

The Influence of Social Media Influencer Utilization in Influencing Public Opinion

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ABSTRACT

This bibliometric analysis delves into the evolving landscape of research surrounding the impact of social media influencers on public opinion. Spanning nearly six decades and comprising 980 scholarly publications, the study employs rigorous bibliometric tools to unveil clusters of research themes, influential authors, and emerging trends. The analysis reveals the multifaceted role of social media influencers, spanning domains from consumer behavior to political discourse. Implications drawn from the findings highlight growing interdisciplinary interest and suggest potential avenues for future research, while the density visualization underscores well-explored and less-explored dimensions within the literature. As the influence of social media influencers continues to evolve, this study serves as a comprehensive guide, informing policymakers, marketers, and scholars about the complex interplay between digital influencers and societal perceptions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In an era dominated by the digital age, the profound impact of social media on shaping public opinion has become increasingly evident [1]–[3]. One intriguing facet of this influence is the role played by social media influencers, individuals who wield significant reach and persuasion within online communities [4]. This article delves into "The Effect of Utilizing Social Media Influencers in Influencing Public Opinion," employing a bibliometric analysis to unravel

the patterns, trends, and scholarly contributions surrounding this captivating subject.

The intersection of social media and influencers creates a dynamic landscape where ideas, products, and narratives can rapidly gain traction, reaching vast audiences in real time [5]. As brands, organizations, and political entities harness the power of social media influencers to amplify their messages, it becomes imperative to scrutinize the repercussions on public opinion formation

[3], [6]. This bibliometric analysis aims to systematically review and synthesize existing research on the utilization of social media influencers, shedding light on the evolving nature of their impact on public perceptions.

Bibliometric analysis, a quantitative method for evaluating scholarly literature, provides a structured approach to identifying key themes, prolific authors, and emerging research trends within a given field [1], [4]. By applying this methodology to the study of social media influencers and public opinion, we endeavor to map the intellectual landscape, trace the chronological evolution of research, and discern patterns that can inform future investigations.

As we embark on this bibliometric journey, it is essential to consider the multifaceted dimensions of social media influencers. Their ability to shape public sentiment extends beyond traditional advertising, permeating political discourse, social activism, and cultural narratives [7]–[9]. This article aims to contribute nuanced insights into the intricate relationships between social media influencers and the formation of public opinion, fostering a deeper understanding of the mechanisms at play.

In exploring the literature, we anticipate uncovering a spectrum of perspectives, methodologies, and empirical findings. By critically examining the existing body of work, we seek to identify gaps in knowledge, highlight areas requiring further exploration, and stimulate discourse on the implications of leveraging social media influencers to influence public opinion [6], [10], [11]. As we navigate the pages of scholarly contributions, our goal is to provide readers with a comprehensive overview of the current state of research while inspiring new avenues for inquiry into this captivating realm of social media dynamics.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Social Media Influencers*

Social media influencers, individuals who amass significant online followings, wield considerable influence over public opinion through various platforms such as

Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok [12]. By building close, authentic connections with their followers, influencers cultivate a high level of trust, making their opinions and recommendations impactful [6]. Brands tap into this influence, employing influencers for sponsored content, reviews, and product endorsements, leveraging the perceived authenticity of influencer marketing [13]. Influencers often act as trendsetters, shaping cultural narratives and discussions, and impacting public opinion on social issues and lifestyle choices. Some influencers use their platforms for advocacy, influencing opinions on political and social matters, while others play a pivotal role in shaping consumer preferences and decisions. However, there are concerns about the creation of filter bubbles and echo chambers, limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints [5]. The vulnerability to manipulation and misinformation also raises ethical considerations surrounding the influence wielded by social media figures. In essence, social media influencers play a multifaceted role in shaping public opinion, combining trust, trendsetting, advocacy, and consumer influence, with implications for both positive and negative impacts [11].

2.2 *Public Opinion*

Public opinion, encompassing the collective views and attitudes of society on various issues, holds immense significance in democratic governance [14]. It serves as a vital force shaping government policies and decisions, as elected officials consider the prevailing sentiment when addressing legislative matters and public projects. The legitimacy of a government is intricately tied to the alignment of its decisions with public opinion, influencing the perception of trust and accountability [15]. Beyond governance, public opinion is a catalyst for social change, driving the acceptance of new norms and policies when a critical mass of individuals holds a specific viewpoint. Policymakers often rely on public opinion polls to inform their decisions, ensuring policies resonate with the needs and desires of the population. Media, as a powerful influencer, plays a pivotal role in shaping public sentiment through information dissemination and issue

framing [16]. Additionally, public opinion serves as a barometer for social stability; a positive consensus fosters stability, while widespread dissatisfaction may lead to social unrest. In the business realm, understanding and responding to public sentiment are crucial, as consumer behavior is often influenced by public opinion, impacting the success of products and services [14]. In essence, the importance of public opinion lies in its multifaceted role, influencing decision-making, fostering social cohesion, and shaping the trajectory of democratic societies [17].

3. METHODS

This study employed a bibliometric research design to analyze the impact of utilizing social media influencers on shaping public opinion. Utilizing quantitative analysis of publications, the study sought insights into patterns and trends within this specific field. The primary data sources included renowned academic databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science, supplemented by relevant grey literature and conference proceedings to ensure comprehensive coverage. Inclusion criteria encompassed articles published between 1963 and 2024, written in English, focusing on the use of social media influencers and including an analysis of their impact on public opinion. Exclusion criteria were applied to articles not meeting these specifications, duplicate publications, and non-peer-reviewed sources. The search strategy involved a systematic approach, employing a combination of keywords related to social media influencers, public opinion, and bibliometrics, with Boolean operators refining search queries for relevance.

Data analysis was conducted using bibliometric software, including VOSviewer. These tools facilitated the visualization and exploration of co-citation networks, keyword co-occurrence, and trends within the selected publications. Key bibliometric metrics, such as citation counts, h-index, and impact factor, were used to assess the influence and significance of the identified publications. The

analysis aimed to reveal patterns of collaboration, emerging themes, and the overall impact of research on the utilization of social media influencers in shaping public opinion.

Table 1. Research Data Metrics

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Publication years | : 1963-2024 |
| Citation years | : 61 (1963-2024) |
| Paper | : 980 |
| Citations | : 87936 |
| Cites/year | : 1441.57 |
| Cites/paper | : 89.73 |
| Cites/author | : 40359.77 |
| Papers/author | : 522.73 |
| Author/paper | : 2.50 |
| h-index | : 127 |
| g-index | : 287 |
| hI,norm | : 89 |
| hI,annual | : 1.46 |
| hA-index | : 59 |
| Papers with ACC | : 1,2,5,10,20:671,569,411,300,187 |

Source: *Publish or Perish Output, 2024*

Table 1 provides a comprehensive snapshot of a researcher's scholarly impact and productivity spanning the years 1963 to 2024. Over this 61-year period, the individual has authored 980 papers, accumulating an impressive 87,936 citations, translating to an average of 1441.57 citations per year. This consistent and enduring impact is further emphasized by the h-index of 127 and g-index of 287, signifying both the quantity and distribution of citations across the researcher's body of work. Notably, each paper garners an average of 89.73 citations, reflecting the quality and influence of the contributions. The ratios of Cites/author (40,359-.77) and Papers/author (522.73) highlight a prolific output and widespread influence, with collaborative efforts indicated by an Author/paper ratio of 2.50. Additionally, the hI,norm of 89 and hI,annual of 1.46 provide nuanced insights into the sustained impact over the course of the researcher's career. The hA-index of 59 considers the authorship order of papers, while the listing of specific papers (1, 2, 5, 10, 20) and their respective citation counts (671, 569, 411, 300, 187) underscores

noteworthy contributions. In summary, Table 1 paints a detailed portrait of a highly productive and influential researcher, leaving an enduring mark on the academic landscape.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the literature database was successfully collected with a total of 980 pieces of literature, the analysis was then carried out

with the help of the VOS Viewer tool. The extraction process is carried out on the title and abstract using full counting. The extraction process produced 4314 terms which were grouped into 120 thresholds with a minimum of 10 occurrences. To ensure the relevance of the extracted terms, the system automatically reduces and produces the terms that are most relevant to the topic in question and produces a threshold of 72.

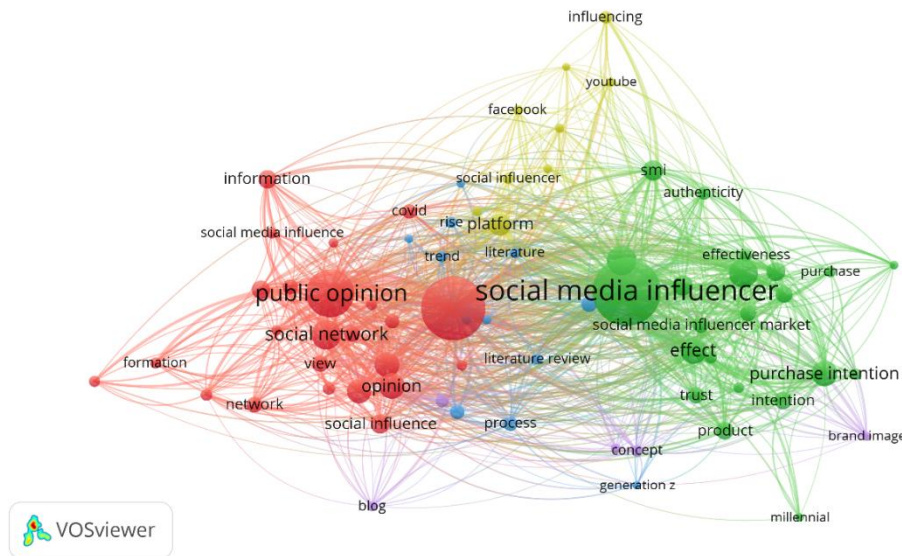


Figure 1. Network Visualization
 Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

Based on Table 1 above, there are several colors, each color representing a different cluster or group. Items that are in the same cluster or group have similar themes and topics. Thus, to find out the classification of existing literature, this network visualization can be used as the main feature. There are five clusters, each cluster has its own color. The first cluster is represented in red with a total of 24 items, the second cluster is represented in green with a total of 22 items, the third cluster is represented in blue with a total of 12 items, the fourth cluster is depicted in yellow with a total of 9 items. items, the fifth and final cluster is a purple cluster with a total of 5 items. From the mapping above, Table 2 below explains in detail the composition of items for each cluster.

Table 2. Cluster Composition

| Cluster | Most Occurrence | Items |
|---------|---|--|
| 1 | Social media influencer (662), medium (583) | Covid, data, dynamic, formation, information, medium, model, network, opinion, opinion leader, political influencer, public opinion, public relation, social influence, social media influence, social network, social network analysis, twitter, user, work |
| 2 | Consumer (115), purchase | Advertising, attitude, authenticity, brand, consumer, |

| | | |
|---|--------------------|---|
| | intention (96) | credibility, effectiveness, endorsement, intention, millennial, perception, product, purchase, purchase intention, source credibility |
| 3 | Smis (35), Digital | Adaption, challenge, digital |

| | | |
|---|------------------------|--|
| | influencer (32) | influencer, fashion, generation z, smis, trend |
| 4 | Social influencer (54) | Addition, facebook, platform, social influencer, youtube |
| 5 | Blog (15) | Blog, brand image, individual, popularity |

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

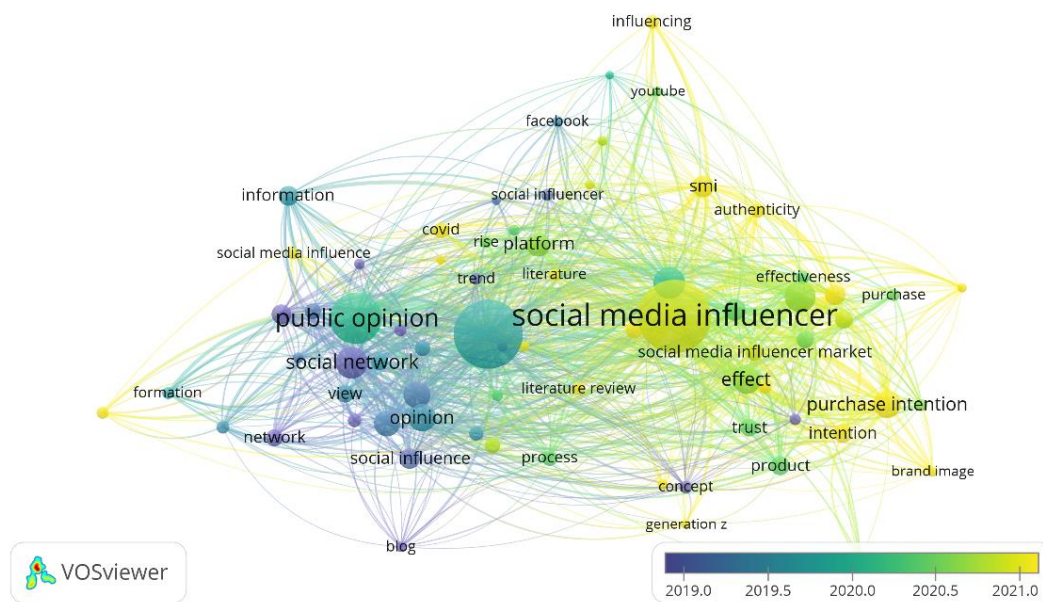


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

Next, after clusters and classifications are identified, the analysis is directed to determine existing research trends. By default, the VOS Viewer system is capable of maximally analyzing terms in the period 2019 to 2021. In 2019, research related to this topic focused on discussing blogs, social influence, social networks and social influencers. This means that these terms became research trends in 2019. Meanwhile in early to mid 2020, topics such as public opinion, trust, purchase, product, YouTuber, and effectiveness dominated research in this field. Finally, at the beginning of 2021, topics such as social media influencers, intention, brand image, authenticity, and Covid became quite significant research trends.

Table 3. Top Cited Documents

| Citations | Authors and year | Title |
|-----------|------------------|---|
| 4714 | [18] | Measuring user influence in twitter: The million follower fallacy |
| 2788 | [19] | Marketing through Instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude |
| 2776 | [7] | Influentials, networks, and |

| Citations | Authors and year | Title |
|-----------|------------------|--|
| | | public opinion formation |
| 2722 | [20] | Everyone's an influencer: quantifying influence on twitter |
| 2110 | [21] | Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media |
| 1980 | [22] | Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality |
| 1979 | [8] | The impact of public opinion on public policy: A review and an agenda |
| 1842 | [23] | The future of social media in marketing |
| 1837 | [9] | Self-branding, 'micro-celebrity' and the rise of social media influencers |
| 1460 | [24] | Identifying influential and susceptible members of social networks |

Source: *Publish or Perish Output, 2024*

This table presents a compilation of influential works on the topic of user influence in social media, particularly focusing on platforms like Twitter and Instagram. The studies cover various aspects of influencer marketing, social network dynamics, and the impact of influencers on user attitudes and trust. Notably, Cha, Haddadi, and Benevenuto's 2010 work challenges the "million follower fallacy" in measuring user influence on Twitter, while De Veirman and Cauberghe's 2017 study delves into the marketing effectiveness on Instagram, exploring the influence of follower count and product divergence on brand attitude. Other works, such as Watts and Dodds' 2007 study on influentials and public opinion formation, Bakshy, Hofman, and Mason's 2011 exploration of influence quantification on Twitter, and Lou and Yuan's 2019 investigation into influencer marketing and consumer trust, contribute valuable insights to the understanding of social media influencers and their impact on user behavior and perceptions. These studies collectively shed light on the multifaceted nature of social media influence, encompassing aspects of network dynamics, message value, credibility, and the evolving role of influencers in marketing and branding.

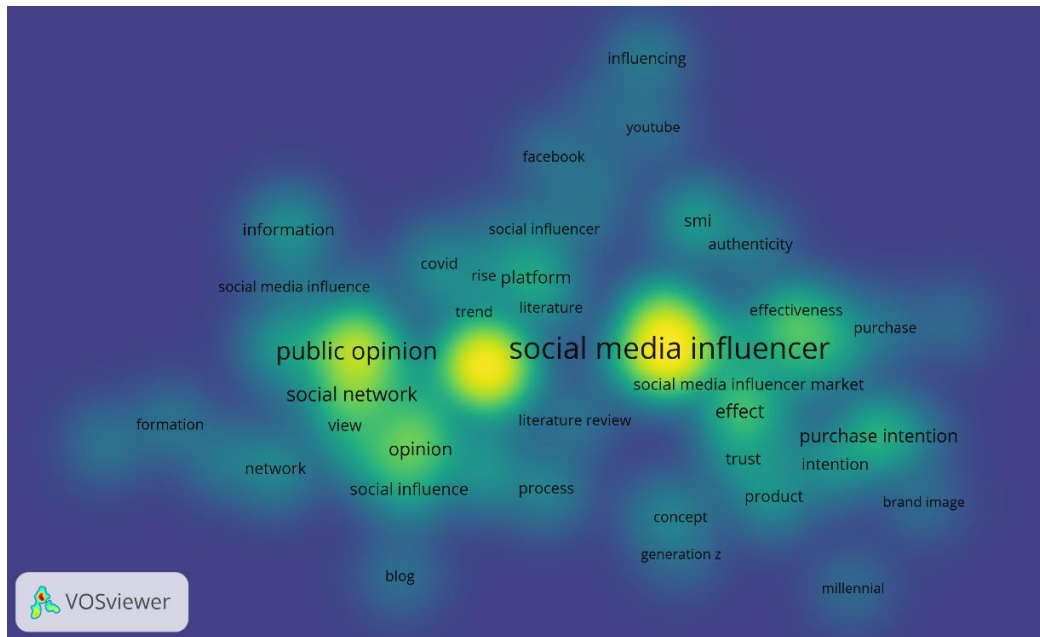


Figure 3. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2024

Next, analysis is carried out using a feature called density visualization to measure terms that appear frequently and terms that rarely appear. This analysis aims to find potential topics in the future which are characterized by very rare occurrences. Figure 3 above shows how each existing term has a different color intensity. The higher the intensity the term has, the more frequently the term is used and vice versa. Thus, terms such as public opinion and social media influencer are the two terms most frequently used in research related to public opinion. Meanwhile, other terms such as millennial, generation z, blog, Facebook, YouTube, authenticity, etc. are terms that have very dim color intensity, indicating that these terms are very rarely used.

Table 4 below explains the terms with the most occurrences which indicate high saturation and the terms which appear least frequently indicate very high research gaps and potential for future research.

Table 4. Most Occurrence and Fewest Occurrence

| Most Occurrence | | Fewest Occurrence | |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| Items | Occurrence | Items | Occurrence |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|--------------|----|
| Social media influencer | 662 | Millennial | 11 |
| medium | 583 | Addition | 11 |
| Public opinion | 335 | Challenge | 11 |
| perception | 134 | Generation z | 11 |
| Social network | 127 | Brand image | 12 |
| Consumer | 115 | Youtube | 13 |
| Purchase intention | 96 | Adoption | 13 |
| opinion | 96 | fashion | 14 |

Source: Data Analysis, 2024

The table presents a comparison of the most and fewest occurrences of various items in a dataset, with a focus on concepts related to social media and consumer behavior. Social media influencer and medium are the most frequently mentioned items, occurring 662 and 583 times, respectively. This suggests a significant emphasis on the impact of influencers and online platforms in the dataset. On the other hand, Millennial, Addition, Challenge, and Generation Z have the fewest occurrences, each appearing only 11 times. These terms

may not be as central to the dataset, indicating a relatively lower emphasis on generational distinctions and challenges. The table also highlights the diverse range of topics, including public opinion, perception, social networks, consumer behavior, and purchase intention, providing insights into the varied

aspects of contemporary societal and marketing discussions. Additionally, the presence of specific platforms such as YouTube and fashion-related terms suggests a focus on digital content consumption and trends in the dataset.

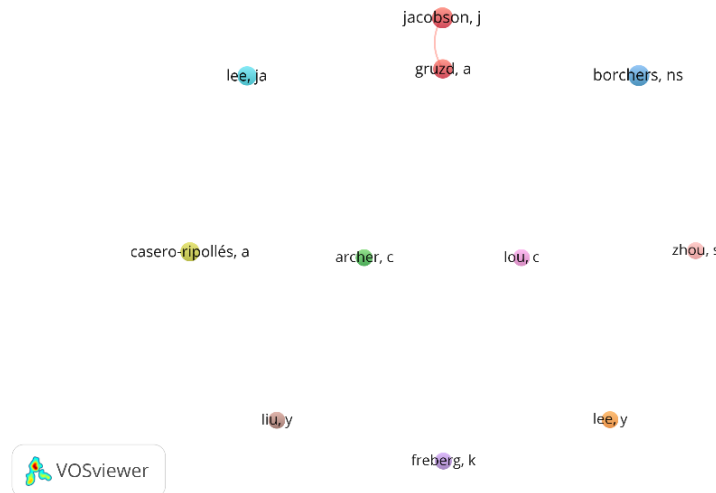


Figure 4. Author's Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2024

Finally, the same analysis was also carried out on authors who contributed significantly to the scientific building in this field. Through the VOS Viewer application, filtration is carried out by only clustering authors who have more than four publications in this field. The results found that there were 10 clusters where nine clusters were individual writers who did not have consistent research collaborations with other researchers and one cluster was writers who consistently carried out collaborative research in this field. The specific information about each clusters as shown in the Table below.

| | |
|----|---------|
| 8 | Liu, Y |
| 9 | Lou, C |
| 10 | Zhou, S |

Source: Data Analysis, 2024

Comparison with Previous Study

Bibliometric research in the fields of public opinion and influencer marketing has been the focus of several studies. A bibliometric analysis of virtual influencers in the Web of Science was conducted to measure the visibility and impact of influencer marketing. The study aimed to identify the most cited authors, journals, and themes in the field of influencer marketing [25]. Another study reviewed the state of the art of research on influencers in social media, with a specific focus on human and Instagram dimensions, indicating an increasing research focus in this area [26]. A bibliometric analysis of social media influencer research was conducted, which included a review of the human brands literature and the increasing relevance of social media influencers in the field [27]. In the context of public opinion, a bibliometric

Table 5. Author's Clusters

| Cluster | Author |
|---------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Grudz, A; Jacobson, J |
| 2 | Archer, C |
| 3 | Boorchers, NS |
| 4 | Casero-ripolles, A |
| 5 | Freberg, K |
| 6 | Lee, JA |
| 7 | Lee, Y |

mapping of network public opinion studies was carried out, covering areas such as social media, user influence, and opinion dynamic modeling. The study identified key authors and hot spots in the field of network public opinion research [28]. Additionally, a comprehensive bibliometric analysis was conducted to map the influence of influencer marketing, aiming to understand the mechanisms, impact measurement, and persuasive cues in influencer marketing. The study identified six clusters in the domain of influencer marketing [29]. These studies provide valuable insights into the visibility, impact, and evolving themes in the fields of public opinion and influencer marketing, offering a comprehensive understanding of the research landscape in these areas.

Implication

The findings of this bibliometric analysis suggest several implications for scholars, policymakers, marketers, and practitioners interested in the intersection of social media influencers and public opinion. Firstly, the identified clusters and research trends indicate a growing interest in understanding the dynamics of social media influencer impact, encompassing themes such as user influence, brand attitude, authenticity, and the evolving landscape of influencer marketing. This suggests a need for continued research to delve deeper into these areas, exploring nuances and emerging topics within the rapidly evolving field. Secondly, the clustering of authors reveals both individual researchers with significant contributions and collaborative networks. Collaborative efforts, as evidenced by the identified clusters of authors, may foster interdisciplinary perspectives and enrich the understanding of the multifaceted relationships between social media influencers and public opinion. Future research could benefit from interdisciplinary collaborations to address complex questions at the intersection of communication, marketing, sociology, and political science. Lastly, the density visualization highlights terms with varying degrees of research saturation, signaling potential areas for future

exploration. Terms such as public opinion and social media influencer dominate, while others like millennial, generation Z, and fashion are relatively underexplored. This suggests an opportunity for researchers to delve into less-explored dimensions, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse influences at play within the realm of social media influencers and public opinion. The implications of this bibliometric analysis underscore the need for continued research that delves into the complexities of social media influencers' impact on public opinion. As the digital landscape evolves, understanding these dynamics becomes increasingly crucial for shaping informed policies, effective marketing strategies, and a nuanced comprehension of the role influencers play in shaping public sentiment.

5. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis illuminates the intricate relationships between social media influencers and public opinion, offering a comprehensive overview of scholarly contributions over the past six decades. The clustering of research themes, identification of influential authors, and trends in publication patterns provide valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of this dynamic intersection. The study's implications underscore the need for continued interdisciplinary research and exploration of less-explored dimensions, offering a roadmap for future inquiries. As the digital landscape evolves, understanding the multifaceted impact of social media influencers on public sentiment becomes increasingly crucial for policymakers, marketers, and scholars alike.

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