

## **Social Media Marketing: The Past, Present and Future**

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### **Abstract**

Social Media Marketing (SMM) has impacted marketing significantly in the past decade. This study uses bibliometric and content analysis to examine academic research on Social Media Marketing (SMM). Focusing on the Scopus database, the research analyzed 899 papers from 2011 to 2021, excluding duplicates. We employed performance analysis, science mapping, and content analysis to understand social media marketing comprehensively. The top journal publishing SMM papers was the Journal of Interactive Marketing, with 6424 citations and 41 articles. The most influential author was Hollebeek L D..Science mapping revealed that "influencer marketing", "social media advertising," and "social media" are the trending themes in SMM. These themes complement the results found in co-citation clusters. Future research should use new theoretical frameworks like the Consumers Online Brand Related Activities (COBRA) Framework and apply Pierre Bourdieu's social capital theory in the context of SMM. This study offers a comprehensive understanding of social media marketing by visualizing the latest fields of research and trending themes. This study identifies various strategies used in social media marketing and how marketers can garner high engagement. This study utilizes various bibliometric methods to deliver a broad view of social media marketing and content analysis. The latest trends in the field are identified through science mapping techniques. Further, it also gives insight into the top authors and journals that prominently publish literature on social media marketing.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Digital Media, E-Marketing, Social Media Marketing.

### **Introduction**

An individual's social media usage has increased significantly in the past decade. Around 57 percent of the global population uses social media. On average, individuals spend at least 150 minutes on social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook (Datareportal, 2022). Social media offers comfort to individuals through its various offerings, such as Images or Videos that appear on the brands' accounts page for 24 hours (Stories), short videos with remixed or original audio (Shorts/Reels), and Live streaming (Live). Brands have adopted these tools to communicate more intimately with an individual. A rapid rise in digital marketing has

made brands focus on social media usage. In the 2010s, brands adopted social media for marketing communications, as they are cost-effective and easy to use. Traditional marketing methods fall short on two aspects, namely cost and two-way communication.

On the other hand, marketers can cost-effectively use social media to interact better with customers. Brands using social media must carefully utilize it as it impacts brand image (Kim & Ko, 2012). Social Media Marketing (SMM) encompasses five crucial components: consumer brand interaction, entertainment, content trendiness, customization, and electronic Word of mouth (ibid).

A key challenge in SMM is measuring social media effectiveness (Rapp, Beitelspacher, Grewal & Hughes, 2013). Brands with targeted advertisements have slowly crawled into an individual's social media feed. They focus on what the individual wants to see on social media rather than what the brand wants them to see (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Peer communication enabled through SMM positively affects purchase decisions (Wang, Yu & Wei, 2012). Social media help consumers interact with the brand directly (De Vries, Gensler & Leeflang, 2012; Malthouse, Haenlein, Skiera, Wege & Zhang, 2013). Different social media platforms have varied characteristics. Therefore, marketers must craft different social media strategies for each platform (Smith, Fischer & Yongjian, 2012). Brands must post fresh content to remain relevant (Zhang & Mao, 2008).

This study explores the present state of SMM research using bibliometric analysis to give researchers a comprehensive view of the domain. SMM involves numerous marketing phenomena, such as brands using influencers, using memes for marketing, etc. This has brought forth substantial research in the SMM domain, especially in the last decade. Earlier bibliometric studies have only looked at SMM with a sectoral focus. For instance, bibliometric analysis of social media has been done in hospitality and tourism, sports, and Facebook marketing (Lopes, Faria, Fidalgo-Neto & Mota., 2017; López-Carril, Escamilla-Fajardo, González-Serrano, Ratten & González-García, 2020; Nusair, Butt & Nikhashemi, 2019). This paper considers SMM in its usage across all sectors to provide a holistic view of the domain. Thus, we attempt to bridge a significant gap in the literature.

SMM research has shown a significant increase in annual scientific output from 2011 to 2021. This indicates a growing reliance on SMM by organizations over traditional marketing approaches. Notable journals publishing SMM research include the Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, the Journal of Business Research, the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, the Journal of Digital and Social Media Marketing, and the European Journal of Marketing. Harrigan, Milne, and Kaplan are authors with the highest number of SMM-related publications. Profiling allows scholars to seek collaboration with top-ranking authors. In addition, this study will enable future scholars to seek out high-impact articles in the domain. The major themes within SMM literature include "Corporate Social Responsibility", "Retailing", "Marketing Strategy", "Trust", "Retailing", and "Influencer Marketing". Thematic analysis identifies theoretical and contextual links and trends within SMM. Co-citation analysis helps classify literature, enriching our understanding of the interconnectedness and complementarity of ideas within the SMM discourse. Researching the latest high-impact articles will lead to the creation of new knowledge. It will also help us to identify theoretical and methodological gaps in the literature (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey & Lim, 2021). We aim to answer the following research questions in this study:

**RQ1:** What is the profile of SMM literature?

**RQ2:** What are the themes in SMM, and how have they evolved?

**RQ3:** What are the themes that upcoming research can explore?

This paper consists of three parts. The first is the literature review, which explains SMM and its characteristics. The second part covers methodology, data analysis, and discussion. The last section provides conclusions, limitations, and directions for further research.

### Literature Review

Previous bibliometric studies on social media are restricted to a specific domain. For instance, Nusair et al. (2019) have investigated the use of social media in hospitality and tourism. Further, using bibliometric analysis, Kitsios, Mitsopoulou, Moustakas, and Kamariotou (2022) studied the effect of user-generated content on social media. Similarly, Ali, Balta, and Papadopoulos (2022) used bibliometric analysis to elucidate literature on social media platforms and social enterprises. Rejeb, Rejeb, Abdollahi, and Treiblmaier (2022) performed a bibliometric analysis on a single social media platform, "Instagram". Yu, Sukjairungwattana, and Xu (2023) analyzed four decades of literature on social media and its application in education. Chen, Wang, Tang, and Hao (2019) studied event detection in social media spaces. Peng and Ye (2021) identified the trends in research about social media and data collection. Aparicio-Martinez, Perea-Moreno, Martinez-Jimenez, Redel-Macías, Vaquero-Abellan, and Pagliari (2019) employed a bibliometric approach to analyze motifs in the domain of health, mainly focusing on young people and social networks. Ye, Hudders, De Jans, and Veirman (2021) have explored the value of influencer marketing using a bibliometric approach. Similarly, Abhishek and Srivastava (2021) have mapped the extant literature on influencer marketing using bibliometric methods. Kargaran, Shahri, Ghorbani, Saberi, Jamali, and Ale Ebrahim (2024) have employed bibliometric analysis to identify, profile, and explore themes in social media content co-creation between customers and organizations. Bibliometric studies surrounding one particular domain comprehensively depict the field (Ghorbani, Kargaran, Saberi, Haghhighinasab, Jamali & Ale Ebrahim, 2022). Hasan, Qayyum, and Zia (2023) found that social media marketing influences value co-creation and a brand's authenticity.

Social media has brought forth change in the way individuals purchase products. Brands use social media to promote their offerings and to connect with their customers (Pivec & Maček, 2019). SMM has been explored in various contexts like brand-related user-generated content in which individuals create posts on social media that have the potential to spark conversation among its users Hennig-Thurau et al. (2010), consumer engagement in which literature elucidates what makes an individual interact with a post on a brand's social media handle (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019), influencer marketing in which literature explores the effect of social media influencers and how they impact behavior, Word of Mouth, brand image (Jin, Muqaddam & Ryu, 2019), Meme marketing in which users interact with internet memes that brands adopt from viral memes (Malodia, Dhir, Bilgihan, Sinha & Tikoo, 2022), and Value creation and sales (Nunan, Sibai, Schivinski & Christodoulides, 2018). SMM literature can be broadly classified into two perspectives, namely the consumer's view about the usage of social media and its use in decision-making and the marketers' perspective, wherein issues like its

implementation, optimization, and monitoring and evaluation of strategies are discussed (Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016). Knoll (2016) found that SMM themes explored in research include its usage, attitude of individuals, user-generated advertising, targeting, electronic word-of-mouth, and the effects of advertising on social media. Most SMM literature is context-specific, including tourism, information sharing, hospitality, etc. Therefore, gaining a broad insight into SMM is crucial by employing a bibliometric review.

### **Materials and Methods**

The methodology section explains the details of data collection, inclusion criteria, keywords, and software used. This study employed bibliometric analysis. It provides a bird's eye view of the extant literature. It helps profile the literature (Top authors, Journals, and documents) based on documents, citations, and science mapping to visualize the literature. Content Analysis was employed to decipher the meaning and implications of the themes and clusters found in thematic and co-citation analysis. The Scopus database was used to collect data due to its extensive coverage of management publications (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). A systematic process was followed to find relevant articles (Paul, Lim, O'Cass, Hao & Bresciani, 2021). Firstly, we used a relevant keyword ("Social Media Marketing") for our study. After entering the appropriate keyword, we refined the results using three filters (a) English language, (b) year 2011 to 2021, and (c) Subject areas of Business, Management, and Accounting. Eight hundred ninety-nine documents were considered for the analysis (Figure 1). Academics use bibliometric software like Cite Space, VOS Viewer, Publish or Perish, and R Studio (Cui, Liu & Mou, 2018; Leung, Sun & Ba, 2017). They help in data analysis and visualization. In this paper, we used the Bibliometrix R package as it offers more excellent tractability and customization in terms of its use and visualization techniques (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

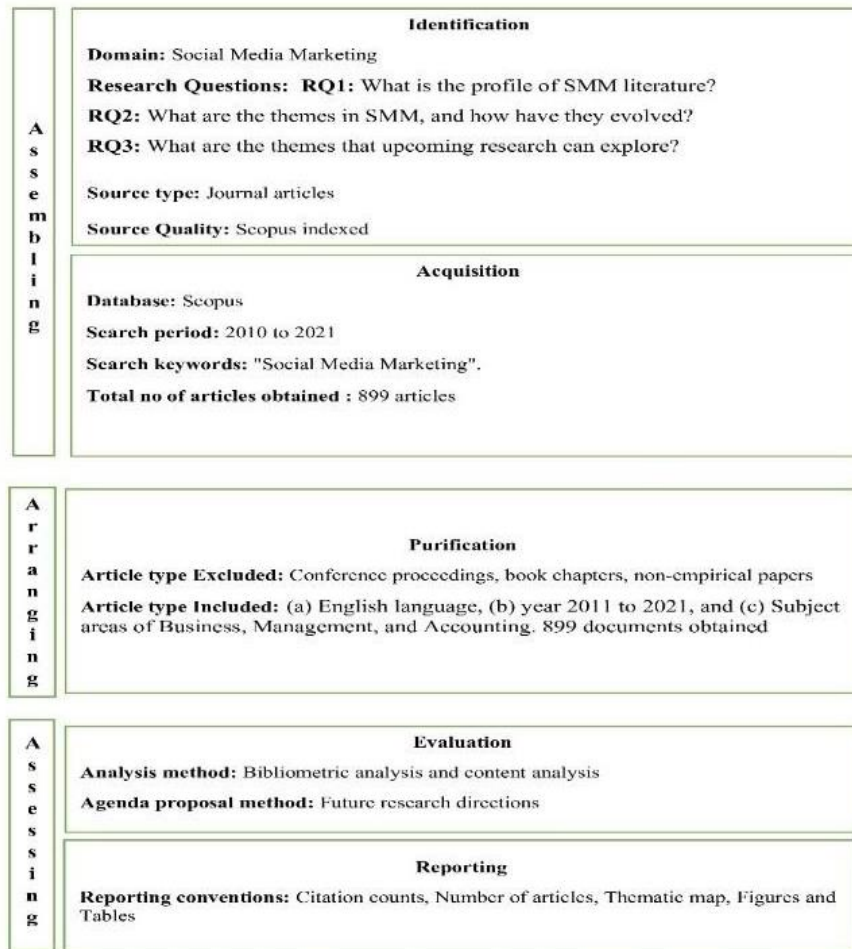


Figure 1: Procedure for Identification, Purification and Reporting Articles

## Results

### Descriptive statistics

The analyzed papers had an average citation of 40.63 and 51928 total references. One hundred forty-two of these were single-author publications. The total keywords used were 2571. The authors' collaboration index is 2.59. The annual increase in articles is 15.98 percent.

### Profile of the extant literature

#### Journals

Profiling journals will help researchers identify relevant journals (Gu, Meng & Farrukh, 2021). We profiled journals using two criteria: (a) Number of publications and (b) Total citations. We found that the *Journal of Interactive Marketing* had the highest number of citations (6424) and 41 publications, followed by *Business Horizons* (4306) with 32 publications and the *Journal of Business Research* (4282 citations) with 83 articles (Table 1). In these journals, crucial literature regarding SMM can be found.

#### Authors

We observed that 1948 authors had contributed to SMM literature. We ranked the authors based on their impact (Total citation) and the number of publications. Hollebeek L D as an author has the highest impact (1247 citations), followed by Bridie RJ (1189 citations) and Glynn

MS (1189 citations). Harrigan P has the highest number of articles (6 articles) followed by Kaplan AM and Milne GR (5 articles) (Table I).

### Articles

Based on total citations, we identified the most relevant articles contributing to SMM literature (Table 1). The article "Demystifying Customer Brand Engagement: Exploring The Loyalty Nexus" has the highest number of citations (1189) in the *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, followed by the article "Popularity of Brand Posts on Brand Fan Pages: An Investigation of the Effects of Social Media Marketing" in *Journal of Interactive Marketing* (1010 citations).

Table 1  
Journals, Authors, Articles, and Their Impact

Journal	Citations	Publications	Author	Citation	Publications	Author	Article Title	Journal	Citations	Year
Journal of Interactive Marketing	6424	41	Hollebeck L D	1247	2	Hollebeck L D	Demystifying Customer Brand Engagement: Exploring the Loyalty Nexus	Journal of Interactive Marketing	1189	2014
Business Horizons	4306	32	Brodie R J	1189	1	De Vries L	Popularity of Brand Posts on Brand Fan Pages: An Investigation	Journal of Interactive Marketing	1010	2012
Journal of Business Research	4282	83	Glynn M S	1189	1	Kim A J	Do Social Media Marketing Activities Enhance Customer	Journal of Business Research	914	2012

Journal	Citations	Publications	Author	Citation	Publications	Author	Article Title	Journal	Citations	Year
Journal of Business Ethics	2501	31	Kaplan AM	1022	5	Hanna R	We Are All Connected: The Power of The Social Media Ecosystem	Business Horizons	846	2011
Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing	2495	91	De Vries L	1010	1	Sashi C M	Customer Engagement, Buyer-Seller Relationships, And Social Media	Management Decision	643	2012
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	2495	56	Gensler S	1010	1	Berthon P R	Marketing Meets Web 2.0, Social Media, And Creative Consumers: Implications For International	Business Horizons	529	2012
Industrial Marketing Management	2219	36	LeeFlang P SH	1010	1	Ashley C	Creative Strategies in Social Media Marketing: An Exploratory Study of Branded Social Content and Consumer	Psychology and Marketing	528	2015

Journal	Citations	Publications	Author	Citation	Publications	Author	Article Title	Journal	Citations	Year
Journal of Marketing	1946	13	Ko E	993	3	Michaelidou N	Digital And Social Media Marketing Usage in B2B Industrial Section	Marketing Management Journal	509	2011
International Journal of Information Management	1159	16	Rohm A	958	2	Wang X	Social Media Peer Communication and Impacts on Purchase Intentions: A	Journal of Interactive Marketing	503	2012
Psychology and Marketing	1070	29	Haenlein M	930	4	Smith A N	How Does Brand-Related User-Generated Content Differ Across YouTube, Facebook, And Twitter?	Journal of Interactive Marketing	496	2012

### Science mapping

This section deals with how the literature is visualized to get meaningful insights. We employed thematic evolution and co-citation analysis as part of science mapping.

### Thematic evolution

#### Themes in publications (2011- 2016)

During the first period (2011-2016), we recorded 323 documents. This period has ten themes. The primary themes are "Social Media," "Marketing Strategy," "Social Media Marketing," And "Online Communities". The theme "Social Media" and "Social Media Marketing" encompasses papers that deal with how social media can be used for marketing and how user-generated content related to brands is spread on social media like Facebook,

Twitter, and YouTube (Roma & Aloini, 2019). The "Marketing Strategy" theme entails literature on how social media can be incorporated into a firm's marketing strategy (Park, 2011). The "Online Communities" theme comprises literature on online communities on social media and how they affect various marketing phenomena (Sasinovskaya & Anderson, 2011).

The motor /engine theme is ' "Social Marketing." ' The literature on this theme relates to how social media spreads mass messages purely for a social cause (Lee, Mowery, Depue, Luxenberg & Schillo, 2013). The niche themes are "Big Data," " Marketing History," "Entrepreneurial Marketing," and "Corporate Social Responsibility." The "Big Data" theme explores how data obtained from social media networks can be used to craft marketing strategies (Maklan, Peppard & Klaus, 2015). The extant literature on "Marketing History" deepens our understanding of various marketing challenges (Logemann, 2013). The "Entrepreneurial Marketing" theme explores how marketing manifests social value creation (Özdemir, 2013). The niche theme "Corporate Social Responsibility" explores social media's role in CSR activities. The emerging/declining theme is "Scale Development". The theme's literature explores the creation, validation, and use of various scales to measure SMM activities (Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014) (Figure 2A).

### **Themes in publications (2017-2020)**

SMM literature in this period clustered around ten themes (391 articles). The primary themes are "Social Media," "Social Media Marketing," and "Advertising". The themes "Social Media" and "Social Media Marketing" have stayed in the basic theme, indicating that concepts and scales are found in this quadrant. The theme "Advertising" revolves around the use of advertising by brands on social media (Shareef, Mukerji, Alryalat, Wright & Dwivedi, 2018). The Motor themes are "Marketing Communication" and "Influencer Marketing," indicating that these were trending themes. The theme "Marketing Communication" explores how SMM can be used and integrated as a part of a firm's marketing communication strategy (Huang, Ha & Kim, 2018). The "Influencer Marketing" theme addresses how influencers on social media are integrated into a company's marketing strategy (Ki, Cuevas, Chong & Lim, 2020). The Niche themes during this period are "Social Media Strategy" and "Trust." The theme of social media strategy entails how firms use it to achieve their marketing goals (Lindsey-Mullikin & Borin, 2017). The "Trust" theme explores individuals' trust in a firm's SMM strategies (Jaywant Singh, Crisafulli, Quamina & Xue, 2020). The emerging or declining themes during this period are "Social Media Analytics" and "Emerging Markets". The theme "Social Media Analytics" explores the use of analytics and how it can be applied to social media to capture insightful consumer data (Chang, Ku & Ch, 2019). The theme "Emerging Markets" entails literature on emerging markets like the adoption of mobile payments in an emerging economy and Effective marketing strategies in an emerging market that are studied in the context of SMM (Dinh, Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018; Vieira, Almeida, Agnihotri, da Silva & Arunachalam, 2019) (Figure 2B).

### **Themes in publications (2021)**

We considered 2021 (calendar year) publications alone here, as 185 articles were centered around 12 themes. The primary themes are "Social Media Marketing," "Marketing," and "Social Media". We see that "Social Media Marketing" and "Social Media" remained basic

themes during this period. The theme "Advertising" has evolved to "Marketing", implying that social media is used for advertising and other marketing activities. "Influencer Marketing" is still a motor theme, implying that this theme is trending in research among scholars. The theme "Marketing Communication" has evolved to "Social Media Advertising", indicating a shift in terms of keyword usage among researchers. "Covid-19" appeared as a motor theme as researchers explored how the Covid-19 pandemic affected SMM. The niche theme "Sustainability" points to SMM's role in promoting eco-friendly behavior (Zhang, Chintagunta & Kalwani, 2021). The niche theme "Authenticity" comprises literature on the authenticity of social media influencers and how they influence individuals to buy products they endorse (Dinh & Lee, 2022). Four emerging or declining themes during this period are "Corporate Social Responsibility," "Fashion Brands," "Social Marketing," and "SMEs."

### Co-citation analysis

The co-citation analysis entails common citations between papers. It allows us to classify and group papers with common themes. Our study has identified four dominant clusters into which documents are grouped (Figure 2C).

Brands using SMM (Red): We observe documents related to brands using SMM for the first time in this cluster. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) differentiated social media from concepts like social presence and user-generated content. Mangold and Faulds (2009) state that social media enables brands to reach and talk to customers directly. Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre (2011) have argued that marketers need to understand consumer engagement using social media as it can affect an organization's reputation, sales, and survival. Lamberton and Stephen (2016) explored fifteen years of digital, social, and mobile marketing literature by profiling and thematically categorizing the literature. They found three crucial themes (1) digital, social media, and mobile marketing for individual expression (2) decision support tools, and (3) market intelligence.

Marketers are seen as the gatecrashers to the party that is the social web (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Since brands are migrating their marketing activities to social media platforms, it is essential to understand the usage, effectiveness, and challenges of SMM (Michaelidou, Siamagka & Christodoulides, 2011). Social media hosts viral content like memes. So, it is essential to understand why posts on social media platforms become viral. Berger (2012) finds that the content that triggers high positive or negative emotions is more viral than others. Since social media enables brand customers to talk to each other, it is essential to understand how Word of mouth (WoM) happens in social media (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki & Wilner, 2010). Similarly, other studies have also studied Word of mouth on social media (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2011). Studies have emphasized the need for Customer Relationship Management on social media as brands interact with customers in the social space (Malthouse et al., 2013).

Theoretical and Empirical insights from SMM (Blue): The second cluster groups theoretical and empirical research. Moreover, this cluster relates to papers using various quantitative research methods, like structural equation modeling (Fornell & Larcker, 2016; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, and Wiertz (2013) evaluated the extant literature on SMM and brand management to arrive at a framework for analyzing social media's impact on brand management. Social media has enabled

marketers to reach new customers and retain them. Some studies have provided the theoretical underpinnings of relationship marketing.

Effect of SMM activities (Green): This cluster explores the impact of various SMM activities. Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch (2017) have constructed a framework elucidating strategic SMM components. Social media plays host to a variety of brands. Kim & Ko (2012) investigated whether SMM activities affect customer equity in luxury brands. Similarly, another study explored whether SMM activities of luxury brands affect consumer Behaviour and brand equity (Godey et al., 2016). Social media influencers endorse products and influence consumers to buy them. Lou and Yuan (2019) have crafted a social media influencer value model that explains how influencer marketing affects brand awareness and purchase intention.

Heterogenous themes in SMM 4 (Purple): This cluster combines various studies in SMM, such as online advertising and effectiveness, social media strategy, and consumer engagement. Calder, Malthouse, and Schaedel (2009) found that personal and social interactive engagement affect advertising effectiveness on social media. This study, in turn, led marketers to create new strategies for social media. Ashley and Tuten (2015) assert the need for brands to regularly update their social media handles with fresh and trendy content. This will enable a brand to engage with consumers. Since consumers and brands increasingly use social networks, it is essential to quantify engagement. Hollebeek et al. (2014) conceptualized and validated a scale, especially for customer engagement with social media brands.

On the contrary, Pansari and Kumar (2017) developed a framework for customer engagement in which satisfaction and emotion act as antecedents and tangible and intangible consequences. Further, a study found involvement and customer participation as precursors to customer engagement and value, trust, commitment, Word of mouth, loyalty, and brand community involvement as its outcome (Vivek, Beatty & Morgan., 2012). Another study explains how using brand fan pages increases brand post popularity. They also found vivid and interactive posts increase the number of likes and comments (De Vries et al., 2012).

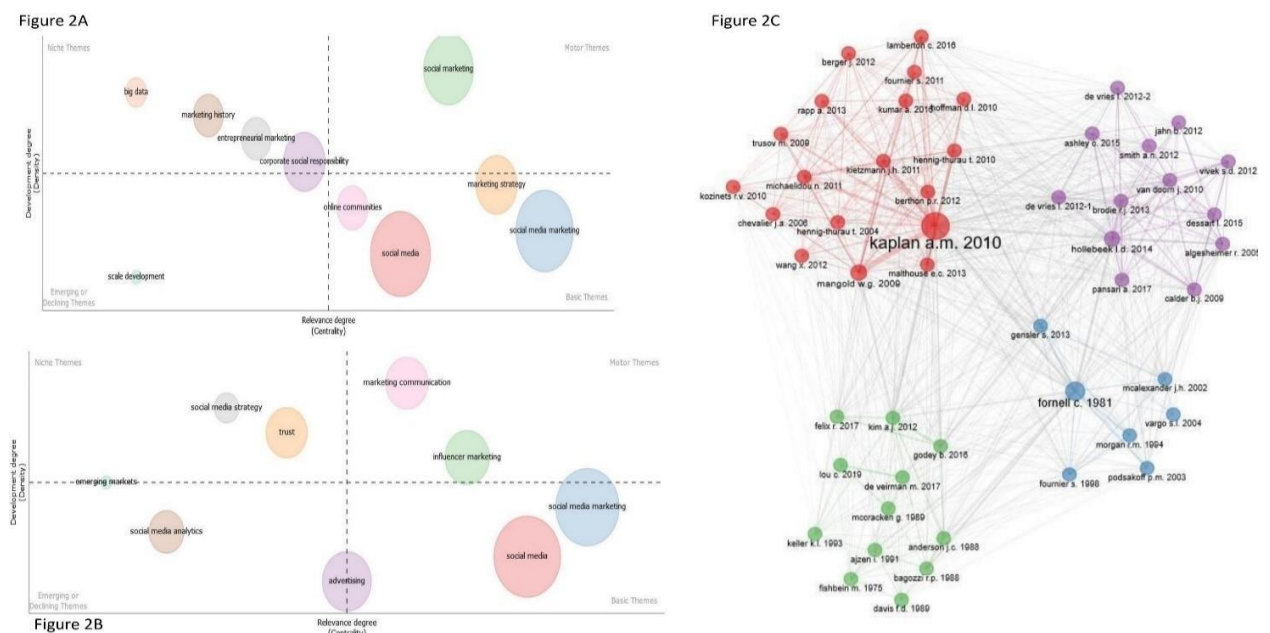


Figure 2: Thematic Evolution and Co-citation Analysis of SMM Literature

### Discussion

SMM literature grows by 15 percent every year, possibly due to the impact social media plays in promoting products. SMM is a paradigm shift for marketers as it is cost-effective and can reach a diverse audience. Brands promote their offerings on their social media handles as it enables them to engage in dialogue with their consumers. Due to its impact, brands have included SMM in their marketing plans. Some SMM strategies are influencers, memes, live-streaming events, etc.

This study presents a comprehensive view of social media marketing by elucidating the journals, authors, and documents with the highest citations (n=899). Further, it uncovers the various themes in SMM literature and suggests what themes can be explored for further research based on the findings. In profiling the literature, we found that the *Journal of Interactive Marketing* and *Business Horizons* has the highest number of published documents and citations. The authors Hollebeek L D and Brodie RJ have the highest citations. The most cited document in social media marketing is Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2011), which revisits consumer brand engagement. De Vries et al. (2012) elucidates how brands can enhance the popularity of their posts on social media. Our findings complement the bibliometric profiling from extant literature on digital and social media marketing (Ghorbani et al., 2022; Krishen, Dwivedi, Bindu & Kumar, 2021). However, we observed some differences in the profiles, possibly due to their focus on digital marketing.

Our findings from thematic mapping show that Influencer marketing and Social Media advertising are the trending areas in SMM literature. The theoretical roots for social media literature are found in the theme “Social media Marketing.” This theme relates to seminal papers in SMM literature (De Vries et al., 2012; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2013). Furthermore, the literature complements our finding that brands must use influencers in their marketing strategy (Ki et al., 2020). Moreover, emerging themes like “Social media analytics” suggest the importance of using analytics like engagement rate, conversion rate, etc., to measure return on marketing investments (Chang et al., 2019). The theme “Emerging markets” also elucidates the use of social media in emerging markets like mobile phone adoption (Dinh et al., 2018; Vieira et al., 2019). This may not be limited just to mobile phone adoption but also SMM in virtual environments like the metaverse.

Co-citation analysis suggests 4 clusters in SMM literature. While one elucidates how social media was conceptualized and how it can be integrated with a brand’s marketing plan, another explains various methodological approaches used, the third cluster explains SMM effects like customer brand equity, and the fourth cluster elucidates the effectiveness of SMM (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010; Fornell & Larcker, 2016; Kim & Ko 2012; Ashley & Tuten 2015). Our findings from thematic mapping and co-citation analysis are consistent with extant literature, which suggests that social media marketing is an emerging domain and warrants further exploration (Ghorbani et al., 2022; Kim, Kang & Lee, 2021; Krishen et al., 2021; Leung et al., 2017). However, Zhao, Huang, and Wang (2021) argue that the scope of social network research is comparatively larger than social media research. Our results also complement the studies (Abhishek & Srivastava, 2021; Ghorbani et al., 2022; Rejeb et al., 2022) stating that social media marketing, big data, and Machine learning are emerging keywords in Digital marketing literature. Further, bibliometric analysis of SMM in various sectors has illustrated that it is a growing field and has enormous scope in terms of applications and research (Ghorbani et al.,

2022; Lopes et al., 2017; López-Carril et al., 2020; Nusair et al., 2019). We believe that SMM has enormous scope and can be researched extensively.

### **Conclusion**

A bibliometric analysis was employed to study the current trends in SMM. This paper found that brands widely use SMM, which will spearhead a new age of digital marketing. SMMs have become popular in the last decade as more people and brands use them. Fashion houses like Gucci and Chanel and E-commerce organizations like Amazon and Meesho have started heavily relying on the insights gained from analyzing the user's activity on social media platforms. This paper focuses on two critical aspects of bibliometrics: descriptive bibliometric and scientific mapping. Descriptive bibliometrics gives us insight into the top authors, the top journals, the most relevant documents, and the impact of the authors and journals. Therefore, a researcher interested in publishing on SMM can choose their Journal based on the number of publications and their impact. Scientific mapping gives us insight into the various themes existing in the field, their evolution over time, and how two papers are related based on their author's keywords. However, this study has limitations. Firstly, this study has looked at only the Scopus database; other databases like Sci Finder and Web of Science can provide more information on various SMM research trends. Secondly, this study has only considered journal papers. Future studies can include popular books, textbooks, book chapters, conference proceedings, and blogs as literature for bibliometric analysis to gain further insights into SMM.

### **Recommendations**

Future research on SMM strategy can be multi-faceted. Researchers and marketers can analyze promotion effectiveness based on each social media platform's characteristics. For example, Instagram is primarily a visual social media platform that includes various attributes like Images (Posts), Videos (Reels), images or videos that last for 24 hours on an accounts page (Stories), and live streaming of an event (Live). In addition, Internet memes used in social media have a higher engagement rate than conventional social media posts (Image, Video, and combination of both). This study has identified various research gaps. Researchers could use these gaps to develop novel research that the industry can use. Researchers can focus on performing content and thematic analysis of a single author's publications or a single journal for their studies. For example, Linda Hollebeek could be analyzed for insightful results.

Similarly, researchers can also perform a meta-analysis of SMM literature in a specific industry (like fashion and e-commerce) that can provide evidence on consumer response. For instance, a meta-analysis of SMM in the luxury brand industry can help marketers. Future studies can attempt research on Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) as social media platforms embrace virtual worlds.

Researchers can also focus on how various marketing phenomena occur through SMM. It can study or review theories used to explain SMM. For example, researchers can study how consumers interact with a brand on social media using the COBRA framework (Consumers Online Brand Related Activities). This theory can explain how consumers consume, contribute, and create brand-related content. For instance, research can elucidate how consumers consume a brand's post, how they engage with the post, and if they make a post related to a brand.

Moreover, this theory can also explain the same with brand-related memes. Social media platforms are used to communicate information instantly. Further research can also explore consumers' adoption of products that went viral using theoretical underpinnings of virality and adoption theory. For instance, the fidget spinner gained global attention owing to social media. Further, future research can explore the theme "social media advertising" particularly to measure if SMM affects a brand's social currency using Pierre Bourdieu's social capital theory. Research can investigate how the brands' activity on social networks leads to value creation in the consumers' minds.

Further, research can identify if there is a correlation between a social media influencer's personality, brand personality, and brand success. Scholars can also explore whether brands "social activism" can enhance brand love. Moreover, research can investigate how user-generated content on a brand's fan page leads to the purchase intention of the brand's offering.

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