

Charting The Evolution Of Influencer Marketing: A Digital-Age Bibliometric Perspective

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Abstract—This paper uses bibliometrics to study digital influencer marketing trends. The study examined 160 articles from 2015 to 2025 and found a 60.35% yearly growth rate. The 160 documents include 456 authors, 3.04 co-authors per document, and 30.63% worldwide partnerships. The average document has 40.07 citations and is 1.69 years old. Keyword analysis finds 151 Keywords Plus and 456 author keywords. According to the data, influencer marketing articles increased significantly, peaking in 2024, demonstrating academic interest.

Keywords—influencer marketing, purchase intentions, influencer credibility, influencer relatability

INTRODUCTION

Any public person who utilizes their popularity and image to make sponsored product recommendations qualifies as a celebrity endorser, including artists, actors, and other types of performers [1]. Influencer marketing may be summed up as employing prominent opinion leaders (influencers), whether famous or not, who have a large following on social media, to encourage their follower's (consumer's) favourable attitudes and behaviours about the brand's product through the use of posts made on such platforms [2]. It also enables influencers and followers to collaborate on the co-creation of the brand image on social media [3]. Influencer marketing at its core, is a form of endorsement marketing which uses influencer's product recommendations to spur sales, but its expected outcomes go much further than that. These include attracting the attention of potential customers, encouraging word-of-mouth influence, and encouraging user engagement of a sponsored brand or a good [4]. Many of the fundamental concepts of the conventional celebrity endorsement model are put to the test by the present practice of influencer communication. Compared to the celebrities that are often picked for celebrity endorsement campaigns, social media superstars represent a far larger range of individuals. In comparison to conventional superstars, who are well recognised by a large portion of the population, many of the most influential social media stars are only recognised by a tiny percentage of people in a specific area [5]. According to research on ad blocking from Page Fair and Adobe, 198 million active ab block users are available worldwide. Sponsored social posts on Instagram account for 56 percent of the most successful marketing strategies, according to eMarketer [6].

The difference between conventional celebrities and new age influencers, while being more fascinating to a larger public and having a large following on social media, renowned individuals are not always trustworthy when it comes to promoting goods or services [7]. Influencers are "essential" for company in the present market climate for a variety of reasons. First of all, it must be emphasised that influencers aid in recruiting new users, developing a community, starting initiatives, strengthening the concept or brand, and increasing brand awareness. secondly, using influencers along with customer relationship management (CRM) may significantly alter marketing efforts [8]. It is not unexpected that marketers have embraced social media as a marketing medium which has given the sizable potential audience accessible who spend several hours a day using social media across the many platform[9]. Intellectuals have embraced social media as well, and there is a wealth of study on social media marketing and related areas including online networks and word-of-mouth [10]. Advertising companies continue to research cutting-edge tactics in the hopes of providing customers with a significant return on investment as social media and digital usage, impact, and ad expenditure increase [11].

The "publish & perish" Scopus journal leads to publisher websites in the study. Selected articles become trends, whereas full reading removes important research elements.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research article's purpose and aims focus on identifying the following stated research questions.

RQ1: What is the yearly trend of influencer marketing?

RQ2: What are the authors and their citations associated with influencer marketing?

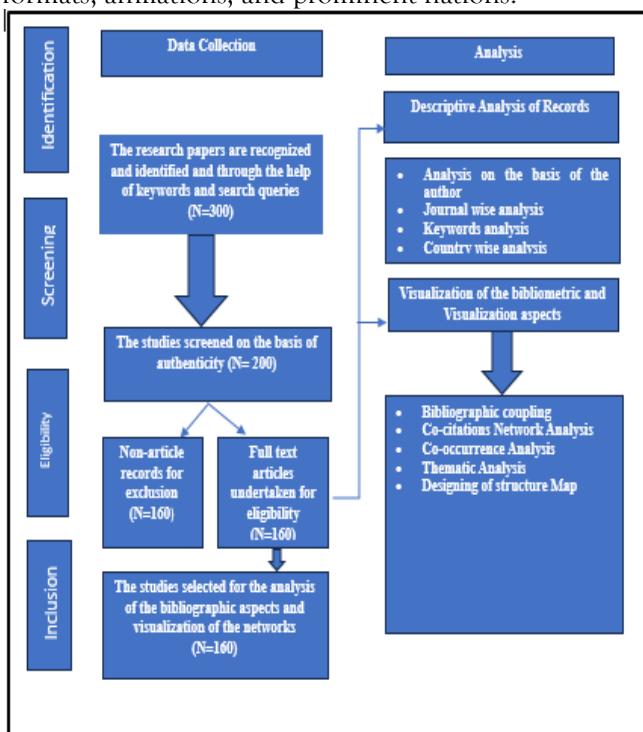
The introduction part assesses a fundamental understanding of the research issue, incorporating the purpose, objectives, and research questions. A comprehensive outline of the research has been produced, encompassing a literature review, methodology, analytical discussion, and conclusion in that order.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chang, Wang, and Kuo [12] employed bibliometric analysis to discern research trends concerning social media influencers. The study delineates significant publications and hypotheses, offering insights into the evolution of research on social media influencers. Ye et al. [13] provided a bibliometric examination of the value of influencer marketing for businesses, with managerial implications. The study investigates the increasing significance of influencer marketing and its effects on several company dimensions, providing insights for professionals. Agrawal (agarwal et al. 2022) carried out proceedings from the International Conference on Cultivating Resilient Business Ecosystems. The study encompassed contributions in marketing, organisational behaviour, human resource management, and additional domains, emphasising resilience within business ecosystems. Pushparaj and Kushwaha [15] do a comprehensive literature evaluation employing bibliometric analysis, concentrating on virtual influencers in marketing. The review consolidates current material and suggests avenues for future study, emphasising the burgeoning field of virtual influencers. Srivastava, Mukaria, and Arora [16] examined influencer marketing in the context of business and management, investigating significant domains, publications, and its development. The research employed citation and co-citation analysis to delineate the intellectual terrain of influencer marketing studies. While this study provides managerial implications, it may lack a deeper understanding of the *consumer perspective*. It lacked consumer segments perception and response to influencer marketing.

I. DATA EXTRACTION

Choosing the appropriate search engine is essential for efficient data retrieval. Scopus was selected for this reason. This selection was determined due to Scopus, a prominent citation database of Elsevier, being a crucial index. It disseminates peer-reviewed, high-calibre material. Scopus assesses the quality of each title by four metrics: h-index, Cite Score, SCI Imago Journal Rank (SJR), and Source Normalised Impact per Paper. This study project encompasses the years 2015 to 2025. The search was conducted on May 11, 2025. A total of 192 research publications were published throughout this time frame and after application of all the filters the documents number comes out to be 160. This Scopus search string concentrated on annual trends, authors, leading journals, subject areas, document formats, affiliations, and prominent nations.



Source: Authors computation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The table no. 1 included 160 publications published from 2019 to 2025, sourced from 114 origins. The collection has a significant yearly growth rate of 60.35%, with the papers averaging 1.69 years in age. Each paper, on average, has garnered 40.07 citations and has 60.35 references. Keyword analysis identifies 151 Keywords Plus (ID) and 456 author-provided keywords (DE). The author landscape has 456 unique writers, with 11 contributing to solo-authored texts. Collaboration patterns indicate an average of 3.04 co-authors per document, with 30.63% of publications featuring foreign co-authorships. The predominant kind of publications consists of articles (158), while a lesser quantity comprises reviews (2).

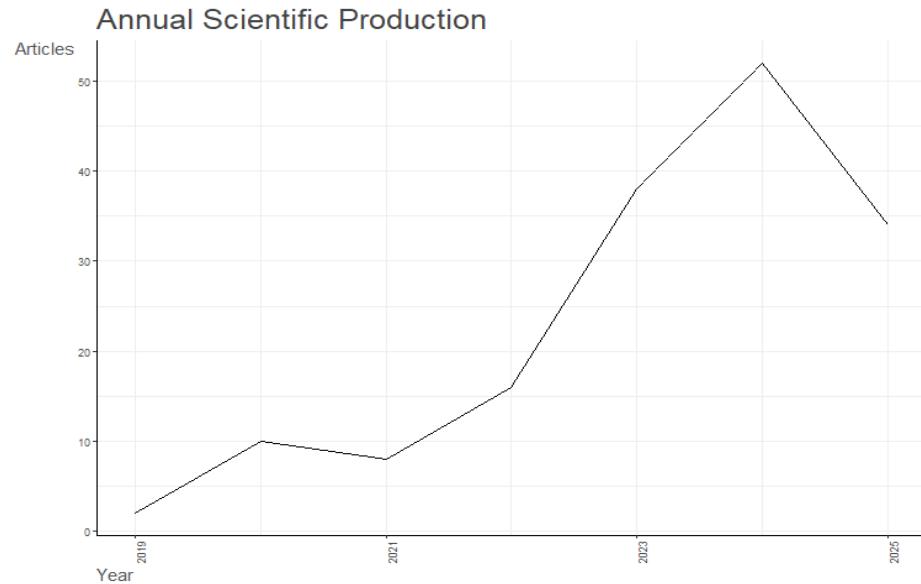
Table 1

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	2019:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	114
Documents	160
Annual Growth Rate %	60.35
Document Average Age	1.69
Average citations per doc	40.07
References	10577
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	151
Author's Keywords (DE)	456
AUTHORS	
Authors	456
Authors of single-authored docs	11
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	12
Co-Authors per Doc	3.04
International co-authorships %	30.63
DOCUMENT TYPES	
Article	158
Review	2

Source: Scopus Database

Figure 1 and Table 2 depict the **yearly scientific output** of articles from 2019 to 2025. Commencing with a minimal output in 2019, production witnessed a modest rise until 2021. A notable increase started in 2022, culminating in 2024 with more than 50 pieces. Nevertheless, a decrease occurred in 2025. The graph demonstrates a significant rise in article output throughout this timeframe, with a prominent peak in 2024.

Figure 1



Source: Bibloshiny

Table no. 2

Year	Articles
2019	2
2020	10
2021	8
2022	16
2023	38
2024	52
2025	34

Source: Bibloshiny

This table displays **citation metrics** for works published from 2019 to 2025. In 2019, despite having just two articles, the mean total citations per article (MeanTCperArt) reached a peak of 687.5. As the quantity of articles (N) escalated throughout the years, MeanTCperArt consistently diminished, attaining a nadir of 0.91 in 2025. MeanTCperYear, which accounts for the citable years, likewise exhibits a diminishing trend. The quantity of citable years (CitableYears) inherently diminishes for more contemporary publications. our indicates that older papers in our dataset have garnered substantially more citations on average.

Table no. 3

Year	MeanTCperArt	N	MeanTCperYear	CitableYears
2019	687.5	2	98.21	7
2020	289.6	10	48.27	6
2021	73.38	8	14.68	5
2022	26.56	16	6.64	4
2023	21.32	38	7.11	3
2024	5.52	52	2.76	2
2025	0.91	34	0.91	1

The graph, titled "Average Citations per Year," displays the trend of average citations received by publications over the years 2019 to 2025. Starting at a high point in 2019, the average number of citations shows a sharp decline in the subsequent years. This downward trend continues, with a more gradual decrease observed from 2021 onwards.

The average citations per year reach a significantly lower level by 2025. This pattern suggests that earlier publications in this dataset have accumulated a considerably higher number of citations compared to more recent ones.

Figure no. 2

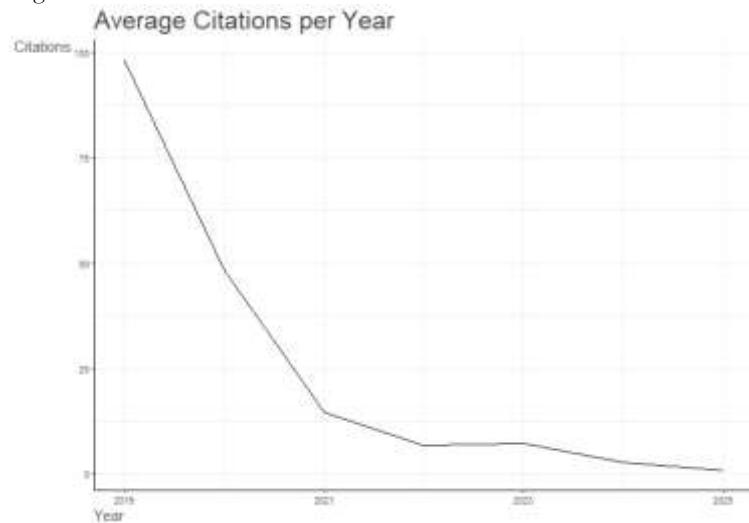


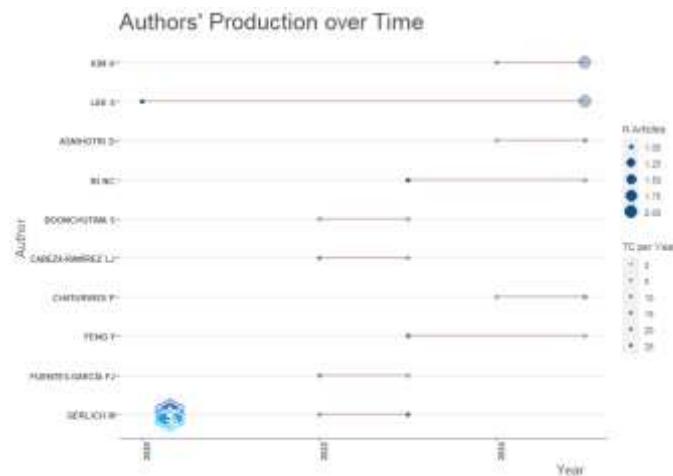
Figure No. 2

The graph, "Authors' Production over Time," shows numerous writers' 2019–2025 publishing and citation history. The "N.Articles" legend suggests that each horizontal line represents an individual author, with blue circles representing their years of publication and the size of the circle indicating the number of articles they published. As shown in the "TC per Year" caption, darker shades of the circle indicate higher average total citations (TC per Year) for publications in that year.

Kim H and Lee S are the most prolific authors, with numerous years of publications and greater circle sizes indicating more papers. Lee S's 2025 dark blue circle indicates a high average citation rate for their articles.

Agnihotri D and Chaturdevi P publish around 2024. Around 2023, BI NC and Feng Y publish. Boonchutima S, Cabeza-ramirez LJ, Fuentes-Garcia FJ, and Gerlich M frequently published in 2022. The red lines connecting various authors show their publication spread within the observed timeframe. For instance, Boonchutima S and Gerlich M published in 2022 and 2023. The graph summarises the authors' publishing activity and citation effect over time. It spotlights prolific authors and those with high citation counts.

Figure no. 3



Between 2019 and 2025, 162 papers from 114 sources indicated a vibrant and rapidly expanding field. The 60.35% annual growth rate indicates rising interest and activity in this sector. This rapid expansion is seen by the yearly

scientific production graph for article output from 2022 to 2024. This trend indicates a growing academic interest in a subject issue and maybe considerable investment or discoveries enhancing productivity.

The average document age of 1.69 years reflects this swift climb, indicating that majority of the study is fresh. Recency influences citation metrics. The average of 40.07 citations per text suggests excellent influence, but year-wise analysis is more challenging. Older articles (2019) have more mean citations per article, according to the table. This is typical in academic writing since prior works are read, cited, and used. With the publication year approaching, expect MeanTCperArt and MeanTCperYear to fall.

The 30.63% of publications with international co-authorships shows a global scientific community that exchanges information. Despite 456 authors and 11 single-authored works, collaboration appears to dominate knowledge generation in this area. The few single-authored documents (12) facilitate cooperation. Future review papers may synthesise the growing body of material.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The strong annual growth rate and expanding publication volume highlight a major study issue for research institutes and funding organisations, warranting strategic commitment. High international collaboration may boost global contacts. "Authors' Production over Time" graphs can direct financing, faculty hiring, and research centre creation.

Early, highly cited papers may reveal expansion opportunities.

Citation counts may undervalue new research; therefore, detailed research impact evaluation is essential due to expected article average citation drop. Citation metrics that include publication age and field norms estimate influence better. Teamwork and infrastructure are needed for collaborative research. Encourage more thorough review papers.

CONCLUSION

This study shows a rapidly growing research area with excellent collaboration, publication output, and global engagement. Early papers highlight fundamental work and have high citation counts, while newer articles have lower citation counts. Keyword analysis shows original research papers dominate.

II. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The conclusions of this study are restricted by its dependence on summary statistics and yearly scientific production and citation graphs. The presence of unknown publication categories impedes interpretation. The 2024 apex and 2025 dip are devoid of context. Keyword analysis summarises themes, but it does not investigate conceptual structure. Document types are restricted to evaluations and articles. The study examines citation counts, but it does not evaluate the content, novelty, or impact of the research.

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