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İSTANBUL KÜLTÜR UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS STUDY

MASTER'S THESIS

Hagar Hosam Eldin Moustafa Hamido Moustafa

1600000628

Department: Business Administration

Program: Business Administration

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Kemal Özkan Yılmaz

JUNE 2025

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Members of Examining Committee:Prof. Dr. İlkay KARADUMAN

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Çiğdem KAYA

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HAGAR MOUSTAFA

DEDICATION

I would especially like to thank my family and friends for their constant love, support, and patience throughout trying times. The journey is possible because of your faith in me.

Hagar Moustafa

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR : Augmented Reality

CE : Consumer Engagement

CRM : Customer Relationship Management

eWOM : Electronic Word-of-Mouth

Freq : Frequency

GeoBM : Geospatial Bibliometrics

MCP : Multiple Country Publications

NLP : Natural Language Processing

PEM : Positive Emotional Motivation

S-D : Service-Dominant

SCRM : Social Customer Relationship Management (Social CRM)

SME : Social Media Engagement

SMBCs : Social Media–Based Brand Communitie

SMIs : Social Media Influencers

SMMAs : Social Media Marketing Activities

S-O-R : Stimulus-Organism-Response

TC : Total Citations

SLM :The Smart Local Moving

WOS : Web of Science

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ABSTRACT

The Impact of Social Media on the Restaurant Industry: A Bibliometric Analysis Study

Hagar Hosameldın Moustafa Hamido Moustafa

This study investigates the impact of social media on the restaurant industry, focusing on customer engagement, brand perception, customer loyalty, and consumer behavior. Given the increasing role of digital platforms in shaping consumer choices, this research aims to better understand how social media contributes to restaurant success. A bibliometric study of papers indexed in Web of Science and Scopus from 2010 to 2025 is conducted using the R package Bibliometric as part of a mixed-method approach. There were 148 documents in Scopus and 148 documents on the Web of Science. This method identifies the Annual Scientific Production, Most Cited Authors, Most Cited Works, Most Relevant Sources, Most Cited Countries, and Co-occurrence Network related to social media and restaurant marketing. The findings reveal significant academic interest in the intersection of social media and hospitality, highlighting the dominant themes and trends in literature. This analysis provides valuable insights for researchers and practitioners by identifying key focus areas and revealing how social media influences customer behavior and restaurant performance. Additionally, the study suggests a conceptual research model that shows how social media presence affects restaurant results. The methodology specifically ties social media activity to menu preferences, customer interaction, and brand perception, all of which influence sales growth, customer loyalty, and overall business performance.

Keywords: **Social Media, Restaurants, Bibliometric Analysis, Customer Engagement, and Influencer.**

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ÖZET

Restoran Endüstrisinde Sosyal Medyanın Etkisi: Bibliyometrik Bir Analiz Çalışması

Hagar Hosameldin Moustafa Hamido Moustafa

Bu çalışma, sosyal medyanın restoran endüstrisi üzerindeki etkisini incelemekte olup müşteri etkileşimi, marka algısı, müşteri sadakati ve tüketici davranışına odaklanmaktadır. Dijital platformların tüketici tercihlerini şekillendirmedeki artan rolü göz önüne alındığında, bu araştırma sosyal medyanın restoran başarısına nasıl katkı sağladığını daha iyi anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. 2010–2025 yılları arasında Web of Science ve Scopus'ta indexlike makaleler üzerinde, karma yöntem yaklaşımının bir parkas olarak R Bibliometric paketi kullanılarak bibliyometrik bir analiz yapılmıştır. Scopus'ta 148 ve Web of Science'ta 148 belge incelenmiştir. Bu yöntem, sosyal medya ve restoran pazarlamasıyla ilgili Yıllık Bilimsel Üretim, En Çok Atıf Alan Yazarlar, En Çok Atıf Alan Çalışmalar, En İlgili Kaynaklar, En Çok Atıf Alan Ülkeler ve Eş-Oluşum Ağı gibi göstergeleri belirlemiştir. Bulgular, sosyal medya ile misafirperverlik (hospitality) kesişimindeki akademik ilgiyi ortaya koymakta ve literatürdeki baskın temaları ve eğilimleri vurgulamaktadır. Bu analiz, araştırmacılar ve uygulayıcılar için önemli odak alanlarını tanımlayarak sosyal medyanın müşteri davranışı ve restoran performansını nasıl etkilediğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca, çalışma sosyal medya varlığının restoran sonuçlarını nasıl etkilediğini ortaya koyan kavramsal bir araştırma modeli önermektedir. Metodoloji, sosyal medya faaliyetlerini menü tercihleri, müşteri etkileşimi ve marka algısı ile ilişkilendirerek bunların satış artışı, müşteri sadakati ve genel iş performansını nasıl şekillendirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: **Sosyal Medya, Restoranlar, Bibliyometrik Analiz, Müşteri Etkileşimi, Influencer**

1.CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Digital technologies like social networking sites, smart marketing, and mobile apps are becoming central to marketing strategies. Social media platforms have grown exponentially, and in the restaurant industry, they play a vital role in shaping customer experience and preferences. Modern marketing techniques now heavily rely on digital technology, including social networking sites, mobile applications, smart marketing, and websites tailored for mobile devices (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2016). While Ostrow (2009) observes a consistent rise in the amount of time users spend on social media, Subrahmanyam et al. (2008) highlight the broad use of these platforms for communication. By the end of 2017, Twitter had about 330 million active users, while Facebook had over 2.07 billion user accounts (Statista, as reported in Kumar et al., 2020).

In recent decades, social media has become an essential commercial tool. According to Hendricks and Aldeen (2012), social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, and Twitter have seen exponential expansion in their user populations and are being utilized by a wide range of demographic groups. These platforms change how companies develop strategies and relationships with potential customers, facilitate two-way communication, and promote brand loyalty (Agresta & Bough, 2011).

This digital transition is best shown by the restaurant business. Consumers regularly discuss their eating experiences on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to sway others' choices (Brown, 2016, as referenced in Timilsina, 2017). Nowadays, social media influences dining decisions more and more (Liang et al., 2011). According to Pick (2014), 60% of customers would switch restaurants because of unfavorable comments posted within their networks, and more than half of restaurant clients base their purchase decisions on internet reviews (Mhlanga & Tichaawa, 2017). Therefore, in the food service industry, social media has probably

outperformed traditional advertising in terms of influencing consumer behavior (Brown, 2016).

Engaging target audiences on pertinent platforms is crucial for the growth of new or emerging restaurants (Timilsina, 2017). In addition to changing dining experiences, social media has spawned the "foodie" culture and the development of food bloggers. Through persuasive content and real-time communication, these influencers have the ability to either improve or harm a restaurant's reputation (Hsu, Liu, & Lee, 2010; Akar & Topcu, 2011; Mhlanga & Tichaawa, 2017). According to Bronner and de Hoog (2013), food bloggers, who currently control the online restaurant review scene, use social media more than any other instrument.

This thesis incorporates a bibliometric study using data from Scopus and Web of Science (2010–2025) to gain a better understanding of the intellectual structure and research evolution in this field. The Bibliometric R package (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017) facilitates this methodological approach, which offers a quantitative overview of significant authors, trending subjects, co-authorship networks, and thematic evolutions in the study of digital marketing, social media, and the restaurant industry. The mapping displays the most referenced works, gaps in knowledge, and new research directions.

Even though social media is becoming more and more important in restaurant marketing, little is known empirically about how influencer marketing helps increase customer loyalty and brand trust. Szakal et al. (2024), for example, looked at the dynamics of influencer marketing, but they were more interested in creators' tactics and consumer perceptions than in loyalty results. Similarly, Hsiao and Lin (2025) examined the characteristics of Instagram influencers and the efficacy of their content, but they did not investigate the long-term impacts on customer retention or trust. Although Sikandar and Ahmed (2019) discussed brand love in the restaurant industry, they did not establish a direct connection between influencer efforts and quantifiable measures of trust or loyalty. These restrictions highlight a glaring study void: the necessity of investigating how influencer marketing enhances long-term customer-brand connections in the restaurant sector.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how customer engagement, brand trust, and loyalty are impacted by social media, specifically influencer marketing, in the

restaurant business. The rapid development of digital technology (DT) has led to a notable growth in the number of users on social networks (SNs). Social networking sites (SNs) have become a new social space where people may engage and form relationships since socializing behavior was introduced by these technologies. In addition to in-person encounters, people can now have digital talks via social media platforms (Gebremariam, Dea, & Gonta, 2024).

People naturally synchronize their emotional states with those they see in others, a phenomenon known as emotional contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). As people imitate the emotional displays of others, this process frequently takes place subconsciously, influencing their own emotions (Barger & Grandey, 2006; Kramer, Guillory, & Hancock, 2014). This was described as a cycle of perception, imitation, physiological reaction, and emotional experience by Hatfield et al. (1994). The idea of emotional contagion has been used in recent marketing research to analyze brand interactions and consumer reactions (Peng, Peng, Lei, & Xie, 2024).

The study's conclusions can help restaurant managers maximize their use of social media to boost patron interaction, sway eating choices, and spur company expansion.

A structured understanding of the evolution of social media research in the restaurant industry is made possible by the bibliometric approach, which offers insights into important authors, prestigious journals, and developing themes

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q1 What is the amount, development, and subject matter of journal research on how social media trends, such as food photography and influencer marketing, have influenced restaurant branding and menu creation?

Q2 How has journal research evolved in examining social media engagement, customer loyalty, and repeat patronage in the restaurant sector?

Q3 What are the research trends, principal contributors, and citation patterns in studies examining the influence of social media presence on consumer engagement and restaurant performance?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to investigate how social media affects restaurant performance; specifically, how various digital marketing strategies and customer behavior patterns impact important business results.

Restaurants rely significantly on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to draw in, interact with, and keep patrons in an increasingly interconnected digital world.

The study investigates how brand perception, customer loyalty, and overall restaurant performance are shaped by influencer marketing, digital branding, Instagram-based promotion, and consumer involvement.

The study uses bibliometric analysis of journal papers from the Web of Science and Scopus databases, spanning the years 2010 to 2025, to methodically evaluate the scholarly discourse in this field. This method makes it possible to map the field's intellectual structures, significant contributions, and research trends.

The following are the study's main goals:

-to determine which journals, writers, and publications have the greatest sway over social media use in the restaurant industry.

-to examine topic development and keyword patterns in research on Instagram marketing, food photography, influencer marketing, and customer interaction.

-to map the intellectual structure, networks of collaboration, and research output in social media and restaurant performance.

-to investigate how social media trends, like influencer endorsements and visually appealing menus, have affected customer behavior and brand image in the scholarly literature.

-to investigate the frequency and context of research papers that link social media use to repeat business and consumer loyalty in the restaurant industry.

1.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

In order to better understand how digital engagement affects consumer behavior, brand perception, and customer relationship management, this study examines the various ways that social media affects the restaurant business.

Using databases like Scopus and Web of Science, on the other hand, maps academic trends from 2010 to 2025 as a combination of theoretical analysis and bibliometric methodologies.

Despite the thorough methodology, there are a number of drawbacks with this study. By limiting the scope to articles that are indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus, bibliometric analysis may leave out pertinent research from regional or non-indexed sources. The primary quantitative insights offered by bibliometric methods may obscure the complexity and depth of qualitative research. Furthermore, social media sites' dynamic nature poses a problem because user behavior, features, and algorithms can all change quickly, potentially impacting how timely findings are.

2.CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media's explosive growth has completely changed how companies communicate with their customers, particularly in the restaurant and hospitality sectors. Social media has developed into a strategic marketing platform that affects consumer behavior, molds brand perception, and propels purchase decisions. It is no longer just a medium for communication. Restaurants are using social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and X (previously Twitter) more and more to interact with patrons, promote their products, and create brand communities. This chapter provides a thorough analysis of the body of research on social media's effects on the restaurant industry.

2.1 Consumer Management

According to Hollebeek et al. (2014), consumer engagement (CE) is defined as "a consumer's positively valenced brand-related cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions" (p. 154). The CE concept has drawn increasing interest from academics and business professionals as marketing has refocused its efforts on relationship building rather than consumer acquisition (Islam et al., 2019). Because brand material is more easily accessible to consumers online, this idea has been applied to social media and brand communities. For instance, customers can write comments on brand material in addition to clicking "like" or "heart" buttons to express their opinions. Additionally, they can produce user-generated content and share the content with ease (Barger et al., 2016).

The notion of CE is multifaceted. The dimensions of CE, however, vary slightly among researchers. For example, Rahman et al. (2023) view CE as a single dimension that

focuses on characteristics of customer behavior related to the brand. In contrast, Hollebeek et al. (2014) distinguish three dimensions: behavior, emotion, and cognition. They propose that CE includes consumers' emotional and cognitive responses to a brand in addition to their investments in brand-related actions. France et al. (2016) propose two dimensions, suggesting that cognition and emotion better characterize CE in terms of consumers' motivating nature and psychological state regarding a brand, excluding behavior as a separate component. According to France et al. (2016), behavior results from the other two aspects. While researchers differ in the number of dimensions, the CE concept generally highlights the degree of brand immersion (France et al., 2016; Yoo, 2024).

2.2 Customer Engagement

Customer engagement (CE) has emerged as a key concept in marketing literature, though it lacks a universally accepted definition due to its multiple theoretical underpinnings. Many scholars ground CE within the service-dominant (S-D) logic framework (Hollebeek, Srivastava, & Chen, 2019), while others draw from social exchange theory (Hollebeek, 2011), relationship marketing (Vivek et al., 2014), and congruity theory (Islam, Rahman, & Hollebeek, 2018).

Hollebeek et al. (2019) define CE as the customer's intentional allocation of operand (e.g., physical resources) and operant resources (e.g., cognitive, emotional, and behavioral competencies) during brand interactions. In contrast, Brodie et al. (2011) conceptualize CE as a psychological state emerging from interactive brand experiences. Despite differing definitions, CE is widely acknowledged as inherently interactive (Harmeling et al., 2017; Hollebeek et al., 2020), particularly in experience-intensive sectors like tourism (Harrigan et al., 2018).

A multidimensional perspective is now widely accepted, positing that CE encompasses emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Engagement behaviors stem from prior emotional and cognitive investments (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014; Taheri, Jafari, & O'Gorman, 2014). These behaviors are further categorized as in-role (e.g., making purchases) or extra-role (e.g., assisting other customers) (Kumar et al., 2019; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Shin, Perdue, & Pandelaere, 2020).

While CE research has typically emphasized positive outcomes, such as brand advocacy, repurchase intention, and favorable word-of-mouth, scholars are

increasingly acknowledging negative engagement and its potential impact on brand perception (Bowden et al., 2017). For example, dissatisfaction with pricing may lead to disengagement or even public criticism. Nevertheless, the current study focuses on positive engagement and its role in supporting favorable brand outcomes (Fang, Zhang, & Li, 2020; Hollebeek et al., 2014; So et al., 2014).

2.3 Virtual Professionals and the Revolution in Customer Service

Virtual experts represent a transformative force in customer experience, enabled by modern digital technologies. These agents—ranging from live human consultants connected via video conferencing to AI-powered digital assistants embedded in mobile applications or augmented reality (AR) environments—enable real-time, location-independent consumer interaction (Parise, Guinan, & Kafka, 2016).

This paradigm can be understood through the lens of Mehrabian and Russell's Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, which suggests that external stimuli (e.g., technological features such as personalization and interactivity) influence individuals' internal cognitive and emotional states, ultimately shaping their behavioral responses, such as engagement, satisfaction, and purchase intentions (Zhang, Lu, Gupta, & Zhao, 2014; Zhang, Lu, Gupta, & Zhao, 2016).

Personalization and interactivity are two essential digital stimuli that enhance customer experience in omnichannel environments. Personalization—achieved through demographic and behavioral data—builds consumer trust and reinforces brand perceptions by delivering tailored recommendations (Liang, Wang, & Farh, 2019). This process is increasingly supported by advanced analytics that integrate data from various customer touchpoints. Conversely, interactivity, enabled by tools such as live video, mobile apps, and AR, fosters immersive communication between customers and brand representatives, thereby increasing customer agency and strengthening brand connections (Klein, 2003).

Modern customer experience encompasses multiple stages: awareness, consideration, purchase, service, and advocacy. The concept of flow refers to seamless progression through these stages in a digitally mediated context. An elevated level of flow reflects frictionless transitions and uninterrupted access to relevant information, improving overall user satisfaction (Novak, Hoffman, & Yung, 2000). Despite technological

advancements, research reveals that many consumers remain dissatisfied with the omnichannel flow, signaling the need for strategic enhancements (Dhebar, 2013).

Closely tied to flow is the concept of immersion, or the sensation of "being there." Immersion depends on both depth (quality and sensory richness) and breadth (number of touchpoints). Highly immersive experience enhances learning and purchase intentions (Suh & Chang, 2006; Suh & Lee, 2005). Key elements include contextually relevant information (e.g., advice on a car model's winter performance) and aesthetically engaging interactions (Kohler et al., 2011; Scholz & Smith, 2016).

To address rising consumer expectations for immediacy, organizations now employ two primary types of virtual experts: digital assistants and remote experts. Digital assistants—often AI-driven—provide real-time support within physical stores or apps. Remote experts, on the other hand, are human specialists who connect with customers via live technology from off-site locations. Depending on operational needs, businesses may utilize one or both approaches simultaneously (Parise et al., 2016).

2.4 Improving Customer Experience with Virtual Expert Models

Digital transformation has given rise to two prominent models of virtual expertise in retail: the digital assistant and the remote expert. Remote experts interact with customers through live videos from external locations, enabling personalized service without requiring physical presence (Parise et al., 2016, p. 414). Digital assistants, typically AI-powered, provide on-the-spot support via apps or platforms, often within retail spaces, thereby increasing service efficiency. Organizations may employ both models in tandem to meet diverse customer needs (Parise et al., 2016, p. 415).

The philosophy of social comparison and orientation towards social comparison is grounded in the notion that individuals inherently assess their performance, status, and competencies by comparing themselves to others (Festinger, 1954). According to Vogel et al. (2014), these comparisons may be downward, toward those perceived as worse off, or upward, toward those perceived as better off. Prominent individuals with large followings, known as social media influencers (SMIs), can directly impact their audiences (Ge & Gretzel, 2018; Koay et al., 2022). To maintain their curated online image and distinguish themselves from followers, SMIs often present idealized lifestyles that include displays of luxury (Tosun & Kaşdarma, 2023). These influences are idolized as symbols of success, leading followers to engage in upward social

comparison (Dinh & Lee, 2023). According to Tian et al. (2022), such comparisons may evoke a range of emotions, such as admiration and envy, which influence followers' purchasing behaviors.

Although theories like attachment theory, parasocial interaction theory, and social identity theory have explained influencer-follower dynamics and marketing effectiveness (Farivar et al., 2022; Hsieh, 2020; Lu et al., 2021), they often emphasize positive emotional connections while overlooking negative effects. In this context, social comparison theory offers a broader lens to understanding influencer marketing impacts, particularly relevant in the restaurant industry.

2.5 Social Identity Theory

According to Social Identity Theory, individuals strive to preserve and enhance their social identities by joining social groups such as brand communities, which help them develop their self-concept (Tajfel, 1978). Building on Tajfel's paradigm, this theory helps explain how brand followers' positive emotional motivation (PEM) emerges and manifests across various social media marketing activities (Ibrahim, 2023). Brands that actively provide engaging content in online brand communities, such as user-generated posts, humorous videos, and behind-the-scenes material, foster feelings of positivity and community (Ibrahim, 2023). This shared positivity strengthens the collective identity of the group, generating emotions like joy, pride, and belonging, which have been linked to strong brand attachment and consumers' self-identities (Torres et al., 2021). Customers tend to support brands aligning with their values and interests, reinforcing their bond and nurturing the pride and loyalty characteristic of PEM (Chen, Jin, et al., 2022; Polat et al., 2023). This phenomenon is particularly evident in online brand subcultures, especially those centered on fast-food restaurants on social media platforms (Aljarah et al., 2024; Ibrahim, 2023). Consumers who identify with these communities and appreciate marketing efforts like influencer collaborations or user-generated campaigns often experience happiness and excitement when engaging with the brand on platforms like Instagram (Aljarah et al., 2024; Ibrahim, 2023). Therefore, Social Identity Theory is well suited to investigate consumer reactions to social media marketing activities (SMMAs) in the fast-food industry and the emotional bonds they form with brands.

2.6 Social Media Engagement (SME)

Social media engagement is the core interaction in the ongoing cycle of sharing and receiving information on social media platforms (Abbasi et al., 2022). User actions like liking and commenting on posts are commonly used behavioral measures of SME (Mele, Filieri, & De Carlo, 2021). SME plays a critical role in shaping travelers' perceptions of destinations and hospitality providers, making it essential for Destination Marketing Organizations (Filieri et al., 2021; Dijkmans, Kerkhof, & Beukeboom, 2015). Furthermore, actual behaviors such as visiting destinations or spreading word-of-mouth often correlate with higher engagement with social media content (Pino et al., 2021). Hence, likes, comments, and shares serve as indicators of audience appreciation and consideration of marketing content (Tamaki, 2023).

SME analytics are widely used to evaluate marketing effectiveness on social media. Despite extensive research on viral text-based content (Chintagunta, Gopinath, & Venkataraman, 2016; Tan, Lee, & Pang, 2018; Li & Xie, 2020), less attention has been given to how photographic content influences engagement (Blanco-Moreno et al., 2024). Research shows that both the message source and content impact engagement levels (Pino et al., 2021; de Vries et al., 2012). However, comprehensive understanding of photographic elements driving interaction remains limited, particularly in tourism contexts (Blanco-Moreno et al., 2024). This study aims to address this gap, focusing on Instagram in particular.

Platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram, with integrated short video features, are popular short video platforms globally, with TikTok boasting over one billion monthly active users (Mashiyane, 2024; Xin, Chen, & Liu, 2025). The rise of Web 2.0 social media has transformed retail and franchise systems by enabling rapid communication of text, images, and videos globally (Bilgihan, Seo, & Choi, 2021; Kumar, Pozza, & Ganesh, 2020). Social media word-of-mouth (WOM), especially when from credible sources like family or celebrities, influences brand reputation strongly (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). Franchisors use social media to communicate with customers and build relationships (Itani et al., 2020). Social media networks facilitate large-scale asynchronous consumer communication that transcends geographic boundaries, altering traditional WOM dynamics (Sashi, 2012; Sashi & Brynildsen, 2022).

Customer engagement, driven by social media and internet technologies, aims to enhance satisfaction and build strong relationships (Sashi et al., 2019). Defined as activating consumer interest within brand contexts (Advertising Research Foundation, 2010), engagement is a key franchisor goal to attract consumers and franchisees. It involves providing superior service, fostering trust, and encouraging customers to function as co-creators and WOM spreaders (Sashi, 2012). Engagement evolves over time, producing different customer types (fans, delighted customers, transactional customers, loyal customers) with varying emotional and interaction levels (Sashi, 2012). Fans are particularly valuable.

2.7 The Model of Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs)

Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs) function as both promotional and relational tools, enhancing companies' marketing strategies by fostering interactive online relationships between brands and customers (Ibrahim et al., 2025). Through both customer-to-customer and customer-to-brand interactions, SMMAs allow marketers to better understand their target audience (Zollo et al., 2024). In the context of the Korean fashion industry, Kim and Ko (2012) identified five core dimensions of SMMAs: word-of-mouth (WOM), trendiness, entertainment, engagement, and customization.

Engagement via social networking sites enables brands to establish lasting customer relationships, enhance brand awareness, and increase sales (Li et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2024; Zollo et al., 2024). These interactions include direct messaging, content sharing, and commenting, facilitating dynamic, two-way communication (Godey et al., 2016). Ibrahim et al. (2025) emphasize the role of interactive content in boosting audience engagement and brand loyalty. For instance, Instagram recipe videos that incorporate branded hashtags and invite user participation to exemplify this strategy (Kim & Ko, 2012).

Entertainment-focused content, such as videos, images, games, and animations, draws user attention by offering escapism and enjoyment—key motivators for social media usage (Fetais et al., 2023; Godey et al., 2016). Humor and amusement are deployed to evoke emotional responses, retain consumers, and build meaningful brand relationships (Ibrahim et al., 2025; Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023). Events like contests,

exclusive deals, and promotions also fall under the scope of entertainment-driven SMMAs (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023).

Customization in social media marketing involves analyzing user data—such as demographics, past behaviors, and online activity—to craft personalized offers and content (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023). For example, a fast-food brand might tailor birthday promotions on Instagram for specific customer segments (Ibrahim et al., 2025).

Trendiness is critical in attracting consumer attention through innovative and timely content. Trend-based material stimulates interaction and influences purchasing behavior (Fetais et al., 2023; Li et al., 2024; Ibrahim et al., 2025; Hazzam, 2024). Trend-driven content also enhances emotional and social brand connections by offering unique, identity-reinforcing experiences (Fu et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2022).

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has become a dominant marketing tool in the digital age. Consumers increasingly share their experiences online, thereby reinforcing brand engagement (Aljarah et al., 2022; Hazzam, 2024). Strategic use of eWOM—particularly when paired with incentives—can foster trust, loyalty, and vibrant consumer communities (Polat et al., 2023; Ibrahim & Belend, 2025).

2.8 Consumer Behavior on Social Media Platforms

As influencer marketing continues to gain traction in the digital space, research into this area becomes increasingly important. Consumers regularly encounter these marketing tactics due to their extended time spent online. Influencers, often producing content from their own homes, disseminate campaigns via social media, resulting in cost savings compared to traditional celebrity endorsements. Investigating how influence marketing can support eco-friendly practices and sustainable development is vital. Influencers possess a powerful capacity to influence behaviors such as encouraging environmentally friendly consumption and raising awareness about environmental issues. For instance, travel companies that engage in sustainability-focused influencer marketing tend to attract more travelers (Szakal et al., 2024, pp. 15–17).

On social networking platforms, users frequently share various forms of personal content, including text, videos, and photographs. To tailor marketing and

communication strategies effectively, businesses must understand the consumption habits of younger generations. Online, individuals often seek a sense of community by exchanging ideas, emotions, and experiences with like-minded peers. Social networks significantly influence consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and purchase behaviors. Organizations leverage demographic, geographic, and lifestyle information shared during registration to implement precise digital segmentation techniques, thereby enhancing marketing effectiveness (Szakal et al., 2024, pp. 18–22).

Behavioral patterns reflected in user reviews, personal experiences, and social connections across platforms shape online decision-making. As consumers seek visibility and community engagement, their choices are often driven by online comments, peer opinions, and review content. Millennials and Generation Z tend to rely heavily on mobile devices and digital platforms for shopping and information, whereas Generation X prefers computer-assisted in-store purchases and conducts more extensive product research. These behavioral differences underscore generational variance in consumer behavior (Szakal et al., 2024, pp. 23–27).

Promotional advertisements, Instagram product posts, and peer or influencer referrals often trigger impulsive buying behavior. Instagram, with its visually rich interface, enhances this tendency through features like product tagging. Users' enjoyment of the platform further accelerates decision-making. Social networks, by fostering social influence and reinforcing community interaction, play a pivotal role in such purchasing decisions—mirroring broader trends toward digital commerce (Szakal et al., 2024, pp. 28–34).

Statistics indicate that nearly half of consumers rely on influencer recommendations, with many basing purchasing decisions on social media suggestions. Beyond product promotion, influencers prompt dialogue and inspire audiences to share feedback with their networks. It is critical for companies to select trustworthy influencers, as research demonstrates their opinions significantly sway consumers—especially when choices involve related products (Szakal et al., 2024, pp. 35–37).

Influencers frequently share authentic product experiences and brand collaborations, shaping their followers' purchasing decisions. Followers often emulate influencers' style and purchasing behaviors, aspiring to resemble them. Consumer behavior encompasses actions related to acquiring, using, and disposing of goods and is

influenced by sociological, psychological, learning, and economic frameworks. Social media contributes to reduced perceived risk by offering valuable information and enabling electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which is often considered more persuasive than expert reviews. As consumers generally trust social networks more than corporate advertising, the volume and quality of online reviews substantially influence purchase decisions. Compared to traditional advertising, social media marketing is more appealing due to its timeliness, personalization, and interactivity. Importantly, social media influences consumers at multiple stages of the decision-making journey.

2.9 Brand Love and Brand Loyalty in the Context of Social Media

Brands, as fundamental components of marketing, have long attracted interest from both scholars and practitioners. Over time, literature has offered multiple conceptualizations of branding. Traditionally, a brand is defined as a "term, symbol, name, design, or any feature that classifies one seller's goods or services as distinct from those of others" (American Marketing Association, as cited in Keller, 2003). In this sense, brands serve as identifiers that differentiate a company's products from those of its competitors. Consequently, branding has evolved to become a more strategic element in marketing than the product itself, stimulating academic inquiry into what makes a brand effective.

Despite the growing interest, most branding research has focused on developed markets, with limited attention paid to emerging economies. Moreover, literature lacks replication studies—vital for validating findings—resulting in a fragmented understanding of branding phenomena (Nguyen, Barrett, & Miller, 2011).

To address this gap, Nguyen et al. (2011) examined factors influencing brand loyalty in two emerging markets—Vietnam and Thailand. Their research considered perceived quality, brand awareness, distribution channel strength, and attitudes toward advertising. Perceived quality, or a consumer's subjective evaluation of a brand's attributes, plays a key role: customers are more likely to repurchase and prioritize brands they perceive to be of superior quality.

However, brand familiarity precedes quality evaluation. Without awareness, consumers are unable to form quality assessments. Brand awareness introduces the product to consumers and can positively influence purchase decisions, especially in

low-involvement contexts. Familiarity also helps distinguish the brand from its competitors.

Affective connections between consumers and brands further influence brand loyalty critical concept in consumer behavior and marketing literature. Loyal customers are more resistant to competitors' marketing and often spread positive word-of-mouth, which contributes to greater market share and profitability (Møller Jensen & Hansen, 2006). As such, fostering brand loyalty should be a key strategic goal for marketers.

Nguyen et al. (2011) also emphasized a deterministic approach to brand loyalty, focusing on cognitive and emotional factors that influence repurchase intent. Unlike stochastic models that interpret repeat purchases as random, the deterministic model views loyalty as deliberate behavior shaped by specific antecedents.

Understanding consumer variety-seeking behavior is also important. True variety-seeking occurs when switching brands is driven by intrinsic motivations like novelty-seeking, rather than external influences such as price promotions. For instance, a consumer may try a new coffee flavor out of curiosity or boredom, behavior more likely when involvement is low or brand differentiation is minimal.

2.10 The Influence of Social Media Influencers

Social media influencers (SMIs) are highly active users who consistently share engaging content in niche domains such as fashion, lifestyle, or travel (Loeper et al., 2023). Through aesthetically pleasing and creative posts, they build large and loyal followings (De Veirman et al., 2017). Instagram has emerged as the dominant platform for influencer marketing (Zote, 2023). As digital opinion leaders, influencers subtly shape the opinions and behaviors of their followers (Dhanesh, 2017).

Followers often perceive influencer recommendations as authentic and trustworthy (Kaabachi et al., 2022), with more than 60% of consumers admitting they have made purchases based on influencer endorsements (Sharma, 2023). By providing glimpses into their daily lives and personalities, influences foster emotion.

2.11 Benefits and Drawbacks of Influencer Promotion

Influencer marketing is a distinct form of social media marketing in which individuals—commonly referred to as influencers—promote or discuss products based

on their perceived authority and established rapport with their followers (Ren, Zhou, & Liu, 2023). The effectiveness of this strategy lies in the trust and authenticity these influencers convey, allowing their endorsements to serve as powerful forms of social proof for potential consumers.

One of the primary advantages of influencer marketing is its digital reach and ability to disseminate content rapidly to a broad audience. It is also relatively cost-effective; for example, micro-influencers—those with smaller but highly engaged audiences—often yield higher engagement rates and generate more authentic connections than traditional celebrity endorsements, all at a fraction of the cost (Ren et al., 2023). Their perceived credibility and relatability allow them to influence consumer purchase decisions more persuasively.

However, influencer marketing is not without its limitations. One significant drawback is the risk associated with choosing an inappropriate influencer. If an influencer's persona or behavior conflicts with brand values, it can negatively affect the product's image and credibility. Furthermore, consumer responses to influencer promotions can be highly unpredictable. There is no guarantee that the target audience will respond positively to the recommendation, which introduces a degree of uncertainty into campaign outcomes (Ren et al., 2023).

Despite these challenges, influencer marketing remains a dynamic and expanding component of contemporary digital marketing strategies, especially in sectors such as retail, hospitality, and food services. As consumer trust continues to shift toward peer-generated content and personalized recommendations, influencer collaborations are likely to retain their strategic value.

2.12 The Impact of Social Media on Customer Relationship Management

The rise of new media has redefined traditional marketing, likened by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2010) to a pinball game, where brand messages are unpredictably redirected in the chaotic digital environment. This analogy remains apt during economic uncertainty, where customer retention becomes more critical than acquisition due to constrained marketing budgets.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)—designed to identify prospects, understand customer needs, and foster long-term relationships—has evolved into Social CRM (SCRM). Defined by Woodcock, Green, and Starkey (2011) as a strategic approach leveraging social media to build trust and loyalty, SCRM focuses on interactive, personalized communication often missing from traditional CRM.

SCRM's customer-centric orientation empowers users to engage with brands on their terms, promoting profitable interactions and long-term relationships (Woodcock et al., 2011). When executed effectively, SCRM can span the entire customer lifecycle, increase revenues, and reduce costs (Woodcock et al., 2011, pp. 52–55).

Although the core principles of CRM remain intact, their execution has changed. Kierzkowski et al. (1996) emphasize retention as the foundation of relationship-building. Chan and Guillet (2011) highlight the importance of compelling social media content, while Lee (2013) argues that sustained engagement cultivates long-term connections. Schneider (as cited in Lee, 2013) adds that marketing strategies must continually evolve to maintain consumer interest. Additionally, Murphy et al. (2003) demonstrate a strong link between superior service and profitability, reinforcing the value of CRM through social media.

Understanding customer preferences is the first step in relationship development. The hospitality industry once relied on comment cards; today, social media allows for richer, real-time customer insights (Stringam & Gerdes Jr., 2010). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) advise firms to identify the type of content that resonates with target audiences. O'Connor (2010) supports this, emphasizing social media as a source of actionable market intelligence.

SCRM also supports customer retention, helping firms target high-value consumers with personalized campaigns that reinforce loyalty (Woodcock et al., 2011, p. 56). Retention strategies must emphasize trust, engagement, and superior service, all of which enhance profitability (Murphy et al., 2003). Continuous engagement sustains these relationships (Kierzkowski et al., 1996; Lee, 2013).

Engagement is the final and most critical stage of CRM. Highly engaged customers are worth five to eight times more than average ones (Woodcock et al., 2011). Corporate blogs and branded communities on platforms like Facebook foster dialogue and customer bonding (Zhang et al., 2016; Lee, 2013). Experienced users often assist

others, building a sense of community and mutual value (Mathwick et al., 2008, as cited in Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010).

In the hospitality and tourism sectors, the internet is a vital channel for attracting and retaining clients (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Pan, MacLaurin, & Crotts, 2007). Jeong and Jeon (2008) argue that customer-generated content necessitates prompt responses and attention from firms. O'Connor (2010) urges hospitality businesses to embrace social media and user-generated content to maintain competitiveness.

2.13 Social Customers' Changing Role in Value Co-Creation

The digital age has dramatically redefined the role of customers in value creation. Previously, businesses created value through products and services for passive recipients. Now, socially connected consumers participate in value co-creation via platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TripAdvisor (Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012; Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012). These consumers not only share opinions with peers but also demand instant access to information (Ramkissoon, 2023).

Web 2.0 technologies have empowered users to move from passive consumption to active participation, giving rise to social commerce fusion of social media features and transactional activities. Defined as the use of social platforms for user interaction and content contribution throughout the buying process, social commerce is especially valuable in sectors like hospitality and tourism (Liang & Turban, 2011). As a result, social media has become integral to CRM and customer engagement strategies (Dewnarain, Ramkissoon, & Mavondo, 2019).

2.14 Brand Community

Relationship marketing emphasizes long-term relational exchanges over transactional interactions (Webster, 1992). However, scaling personalized relationships can be difficult. As a solution, companies increasingly rely on brand communities—groups of brand enthusiasts who connect to share ideas and experiences. These communities facilitate information sharing, brand storytelling, and peer support, all of which reinforce consumer–brand bonds and enhance loyalty (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) define a brand community as a "specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand" (p. 412). These communities enable the co-creation of meaning

and the exchange of emotional, cognitive, and material resources (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002).

Consumers engage in brand communities to fulfill identity-related needs. As Elliott and Wattanusuwan (1998) note, brands serve as symbolic representations of the individual's identity's wish to express or adopt. Brand imagery thus acts as a symbolic system for aspirational self-expression (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Schembri, Merrilees, & Kristiansen, 2010). Luxury brands like BMW and Ferrari exemplify this, with their brand associations often integrated into one's self-concept.

Brand communities also provide diverse viewpoints and experiential knowledge that foster trust and deepen loyalty (Szmigin & Reppel, 2004). According to Anderson and Von Hippel (2005), such communities allow companies to interact with customers, gather feedback, and drive innovation. Firms like Dell and Cisco have built ecosystems that incorporate customers and suppliers into feedback loops, while brand-centered events such as "brand-fests" enhance emotional bonding (McAlexander et al., 2002).

Schau, Muniz, and Arnould (2009) identified practices in brand communities that benefit both consumers and brands, reinforcing loyalty and satisfaction. These interactions generate social and hedonic value, often perceived as gifts, enhancing appreciation and increasing advocacy (Sherry, 1983).

While early brand communities were constrained by geography, digital platforms have eliminated this barrier. Today, social media and mobile technologies enable global participation in online brand communities (Kang et al., 2021).

2.15 Communities in Social Media and Brand Trust

Trust is a foundational element in consumer–brand relationships, especially in contexts characterized by information asymmetry (Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987). In such settings, consumers must rely on the credibility of brand messaging (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Social media–based brand communities (SMBBCs) can mitigate this asymmetry through increased transparency and interactive communication (Chiu, Huang, & Yen, 2010; Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003).

Two primary mechanisms contribute to trust-building in SMBBCs. The first is information dissemination. Social media platforms enable customers to share

experiences, reviews, and insights, fostering brand transparency and enhancing trust (Habibi, Laroche, & Richard, 2014).

The second mechanism is exposure and interaction. Continuous interactions—via posts, reviews, videos, and conversations—deepen emotional and cognitive ties between users and the brand. These engagements foster familiarity and strengthen relational bonds, encouraging trust (Holmes, 1991).

Repeated exposure to user-generated content and shared narratives further amplifies this trust. The social validation inherent in such interactions cultivates loyalty and strengthens the symbolic significance of brand affiliations within the community.

2.16 Emotional Attachment, Willingness to Pay Premium Prices, and Advocacy

Emotional attachment, defined as a strong affective bond between a consumer and a brand, is a key predictor of consumer behavior (Wu et al., 2021). Consumers who value sustainable or eco-friendly businesses are more likely to show loyalty and advocate for such brands (So et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2021). Advocacy, as described by Saki et al. (2023), represents a form of positive word-of-mouth shared by satisfied and loyal customers. In the restaurant industry, customers who prioritize sustainability often support their preferred businesses through repeated patronage and recommendations (Teng & Wu, 2019).

Moreover, consumers tend to make purchase decisions when they perceive functional, emotional, and social value in a brand (Martínez, 2020; Pérez et al., 2021). Emotional attachment correlates with consumer loyalty behaviors such as advocacy and the willingness to pay premium prices (So et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2021). According to social identity theory, individuals are more likely to engage in these behaviors when they identify with environmentally responsible or value-driven brands (Gonzalez-Rodríguez et al., 2020)

2.17 Typical Social Media Advice: Endorsing Unusual Food Content

Despite being a relatively new field, social media marketing research over the past decade has sought to guide marketers on how to promote engaging content. However, due to overwhelming volumes, e., over 65,000 photos uploaded every minute on

Instagram and an average of 1,500 unique posts seen per Facebook visit (Meta for Business, 2024; Statista, 2024)—standing out remains difficult. Prior research suggests that content must be entertaining, often defined as original, unusual, shocking, or extreme, to gain attention (Berger, 2013). Industry trends include using unique and unusual food visuals to attract attention and increase interaction. Studies show consumers are more likely to discuss novel items than common ones, reinforcing this approach (Berger & Iyengar, 2013; Berger & Schwartz, 2011; Moldovan et al., 2011). Similarly, news articles (Berger & Milkman, 2012) and unexpected urban stories (Heath et al., 2001) receive higher online sharing. Extreme personal narratives defying social norms also tend to be widely shared (Heath & DeVoe, 2013).

This preference for entertaining content is linked to impression management motives, where users interact with content to project positive impressions of themselves (Berger, 2013). Likes and comments function as word-of-mouth communication (Swani et al., 2014; De Vries et al., 2012), and because these interactions are visible, they enable users to express their identities openly (De Vries et al., 2012). Engaging with unusual content helps users appear interesting and fun, fulfilling self-enhancement goals (Berger, 2013). These findings imply that novel food photos should generate more interaction on restaurant Instagram pages as they break visual norms and are perceived as more interesting. However, much earlier research focuses on text-based social media or general WOM, and the impact of unusual food visuals on highly visual platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok remains underexplored (Philp, 2023).

2.18 Promoting Unusual Food Content on Social Media

Despite rapid advancements in social media marketing, it remains difficult for brands to stand out in crowded digital spaces. For example, Instagram users post over 65,000 photos per minute, while Facebook users may encounter about 1,500 unique posts per visit (Meta for Business, 2024; Statista, 2025).

As a result, research suggests that content must be *entertaining* to be effectively defined as original, surprising, or extreme (Berger, 2011). Within the food sector, industry trends show that unusual, visually striking imagery tends to capture attention and boost engagement. Consumers are more inclined to discuss novel products than typical ones (Berger & Iyengar, 2013; Berger & Schwartz, 2011; Moldovan et al.,

2011). Similarly, unique news stories and emotionally intense narratives are more likely to be shared.

2.19 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing broadly encompasses marketing efforts utilizing digital channels to reach audiences (Chaffey, 2019). It includes online platforms such as social media, websites, search engines, email, and mobile apps. Digital marketing enables precise targeting, personalized content, and real-time engagement, distinguishing it from traditional marketing (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). The rise of social media has made digital marketing an essential strategy for businesses to engage with consumers directly and foster brand communities (Singh et al., 2024). Digital marketing analytics tools also allow marketers to measure campaign performance and consumer behavior effectively (Almashaleh et al., 2025).

2.20 Digital Marketing and Circular Economy Communication

Digital marketing has emerged as a key instrument for promoting sustainable consumer behavior and increasing knowledge of the circular economy (CE). Digital platforms offer SMEs and microbusinesses an inexpensive way to reach large audiences while overcoming financial and geographic constraints (Mohammadian & Valilai, 2022). The accessibility of mobile technology has enabled companies to advertise their products online, cultivate clientele, and establish an online presence (Fitriani et al., 2023). In regions with high social media usage, the democratization of marketing tools is particularly significant as it allows businesses to deliver tailored content to specific audiences. According to Ronkainen (2022), Shrivastava et al. (2021), Shen (2022), Tsironis, and Tsagarakis (2023), social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn have evolved into strategic tools enabling deeper engagement beyond mere conversation. Consumer decision-making is further influenced by value-driven and emotional appeals on these platforms (Chamberlin & Boks, 2018).

Social media's widespread use has transformed how businesses gather market intelligence. Traditional surveys are gradually being replaced by real-time data analytics. Techniques such as text mining and natural language processing (NLP) are essential for analyzing large volumes of unstructured user-generated content (An &

Park, 2021; Cohen & Hunter, 2020). Furthermore, sentiment analysis and semantic network studies help businesses better understand public opinion and content relationships (Choi & Lee, 2022; Huang & Liu, 2023; Kim et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2022).

The role of social media in corporate communication about CE practices is highlighted in recent research. L'Abate et al. (2023) examined Twitter disclosures of 141 organizations and found that more profitable and leveraged businesses are more likely to share CE-related content. Similarly, Esposito et al. (2023) studied how European agri-food companies use Twitter to engage stakeholders in CE conversations. While companies often post about recycling and CE principles, most of the content is informational rather than interactive, indicating that the potential for social media to foster meaningful stakeholder engagement remains underutilized (Almashaleh et al., 2025).

2.21 Instagram Marketing

Instagram, a highly visual social media platform, has become a powerful marketing tool for businesses, especially in hospitality and food sectors (Yoo, 2024). Its features—such as stories, reels, IGTV, and shopping tags—allow brands to showcase products creatively and interact with consumers directly. Visual storytelling on Instagram enhances brand image and engagement by leveraging attractive images and videos (Hsiao & Lin, 2025). Influencer marketing on Instagram, where trusted figures promote products to their followers, is particularly effective in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors (Ibrahim et al., 2025). Marketers increasingly use Instagram to build brand communities, encourage user-generated content, and foster customer loyalty (Blanco-Moreno et al., 2024; Xin & Liu, 2025).

2.22 Bibliometrics in Tourism and Hospitality

Marketing (Samiee & Chabowski, 2012), advertising (Kim & McMillan, 2008), sales management (Johnson, 2006), accounting (Zhong et al., 2016), strategic management (Vogel & Güttel, 2013), and supply chain management (Asgari et al., 2016) are just a few of the business disciplines where bibliometric analysis has been widely used in literature reviews. Palmer et al. (2005) were the first in the hospitality and tourist industry to review statistical methodologies in tourism research using keyword

analysis. But until recently, bibliometric techniques, in particular, co-citation analysis, were not frequently used.

Using a 15-year co-citation analysis, Benckendorff and Zehrer (2013) investigated the transdisciplinary organization and epistemology of tourism research. Similarly, by examining every article published in the International Journal of Hospitality Management between 2008 and 2014, García-Lillo et al. (2016) looked into the intellectual framework of hospitality management research. Yuan et al. (2016) used citation analysis to investigate knowledge bases and flows in six prestigious journals related to hospitality and tourism, offering insights into the structure of the field.

Bibliometric techniques have been used by other academics to investigate particular areas of hospitality and tourism. Chuang et al. (2014) employed main route analysis to determine development trajectories in medical tourism, whereas Yankholmes (2014) evaluated the contributions of African scholars over a two-decade period using co-citation analysis. Figueroa-Domecq et al. (2015) used co-citation analysis to examine 28 years of research on gender-aware tourism. Cheng (2016) used co-citation analysis to highlight major topics in sharing economic research from 2010 to 2015, whereas Gomezelj (2016) carried out a comprehensive assessment on innovation in hospitality and tourism.

It is necessary to update earlier studies, look at theoretical underpinnings, monitor topic progression, and suggest future research possibilities due to the quick expansion of social media research in the hospitality and tourism industry (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Scholars in the domains of business and hospitality/tourism can benefit from comparative and quantitative assessments of these journals. Combining co-citation with co-word analysis improves the capacity to capture both intellectual structure and thematic dynamics, as proposed by Braam et al. (1991a, 1991b).

For instance, Leung et al. (2017) conducted a bibliometric study of social media research in hospitality and tourism, using data from the Web of Science Social Sciences Citation Index. They selected 16 journals (eight business and eight hospitality/tourism) and applied 28 social media–related keywords, such as “social media,” “SNS,” “Web 2.0,” “eWOM,” “TripAdvisor,” “Facebook,” “Twitter,” and “Instagram.” The analysis, covering 2007–2016, identified 406 relevant articles and

compared publication trends between business and hospitality/tourism journals, highlighting the rapid growth of this research area.

For example, Leung et al. (2017) used information from the Web of Science Social Sciences Citation Index to perform a bibliometric analysis of social media research in the hospitality and tourist industry. Eight business and eight hospitality/tourism magazines were chosen, and twenty-eight keywords relating to social media were used, including "social media," "SNS," "Web 2.0," "eWOM," "TripAdvisor," "Facebook," "Twitter," and "Instagram." The study, which covered the years 2007–2016, found 406 pertinent papers and contrasted the publication patterns of business and hospitality/tourism journals, demonstrating the field's explosive expansion.

2.23 Uses and Extent of Bibliometric Analysis

The quantitative analysis of bibliographic materials is known as bibliometrics (Broadus, 1987). Podsakoff et al. (2008), Cancino et al. (2017), Fagerberg et al. (2012), Landström et al. (2012), business-to-business marketing (Valenzuela-Fernández et al., 2019), technology and innovation management (Sarin et al., 2018a), international marketing (Samiee & Chabowski, 2012), and management have all used these techniques over the years. Bibliometric studies also look at publications by authors (Coupe, 2003), institutions, countries, and regions (Bonilla et al., 2015; Merigo et al., 2016).

Bibliometrics frequently incorporates mapping techniques to show patterns in addition to quantitative evaluation (Cobo et al., 2011; Small, 1999). Leading research trends, highly cited papers, prolific authors, institutions, and nations can all be found with the aid of journal-level studies. The following are a few examples: the European Journal of Marketing (Martínez-López et al., 2018); the Journal of Industrial Marketing Management (Di Benedetto et al., 2018; Martínez-López et al., 2020); the Journal of Business Research (Donthu et al., 2020; Merigó et al., 2015a); the Journal of Knowledge Management (Gaviria-Marín et al., 2018); the Journal of Product Innovation Management (Biemans et al., 2010; Sarin et al., 2018b); the Journal of Strategic Marketing (Brown et al., 2018); and Technovation (García-Merino et al., 2006; Thongpapanl, 2012).

Bibliometric calculations include citation counts, publication counts by author, institution, or country, keyword occurrence or co-occurrence, and co-authorship networks (Mas-Tur et al., 2021).

Citation counts, publication counts by author, institution, or nation, keyword occurrence or co-occurrence, and co-authorship networks are all included in bibliometric computations (Mas-Tur et al., 2021).

2.24 Bibliometric Evaluation of Tourism and Hospitality

Pritchard (1969) coined the word "bibliometrics" and defined it as the use of statistical and mathematical methods to analyze books and other types of communication. There are two main approaches: science mapping, which graphically depicts the intellectual, theoretical, or social structure and development of research, and performance analysis, which evaluates scientific effect using measures like citations (Montero-Díaz et al., 2018).

Bibliometric techniques have been used in consumer behavior (Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2012), integrated marketing communications (Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2015), financial marketing (Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2013), and management information systems (Culnan, 1986). Bibliometrics has developed in tandem with the tourism industry (Hall, 1991). Studies in the Science Web category of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism from 2000 to 2018.

There is still little research on eateries. DiPietro (2017) did not use bibliometric analysis; instead, he employed qualitative methods to find trends. In their analysis of 462 works on food and gastronomy in hospitality, Okumus et al. (2018b) shown that gastronomy gained prominence after 2000. A focused study spanning the past 20 years is beneficial because to the paucity of bibliometric research on restaurants (Rodríguez-López et al., 2020).

2.25 Service Marketing and Innovation in the Restaurant Sector

Continuous innovation in goods and services is a strategic differentiator in the commercial process of tourism, which is provided to tourists during short-term visits. With 1.5 billion foreign visitors in 2019, a 4% rise from the previous year, tourism developed dramatically between 2009 and 2019. It also generated USD 1.5 trillion in exports and almost 10% of all jobs worldwide (World Tourism Organization, 2019).

Innovation and service quality are essential components of competitiveness. To assess visitor views, decision-making necessitates both scholarly and practical viewpoints (Vajčnerová et al., 2014; Sukiman et al., 2013). The company's service delivery, customer happiness with the service process, and strategic methods to accomplish organizational objectives all affect customer satisfaction in the tourist industry (Alegre & Garau, 2011; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Huang & Hsu, 2010; Kumar, 2018; Prayag, 2009).

Customer expectations have increased due to the increased reliance on restaurants brought about by globalization and changes in lifestyle (Bulut & Karabulut, 2018). A major contributor to employment and economic activity associated with tourism is the restaurant industry, which is a subset of the tertiary economic sector (Huaripata Linares, 2017).

Since they involve new products, strategic planning, and market integration, innovation and marketing are intrinsically intertwined (Heo, 2016; Moreno & Tejada, 2019; Martínez & Padilla, 2020; Najib et al., 2020). Competitive advantage is maintained when service procedures are in line with client expectations (Namkung & Jang, 2007; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2018). Products, services, and organizational models gain value from innovation, which makes it possible to adjust to industry, social, and economic difficulties (Burgos & Rojo, 2018).

According to Monroy and Urcádiz (2019), service marketing is the adaptation of traditional marketing to experiential, intangible services. Profitability, loyalty, and operational efficiency are all enhanced by customer relationship management (Garrido & Padilla, 2011; Lambert, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2007). Customer satisfaction and service delivery are further improved by strategic, customer-focused approaches (Cárcamo et al., 2021; Plakoyiannaki & Saren, 2006; Praditya, 2020; Putra et al., 2021). Including the traditional elements of empathy, dependability, assurance, and responsiveness as well as experiential and emotional components, service quality influences customer satisfaction and loyalty (Abomaleh & Zahari, 2014; Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown, 2019; Gallarza et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2015; Mahmud & Wolok, 2020; Nghiêm-Phú, 2017).

Examining innovation and service marketing in restaurants as a central idea in business and tourism literature is the primary goal of this study (Monroy Ceseña, 2022).

2.26 Co-citation analysis and bibliometric research

Co-citation analysis creates "core" clusters that reflect the intellectual structure of a topic by methodically indexing research papers that are cited together. These linkages are visualized by multidimensional scaling, which offers quantitative insight into the conceptual development and progression of research topics (Garfield, 1993; Gmür, 2003; Pilkington & Meredith, 2009).

In the dynamic field of hospitality research, food and culinary tourism include marketing tactics, the quality of the visitor experience, and the intention to return (Okumus & Cetin, 2018; UNWTO, 2019). Cooking trends, street food, eating habits, the restaurant industry, vegetarianism, and food choices based on religion have all been studied (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hall & Sharples, 2003; Henderson, 2016; Jayawardena et al., 2013; Jones & Jenkins, 2002; Josiam & Monteiro, 2004; Long, 2010; Sims, 2009; Son & Xu, 2013). The role of gastronomy in destination identity, marketing, sustainable tourism, and policy initiatives has also been studied (Lin et al., 2011; Du Rand et al., 2003; Okumus et al., 2018; Boyne et al., 2003)..

In order to map culinary tourism research, identify emerging themes, and highlight future directions, Okumus et al. (2021) give a systematic bibliometric analysis utilizing co-citation and network approaches. This demonstrates the interdisciplinary character of culinary tourism across tourism, hospitality, marketing, and cultural studies.

2.27 Using Geospatial Bibliometrics to Visualize the Production of Knowledge Worldwide

An open-source Python framework called GeoBM was created by Fu et al. (2025) to visualize scientific collaboration and production worldwide. Compliant with Bibliometric R outputs, GeoBM analyzes bibliometric data from Dimensions, Web of Science, and Scopus.

Data preparation and harmonization, geographical representation of publication volumes, modeling bilateral collaboration, and network visualization in two and three

dimensions are the four steps of the procedure. To provide scalability and reproducibility, the pipeline makes use of Python tools like pandas, geoplanids, cartopy, matplotlib, and portly.

Using ISO 3166-1 alpha-3 identifiers, country-level publishing counts are geocoded and connected with geopolitical borders. Co-authorship networks show patterns of collaboration, while global choropleth maps show the output of publications. Network-choropleth composites show both less productive but internationally connected "bridge" states and productive but isolated countries. For trans-hemispheric cooperation, 3D globe renderings reduce distortion. Policymakers, administrators, and academics can get GeoBM through GitHub and Google Collab, which combines bibliometrics with geospatial visualization.

2.28 Co-Word Analysis and Research Theme Strategic Mapping

Co-word analysis finds, explains, and illustrates how keywords interact in a field of study (Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2015; Del Barrio-García et al., 2020). It calculates how frequently keywords appear together in different documents. Thematic prominence is depicted in strategic diagrams using programs such as SciMAT (Cobo et al., 2012).

Density and centrality are used to divide diagrams into quadrants. Whereas centrality gauges network interaction, density represents the internal strength of keyword networks. "Motor themes" are high-density, high-centrality themes that reflect well-developed, significant subjects. Themes with low centrality and low density are either growing or diminishing. Low-density, high-centrality themes are fundamental subjects that connect various fields of knowledge, whereas high-density, low-centrality themes are internally powerful but separated.

3. CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology and Data Collection

Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus, two significant academic databases that are well-known for their extensive coverage of top-notch publications in management, business, and hospitality research, provided the bibliographic data for this study. Both databases were searched using the phrase "SOCIAL AND MEDIA AND RESTAURANT." The time frame for this study's bibliometric analysis is 2010 until May 2025. 2010 was selected as the beginning year because it represents a dramatic change in the way social media started to impact the restaurant sector. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter became widely used at this time, giving restaurants additional resources for consumer interaction, marketing, and brand development. To incorporate the most recent research results available at the time of data collection, the study is extended until May 2025. This guarantees that the analysis includes new trends like digital food delivery apps, influencer marketing, and short-form video platforms. By including 2025, the bibliometric dataset is brought into sync with the current research timetable and offers a thorough and comprehensive perspective of the area. Only papers in the management or business categories were included in the search for WOS, and the citation topics were restricted to photography, digital media influence, and micro consumer behavior. Scopus was filtered to only contain English-language articles, with the subject area restricted to business, management, and accounting, and the keywords restricted to social media, restaurants, marketing, Twitter, and Facebook 148 records from WOS and 148 from Scopus were found in the first search. The Bibliometric package in RStudio version 2025.05, an open-source program made for thorough bibliometric analysis, was used to process the records after they were exported in BibTeX format (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Both descriptive and relational analyses were made possible by the comprehensive

information included in the imported files, which included author names, affiliations, publication years, document types, keywords, abstracts, citation counts, and author addresses. Science mapping, which investigates the intellectual and conceptual structure of the field through co-citation, keyword co-occurrence, and co-authorship analyses, and performance analysis, which looks at research output and impact in terms of publications and citations (Donthu et al., 2021), were the two types of bibliometric techniques used. The Smart Local Moving (SLM) method was used to find clusters (Leung et al., 2017; Kim & So, 2022). This study enabled a thorough, transparent, and repeatable investigation of the trends, thematic evolution, and intellectual underpinnings of social media research connected to restaurants by merging two complementary databases and using Bibliometrics' systematic methodology.

3.2 The significance of the research

This study uses a thorough bibliometric examination of academic papers from 2010 to 2025 to examine the effects of social media on the restaurant sector. The study finds important trends, prominent writers, significant topic areas, and the development of scholarly interest in social media's function in the restaurant industry by analyzing data from the Web of Science and Scopus databases. The results offer a starting point for comprehending how social media has influenced the industry's expansion and change during the previous 15 years.

4. CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1.1 Annual scientific production

An analysis of yearly scientific production from 2010 to 2025 was done in order to gain a better understanding of how academic attention has changed regarding social media and restaurants. The numbers below show how many articles are published each year.

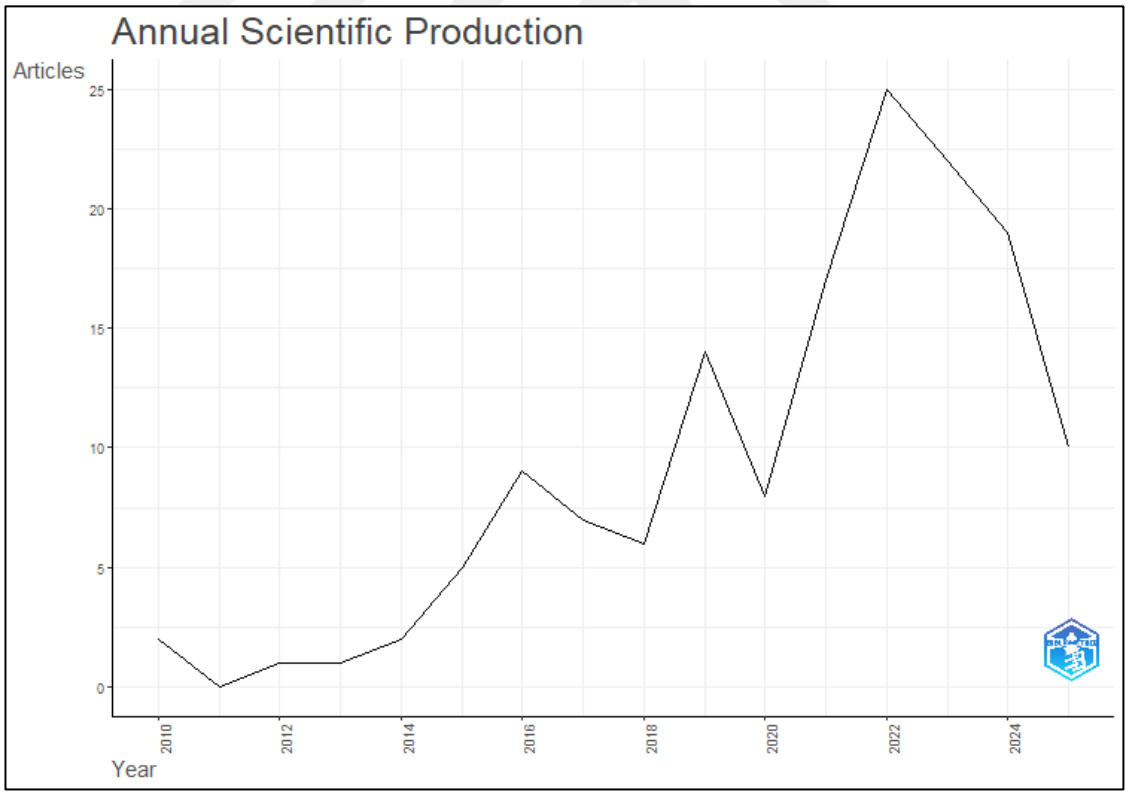

Figure 1. Annual scientific production (2010-2025) from WOS

Between 2010 and 2025, there is a noticeable difference in the yearly research output on social media and the restaurant business. With just two publications in 2010 and

very little production in the years that followed, research activity started out slowly. Around 2015, a steady rise became apparent, indicating a greater understanding of the function of digital platforms in hotel and restaurant management. In 2022, when the COVID-19 pandemic increased reliance on online engagement and digital marketing became a vital survival strategy for many eateries, scholarly interest peaked with 25 papers. This increase highlights how the industry has responded to crisis situations, especially how chain restaurants have been able to take advantage of creative resources and pre-existing digital infrastructures (Fainshtein, Chkoniya, Serova, & Vorobyev, 2023).There was a minor fall in research output after the peak, with 22 publications published in 2023 and 19 in 2024. Ten articles are included in the 2025 partial data (up to May), which could be a result of the annual dataset's incompleteness or a persistent declining trend. All things considered, the trajectory shows how the research landscape is changing and emphasizes how social media is becoming more and more important in determining restaurant business plans.

Figure 2 below shows how many articles are published each year on Scopus.

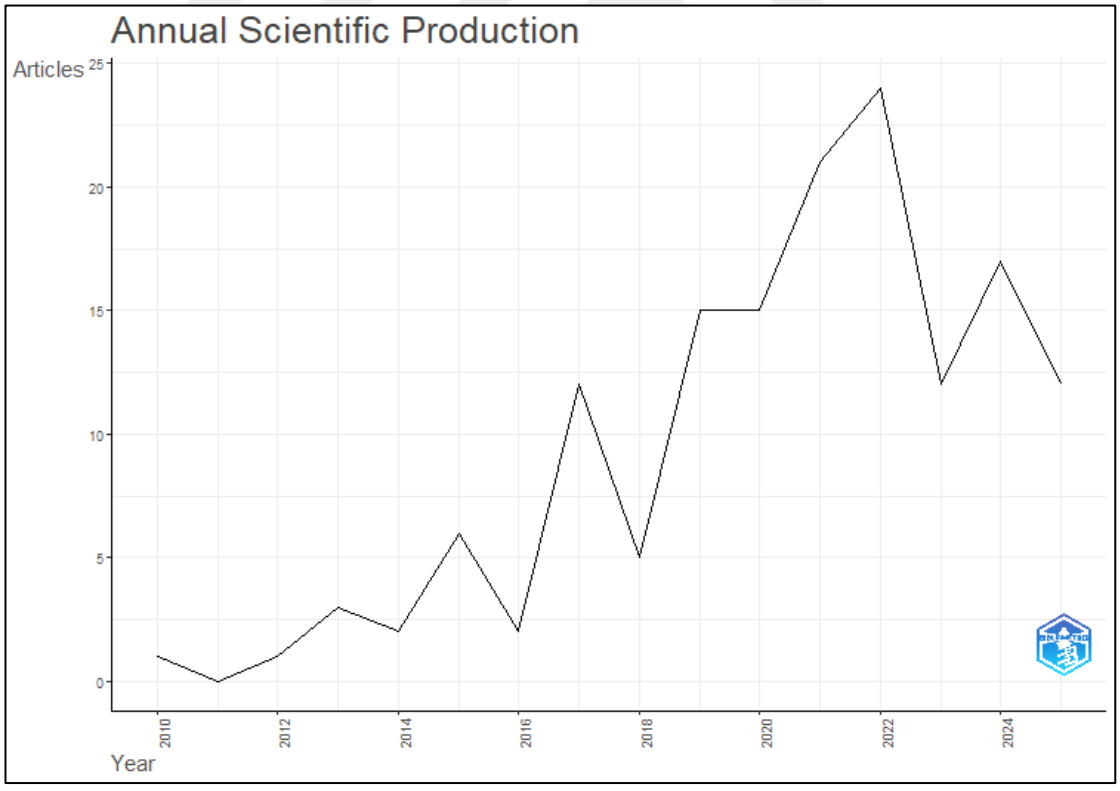

Figure 2. Annual scientific production (2010-2025) from Scopus

Research on social media and the restaurant sector has evolved dynamically, according to an examination of annual scientific production from 2010 to 2025 based on the Scopus dataset. Only one or two articles were published each year during the early

years (2010–2014). But starting in 2015, there was a noticeable uptick, reaching a peak of 24 publications in 2022. This increase parallels the quick uptake of digital marketing tactics and the increased dependence on social media during the COVID-19 epidemic, when companies encountered hitherto unseen difficulties.The food and beverage industry was severely impacted by the pandemic, which resulted in lower sales and compelled business actors to implement creative survival tactics (Putri & Sanica, 2022). Despite a drop in publications in 2023, research activity has since leveled off, suggesting that even while the discipline may be maturing, it is still a pertinent and developing area of scholarly study.

4.1.2 Most cited articles

Citation information for the years 2010–2025 was taken from the Web of Science (WOS) database to determine the most significant contributions in the discipline. The top 10 most mentioned documents are highlighted in the analysis.

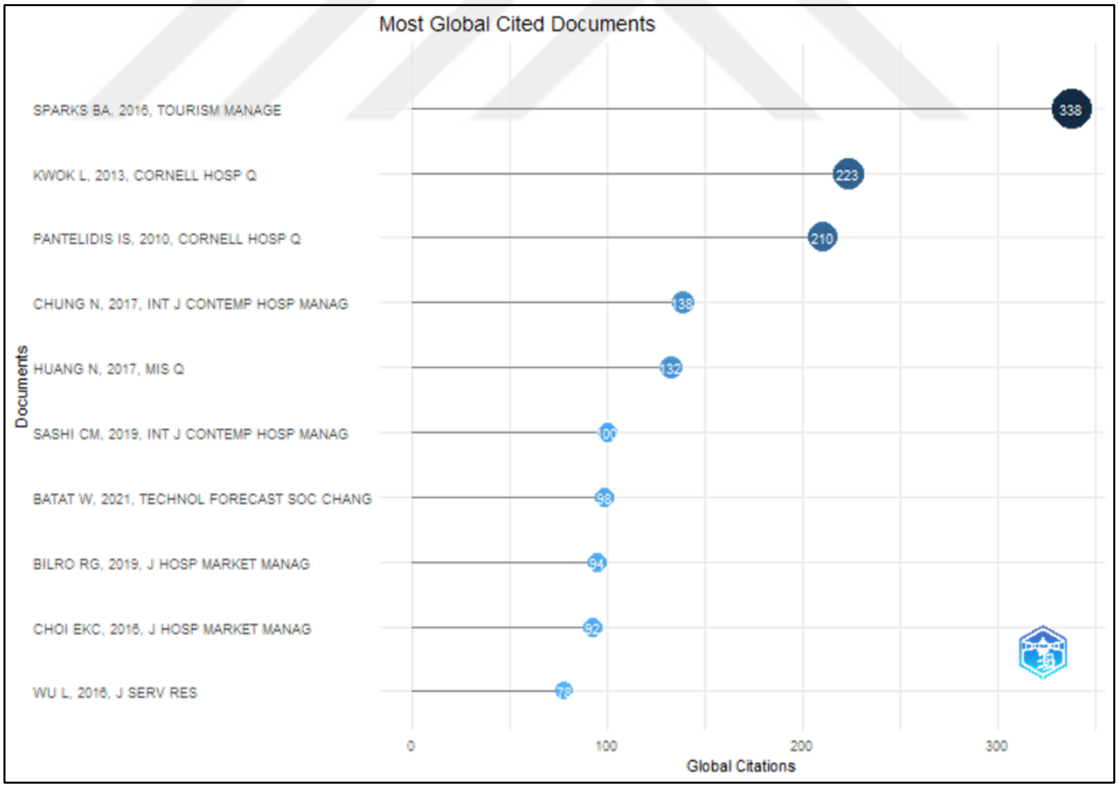

Figure 3. Most cited documents from WOS

The dataset's most widely cited papers, which serve as the theoretical underpinnings of studies on social media and the restaurant sector, are shown in Figure 3. According

to the analysis, early work mostly focused on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and online evaluations before progressively moving toward consumer involvement and, more recently, technology integration and digital innovation. When taken as a whole, these studies show how the field has changed from early investigations of internet reviews to more recent topics of customer interaction and creative customer service.

Table 1 provides further detail on the most influential documents, listing their citation counts and focus areas. The most cited work is Sparks (2016) in Tourism Management (338 citations), which examines hotel responses to negative online reviews and their implications for consumer perceptions. This is followed by Kwok (2013) in Cornell Hospitality Quarterly (223 citations) and Pantelidis (2010) in the same journal (210 citations), both addressing online consumer engagement in restaurant contexts. Other notable contributions include Chung (2017) in the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (138 citations) and Huang (2017) in MIS Quarterly (132 citations), which expand the discussion to consumer behavior and information systems. More recent works, such as Sashi (2019) (100 citations), Batat (2021) in Technological Forecasting and Social Change (98 citations), and Bilro (2019) in the Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management (94 citations), emphasize themes of digital innovation, augmented reality, and social commerce.

Table 1: Highly cited articles from WOS

No	Authors	Title	Year	No. of Citation
1	SPARKS BA, 2016, TOURISM MANAGE	Responding to negative online reviews: The effects of hotel responses on customer inferences of trust and concern	2016	338
2	KWOK L, 2013, CORNELL HOSP Q	Spreading Social Media Messages on Facebook an Analysis of Restaurant Business-to-Consumer Communications	2013	223

3	PANTELIDIS IS, 2010, CORNELL HOSP Q	Electronic Meal Experience: A Content Analysis of Online Restaurant Comments	2010	210
4	CHUNG N, 2017, INT J CONTEMP HOSP MANAG	Consumers' impulsive buying behavior of restaurant products in social commerce	2017	138
5	HUANG N, 2017, MIS Q	Social Network Integration and User Content Generation: Evidence from Natural Experiments	2017	132
6	SASHI CM, 2019, INT J CONTEMP HOSP MANAG	Social media, customer engagement, and advocacy: An empirical investigation using Twitter data for quick service restaurants	2019	100
7	BATAT W, 2021, TECHNOL FORECAST SOC CHANG	What an augmented reality (AR) is transforming the restaurant sector: Investigating the impact of "Le Petit Chef" on customers' dining experiences	2021	98
8	BILRO RG, 2019, J HOSP MARKET MANAG	Exploring online customer engagement with hospitality products and its relationship with involvement, emotional states, experience and brand advocacy	2019	94
9	CHOI EKC, 2016, J HOSP MARKET MANAG	Social Media Marketing: Applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory in the Hotel Industry	2016	92

10	WU L, 2016, J SERV RES	The Impact of Power on Service Customers Willingness to Post Online Reviews	2016	78

Utilizing the Scopus database, a comparable citation analysis was carried out.

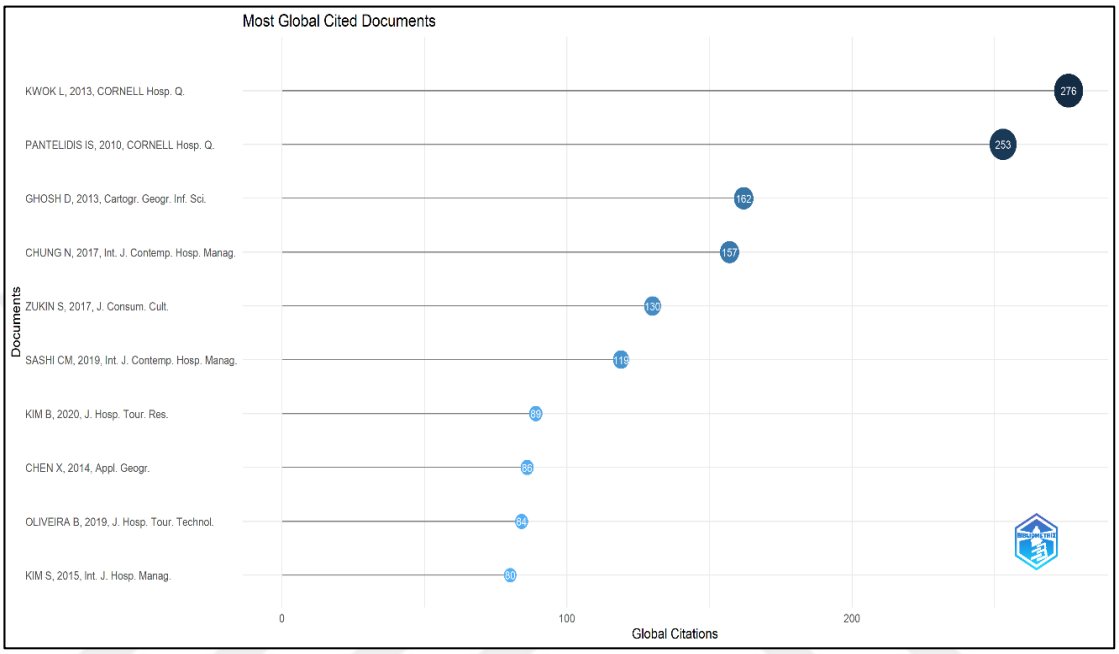

Figure 4. Most cited documents from Scopus

The citation analysis highlights the most influential contributions to the field of social media and restaurant research. Early highly cited works, such as Kwok (2013), which examined how restaurants disseminate messages through Facebook (280 citations), and Pantelidis (2010), which analyzed customer reviews and online restaurant comments (258 citations), provided the foundational descriptive insights that shaped this area of study. More recent research, such as Chung (2017) on impulsive buying behavior in social commerce (159 citations), Sashi (2019) on customer engagement via Twitter (121 citations), and Kim (2020) on flow and engagement in restaurant-related social media use (89 citations), reflects the field's shift toward examining engagement, behavioral outcomes, and business performance The top-cited papers from Scopus are listed in Table 2 along with citation counts, publication years, titles, and author information to give further context. The wider societal relevance of this research stream is demonstrated by the noteworthy fact that certain highly cited papers go beyond restaurant-specific contexts, such as Zukin (2017) on gentrification through

online reviews and Ghosh (2013) on obesity-related Twitter chats. When combined, these trends show that the field has progressed from descriptive evaluations of digital presence to more in-depth investigations of the strategic and behavioral effects of social media in the restaurant industry.

Table 2. Highly cited articles from Scopus

No	Authors	Title	Year	No. of Citation
1	KWOK L, 2013, CORNELL HOSP Q	Spreading Social Media Messages on Facebook an Analysis of Restaurant Business-to-Consumer Communications	2013	280
2	PANTELIDIS IS, 2010, CORNELL HOSP Q	Electronic Meal Experience: A Content Analysis of Online Restaurant Comments	2010	258
3	GHOSH D, 2013, CARTOGR GEOGR INF SCI	What are we 'tweeting' about obesity? Mapping tweets with Topic Modeling and Geographic Information System	2013	164
4	CHUNG N, 2017, INT J CONTEMP HOSP MANAGE	Consumers' impulsive buying behavior of restaurant products in social commerce	2017	159
5	ZUKIN S, 2017, J CONSUM CULT	The omnivore's neighborhood? Online restaurant reviews, race, and gentrification	2017	133
6	SASHI CM, 2019, INT J CONTEMP HOSP MANAGE	Social media, customer engagement and advocacy: An empirical investigation using Twitter data for quick service restaurants.	2019	121

7	KIM B, 2020, J HOSP TOUR RES	Online Engagement Among Restaurant Customers: The Importance of Enhancing Flow for Social Media Users	2020	89
8	CHEN X, 2014, APPL GEOGR	Does food environment influence food choices? A geographical analysis through “tweets”	2014	87
9	OLIVEIRA B, 2019, J HOSP TOUR TECHNOL	The importance of user-generated photos in restaurant selection	2019	84
10	KIM S, 2015, INT J HOSP MANAGE	Effects of social media on firm value for U.S. restaurant companies	2015	81

4.1.3 Most cited authors

Based on the quantity of published papers and total citations (TC), Figure 5 lists the top 10 most relevant authors from 2010 to 2025.

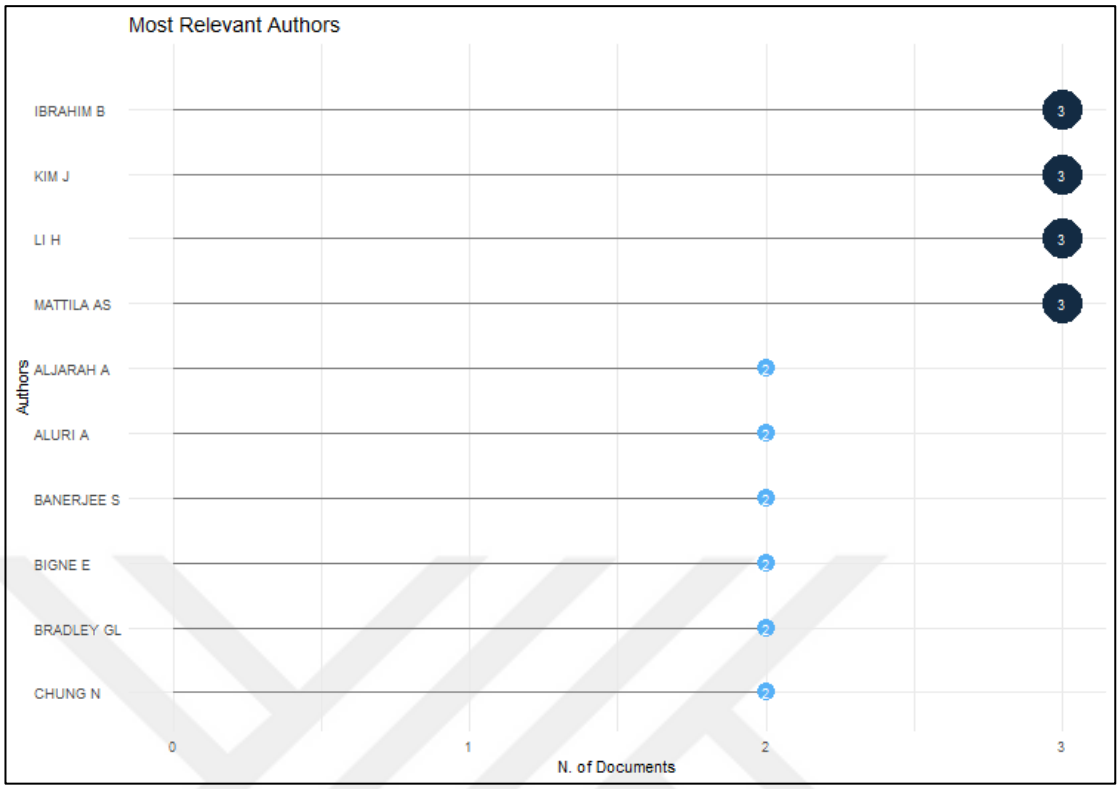

Figure 5. Most Relevant Authors from WOS

The most productive writers who contributed to the literature on social media and the restaurant industry between 2010 and 2025 are shown in Figure 5. The dataset's largest production came from four scholars: Mattila A. S., Li H., Kim J., and Ibrahim B. Each of them wrote three publications. Fractional authorship offers a more nuanced viewpoint because credit is distributed among co-authors rather than given equally to each publication. For instance, Ibrahim B.'s fractionalized score (1.70) suggests a relatively bigger individual contribution even if both he and Li H. produced three publications. By considering co-authorship dynamics, this method enables a more equitable assessment of scholarly work (Esener & Tasdelen, 2025).

Table 3 provides further insights by comparing productivity with citation impact. Although Mattila A. S., Li H., Kim J., and Ibrahim B. each contributed three articles, their influence varies significantly. Mattila A. S. (164 citations) and Kim J. (138 citations) stand out as particularly influential, while Li H. (62 citations) and Ibrahim B. (39 citations) received comparatively fewer citations. Moreover, some authors with fewer publications achieved notable prominence. For instance, Chung N. (190 citations) and Aluri A. (110 citations) reached high impact despite limited output, and Bradley G. L. received 352 citations from only two studies. These results suggest that

citation influence and academic production are not always related because some researchers have a greater impact on the field with fewer but more significant contributions.

Table3. List of the highly cited authors from the WOS

No	Authors	Total citations (TC)	No. of articles
1	IBRAHIM B	39	3
2	KIM J	138	3
3	LI H	62	3
4	MATTILA AS	164	3
5	ALJARAH A	35	2
6	ALURI A	110	2
7	BANERJEE S	4	2
8	BIGNE E	68	2
9	BRADLEY GL	352	2
10	CHUNG N	190	2

To guarantee thorough coverage, a similar analysis was carried out using the Scopus database. Based on the number of articles and total citations from 2010 to 2025, Figure 6 shows the most relevant authors.

Figure 6. Most Relevant Authors from Scopus

Several noteworthy trends in the literature on social media and the restaurant industry are revealed by analyzing author productivity and influence (Figure 6).The two routes to academic influence are highlighted by the fact that a small number of scholars have influenced the area by either consistent productivity or highly cited contributions. For further in-depth information, see Table 4, which lists the most cited authors by Scopus along with the number of articles and citations they have received. The two most prolific authors, Suttikun C. and Mahasuweerachai P., both have 20 citations and four publications. On the other hand, although having fewer publications, Bilgihan A. (2 articles, 187 citations) and Brynildsen G. (2 papers, 136 citations) are notable as highly important scholars. In a similar vein, Zhang L., with three papers and 86 citations, demonstrates a balance between productivity and influence, while Dogru T. and Gopal A. exhibit high citation counts in relation to restricted output. These findings imply that impact and productivity are not always related, since some academics make a substantial impact with fewer but highly cited works, while others contribute with more publications. The Scopus database is used to determine citation counts, and fractional counting, which takes into consideration the relative author contributions in co-authored publications, is used to gauge link strength (Peng et al., 2024). All things

considered, these results demonstrate how a small number of significant academics, especially Bilgihan and Brynildsen, helped to build the theoretical underpinnings of this field (Table 4)

Table 4. Authors' production over time from Scopus

No	Authors	Total citations (TC)	No. of articles
1	LEE H	196	2
2	BILGIHAN A	182	2
3	BRYNILDSEN G	134	2
4	KIM E	112	2
5	LEPKOWSKA-WHITE E	56	2
6	HANKS L	40	2
7	DOGRUT T	40	2
8	LUL	30	2
9	LWU CG	30	2
10	BANERJEE S	4	2

4.1.4 Most relevant sources

According to the Web of Science database, the 10 most popular journals for social media and restaurant research are shown in Figure 7 and Table 5.

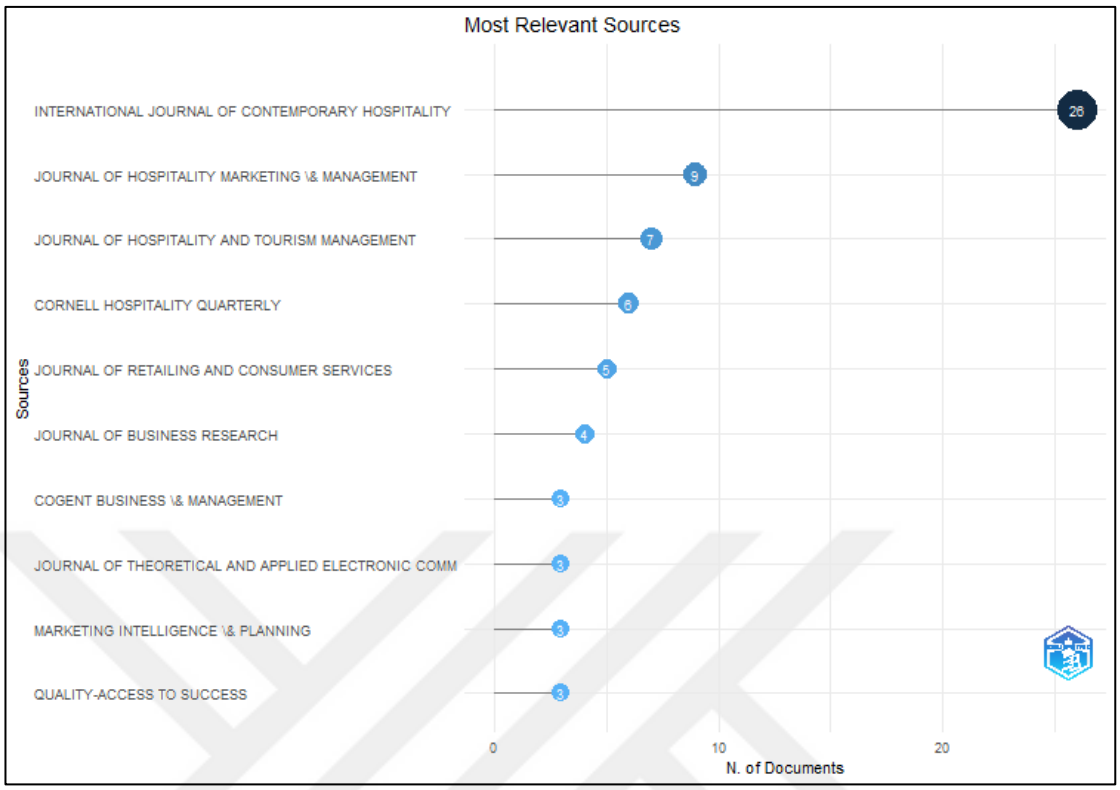

Figure 7: Most relevant sources from WOS

As seen in Figure 7, there is a significant concentration of research on social media in the restaurant and hotel sectors in a small number of academic journals. This concentration shows that, although it also receives input from commercial and consumer research sources, the discipline is largely based on scholarship that focuses on hospitality.

Table 5 provides further details on the most influential source titles. The International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management is the leading outlet, with 26 relevant publications, nearly three times as many as the next most frequent journal. This dominance reflects the journal's central role in shaping research on social media in hospitality and restaurant contexts. The disciplinary importance of hospitality is further reinforced by the Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management (9 articles) and the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (7 articles). Cross-disciplinary involvement is evident in journals such as Cornell Hospitality Quarterly (6 articles), Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services (5 articles), and Journal of Business Research (4 articles). Additional contributions from outlets including Cogent Business & Management, Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce

Research, Marketing Intelligence & Planning, and Quality – Access to Success (each with three articles) highlight the relevance of e-commerce, marketing analytics, and management perspectives. Overall, the distribution of publications shows that hospitality journals dominate the scholarly conversation, while also pointing to opportunities for expanding research across more varied academic platforms (Esener & Tasdelen, 2025).

Table5. Top ten most prolific journals from WOS

No.	Source title	No. of publication	Percentage
1	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT	26	37.68
2	JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY MARKETING\& MANAGEMENT	9	13.04
3	JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT	7	10.14
4	CORNELL HOSPITALITY QUARTERLY	6	8.69
5	JOURNAL OF RETAILING AND CONSUMER SERVICES	5	7.24
6	JOURNAL OF BUSINESS RESEARCH	4	5.79
7	COGENT BUSINESS \& MANAGEMENT	3	4.35
8	JOURNAL OF THEORETICAL AND APPLIED ELECTRONIC COMMERCE RESEARCH	3	4.35
9	MARKETING INTELLIGENCE\& PLANNING	3	4.35
10	QUALITY-ACCESS TO SUCCESS	3	4.35
	Grand Total	69	

A different viewpoint is offered by the Scopus database. As seen in Table 6 and Figure 8

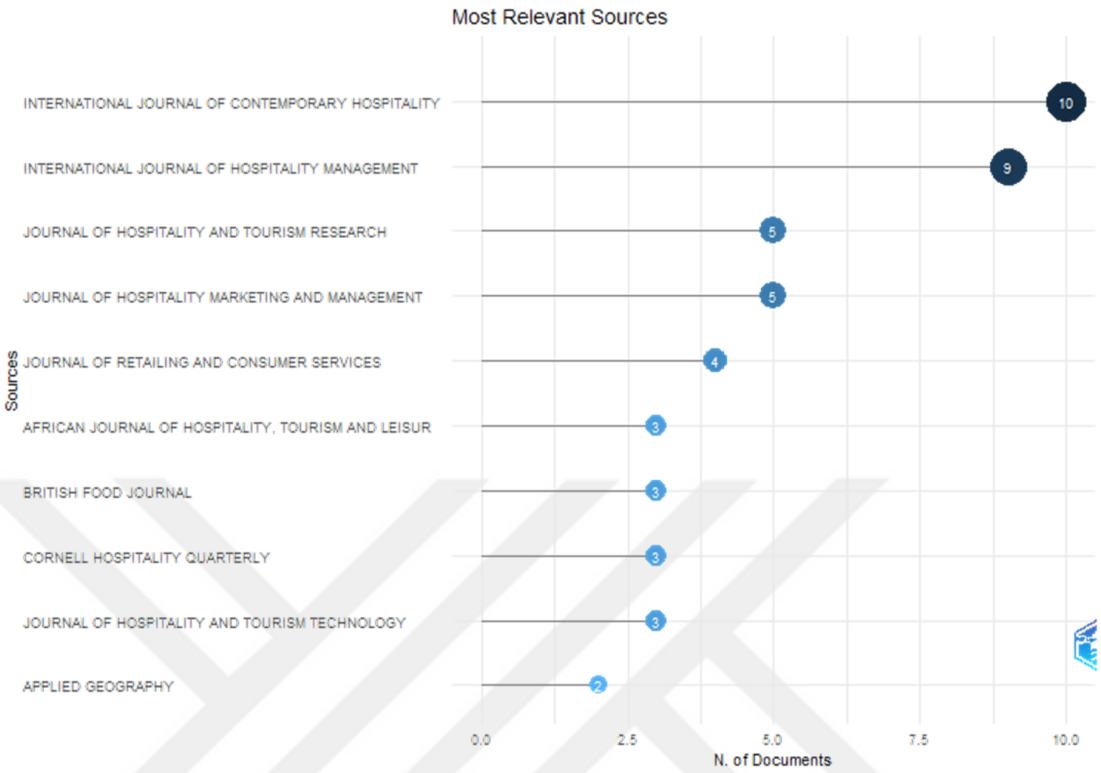

Figure 8. Most relevant sources from Scopus

Research on social media in the restaurant and hotel industry is centered in a very limited number of publications, according to the bibliometric analysis of source titles (Figure 8). This focus demonstrates how outlets with a hospitality focus have shaped the industry, but it also shows some indications of diversification from contributions from related fields.

Table 6: leading outlet, accounting for 10 publications (21.28%) of the total sample, followed by the International Journal of Hospitality Management with 9 publications (19.15%). Together, these two journals represent more than 40% of the total research output, underscoring their central role in advancing scholarship in this field. Other notable journals include the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research (5 publications; 10.64%) and the Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management (5 publications; 10.64%), further reinforcing the prominence of hospitality-focused outlets. At the same time, contributions from sources such as the Journal of Retailing

and Consumer Services (4 publications; 8.51%), the African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure (3 publications; 6.4%), the British Food Journal (3 publications; 6.4%), Cornell Hospitality Quarterly (3 publications; 6.4%), and the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology (3 publications; 6.4%) illustrate the growing diversity of publication venues. Finally, journals outside the immediate hospitality domain, such as Applied Geography (2 publications; 4.25%), demonstrate interdisciplinary interest in topics like consumer location behaviors and spatial dynamics. Though additional contributions from food, consumer behavior, and multidisciplinary sources expand the field's intellectual reach, the distribution of publications generally indicates that journals with a focus on hospitality dominate the debate (Hanafi, Hasan, Ahmad, & Ali, 2025)

Table6. The top ten most prolific journals in the scope

No.	Source title	No. of publication	Percentage
1	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT	10	21.28
2	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT	9	19.15
3	JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM RESEARCH	5	10.64
4	JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT	5	10.64
5	JOURNAL OF RETAILING AND CONSUMER SERVICES	4	8.51
6	AFRICAN JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY, TOURISM AND LEISURE	3	6.4
7	BRITISH FOOD JOURNAL	3	6.4
8	CORNELL HOSPITALITY QUARTERLY	3	6.4

9	JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM TECHNOLOGY	3	6.4
10	APPLIED GEOGRAPHY	2	4.25
	Grand Total	47	

4.1.5 Most cited countries

Figure 9 presents the leading countries of corresponding authors in the WOS database (2010–2025), highlighting their contributions based on total publications.

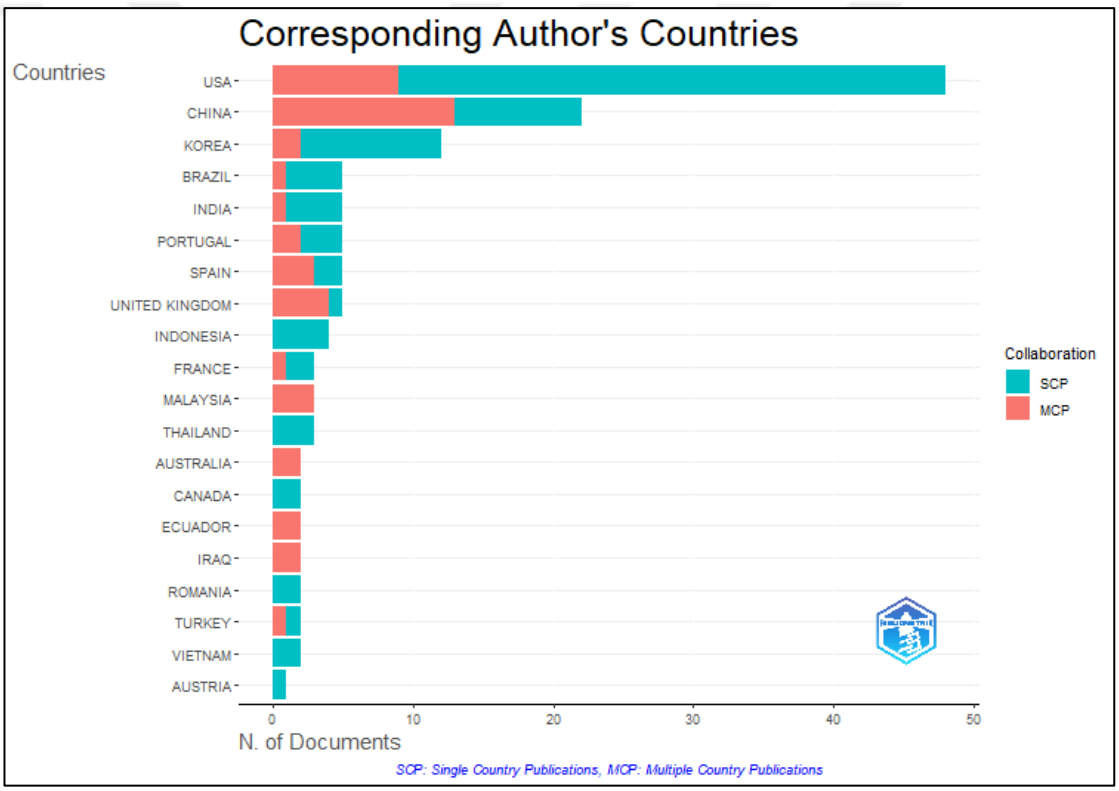

Figure 9: corresponding author countries from WOS

The distribution of research output at the national level is shown in Figure 9, which also highlights trends in international collaboration and publication volume. With 48 papers over the two datasets, the United States is the largest contributor, demonstrating its dominance in forming the discipline. China comes in second with 22 articles, indicating a moderate degree of international collaboration and growing scholarly activity (MCP ratio = 0.59).

Despite producing fewer papers, shown in table 7, the UK exhibits a high level of international co-authorship (MCP ratio of up to 0.80), highlighting its significant contribution to cross-border research collaborations. South Korea, Portugal, France, Spain, and India are among the other countries that have made significant contributions. It's interesting to note that all seven of Indonesia's publications were single-country endeavors (MCP ratio = 0), indicating little participation in cooperative networks. However, certain European countries, like the UK, Spain, and Portugal, show a stronger propensity for international co-authorship, which is in line with broader trends in internationalized research collaborations. Overall, these findings reveal a heterogeneous environment: some countries balance local production with active participation in international research networks, while others dominate through targeted domestic contributions (Hanafi, Hasan, Ahmad, & Ali, 2025).

Table 7: corresponding author countries from WOS

Rank	*country*	*articles*	scp	mcp	freq	Mcp_ratio
1	*USA*	*48*	*39*	*9*	*0.421*	*0.188*
2	*CHINA*	*22*	*9*	*13*	*0.192*	*0.590*
3	*KOREA*	*12*	*10*	*2*	*0.105*	*0.1666*
4	*BRAZIL*	*5*	*4*	*1*	*0,043*	*0.2*
5	*INDIA*	*5*	*4*	*1*	*0.043*	*0.2*
6	*PORTUGAL*	*5*	*3*	*2*	*0.043*	*0.4*
7	*SPAIN*	*5*	*2*	*3*	*0.043*	*0.6*
8	*UNITED KINGDOM*	*5*	*1*	*4*	*0.043*	*0.8*
9	*INDONESIA*	*4*	*4*	*0*	*0.035*	*0*
10	*FRANCE*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0.026*	*0.333*
	Grand Total	***114***		*36*		

SCP (Single Country Publications), MCP (Multiple Country Publications), Freq (Frequency)

Freq=Number of publications from the country÷ Total publications in dataset.

MCP Ratio= MCP ÷ Total Publications for that country

Figure 10 presents the top corresponding author countries based on total citation counts from 2010 to 2025."

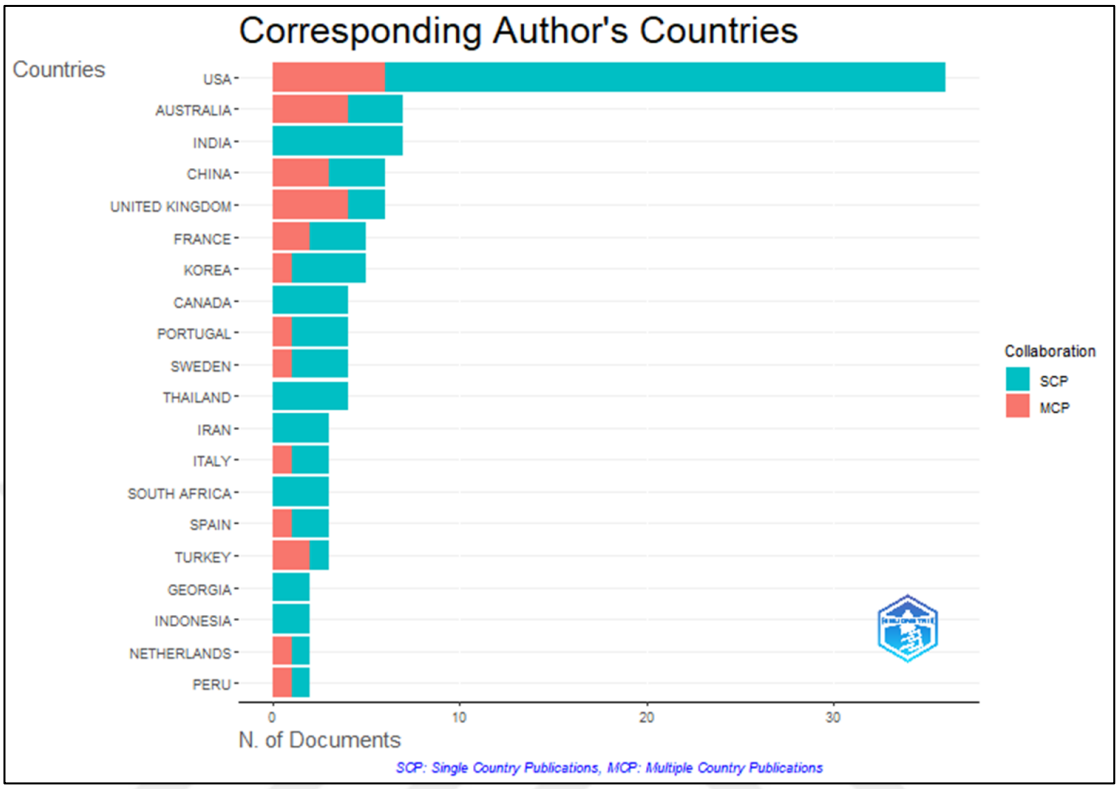

Figure 10: corresponding author countries from Scopus

The country-level analysis shows that the USA dominates research on social media in the restaurant sector, contributing 36 articles (42.8% of the total). The majority of these are single-country publications (30 SCP), with limited international collaborations (MCP = 0.1666). Australia and India follow with 7 articles each; however, their collaboration patterns differ significantly. Australia demonstrates a strong international orientation (MCP = 0.571), while India's publications are entirely domestic (MCP = 0). Similarly, China and the UK each contribute 6 articles, with the UK standing out for the highest collaboration ratio (0.666), indicating robust global networking. Other active contributors include France, Korea, Canada, Portugal, and Sweden.

These patterns imply that while nations like the UK and Australia use international alliances to increase their influence, the USA's leadership is supported by a long-standing scientific foundation in hospitality and marketing. India's lack of cooperation, on the other hand, is indicative of a more independent research methodology. The potential for shared research centers to accelerate scientific advancement is highlighted by cross-regional cooperation, such as that between European and Asian institutions

(like Korea and China). International cooperation boosts competitiveness and encourages the growth of new disciplines, according to earlier bibliometric research in other fields (Amiruddin et al., 2025). This is consistent with the more general notion that international collaboration enhances scientific mapping and conceptual development, guaranteeing the continuous expansion of knowledge. Table 8 shows the precise breakdown of collaboration indicators and nation contributions.

Table 8: corresponding author countries from Scopus

Rank	*country*	*articles*	scp	mcp	freq	Mcp_ratio
1	*USA*	*36*	*30*	*6*	*0.43*	*0.1666*
2	*AUSTRALIA*	*7*	*3*	*4*	*0.083*	*0.571*
3	*INDIA*	*7*	*7*	*0*	*0.083*	*0*
4	*CHINA*	*6*	*3*	*3*	*0.071*	*0.5*
5	*UNITED KINGDOM*	*6*	*2*	*4*	*0.071*	*0.666*
6	*FRANCE*	*5*	*3*	*2*	*0.06*	*0.4*
7	*KOREA*	*5*	*4*	*1*	*0.06*	*0.2*
8	*CANADA*	*4*	*4*	*0*	*0.048*	*0*
9	*PORTUGAL*	*4*	*3*	*1*	*0.048*	*0.25*
10	*SWEDEN*	*4*	*3*	*1*	*0.048*	*0.25*
	Grand Total	***84***		*22*		

SCP (Single Country Publications), MCP (Multiple Country Publications), Freq (Frequency)

Freq=Number of publications from the country÷ Total publications in dataset.

MCP Ratio= MCP ÷ Total Publications for that country

4.1.6 Co-occurrence network

Using co-occurrence analysis, high-frequency keywords were identified and grouped into four thematic clusters that reflect the core research topics in the field. The relationships between keywords are visually represented in Figure 11, while offering a detailed interpretation of each cluster. In the visual map, node sizes indicate how frequently a keyword appears, and connecting lines represent the strength of associations between keywords.

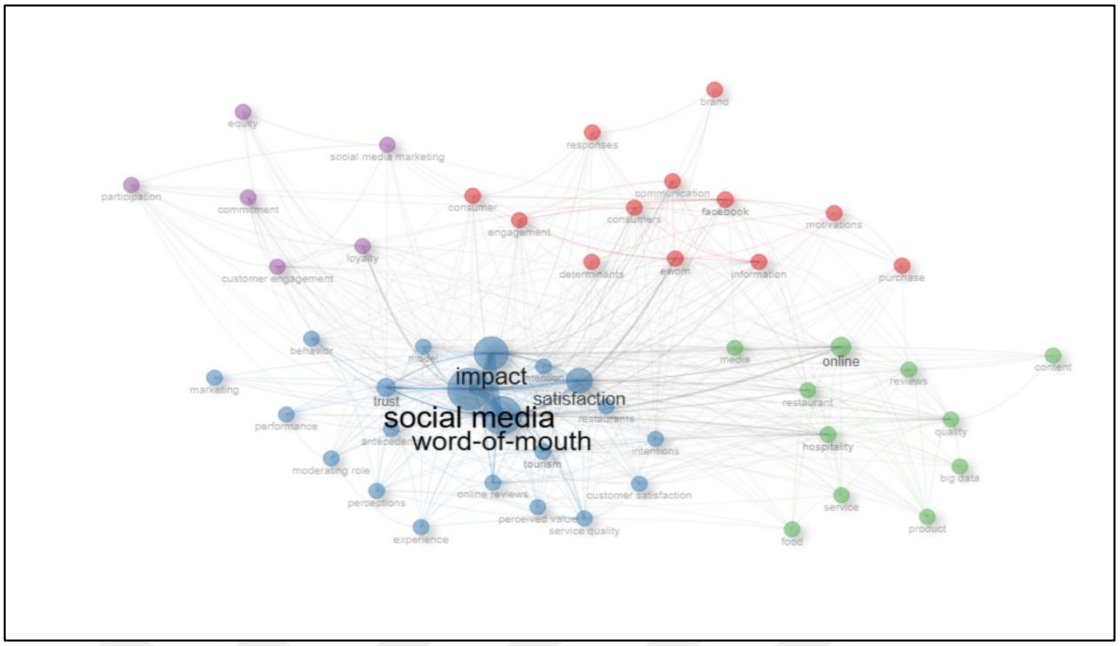

Figure 11. Co-occurrence networks of high-frequency keywords WOS

Cluster analysis further organizes these keywords into four thematic areas. Cluster 1 (blue) focuses on customer satisfaction, service quality, behavior, and perceived value. Cluster 2 (red) emphasizes platform-specific studies such as Facebook, eWOM, consumer engagement, and communication. Cluster 3 (green) highlights hospitality and restaurant reviews, service/product quality, food, and big data applications. Cluster 4 (purple) captures strategic outcomes such as loyalty, equity, and commitment within social media marketing.

The findings of the keyword co-occurrence analysis, which illustrates the conceptual framework of studies on social media in the restaurant sector, are shown in Taple 9. The network illustrates the connections between recurrent phrases, demonstrating the interdependence of major themes in the subject.

Table 9. The interpretation of the co-occurrence clusters displayed in Figure 11.

cluster	No. of items	color	Label /keywords
1	28	blue	Social media, word-of-mouth, impact, satisfaction, trust, online reviews, tourism, behavior, model, restaurants, service

			quality, intention, customer satisfaction, antecedents, intentions, customer satisfaction, antecedents, intentions, perceptions, experience, moderating role, perceives value, performance marketing.
2	12	Red	Facebook, ewom, information, consumers, communication, engagement, consumer, responses, motivations, purchases, determinants, brand
3	11	green	Online, hospitality, quality, media, restaurant, reviews, service, product, food, big data, content
4	6	purple	Loyalty, customer engagement, commitment, social media marketing, equity, participation

Table 10 identifies the most frequently occurring keywords. The most prevalent concepts are "social media" (70 instances; 21.34%), "word-of-mouth" (56; 17.1%), "impact" (53; 16.16%), and "satisfaction" (32; 9.75%). Other frequently used keywords, such as "online" (25; 7.62%), "trust" (21; 6.40%), and "Facebook" (19; 5.79%), indicate both platform-specific scholarly.

Table10. Top 10 keywords based on the number of occurrences from WOS.

Rank	*keyword*	*Occurrences*	Percentage
1	*Social media*	*70*	*21.34*
2	*Word-of-mouth*	*56*	*17.1*
3	*impact*	*53*	*16.16*
4	*satisfaction*	*32*	*9.75*

5	*online*	*25*	*7.62*
6	*trust*	*21*	*6.40*
7	*Facebook*	*19*	*5.79*
8	*ewom*	*18*	*5.48*
9	*information*	*17*	*5.18*
10	*Online reviews*	*17*	*5.18*
	Grand Total	***328***	

Collectively, these clusters show that the literature encompasses social media research, operational insights in the restaurant business, and wide digital taken .

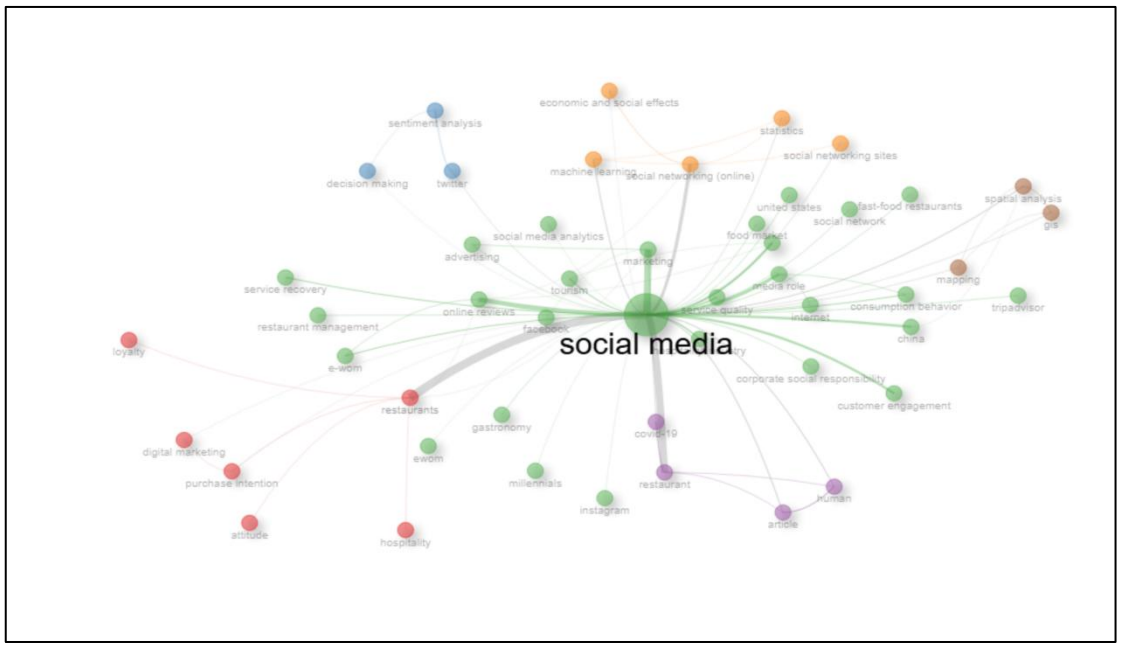

Figure 12. Co-occurrence networks of high-frequency keywords Scopus

Six unique clusters that demonstrate the thematic diversity of research on social media and the restaurant business were identified by the keyword co-occurrence analysis. With keywords like social media, marketing, online reviews, Facebook, Instagram, TripAdvisor, and customer interaction, Cluster 1 (Green, 28 items) embodies the core and highlights the importance of social media in hospitality marketing and consumer engagement. Restaurants, loyalty, purchase intention, and digital marketing are among the consumer behavior and loyalty outcomes highlighted in Cluster 2 (Red, 6 items).

With terms like social networking sites, machine learning, and statistics, Cluster 3 (Orange, 5 items) exhibits methodological and technical methods. Cluster 4 (Purple, 4

items) integrates COVID-19, restaurant, and human research into its focus on pandemic-related restaurant research. The use of sentiment mining in this context is demonstrated by Cluster 5 (Blue, 3 items), which is focused on Twitter, sentiment analysis, and decision making. Lastly, Cluster 6 (Brown, 3 items) reflects specialized study that uses mapping, GIS, and spatial analysis.

Table11, the six groupings show how social media research in the restaurant business has developed into a broad, interdisciplinary field. The importance of social media platforms in restaurant marketing strategies is confirmed by core themes that highlight how they influence customer involvement, loyalty, and brand perception. Concurrently, a methodological shift toward data-driven and analytical techniques is reflected in the formation of clusters around machine learning, sentiment analysis, and GIS mapping. Furthermore, the unique COVID-19 cluster emphasizes resilience and flexibility in the restaurant industry, highlighting how global crises transform research objectives. Collectively, these clusters demonstrate the range of study topics as well as the field's adaptability to external obstacles and technology advancements, making social media a constantly changing catalyst for both academic inquiry and practical application in hospitality.

Table 11. The interpretation of the co-occurrence clusters displayed in Figure 12

cluster	No. of items	color	Label /keywords
1	28	Green	Social media, Marketing, online reviews, Facebook, media role, text mining, China, customer engagement, hospitality industry, service quality, e-wom, tourism, advertising, consumption behavior, gastronomy, service recovery, corporate social responsibility, ewom, fast-food restaurants, food market, Instagram,

			internet, millennials, restaurant management, social media analytics, social network, TripAdvisor, United States
2	6	Red	Restaurants, loyalty, purchase intention, attitude, digital marketing, hospitality
3	5	orange	Social networking(online), machine learning, social networking sites, economic and social effects, statistics
4	4	purple	Restaurant, COVID-19, article, human,
5	3	blue	Twitter, sentiment analysis, decision making
6	3	Brown	spatial analysis, GIS, mapping

Table 12, The most common term, according to keyword frequency analysis, is social media (112 occurrences, 51.6%), followed by restaurants (29, 13.3%) and restaurants (18, 8.3%). Other terms that show up frequently include marketing, online reviews, Twitter, Facebook, and text mining. The graphic (Figure 4) further illustrates the associations between clusters, indicating that many topics overlap rather than being restricted to a single thematic zone. For instance, research on online reviews and sentiment analysis (blue cluster) is intimately related to digital marketing techniques (orange cluster), while studies on customer interaction (green cluster) frequently cross with research on loyalty and buy intention (red cluster). The transdisciplinary and dynamic nature of the field is demonstrated by this overlap, which makes it challenging to limit research to a single topic group (de Oliveira & Sohn, 2025).

Table12. The top 10 keywords are based on the number of occurrences in Scopus.

Rank	*keyword*	*Occurrences*	Percentage
1	*Social media*	*112*	*51.61*

2	*Restaurants*	*29*	*13.36*
3	*Restaurant*	*18*	*8.29*
4	*marketing*	*11*	*5.07.*
5	*online reviews*	*9*	*4.15*
6	*Social networking(online)*	*9*	*4.15*
7	*twitter*	*8*	*3.68*
8	*Facebook*	*7*	*3.22*
9	*Media role*	*7*	*3.22*
10	*Text mining*	*7*	*3.22*
	Grand Total	***217***	

4.1.7 Author keyword cloud

The database's focus on marketing and customer engagement is reflected in the keyword co-occurrence analysis in WOS, which highlights prominent themes like social media, word-of-mouth, satisfaction, and consumer impact.

Figure 13. Author keyword cloud during 2010–2025 From WOS

There are two main types of keywords commonly analyzed in bibliometric research: author keywords and Keywords Plus, both of which help identify emerging issues and research hotspots (Zhang, Huang, Yu, & Yang, 2017). In this study, a keyword cloud was constructed using author keywords, as these terms are intentionally selected by researchers to capture the central themes and concerns of their work. This approach provides direct insight into the authors' perspectives on relevant issues in the field. The keyword cloud (Figure 13) illustrates the most frequently used author keywords, with terms such as *social media*, *word-of-mouth*, *impact*, and *satisfaction* dominating the visualization, indicating their centrality in the research landscape. The database's emphasis on marketing and customer behavior in service industries is seen in the dominating themes of word-of-mouth, social media, and effect as well as the significant representation of hospitality, tourism, food quality, and consumption in the Scopus keyword analysis.

Fig. 14. Author keyword cloud during 2010–2025, from Scopus

The most common keywords in studies on social media and the restaurant or hospitality sector are graphically represented in the word cloud you gave. Terms like "social media," "word-of-mouth," "impact," "satisfaction," "behavior," and "consumption" are prevalent, which suggests the main themes that run across literature. Social media becomes a primary focus, emphasizing its function as a medium for marketing, communication, and customer interaction. The importance of

online reviews, suggestions, and peer influence on customer decision-making is reflected in the prevalence of "word-of-mouth." Numerous studies examine how social media interactions impact client experiences, perceptions, and repeat business, according to keywords like "satisfaction," "behavior," and "loyalty.".Other words like "information," "trust," "quality," and "engagement" highlight the ways in which social media influences customer perceptions and corporate outcomes. The research in this area, which focuses on how social media platforms affect restaurant choice, customer happiness, and brand engagement, integrates marketing techniques with consumer behavior, as this visualization illustrates overall.

4.1.8 Co-citation analysis

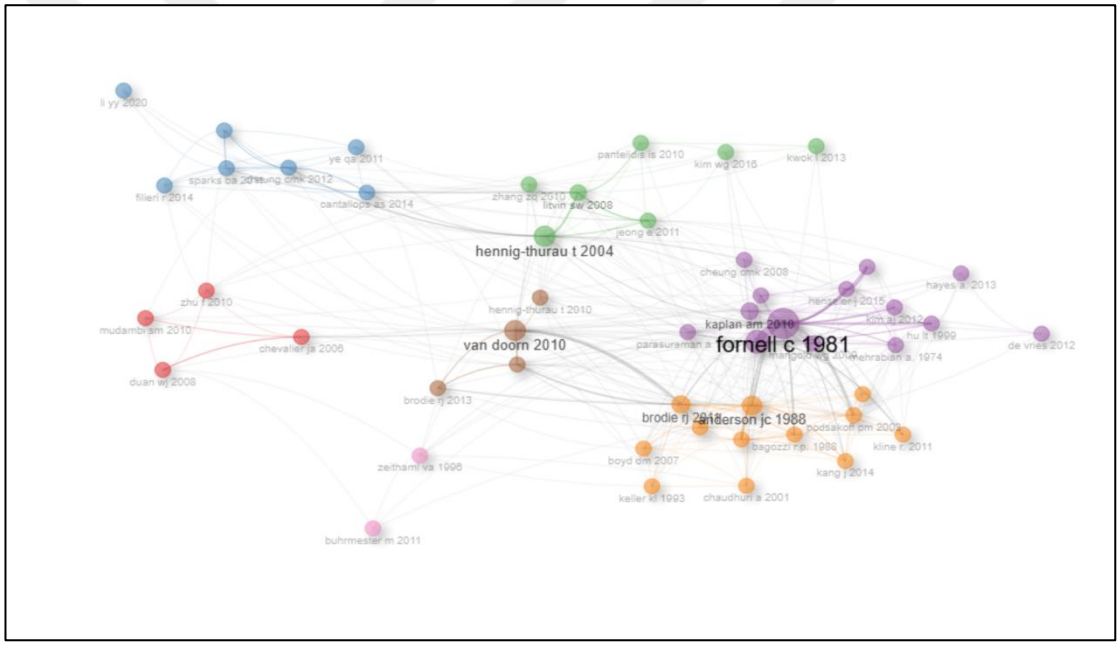

Figure 15. Co-citation network WOS

The intellectual framework of studies relating to social media, customer interaction, and the restaurant business is shown by the co-citation network (Figure 15). Measurement models and structural equation modeling are supported by foundational methodological works like Fornell (1981) and Anderson and Gerbing (1988), while Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) offer a crucial framework for thinking about social media in marketing. Digital marketing and hospitality research are connected by Hennig-Thurau et al.'s (2004, 2010) and Van Doorn et al.'s (2010) groundbreaking studies on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and consumer involvement.

The organization of the literature is highlighted by thematic clustering: The orange cluster focuses on consumer trust, loyalty, and engagement theory (Brodie et al., 2011; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001); the green cluster explores the influence of social media on consumer behavior in hospitality contexts (Pantelidis, 2010; Kwok & Yu, 2013; Kim et al., 2016); the blue cluster focuses on online reviews and user-generated content (Sparks & Browning, 2011; Ye et al., 2011); the red cluster focuses on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in e-commerce (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006), and the purple cluster emphasizes service quality and measurement frameworks.

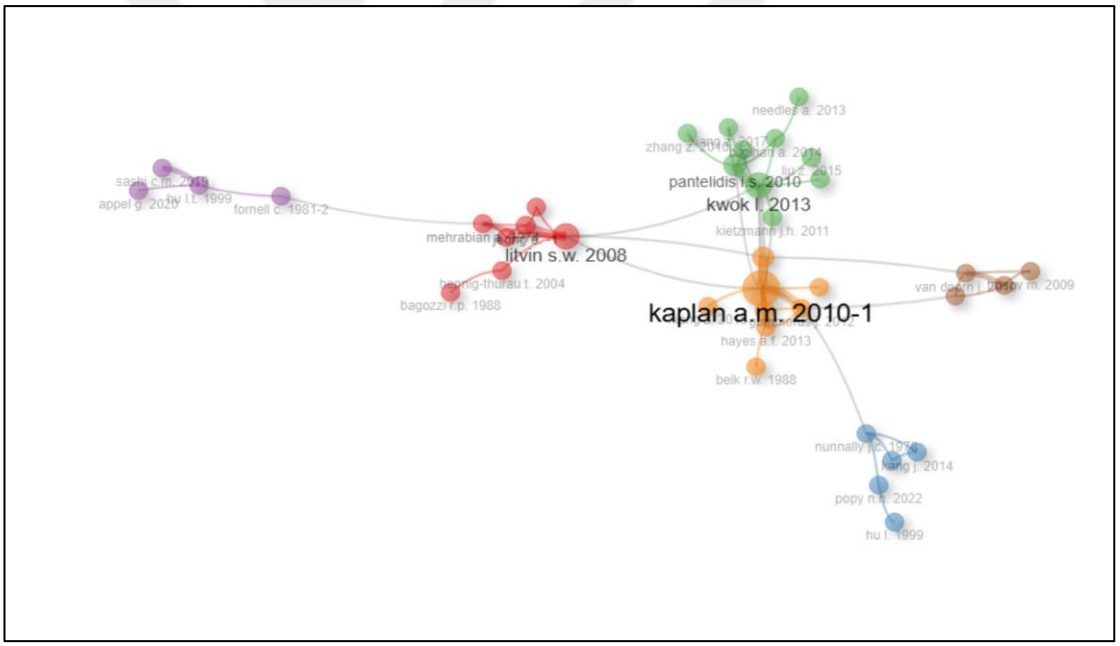

Figure 16. Co-citation network Scopus

By highlighting the most significant writers and theoretical pillars in the field, the co-citation network analysis reveals the conceptual framework supporting restaurant social media research. A key source that cuts across several categories and influences the conceptual understanding of social media is Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)Pantelidis (2010) and Kwok (2013) highlight online reviews and consumer feedback in the restaurant context, whereas Litvin et al. (2008) establish a core cluster around

electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in hospitality and tourism. While Hennig-Thurau (2004) grounds eWOM studies in marketing, foundational psychological and methodological literature like Mehrabian (1974), Nunnally (1978), and Hu (1999) advocate the use of stimulus-organism-response models and psychometric techniques. Bagozzi, Jeong, and Kandampully are among the other notable contributors who offer insights into hospitality management and consumer behavior. Other clusters represent emerging methods in digital marketing and happiness theory (Appel et al., 2020; Fornell, 1981), as well as consumer interaction and cultural viewpoints (e.g., Van Doorn, 2009; Belk, 1988).Three primary theoretical streams are shown by the co-citation map using the Smart Local Moving (SLM) technique for cluster recognition with a threshold of 86 (Leung et al., 2017; Kim & So, 2022): marketing and eWOM, psychological and behavioral models, and hospitality management frameworks. In addition to emphasizing new conceptual developments in the field, these clusters together show how marketing, psychology, and hospitality management come together to form the multidisciplinary basis of restaurant social media research (Amiruddin et al., 2025).

4.2 Discussion

To achieve the thesis aim, a bibliometric analysis of social and media and restaurants Literature research was done. Bibliometric analysis approaches such as performance analysis, citation analysis, co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, co-occurrence analysis, and co-authorship analysis were used to arrive at the answers to the study questions (Barak, 2022).

The analysis's findings addressed the study questions. The thorough responses to the research questions are provided below.

4.2.1Bibliometric Perspective

Q1: What is the amount, development, and subject matter of journal research on how social media trends, such as food photography and influencer marketing, have influenced restaurant branding and menu creation?

Research on social media trends in the restaurant industry has changed dramatically over time, according to bibliometric evidence. Descriptive analyses of consumer-generated content, including eWOM and online reviews, were the main focus of early research. As time went on, the emphasis changed to strategic assessments of menu innovation and branding, emphasizing the ways in which influencer marketing, food photography, and visual material shape restaurant impressions. Scholarly interest in the ways that social media influences consumer involvement, purchase intention, and brand advocacy is growing, as seen by the surge in publications and citations for important Works.

Q2: How has journal research evolved in examining social media engagement, customer loyalty, and repeat patronage in the restaurant sector?

The literature shows that in the restaurant industry, social media research has made customer involvement, loyalty, and repeat business its main issues. Research is increasingly using psychological and behavioral models to study how consumers react to social media interactions. Cluster analyses draw attention to the significance of concepts like perceived value, contentment, and trust, all of which are vital for assessing how well social media campaigns work. This development shows a change from merely recording social media use to investigating its strategic and behavioral effects on the restaurant industry.

Q3: What are the research trends, principal contributors, and citation patterns in studies examining the influence of social media presence on consumer engagement and restaurant performance?

With differing degrees of international cooperation, the bibliometric results show that research output is concentrated in a small number of countries, most notably the USA, China, and a few European countries. Prominent authors become well-known either by consistently producing publications or by having highly referenced works, which shows that the scope and significance of research determine influence in the subject. Citation patterns and co-citation networks demonstrate the intellectual structure and important figures influencing this field of study, demonstrating how foundational

works on eWOM, consumer behavior, and social media marketing frameworks continue to influence contemporary research trends.

When taken as a whole, the bibliometric results show a dynamic and changing research environment. In the restaurant business, social media plays a crucial role in shaping customer behavior and strategic decision-making in addition to being a marketing tool. The field's multidisciplinary nature, which incorporates perspectives from marketing, psychology, and hotel management, is demonstrated by thematic clusters, co-citation structures, and geographic patterns. By identifying important works, research hotspots, and new trends, these insights offer a thorough grasp of the conceptual, methodological, and thematic underpinnings of social media research in restaurants.

5. CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 CONCLUSION

This thesis used a bibliometric study of articles published between 2010 and 2025 to look at how academic research on the effects of social media in the restaurant business have changed over time. In order to give a thorough picture of publishing trends, significant contributions, topic clusters, and worldwide research patterns, the analysis combined performance indicators, citation impact, and scientific mapping approaches with data from Web of scientific and Scopus. When taken as a whole, the results provide a better understanding of the evolution, maturation, and diversification of this field of study.

According to the performance analysis, there has been a consistent rise in scholarly interest since 2015. This interest peaked in 2022 during the COVID-19 pandemic, when restaurants were using social media extensively as a means of involvement and survival. This pattern demonstrates how university research into digital solutions for the hotel industry is accelerated by real-world crises. Citation analysis also showed that, in line with the sector's strategic and technological transformation, the most influential works have moved from early research on online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) to more recent focus on consumer engagement, influencer marketing, and digital innovation.

The identification of leading authors and journals demonstrated the central role of a relatively small group of contributors and outlets in shaping the field. Highly productive scholars such as Mattila, Li, and Kim, alongside influential works by researchers like Chung, Sashi, and Bilgihan, have laid the theoretical and empirical foundations for current debates. Journals including the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management and Cornell Hospitality Quarterly emerged as the primary publication venues, confirming the field’s concentration within hospitality and service management research.

Science mapping added further depth by identifying thematic clusters and intellectual structures that characterize the field. Co-occurrence analysis revealed recurring themes such as customer engagement, loyalty, menu innovation, influencer marketing, and the role of visual content (particularly food photography). Co-citation and bibliographic coupling patterns indicated a multidisciplinary integration of hospitality, marketing, consumer psychology, and information systems research. Geographic analysis showed that the United States and China dominate publication output, while countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia demonstrate strong international collaboration. Emerging contributions from Asia and the Middle East suggest increasing global diversification in the field.

Science mapping added even more information by identifying the theme groupings and intellectual frameworks that characterize the region. Co-occurrence analysis revealed recurring themes, such as influencer marketing, menu innovation, customer loyalty, and the value of visual material, particularly food photography. Co-citation and bibliographic coupling patterns indicated a multidisciplinary integration of studies in consumer psychology, marketing, hospitality, and information systems. Geographic analysis showed that the United States and China dominate publishing production, even if countries like the United Kingdom and Australia show significant international collaboration. Emerging contributions from Asia and the Middle East suggest that the area is becoming increasingly globally varied.

When combined, these results show a dynamic and changing field of study. Social media is becoming acknowledged as a crucial factor influencing consumer behavior, brand strategy, and long-term restaurant performance, rather than just being researched as an additional marketing tool. Literature has developed into an organized, multidisciplinary body of knowledge, yet there is still a great deal of space for growth, as shown by the bibliometric evidence. Platform-specific studies (such as Instagram and TikTok), cross-cultural consumer interaction, uncharted geographic areas, and the use of cutting-edge techniques like machine learning, sentiment analysis, and big data analytics present potential for future research.

This study concludes by offering a thorough summary of the conceptual, methodological, and thematic evolution of research at the nexus of social media and the restaurant sector. It not only synthesizes current knowledge but also directs

researchers and practitioners in the right path by charting the theoretical underpinnings and new trends. The findings highlight the necessity of ongoing theoretical development and global inclusion in research for scholars. The results emphasize for practitioners the strategic importance of using social media to foster engagement, loyalty, and trust in a market that is becoming more digitalized and competitive.

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