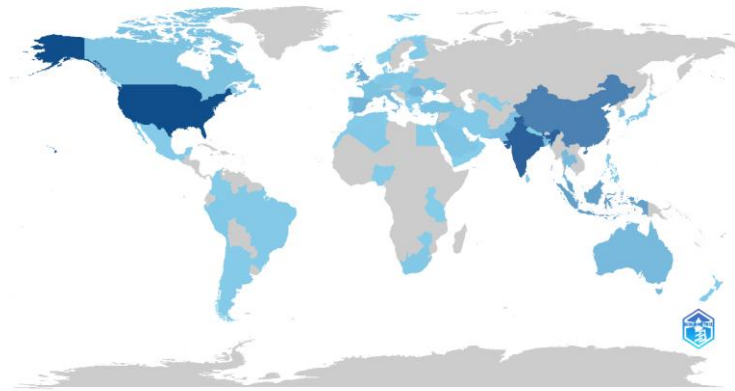


Figure-4: Country scientific production

Source: Researcher own compilation using Bibliometrix R studio

4.2 Scientific Mapping

4.2.1 Most Cited Documents Analysis

The Table-2, outlines the most widely referenced materials as regards to SMM and CB. The article by Kozinets et al., (2010) in *Journal of Marketing* stands out due to its extremely high number of references of 1,499 ones, all over the globe, which mark the basic role of the article in the field. Other interesting articles include those by Dwivedi et al., (2021), 1,417 citations in the article published in *International Journal of Information Management*, and Godey et al., (2016), 917 citations in the article published in the *Journal of Business Research*. These articles play a central role in informing the current academic debate in SMM and CB, especially with respect to the effects of social media on the decision-making process of consumers.

The rest of the most-cited articles, which include the works of Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, (2013), Hollensen et al., (2023) and Sun & Wang, (2020), cover a range of topics of digital marketing and consumer behavior. These works received many citations and show the interdisciplinary and global nature of the research in the field. According to the table, the number of citations per year (TC per Year) of these documents is significantly large, particularly in the years 2021 and 2020, which means that they remain relevant in the academic environment. These papers are in turn citation paths to the increased scholarly interest and acknowledgement of the crucial convergence between social media marketing and consumer behavior that makes them a vital source of information to researchers who are interested in further developing existing knowledge and expand the new dimensions of digital marketing and consumer research.

In general, the trend indicates that despite a slow but steady growth in the amount of publications (as seen in the graph above), the citation impact of new articles is still in the phase of playing catch-up with the old ones. The number of citations per year is on a rising trend until 2021, as the popularity of social media marketing and its impact on consumer behaviour are growing. The trend of increasing the number of citations is an indication of an extended scholarship recognition of the importance of the topics. The latest decline can be explained by the traditional lag that is tied to citation accrual of newly issued publications, as it requires some time before scholars can make use of new materials in the cover of further studies. This discussion highlights the growing research academic interest in SMM and CB with time and the growing research impact as it develops.

Table-2: Most cited documents

Paper	DOI	Total Citations	Normalized TC
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Kozinets et al., (2010)	10.1509/jmkg.74.2.71	1499	1.00
Dwivedi et al., (2021)	10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168	1417	15.06
Godey et al., (2016)	10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.181	917	7.83
Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, (2013)	10.1007/s13278-013-0098-8	628	3.73
Hollensen et al., (2023)	10.1108/JBS-01-2022-0014	329	11.66
Sun & Wang, (2020)	10.1108/APJML-03-2019-0178	260	4.57
Yadav & Rahman, (2017)	10.1016/j.tele.2017.06.001	246	4.50
Nekmahmud et al., (2022)	10.1016/j.techfore.2022.122067	225	6.98
Algharabat et al., (2018)	10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.09.011	224	4.32
Manser Payne et al., (2017)	10.1108/JRIM-08-2016-0091	222	4.06

Source: Researchers' own compilation

4.2.2 Thematic Analysis

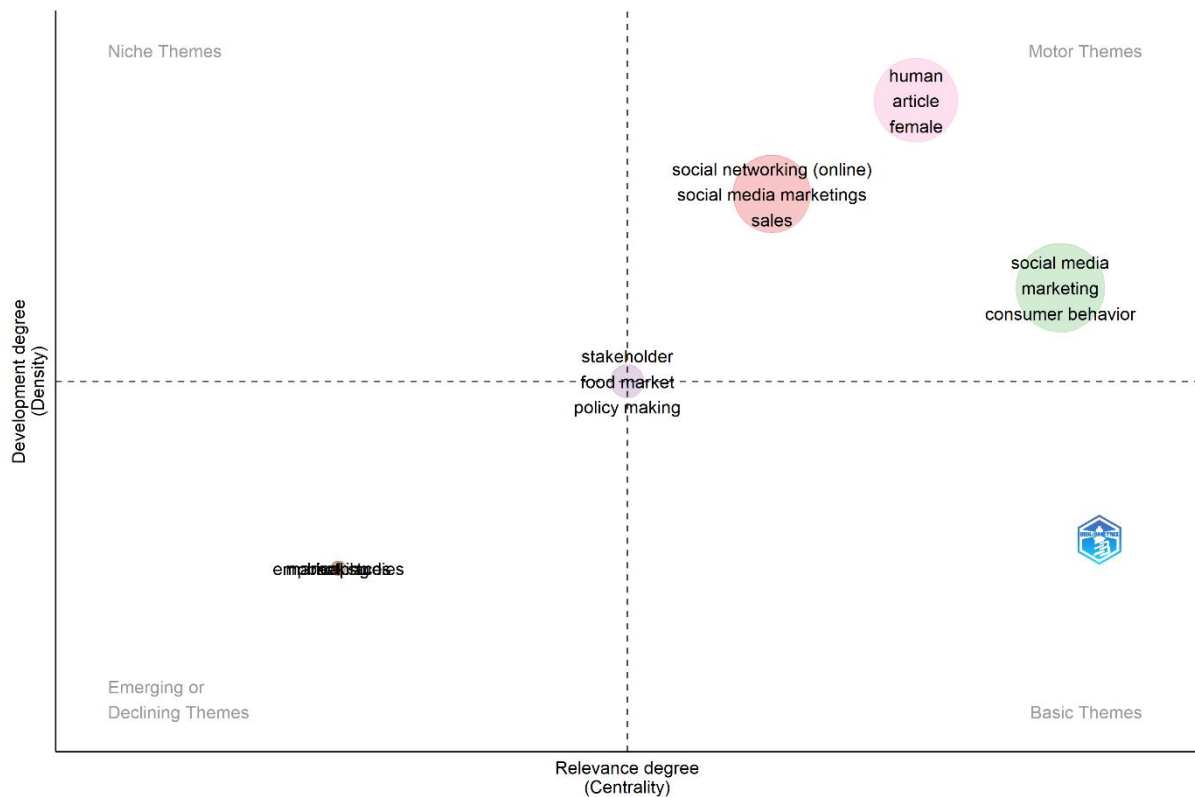


Figure-5: Thematic Map

Source: Researcher own compilation using Bibliometrix R studio

The theme map (Figure-5), shown above indicates how important research themes have evolved and become applicable in the context of SMM and CB. The map lists the themes by their significance to each other (centrality)

and level of development, which gives an understanding of how they will be placed in the general academic environment.

In the upper right box which is the Motor Themes we find themes that are highly relevant and also highly developed. These are SMM and CB, which take up the area of both strong development and centrality. Such placement shows that these fields are not merely extremely relevant to the discussion of modern academics, but also well-developed, having a large body of research that is having a substantial impact on the sphere. These are the themes that form the basis of SMM and CB and represent the primary ones in the development of a marketing strategy and the interaction of consumers with digital platforms.

The map on the left side and especially on the quadrant of the theme emerging or falling has a theme named empty strategies. This referral means that it is either the underdeveloped area or that it is becoming irrelevant to the academic community, which may be due to its inability to keep up with the dynamic environment of social media marketing.

At the upper-left corner, the so-called “Niche Themes”, we find the following concepts: social networking (online), social media marketing, and sales. These ones are highly developed but perhaps still need to achieve the same level of academic eminence, or relevance as those of the Motor quadrant. They, therefore, form the sub-topics of intensive, specialized research that can be an emergent or sub-field study in SMM and CB.

Lastly, the area of the “Basic Themes” quadrant includes such themes as stakeholder, food market, and policy making. These are the topics that have lower relevancy scores implying that they are at lower levels of development and could slowly come out as more core research debates. They share general societal and policy implications of SMM and CB, but they are less commonly studied than more established ones.

Together, this thematic map provides a graphic depiction of the volatile character of SMM and CB research. Theoretical status and relevance of such themes as SMM and CB are confirmed by their centrality and maturity in the academic discourse. However, the map similarly finds out new regions and smaller theme areas that can have the potential of becoming more significant themes in the future. Such areas should therefore be considered further developed by researchers, especially the themes of Basic and Motor which can offer new possibilities of developing theoretical basis as well as application of SMM and CB. At the same time, one should focus on the degradation or the lack of development of such themes like empty strategies that may require reconsideration in the face of new marketing technologies and trends.

4.2.3 *Word cloud Analysis*

The term cloud (*Figure-6*), is used to present an image of the most common terms in the academic sources on ‘social media marketing (SMM)’ and ‘consumer behavior (CB)’. The fact that it includes such terms as ‘social media’, ‘marketing’, ‘consumer behavior’, ‘social networking (online)’ makes the major component of research in these fundamental areas. These are the words that prevail in the discussion meaning that the major research themes are closely related to the knowledge of how social media platforms contribute to consumer behavior, decision-making, and purchasing intentions.

Moreover, the words ‘sales’, ‘commerce’, and ‘electronic commerce’ show that the crossroads of the social media and consumer behavior is often considered through the prism of commercial interest, i.e., how the social media marketing influences the consumer buying choices and the overall climate of e-commerce. The fact that the words like ‘consumer’, ‘intention’, and ‘purchasing’ are introduced implies researches that explore the motives and activities of consumers in the virtual environment.

The demographic elements of the literature can be also revealed through the use of the word cloud, where such words as ‘female’, ‘male’, ‘young adult’, and ‘middle aged’ indicate that the scholarship is exploring the interactions between specific demographic groups and social media and how they might behave differently. The reference to adolescent and adult also emphasizes on the use of age segmentation in consumer behavior study.

On the whole, the word cloud supports the main ideas of the study the impact of the social media on consumer behavior, and the degree of focus on marketing strategies and e-commerce results is significant. The diversity of the terminology reflects the multidisciplinary nature of the industry, combining the aspects of psychology, marketing, sociology, and digital technology. This understanding would inform future studies by identifying the high intellectual and research needs and possible research gaps, especially on understanding how various age and demographic cohorts interact with social media marketing.

Figure-6: Word Cloud

Source: Researcher own compilation using Bibliometrix R studio

4.2.4 County Collaboration Analysis

The country collaboration map (Figure-7), outlines the international system of research collaboration of the area of SMM and CB. The map provides the illustration of the collaborative relationships and cross-border intellectual interactions that contributed to the development of the research in these spheres. A closer look at the map will reveal that the *United States of America (USA)* is the leading country in international partnerships, as there are many arrows leaving it towards countries in *Europe, Asia, and Oceania*. Such an arrangement implies that the USA is a key centre of SMM and CB studies, which is a major player in the global academic cooperation. Other European states, in particular the *United Kingdom, Germany and France* also show a high degree of collaboration to other regions and this highlights their significance in the scholarly discussion on social media marketing. In addition, Asian nations, especially China and India, are well-networked, which is indicative of their rapidly increasing contribution to the industry. These countries are becoming significant research hubs in the digital marketing and consumer behaviour, and their growing involvement in academic co-operation is an indication of the international nature of research in the fields of SMM and CB. The arrows on the map mean collaborative relationships, and tighter lines on the map depict stronger research relationships. The map proves that the academic partnerships are quite common, but certain areas are the leaders in terms of the number of collaborative studies: *North America* and some parts of *Europe* are the countries where the presence of this type of study is the most significant, thus supporting its significance in the field. This research distribution of the world partnerships enlightens the cross-cultural and international dimension of SMM and CB research. It also reflects the universal nature of the impact of social media on the global consumer behaviour since researchers across the world collaborate in order to explore and study this powerful effect.

Country Collaboration Map

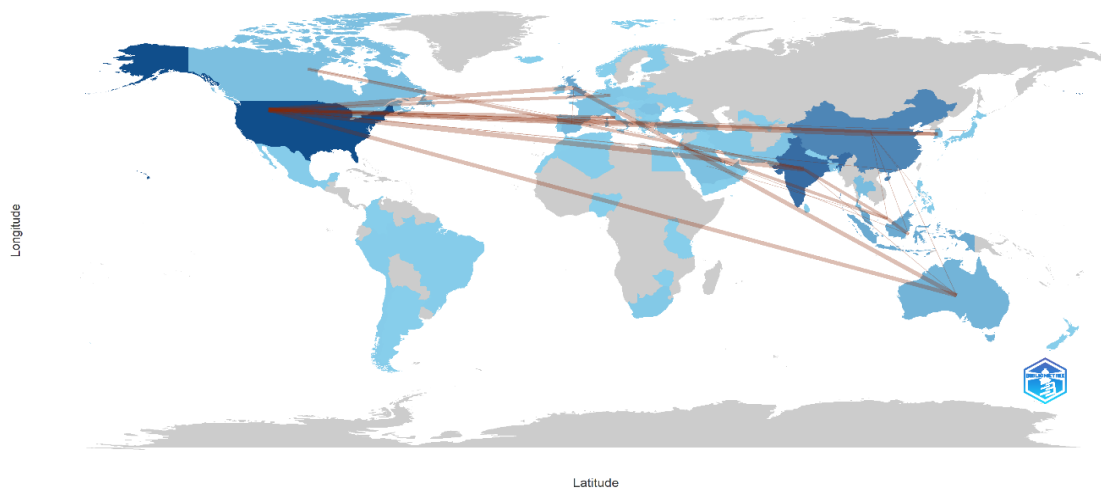


Figure-7: Scientific Collaboration among countries

Source: Researcher own compilation using Bibliometrix R studio

4.2.5 Co-Occurrence analysis

The co-occurring network (*Figure-8*), visualization represents the most repeated keywords in the academic literature on the topic of SMM and CB. This analytical framework provides a summary of how the central themes and concepts interrelate when they appear mutual to each other in academic articles.

The reason why the notion of SMM and CB occupies the central position in the visualization is the significance of the concept in the research world. These two constructs are highly interconnected and bear a vast range of related notions, such as purchase intention, social networking (online), advertising, thus, constituting a highly interrelated web of co-occurring terms. The close relationships between these keywords show that the study of SMM and CB regularly lays stress on the role played by social media in consumer behavior, especially in areas of purchase decisions, internet use and advertising effectiveness.

The keywords that have been determined in the red cluster like consumer behavior, purchase intention, and brand depict the behavioural and psychological aspects of consumer interaction with social media sites. The green cluster, which includes such terms as sustainability, sustainable development, and green marketing, underlines the fact that the role of ethical concerns in digital marketing is becoming bigger and bigger, it can be assumed that more and more studies are investigating how sustainability and consumer behavior interact in the digital space.

The blue circle around the terms social media marketing and advertising indicates that the focus is made on the strategic and promotion elements of marketing through social media, with such words as brand, social media advertising, and marketing communication speaking to the matter of combining advertising approaches through social platforms. In addition, the use of such terms as influencer or the use of celebrity endorsement only underscores the contribution of influencer marketing in forming the perception and behaviour of consumers in social media.

The keywords like generation z, young adult, female and adolescent can be interpreted as the demographic segmentation that is often discussed in the context of SMM and CB research which presupposes the focus on the interaction of different age groups and gender categories with social media marketing. The cluster of the words purchase intention and intention indicates a current research topic, which is about the need to understand consumer decision-making mechanisms and the effect of the content in social media on consumer decision-making.

The given co-occurrence network demonstrates the broadness of research on the topic of social media marketing and consumer behavior and the importance of relationships between various factors including consumer intent,

advertising strategies, demographic distinctions, and sustainability concerns. The high level of interconnections between the important terms shows that SMM and CB research is multidimensional and it involves psychological, behavioural, strategic and ethical implications. Since the social media platforms can keep changing, the network suggests that research in the future will probably explore further the impact of social media on diverse consumer groups, and how sustainability and ethical marketing practices can determine consumer behaviour.

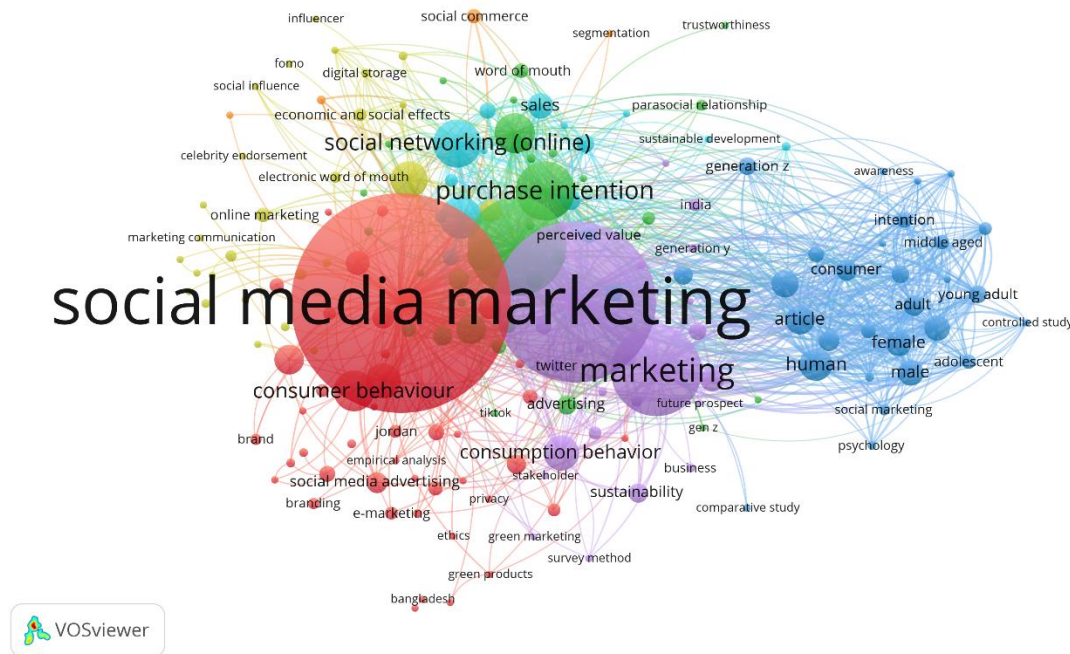


Figure-8: Co-Occurrence network

Source: Researcher own compilation using VOSviewer

4.2.6 Co-Author Network analysis

The co-author network (Figure-9), provides an informative illustration of the relationship of collaborative contacts between the leading scholars in the fields of social media marketing (SMM) and consumer behaviour (CB). The figure uses a node-connections to depict the relationship between different authors therefore with nodes (author) being connected by edges (co-authorship).

Based on the visualization, it is clear that there are some writers that are placed in very central locations in the network. As an example, *Jacobson, Jenna and Dwivedi, Yogesh K.* become important nodes, having so many links with other authors in the network. Presumably, these scholars can be considered as the key players in the SMM and CB fields since their wide networking among other academics supports their leading position in promoting joint research. The number of the collaborations is related to the size of the nodes, which means that these authors are one of the most important participants in the evolution of the field.

The clusters are formed on the basis of co-authorship of the authors. Indicatively, the green cluster with the center of *Dwivedi, Yogesh K. and Algharabat, Raed Salah* refers to an excellent collaborative research network in that group. Equally, the red cluster around Jacobson, Jenna integrates some of the most influential academics like *Wang, Yichuan and Jain, Varsha*, indicating a research area in this group. These groups indicate fields of specialization or sub-disciplines of SMM and CB, a group of researchers working on similar topics or research methods.

It is also found in the network visualization that smaller clusters of nodes and isolated nodes exist, e.g. those depicting *Mattila, Anna S. S. and Costa Pinto, Diego*. These structures either represent expert fields of study or writers

who do not work together solely as much as part of the larger network. The relationships among such nodes suggest the possible future directions of cooperation, as these scholars can be developing emerging issues or very specific aspects of social media marketing and consumer behaviour.

This network visualization of co-authors offers a vivid representation of the research cooperation scenario in SMM and CB. The word best used to describe the centrality of authors like *Jacobson, Jenna and Dwivedi, Yogesh K.* is that they are leaders in their field, whereas the fact that the authors are grouped into specific clusters implies that the authors are investigating a specific area of interest. Such collaborative networks may be understood in order to know the main types of influencers and reveal the relationships between the various research sub-fields of SMM and CB. This information can help researchers to develop future partnerships and trace the change of research topics in the academic society.

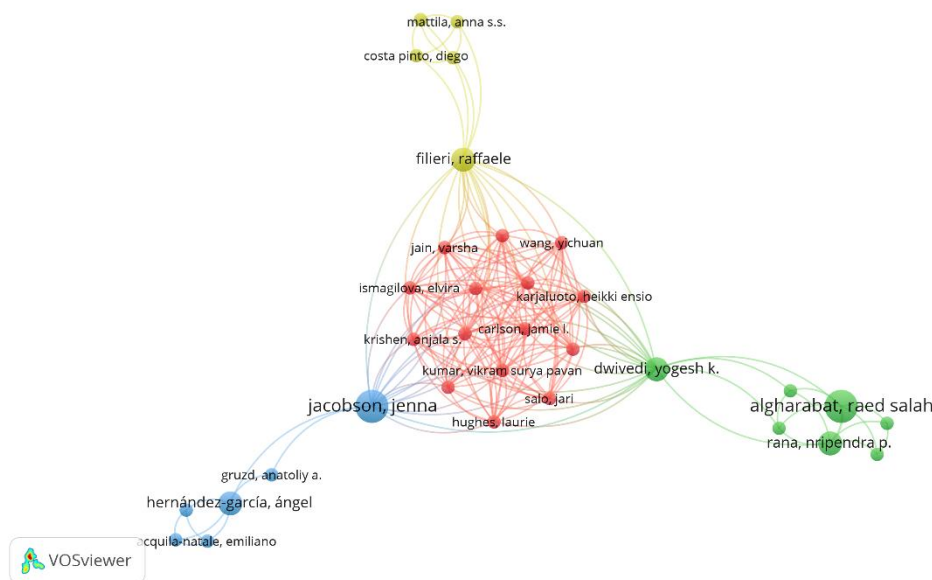


Figure-9: Co-author network visualisation

Source: Researcher own compilation using VOSviewer

4.2.7 Co-Citation Density Visualization Analysis.

The co-citation density map (Figure-10), outlines the intensity of co-citation association between the important researchers and their publications in the field of social media marketing (SMM) and consumer behavior (CB). In this heat map-like display, areas with high intensity (yellow and green) represent a strong level of co-citation meaning that the works by these authors are commonly cited together in the number of extant academic researches. Regions with darker blue colors on the other hand indicate a low frequency of co-citation indicating less frequent combination in the literature.

The most conspicuous clusters identified as yellow and green, are surging around established experts in the marketing and consumer behavior studies. Ajzen, Icek the Theory of Planned Behavior, Bagozzi, Richard P. the knowledge of attitudes and purchasing decisions, and Anderson, James C. the master of the structural equation modeling are the main aspects of focus. The fact that these scholars are located in the high-density area shows just how important they are in terms of the development of theoretical frameworks and research methodology in the field.

Other authorships like Abdallah Alalwan and Ali Abdallah also demonstrate high co-citation as they are testifying to their contributions to the study of consumer behavior and social media. The list of co-cited sources related to these authors, as well as such names as Brodie, Roderick J. the author based on the interaction with consumers, and

Ashley, Christy, the creator of the unique approach to consumer engagement in the digital realm, demonstrates the growing body of research on the subject of social media marketing strategies and consumer engagement in the online realms.

This co-citation density map also makes clear the interrelation of fundamental and new research, and the fact that studies on SMM and CB mention and expand upon classic research, theories, and methods, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and structural equation modeling. The representation of more current scholars, such as Arora and Anuja (who explores the quantification of impact of social media) and Barger, Victor A. (who explores the influence of social media) testify to the shifting nature of scholarship, especially with the emergence of new trends and social media sites.

The map visually depicts the intellectual structure of the science of social media marketing and consumer behavior, here the authors are those with works that are repeatedly cited. These theorists have it in the development of key theories and approaches that have informed current perceptions of SMM and CB. The fact that high-density clusters are based on the continuity of foundational research and at the same time reflect the dynamic and changing nature of the discipline as new areas of inquiry are discovered in parallel with the evolution of digital marketing and consumer behavior analysis. Therefore, the map can be used as a resource on recognizing the most influential authors and understanding how much the main research topics are connected with each other in the field.

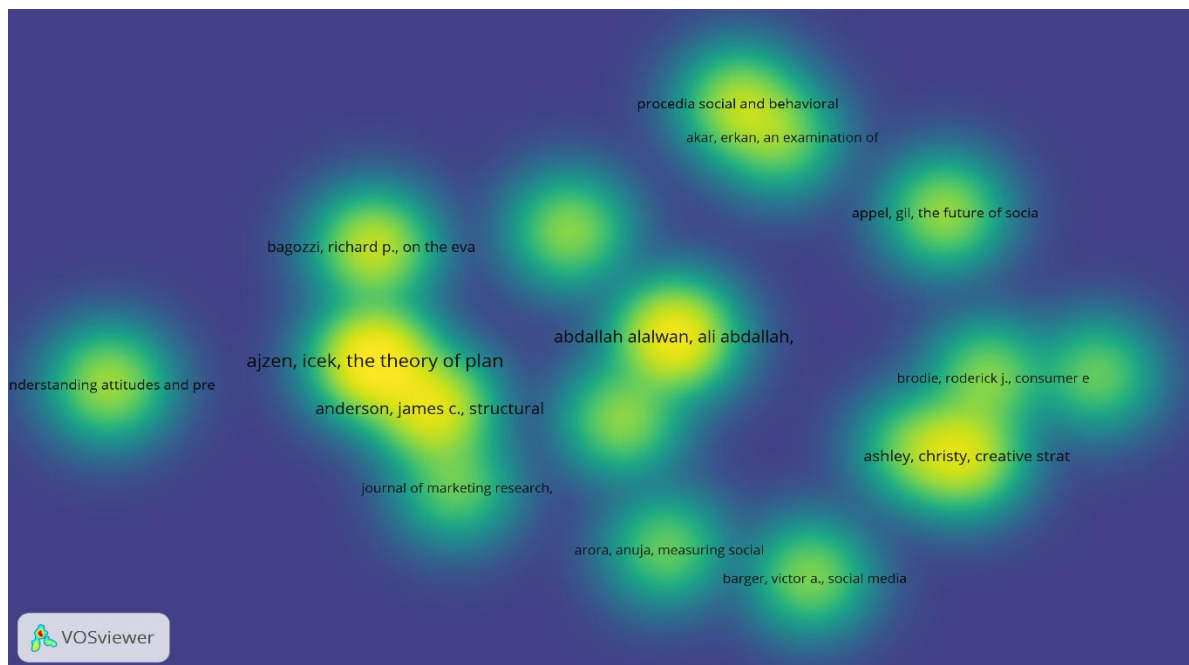


Figure-10: Co-Citation Density visualisation

Source: Researcher own compilation using VOSviewer

5. Discussion

Work is the in-depth bibliometric review of the academic environment of social media marketing (SMM) and consumer behavior (CB), which clarifies the major tendencies, authors who have made a significant impact, the topic of research, and future directions of the two related issues. The results support the growing role of social media platforms in influencing the process of consumer decision-making, which is accompanied by the changing marketing approaches. Combining them with the most popular marketing and consumer behavior frameworks the 'Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)' (Ajzen, 1991), the 'Engagement Theory' (Brodie et al., 2013), and the 'Technology

Acceptance Model (TAM)' (Davis, 1989). The current study outlines dominant and emerging insights into the area of SMM and CB.

5.1. Development and History of SMM and CB Research.

The bibliometric analysis shows that there has been a great increase in number of publications related to SMM and CB, especially since 2017. This surge can be explained by the fact that social media sites have been spreading at a very high rate and are becoming part of the marketing strategies. As multiple studies (e.g. Mason et al., 2021; Mastur et al., 2016; Serrano-Malebran et al., 2023; Tulipa et al., 2024; Zha et al., 2023) emphasize, social media has completely transformed the interactions between the brand and the consumer, thus, triggering increased scholarly interest. The sharp increase in the number of research since 2020 can be explained by the fact that the world is digitising faster due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and during this period, companies switched to digital marketing platforms to continue reaching customers in the conditions of lockdown and changes in their consumer behaviour (Anderson et al., 2024). In addition, the bibliometric evidence shows that the impact of social media on consumer buying decisions is gaining academic acceptance, which corroborates previous research works by Donthu, Kumar, Pattnaik, et al., (2021), Giraldo et al., (2025), Joshi et al., (2025) and W. Khan et al., (2024), on the pivotal role of social media marketing in the modern consumer experience.

Citation analysis also proves that the articles provide fundamental knowledge, including Kozinets (2010) and Godey et al. (2016), have an enduring effect on the sphere, which is directly related to the long-term academic implications of research studies concerning such fundamental concepts as consumer engagement and purchase intention in digital marketing-related situations (Schivinski et al., 2016). However, the citation rate decrease in the latest publications (2023-2025) indicates the presence of citation lag, which is the common characteristic of bibliometric studies since more current research needs time to become part of the further research (Shukla et al., 2022).

5.2. Theoretical Implications: Relating to Important Models.

5.2.1. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The fact that TPB (Ajzen, 1991) can be applied to SMM and CB study gives us a systematic model that will be used to understand how consumer attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control affect behaviour in social media sites. The bibliometric results bring out consumer trust, purchase intention, and brand loyalty as a core concept of SMM and CB, which are very similar to constructs of TPB. Specifically:

- a) Attitudes towards Social Media Marketing: The consideration made by consumers on social media content influence their interaction with brands. Positive attitudes are formed when material is considered as valuable or genuine and this raises intentions to buy or participate (Ali, 2025).
- b) Subjective Norms and Influence by Peers: Social media enhances the subjective norms especially through influencer marketing. The actions and views of others in their networks tend to influence the consumer behaviour (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016), which aligns with the idea of TPB that subjective norms influence consumer behaviour.
- c) Perceived Behavioural Control: Social media provides consumers with the ability to control their interaction, including what adverts to view or content to share, and therefore, is seen to reflect TPB construct of perceived behavioural control, in which autonomous choice and perceived ease of interaction are significant determiners of likelihood of engagement.

5.2.2. Engagement Theory

Engagement Theory (Brodie et al., 2013) provides a detailed explanation of the way SMM contributes to consumer participation and engagement with brands in an emotional manner. The data show that consumer interest, which can be cognitive and emotional is a critical factor that dictates the success of the campaign. In particular:

- a. Cognitive Engagement: Platforms with interactive content include polls, quizzes, live sessions, produce cognitive engagement, which leads to a greater connection with the brand (Tuten and Solomon, 2017), which, when done well, can increase brand perceptions and loyalty.
- b. Emotional Engagement: Storytelling and personalised content are used by the brand to develop emotional attachment on the platform (such as Facebook and Instagram), which is necessary to establish long-lasting consumer relationships (Brodie et al., 2013). These observations are in line with the increasing trends of emotional branding in SMM (Godey et al., 2016).

5.2.3. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

TAM (Davis, 1989), plays a significant role in the understanding of consumer adoption of the social media and interaction with digital marketing content. The results suggest that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness have a dramatic effect on consumer relationships with SMM campaigns:

- a. *'Perceived Ease of Use'*: The ease of use of the platforms like *Instagram* and *Tik Tok* make the consumer experiences much easier, which increases the engagement and participation (Ali, 2025).
- b. *'Perceived Usefulness'*: Content that delivers substantive value, e.g., exclusive offers or brand-relevant information, increases perceived usefulness, which leads to engagement and purchasing behaviour (Tuten and Solomon, 2017). This explains why it is important to fit content to consumer needs to enhance efficacy.

5.3. Topical Developments and Future Prospects.

The co-occurrence and co-citation network analysis shows the following salient themes: influencer marketing, sustainability, and cross-cultural engagement. The new popularity of sustainability in SMM is an indicator of the transition to ethical consumption since consumers are more willing to recognize the effects of their purchases on the environment and society (Schivinski et al., 2016). Future studies must conclude how social media can be efficiently used to encourage sustainable consumption practices, particularly among younger and more environmentally aware groups of people (Shukla et al., 2022).

The growing importance of AI and machine learning in SMM is an indication of greater customisation and efficiency in marketing solutions. Research may consider the ways in which AI-based solutions might promote the engagement of consumers and predict their behaviour more accurately (Rana and Dwivedi, 2021). Also, emerging applications like TikTok and Clubhouse provide ample opportunities to investigate the new trends in consumer behaviour and brand relationships, especially in terms of young generations (Barger et al., 2020).

5.4. International Research and Intercultural Intelligence.

The national and co-authorship net works are analyzed to point out the international nature of the SMM and CB studies with significant input in North America, Europe and Asia. However, more studies are justified to deal with the cross-cultural differences in social media marketing (Karjaluoto et al., 2021). With platforms going global, understanding of cultural values influencing consumer behavior in relation to digital content will be central to the marketer who would need to develop localized and culturally-relevant campaigns.

5.5. Potential Research Directions

The potential research agenda in social media marketing (SMM) and consumer behavior (CB) is vast due to the dynamic nature of the digital platform, the changing consumer anticipations, and the introduction of the global marketing behaviors. A table below outlines the possible research avenues in the future, as identified during this bibliometric analysis, and the relevant sources that have been used in these areas. These suggestions are meant to fill the gaps and opportunities that have been identified in the present study and provide the path forward on this matter.

- a) *The effects of Social Media on Sustainability and Ethical Consumption.*

As consumer awareness of sustainability increases, the research that may be examined in the future is the way social media platforms influence the consumer decision-making in terms of sustainable and ethical consumption. Previous research has revealed a traceable change in the environmental awareness of purchasing behavior, especially in younger generations (Shukla et al., 2022). The social media can be a powerful means of delivering sustainability-related messages and promoting the adoption of environment-friendly products. Research into this direction would focus on the way businesses use social media to build brand trust on sustainability matters and the resultant implications on consumer behaviour.

b) Engaging Consumers via Influencers.

The field of influencer marketing is one of the key areas where one can seek future research. The authority of social media influencers, in particular in the specialist market, eco-friendly or ethical fashion is becoming more relevant in the context of the consumer behaviour (Tuten and Solomon, 2017). With the growing popularity of social media, such as Instagram and Tik Tok, studies may explore how influencers capture the attention of their followers and trigger a purchase decision, as well as the psychological processes underlying the effectiveness of influencers promotion (Ali, 2025).

c) The Social Media Interaction and Cross-Cultural Differences.

With the social media platforms achieving an international scale, there is a dire necessity to conduct researches that define the influence of cultural differences on consumer interaction. In the previous research, there were identified uneven trust and engagement with brands in regions (Karjaluoto et al., 2021). The future studies might be used to compare the practice of social media marketing in the heterogeneous cultural setting and determine their effect on consumer behaviour to emerge markets like India and China.

d) The Social Media influence on building consumer trust.

Trust is one of the key factors of consumer behaviour especially in the context of social media marketing. The research on the field would define ways in which brands build trust within the context of social media exchange, which can be regarded as the elements of the foregrounding, which includes transparency, authenticity, and consumer-brand relations (Brodie et al., 2013). This subtle perspective on these dynamics is essential to the marketer who seeks to create long term consumer loyalty and long term engagement.

e) Social Media Marketing Psychological Impact.

The psychological impact of social media marketing on consumer decision making is not well investigated. Studies have the potential to question the impact of marketing campaigns via social media on the consumer perceptions, the affective reactions and the brand attachment (Ajzen, 1991). A study of the emotions that social media users experience, like FOMO (Fear of Missing out) and social influence may be useful in terms of the effectiveness of divergent marketing.

f) Privacy of Data and Consumer behaviour in SMM.

As the anxiety on data privacy continues to mount, future studies must question the impact of these concerns on consumer behaviour in the social media. Empirical research would be able to evaluate the role of data privacy concerns in moderation of brand trust in companies using targeted advertising and data analytics. It is essential to find a balance between individualisation and privacy because consumers are becoming more and more aware of how their data is being used in digital marketing (Yadav, 2017).

g) Effect of User-Generated Content (UGC) on Brand Perception.

UGC has become a relevant predictor of brand perception. Future studies might examine the role of UGC (such as reviews by consumers, posts on social media, and mentions of a brand) in consumer trust and trust in the brands.

The relative effectiveness of UGC over traditional advertising and its influence on the consumer decision-making cycle is a promising direction to research on (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016).

h) Social Media Marketing using AI and Automation.

With the further development of artificial intelligence and automation technologies, their use in social media marketing provides new brand optimisation opportunities of marketing campaigns. Future studies may focus on the use of AI to create personalised content, chatbots, and predictive analytics to improve consumer experiences on social media platforms (Rana and Dwivedi, 2021).

i) Emerging Social Platforms Consumer Behaviour.

New applications, like Tik Tok and Clubhouse among others, are gaining traction fast. Research could be conducted on the impact of these emerging platforms on consumer behaviour, such as the types of content that attract users and drive their decision to purchase. This rapid rise of the channels indicates that understanding the consumer psychology of users on the developing social media will become a key concern of marketers (Barger et al., 2020).

Table-4: Future Research directions

<i>Research Direction</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Relevant Sources</i>
Influence of Social Media on Sustainability and Ethical Consumption	As consumers increasingly demand sustainable products and services, research could examine how social media can promote sustainable consumption behaviors.	Schivinski et al. (2016); Shukla et al. (2022)
Consumer Engagement through Influencers	Impact of social media-influencers on consumer engagement, particularly within niche markets such as sustainability, wellness, and fashion.	Tuten & Solomon (2017); Ali (2025)
Differences in Cross-Cultural aspects of Social Media Engagement	Exploring how cultural differences influence consumer engagement and brand interactions on social media, especially in emerging markets.	Dwivedi (2021); Karjaluoto et al. (2021)
Role Social Media in Shaping Consumer Trust	Investigating how trust is built through social media interactions and its influence on consumer behavior and loyalty to brands.	Barger & Labrecque (2020); Brodie et al. (2013)
Psychological Impact of Social-Media Marketing	Examining the psychological effects of social media marketing on consumer decision-making, brand attachment, and purchase intentions.	Ajzen (1991); Filieri et al. (2020)
Data Privacy and Consumer Behavior in SMM	Understanding the implications of data privacy concerns on consumer behavior and their trust in brands using social media marketing strategies.	Yadav (2017); Carlson et al. (2020)
Effect of User-Generated Content (UGC) on Brand Perception	Comparing the importance of UGC in consumer brand perception and efficacy in social media marketing	Godey et al. (2016); Schivinski & Dabrowski (2016)

	in comparison to conventional advertisement.	
Evolving Social Media Marketing Strategies Post-COVID-19	Exploring how the pandemic has changed consumer behavior online, and what new marketing strategies have emerged in response to shifting consumer habits.	Anderson et al. (2021); Dwivedi et al. (2020)
AI and Automation in <i>Social-Media Marketing</i>	Researching application of artificial intelligence and automation in optimizing social media marketing campaigns and predicting the behavior trends of the consumers.	Rana & Dwivedi (2021); Yadav & Agarwal (2021)
Consumer Behavior on Emerging Social Platforms	Research focusing on newer social media platforms (TikTok, Clubhouse, etc.) and their unique effects on consumer behavior and marketing strategies.	Ashley & Tuten (2019); Barger et al. (2020)

Source: Authors own compilation

6. Conclusion

The bibliometric study offers a comprehensive overview of the academic field of social media marketing (SMM) and consumer behavior (CB), therefore shedding some light on the patterns of evolution, thematic development and the significant participants of the field. The evidence-based sources demonstrate that the volume of research on SMM and CB has been very fast in particular since 2017, which is connected to the rising popularity of social media platforms in shaping consumer behavior and the digital marketing practice. This discussion also demonstrates that social media marketing and consumer behavior are the most important aspects of the academic discourse, and such areas of research as purchase intention, social networking (online), advertising are the most relevant ones and contain the greatest part of scholarly production.

The citation and co-author network plots emphasize the crucial part played by great scholars like Dwivedi, Yogesh K., Jacobson, Jenna, and Filieri, Raffaele, whose immense contributions form the basis of the development of theoretical framework in SMM and CB. In addition, the co-occurrence and co-citation studies indicate a complex pattern of interconnected research topics, which therefore reaffirm the interdisciplinary nature of the field, which is an amalgamation of marketing, psychology, consumer behavior, and sustainability.

The paper also determines the research gaps and potential future directions such as the growing role of sustainability in SMM, the role of influencer marketing, and the need to examine cross cultural differences in social media use. The findings put forward the idea that these emergent spaces provide useful opportunities in future research to understand how social media influence consumer behavior and how marketing practices can be adapted to fit the needs of a digitally native and socially conscious consumer market.

Together, this study adds to the existing knowledge base in the field of SMM and CB, providing scholars, practitioners and policymakers with the deeper insight into the academic development, key participants and the future trends. The current study can also serve as a basis of future research to explore the idea of strategic use of social media to achieve even more effective and ethical marketing by outlining the central themes and key players in the field.

Practical Implications

The results of this study have a lot of implications on scholars and practitioners in the field of marketing and consumer behavior. To marketers, understanding of thematic development of SMM and influences on consumer behavior is necessary in order to adjust the strategies that respond to the demands of the digitally advanced and social

aware consumers. The increased emphasis on sustainability, such as the increased attention to sustainability, indicates the need to incorporate ethical behavior in the marketing activities of the brands, especially on social media where customers take an active part in the sustainability discussion (Ahmed et al., 2025).

As stressed in this paper, influencer marketing is a powerful tool to use in reaching the consumer and creating brand loyalty. Knowing the impact caused by the influencers on the consumer choices, particularly the niche markets, like sustainable fashion or sustainable products, provides new possibilities in exploring the brand (Adnan et al., 2020). Also, as artificial intelligence (AI) and automation gradually achieve greater integration into the marketing of social media, brands will have the opportunity to make marketing campaigns more personalized and targeting more precise, thus making sure that the marketing campaign is delivered to the right audiences at the most appropriate time (Algharabat et al., 2018).

As an academic researcher, this study provides a strategic road map of their further research in the convergence of SMM and CB with the emerging trends including social media ethics and consumer trust. Further studies may look into the psychological impact of social media marketing to specific demographic groups, especially with the growing concern of privacy and data safety (Yadav & Rahman, 2017). The shifting role of social media in the consumer decision-making process, in particular, in the post-COVID-19 environment, is also a promising area of study, as the altered consumer behavior will have an enduring impact on the marketing strategy (Anderson et al., 2024).

Conflict of Interest Statement.

The authors of this review study, attest that clash of the interest regarding the publication of the article does not exist. No financial or personal connections to the research or unbiased and objective manner of conducting the research existed.

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