

# OVER A DECADE OF SOCIAL COMMERCE: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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**Abstract** *Social commerce, a fairly new concept in the world of marketing has gained a lot of momentum in the last few years. Considered as a subset of e-commerce, it is an emerging area of research and this article aims to investigate the developments and trends in research on social commerce. Using bibliometric analysis, a detailed study of the research on social commerce from 2009 to 2021 has been conducted. Performance analysis and science mapping have been done on a total of 530 articles available in the Scopus database on social commerce. Data selection was performed following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews process. The descriptive analysis revealed that N. Hajli is the most prolific author and China is the most prolific country with the highest number of publications in the field of social commerce. Based on the h-index, the International Journal of Information Management and Electronic Commerce Research and Application were found to be the most impactful journals. The cluster analysis identified social commerce constructs, antecedents and consumer behaviour as the most trending themes. The study makes for a better understanding of the development in social commerce for both researchers and marketers. There is a lot of scope for research in this field as international collaborations are increasing and new trends are emerging. This study uses one of the latest review techniques, that is, bibliometric analysis to study social commerce covering the longest period of research in the field, that is, from 2009 to 2021.*

**Keywords:** *Bibliometric Analysis, Performance Analysis, Research Trends, Science Mapping, Social Commerce*

## INTRODUCTION

Web 2.0 has changed the way people communicate and has impacted the way businesses connect with their customers. Social Commerce is a novel concept in marketing that arose from the convergence of online and physical marketplaces enabled by social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook. The term “Social” in social commerce pertains to the role of social media, and the term “Commerce” refers to commercial transactions online. So, in principle, Social Commerce is that branch of online retail that places an emphasis on two-way contact between consumers via user-generated content. A more common way to characterise it is as a “e-commerce subgroup”(Liang & Turban, 2011) which is becoming popular because of the increased use of social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn which facilitate commercial activities (Curty & Zhang, 2011). According to the ‘Hootsuite and We are Social’ report (2023) over 4.76 billion people across the world, that is, almost 60 percent of the total global population are using social media platforms for different purposes like communication, collaborations, interaction, entertainment, networking, shopping and so on. Social media has found to have an impact on consumer attitude and decision making process (Gupta, Gupta &

Yadav, 2021). This phenomenon has made the consumers more powerful and has changed the nuances of marketing which was earlier only company or seller driven. A report by Deloitte Insights (2023) highlighted that the rapid growth of social commerce has outpaced traditional e-commerce market. It details the rise of the “creator economy” and the influence of social media influencers on consumer buying decisions. With the increasing popularity, research on the concept has also increased. Although social commerce is not a very old concept, but a significant amount of research has been done on it in a span of a few years (Kim & Kim, 2018). Though research in this field is gaining momentum with time it is still fragmented and needs more systemisation (Han, Xu & Chen, 2018). In the past, few scholars attempted to synthesise the research through narrative literature reviews (Liang & Turban, 2011; Huang and Benyoucef, 2013) and systematic reviews (Baethge et al., 2016; Han et al., 2018). However, the scope of these studies is limited to a specific time frame, descriptive techniques and a smaller number of studies which has resulted in a need to re-examine the seminal work of authors in this domain by incorporating the latest studies and rigorous techniques of literature synthesis like the bibliometric analysis. The large scope and the ever-changing nature of activities on social commerce platforms

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bring out the need to synthesise the work done in different dimensions of the concept.

Therefore, the present study attempts to synthesise the seminal work of previous authors in the domain of social commerce by conducting a bibliometric analysis using techniques of ‘performance analysis’ with a focus on authors, articles and countries and ‘science mapping to understand the knowledge structure (Huang et al., 2021). The study will contribute to the literature by identifying underlying themes of social commerce and will help future researchers to understand the growth, current trends and prospects in this area. Moreover, this study will offer scholars an authentic basis to select emerging topics for future research where research is still in a nascent stage.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social commerce has been defined differently by various authors and there is no standard definition of the concept as such (Liang & Turban, 2011). But, it is usually referred to as a subset of e-commerce that blends both social and commercial activities. The term has been defined from various perspectives but the most comprehensive definition of social commerce covering both its broad and narrow perspectives has been given by Yadav et al. (2013) according to which “Social commerce refers to exchange-related activities that occur in, or are influenced by, an individual’s social network in computer-mediated social environments, where the activities correspond to the need recognition,

pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages of a focal exchange”.

The first reference to the concept of social commerce was in an article by Snyder, Cheavens and Sympson (1997), in the field of psychology which explained the importance of shared goals to achieve the desired results, and ever since the concept has evolved in other disciplines also, including commerce. In the year 2005, Yahoo! became the first company to introduce the concept of social commerce in the business arena by bringing together the functions of socialisation and commercialisation with the help of two of its social commerce platforms namely ‘Shoposphere’ and ‘Pick Lists’ (Baethge et al., 2016). Over a decade and a half after its emergence, social commerce is on a rise because of the increasing popularity of social networking sites that make a product profitable with their inspirational and entertaining content. According to a report by Statista 2022, the worldwide sales revenue from social commerce is projected to grow from US \$ 560 billion in 2020 to US \$ 2900 billion in 2026. Looking at the enormous potential of this phenomenon, it has become the focus of even researchers to explore the concept.

In the past, reviews on social commerce have been conducted in the form of narrative literature reviews, systematic literature reviews and bibliometric analysis but since narrative literature reviews are not the focus of this study thus, Table 1 shows the summary of only the systematic literature reviews and bibliometric analysis undertaken by researchers in the past.

**Table 1: Summary of Articles Related to Review on Social Commerce**

Article	Type of Review	Keywords Searched	Time Period	Techniques Used and Findings
Zhou, Zhang and Zimmermann (2013)	Narrative and Bibliometric	Social commerce, social shopping, collaborative commerce, and collaborative shopping	2003-2012	The study proposed a research framework and through bibliometric analysis, it gave some preliminary findings to reveal recent trends and topics based on the descriptive analysis.
Busalim (2016)	Systematic Literature review	Social commerce, social e-commerce, and social electronic commerce	2010-2015	Provides information about various research themes explored in social commerce, with user behaviour and website design is the most researched themes.
Han, Xu and Chen (2018)	Systematic Literature review	Social commerce and s-commerce	2006-2017	Reviews information about the definition, differences, and technologies, benefits of social commerce along with the Outcomes measured based on Research themes, research theories.
Li, Huang and Li, Qi (2018)	Bibliometric analysis	Social commerce	2003-2018	Identified key journals, countries, and authors working in the field of social commerce by conducting a Performance analysis; and country and institution collaboration; and co-citation analysis of references by science mapping.
Goyal, Hu, Chauhan, Gupta, Bhardwaj and Mahindroo (2021)	Bibliometric analysis	Social commerce, Facebook commerce, social shopping, social media marketing, social e-commerce, social electronic commerce, collaborative-commerce, collaborative shopping	2015-2020	Performance analysis has been done to review the influential authors, Journals, and Universities. Using HistCite for citation mapping of articles, the study identifies key research themes. A content analysis of top-cited social commerce papers has also been done.

Source: Authors’ own compilation (Goyal et al., 2021; Cui, Mou & Liu 2018; Han, Xu & Chen, 2018; Zhang & Benyoucef, 2016)

Table 1 shows that there have been reviews done on social commerce in the past with the majority of them being systematic reviews. As compared to systematic reviews, bibliometric analysis is a useful technique when the size of research studies is huge and, it also helps in generating bias-free results (Zupic & Cater, 2015). It lends objectivity to traditional literature reviews. Since it is a quantitative approach it is free from any kind of bias which tends to happen in other types of reviews that are subjective (Tranfield, Denyer & Smart, 2003). A few bibliometric studies undertaken on social commerce in the past largely focus on the descriptive analysis of the influential authors, articles, institutions and countries. Science mapping has also been done but in a restricted manner with the focus being on collaboration and co-citation analysis with the help of software tools like HistCite and CiteSpace. But the mentioned softwares do not provide a complete and systematic workflow (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017), and also mapping techniques such as thematic maps based on keywords have not been used for identifying themes and trends in the field.

To fill the gaps in the existing literature, the current study uses bibliometric techniques to study various dimensions of performance analysis with reference to social commerce. Also, detailed network analysis in the form of co-word analysis has been done to help in building the conceptual, and intellectual network (Rodríguez-Soler et al., 2020). As compared to software tools used by previous researchers, this study uses the bibliometrix R-package for bibliometric analysis since it offers a better workflow facilitating descriptive analysis, network creation and data visualisation (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Also, all the earlier bibliometric studies have used the web of science as the source of data collection whereas the Scopus database has been used in the current study as it is considered to be more suitable for bibliometric analysis (Donthu et al., 2021).

The contributions of the study are as follows:

- It provides a descriptive analysis showing the basic statistics to give an overview of the literature on social commerce.
- It exhibits the most productive authors in the field of social commerce by article count, h-index, g-index.
- It analyses the countries majorly involved in research on social commerce.
- It conducts science mapping of the field based on thematic analysis and identifies opportunities for future research.

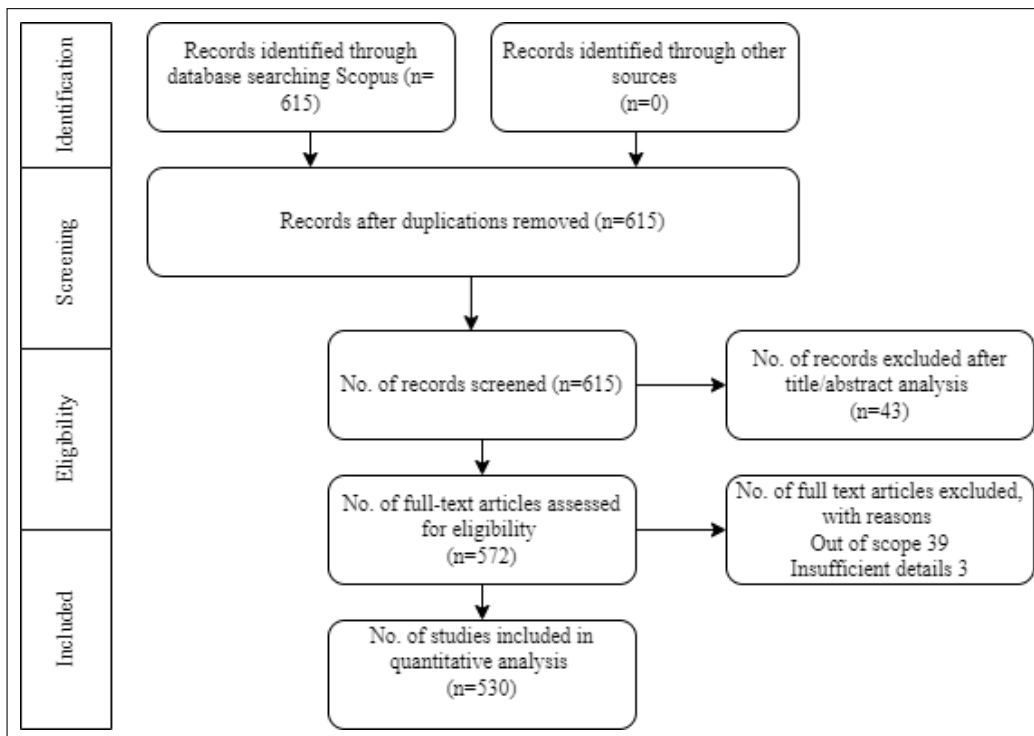
## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the current study, the Scopus database has been used as the source for data collection as it is considered to be the largest abstract indexing database (Abbas et al., 2022) and it facilitates bibliometric analysis by making it easy to collect large sets of data (Donthu et al., 2021). Also, according to Zupic and Carter (2015), Scopus is a recommended source as it has wider coverage than the web of science and the data on authors is available in a format that makes author-based citation and co-citation analysis more accurate. The data collected was filtered to keep only the core documents based on the keywords of the study and henceforth, the data was exported from the database. The analysis and synthesis of literature has been done using the R method of bibliometrics. The conceptual map and network diagrams have been made using ‘Biblioshiny’, that is a web based interface of bibliometrix (Moral-Muñoz et al., 2020). Biblioshiny combines the functionality of the bibliometrix package with the ease of use of web apps using the Shiny package environment (Huang et al., 2021).

After discussion between the authors of the present study, the keyword identified was ‘Social Commerce’. In agreement with Esmaeili and Hashemi (2019), the analysis has been performed only on the studies where the term ‘Social Commerce’ is found in their title, abstract and keywords to guarantee that the results drawn directly relate to the social commerce domain. Also, according to Rad and Benyoucef (2011), social commerce is different from collaborative buying or social buying or social shopping (Curty & Zhang, 2013), and the meaning of these terms vary from author to author, thus related keywords have not been included in the present study.

The articles included in the study were found through a keyword search using special quotation marks within the SCOPUS database to limit the search to articles on “Social commerce” in journals in the English language. The query used on the Scopus database was TITLE-ABS-KEY (“social commerce”) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, “ar”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, “english”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE, “j”)). This search was done on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses Statement) template (Liberati et al., 2009) has been used to explain the entire process of inclusion and exclusion of articles for the review as done in previous studies such as Kumar and Gupta (2023).



Source: Kumar and Gupta (2023).

Fig. 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram

The identified keyword was searched in the title, abstract and keywords of article indexed in the database, and a total of 615 articles were found. The search returned 615 articles; however, the first article included in the results was published in the year 1997 when the term ‘social commerce’ was not in use. The full-text analysis of the paper showed that the term ‘social commerce’ was related to the field of psychology. Furthermore, there was no paper published from 1998 to 2008 as the concept of social commerce came into use commercially in the year 2005 (Wang & Zhang, 2012), and research on the concept started a few years after 2005. Therefore, in the present study, all the articles published from 2009 to 2021 are included for analysis purposes.

Since only one database was selected so there were no duplications to be removed. Both the researchers individually read the abstracts of the articles and marked the articles to be included or excluded using the Sysrev software which is a software that helps in data curation (Bozada et al., 2021). In the next step, the papers on which there was a disagreement related to inclusion between both the researchers, a discussion was done and the unwanted articles were removed from the dataset. This led to an unbiased and appropriate selection of the core articles and 43 articles were removed based on the analysis of the title and abstract of each study. In the next step, a study of the full text of all articles was done, whereby

all those articles which were from non-related backgrounds and had insufficient details were removed and a total of 530 articles were left.

## RESULTS

The descriptive statistics covered in the current study are the main information about the collection, annual scientific production, top most authors and countries. Further, it focuses on co-word analysis as a science mapping technique which refers to the structure and developments in the dynamic field of study (Gao et al., 2021) with an aim to understand the themes and trends in the field thereby making suggestions for the future.

### Performance Analysis

#### Descriptive Analysis

This section gives the basic information about the collected literature. Table 2 gives the primary information of the documents under study in terms of articles, authors and keywords and provides an overview of the available literature on social commerce.

**Table 2: Descriptive Analysis: Main Information Regarding the Collection**

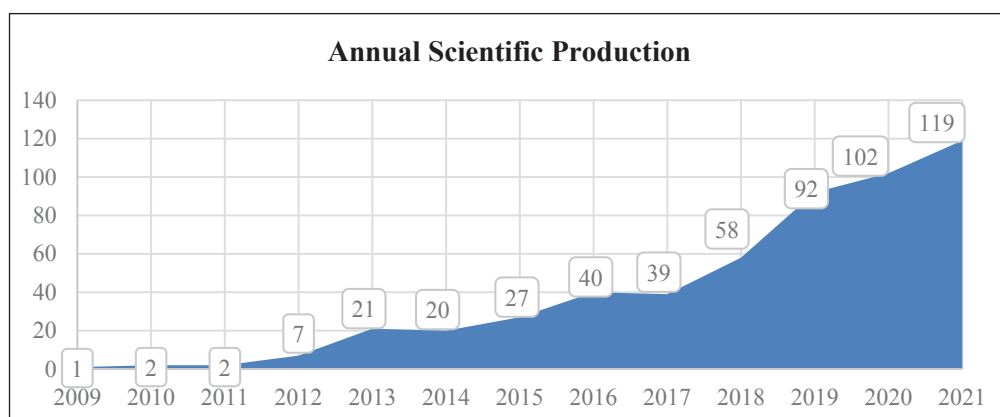
Description	Results	Description	Results
Number of articles	530	Authors	1094
Period	2009:2021	Authors of single-authored documents	50
Annual percentage growth rate	48.92	Authors of multi-authored documents	1044
Average citations per article	29.67	Articles per Author	0.484
Average citations per year per doc	4.796	Authors per Article	2.06
Keywords Plus	1258	Co-Authors per Article	2.9
Author's Keywords	1422	Collaboration Index	2.29

Source: Biblioshiny software.

Table 2 shows that in the period 2009-2021, 530 articles have been published on social commerce, with an average citation of 29.67 per article. The average citation of every article per year is 4.796. The most commonly used scientific units for analysis are author keywords and keyword plus. Author keywords are the words provided by an author in the abstract of the article which highlights the main aspects of the paper whereas keywords plus refers to the words which occur most frequently in the article even though they do not appear in the abstract or title of the article, and are automatically generated

with the help of a computer algorithm (Pesta et al., 2018). There are 1258 keywords plus and 1422 author keywords in this study. The majority of the articles are authored by two or more authors with a collaboration index of 2.28 which is an indication of increased productivity of authors due to institutional collaborations (Donthu et al., 2021). Out of a total of 1094 authors, 50 have single-authored articles and 1044 have multi-authored articles. The authors per article are 2.06 and co-authors per article are 2.9.

### Annual Scientific Production



Source: Authors' own compilation.

**Fig. 2: Annual Scientific Production in the Domain of Social Commerce from 2009-2021**

Fig. 2 shows the trend of year-wise publication from 2009 to 2021 with an increasing trend every year. In the beginning years of research on social commerce, the publications have been less with only 1-20 articles being published in the first 5-6 years because of a lack of awareness among the masses about the phenomenon and also because of less use of technology at that time. But with the rise of web 2.0 and increasing use of social media by users, the research in the field has also seen growth since 2015. It can be observed from Fig. 2 that the highest number of publications was in the year 2021 (119). The annual scientific production per year

increased from one article in 2009 to 119 articles in 2021.

### Most Relevant Authors and Authors' Impact

A descriptive analysis of the top authors working on social commerce has been done by listing down the top ten authors and studying their impact. The authors Impact has been studied with the help of h and g index. h-index is a bibliometric indicator that refers to the number of articles h, with each article receiving at least h citations and the g-index refers to the top g articles which have  $g^2$  or more citations (Jalal, 2019).

**Table 3: Top Most Authors**

Authors	Articles	h-index	g-index	TC	NP	PY_start
Hajli, N.	18	13	17	1244	17	2014
Wang, Y.	12	10	12	559	12	2013
Choi, Y.	8	1	1	4	3	2019
Li, Y.	8	4	7	187	7	2017
Shanmugam, M.	8	4	8	183	8	2015
Liébana-Cabanillas, F.	7	4	6	138	6	2017
Liu, Y.	7	4	5	70	5	2018
Lu, Y.	7	7	7	671	7	2014
Wang, X.	7	6	7	274	7	2017
Benyoucef, M.	6	6	6	1142	6	2013

TC = Total citations and NP= Number of publications, PY- Publication year.

Source: Biblioshiny software.

By investigating the data set it is found that out of a total of 1094 authors, almost 80% of the authors had only one publication each in the field of social commerce. Table 3 shows that, N. Hajli is the author with the highest number of publications on social commerce, that is, 18 followed by Y. Wang with 12 articles. On analysing the impact of these top most authors it has been found that N. Hajli is the most impactful author with the highest h and g index. For a total of 17 publications, N. Hajli has the highest total citations

and the highest local citation score of 2.86 making him the most prolific author in the field.

**Most Productive Countries**

The descriptive analysis of most productive countries shows the countries from where maximum authors are carrying out research and publishing their work on social commerce. The ranking of countries has been done on the basis of number of publications by each country.

**Table 4: Top 10 Most Productive Countries**

Country	Articles	Freq	SCP	MCP	MCP Ratio	Total Citations
China	151	0.3794	96	55	0.364	4902
Korea	48	0.1206	39	9	0.188	1303
USA	46	0.11558	30	16	0.348	1884
United Kingdom	17	0.04271	6	11	0.647	611
Malaysia	16	0.0402	9	7	0.438	190
Spain	15	0.03769	10	5	0.333	331
Iran	13	0.03266	10	3	0.231	341
Canada	12	0.03015	2	10	0.833	943
Jordan	8	0.0201	7	1	0.125	63
India	7	0.01759	7	0	0	36

SCP=Single country publication, MCP=Multi country Publication.

Source: Biblioshiny software.

Table 4 shows that China has the most publications (151) in the field. Korea, the United States, the United Kingdom and Malaysia follow closely after. Among all countries, China ranks first with 4902 citations, followed by the United States, Korea and the United Kingdom. For nations with a smaller gap between articles and MCP, the MCP ratio—which displays the percentage of multi-country publications to the overall number of articles—is greater. China ranks

first with 96 publications for a single nation and first with 55 for multi-country publications among the top ten countries. Due to a significant disparity between the number of articles and the multi-country publication, China’s MCP ratio (.364) is lower than many other nations, despite having the highest MCP and the biggest number of articles. As India’s MCP ratio was zero, it’s safe to say that it is working alone on social commerce research and has no partnerships.

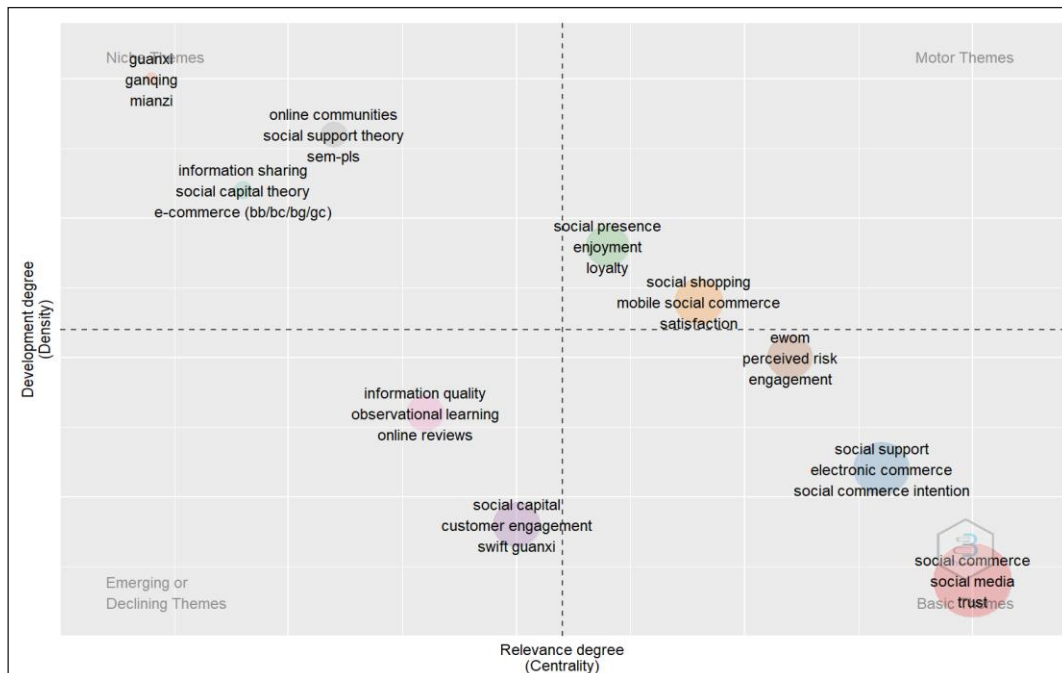
Thus, China emerges to be the world leader in research in this field as it has the world's largest internet market and a highly well-developed e-commerce ecosystem (Cui et al., 2018).

## Science Mapping

Science mapping is a bibliometric tool involving methods and techniques for the visual representation of the knowledge structure of a field of study. It uses the actual content of documents to extract networks based on different units of analysis like authors, articles, countries, etc. (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). In the current study, thematic map has been used as techniques of science mapping.

## Thematic Map

This study has a number of goals, one of which is to identify and give future research paths. In order to do this, a thematic map that is based on the authors' keywords has been taken into consideration. While maintaining a minimum cluster frequency of five (per 1000 documents), the keywords of 250 writers have been grouped. This was done taking into account the two metrics of centrality and density. Based on the measure of centrality, which refers to the relevance of the theme in the entire research field, and the density, which refers to the development of the theme over the years, a thematic or strategic map visualises the grouping of themes in the form of clusters, as stated by Cobo et al. (2011).



Source: Biblioshiny software.

**Fig. 3: Thematic Map of Author-Keywords in the Field of Social Commerce**

The thematic map in Fig. 3 shows four quadrants based on density and centrality based on which clusters have been developed through the thematic map technique in the biblioshiny software. The clusters have been named on the basis of the total number of keywords and the keyword with maximum number of occurrences in each cluster.

- Cluster 1: Outcomes of Social Commerce

The lower left quadrant covers the themes which are low on centrality and density showing that these are areas that are either emerging or declining. But for social commerce, the themes in this quadrant are emerging themes as they are more towards the upper right of the quadrant. Information

quality as a theme has the highest number of occurrences out of a total of 40 keywords in this cluster. The cluster includes various outcomes of social commerce some of which like social capital, and social engagement which began to be explored in the early years of social commerce research as in Shiue et al. (2010) Shen and Eder, (2011). The behavioural outcomes studied concerning social commerce include purchase intention, repurchase intention, impulse buying, e-commerce satisfaction, service quality, flow experience, social presence, social interaction and customer engagement. Since social commerce is comparatively a new field of study, thus authors have the opportunity to explore the outcomes of adopting social commerce by customers around the globe.

- Cluster 2: Consumer Behaviour in Social Commerce

The lower right quadrant lists themes that are high on centrality but low on density thus, implying that more research can be done in these areas such as eWOM, perceived risk, social shopping and information quality. Since this quadrant covers the basic themes thus, the maximum number of keywords, that is, 141 keywords appear here of which, social commerce is the most frequently occurring keyword with a total of 371 occurrences in the entire data set followed by social media with 81 occurrences. Consumer behaviour is the most popular and most researched theme in social commerce (Han et al., 2018). Consumer behaviour has also been studied in the context of Consumer-to-Consumer social commerce also, that is, commercial transactions between consumers and signifies the role played by consumers in this field. Social presence, social commerce constructs, social support, eWOM, perceived risk, perceived value information quality, relationship quality, trust and perceived usefulness have an effect on consumer behaviour in making purchase decisions through social networking sites. These factors appear together in the cluster as these have been studied together in various studies such as (Sheikh et al, 2019; Liang et al., 2011) to find how they directly or indirectly affect consumer behaviour.

- Cluster 3: Antecedents of Social Commerce

The upper right quadrant shows the ‘motor themes’ that are both high on centrality and density. Since these are well-developed and important themes thus more research can be done in the future. This quadrant has 52 keywords. It covers the themes which have been studied as antecedents of social commerce with social presence being the most frequently studied. Factors such as enjoyment, familiarity, loyalty, parasocial interaction, privacy, security and social comparison are all part of this quadrant as the effect of these factors on the adoption of social commerce has been explored by authors and there is still a lot of potential to study their effect on new trends in social commerce like on mobile social commerce. These factors can be further classified into social, transactional and informational (Shen & Eder, 2011). Each antecedent is a theme of social commerce (Lin et al., 2016) and acts as a stimulus that leads to a behavioural outcome (Ngai et al., 2015). The study of antecedents has been a major focus of empirical research done on social commerce (Lin et al., 2016). In sync with this, the cluster represents that most of the studies in the area of social commerce have been done on the identification of factors that lead to social commerce adoption.

- Cluster 4: Social Commerce Constructs

The upper left quadrant covers ‘niche themes’ that are high on density but low on centrality which means there are of high importance. Since this cluster covers niche themes

that are rapidly developing with time but are not very frequently researched, thus, as compared to other quadrants this quadrant has the lowest number of keywords in it, that is, 17 out of which online communities have the highest number of occurrences, that is, 6 This quadrant covers the various forms in which social commerce can be done also called as social commerce constructs (Al-Adwan, 2019) which includes online communities, forums, etc. and social networking sites. These constructs are tools of innovation (Hajli, 2012) and help in reaching out to the customers in the easiest possible way.

## DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to identify the worldwide trends in social commerce literature over a period of time. The methodological contribution of this paper is that it uses Biblioshiny app which is one of the latest software for bibliometric analysis and has an easy user interface for performing analysis by making networks and descriptive tables.

The results suggest that there has been a conspicuous growth in research on the topic of social commerce from 2009 to 2021 with a major spike coming in the year 2021. With the growth in the adoption of social commerce by consumers across the globe, the research in the field has also increased with time. From 2009 to 2012 the total number of publications in the field was as less as 12 thus, the trending themes started emerging in the year 2013 when the number of publications started increasing. 2019-2021 has seen a peak in research on social commerce in the entire period of 13 years, that is, 2009-2021.

As a result of the worldwide wave of COVID-19, there has been a sudden increase in the number of people shopping through social media (Goyal et al., 2021). Additionally, authors have been exploring newer dimensions of social commerce, which has led to an increase in the amount of research conducted in this field, with the highest number of publications coming in the year 2021. Maximum research on social commerce has been done by China, with the largest number of publications and citations worldwide, thus making China the global leader in this field.

Science mapping in the form of co-word analysis using a thematic map represented the most frequently studied concepts in the articles on the theme including ‘social media’, ‘trust’, ‘purchase intention’, ‘TAM’, ‘social support’, ‘social presence’ to name a few. The themes highlight that social commerce is influenced by consumer socialisation and the socialisation between consumers affect their purchase behaviour (Wang et al., 2012). And since consumer behaviour is an ever-changing concept, these themes hold

a lot of potential to be studied in the context of people from different cultures and countries. It was discovered that foreign companies such as Facebook presently have a dominant position in the social commerce arena that is driven by social media. According to Statista, in the year 2022, Facebook and Instagram were the social media platforms that were most widely used for purchasing things all around the globe. Recent studies have shown that the antecedents such as trust, price, time-saving, payment and security, continue to have an impact on consumers' online purchasing behaviour during COVID-19 (Jain, Shivnani & Babu, 2023) and thus, the study of social commerce and its antecedents holds relevance even in the post COVID-19 era.

## MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The dominance by a few social platforms like Facebook and Instagram in the social commerce market poses a challenge to new and indigenous platforms. Taking an example of India, made in India social media apps like Roposo, and Meesho, which have only been around for a few years are also aiming to make a mark in the social commerce arena (Mint Report, 2021). These sites can carve out their own space by focusing on niche customer segments, offering unique features and providing localised and personalised experiences that resonate with their target audience.

Social commerce is revolutionising the fundamental principles of online marketing. This emerging trend involves sellers being interconnected through online social networks, marking a shift in marketing focus from brand recognition to community recognition and from brand management to relationship management (Hsu, 2019). Essentially, social commerce has transformed traditional online marketing into a data-driven approach, now referred to as e-marketing or digital marketing. Recognising this profound change brought about by social commerce is crucial for future marketing studies.

The marketers need to focus on the creation of a consistent customer experience in social commerce. Communication is a key characteristic of customer experience (Grewal et al., 2009). Since consumers rely on the suggestions and recommendations of other people on social commerce platforms, the authenticity of and trust in the information is always a concern. The marketers should prioritise customer satisfaction, and be proactive to customer feedback to continually improve the social commerce practices and strengthen consumer trust in the brand.

Majority of consumers spend most of their time browsing the social networking sites and connecting with family and friends (Statista, 2022). Even today, e-commerce websites still account for the majority of online sales, accounting

for 97% of revenues though in the years to come social commerce is set to surpass the e-commerce market worldwide (Forbes, 2022). Thus, at present social commerce platforms need to focus on influencing and converting browsers into purchasers.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study has certain limitations. Firstly, the entire analysis relies on information retrieved from one database which is constantly updated and this can lead to variation in the analysis as social commerce is still an emerging concept and the research in this field shall increase in the years to come. Future researchers have an opportunity to expand the scope of the study by using a combination of databases rather than just one database so that no published work in this area is left out of the analysis. Secondly, to cover related aspects of social commerce keywords other than 'social commerce' such as 'social shopping', 'Facebook Commerce' can be included in future studies. Thirdly, other science mapping techniques can be performed to make the research more dynamic (Gao et al., 2021). Thus, a few of the descriptive and science mapping techniques of bibliometric analysis which could not be covered in this study, present an opportunity for future research. Also, while research on social commerce has predominantly focused on developed markets, there is an increasing interest in understanding social commerce practices, challenges and opportunities in emerging markets. This includes investigating cultural influences, technological infrastructure and socio-economic factors that shape social commerce adoption and usage patterns.

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