

Social Media Marketing during Covid-19 Outbreak: A Study Based on Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

Research in the area of social media marketing has risen at a higher pace in last few years. Moreover, the Covid-19 outbreak has helped social media marketing to reach new heights. The present study focuses upon the research done in the area of social media marketing during the pandemic. The purpose of the study is to give a bibliometric outline of the primary trends of SMM during this period. The research has used the SCOPUS database to collect the data related to the studies conducted on SMM in the years 2020 and 2021. The study analyses the data based on the keywords, citations and linkages. The study undertakes the analysis on 2000 research articles and gives a graphical & visual representation of the results. The present research found that United States and United Kingdom top the list of the countries conducted research in the area of SMM during Pandemic followed by , Australia, India and China. The study also observes that Facebook and Instagram are two most popular social media platforms amongst researchers. The researchers find that there are in total 47 linkages found between the Social Media Marketing and Covid-19. This article helps researchers and academia doing research in the area of SMM to contemplate on the most leading topics and identify the gaps in the literature.

Keywords: Social Media, Marketing, Covid-19, Bibliometrics

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 outbreak has been one of the greatest challenges for the mankind. The world observed its toughest time during 2020-2021. The governments across nations are trying really hard in order to minimize the damage occurred by the coronavirus. The impact of the virus was extremely dreadful and it led the World Health Organization to declare the situation as public health emergency. The governments are compelled to restrict social gatherings to shrink the spread of this deadly virus. Social distancing is considered to be the most prominent key to get over this disease. At one end, the physical distance has allowed people to be safe but at the other end, it has revolved the routine.

The pandemic has affected social, profession and psychological health and people are suffering from various financial and psychological issues (Bradbury- Jones & Isham, 2020; Danziger, 2020; Lufkin, 2020). Implementation of social distancing norms has also reduced the demand in SME's (Nicola et al., 2020). As the demand for the products and services is decreasing in the market, marketers are trying to enhance their market share using different tactics of marketing. Social Media Marketing (SMM) is one of the greatest trending activities amongst marketers during the Covid-19 outbreak. The relevance of SMM has been discussed by various authors and they mentioned social media as a great weapon to enhance the value and credibility of the company (Aral & Weill, 2007). Some researchers also found that the SMM can help marketers to attract customers (Ahmad et al., 2018; Bailey, 2019; Chatterjee & Kar, 2020). The emergence of internet has helped all types of businesses to create new options and increase the profitability (Chang & Cheung, 2001; Weisberg et al., 2011).

The Covid-19 Pandemic has also allowed social media platforms to enhance the level of engagement with its users which has a huge influence on the consumer behaviour (Carlson et al., 2018; Brough & Martin, 2020). People feel more connected to the internet and social media as they are stuck in their houses and living with digital devices (Nabity-Grover et al., 2020). According to Finset et al. (2020) social media is extensively used by the governments to spread the word-of-mouth related to safety and

hygiene. In contrary to that, Depoux et al. (2020) found that the social media is a double edged sword and also leads to rumours and fake information.

Wagner et al. (2020) observed that the use of internet has led users to have multiple profiles and these profiles are being used as a great source of information by the marketers. People are showcasing their experiences on social media platforms as they cannot do it physically (Chen et al., 2020). According to Zhang et al.(2020) The social media marketing has become a wide area of research due to its ability of community information exchange, wide variety of user base and different aggregation models. The social media has changed the way people used to interact in pre-covid era. There have been many developments in the marketing strategies during last couple of years and this change can be attributed to restrictions imposed by the governments (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). This change in the behaviour of consumers has induced the marketing community to look for different opportunities (Öztürk, 2020).

There have been numerous studies conducting systematic review of literature in the area of marketing in the recent past, but only few of them have examined the popularity of SMM during pandemic. Therefore, the present study explores the primary themes in the literature of social media marketing using bibliometric analysis. The aim of this study is to analyse the literature and find out the main linkages, themes etc. It also aims to find out the countries doing extensive research in the area of social media marketing during the covid-19 outbreak. It also collects the information regarding authors, citations and sources using the VOSviewer software.

The present research talks about the studies related to the social media marketing , Covid-19 and bibliometric analysis in the section 2 named as Review of Literature. Section 3 of the paper describes the methodology used in conducting the research. Then section 4 examines the results and gives a brief discussion over major findings. Section 5 gives the concluding remarks, section 6 talks about the implications of the research and section 7 focuses upon the limitation and the scope of further research in the given area.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Whenever a research journey starts, it is important to have an idea about the studies conducted in the same area. The literature has to be examined in such a way that it helps the researcher to identify the gap and make contributions to the existing body of knowledge (Bornmann & Mutz, 2015).

2.1 Social Media Marketing

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) stated that the social media includes all internet-based technological application which allow people to generate and share the content. These applications include social networking platforms like Facebook, Microblogging sites like Twitter, Photo sharing apps such as Instagram and Pinterest, Video sharing apps such as Youtube and TikTok, Virtual world like second life etc. (Chan & Guillet, 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

The explosion of these sites has enabled marketers to capitalise on the opportunity and reach customers in no time (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). SMM is largely used as an effective tool that enhances the marketing strategies of the firm. SMM primarily contributes in the area of customer involvement and enhancement (Filo et al., 2015; Saxena & Khanna, 2013). A huge number of researches have focussed upon the social media and its association with customer behaviour and perception. Even some of the researchers observed social media to be the main source of information when they get back to the sources while taking a buying decision (Hamilton et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2016; Erkan & Evans, 2016).

2.2 Social Media and Covid-19

Samet (2020) found that there has been an explosion in the number of social media users in the Covid era. There has been a shift in the marketing activities in the recent past, specifically during the Covid-19 outbreak. Marketers have moved from the conventional means to digital media. Adoption of Internet and e-business technology also helps promoting the online transactions especially during pandemic (Patma et al, 2020). The spread of coronavirus has made it difficult for people to contact physically, thus making the marketing activities a cumbersome process (Mason et al., 2021).

According to Athwal et al. (2019) the social media marketing has a power to reduce the level of dissatisfaction and fulfil the emotional needs of the consumers. Knowles et al. (2020) stated that the consumers experience a fear of social contact with the sales representative and therefore, they rely on social media to a large extent. Even it is observed that social distancing has reduced the efficiency of services provided by the businesses (Root, 2020). Kumar et al. (2020) has demonstrated the relevance of social media in marketing and integrated marketing promotional messages better influence people and their perceptions.

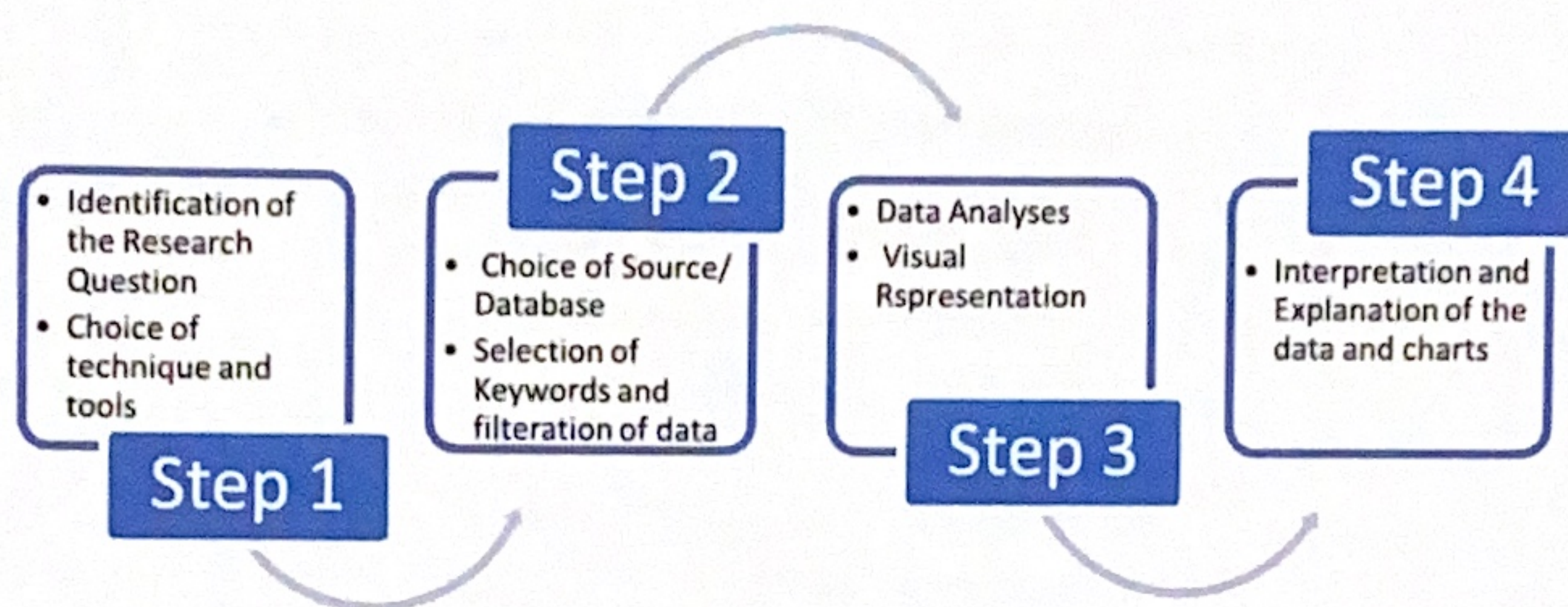
2.3 Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis is one of the key techniques used to analyse the literature in a systematic manner. Earlier, the bibliometry was used to handle the developments in the area of the scientific research (Broadus, 1987, Donthu et al., 2020). A systematic review of the developments in a research area can help researchers to explore the gaps in the field and help them to fill these gaps (Çiçek & Kozak, 2012). According to Vogel & Güttel (2013), Bibliometric analysis is an effective method for reviewing the academic literature of a particular field. Martínez López et al. (2018) stated that bibliometric analysis is extensively used in the area of marketing. Even a surge in the studies related to Covid-19 has been observed in the recent past (Kambhampati et al., 2020) and many studies of them have undertaken the bibliometric analysis for the same (Hossain, 2020; Chahrour et al., 2020; Lou et al., 2020; Darsono et al., 2020; Verma & Gustafsson, 2020; Dehghanbanadaki et al., 2020; Kambhampati et al., 2020; Sa'ed & Al-Jabi, 2020; Hamidah et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2020)

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study aims to find out the major and leading themes of the research done in the area social media marketing during the Covid-19 outbreak. Bibliometric analysis uses different techniques where the data related to citation, co-citation, disciplines, countries etc. is collected and analysed (Koehler, 2001). The following flowchart depicts steps used while performing the bibliometric analysis in the present research.

Figure 1: The Flowchart of Bibliometric Analysis



The prevailing situation of the market has raised many questions for the researchers in the domain of marketing techniques. In this regard, the present study tries to identify the relevance of social media marketing amid coronavirus. The main objective of the research is to look upon the literature presented in the area of SMM so that it can help future researchers to identify gaps and fill them with novel ideas. Bibliometric analysis is considered to be a fruitful technique as far as a systematic review of literature is concerned. The research in the area of digital marketing keeps on changing. Even in every five years, a lot of changes do take place in this area (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). Therefore, a bibliometric analysis has the power to identify the radical change, digital marketing is going through during the pandemic. The study uses VOSviewer 1.6.16 software (Van Eck & Waltman, 2014) as it provides a beautiful and effective visualisation of bibliometric data. It allows the data to be arranged in clusters and maps.

Scopus database is being used to get the all relevant research articles published in the area of social media marketing during 2020-2021. Scopus database is the largest and one of the most authentic databases available for the quality research publications (Dunakhe & Panse, 2021). The research has included research papers, conference proceedings and other published works. The term "Social Media Marketing" was searched. A total of 11,434 results were found ranging from the year 1969-2021. The data showed that 1467 and 847 researches are done in the year 2020 & 2021 respectively. Over 4000 studies are done in the domain Business, Management and Accounting. The researches published in 1969- 2005 are mainly concerned with the conventional marketing techniques. The term social media was

used first time in an article published in the year 2005 in the journal of communications network. Most of the researches in the area of social media marketing have come from United States.

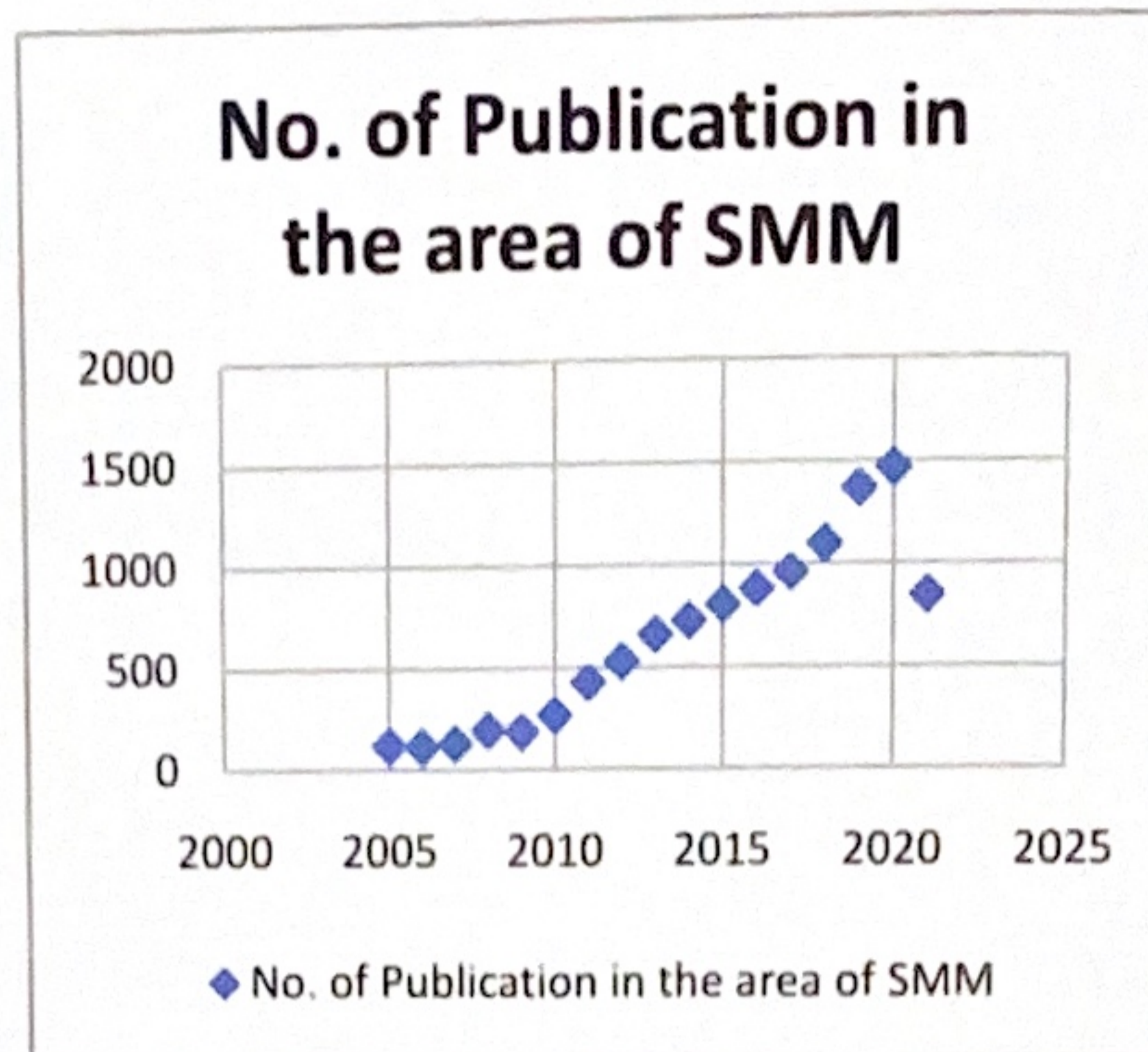
The data was again filtered out and 2000 studies were taken into consideration for further analyses. As the research is about the social media marketing during the pandemic, only the researches done in the year 2020-2021 are taken into consideration. A further search within the search was also performed to find out that how many of the studies contain the keywords Social Media Marketing and Covid-19. Around 189 articles were found who had talked about social media marketing amid covid-19.

The data file was directly downloaded from the scopus library using the scopus download extension. The file was downloaded in the .csv format. The file was uploaded to VOSviewer software for the further processing. The software allowed the data file to be converted into maps and graphs. The maps and clusters were being used to take insights out of the data. The findings of the study are discussed in the next section of the research paper.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

It is observed that the researches in the area of SMM have increased drastically since 2005. According to the data retrieved from the scopus, the year 2021 has already witnessed more than 800 studies in the area. The scatter diagram (Figure 2) given below is evident that how the researchers are gaining interest in the area of Social Media Marketing. There has been a large hike in the researches done in the area of social media marketing during 2019 and 2020. This hike can also be attributed to the increasing cases of covid-19 and social distancing (Dunake & Panse, 2021).

Figure 2: Year-wise Data of Publication in the Area of SMM (Scopus)

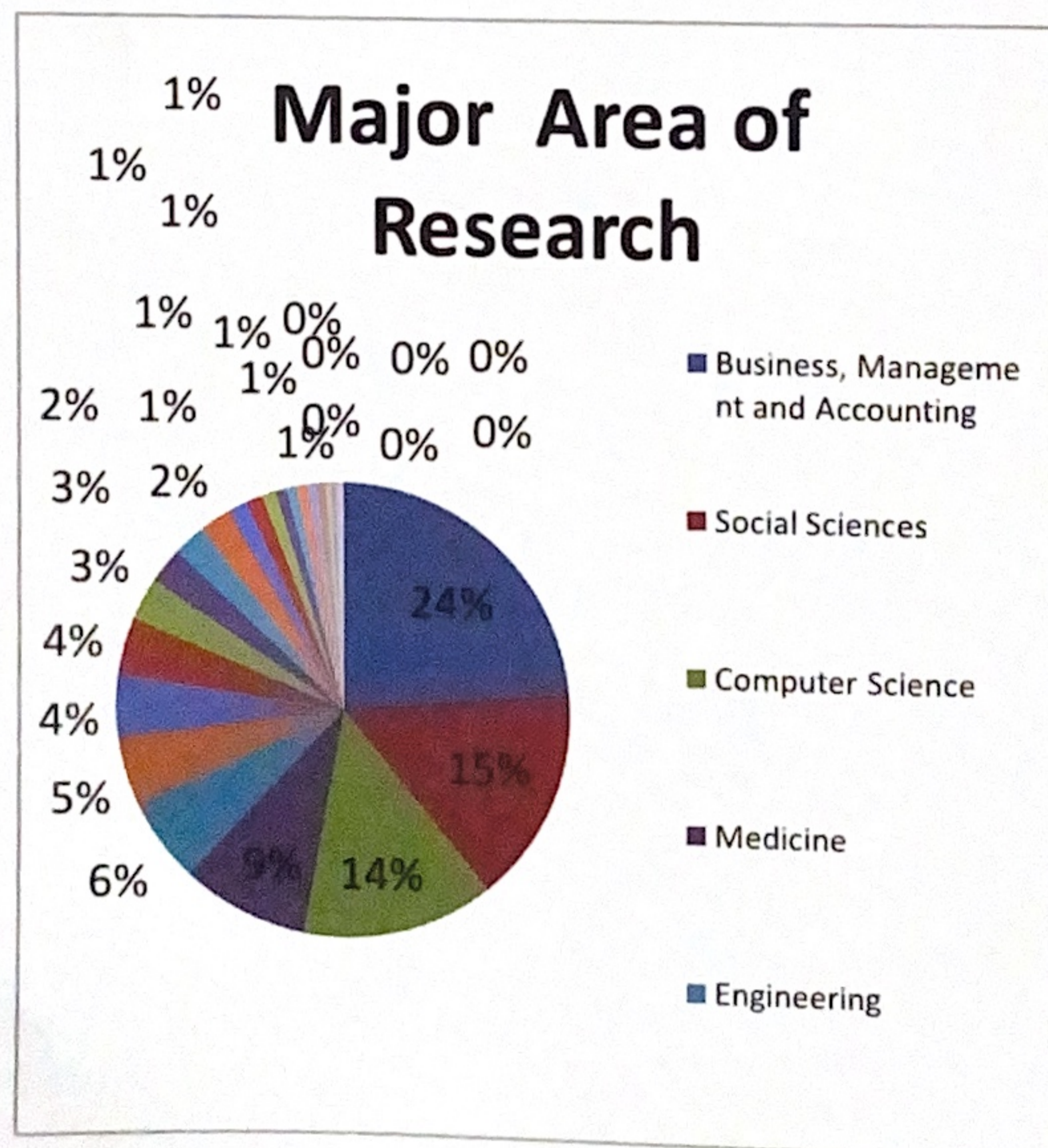


Source: Compiled by the authors

It can also be observed from the pie chart (fig. 3) given below that the majority of the researches are done in the area of Business Management and Accounting followed by the Social Sciences, Computer Sciences and Medicine as far as the SMM

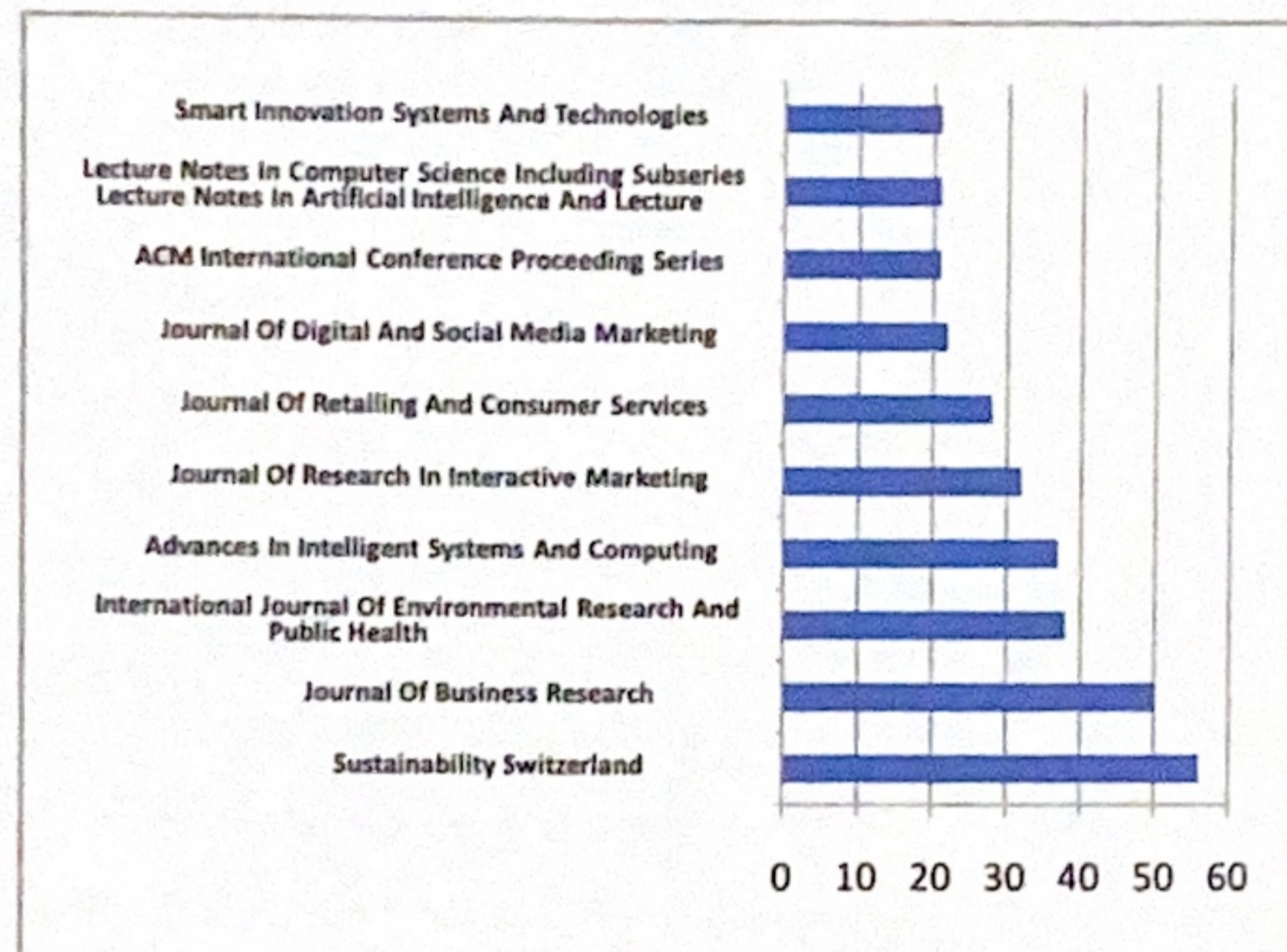
is concerned. The pie chart depicts the relevance of social media in the domain of Business, Management, Accounting and Social Sciences.

Figure 3: Major Area of SMM Research



Source: Compiled by the authors

Figure 4: Prominent Journals Publishing in the Area of SMM

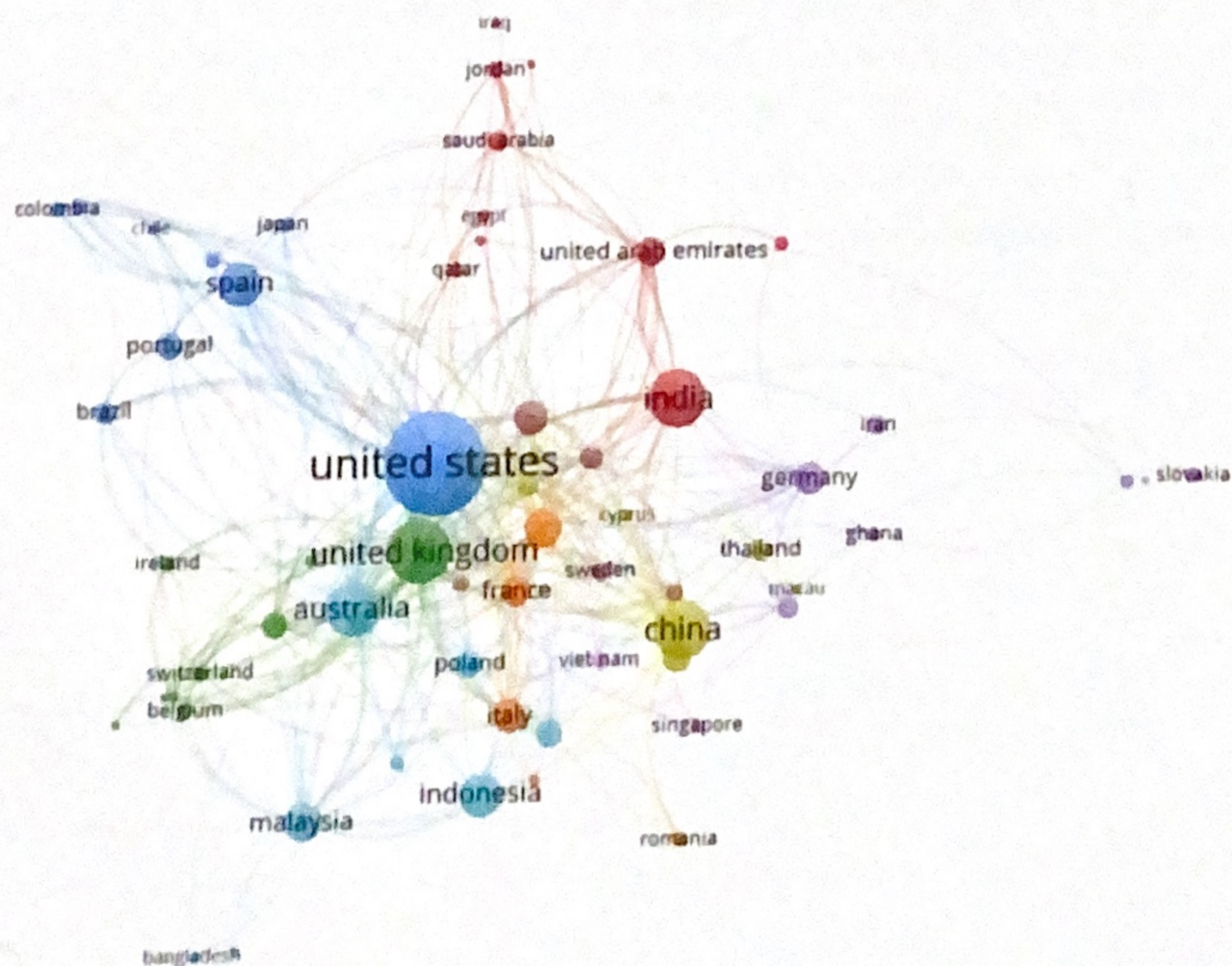


Source: Compiled by the authors

The above chart shows top ten journals which had been publishing the work related to SMM in the last couple of years. The chart depicts that many of the management and marketing research have included studies related to SMM in their publications in the year 2020-2021.

Table 1 shows that the United States has the highest citation score followed by the UK, China and India. The publication status is good for India but somewhere its not very high in total link strength.

Figure 5: Countries Doing Research in the Area of SMM During Pandemic



VOSviewer

Source: Compiled by the authors

Table 1 : Country-wise Citation, Linkages and TLS Score

label	x	y	cluster	weight<Links>	weight<Total link strength>	weight<Documents>	weight<Citations>
1	UNITED KINGDOM	-0.19	-0.098	2	45	191	192
2	UNITED STATES	-0.16	0.098	3	42	247	510
3	AUSTRALIA	-0.35	-0.224	6	34	130	147
4	CANADA	0.09	-0.049	7	27	62	68
5	FRANCE	0.03	-0.192	7	27	67	46
6	SPAIN	-0.62	0.513	3	27	61	93
7	CHINA	0.42	-0.281	4	25	103	165
8	GERMANY	0.71	0.058	5	25	42	54
9	MALAYSIA	-0.46	-0.703	6	24	44	70
10	INDIA	0.4	0.241	1	23	56	165

Further analysis is done using the VOSviewer software and represented visually in the figure given above (fig 5). It can be observed from the figure 5 that most of the research in area of SMM during 2020-2021 is done in the United States (Document-510, TLS 247), followed by United Kingdom (Documents- 192, TLS 191), Australia (Documents-147, TLS 130),China (Documents-165 TLS-130) and India (Documents-165 TLS-56) . It depicts the popularity of social media marketing in the Indian markets and amongst Indian researchers. But they do not believe in cross-country authorship as compared to other nations.

the literature and their co-occurrence with other words. The figure illustrates that Social Media is the most prominent keyword in the literature with 1113 TLS followed by Social Media Marketing (308 TLS) and Marketing (249 TLS). There are some more observations related to the keywords which can help researchers in the future. It can be seen that there are in total 87 TLS related of Covid-19 which clearly shows that researchers are taking covid-19 as an influential factor as far as SM is concerned. Even it can be seen that Facebook (147 TLS) and Instagram (165 TLS) are among some of the prominent social media platforms and attracting the researchers.

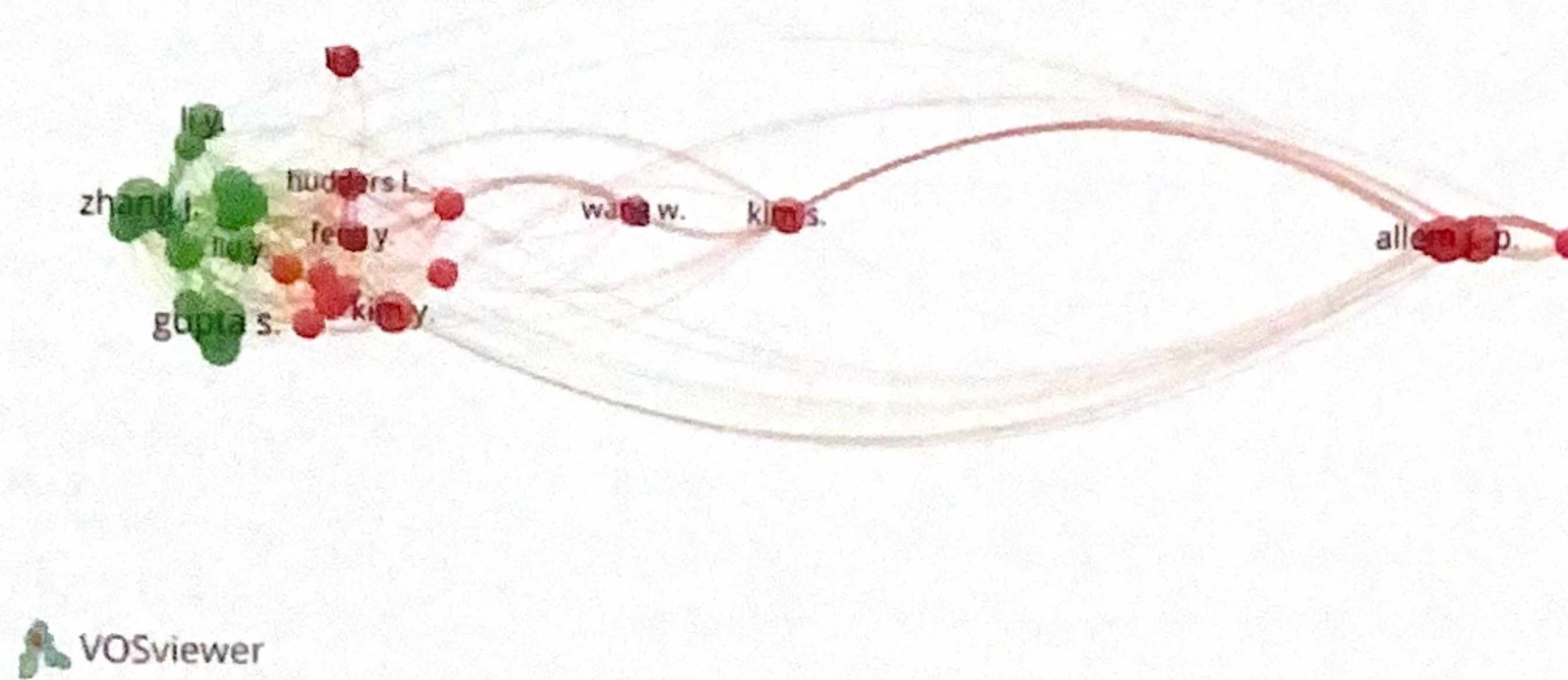
Figure 6 shows the most prominent keywords used in

Figure 6: Keywords and Their Linkages.



Source: Compiled by the authors

Figure 7 : Co-authorship of Authors



Source: Compiled by the authors

The present research also explores the linkages among authors of the literature used. Wherever the linkages are found, they depict that some of the authors have co-authored for one or more researches. Gupta & Zhang are found to be most prominent

authors doing research in the area of SMM during the last couple of years i.e. research publications 10 and 9 respectively. The results have formed 2 clusters shown by red and green colours.

Table 2 : Author-wise Citation, Documents and TLS Score

Ranks	Author	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
1	Allem J.-P.	8	20	583
2	Bragg M.A.	5	27	25
3	Chen X.	5	13	285
4	Cheung M.L.	6	61	946
5	Cruz T.B.	6	12	555
6	Dwivedi Y.K.	6	113	1786
7	Feng Y.	5	4	218
8	Gupta S.	10	30	273
9	Harrigan P.	8	23	669
10	Hudders L.	5	56	357
11	Jin S.V.	5	45	300
12	Kim J.	6	11	208
13	Kim S.	6	4	262
14	Kim Y.	7	39	260
15	Krishen A.S.	6	71	1093
16	Kumar S.	7	23	121
17	Lee J.	5	3	48
18	Li L.	5	3	101
19	Li Y.	6	28	80
20	Li Z.	5	5	3
21	Liu Y.	5	3	162

22	Majmundar A.	5	16	453
23	Rana N.P.	5	43	970
24	Unger J.B.	8	12	632
25	Wang S.	7	49	474
26	Wang W.	5	7	226
27	Wang X.	5	6	82
28	Wang Y.	6	77	1202
29	Wang Z.	5	6	260
30	Yang Y.	5	2	345
31	Zhang J.	9	7	645
32	Zhang L.	5	7	252
33	Zhang Y.	6	4	631
34	Zhu X.	5	0	51

The above table gives a summary of the prominent authors in the area and their citation score. It also shows the total link strength of the authors which shows how many of them have been indulged in co-authorship with each other.

5. CONCLUSION

The objective of the study is to identify the main research trends in area of Social Media Marketing especially during the pandemic. The study analyses the trend using the most common yet effective technique of literature review i.e bibliometric analysis. Bibliometric approach is scientific mapping approach which collects the data of published work from libraries and analyses the same. The study observes that there is a significant impact of pandemic on the literature related to SMM. The area attracts many researchers in the Web 2.0 era. Even an increasing trend is been observed as far as research in this area is concerned. It is observed that many developed nations are doing researches about the social media marketing during the covid-19 outbreak. Countries such as United States, United Kingdom, Australia, China and India are among prominent nations. The study also tries to look upon the most highlighted keywords in the literature.

The data revealed that social media is the most used word in the literature followed by marketing and humans. An important insight drawn from the co-occurrence of the keyword is that there are very low linkages between covid-19 and social media marketing. This result can help the future researches

to conduct studies where the link between social media marketing and the covid-19 can be established. If we talk of the citation analysis, most of the citations are coming from US and UK. As per the co-authorship data, it is seen that, Unger J.B, Allem J.P and Cruz T.B are among some who have highest number of links i.e 4 each and total link strength 17, 17 and 16 respectively.

The study also reveals that Sustainability Switzerland, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Research In Interactive Marketing and Journal of Retailing And Consumer Services are among top ten journals publishing in the area of SMM during Pandemic. This study explores the new dimensions of the research done in the domain of digital marketing. It is found that the social media marketing and its research is gaining popularity in the current times but still the literature about the association between covid-19 and SMM is under developed. The present research is an attempt to provide the systematic review of the literature in order to promote research in the domain of SMM and Covid-19.

6. IMPLICATIONS

The present research is a part of systematic review of literature and poses as a foundation for many related research. The article focuses on the researches done in the area of social media marketing during the Covid-19 period which has emerged as a new normal in the recent days. The marketers are striving for more and more social

networks where they can easily reach their audience. The popularity of social media marketing in the Covid-19 outbreak makes it a potential area of research and the article provides a good start to those researches. The article contributes towards the identification of most used keywords and their linkages with other words like facebook and Influencer marketing helping future researchers to work on this prominent platform i.e facebook or technique of marketing i.e Influencer marketing. The article also talks about the most prominent authors working in the area of SMM enabling further researchers to follow them. Also the present paper clearly shows that the research in the area of SMM is very popular in the countries like US and China. The developed nations are predominantly working in the given area leaving scope for the developing nations like India.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study suffers some of the limitations such as limited literature. As the study focuses on the Covid-19 era, the number of research articles published is quite low. Therefore the results cannot be generalised. Secondly, the study has taken only the published books, articles, research papers from the scopus which cannot be sufficient for the generalization despite being one of the largest and most authentic indices. The future researches can include the data from various sources to make such kind of studies more comprehensive.

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