

Trends and Impact of Social Media Marketing and Online Customer Reviews: A Bibliometric Study

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes trends in the literature related to social media marketing, online customer reviews, digital marketing, e-commerce, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) using a descriptive bibliometric approach. By selecting 219 relevant articles, the study identifies publication patterns, authorship, citations, and collaborations within this field. The data were analyzed using VOSviewer to generate visual maps illustrating the development of these research themes. The findings provide insights into the influence of social media marketing and e-WOM on consumer behavior and sales in e-commerce, while also highlighting opportunities for further research to develop more effective digital marketing strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The changes occurring in digital marketing are closely associated with rapid technological advancements, particularly in internet networks and mobile devices such as smartphones. Previously, marketing was predominantly one-way, where companies delivered information to consumers without direct interaction (Banjongprasert, 2024). However, with the emergence of digital technology, marketing has become increasingly interactive. The utilization of digital technology for business purposes and its contribution to society has created new opportunities for entrepreneurship (Short et al., 2009, as cited in Ghatak et al., 2023). Consumers no longer merely receive information but can also interact directly with companies through various digital channels, including social media, mobile applications, and websites.

The emergence of social media platforms and their widespread adoption have transformed the way people communicate online, share information, and engage with digital content (Dunlap et al., 2023; Ge & Gretzel, 2018). The expansion of digital connectivity has opened numerous communication channels between businesses and both existing and potential customers, creating unprecedented opportunities for organizations (Abu-Salih & Salihah, 2023). Social media is defined as an electronic communication platform that facilitates online communities. Consequently, many retail websites can also be considered forms of social media, as they feature customer product reviews that are shared among users of the platform (Kyung et al., 2023). Through social media engagement, individuals can now express their opinions and share their experiences with products or services with friends and acquaintances within their networks (Rahaman et al., 2021).

The widespread availability of smartphones and internet access has made it easier for consumers to provide reviews and feedback on products they purchase, whether through e-commerce platforms or social media. According to Un, Yeong, Hyun Seung, and Young Joon (2024), these reviews are intended to assist prospective consumers who are considering specific products, enabling them to make more informed purchasing decisions. Detailed, experience-based reviews provide substantial value for companies because they offer insights into how products are perceived and used in real-world settings. Furthermore, Rahaman et al. (2021) stated that before purchasing products or services, consumers tend to seek additional information online and place considerable importance on product reviews written by other consumers. As online reviews have become increasingly popular, many researchers have sought to understand the characteristics of reviews and reviewers that influence their credibility (Chih et al., 2020; Tran & Can, 2020).

According to Xun, Jiao et al. (2025), social media also serves as an essential customer service channel, enabling businesses to effectively manage negative reviews while implementing service recovery and quality improvement strategies. Customer feedback represents valuable information for product development and quality enhancement. In situations where consumers cannot physically examine products, online reviews assist them in making purchase decisions based on the experiences shared by previous users on e-commerce

platforms (Klaus & Changchit, 2019). However, when consumers encounter negative reviews, they may develop unfavorable perceptions even without direct interaction with the product or service (Chen et al., 2021). Therefore, understanding the influence of social media on society is fundamental to examining the role of social media persuasion. With billions of active users across multiple platforms, social media has become a critical environment for communication, information dissemination, and social influence (Rehman et al., 2025).

The existing literature on social media marketing and online customer reviews exhibits several limitations. First, much of the literature focuses on specific trends, with most studies examining either social media marketing or online customer reviews independently rather than investigating both constructs simultaneously. Second, the majority of previous studies evaluate the short-term effects of social media marketing and online customer reviews, whereas their influence on customer loyalty and purchasing decisions may require a longer period to become evident. Finally, the application of bibliometric methods remains limited. Although bibliometric analysis is useful for identifying research trends and scholarly impact, it often provides limited insight into qualitative aspects and consumer interactions on social media and product review platforms.

Developing a deeper understanding of social media marketing and online customer reviews enables researchers and practitioners to critically evaluate the information available on these platforms. Research on social media marketing and online customer reviews has attracted considerable scholarly attention in recent years from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. The rapid evolution of social media and the changing behavior of consumers highlight the need for bibliometric studies to evaluate the existing body of knowledge and identify emerging research trends. In this study, bibliometric data are employed to analyze the literature on social media marketing and online customer reviews. The study provides insights into the development of this research area, identifies relevant research streams, and highlights gaps requiring further investigation through a comprehensive analysis of academic publications, citation patterns, and emerging themes. Ultimately, the findings contribute to a broader understanding of social media marketing and online customer reviews while offering valuable directions for future research.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Social Media Marketing

Within a relatively short period, social media has transformed simple personal interactions into broader social communities. Marketing activities conducted through social media, supported by its various interactive features, encourage consumers to engage, discuss, and share their experiences and opinions regarding products, services, and brands (Jamil et al., 2022). In the marketing context, the utilization of the internet and information and communication technologies (ICT) by both profit-oriented and non-profit organizations has made significant contributions to communication, interaction,

and business operations. More importantly, social media can be utilized not only to promote a company's products and services but also to strengthen customer loyalty (Alzhami, 2020). Its role in implementing marketing strategies, such as marketing communication and customer relationship management, further emphasizes the growing importance of social media marketing activities (Al Kurdi et al., 2024).

E-commerce websites and social media have become widely adopted tools in digital marketing. Therefore, achieving marketing objectives through activities conducted on social networking platforms has become increasingly important. Social media marketing activities have emerged as essential strategies for many companies, as they contribute to the achievement of several critical marketing objectives (Trunfio & Rossi, 2021). Furthermore, social media marketing activities serve to market and promote a company's products while influencing consumers' purchasing behavior (Balaji et al., 2023). According to Dossena et al. (2020), modern restaurant businesses implement internet and social media marketing to showcase their offerings and organizational culture, interact with customers, and maintain customer attention and loyalty through visual and narrative content.

Online Customer Review

Online reviews of products and services have become an essential source of product information on e-commerce platforms and are frequently used as a strategic tool for gaining competitive advantage (Gut et al., 2019). Mudambi and Schuff (2010) define online reviews as "product evaluations created by consumers and posted on a company's website or third-party websites." In addition, online customer reviews play a significant role in shaping consumers' perceptions of the quality of products and services offered through e-commerce platforms (Alkadrie, 2024). According to Gündüzyeli (2025), companies provide platforms that enable consumers to share their experiences and opinions about products, which can significantly influence prospective customers. Numerous studies have examined the role of online customer reviews in influencing brands and other users across various industries. For example, De Pelsmacker et al. (2018) analyzed how hotels' digital marketing strategies affect the characteristics of online customer reviews, which subsequently influence business performance.

Consumer uncertainty regarding products is considered one of the primary barriers to sales. Online customer reviews help reduce this uncertainty by providing valuable information about products, thereby enabling consumers to make better-informed purchasing decisions (Qiu, Zu-Meng, 2024). Hanzari et al. (2017) explained that online customer reviews serve as an important source of information for other consumers, emphasizing that user-generated content can influence consumers' attitudes toward products or services, ultimately shaping their perceptions and affecting their purchasing decisions.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive bibliometric approach to analyze and map the trends, developments, and major themes within the scientific literature related to social media marketing and online customer reviews. This approach enables researchers to obtain a systematic overview of how these topics have

evolved over time and to identify the major patterns in the existing body of research. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative research method that applies statistical and mathematical techniques to analyze and measure various aspects of scientific literature, including publication patterns, authorship, citations, and collaboration networks (Van Raan, 2005).

The first stage is identification. During this stage, the researchers identified keywords relevant to the research topic. The keywords used in this study were "Social Media Marketing" and "Online Customer Review." These keywords were entered into the Scopus database to retrieve relevant scientific articles. The objective was to identify as many publications as possible related to social media marketing and online customer reviews and to determine whether they aligned with the focus of the study.

The second stage is screening. After the relevant articles had been identified, a screening process was conducted by selecting articles based on predefined criteria. Articles that met the requirements regarding the research topic, relevant publication years, and appropriate publication types were included for further analysis. During this stage, only documents published within the subject area of Business, Management, and Accounting were selected. Non-research publications were excluded, resulting in a total of 219 documents.

The third stage is the eligibility assessment. At this stage, the selected articles underwent further evaluation based on their content. To ensure analytical consistency, only articles published in English were included. This criterion was applied to maintain a consistent standard of analysis and to ensure that the data could be accurately interpreted within the same academic context. As a result, 219 documents remained, indicating that no additional articles were excluded after the screening stage.

The final stage is inclusion. At this stage, all articles that satisfied the criteria established in the previous stages were included in the final analysis. These articles were further examined to evaluate their contributions to the research topic and to provide insights into the trends, themes, and impact of social media marketing and online customer reviews. The selected articles were subsequently analyzed using VOSviewer to generate visual maps and identify the relationships and patterns within the literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Documents per year by source

Compare the document counts for up to 10 sources.

Compare sources and view CiteScore, SJR, and SNIP data

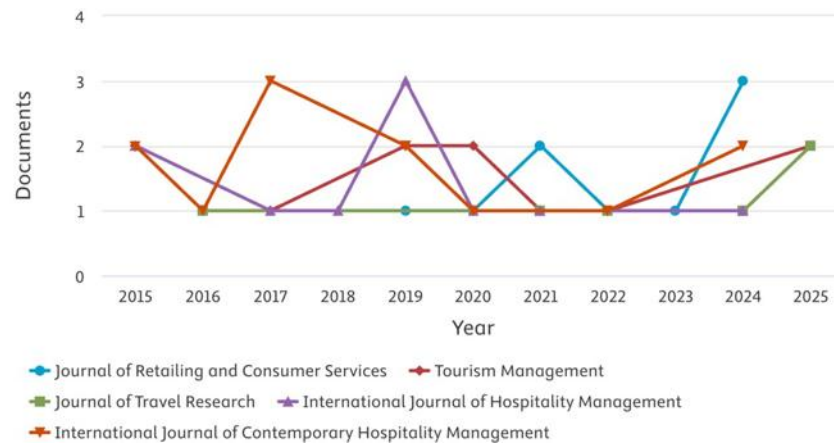


Figure 1. Document per Year by Source

Based on data obtained from Scopus, an analysis of journal publication trends was conducted. The data presented indicate several significant patterns in publication trends within the field of hospitality and tourism management. The International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management recorded the highest number of publications, with 12 documents, and experienced a substantial increase in publications during 2021 and 2022, particularly in 2021. This growth indicates that the journal has made a significant contribution to hospitality and tourism studies by focusing on current themes relevant to industry developments.

Tourism Management also recorded 12 documents and demonstrated relatively stable publication trends from 2015 to 2025. Although the journal experienced a decline after reaching its peak in 2021, it remains one of the primary sources of research in the tourism field. In contrast, the International Journal of Hospitality Management, with 10 documents, showed a lower number of publications but experienced an increase during 2020 and 2021, indicating a stronger focus on specific issues related to hospitality management.

The Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, with 9 documents, experienced a significant increase in publications in 2021. Although its contribution was not as extensive as other journals, the journal primarily focuses on consumer-related research and market trends within the tourism sector. The Journal of Travel Research recorded 6 documents, with its highest publication point occurring in 2021, demonstrating a more specific focus on travel-related aspects. Meanwhile, Annals of Tourism Research and Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology each recorded 5 documents, with relatively limited contributions, focusing on social and economic analyses as well as the application of technology within the hospitality and tourism industries.

Overall, these journal publications demonstrate significant fluctuations, with journals such as the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management and Tourism Management making greater contributions compared to other journals. These fluctuations may have been influenced by major changes in the hospitality and tourism industries, including the impact of the COVID-19

pandemic. Emerging research trends include topics related to hotel management, customer services, and technology adoption, which have become increasingly prominent due to technological advancements and changing consumer needs. Overall, the data illustrate the development of scientific publications in hospitality and tourism management from 2015 to 2025, reflecting research responses to the continuously evolving dynamics of the industry.

Documents by author

Compare the document counts for up to 15 authors.

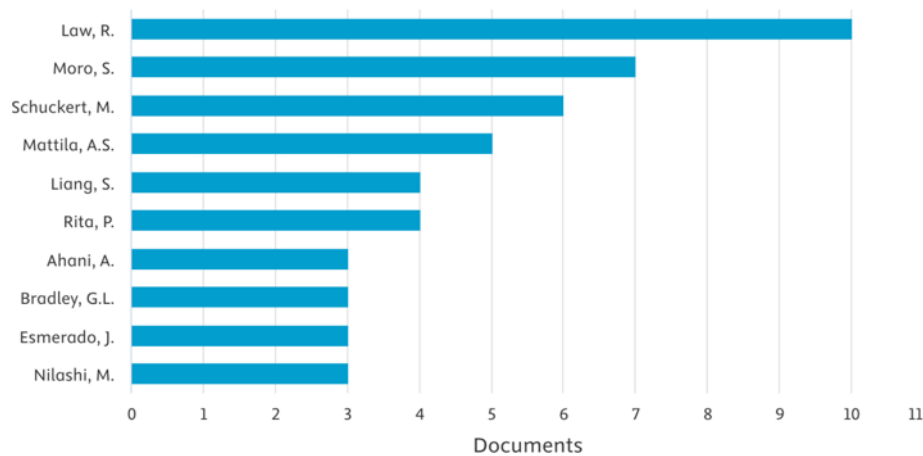


Figure 2. Document by Author

The presented graph illustrates the number of publications contributed by various authors within the Scopus database. The author with the highest number of publications is Law, R., with 10 documents, followed by Moro, S. with 7 documents, and Schuckert, M. with 6 documents. Other authors who have contributed a considerable number of publications include Mattila, A.S. with 5 documents and Liang, S. with 4 documents. Meanwhile, authors such as Rita, P., Ahani, A., Bradley, G.L., and Esmerado, J. each have 3 documents, while Nilashi, M. has only 1 document. Although several authors have contributed fewer publications, such as Nilashi, M., these data demonstrate the contributions of various researchers to the existing literature. Authors with a higher number of publications may have greater influence or may be more actively involved in producing research articles related to the topics analyzed in the database.

Overall, this graph provides insights into the contribution of each author to research in the analyzed field. It also enables the identification of key authors and publication trends over a specific period. These data can be used to examine collaboration patterns and researcher productivity, as well as to understand which researchers are more active in producing scientific works related to the topic.

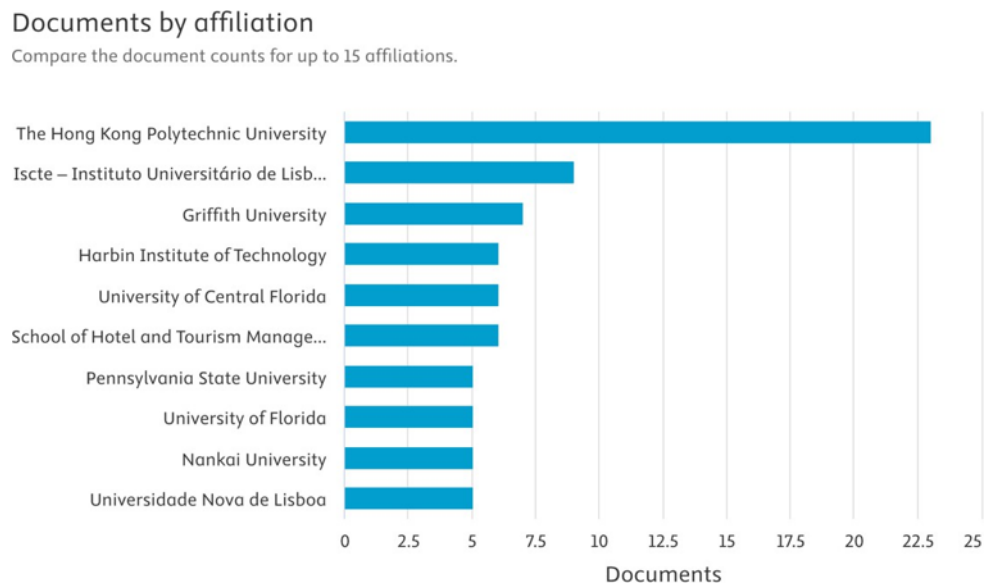


Figure 3. Documents by Affiliation

The data presented in this graph illustrate the number of documents published by various universities. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University ranks first with the highest number of publications, totaling 23 documents, indicating its dominant role in the analyzed research topic. In second place is Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, which recorded 9 documents, representing a significant contribution, although still considerably lower than that of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Furthermore, Griffith University ranks third with 7 documents, followed by Harbin Institute of Technology and the University of Central Florida, each contributing 6 documents. This indicates that both universities have similar levels of contribution within the field. In addition, the School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, which is part of the same institution, also recorded 6 documents, demonstrating consistent contributions within a more specific research area.

Pennsylvania State University recorded 5 documents, ranking below several other universities. Meanwhile, the University of Florida, Nankai University, and Universidade Nova de Lisboa each also contributed 5 documents, showing relatively comparable levels of contribution among these institutions.

Overall, these data indicate that The Hong Kong Polytechnic University is the institution with the greatest contribution, while other universities demonstrate lower numbers of publications.

Documents by country or territory

Compare the document counts for up to 15 countries/territories.

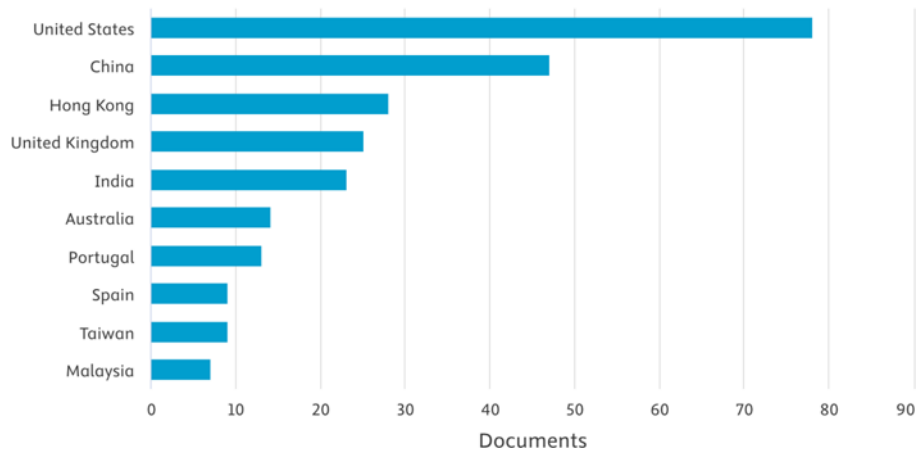


Figure 4. Documents by Country or Territory

The graph above illustrates the number of documents published by country or region, with a total of 219 documents. The country with the highest contribution is the United States, which recorded 78 documents. The United States significantly surpasses other countries in terms of publication output. In second place, China contributed 47 documents, demonstrating a substantial contribution, although still considerably lower than that of the United States. Hong Kong ranks third with 28 documents, highlighting its important role in scientific publications within the Asian region.

European countries, such as the United Kingdom and Portugal, also made notable contributions, with 25 and 13 documents, respectively. India, with 23 documents, ranks fifth, followed by Australia, which recorded 14 documents. Meanwhile, Spain and Taiwan each contributed 9 documents. Lastly, Malaysia recorded the lowest contribution, with only 7 documents.

Overall, the United States dominates scientific publications within this dataset, while Asian countries such as China and Hong Kong also demonstrate significant contributions. European countries and several other nations show smaller contributions but remain important within the global research context.

Documents by type

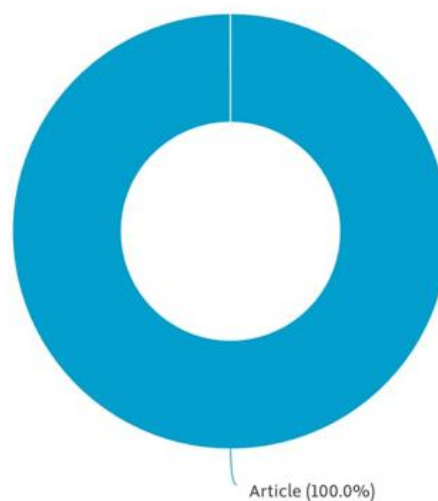
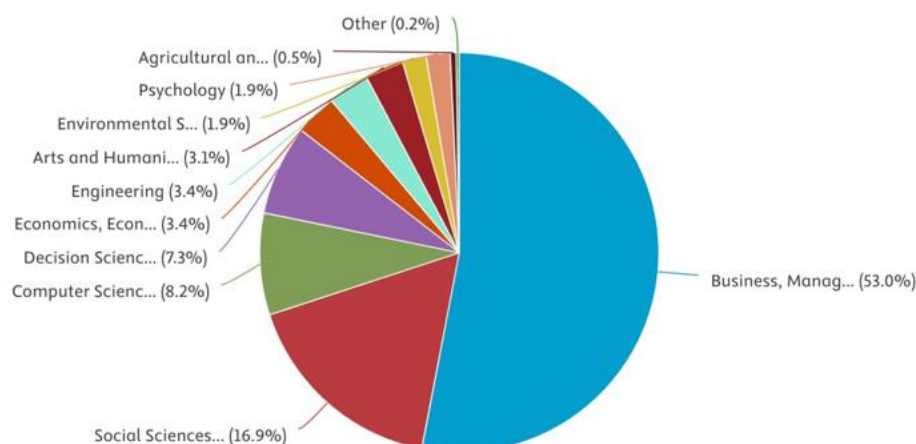


Figure 5. Documents by Type

Based on the uploaded figure, the results of this analysis indicate that a total of 219 documents were identified through a search conducted in the Scopus database. All identified documents were categorized as articles, accounting for 100% of the total results, which means that no other document types, such as conference papers or books, were recorded in this search. The presented pie chart illustrates the distribution of document types, showing that all retrieved documents consist of articles published in various journals or similar academic sources.

This search appears to focus on topics related to "Social Media" and "Online Reviews." This conclusion can be drawn from the keywords used in the search query, which emphasize digital phenomena influencing how consumers interact with products or services in the online environment. In other words, the identified articles primarily discuss topics related to social media marketing and the role of customer reviews within digital platforms.

Documents by subject area



Picture 6. Documents by Subject Area

This graph illustrates the distribution of documents in Scopus based on subject areas. Overall, publications in the field of Business, Management, and Accounting account for the largest proportion at 53%, indicating that research related to business management and accounting has the highest number of publications. The field of Social Sciences follows with 16.9%, reflecting the importance of social topics such as psychology, sociology, and political science in academic publications.

Furthermore, Computer Science contributes 8.2%, highlighting the growing relevance of computer science and information technology. Decision Sciences account for 7.3%, while Economics, Econometrics, and Finance contribute 3.4%, demonstrating the important role of economic studies and financial analysis despite their smaller proportion.

The fields of Engineering and Arts and Humanities contribute 3.4% and 3.1%, respectively, while Environmental Science and Psychology each contribute 1.9%. The fields of Agricultural and Other have relatively small contributions, accounting for 0.5% and 0.2%, respectively.

Overall, publications indexed in Scopus are dominated by topics related to business and management, while social sciences and information technology also represent significant areas of research contribution.

Documents by funding sponsor

Compare the document counts for up to 15 funding sponsors.

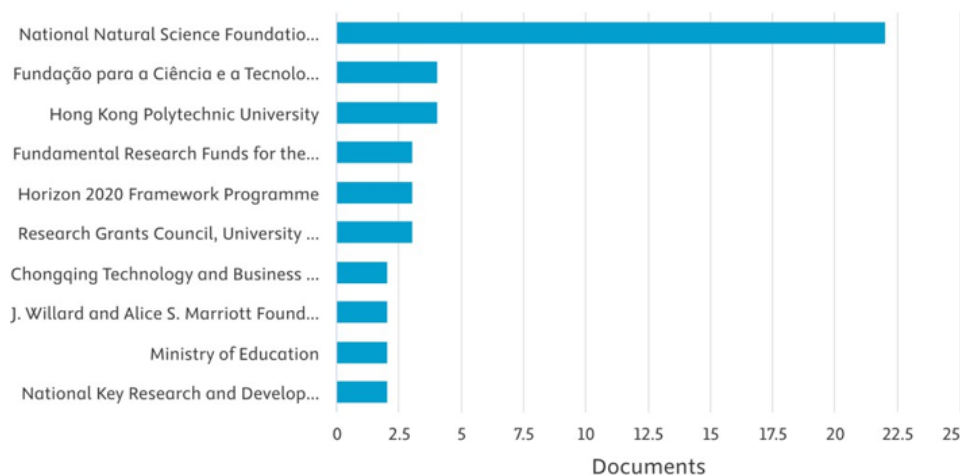


Figure 7. Documents by Funding Sponsor

The graph illustrates the distribution of the number of documents funded by various research sponsors, with the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) as the leading sponsor, dominating with 22 documents. This indicates that NSFC plays a significant role in funding research related to the analyzed topic, providing greater support compared to other institutions. In addition, other organizations such as Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University each funded 4 documents, demonstrating substantial contributions from international institutions in supporting research within this field.

Besides NSFC, several other institutions, including the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities, Horizon 2020 Framework

Programme, and Research Grants Council, University Grants Committee, each funded 3 documents. Although their contributions are relatively smaller, these institutions still play an important role in supporting research funding.

Overall, this graph reflects the dominance of Chinese institutions in funding research, while also highlighting the contributions of other international organizations that support studies in this field.

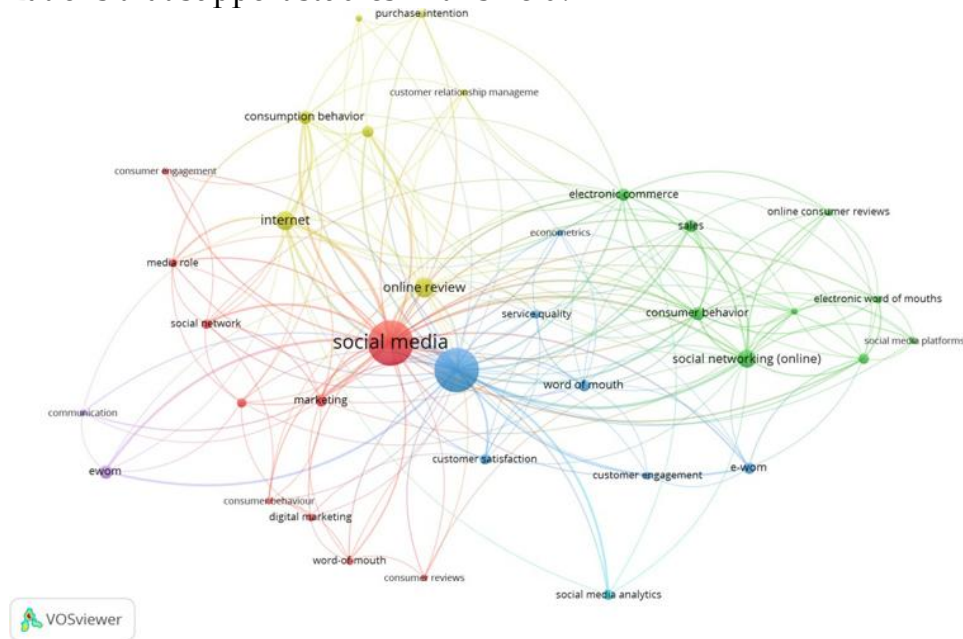


Figure 8. Network Visualization

The graph above presents a network visualization generated by VOSviewer, illustrating the relationships among various research topics based on an analysis of data from a CSV file containing frequently occurring terms in publications or articles related to social media, online reviews, and consumer behavior. The analysis identifies several clusters as follows:

Cluster 1: Social Media and Online Reviews

This cluster focuses on social media and online reviews, with key terms such as "social media" and "online reviews." This topic is associated with the influence of social media and online reviews on consumer behavior, including engagement, customer satisfaction, and consumer behavior. It is closely connected with terms such as digital marketing, word-of-mouth, and social media marketing, indicating the important role of social media in marketing activities and purchasing decisions.

Cluster 2: Social Networks and Consumer Behavior

This cluster focuses on social networks and consumer behavior, with keywords such as consumer behavior, sales, social networking (online), and e-commerce. These terms indicate the relationship between consumer behavior within online social networks and electronic commerce. Terms such as customer engagement and social media analytics demonstrate the importance of social media analysis in understanding consumer preferences and behaviors in online shopping environments.

Cluster 3: Internet and E-Commerce

This cluster is related to the internet and e-commerce, with associated terms such as electronic commerce, online consumer reviews, and sales. It illustrates the role of online transactions and consumer reviews in the development of e-commerce. This cluster is also connected with customer relationship management and economic metrics, indicating how companies manage customer relationships and measure sales performance or online marketing effectiveness.

Cluster 4: E-WOM and Word-of-Mouth

This cluster focuses on electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and word-of-mouth (WOM), demonstrating how information or recommendations shared through interpersonal communication, both digitally and traditionally, influence consumers. Terms such as consumer engagement and customer satisfaction highlight the importance of WOM in building brand reputation and influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

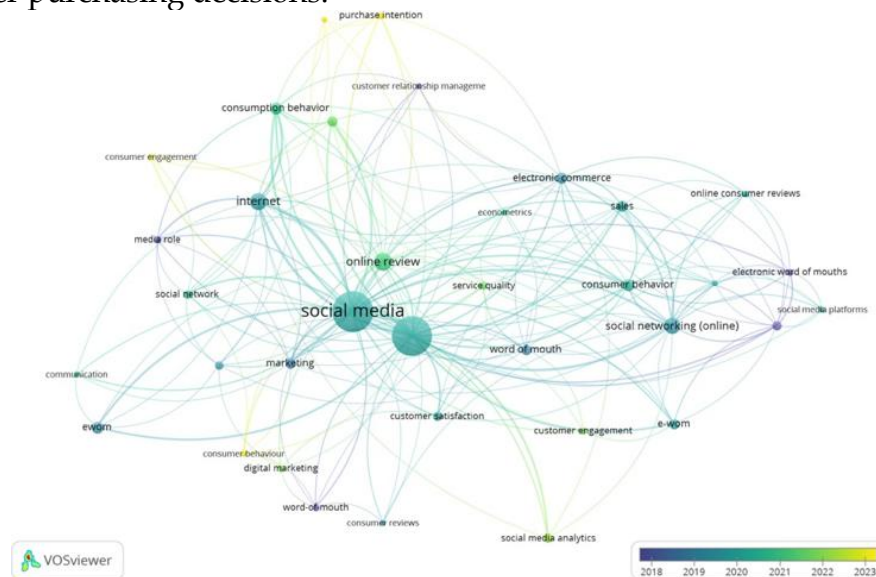


Figure 9. Overlay Visualization

This graph presents a conceptual relationship map related to social media, consumer behavior, and digital marketing based on a literature analysis from 2018 to 2023. At the center of the graph, the "social media" node serves as the main point connecting various important concepts, such as "online review," "consumer behavior," "marketing," and "consumer engagement." This indicates that social media plays a central role in research related to consumer behavior and marketing. The colors of the nodes represent changes in the publication frequency of topics during the analyzed period, where blue indicates topics that were widely discussed at the beginning of the period (2018), while yellow represents topics that gained increasing attention toward the end of the period (2023)

Several concepts, such as "purchase intention," "customer relationship management," and "word of mouth," are closely connected with social media, demonstrating how consumer interactions on social media influence purchasing decisions and customer relationships. Furthermore, topics related to e-commerce

and social networks, including "electronic commerce," "sales," and "social networking (online)," highlight the important role of social media in influencing consumer behavior and online transactions. Emerging trends can also be observed in topics such as "social media analytics," "customer satisfaction," and "service quality," indicating the importance of analyzing and measuring the impact of social media on customer satisfaction and service quality.

Overall, this graph provides insights into the development of social media-related research topics and their interconnections within the academic research landscape.

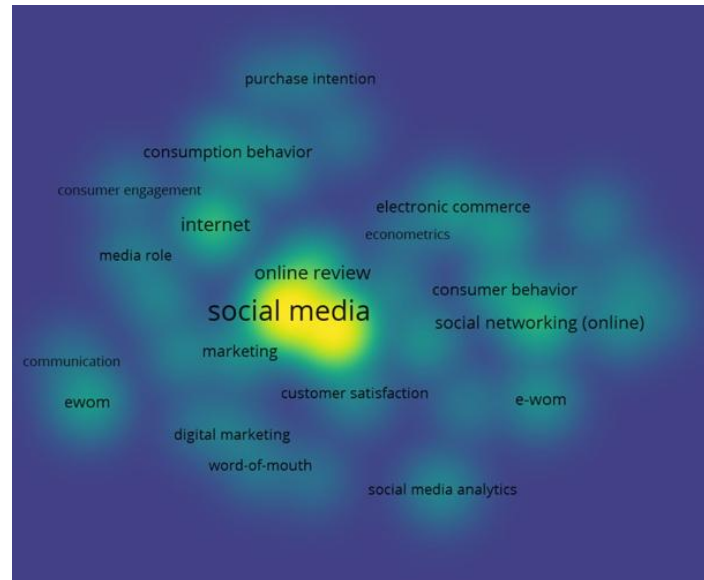


Figure 10. Density Visualization

This figure illustrates the relationships among frequently occurring terms in social media research. "Social media" serves as the central concept, closely connected with marketing, online review, and customer satisfaction, indicating the significant role of social media in influencing consumer behavior and marketing activities.

Terms such as "online review" and "word-of-mouth" (eWOM) demonstrate how online reviews influence purchasing decisions and brand image. In addition, "consumption behavior" and "purchase intention" illustrate the impact of social media on consumption patterns and consumers' purchase intentions.

This map also connects social media with electronic commerce (eCommerce) and customer engagement, highlighting the importance of data analysis in understanding consumer interactions on these platforms. Overall, this visualization illustrates the influence of social media on marketing activities and consumer decision-making processes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study successfully mapped the development, trends, and main themes within the literature related to social media marketing and online customer reviews using a descriptive bibliometric approach. By applying quantitative analysis techniques involving statistical and mathematical methods, this study provides a comprehensive overview of publication patterns, authorship, citations, and collaboration networks within this field. Through the stages of identification,

screening, eligibility, and inclusion, the researchers obtained focused and relevant results, with a total of 219 selected articles.

The data processing using VOSviewer generated visual maps illustrating the development of themes and trends in social media marketing and online customer reviews. This study provides valuable insights for researchers and practitioners in understanding the relationship and influence of these two aspects within the business environment and digital marketing. The findings open opportunities for further research to explore unexplored aspects and contribute to the development of more effective social media-based marketing strategies.

FURTHER STUDY

Further research is recommended to explore the evolving relationship between social media marketing and online customer reviews across different industries, geographical regions, and consumer segments. Future studies may also examine emerging platforms, artificial intelligence, influencer marketing, electronic word-of-mouth, and consumer trust to provide a more comprehensive understanding of digital marketing trends and their impact on consumer behavior.

Future researchers are encouraged to combine bibliometric analysis with systematic literature reviews, empirical studies, or qualitative approaches to gain deeper insights into the findings identified in this study. Longitudinal research could also be conducted to examine how trends in social media marketing and online customer reviews develop over time and how technological changes influence their effectiveness in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions.

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