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A bibliometric analysis of the nexus of influencer marketing and social commerce

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This paper explores the transformative impact of influencer marketing and social commerce in the digital era, which is reshaping consumer behaviour and marketing strategies. Influencer marketing uses the persuasive power of online personalities to create authentic connections with audiences, while social commerce seamlessly integrates shopping experiences within social media platforms. Using bibliometric analysis, we examined 285 scholarly publications from 2008 to 2024, revealing a surge in research output and global engagement in these domains. Key findings include the dominance of conference proceedings, top contributing sources such as "Lecture Notes in Computer Science" and "Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies," as well as significant contributions from institutions like Shandong University and Huazhong University of Science and Technology. We identified notable authors, such as Zhang Y and Kumar S, alongside prominent affiliations, including Shandong University and Huazhong University of Science and Technology. The thematic analysis revealed crucial themes, including marketing strategies, digital platforms, consumer behaviour, and emerging trends, illustrating the dynamic evolution of marketing practices. Collaboration world network analysis revealed strong research collaborations among countries such as the United States, South Korea, China, and Spain. This study highlights the growing importance of influencer marketing and social commerce, offering valuable insights for future research directions, including nano-influencers, AI-driven marketing, interdisciplinary collaborations, global expansion, and longitudinal studies. Embracing these insights can empower marketers and researchers to navigate and capitalise on the evolving landscape of digital marketing strategies effectively.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Social Commerce, Social Media, Online Influencers, Online Personalities.

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Introduction

The digital age has changed the way consumers behave. The traditional marketing playbook, which previously relied on passive information dissemination and one-way advertising channels, is no longer enough. Today's consumers are

empowered, actively seeking information, engaging with brands that match their values, and making purchasing decisions based on trust and authenticity. This dynamic market landscape has given rise to two powerful marketing forces: influencer marketing and social commerce. Influencer marketing uses word-

of-mouth marketing to create a strong and immediate connection between the brand and its target audience. Social commerce, on the other hand, enables brands to utilise social media platforms to create an immersive shopping experience, allowing customers to purchase products directly from the platform.

Influencer marketing is a strategy that involves partnering with established online personalities, such as content creators, industry experts, or social media celebrities, who have built dedicated communities that value their opinions and recommendations. By collaborating with these influencers, brands can create compelling content that resonates with their target audience, including product reviews, tutorials, user-generated content campaigns, and social media takeovers. The key advantage of influencer marketing is that it enables brands to leverage the influencer's credibility and establish rapport with their audience, which can help to build trust and engagement that traditional advertising often struggles to achieve. Ultimately, the goal of influencer marketing is to increase brand awareness, foster positive brand sentiment, and drive sales. This type of marketing is cost-effective and relatively easy to track. It enables brands to reach a wider audience, as influencers' followers are usually much larger than those of the brand.

Social commerce is a new shopping method that seamlessly integrates the buying process into social media platforms, allowing users to browse, purchase, and share products directly within these platforms. Instead of having to navigate to separate e-commerce websites, users can discover products and brands directly on social media through influencer posts, reviews, and targeted advertising. The beauty of social commerce is that users can seamlessly transition from discovery to purchase without having to leave the platform. This creates a more convenient and impulse-driven shopping experience for consumers while simultaneously allowing sellers to reach a wider audience. By eliminating friction from

the buying journey, social commerce platforms can help businesses increase their sales and reduce cart abandonment.

A Synergistic Force: The Power of Collaboration
Influencer marketing and social commerce work together to create a mutually beneficial relationship. Influencers can use social commerce features to drive immediate conversions from their content. Social commerce platforms benefit from the trust and influence of partnered influencers, resulting in increased traffic and engagement within their ecosystems. This collaborative approach creates a powerful marketing force that benefits both brands and consumers. By working together, influencers can monetise their content, and brands can reach their target audience. This relationship is constantly evolving, and both influencers and brands need to stay ahead of the latest trends to remain competitive.

Business Advantages: Targeted Reach and Enhanced Engagement

Influencer marketing and social commerce offer numerous benefits for businesses. These strategies enable companies to effectively reach specific target audiences and demographics. By collaborating with relevant influencers, brands can tap into a pre-existing, engaged community, which establishes brand trust and loyalty more organically than traditional advertising. Social commerce streamlines the customer journey, resulting in higher conversion rates and potentially increased sales. Moreover, influencer marketing and social commerce are cost-effective, as businesses only pay influencers when desired results are achieved. These strategies are also measurable, enabling companies to track the impact of their campaigns.

Consumer Benefits: Authenticity and Convenience

Consumers benefit from the evolving marketing landscape in multiple ways. With the help of

influencer marketing, they can discover products in a more authentic and relatable way. Recommendations from trusted personalities are perceived as genuine endorsements, rather than advertisements. Additionally, social commerce is empowering consumers with a convenient and frictionless shopping experience. They can discover and purchase products within the familiar and trusted environment of social media platforms. This encourages consumers to be more active and engaged in their purchasing decisions, resulting in higher conversions and improved customer satisfaction. It also provides them with a more personalised shopping experience.

The Future of Marketing: Embracing the Digital Imperative

In today's constantly evolving digital landscape, understanding the concepts of influencer marketing and social commerce is no longer an advantage but rather a necessary marketing strategy. This chapter aims to provide a detailed exploration of different types of influencers and social commerce platforms. We will examine successful marketing campaigns that have leveraged these trends and offer businesses the necessary tools and strategies to harness the power of influencer marketing and social commerce, enabling them to achieve success in the digital age. By understanding how to utilise influencer marketing and social commerce effectively, businesses can more effectively reach their target audience and enhance their brand visibility.

Research Methodology

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the current state of research in the field of Influencer Marketing and Social Commerce, we conducted a meticulous bibliometric analysis using R Programming and R Studio. Our research methodology included collecting and organising information from Scopus databases. We then analysed the data to identify trends and patterns and

draw significant conclusions. Our approach enabled us to gain valuable insights into various aspects of circular economy research, thereby developing an all-encompassing understanding of the subject matter.

Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis is a statistical method used to evaluate quantitative aspects of research literature, including the number of publications, citation patterns, author contributions, and thematic trends. This technique helps researchers gain a deeper understanding of the intellectual landscape of a field, recognising influential authors, prominent sources, and emerging research areas. By examining this data, researchers can navigate through existing knowledge, identify research gaps, and strategically direct future research efforts.

A bibliometric analysis was conducted on a corpus of 285 scholarly publications retrieved from the Scopus database. Published between 2008 and 2024, these documents originated from 184 distinct sources and collectively cited 11,327 external references. The average citation counts per document reached 9.78, indicating a moderate level of research impact. The publication types included articles (115), a book (1), book chapters (11), conference papers (150), conference reviews (5), and review papers (3). This distribution reflects a dominance of conference proceedings within the corpus.

Data Analysis: Annual scientific production

Annual scientific production is a metric that measures the number of publications produced by researchers in a given year to evaluate the productivity, quality and impact of scientific research within a field.

Table 1

Year	Articles	Change from the Previous Year
2015	4	-
2016	4	Similar
2017	6	2
2018	13	7
2019	23	10
2020	36	13
2021	44	8
2022	49	5
2023	77	28
2024	21	-56

Examining Table 1 and Figure 1, we can observe a fluctuating trend in the number of articles published over the years. The publications increased steadily from 2015 to 2023, reaching a peak of 77 articles in Annual Scientific Production

2023. However, the number of articles published significantly decreased in 2024, with only 21 articles published.

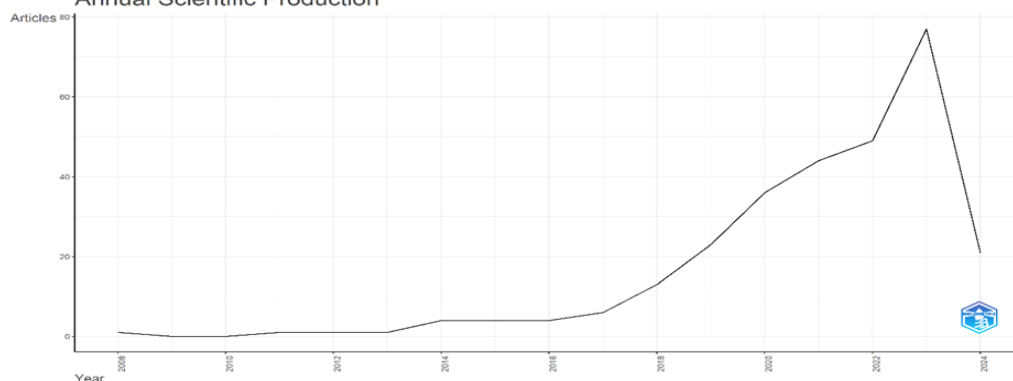


Fig 1.

Most Relevant Sources

It displays which journals have produced the most documents related to the given topic. In Figure 2, the top 10 journals are shown. We can see that the most relevant journal is "Lecture Notes in Computer Science (Including Subseries Lecture Notes in

Artificial Intelligence and Lecture Notes in Bioinformatics)," with 16 published documents on the topic. Following that is "Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies" with 15 publications, and "ACM International Conference Proceeding Series" with eight publications. Other journals have published documents on this topic.

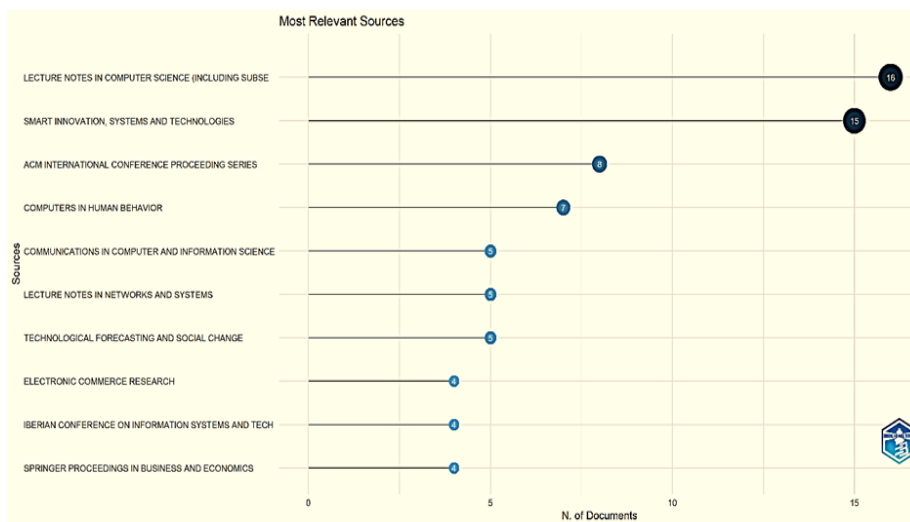


Fig 2

Bradford Law

According to Bradford's law, the number of journals in the second and third zones will be n and n^2 times larger than in the first zone. This means that if we know the number of journals in the core and middle zones, we can predict the total number of journals that contain papers on a specific subject. Having an idea of the total number of journals can help us estimate the amount of relevant information that is missing from an incomplete search. This is particularly useful for systematic reviews that require

a significant amount of time and effort to identify appropriate sources on a subject. By using Bradford's law to predict the size of the literature, researchers can better plan and conduct their studies.

We found that in Zone 1, there are 18 journals, in Zone 2, there are 72 journals, and in Zone 3, there are 94 journals. Figure 3 illustrates Bradford's law in a graphical form.

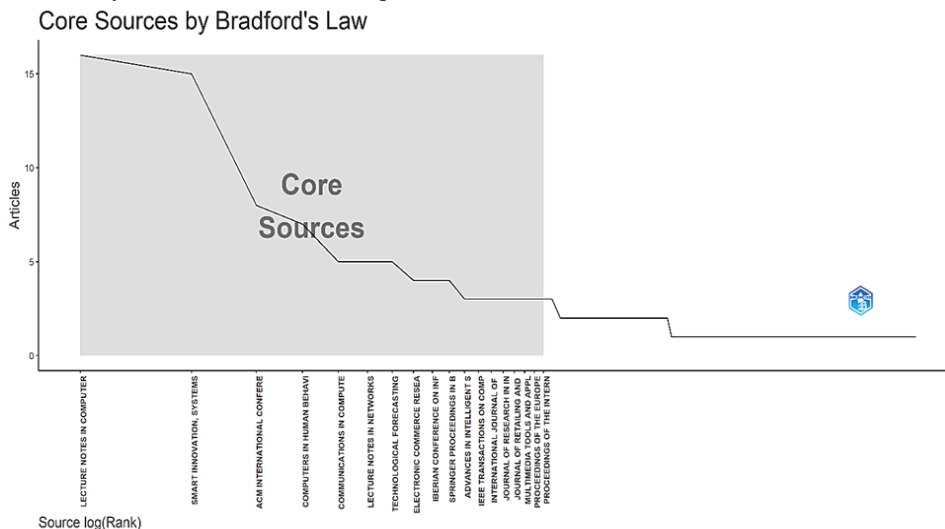


Fig 3

Author Local Impact

Bibliometricians use citation analysis to determine an author's impact in a specific research community, such as an institution, region, or niche field. In our research, we focus on the impact of authors in India by analysing citations from researchers in that local area.

Authors have published research with h-index values greater than 0. Zhang Y has the highest h-index (4) and g-index (6), Kumar S shows promise with a high g-index (5) and h-index of 3. Several authors have similar h-index and g-index values of 3. Aswani R and Chetty M have the lowest h-index and g-index values (2). This is evident in Figure 4.

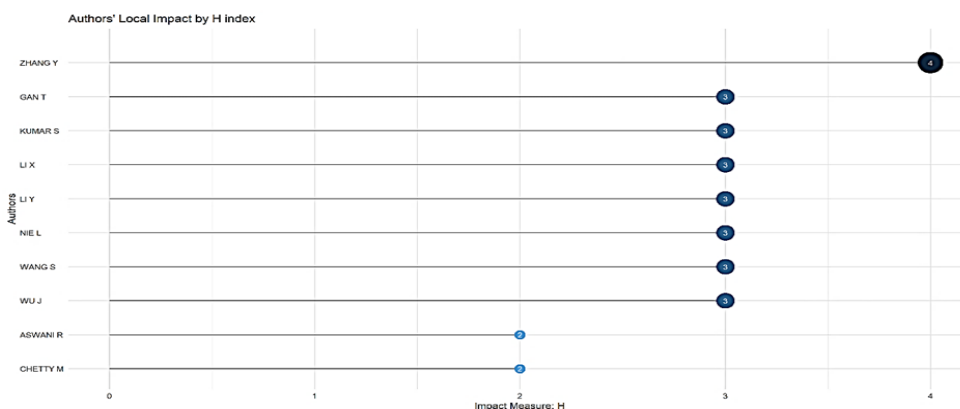


Fig 4

Most Relevant Authors

Figure 5 displays the top 10 most relevant authors based on the number of publications over time. The author who has published the most documents is "Zhang Y," with a total of 6 publications. Following

Zhang Y is "Kumar S" with five publications, and "Li Y" with four publications. Additionally, there are seven other authors in Figure 5, each with a total of three publications.

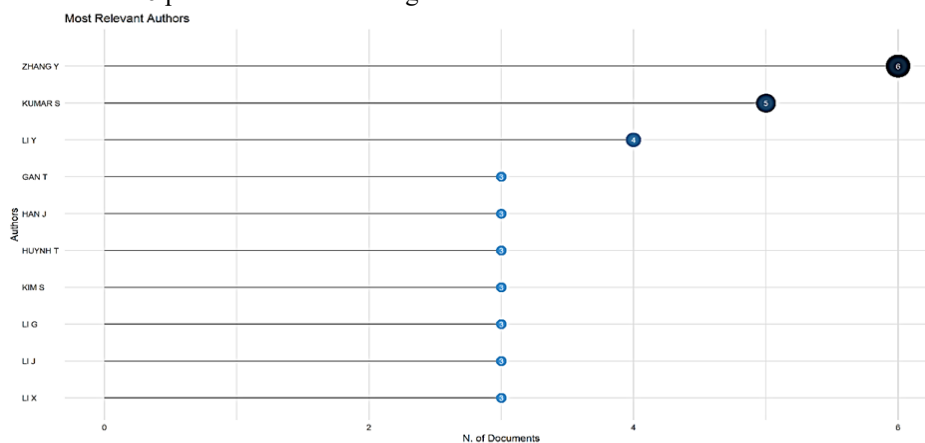


Fig 5

Most Relevant Affiliation

In Figure 6, we can see that the research contributions are distributed geographically. Shandong University

has contributed the most with 16 articles, followed closely by Huazhong University of Science and Technology and Universiti Putra Malaysia with nine

articles each. Other institutions, such as Jinan University and Shanghai University, among others, have contributed a steady stream of research, with 6-

7 articles each. This suggests a collaborative research landscape without a single dominant institution.

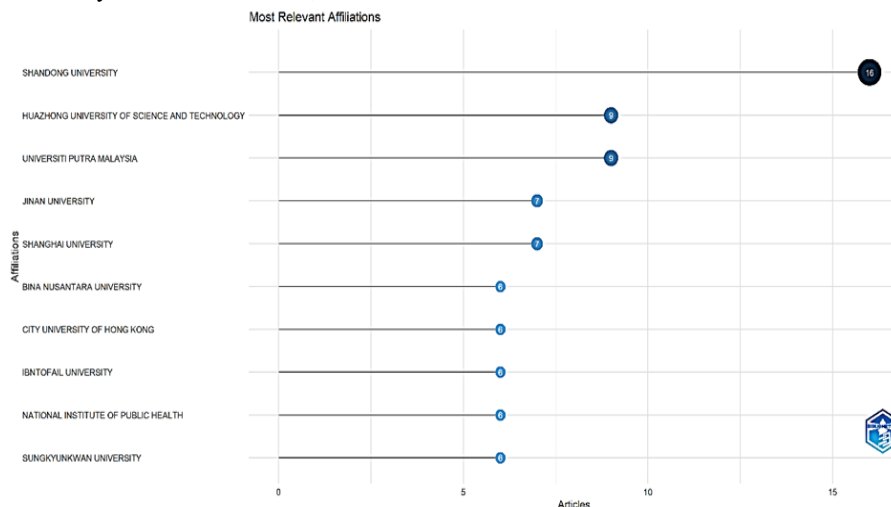


Fig 6

Country scientific production

Country Scientific Production

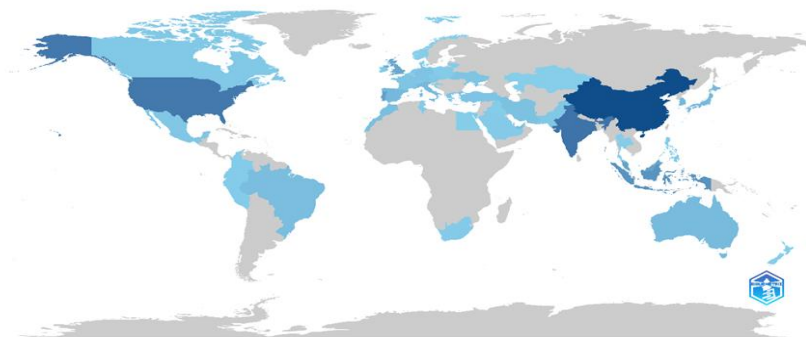


Fig 7

Based on the analysis (Fig. 8 and Table 2), it is evident that there is a diverse distribution of articles across various regions. China is the most prolific contributor, with 136 articles, implying a significant research output. India and the USA follow closely, contributing substantially with 93 and 88 articles, respectively, indicating their strong presence in the research landscape. Indonesia, Portugal, and Malaysia also make notable contributions with 59, 46, and 43 articles, respectively. The UK, Japan, South Korea, and Spain demonstrate a comparable

level of contribution, each with 22 articles. This geographic diversity highlights a global interest and engagement in the research topics under study, reflecting a rich and varied scholarly discourse across multiple regions.

Table 2

Region	Freq
CHINA	136
INDIA	93
USA	88
INDONESIA	59
PORTUGAL	46
MALAYSIA	43
UK	39
JAPAN	22
SOUTH KOREA	22
SPAIN	22

Most Global Cited Documents

In Table 3, we can see the most globally cited documents in which several papers have been mentioned in the research domains. Arora A's (2019) paper, published in the Journal of Retail and Consumer Services, stands out as a clear leader in terms of citation count, with a total of 307 citations

and a healthy citation rate of 51.17 per year. Masuda H's (2022) paper in Technological Forecasting and Social Change is a close second with 127 citations. The remaining papers in the cohort exhibit a range of citation counts, falling between 101 and 14 citations. Liao J's (2024) paper is the most recent, having garnered only three citations to date. It is essential to consider the year of publication when evaluating citation counts, as newer papers are naturally at a disadvantage due to having less time to accumulate citations. Overall, the data underscores a range of citation impact, with some papers garnering considerably more attention than others.

Table 3

Paper	DOI	Total Citations	TC per Year	Normalised TC
ARORA A, 2019, J RETAIL CONSUM SERV	10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.03.012	307	51.17	16.50
MASUDA H, 2022, TECHNOL FORECAST SOC CHANGE	10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121246	127	42.33	14.75
HARRIGAN P, 2021, INT J INF MANAGE	10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102246	101	25.25	13.89
LIAO J, 2024, J TRAVEL RES	10.1177/00472875231175083	3	3.00	10.50
JIN SV, 2020, J RETAIL CONSUM SERV	10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102121	161	32.20	9.46
ZHOU S, 2021, INT J INF MANAGE	10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102293	59	14.75	8.11
JOSHI Y, 2023, ELECTRON COMMERCIAL RES	10.1007/s10660-023-09719-z	15	7.50	7.17
WONG IHS, 2023, ASLIB J INF MANAGE	10.1108/AJIM-11-2022-0495	15	7.50	7.17
YAN M, 2023, INTERNET RES	10.1108/INTR-11-2020-0625	14	7.00	6.70
ARGYRIS YA, 2020, COMPUT HUM BEHAV	10.1016/j.chb.2020.106443	98	19.60	5.76
ARORA A, 2019, J RETAIL CONSUM SERV	10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.03.012	307	51.17	16.50
MASUDA H, 2022, TECHNOL FORECAST SOC CHANGE	10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121246	127	42.33	14.75
HARRIGAN P, 2021, INT J INF MANAGE	10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102246	101	25.25	13.89
LIAO J, 2024, J TRAVEL RES	10.1177/00472875231175083	3	3.00	10.50

Most Relevant Words

Figure 8 displays the words that have been most commonly used. "Commerce" is the most frequently occurring word, appearing 208 times. Following closely is "marketing" with 192 occurrences. "Social

Networking (online)" appears 171 times, "social media" appears 140 times, "economic and social effect" appears 73 times, "influence marketing" appears 52 times, and there are other words as well, which can be seen in Figure 8.

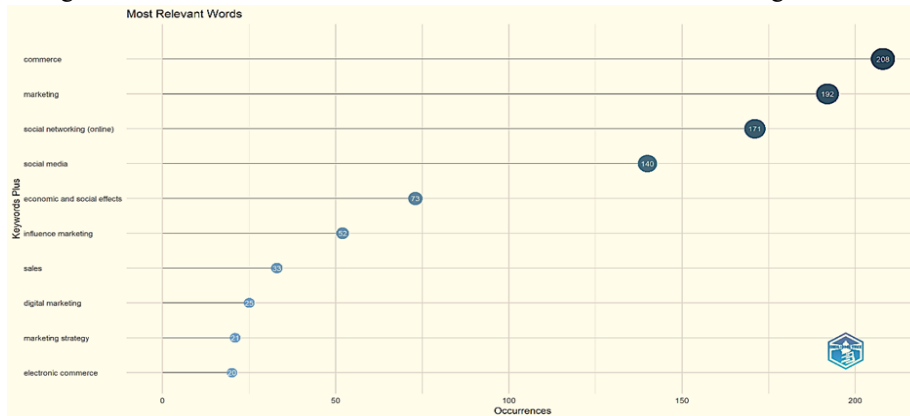


Fig 8

Word Cloud

Figure 9 shows a word cloud where bolder and larger words indicate higher frequency, while smaller

words indicate lower frequency in the given documents.



Fig 10

Co-word network

Table 4 and Figure 10 display a co-word network analysis where keywords are grouped into clusters based on their connections within a set of documents. The results of this analysis are summarised below, organised by each cluster. The data presented is a network analysis where nodes are classified into

different clusters based on their attributes, such as Betweenness, Closeness, and PageRank scores. Here is an explanation of the information:

Cluster 1 (Marketing and Influence):

- This cluster consists of nodes such as "marketing," "viral marketing," "marketing

campaign," "influence maximisation," and "influence."

- These nodes have moderate to high Betweenness values, indicating their importance in connecting other nodes in the network.
- Closeness and PageRank scores vary but generally reflect their centrality and influence within this cluster.

Cluster 2 (Digital Marketing and Social Media):

- This cluster consists of nodes related to digital marketing, social media, social networking, influencer marketing, and online commerce.
- They have high Betweenness values, suggesting they play crucial bridging roles between different parts of the network.
- Closeness and PageRank scores are relatively high, indicating their prominence and influence within the digital marketing and social media domain.

Cluster 3 (Information Systems):

- This cluster comprises nodes such as "information systems" and "information use," focusing on aspects of information management and utilisation.
- These nodes have lower Betweenness values compared to the marketing clusters,

indicating a more focused role in the network.

- Closeness and PageRank scores are moderate, reflecting their importance within their specific domain.

Cluster 4 (Consumer Behaviour and Surveys):

- This cluster consists of nodes related to consumer behaviour, purchasing, sales, and surveys.
- They have lower Betweenness values but still contribute to the overall connectivity of the network.
- Closeness and PageRank scores are moderate, highlighting their relevance in understanding consumer-related aspects.

Cluster 5 (General Topics):

- This cluster comprises nodes such as "article" and "human," representing general topics within the network.
- Their Betweenness, Closeness, and PageRank scores are relatively lower compared to other clusters, indicating their less central role in the network structure.

Overall, this data illustrates the interconnectedness and importance of various topics within the analysed network, with different clusters representing distinct thematic areas.

Node	Cluster	Betweenness	Closeness	PageRank
Marketing	1	175.029664	0.01960784	0.10948664
viral marketing	1	0.22161347	0.01149425	0.01199177
marketing campaign	1	0.14783079	0.01162791	0.01159047
influence maximisations	1	0.29574153	0.01149425	0.01094919
Influence	1	0.27522667	0.01176471	0.01121502
social network	1	0.02821564	0.01123596	0.00943736
deep learning	1	0.09505261	0.01136364	0.00738979
learning systems	1	0.01208459	0.01111111	0.00766947
social influence	1	0.00255319	0.01111111	0.00802453

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big data	1	0.00404858	0.01098901	0.00628569
machine learning	1	0.02295421	0.01098901	0.00623122
marketing is	1	0	0.01075269	0.00555575
Costs	1	0.08750709	0.01123596	0.00656345
online social networks	1	0.0034904	0.01086957	0.0065355
digital storage	1	0	0.01075269	0.00489242
Commerce	2	286.1727	0.02040816	0.13412535
social networking (online)	2	190.672882	0.02040816	0.11578725
social media	2	115.886444	0.02	0.09388256
economic and social effects	2	32.0622247	0.01818182	0.05662583
influence marketing	2	17.3039311	0.01666667	0.04167883
digital marketing	2	2.00262805	0.01333333	0.01865925
marketing strategy	2	0.8151428	0.0125	0.0164688
electronic commerce	2	0.57927165	0.0125	0.01223378
social media marketing	2	0.84380162	0.01265823	0.0157164
social media platforms	2	0.16347681	0.01176471	0.01357789
Instagram	2	0.37457684	0.01204819	0.01375091
Advertising	2	0.11003052	0.01176471	0.01242803
decision making	2	0.84347621	0.0125	0.01273556
behavioral research	2	0.02194102	0.01136364	0.00821272
Influencer	2	0.15616364	0.01204819	0.00962667
strategic planning	2	0.12302607	0.01204819	0.01068893
budget control	2	0.00310078	0.01149425	0.00786121
virtual reality	2	0.00824528	0.01111111	0.00675342
Youtube	2	0	0.01111111	0.00749792
social commerces	2	0.00206718	0.01123596	0.00657108
Social media influence	2	0.00601805	0.01111111	0.00746934
sentiment analysis	2	0	0.01086957	0.00505517
social media influencer	2	0	0.01111111	0.00715705
case-studies	2	0.01514296	0.01123596	0.00636805
Facebook	2	0.0032077	0.01111111	0.00616318
information systems	3	0.01269841	0.01123596	0.00938787
information use	3	0.01269841	0.01123596	0.00938787
Sales	4	5.47023677	0.01388889	0.02596649
Purchasing	4	1.97297155	0.01315789	0.01826782
consumer behavior	4	0.45012689	0.01219512	0.01366191
purchase intention	4	0.35107552	0.01204819	0.01529971
Surveys	4	0.01433108	0.01162791	0.00808338
Article	5	0.16018957	0.01136364	0.01077978

Human	5	0.16018957	0.01136364	0.01077978
human experiment	5	0	0.01111111	0.00747195



Fig 10

Thematic Map

Figure 11 illustrates thematic maps, which are visual representations used in bibliometric analysis to depict research topics and trends. These maps help identify essential themes and concepts, explore scientific knowledge, and display patterns and relationships between them. Thematic maps can be customised to show different levels of detail and visualised in various formats.

In thematic analysis, keywords are grouped into categories based on their centrality (importance) and density (development) within the research field. This creates a map with four quadrants, each associated with a specific theme type:

Motor Themes (High Centrality, High Density):

These themes are crucial for structuring and advancing the research field. They represent the main areas of focus and established knowledge within the field. Keywords like “Article”, “Human”, & “Human experiment” are examples of motor themes in our study.

Basic Themes (High Centrality, Low Density):

These themes are also important in the field, but they are not yet well-developed. They represent

fundamental concepts or foundational knowledge that need further exploration and research. Keywords such as “Commerce,” “Social Networking,” “Social Media,” “Viral Marketing,” and “Electronic Marketing” fall into the category of basic themes in our study.

Emerging Themes (Low Centrality, High Density):

These themes are new and growing areas of interest within the field, but they haven't yet reached a level of high importance. They represent recent trends, innovative approaches, or topics that are gaining traction and continue to rise. In our study, “Consumer Behaviour” is an example of an emerging theme.

Niche Themes (Low Centrality, Low Density):

These themes are specialised or peripheral themes that are not central to the overall field. They represent specific applications, unique methodologies, or topics of interest to a small group of researchers. Keywords such as “Online Social Network”, “Cost Effectiveness”, “Multi-modal”, and “Efficiency” were identified in the niche theme category of our study.

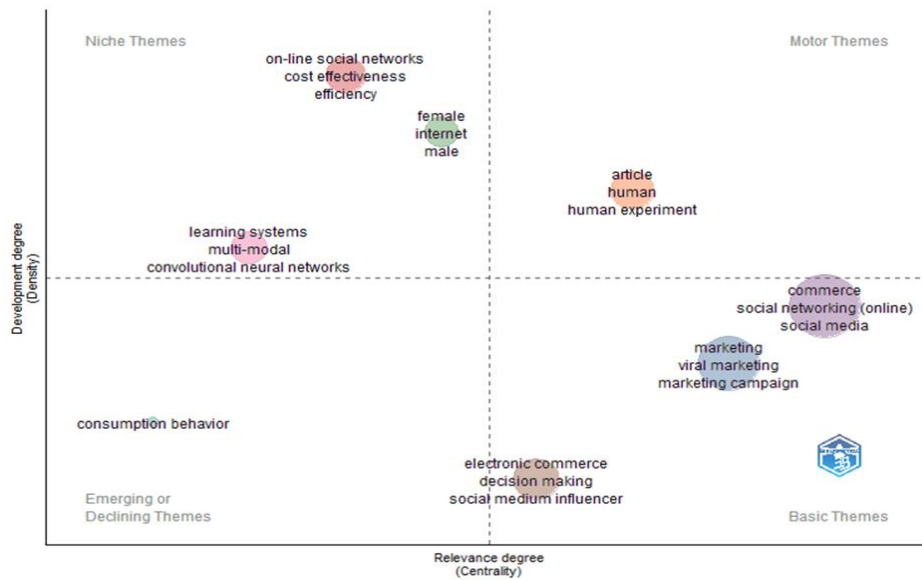


Fig 11

Thematic Evaluation

In our study, we conducted a thematic evaluation, which is illustrated in Figure 12. This evaluation outlines the four different time slots and the keywords commonly associated with each one.

During the 2008-2012 time period, the frequently used keywords were "Commerce" and "Marketing". Moving on to 2013-2016, the keywords that were commonly used were "Commerce" and "Social

Influence".

During the period from 2017 to 2020, the frequently used keywords included "Commerce", "Online System", "Sales", and "Twitter", among others. Finally, between 2021 and 2024, the commonly used keywords included "Commerce", "Sales", "Influence", "Video Platform", and others. It is worth noting that the most frequently used word throughout all the time slots was "Commerce".

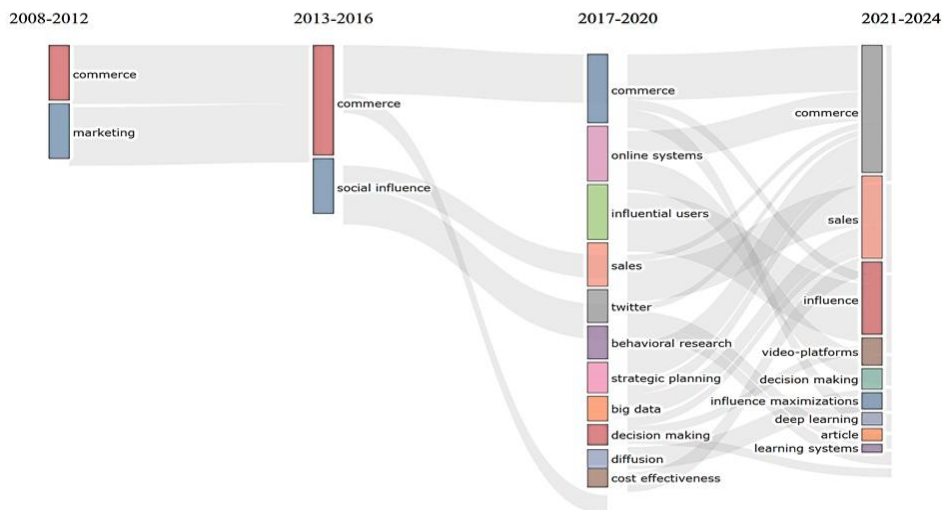


Fig 12

Collab World Network & Map

Table 5 and Figure 13 provide a visual representation of the Collab World Network & Map, which shows the research collaborations between different countries. According to the table, the USA and Korea have the highest number of collaborations, with a frequency of 6, followed by China and the USA (4), China-Hong Kong, and Spain-Ecuador, with frequencies of 3 and 3, respectively. Table 5 also lists other collaborations between countries.

Table 5

From	To	Frequency
USA	KOREA	6
CHINA	USA	4
CHINA	HONG KONG	3
SPAIN	ECUADOR	3
AUSTRALIA	FRANCE	2
CHINA	DENMARK	2
CHINA	MALAYSIA	2
CHINA	SINGAPORE	2
CHINA	UNITED KINGDOM	2
INDIA	SINGAPORE	2
INDIA	UNITED KINGDOM	2
INDIA	USA	2

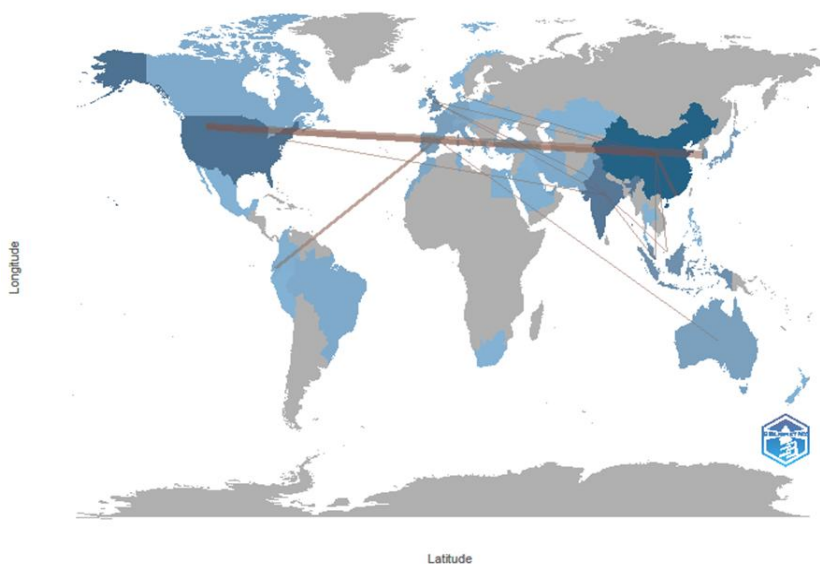


Fig 13

Conclusion:

This study explored the impact of influencer marketing and social commerce on modern consumer behaviour and marketing strategies. The digital age has ushered in a new era where consumers actively engage with brands, seek authentic experiences, and make informed purchasing decisions. Influencer marketing, through its collaborative approach with online personalities, has emerged as a powerful tool for building trust, driving engagement, and increasing brand visibility. Social commerce, on the other hand, has transformed the shopping experience by integrating product

discovery and purchase within social media platforms.

The bibliometric analysis provided essential insights into the scholarly landscape surrounding influencer marketing and social commerce, revealing a steady growth in research output over the years. The study of top sources, authors, affiliations, and country contributions demonstrated a global interest and engagement in these topics, reflecting their significance in the marketing domain.

Thematic analysis identified key themes, including marketing strategies, digital platforms, consumer behaviour, and emerging trends, highlighting the dynamic nature of marketing practices in response to digital imperatives.

Recommendations:

Future Research Directions: Explore emerging trends such as nano-influencers, AI-driven marketing, and immersive technologies to understand their impact on influencer marketing and social commerce.

Collaborate with experts from psychology, sociology, and technology fields to gain deeper insights into consumer behaviour and digital interactions influencing marketing strategies.

Expand research globally to capture nuances in influencer marketing and social commerce.

Conduct longitudinal studies to track trends in influencer marketing and social commerce.

By implementing these suggestions and leveraging the findings of this study, marketers and researchers can effectively navigate influencer marketing and social commerce, driving growth and engagement with consumers.