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The Rise of Social Media in B2B Marketing: Insights, Implications, and Future Directions

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to consolidate research trends on the distribution of marketing value, customer engagement, and inter-firm relationships through the use of social media in business-to-business (B2B) marketing. It also aims to identify emerging research directions and provide strategic insights for firms navigating digital distribution networks. **Research design, data and methodology:** This article uses a systematic review and bibliographic mapping analysis (VOSviewer) on 469 documents published between 2010 and 2024, extracted from the Scopus database and filtered through the PRISMA method. The study combines bibliometric and content analysis to examine how social media facilitates the digital distribution of marketing content, trust, and collaboration in B2B contexts. **Results:** The analysis reveals four key thematic clusters: social media marketing, digital distribution infrastructure, relational value co-creation, and platform-specific engagement. Most studies employ quantitative methods, with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as the dominant frameworks. Social media is shown to be instrumental in distributing marketing communication, enhancing stakeholder relationships, and supporting B2B sustainability. **Conclusions:** The findings enable B2B companies and policymakers to design more adaptive and relationship-driven distribution strategies. They also provide a theoretical foundation for future research into digital transformation and cross-border marketing infrastructure.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis, B2B Marketing, Social Media, Distribution, Marketing Strategies

JEL Classification Code: M31, L14, M15, L86, O32

1. Introduction

Companies are integrating social media into their B2B marketing strategies due to the changing nature of the business environment. It marks an important milestone in increasing market penetration and enhancing marketing efforts (Wang et al., 2017). Newer forms of technology are

enhancing the role of social media in B2B marketing, as business is conducted on a global scale, facilitating more engagement, collaboration, distribution, and value creation on social media. The evolving role of social media encourages companies to adapt their marketing strategies, driving deeper customer engagement, trade relationships and business relationships. Social media is also used to

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establish strategic relationships, which lead to enhanced sales performance. Research by Cheng et al. (2022) explains how B2B salespeople use social media to create value for customers at different stages of the sales process. Activity, particularly in the closing stages. These sales personnel use it to communicate directly with existing customers and potential clients, which helps create rapport, trust, and credibility. Relationship value, consisting of personal, financial, knowledge, and strategic dimensions, also plays a crucial role in increasing trust and performance throughout the B2B distribution network (Prasetya et al., 2021)

While the role of social media in B2B marketing has been widely acknowledged, gaps persist in understanding its strategic integration, particularly across different industries and regions. Existing studies, such as those by Cheng et al. (2022) and Itani et al. (2017), focus on specific dimensions of social media use. However, there is a lack of comprehensive reviews that map the evolution of this topic, leaving a significant void in synthesising research trends and providing actionable insights for practitioners.

The emergence of social media in sales, distribution, customer engagement, and digital marketing continues to spur its adoption in Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing. However, despite the progress, gaps remain in fully understanding how social media impacts B2B relationships on a broader scale. Some research indicates that, despite this improvement, gaps still exist in research and progress related to this field. Itani et al. (2017) examined the role of social media in competitive intelligence gathering and adaptive selling and discovered that learning-oriented cultures were very helpful in facilitating these activities. Similarly, Hollebeek (2019) examined the use of social media for customer engagement from a business perspective, proposing a model based on the service-dominant logic and resource-based view. The same view was presented by Swani et al. (2014) and Swani et al. (2013), who reported the benefits of social media use for communication and customer engagement. Ancilla et al. (2019) build a conceptual framework to deepen understanding of social selling in the B2B context. However, Swani et al. (2014) noted that strategy communications differ in B2B and B2C interactions, providing useful insights.

B2B companies that actively utilise social media to engage with their stakeholders can increase engagement and, ultimately, sales (Liadeli et al., 2022). Social media also serves as a tool to promote relevant and engaging content, which can influence purchasing decisions. Advertising and promotional content created by companies on social media influence consumer behavioural intentions (Adetunji et al., 2019). Big data and social media analytics play a role in business sustainability, emphasising the participatory nature of modern social media (Sivarajah et al., 2020). SMEs can utilise these tools, even with limited resources, to gain a

deeper understanding of broader applications. Singaraju et al. (2016) and Jussila et al. (2014) further extend the theory of shared value creation and stakeholder engagement. Other research addresses the impact of social media on customer satisfaction and B2B brand marketing efforts (Agnihotri et al., 2016; Michaelidou et al., 2011)

Research by Swani et al. (2014) and Agnihotri et al. (2016) highlights the role of social media in B2B marketing, focusing primarily on specific platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter. These studies do not address the broader thematic clusters emerging from social media's role across B2B contexts, such as customer engagement, trust-building, co-creation of value, and logistics in trade. This paper seeks to fill this gap by mapping the development of social media research in B2B marketing and providing a comprehensive bibliometric and content analysis.

Furthermore, research by Zhou and Charoensukmongkol (2020) indicates that the use of social media in B2B sales can enhance customer qualification skills and adaptive sales behaviour, both of which are crucial for successfully closing sales. By utilising social media, salespeople can gather more accurate information about customer needs and preferences, thereby tailoring their sales approaches more effectively. The importance of social media in the B2B sales process is also reflected in how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) utilise these platforms to boost their sales. The role of social media is proven to aid the growth of SMEs, especially in regions like Egypt, where platforms like Facebook and Instagram are crucial in reaching customers (Fakhreldin & Miniesy, 2023). Social media is not only relevant for large companies but also for SMEs seeking to boost visibility and sales in a competitive market. The intrinsic relationship between social media engagement and business sustainability suggests that active use of social media, combined with perception and readiness, can drive sustainable business growth (Sendawula et al., 2022).

Several previous studies have provided insights into the impact of social media use on inter-firm marketing; however, most of these studies have focused on specific aspects without addressing them within a broader framework. There is thus a need for a comprehensive literature review that synthesises existing research while also identifying emerging trends and research gaps in the field. This study aims to fill this gap by using a bibliometric and content analysis approach. Through this method, this study will map the development trend of publications related to social media in inter-company marketing. Additionally, this research will examine thematic maps and research clusters in the existing literature. This research is expected to contribute to identifying future research directions and suggest measures to strengthen the knowledge base in B2B marketing, logistics, and trade.

1.1. Study Objectives

To address the gap in the literature regarding social media in B2B marketing, this study undertook an exhaustive investigation into the role of social media in B2B literature. This paper employs both bibliometric and content analyses. Specifically, this paper attempts to answer these questions:

RQ1: Which are the most important publication development patterns in the topic of social media in B2B?

RQ2: What is the theme map and the research clusters in the publications on social media in B2B?

RQ3: What are the predominant research methods and sociological theories within the social media in the B2B case study?

RQ4: What are the envisioned gaps in the studies on social media's impact on B2B?

This study is expected to benefit several designated groups. Regarding practitioners, particularly B2B firms and digital marketers, the study's results can enable them to devise more effective digital marketing plans. For scholars, this study contributes to the existing body of literature and inspires further investigation, as well as interdisciplinary cooperation, in the area. At the same time, policymakers can analyse the findings of this study to evaluate the effectiveness of regulations governing marketing for social media and recommend adjustments to increase social media utilisation within the ecosystem. Ultimately, examining the role of social media in B2B transactions will deepen our understanding and foster innovation and digital transformation in this specific industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social media in B2B Marketing

Social media has reshaped B2B marketing strategies, enabling companies to better engage with customers and manage relationships across multiple platforms. In an increasingly global business environment, companies are leveraging social media channels to expand their market reach and foster meaningful interactions, which are critical to building trust and credibility in B2B transactions (Cheng et al., 2022; Hayes & Kelliher, 2024). In particular, platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook facilitate real-time communication, enabling businesses to establish good relationships with potential clients and maintain ongoing relationships with existing clients (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Research shows that B2B salespeople actively utilise social media at various stages of the sales cycle (Cheng et al., 2022; Drummond et al., 2020). These professionals are not

limited to the initial engagement phase; instead, they utilise social media tools strategically to enhance customer value, particularly as they approach a sale. This approach emphasises the importance of building good relationships and credibility, which is essential to convince potential buyers to finalise their purchase decisions. In addition, Kumar and Srivastava (2022) highlight the need for organisations to adapt their marketing communications to technological advances in order to accelerate the sales process. It highlights that a strong social media presence is crucial for enhancing sales effectiveness and overall company performance.

The importance of social media in B2B marketing is further illustrated by its role in facilitating digital engagement strategies that drive marketing communication efforts. Various strategies, including message content and co-creation, suggest the need for companies to develop customised communication tactics that resonate with their audience. To stay competitive, B2B companies must empower their employees to innovate and take risks, which is essential in utilising social media platforms effectively. This empowerment fosters an innovative culture that aligns with the dynamic nature of digital marketing.

B2B salespeople are increasingly utilising social media at various stages of the sales cycle, a trend supported by growing research that emphasises the diverse role these platforms play in modern sales practices. Initially, B2B salespeople utilise social media as a communication channel to engage potential buyers, especially in the early stages of the sales process (Cheng et al., 2022). An increase in adaptive sales behaviour mediates the indirect impact of social media use on sales performance, thus underscoring its usefulness beyond communication (Zhou & Charoensukmongkol, 2020).

Social media serves as a powerful tool for improving customer relationships. The various functions of social media in the B2B context, noting its effectiveness in supporting sales initiatives and brand building (Andersson & Wikström, 2017). It aligns with the suggestion that B2B organisations should create unique content on social media to interact with partners and generate quality leads, a sentiment reinforced by Dinçer, who discusses the broader implications of digital media for B2B sales methodologies (Lipiäinen, 2015).

The integrated application of social media, along with traditional and digital communications, also emerges as a crucial strategy in the B2B sales process. Research indicates that companies utilise a combination of these channels to foster customer engagement and adapt to the evolving landscape of buyer-seller interactions (Licong & Ghosh, 2023). Successful B2B companies are increasingly relying on cohesive communication strategies that leverage the power of multiple platforms to enhance their sales

effectiveness, exemplifying the transformative impact of social media on sales channels (Fraccastoro et al., 2021).

2.2. Frameworks in B2B Social Media Research

The influence of social media on B2B marketing has been explored by integrating and expanding several theoretical frameworks to capture the mechanisms of technology adoption and value creation. Frameworks such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) have traditionally supported our understanding of how businesses adopt and integrate social media tools. Recent empirical research has reinforced the importance of the main TAM constructs (perceived usefulness and ease of use) in driving the adoption of social media marketing (SMM) B2B (Thaher Amayreh et al., 2025). This study confirms the predictive validity of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in the context of social media marketing (SMM) integration. It broadens its application by incorporating digital transformation variables that capture the evolving nature of online engagement. The TPB's focus on attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control continues to provide an understanding of the behavioural intentions underlying social media usage.

To further capture the interactive and co-creative dynamics in B2B marketing through social media, researchers have drawn on Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) and the Resource-Based View (RBV). SDL has played a crucial role in explaining how social media facilitates co-value creation by enabling the collaborative exchange of resources and capabilities between companies and their stakeholders (Apatova, 2020; Mazurov, 2024). Social media interactions are not merely transactional exchanges but are embedded in complex, iterative processes that enable the co-creation of value. This perspective is complemented by research that applies the Resource-Based View (RBV) to highlight how the unique capabilities of social media can function as strategic resources, ultimately providing competitive advantages for B2B companies. Recent research by Saragih (2024) demonstrates that effective resource management and relational connectedness—strengthened through social media channels—play a crucial role in establishing a sustainable competitive advantage.

In addition, emerging models from the social selling literature have contributed nuance by examining the strategic integration of social media in the sales process. Tsotsou's (2020) framework demonstrates that the dialectical nature of actor engagement on social media supports a successful communication strategy, bridging the core concepts of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Sustainable Development Learning (SDL). As a complement, Wang et al. (2020) propose that social media analytics (SMA) is central to exploiting business networks,

providing actionable insights to companies that integrate digital and social dimensions into their marketing strategies. Artificial intelligence (AI) plays a facilitative role, enriching the co-creation mechanism by enabling enhanced, data-driven interactions that support value creation in B2B sales environments (Paschen et al., 2020).

The digital transformation facilitated by social media impacts customer engagement and reshapes traditional sales and marketing relationships (Chowdhury et al., 2023). The shift toward B2B marketing strategies that focus on relationships and innovation aligns with emerging practices in creating shared value through social media platforms. The integration of TAM, TPB, SDL, and RBV provides a strong and diverse understanding of how social media affects B2B marketing.

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1. Materials and Methods

This study identified Scopus as the primary database source. For bibliometric purposes, Scopus is considered the primary choice due to its extensive coverage (Alex, 2024). Such broad coverage enables the aggregation of numerous relevant publications. Scopus contains a more advanced search engine which facilitates the effectiveness of literature review searches (Ali & Tanveer, 2021). The goals of this research were achieved more effectively through the use of Scopus.

3.2. Data Collection and Cleaning Process

To validate the credibility of the collected data, this study employs the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach. The PRISMA method is a widely recognised framework for conducting systematic reviews and meta-analyses, which ensures transparency, consistency, and reproducibility in the selection process of relevant studies (Tricco et al., 2018). The PRISMA approach was followed throughout the data collection and cleaning processes, and its application is explained in the following steps. The PRISMA method has been shown to improve various aspects of the research, including the utilisation of its results (Tricco et al., 2018). The approach was applied throughout the data collection and cleaning process, which followed the steps outlined in Figure 1. One of the limitations of the PRISMA approach in this study is that it primarily focuses on published literature from indexed journals, which may exclude relevant studies that are not published or those not available in the Scopus database.

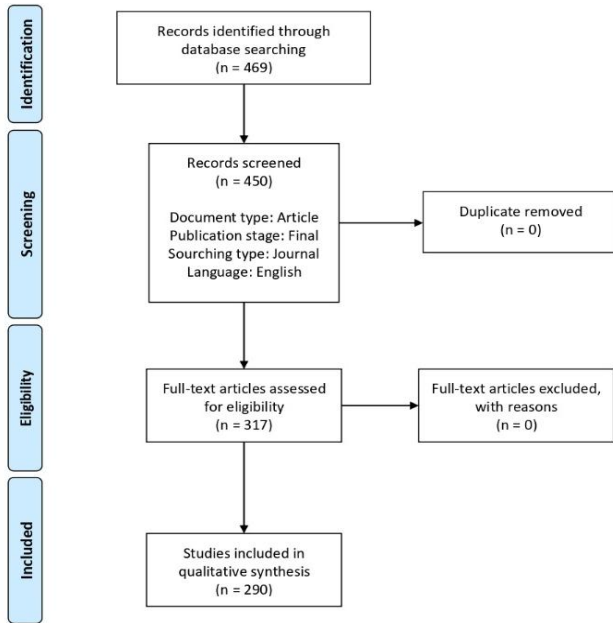


Figure 1: PRISMA Flowchart for Literature Screening Process

In the identification stage, a search was conducted using a query in the Scopus database with the parameters TITLE-ABS-KEY ('social media' AND 'B2B' OR 'business to business'). The search was conducted in January 2024, encompassing titles, abstracts, and keywords, and yielded 469 documents. This process did not limit the year of publication to obtain a comprehensive overview of the scientific developments related to B2B marketing on social media, allowing the inclusion of all relevant research across time. This process did not limit the year of publication to obtain a comprehensive overview of the scientific developments related to B2B marketing on social media. Next, the data were filtered using the following inclusion criteria: document type, article; publication stage, final; source type, journal; and language, English. After screening, 469 documents were obtained. The Mendeley software was used to check for duplicate documents, which revealed that no data was duplicated; therefore, the remaining number of documents was 469. Finally, the author performed a content analysis selection, whereby documents that did not pertain to the study's scope were eliminated from the list. This process ensured that only the most relevant and high-quality studies were included in the final dataset. The analysis yielded 157 documents relevant to the study.

After the literature was gathered and filtered, a bibliometric analysis was done to track the pacing and development of active social media research in B2B marketing. This analysis incorporates trends in publication and citation networks, highlighting the most prominent areas of discussion in the available literature. The

bibliometric analysis is enhanced by the use of VOSviewer software, which assists in the visualisation of trends, networks, and clusters. At the same time, a content analysis was conducted to define the essence of each article, focusing on how social media affects B2B marketing.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Publication Trends

The attention given to B2B marketing and its relationship with social media is growing, and so is the associated academic literature, as illustrated in Figure 2, which outlines publication trends and projections from 2010 to 2025. In the initial years (2010-2013), only a handful of articles were published, indicating that B2B marketing research had not yet taken up this topic. However, since 2014, there has been a noticeable surge in publications, which showcases the increasing interest from both scholars and professionals.

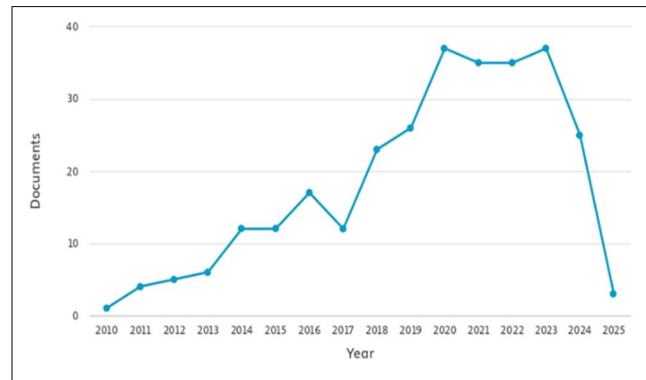


Figure 2: Documents by Year and Trends

4.2. Distribution of Publication Sources

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of journal sources related to social media in B2B marketing. The analysis is based on the number of published articles. The Journal of Business Research is the leading journal, having published 81 documents. It is recognised as the primary publication on the subject of B2B social media. This journal is distinguished by its quality and has an impact on assisting other researchers in formulating and implementing marketing strategies and policies.

Additionally, other journals, including the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services and the Journal of Interactive Marketing, published 38 and 10 documents, respectively. Their publishing activities demonstrate that there are indeed studies that focus on marketing and

consumer behaviour. Other journals, such as the European Journal of Marketing or the Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing, may have fewer articles. However, they are still important in industrial marketing and business management.

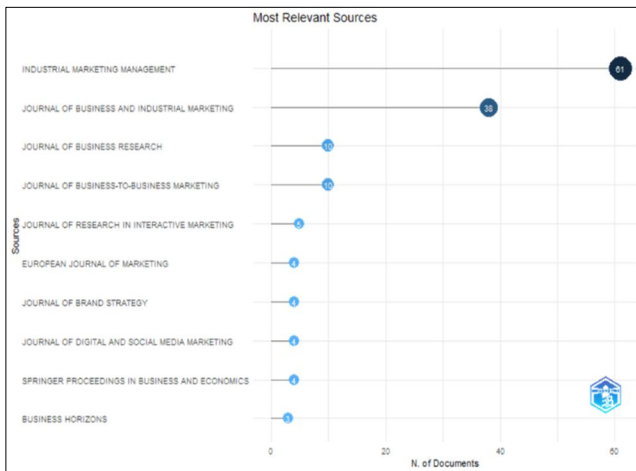


Figure 3: Distribution of Published Sources

4.3. Top Contribution

Table 1 indicates scholarly publications on social media usage in B2B marketing by country. The United States overwhelmingly leads with 142 publications. This figure illustrates the country's high level of expenditure and dedication to research in social media and B2B marketing. Moreover, the United Kingdom and India follow with respectable counts of 94 and 50 documents, respectively. It indicates that these two countries also contribute significantly towards research on the given subject and add their share towards the existing scholarly work.

Table 2: Most Cited Publications

Authors	Source Title	Cited by	TC per Year	DOI
Dwivedi <i>et al.</i>	J Information Man	1046	209.2	10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168
Michaelidou <i>et al.</i>	Ind Marketing Man	659	47.1	10.1016/j.indmarman.2011.09.009
Leeflang <i>et al.</i>	J European Man	427	35.6	10.1016/j.emj.2013.12.001
Agnihotri <i>et al.</i>	Ind Marketing Man	405	40.5	10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.09.003
Siamagka <i>et al.</i>	Ind Marketing Man	263	26.3	10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.05.005
Holliman <i>et al.</i>	J Interactive Marketing	241	21.9	10.1108/JRIM-02-2014-0013
Swani <i>et al.</i>	Ind Marketing Man	233	23.3	10.1016/j.indmarman.2014.04.012
Wang <i>et al.</i>	Ind Marketing Man	232	23.2	10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.12.004
Swani <i>et al.</i>	Ind Marketing Man	220	24.4	10.1016/j.indmarman.2016.07.006
Iankova <i>et al.</i>	Ind Marketing Man	213	30.4	10.1016/j.indmarman.2018.01.001

4.5. Author Collaboration Network Analysis by Time

The results of the analysis of the authors' collaboration networks in the study on the role of social media in B2B

Table 1: Country Contributions to Publications

Region	Number of Publication
USA	142
UK	94
India	50
Finland	37
China	36
Germany	28
Australia	27
France	25
Canada	21
Sweden	19
Italy	18
Spain	14
Turkey	12
Indonesia	11

Finland, Germany, and France are other European countries that are proactive in this particular research field, with 37, 28, and 25 publications, respectively. While lower than major countries like the US, these countries have begun to make meaningful contributions to understanding the role of social media in B2B marketing.

4.4. Most Cited Publications

Cited sources regarding the effectiveness of social media in B2B marketing are listed in Table 2. Their relevance is determined by their total number of citations and the number of citations received within the year. The most notable article is by Dwivedi *et al.* (2021) in 'The Journal of Information Management,' which has been cited 1,046 times and receives an average of 209.2 citations annually. This specific research significantly advances the discourse by offering views and research propositions for the future of digital marketing and further social media integration.

marketing are shown in Figure 4. The analysis groups the authors into several main clusters based on the level and intensity of their collaboration over time. Based on this analysis, countries are grouped into four main clusters

(Table 3). Collaboration between countries in this field is increasingly widespread, with countries at the centre of international attention and cooperation. Cluster 1 comprises countries with high levels of collaboration, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Australia. The results are reflected in the many relationships established with other countries.

Table 3: Country Collaboration Clusters

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
United States	China	India	Spain
United Kingdom	Canada	South Africa	Norway
Germany	Finland	Turkey	UAE
France	Italy	Greece	Lebanon
Australia		Netherlands	Indonesia
		Sweden	Ireland

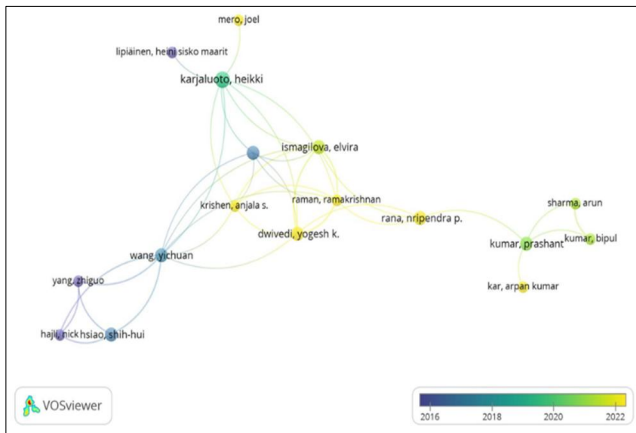


Figure 4: Author Collaboration Network (2016-2022)

4.6. Thematic Map

Figure 5 clearly illustrates the thematic map, which features the major themes related to the application of social media and marketing. The map categorises these themes into clusters (Table 4) based on density and centrality, with some themes being more developed than others (Donthu et al., 2021). In the middle of the map, labelled as "Social Media Marketing," are the most dominant and well-established themes within the scope of our observation. This cluster contains fundamental terms such as "social media," "social networking sites," "B2B marketing," and "social media marketing." These phrases constitute the fundamentals of research in this area of study, which proves the dynamic character of social media integration within business and marketing functionalities. The prevalence of terms such as 'social media,' 'engagement,' 'CRM,' and 'sales performance' indicates the direction this area is taking in both academic research and practice. It demonstrates that this area of

research has progressed and developed towards understanding how social media is utilised by organisations to enhance marketing strategies, particularly in the context of B2B relationships.

Table 4: Clusters of Main Themes in the Thematic Map

Cluster	Main Theme	Keywords
1	Social Media Marketing	Social media, Social media marketing, B2B marketing, Marketing, Social networking sites, Social networking (online), Content marketing
2	Business & Technology	Big data, Digital platforms, Artificial intelligence, Data analytics, Technology acceptance model, Information systems, Business-to-business marketing
3	Social Interaction	Trust, CRM, Sales performance, Social selling, Influencer marketing, Engagement
4	Social Platforms	Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, SMEs, B2C

The upper right quadrant of the map, labelled "Social Networking," reveals new and emerging areas in social media studies. These themes include "social networking (online)," "trust," and "influencer marketing." These themes are relatively new but growing rapidly, reflecting the importance of social media platforms as spaces for interaction between brands and consumers. The rise of influencer marketing, in particular, signals a change in the way brands approach their audiences, relying on individuals with large social followings to engage in more authentic marketing practices.

The bottom right quadrant, "Business and Commerce," includes terms such as "business-to-business marketing," "commerce," "big data," and "social media analytics." These themes illustrate the convergence between social media and traditional business models, where businesses are increasingly utilising social platforms not only for engagement but also to derive data-driven insights. The inclusion of terms such as "digital platforms" and "artificial intelligence" suggests a growing emphasis on technological advancements and data-driven marketing strategies.

The upper left quadrant, which includes themes such as "public relations" and "social selling," shows less central but still relevant themes. These topics show the integration of social media with broader business functions such as public relations and direct sales, with social selling emerging as a key strategy for brands to connect with potential customers through social platforms. Finally, the bottom left quadrant encompasses themes such as the "technology acceptance model" and "information systems," highlighting the underlying concepts that support the broader application of social media in business.

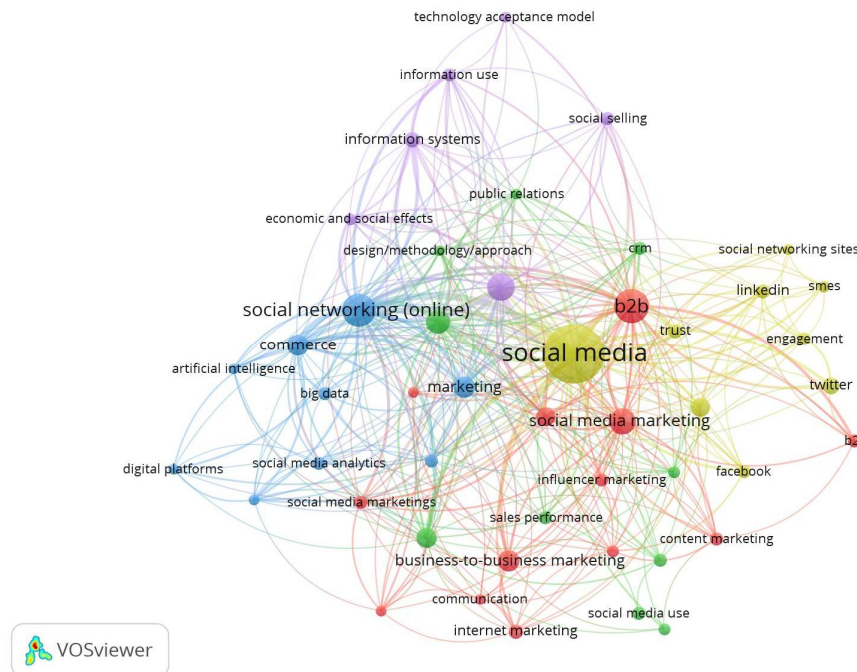


Figure 5: Thematic Map



Figure 6: Word Cloud of Key Themes

4.7. Word Cloud of Key Themes

Research on social media in B2B shows a strong relationship between social media platforms and marketing strategies. The size of each word reflects its frequency of occurrence, with larger words representing the most frequently mentioned themes. In this word cloud (Figure 6), "social media" and "social networking (online)" emerge as the most prominent terms, emphasising their central role in B2B marketing research. These buzzwords reflect the widespread recognition of social media platforms as important tools for business communication, customer engagement, and marketing strategy. The words "commerce" and "marketing" also stood out, highlighting

the key links between social media and B2B commercial activities. The inclusion of "predictive analytics" and "artificial intelligence" underscores the increasing integration of advanced technologies to improve marketing performance and decision-making in the digital age.

4.8. Content Analysis

Research into the use of social media in B2B marketing is primarily driven by quantitative research methods, which often involve analysing quantifiable data and statistics to assess the impact of social media on business outcomes. Research by Itani et al. (2017) examined the impact of social media use on competitive intelligence gathering and

adaptive selling by focusing on the role of learning orientation as a driver. Another study by Michaelidou et al. (2011) examines the use, barriers, and measurement of social media marketing in small and medium-sized B2B brands. Quantitative methods aim to provide robust, evidence-based insights into the impact of social media on business performance.

At the same time, qualitative approaches are increasingly implemented to capture the nuances, dynamics, and experiences within a specific context. As done by Hollebeek (2019), which combines service-dominant logic (S-D logic) and Resource-based view (RBV). Another qualitative study highlights the contribution of social media to value creation in multi-stakeholder systems (Singaraju et al., 2016). This paper is more inclined to examine the relationships among the different participants in the system through interviews, case studies, or other ethnographic means. These approaches enable a deeper understanding of how participants in an ecosystem interact and contribute to value creation, extending beyond defined quantifiable parameters.

The studies listed in Table 5 explain the adoption and impact of social media on B2B business strategies. How social media is leveraged for customer engagement, sales, and communication, the barriers that B2B brands encounter when leveraging social media, and the impact of big data and analytics on business sustainability. Guesalaga's (2016) study examines the impact of social media on B2B selling and customer engagement, with a focus on the influence of LinkedIn and Twitter. At the same time, Sivarajah et al. (2020) examine the use of big data and social media scraping to support the sustainability of B2B enterprises by demonstrating the relevance of data for making marketing and operational decisions.

Table 5: Main Topics, Social Media Platforms, and Key Insights from Research

Author	Main Topic	Type	Insight
Dwivedi et al. (2021)	Social Media, Digital Marketing Research	Various Digital Channels	Provides research propositions for the future of digital and social media marketing.
Michaelidou et al. (2011)	Social Media, Barriers, Small B2B Brands	LinkedIn	Explores the barriers and opportunities for small B2B brands to utilise social media.
Leeflang et al. (2014)	Digital Marketing, Challenges	Various Digital Channels	Identifies key challenges and solutions for marketing in the digital era.
Agnihotri et al. (2016)	Social Media, Customer Satisfaction, B2B Sales	LinkedIn, Twitter	Examines the impact of social media on customer satisfaction in business-to-business (B2B) sales.

Author	Main Topic	Type	Insight
Siamagka et al. (2015)	Social Media, Adoption, B2B	LinkedIn, Facebook	Identifies factors driving social media adoption in B2B organizations.
Holliman & Rowley (2014)	B2B Digital Content Marketing	Facebook, Twitter	Explores best practices in B2B digital content marketing.
Swani et al. (2014)	Social Media, Twitter Strategy, B2B vs B2C	Twitter	Analyses the role of Twitter in B2B vs B2C communications in large companies.
W. Y. C. Wang et al. (2016)	Social Media, B2B Communication, SMEs	LinkedIn	Examines how social media enhances communication and performance in small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
Swani et al. (2017)	Social Media, Message Strategy, B2B vs B2C	LinkedIn, Twitter	Compares the effectiveness of social media communication in B2B and B2C contexts.
Iankova et al. (2019)	Social Media, B2B vs B2C Models	LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter	Compares B2B, B2C, and mixed business models in social media marketing.
Guesalaga (2016)	Social Media, B2B Sales	LinkedIn, Twitter	Focuses on the role of social media in sales engagement and customer relationships.
Swani et al. (2013)	Social Media, Brand Strategy	Facebook	Evaluates message strategy effectiveness for large corporations on social media.

The problems that B2B companies face in utilising social media and how platforms like LinkedIn can assist small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in leveraging social media for marketing purposes (Michaelidou et al., 2011). The role of various social media channels, including LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook, in developing communication strategies for B2B and B2C contexts. Communication on Twitter varies across B2B and B2C contexts, based on observations of major Fortune 500 corporations that employ different strategies for each market segment (Swani et al., 2014).

4.9. Discussions

This study answers several research questions relating to the rise of social media in B2B marketing. The results from the bibliometric analysis and content analysis offer a comprehensive insight into the current state of research and its implications for future research. This study investigates the rise of social media in Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing by integrating bibliometric analysis and content analysis. The bibliometric analysis provides an overview of publication trends, author collaboration networks, and thematic development. In contrast, the content analysis

focuses on the core themes in the articles and their contribution to B2B marketing strategies. The results of both analyses highlight the growing academic and practical interest in the role of social media in B2B marketing (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020).

Publication trends show an increase in research output from 2014 onwards, which is consistent with the increased adoption of social media platforms in B2B (Agnihotri, 2016). The results of the bibliometric analysis reveal a significant increase in the number of publications, with a concentration of research in established markets, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and India (Michaelidou et al., 2011). It aligns with the findings from the content analysis, which revealed that themes such as customer engagement, trust building, and social media analytics dominate academic discussions. These themes reflect the growing recognition of social media as a crucial tool for enhancing business relationships and refining marketing strategies in the B2B sector (Hollebeek, 2019; Swani et al., 2014).

The thematic map obtained from the bibliometric analysis corroborates the results of the content analysis, particularly in identifying key themes such as social networking, influencer marketing, and social selling (Swani et al., 2017). These themes, which appear in the upper right quadrant of the thematic map, reflect the rapidly growing interest in social networking platforms and their integration into B2B marketing strategies. Notably, influencer marketing was identified as an emerging area of focus, indicating a shift in the way B2B brands utilise social media influencers to create authentic relationships with other businesses and their customers (Michaelidou et al., 2011).

The rise of social networking and social selling further emphasises the importance of social media platforms as tools to foster deeper relationships between businesses and their stakeholders (Cheng et al., 2022). The findings highlight the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of social media integration in B2B marketing. As shown in the findings, social media has become an important tool for businesses to increase customer engagement, build trust, and create more personalised marketing strategies (Liadeli et al., 2022). The findings suggest that B2B companies should focus on leveraging social media platforms to strengthen relationships, interact with customers in real time, and use analytics to optimise marketing efforts (Sivarajah et al., 2020).

Analysis of the authors' collaboration networks further supports these findings by showing the collaborative nature of research in the field. Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany are at the centre of international collaboration, with these regions leading the way in research on the strategic role of social media in B2B marketing (Itani et al., 2017). This international cooperation highlights the global nature of social media marketing and

reflects the widespread recognition of the significant role social media plays in enhancing B2B relationships (Guesalaga, 2016).

4.10. Future Research Directions

The results from the bibliometric analysis and content analysis open up further research opportunities to deepen the understanding of B2B social media marketing. While investigations of B2B social media marketing have been conducted across various industries, considerable gaps remain in understanding how these strategies differ across different regional contexts. The primary focus of research on B2B social media marketing has been directed towards established markets. Future research efforts should examine the operational dynamics of B2B social media marketing strategies in developing countries, particularly in regions where digital marketing infrastructure is still in its early stages of development and where cultural and economic disparities may impact technology adoption. These studies can investigate the impact of these contextual elements on the adoption and efficacy of B2B social media marketing strategies. Furthermore, comparative analysis across sectors, such as technology and traditional manufacturing industries, can shed light on industry-specific patterns in the utilisation of social media for B2B marketing purposes.

In terms of methods, this study explains that a quantitative approach mainly characterises research conducted on B2B social media marketing. This methodological framework is largely used to assess the interrelationships between certain variables, such as the impact of social media on customer engagement and organisational performance, using quantifiable data. Qualitative inquiries, exemplified by thorough interviews or case analysis, can provide more nuanced insights into how B2B companies strategically incorporate social media into their operational frameworks and customise their methodologies according to diverse audiences and marketing objectives. Additionally, the incorporation of advanced big data analysis techniques in prospective research can lead to a broader understanding of consumer behaviour on social media. Integrative methodologies that combine quantitative and qualitative strategies with big data analytics technologies have the potential to provide more comprehensive insights into B2B social media marketing (Qian, Sui, and Wang, 2023).

Future investigations should probe new themes within the field of B2B social media marketing, particularly emphasising the incorporation of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and automation instruments. While existing studies have largely concentrated on the fundamental utilisation of social media platforms, the rise of AI tools and chatbots presents

unprecedented prospects for customised customer engagement and predictive analytics in marketing initiatives. In addition, the increasing prioritisation of sustainability in corporate practices is uncovering new research avenues. Analysing how B2B companies leverage social media to articulate their sustainability efforts and actively engage customers in ecological initiatives can enrich the academic discourse surrounding social media marketing. Research focuses on the integration of new technologies, sustainability, and the utilisation of employee-generated content to optimise B2B social media marketing strategies.

In an era where authentic and transparent communication is increasingly valued, businesses need to explore how they can leverage their employees' networks and insights on social media to enhance engagement and brand trust (Davey et al., 2022; Mikalef et al., 2023). Employee-generated content (EGC) plays a crucial role in marketing, serving as an effective tool for fostering stronger customer relationships. This content is often perceived as more trustworthy than content produced by the company itself (Hofacker et al., 2020). Future research should focus on integrating new technologies, sustainability, and the utilisation of employee-generated content to optimise B2B social media marketing strategies.

4.11. Theoretical Implication

The assessment offers a comprehensive bibliometric critique, accompanied by a thorough content analysis of the use of social media in B2B, thereby enhancing existing knowledge. Through a multidisciplinary lens, the study's outcomes address a notable gap in understanding how businesses utilise social media channels to enhance their B2B marketing strategies. The research not only describes the emerging phenomena and trends that require greater in-depth research in social media marketing but also provides a conceptual framework for the field. The study examines the evolution of research on B2B social media marketing, as well as its current state, and asserts that it provides an intellectual framework for the data. As noted, most explanations focus on the key theories of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) concerning social media usage by B2B firms. This report also demonstrates, however, that social media engagement in B2B relations is complex and cannot be accounted for through a single social theory. It is recommended that further steps combine different approaches, such as the resource-based view (RBV) and service-dominant logic (SDL), to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of social media in B2B marketing and its relationship with business performance.

Furthermore, this work identified relevant gaps in research regarding the adoption of social media across

various industries and business scales. Further research is suggested on the social and organisational contexts, such as organisational culture, industry attributes, and market maturity, that shape the use of social media in the B2B context. It will help you better understand how businesses can leverage social media for specific marketing purposes. This study outlines the social structure of the research community by mapping the primary researchers and institutions engaged in B2B social media marketing research as well as the countries that are leaders in this particular area of research. Its findings are beneficial to both scholars and practitioners, as they can extend existing research and target new areas of potential investigation. Moreover, this research motivates cross-country analyses to study the impact of cultural and institutional contexts on the use and effectiveness of social media marketing in different countries.

4.12. Practical Implication

A comprehensive understanding of social media enables practitioners and policymakers to leverage its value for business expansion fully. This study, along with others, demonstrates the role of social media sites, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook, in the development of marketing strategies for companies, particularly in the context of B2B communications. For marketing specialists, the study proves that there is a multitude of social media platforms that serve separate functions in B2B marketing. Improving a company's digital marketing strategy entails redefining the communication strategy for each platform. The aim is not only to enhance the scope of coverage but also to foster customer engagement and communication by facilitating greater personalisation. Social media also supports business sustainability as a driver in the implementation of digital transformation. As a result, companies can enhance operational efficiency by improving their brand image, utilising big data to identify customer consumption patterns, and creating a digital ecosystem that is adaptable to technological advances.

Regarding social media policy, the results of this study provide a basis for establishing a social media regulatory framework and integrating a policy. Moreover, new regulations can be implemented to enable social media to be ready for business, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The implications include enabling a business-ready digital environment and leveraging social media as a marketing strategy. Businesses must ensure that their marketing teams have the necessary skills and knowledge to engage customers meaningfully. Businesses can leverage social media data and analytics to improve their decision-making processes and social media marketing strategies. Furthermore, analysis is used to identify and

gather the necessary information, thus helping political businesses make more strategic marketing manoeuvres.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the growing role of social media in B2B marketing. Regarding publication dynamics, there has been a dramatic increase in interest in the impact of social media on business-to-business communication, particularly in areas such as distribution, logistics, and trade. Citing behaviour is still fluctuating, with few studies being considered important. Among all the contributors in this field, Swani et al., Agnihotri et al., and Guesalaga are particularly notable for their contributions to social media marketing in a B2B context. To date, the country leading in the volume of published research in this field is the United States; however, candidates from the United Kingdom, India, and several other European countries are also conducting extensive research.

The cross-country collaboration in this study was quite extensive, with several major clusters of cooperation identified in the analysis. From the thematic map, the themes of social media's role in increasing B2B sales, customer engagement, and relationship management were the main focus. New areas of interest emerged around topics such as big data, analytics, and sustainability in B2B marketing through social media, particularly as they pertain to trade and logistics in the context of global supply chains. The evolution of this research shows a shift from theoretical discussions toward practical explorations of tools such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook in B2B marketing strategies, including their applications in logistics and trade relationships. Most research on B2B social media marketing employs a quantitative approach, often utilising surveys to assess the impact of social media on customer engagement, sales performance, and distribution strategies. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) are the most widely used frameworks, especially in analysing the factors that influence the adoption and successful use of social media in a B2B context. These models often incorporate elements such as ease of use, perceived benefits, and social influence, which are also crucial in understanding how businesses integrate social media into their logistics and trade operations.

This research highlights contextual aspects, including regional differences, sector-specific use cases, and the adoption of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics in B2B marketing, as areas that require further investigation. Furthermore, a sociological approach must also be considered to understand why and

how B2B companies utilise social media strategically—not just for altruistic purposes but also to enhance their distribution channels and trade networks. This study contributes to the understanding of the role of social media in B2B corporate marketing, helping further the digitisation of marketing processes across industries.

Despite the thoroughness of this study, it is important to recognise its limitations. The research predominantly focuses on English-language literature from Scopus-indexed journals related to B2B social media. As a result, studies in other languages or those outside academic sources may not be fully represented. Nevertheless, this study lays a strong foundation for understanding B2B social media practices and highlights critical areas, especially in distribution, logistics, and trade, that warrant further research and practical exploration.

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