

Economic and Business Horizon

ISSN: 2963-2765

Economic and Business
Horizon

Volume: 05

Issue: 05

Year: 2026

Page: 693-708

Citation:

Kusuma, D. P., Wijaya, T.,
& Utama, A. (2026).

Research trends in social
media engagement and
consumer behavior: A
bibliometric analysis.

*Economic and Business
Horizon*, 5(5), 693-708.

Research Trends in Social Media Engagement and Consumer Behavior: A Bibliometric Analysis

Ditalia Puspita Kusuma^{1*}, Tony Wijaya¹, Agung Utama¹

¹ Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

* Corresponding author: Ditalia Puspita Kusuma (ditaliapuspita.2025@student.uny.ac.id)

Abstract

Digital transformation has intensified the role of social media in shaping consumer engagement and behavior in digital marketing. This study examines how scientific publications have developed, maps the intellectual structure, dominant themes, scientific collaboration networks and emerging trends in the study of social media engagement and consumer behavior. This study uses bibliometric analysis to examine the intellectual structure, research trends, and thematic evolution of social media engagement and consumer behavior in digital marketing. Data from Scopus yielded 88 relevant documents published between 2014 and 2026 after PRISMA screening, which were analysed using VOSviewer for co-occurrence, overlay, and density visualisation. Results reveal a significant growth in the number of publications, especially from 2022 to 2025, indicating an increasing academic interest in digital consumer behavior and social media engagement. The intellectual structure includes five main clusters: consumer behavior and purchase decisions; user engagement and brand interaction; digital marketing strategies; digital marketing communication; and statistical analysis and structural models. They also pointed to new trends like influencer marketing, social commerce, artificial intelligence, machine learning, behavior prediction, and AI-driven engagement. The study assists in mapping conceptual relationships and provides direction for future studies on digital marketing and consumer behavior.

Keywords

Consumer Behavior, Digital Marketing, Social Media Engagement, Thematic Evolution.

1. Introduction

Today's marketing landscape has been transformed by digital technology and the rapid growth of social media, which have evolved into strategic platforms for interactive and sustainable brand–consumer relationships (Dauhan & Langi, 2024). This transformation has reshaped how consumers search for information, evaluate products, and make purchase decisions, making social media an essential component of personalized and community-based digital marketing (Harrigan et al., 2021; Zeqiri et al., 2025).

Social media engagement has consequently become a key focus in digital marketing research. It refers to consumers' interactions with brand content through likes, comments, shares, views, and user-generated content. High engagement reflects stronger consumer-brand relationships and can enhance trust, loyalty, purchase intention, and purchasing decisions (Ndhlovu & Maree, 2024). Recent research also shows that digital consumer engagement influences customer responsiveness and behavioral engagement across digital industries (Lim & Rasul, 2022). Research further shows that effective consumer–brand interactions through social media can increase purchase intention, while engagement can mediate the relationship between digital content and marketing outcomes (Santos et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the digital age has introduced very dynamic changes in consumer behavior. Today's consumers increasingly rely on social media for information, seeking social endorsement through user reviews and weighing product alternatives based on recommendations from influencers and online communities. Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), viral marketing, and influencer marketing further enhance the role of social media in consumer behavior (Shaheen, 2025). Moreover, recent studies indicate that influencer marketing and social commerce have a significant influence on consumers' purchase intention and purchasing decisions in digital environments (Wang & Shahzad, 2024).

Digital interaction processes can explain the relationship between social media engagement and consumer behavior that affects consumers' cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects. Repeated exposure to content, social interaction and participation in digital discussions can lead to positive perceptions and a stronger emotional attachment to brands (Harrigan et al., 2021). Engagement is a stimulus that affects consumers' attention, trust, and positive evaluation, and subsequently affects their purchase intention and consumption behavior (Lim & Rasul, 2022). In addition, interactions in the form of electronic word of mouth also increase social validation, which directly and indirectly influences purchase decision-making (Ismagilova et al., 2017). Hence, social media engagement has become a significant determinant in understanding consumer behavior in the digital age.

The growing importance of social media engagement and consumer behavior has increased scientific publications. Yet, most studies still examine variable relationships separately, leaving limited comprehensive mapping of research trends, intellectual structures, theme evolution, and scientific collaboration (Donthu et al., 2021). The issue of social media engagement in digital marketing has been covered in a great number of previous bibliometric studies, for example, the works of Rawangngam et al. (2025) and Shaheen (2025). However, these studies generally focused on engagement in a broad sense and did not specifically integrate consumer behavior as the main focus of the study. Furthermore, previous research was limited to descriptive analysis such as publication trends and author productivity, and could not fully reflect the intellectual structures, conceptual relationships between themes, and development of emerging trends. This condition indicates that there exists a significant research gap that requires further exploration.

In recent years, new phenomena such as influencer marketing, social commerce, short-video content, AI-based engagement, and algorithm-based interactivity have also emerged with the rise of social media and are increasingly playing a role in consumer behavior. Furthermore, today's social media algorithms are increasingly based on community-based engagement, genuine conversation, and social search rather than the amount of content (Poleac & Gherguț-Babii, 2024). However, there is a gap in bibliometric studies mapping the evolution of these latest themes in the relationship of social media engagement and consumer behavior. The dynamics of research development are not systematically documented: no dominant themes, no scientific collaboration networks, no future research directions.

In this context, the present study aims to fill the research gap by using a more inclusive bibliometric approach. This study examines how scientific publications have developed, maps the intellectual structure, dominant themes, scientific collaboration networks, and emerging trends in the study of social media engagement and consumer behavior. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to enrich the literature of digital marketing and consumer behavior, and to provide a more systematic understanding of future research directions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social Media Engagement and Consumer Behavior

Social Media Engagement (SME) refers to the extent to which consumers interact with brand-related social media content and activities through likes, comments, shares, views, and user-generated content (Harrigan et al., 2021). Beyond these observable behavioral activities, SME has evolved into a multidimensional construct encompassing behavioral, cognitive, and affective dimensions, reflecting the depth and quality of consumer–brand relationships (Lim & Rasul, 2022). Recent research further indicates that brand engagement through social media can contribute to purchase intention, particularly in influencer marketing contexts (Hadi et al., 2025). This multidimensional perspective highlights that engagement is not limited to visible interactions but also involves consumers' attention, thoughts, and emotional responses toward brands and their digital content.

Consumer behavior refers to the processes involved in purchasing, using, and evaluating products or services to satisfy consumer needs and wants. In the digital environment, these processes are increasingly influenced by social validation mechanisms, including Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), online reviews, and influencer recommendations (Ismagilova et al., 2017). Consumers can access and evaluate information from other users before making purchasing decisions, making social media an important environment for information exchange and preference formation. Consequently, social media has become an important determinant of consumer preferences and choices in the digital age.

The growing integration of interactive features, user-generated content, and social commerce further strengthens the relevance of SME in understanding consumer behavior. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages but actively participate in creating, sharing, and evaluating digital content. This shift has transformed social media into an interactive marketplace where engagement can contribute to the development of consumer perceptions and relationships with brands. Therefore, understanding SME and consumer behavior provides an important theoretical foundation for examining how digital interactions influence consumer decision-making and marketing outcomes.

2.2. Relationship Between Social Media Engagement and Consumer Behavior

The relationship between social media engagement and consumer behavior can be explained through digital interaction processes that influence consumers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Social interaction and participation

in digital discussions can create positive perceptions and strengthen consumers' emotional attachment to brands through repeated exposure to relevant content (Harrigan et al., 2021). Engagement functions as a mechanism that captures consumer attention, builds trust, and generates positive evaluations, which can ultimately influence purchase intention and consumption decisions (Lim & Rasul, 2022). Thus, higher levels of engagement can strengthen the connection between consumers and brands while shaping subsequent behavioral responses.

Direct and indirect interactions through eWOM and digital communities further reinforce the social validation effect on consumer behavior (Ismagilova et al., 2017). Consumers often rely on the experiences and opinions of other users when evaluating products or brands, making social interactions an important source of information and credibility. Empirical studies have also shown that high levels of social media engagement can contribute to customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and repurchase intention across various digital marketing contexts (Bilro et al., 2022). These outcomes demonstrate that engagement extends beyond immediate purchase decisions and can contribute to the development of longer-term consumer–brand relationships.

Furthermore, the growing use of influencer marketing, algorithmic personalization, and short-form video content has further strengthened the relationship between social media engagement and consumer behavior (Li et al., 2023). These developments enable brands to deliver increasingly relevant and interactive content while encouraging consumers to participate more actively in digital environments. As a result, social media engagement has become an important mechanism through which brands influence consumer attention, perceptions, trust, purchase intention, loyalty, and continued interaction. This evolving relationship provides a strong basis for examining how digital marketing practices reshape consumer behavior in contemporary social media environments.

2.3. Emerging Themes in Social Media and Consumer Behavior

Recent research indicates that interactive, community-based, and commerce-oriented activities increasingly shape social media and consumer behavior. Social commerce, user-generated content, and consumer-to-consumer interaction have become important research themes because they enable consumers to exchange information, build trust, and influence one another's purchase intentions. Recent evidence shows that consumer-to-consumer interactions can significantly influence purchase intention through the development of trust, while social commerce research increasingly examines the factors that drive customer engagement in digitally mediated shopping environments (John et al., 2025; Busalim & Asadi, 2025).

Another emerging direction concerns influencer marketing and technology-enabled engagement. Influencer-based communication has developed into an important mechanism for stimulating consumer participation, while research increasingly examines the psychological processes underlying engagement with influencer content (Gu & Duan, 2024). At the same time, artificial intelligence is creating new opportunities and challenges for social media marketing. Recent evidence by Brüns and Meißner (2024) shows that the use of generative AI in social media content can influence consumers' perceptions of brand authenticity and subsequently affect their attitudes and behavioral responses.

These developments demonstrate that research is moving beyond conventional social media interaction toward social commerce, influencer engagement, AI-generated content, and increasingly complex consumer experiences. Research by Kulikovskaja et al. (2023) on social media-based customer engagement also shows that different types of digital content can generate different engagement responses and marketing outcomes. Therefore, mapping these emerging themes is important for understanding how the intellectual structure of social media engagement and consumer behavior continues to evolve.

3. Methods

This study aims to map the evolution of the literature in social media engagement and consumer behavior from a methodological context, using bibliometrics. Bibliometric analysis (techniques of co-occurrence, co-citation and bibliographic coupling) helps to identify intellectual structures, research trends, patterns of scientific collaboration and conceptual relationships. The present methodology is more inclusive than traditional literature reviews as it reflects the evolution of the research themes through data and scientific visualisation (Thakur & Kushwaha, 2024).

This study uses a quantitative approach based on bibliometric analysis to map the development of literature related to social media engagement and consumer behavior. The selection of this approach is due to its capability to systematically, objectively, and scientifically identify research trends, intellectual structures, and relationships between concepts based on data (Thakur & Kushwaha, 2024). Bibliometric research is also commonly used in recent studies to gain an understanding of the development of scientific fields and to identify future research paths (Lim & Rasul, 2022). The research method was carried out in three stages, namely the selection of literature using the PRISMA method, data collection from the Scopus database, and analysis and visualization using VOSviewer.

In the first stage, we applied the PRISMA method to make sure that the literature selection process was conducted systematically and transparently. This process included stages of identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion. At the identification stage, the search of articles was conducted with the keywords “Social Media Engagement” AND “Consumer Behavior” in the database of Scopus. The initial number of documents was 103. In addition, filtering was employed in the screening and eligibility steps based on the inclusion criteria, which included types of documents, i.e., journal articles and conference papers, and publications in the English language. Documents that did not meet these criteria were eliminated, and the number of publications was reduced to 88 relevant documents that met the requirements for further analysis.

The next step was data collection and analysis. The selected data were downloaded in CSV or RIS file formats, containing information such as title, author, publication year, keywords, abstracts and citation counts. The analysis was performed with VOSviewer to map relations between publications and research structures (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The process of analysis included data cleaning, defining the types of analysis such as co-authorship, co-occurrence, co-citation and bibliographic coupling and defining the minimum occurrence threshold so that only significant elements were analyzed. The results were displayed as network visualisation, overlay visualisation, and density visualisation to thoroughly reveal thematic clusters, relationships between variables, and trends of research development (Thakur & Kushwaha, 2024).

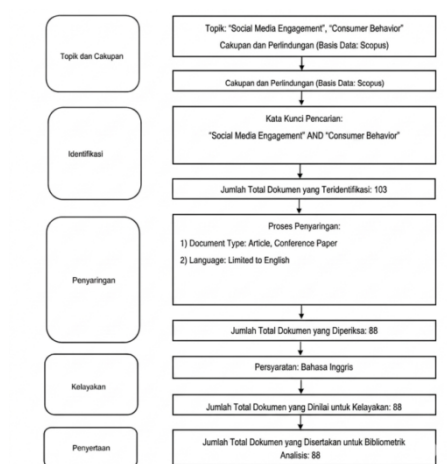


Figure 1. Data Collection Process

This study aims to provide a comprehensive and systematic overview of the intellectual structure, development and evolutionary direction of literature on social media engagement and consumer behavior through the bibliometric approach. The analysis of citation patterns, keyword relationships and research networks enables the objective identification of major themes, conceptual relationships among variables and research trends. In addition, bibliometric analysis allows for the identification of research clusters and relevant research gaps, thus providing a more accurate understanding compared to conventional literature reviews (Donthu et al., 2021).

4. Results

4.1. Publication Trends in Social Media Engagement and Consumer Behavior

The total number of relevant articles identified from the database of Scopus from the year 2014 to 2026 was 103 (the combination of keywords “Social Media Engagement” AND “Consumer Behavior”).

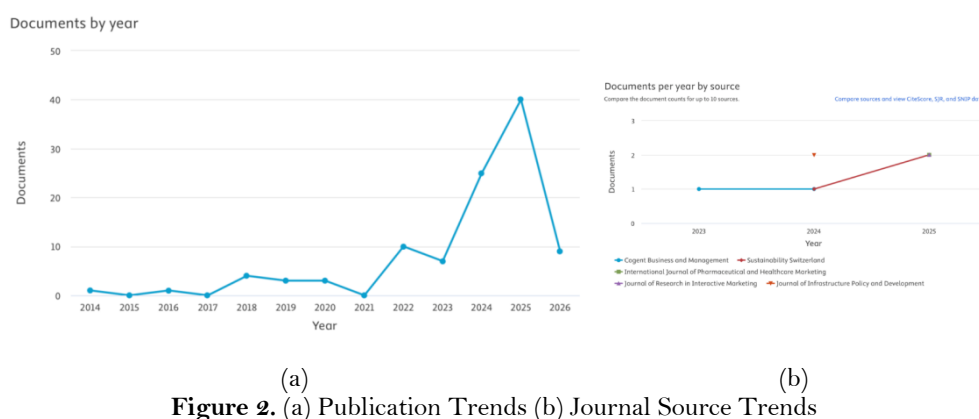
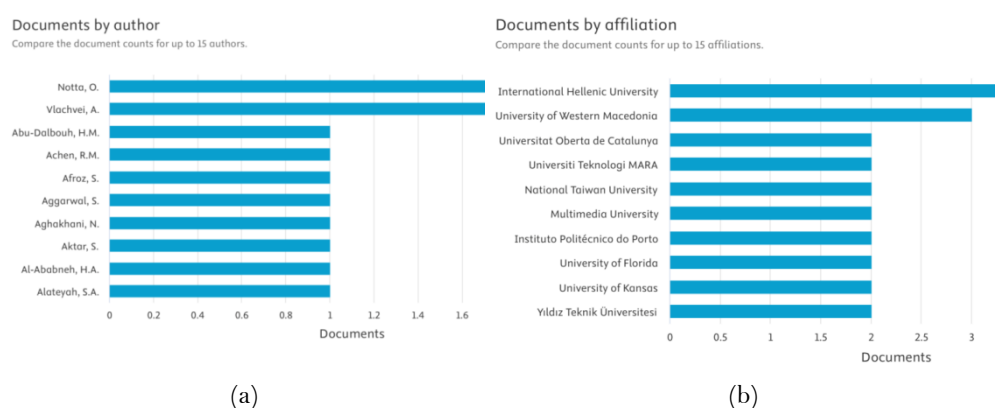


Figure 2. (a) Publication Trends (b) Journal Source Trends

According to Figure 2(a), publications on social media engagement and consumer behavior increased during 2014–2026. Publication output remained low and fluctuated between 0 and 4 documents annually during 2014–2021, indicating limited academic attention to the topic. Growth began in 2022 with 10 documents, although it declined slightly to 7 documents in 2023. A substantial increase occurred in 2024 and 2025, reaching 25 and 40 documents, respectively. This sharp growth

reflects increasing academic interest in Social Media Engagement and Consumer Behavior, alongside the development of digital marketing and the growing use of social media. Meanwhile, 9 documents were recorded in 2026, which may reflect ongoing publication activity during the year. Overall, the trend indicates that this research area has developed rapidly and gained increasing importance in contemporary digital marketing research.

Based on Figure 2(b), publications on social media engagement and consumer behavior have gradually expanded across various journal sources during 2023–2025. In 2023, publication activity remained limited, with Cogent Business and Management contributing one document. In 2024, contributions became more diverse, with Cogent Business and Management publishing one document, Journal of Infrastructure Policy and Development contributing two documents, and Sustainability Switzerland contributing one document. The trend became more pronounced in 2025, with Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing, and Sustainability Switzerland each contributing two documents. This distribution indicates that research on social media engagement and consumer behavior is becoming more established and attracting attention from journals across different disciplinary perspectives.



(a) Documents by Author

(b) Top Publication-Contributing Institutions

Based on Figure 3(a), the graph of Documents by Author indicates that the publication counts are somewhat scattered among the authors. This indicates that the scientific contributions regarding social media engagement and consumer behavior are still relatively scattered and not greatly dominated by any author. The authors with the most documents are Notta, O. and Vlachvei, A. (2 documents). This shows that these two authors have a more prominent contribution than other authors in this field of study.

Other authors such as Abu-Dalboul, H.M., Achen, R.M., Afroz, S., Aggarwal, S., Aghakhani, N., Aktar, S., Al-Ababneh, H.A. and Alateyah, S.A. were recorded with 1 document each. These results indicate that research contributions are still shared by a lot of authors with similar numbers of publications. From a bibliometric perspective, this scenario indicates that the area of social media engagement and consumer behavior is still active and can be enriched by cooperation and inputs from researchers from multiple disciplines.

According to Figure 3(b), the “Documents by Affiliation” visualization shows that the International Hellenic University is the top institution with 4 publications in total. This means that the institution’s contribution is the highest in the field of science being researched. Second, the University of Western Macedonia published 3 documents. This also suggests a relatively high level of productivity, but still lower

than the top-ranked institution. Moreover, some other institutions like Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Universiti Teknologi MARA and National Taiwan University contributed 2 documents each, demonstrating active participation but with a more moderate intensity.

Furthermore, the relatively equal distribution of the number of publications in most institutions such as Multimedia University, Instituto Politécnico do Porto, University of Florida, University of Kansas and Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, with 2 documents each, shows that there is no very wide gap between institutions in terms of scientific contribution. The condition shows that research on this topic was developed quite evenly among different countries' various higher education institutions. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research landscape analyzed is globally distributed and not concentrated in only one or two institutions but rather involves various academic actors with relatively balanced contributions.

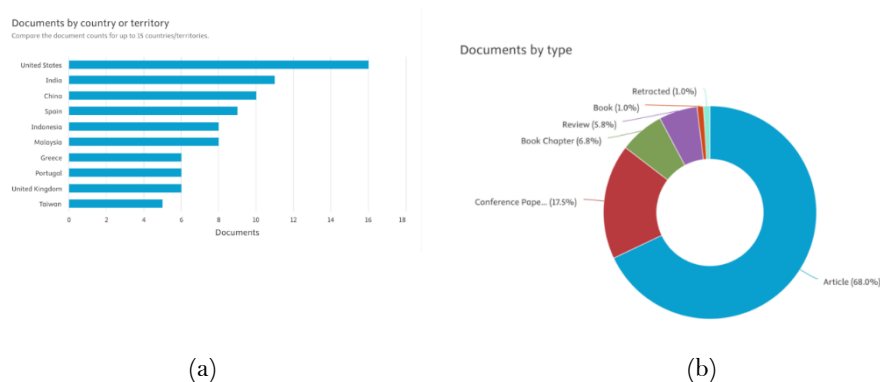


Figure 4. (a) Distribution of Publications by Country (b) Distribution of Document Types in Publications

Figure 4(a) shows the visualization “Documents by Country or Territory”, which indicates that the United States is the country with the highest number of publications, with a total of 16 documents. India is positioned in the next position with 11 documents, and China with 10 documents. Meanwhile, Spain contributed 9 documents, and Indonesia and Malaysia contributed 8 documents each. This shows that these countries are important in the development of research in the analyzed area.

Conversely, countries such as Greece, Portugal and the United Kingdom produced 6 documents each, while Taiwan produced 5 documents. This distribution shows that the contributions of research are not concentrated in one country, but they are distributed in several regions with relatively different levels of productivity. In general, this publication map shows the international character of the research in question, where the contributions of different countries contribute to the enrichment of the development of knowledge on the subject.

Figure 4(b) presents the visualization “Documents by Type”, which shows that the most dominant type of publication is a scientific article, which is 68.0% of the total publications. This means that the majority of research results in the studied area are published in scientific journals with usually high academic standards and a rigorous peer-review process. Meanwhile, the conference papers account for 17.5% of the overall documents, indicating that the conference forum is also a significant channel for researchers to publish their preliminary results and the latest research progress.

Other types of publications, like book chapters, contributed 6.8%, and reviews comprised 5.8%, which shows the efforts towards the development of theoretical studies and synthesis of previous research. In contrast, books and retracted

documents represented 1.0% each. This suggests that these two document types represent a very small proportion of the publications overall. In short, this distribution suggests that journal articles are the most common type of research publication, with additional document types that complement and enrich the literature in the studied field.

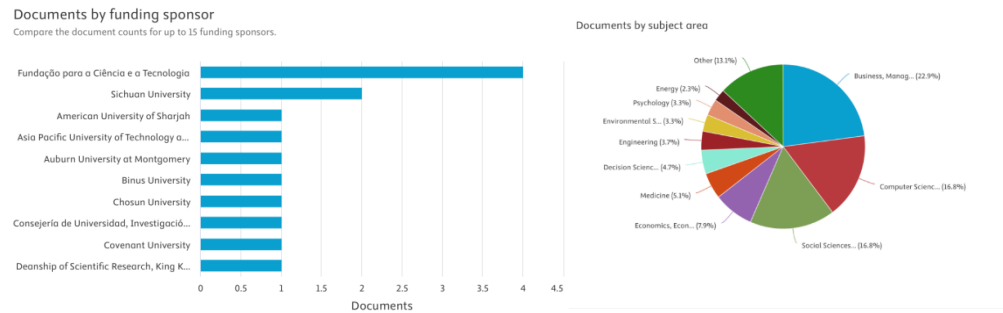


Figure 5. (a) Top Funding Sponsors in Research (b) Distribution of Publications by Field of Study

Based on Figure 5(a), the visualization “Documents by Funding Sponsor” shows that the funding institution that most contributes to the publication is the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, with 4 documents. Next is Sichuan University with 2 documents. Several other institutions published 1 document each: American University of Sharjah, Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation, and Auburn University at Montgomery. This means that the funding contributions in the research field are still dominated by several specific institutions with quite noticeable differences in the number of publications.

However, a few institutions such as Bina Nusantara University, Chosun University, Consejería de Universidad, Investigación e Innovación, Covenant University, Deanship of Scientific Research and King Khalid University contributed 1 document each. Such a distribution indicates that there are many different sources of research funding and that they are from different institutions around the world, but with no really strong domination except for one institution. In general, this pattern shows that the funding of research is widely distributed and involves different actors, both educational institutions and government agencies from different countries.

According to Figure 5(b), the visualization “Documents by Subject Area” shows that the Business, Management and Accounting subject area dominates with a proportion of 22.9%. This means that the main focus of the research under review is primarily business-related and management-related aspects. Furthermore, Computer Science and Social Sciences contribute 16.8% each, which signifies the importance of technology and social aspects to support the research studies. At the same time, the areas of Economics, Econometrics and Finance account for 7.9% and Medicine for 5.1%, demonstrating the importance of economic and health-related aspects in the research.

On the other hand, other fields such as Decision Sciences (4.7%), Engineering (3.7%), Environmental Science (3.3%), Psychology (3.3%), and Energy (2.3%) have lower contributions. The “Other” category, accounting for 13.1%, reflects the diversity of other fields involved in the research. This distribution shows that the research analysed is multidisciplinary, with a prevalence in the areas of business and management, but supported by diverse other disciplines.

4.2. Main Themes and Intellectual Structure of the Research

Based on Figure 6, the results of network visualization using VOSviewer, the bibliometric map shows that five major clusters are the dominant themes in studies of social media engagement and consumer behavior. The biggest node in the first cluster is the keyword “Consumer Behavior,” which indicates that this theme is the main focus in the literature. This cluster includes keywords such as purchase intention, sales, social media marketing, digital marketing, marketplaces and user-generated content, suggesting that the majority of studies focus on the effect of social media consumer engagement on purchase behavior, purchase intention and consumption decisions. It also shows that consumer behavior is often linked to digital marketing strategies and commercial activities based on social media.

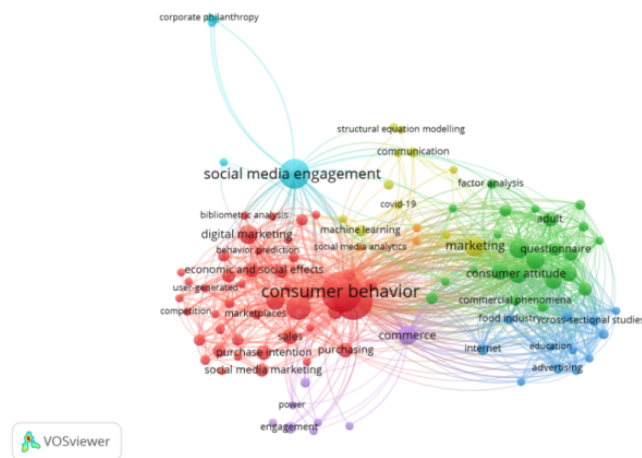


Figure 6. Network Visualization

The second cluster focuses on the keyword “Social Media Engagement,” which becomes one of the central nodes in the visualization. This cluster reflects the research focus on user engagement in social media, including consumer-brand interactions. Keywords such as corporate philanthropy indicate that some research also links engagement to corporate social responsibility activities and brand image. The proximity of the node to consumer behavior shows a very strong relationship between the two themes.

The third cluster is mainly composed of the keywords “marketing,” consumer attitude, questionnaire, adult, and commercial phenomena. This indicates that the majority of research in this cluster has used survey or questionnaire methods to measure consumer attitudes towards digital marketing activities. The cluster is mainly dedicated to the effects of social media marketing strategies on consumers’ perceptions, attitudes and responses toward a product or brand. The fourth cluster includes keywords such as internet, advertising, cross-sectional studies and education, reflecting an increase in research on digital marketing communication and research methodologies, particularly cross-sectional studies commonly used to analyze consumer behavior over a specific period of time.

The fifth cluster, represented by supporting themes, includes keywords such as commerce, engagement, communication, factor analysis and structural equation modelling. This cluster suggests that statistical analysis approaches and structural models are also widely used in studies in this field to explain the relationship between social media engagement and consumer behavior. In general, the interconnection among clusters shows that research on social media engagement and consumer behavior is multidisciplinary, with a major focus on how digital interactions affect purchase decisions, consumer attitudes and marketing effectiveness.

4.3. Emerging Trends and Future Research Opportunities

From the Overlay Visualization results in Figure 7 with VOSviewer, it can be seen that the development of research on Social Media Engagement and Consumer Behavior has dynamic thematic changes from 2021 to 2025. The color of each node denotes the time of keyword occurrence: blue to purple colors denote themes that appeared earlier in 2021–2022, green for themes that appeared in 2023–2024, and yellow for relatively new themes that became trending topics in 2024–2025. The major themes of the period are still “Consumer Behavior” and “Social Media Engagement”, as shown by their large node sizes and dominant locations in the network (Mardhatilah et al., 2024).

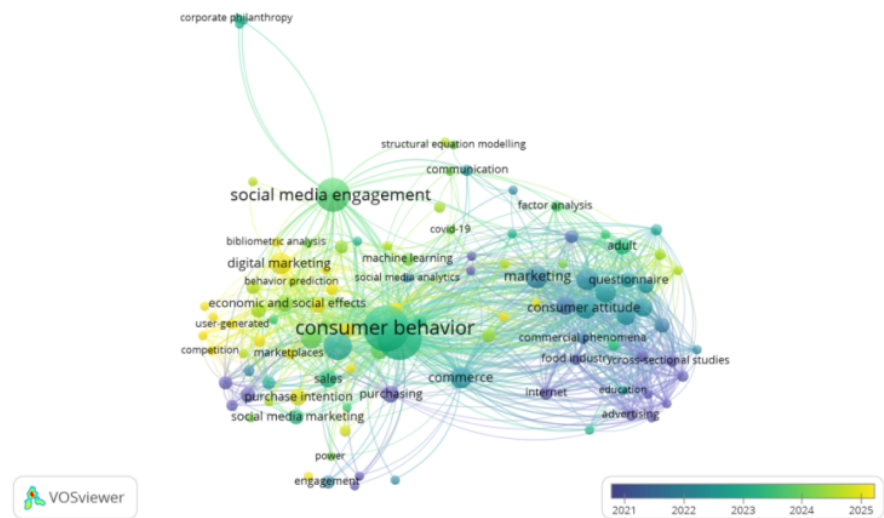


Figure 7. Overlay Visualization

In the early period, the research was more related to themes such as advertising, the internet, education, and cross-sectional studies. This means that the studies performed in the initial stage were still focused on aspects of digital marketing communication and methodological approaches in measuring consumer behavior. Moreover, the research trend in the middle period was towards themes such as marketing, consumer attitude, questionnaire, and commerce, which indicates that there was growing interest in consumer attitudes, digital marketing strategies, and the use of survey instruments to analyze consumer responses on social media (Bartoloni & Ancillai, 2024).

In the most recent period, research topics are shifting towards more modern and technology-based topics such as digital marketing, purchase intention, behavior prediction, machine learning, and bibliometric analysis. The dominance of the yellow color in these keywords indicates that present research has started focusing on predictive approaches and technology-based analysis to understand consumer behavior in the digital era. This visualization shows that the research trends have changed from basic marketing communication to more complex, predictive and technology-relevant analyses of consumer behavior in line with the current digital technology developments (Azad et al., 2023).

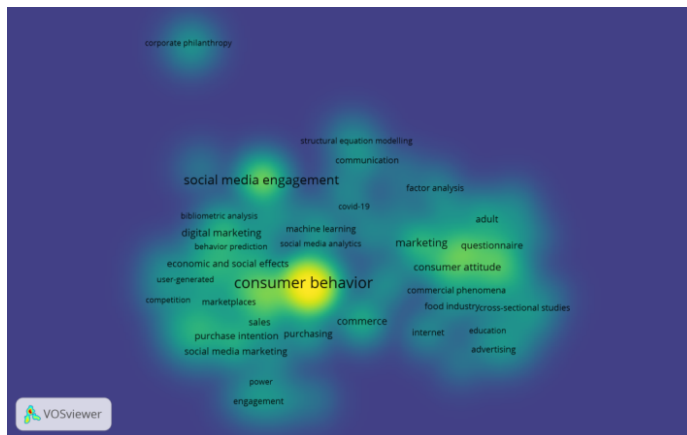


Figure 8. Density Visualization

In the results of the Density Visualization using VOSviewer in Figure 8, it can be seen that the density of keywords in research on Social Media Engagement and Consumer Behavior is concentrated on several main themes. The bright yellow to green areas are the keywords that appeared most frequently and had the strongest interconnections within the literature. Blue colored areas are the themes that occurred with relatively lower intensity. In this visualization, the keyword “Consumer Behavior” is the one with the highest density and is represented by the brightest yellow color. This shows that the main and most discussed theme in the analysed research is consumer behavior.

Moreover, the keyword “Social Media Engagement” is also in an area with a high density level, indicating that this topic is in a central position and has a strong interconnectedness with various other themes in the research network. High density is also visible in keywords such as marketing, consumer attitude, digital marketing, purchase intention and commerce. The findings imply that most of the studies were concentrated on the correlation between social media user engagement and different aspects of consumer behavior, especially consumer attitudes, purchase intention and digital marketing strategies.

Keywords such as advertising, education, internet, machine learning, and bibliometric analysis, on the other hand, are located in areas with medium to low density, indicating that these themes are used as supporting or developing topics in the literature. In conclusion, this density plot confirms that the study of social media engagement is closely related to consumer behavior, especially in the context of digital marketing and consumer purchasing decisions.

5. Discussion

The bibliometric analysis for 2014–2026 demonstrates substantial growth in research on social media engagement and consumer behavior, particularly since 2020. Publication activity increased sharply in 2024 and 2025, reflecting growing academic interest alongside rapid digital technology development, social media adoption, eWOM, and social commerce. This pattern indicates that the field has entered a rapid-growth stage, consistent with Donthu et al. (2021), who emphasize that increasing publication volume reflects the maturation and growing importance of a research domain. The findings therefore address the first research question by confirming that social media engagement and consumer behavior have become prominent themes in contemporary digital marketing research. This development is also consistent with the broader evolution of digital and social media marketing research highlighted by Dwivedi et al. (2021).

The distribution of authors, institutions, publication sources, and countries indicates a relatively fragmented research structure despite several dominant

contributors. The United States, India, China, and Indonesia represent important research contributors, while the dispersed authorship suggests that no single group has yet dominated the field. Such openness is characteristic of rapidly developing research areas, where collaboration and thematic exploration remain dynamic (Thakur & Kushwaha, 2024). This pattern also indicates that the field remains open to interdisciplinary collaboration and the development of new research perspectives. The predominance of journal articles and the broad distribution across business, management, computer science, and social sciences further demonstrate that the field is primarily academically oriented while remaining multidisciplinary. The distribution of funding sponsors also indicates that research support comes from diverse institutions, suggesting growing but relatively decentralized investment in this research area.

The VOSviewer co-occurrence analysis identifies five interconnected intellectual clusters encompassing consumer behavior and purchase decisions, social media engagement and brand interaction, digital marketing strategies, eWOM and influencer marketing, and emerging digital technologies. Consumer behavior and social media engagement remain the central themes, while engagement is increasingly connected with purchase intention, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and digital marketing effectiveness (Nuseir, 2019; Bilro et al., 2022). The presence of eWOM, influencer marketing, and online reviews further demonstrates the importance of social validation in consumer decision-making (Ismagilova et al., 2017; Vrontis et al., 2021). These findings address the second research question by demonstrating that the intellectual structure has expanded from basic consumer interaction toward more integrated digital marketing and technology-oriented themes.

The Overlay Visualization further shows a thematic shift from traditional topics such as advertising and communication toward influencer marketing, social commerce, personalization, artificial intelligence, short-form content, and machine learning. This evolution reflects the increasing strategic role of social media as both a communication channel and a source of consumer data (Li et al., 2023). Emerging AI-related themes are consistent with Thakur and Kushwaha (2024), while recent studies emphasize the growing importance of influencer marketing and brand engagement (Hadi et al., 2025; Zeqiri et al., 2025). The Density Visualization confirms that consumer behavior, social media engagement, purchase intention, and digital marketing constitute the core knowledge structure, whereas AI, social commerce, and emerging digital experiences remain comparatively less dense.

The findings provide theoretical and practical contributions by systematically mapping the publication development, intellectual structure, and thematic evolution of social media engagement and consumer behavior. Bibliometric analysis enables the identification of conceptual relationships, research clusters, and emerging directions that may be less visible through conventional literature reviews (van Eck & Waltman, 2010; Zupic & Čater, 2015). From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that marketers should increasingly integrate interactive, personalized, influencer-based, and data-driven approaches to strengthen consumer engagement and purchasing outcomes in digital environments.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that research on social media engagement and consumer behavior has experienced substantial growth, particularly since 2022, reflecting the increasing importance of social media and digital marketing in shaping consumer behavior. The bibliometric analysis identified five interconnected intellectual clusters covering consumer behavior and purchase decisions, social media engagement and brand interaction, digital marketing strategies, marketing communication, and statistical or structural analysis. The overlay and density

visualizations further indicate a shift from traditional themes toward emerging topics such as influencer marketing, social commerce, artificial intelligence, machine learning, behavior prediction, and AI-driven engagement.

These findings imply that academics can use the identified clusters and emerging themes as a basis for developing future research frameworks, while practitioners can leverage insights into consumer engagement, personalization, social commerce, and data-driven marketing to design more effective digital strategies. However, this study has limitations, particularly its reliance on the Scopus database, the 2014–2026 publication period, and VOSviewer as the primary analytical tool. Relevant studies indexed in other databases may therefore not have been captured, and the findings may also depend on the selected keywords and bibliometric parameters.

Future research should expand the analysis by integrating databases such as Web of Science and Dimensions, applying complementary bibliometric and systematic review methods, and examining emerging topics more deeply, particularly artificial intelligence, machine learning, social commerce, immersive digital experiences, personalization, and AI-powered engagement to better understand the evolving relationship between social media engagement and consumer behavior.

References

- Azad, M. S., Khan, S. S., Hossain, R., Rahman, R., & Momen, S. (2023). Predictive modeling of consumer purchase behavior on social media: Integrating theory of planned behavior and machine learning for actionable insights. *PLOS ONE*, 18(12), 290–304. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0296336>.
- Bartoloni, S., & Ancillai, C. (2024). Twenty years of social media marketing: A systematic review, integrative framework, and future research agenda. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 26(3), 435–457. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12360>.
- Bilro, R. G., Loureiro, S. M. C., & Guerreiro, J. (2022). Exploring online customer engagement with hospitality products and its relationship with involvement, emotional states, experience and brand advocacy. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 31(1), 25–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2018.1506375>.
- Brüns, J. D., & Meißner, M. (2024). Do you create your content yourself? Using generative artificial intelligence for social media content creation diminishes perceived brand authenticity. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 79(11), 103–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.103790>.
- Busalim, A., & Asadi, S. (2025). What drives customers to engage with social commerce: a systematic review and factor derivation approach. *Information Systems and e-Business Management*, 23(3), 717–743. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10257-025-00700-x>.
- Dauhan, G. I., & Langi, E. (2024). Social media influencer: the influence of followers purchase intention through online engagement and attitude. *Binus Business Review*, 15(1), 41–55. <https://doi.org/10.21512/bbr.v15i1.10185>.
- Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Mukherjee, D., Pandey, N., & Lim, W. M. (2021). How to conduct a bibliometric analysis: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 13(2), 285–296. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.04.070>.
- Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., ... & Wang, Y. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management*, 59(10), 102–118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168>.
- Gu, C., & Duan, Q. (2024). Exploring the dynamics of consumer engagement in social media influencer marketing: From the self-determination theory perspective. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), 587–600. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03127-w>.
- Hadi, H. S., Kinanti, P. S., Khasanah, I., & Soesanto, H. (2025). The influence of influencer marketing and brand engagement on purchase intention. *Economic and Business Horizon*, 4(2), 107–114. <https://doi.org/10.54518/ebh.4.2.2025.618>.

- Harrigan, P., Daly, T. M., Coussement, K., Lee, J. A., Soutar, G. N., & Evers, U. (2021). Identifying influencers on social media. *International Journal of Information Management*, 56(10), 102-116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102246>.
- Huang, Y., Bunchapattanasakda, C., Suo, L., & Boonmek, B. (2024). The influence of social media marketing on purchase intentions through consumer engagement. *Asian Administration & Management Review*, 7(2), 90-100. <https://doi.org/10.14456/aamr.2024.21>.
- Ismagilova, E., Dwivedi, Y. K., Slade, E., & Williams, M. D. (2017). Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). In *Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) in the Marketing Context: A State of the Art Analysis and Future Directions* (pp. 17-30). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52459-7_3.
- John, J. K., Qiu, X., Kilumile, J. W., & Mofulu, G. (2025). Social commerce purchase intention: the salience of consumer-to-consumer interactions. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 24(3), 1473-1485. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.2478>.
- Kulikovskaja, V., Hubert, M., Grunert, K. G., & Zhao, H. (2023). Driving marketing outcomes through social media-based customer engagement. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 74(10), 103-115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103445>.
- Li, F., Larimo, J., & Leonidou, L. C. (2023). Social media marketing strategy: Definition, conceptualization, taxonomy, validation, and future agenda. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49(1), 51-70. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00733-3>.
- Lim, W. M., & Rasul, T. (2022). Customer engagement and social media: Revisiting the past to inform the future. *Journal of Business Research*, 14(7), 325-342. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.04.068>.
- Mardhatilah, D., Omar, A., & Septiari, E. D. (2024). Building consumer engagement in social media: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Business Management and Accounting (JBMA)*, 14(1), 1-35. <https://doi.org/10.32890/jbma2024.14.1.1>.
- Ndhlovu, T., & Maree, T. (2024). The central role of consumer-brand engagement in product and service brand contexts. *Journal of Marketing Analytics*, 12(4), 944-961. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41270-023-00241-7>.
- Nuseir, M. T. (2019). The impact of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on the online purchase intention of consumers in the Islamic countries—a case of (UAE). *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 10(3), 759-767. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-03-2018-0059>.
- Poleac, G., & Gherguț-Babii, A.-N. (2024). How social media algorithms influence the way users decide – Perspectives of social media users and practitioners. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 57(1), 90-106. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v57i1.10955>.
- Rawangngam, N., Pongsakornrungrasit, P., Siri Wong, C., Ketkaew, K., Tonsakunthawee team, S., & Kumar, V. (2025). Social media and consumer engagement: A bibliometric analysis and future research directions. *Innovative Marketing*, 21(3), 197-214. [https://doi.org/10.21511/im.21\(3\).2025.15](https://doi.org/10.21511/im.21(3).2025.15).
- Santos, S., Gonçalves, H. M., & Teles, M. (2023). Social media engagement and real-time marketing: Using net-effects and set-theoretic approaches to understand audience and content-related effects. *Psychology & Marketing*, 40(3), 497-515. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21756>.
- Shaheen, H. (2025). Social media marketing research: A bibliometric analysis from Scopus. *Future Business Journal*, 11(1), 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-025-00465-2>.
- Thakur, J., & Kushwaha, B. P. (2024). Artificial intelligence in marketing research and future research directions: Science mapping and research clustering using bibliometric analysis. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, 43(3), 139-155. <https://doi.org/10.1002/joe.22233>.
- van Eck, N. J., & Waltman, L. (2010). Software survey: VOSviewer, a computer program for bibliometric mapping. *Scientometrics*, 84(2), 523-538. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-009-0146-3>.
- Vrontis, D., Makrides, A., Christofi, M., & Thrassou, A. (2021). Social media influencer marketing: A systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(4), 617-644. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12647>.
- Wang, J., & Shahzad, F. (2024). Deciphering social commerce: A quantitative meta-analysis measuring the social, technological, and motivational dimensions of consumer purchase intentions. *Sage Open*, 14(2), 215-235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/215824402412575>.

- Zeqiri, J., Koku, P. S., Dobre, C., Milovan, A. M., Hasani, V. V., & Paientko, T. (2025). The impact of social media marketing on brand awareness, brand engagement and purchase intention in emerging economies. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 43(1), 28-49. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-06-2023-0248>.
- Zupic, I., & Čater, T. (2015). Bibliometric methods in management and organization. *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(3), 429-472. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114562629>.



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).