



## **Mapping the Landscape of Influencer Marketing and Sponsorship Disclosure: A Bibliometric Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

The intellectual environment around the incorporation of influencer marketing is systematically examined in this paper. This chapter conducts a thorough quantitative evaluation of the literature using bibliometric techniques in order to pinpoint important trends, significant writers, and new study topics in the ever-evolving field of Influencer marketing. A thorough examination of scholarly works, citation trends, and cooperative networks are all included in the analysis, which provides insights on the development of knowledge and the connections between concepts at the nexus of Influencer Marketing and Sponsorship Disclosures. The chapter seeks to improve our comprehension of the most influential contributions by charting the field's conceptual framework, influencing future research directions. Critical focal areas including recognizing foundational works, developing research frontiers, and possible gaps in the literature are also highlighted here.

**Key words:** Influencer marketing, Sponsorship disclosure, Sponsorship, Sponsored content, Bibliometric Analysis

### **Introduction**

Businesses and consumers have changed as a result of the Internet's onset and progress over time. In addition to making it quicker to obtain information and material, the increasing popularity of the internet, particularly social media, has also made it possible to individuals to establish themselves as their own creators of content. Nielsen reports that 92% of consumers place greater trust in influencer marketing than in conventional forms of promotion. More than 75% of firms have set aside a specific budget for influencer marketing, which has grown to \$16.4 billion, according to a Harvard Business Review article from 2022 (Leung et al., 2022). Word-of-mouth recommendations from friends or salespeople about a product's advantages can sway consumers. These days, social media influencers (SMIs) have taken their position, and they are mostly responsible for the influence (Burns, 2021). Lou and Yuan (2019) define social media influencers to be individuals who possess an ideal number of followers or fans on a particular platform or platforms and have the ability to affect those followers. Beginning with blogs in 2005, the idea of influencers spread to other social networking platforms including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and X (Twitter) (Ye et al., 2021; Borchers, 2019).

Influencer marketing is still a growing component of digital marketing strategies as social media platforms change, helping firms to adapt to the changing interests and behavior of online consumers. One effective way to affect customers' purchasing decisions is through interpersonal contact. Influencer marketing is the term used to describe the practice of influencers regularly posting online content such as vlogs, comedy satires, and beauty tutorials to interactively inform consumers about their products through social media platforms. However, there is currently no specific academic explanation for influencer marketing (Johansen & Guldsvik, 2017).

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has criticized influencer advertising despite its success because it uses vague terms to describe the connection between influencers and brands. According to FTC guidelines, influencers who lead branded posts must uphold disclosure and adhere to rules that make it easier for customers to recognize Instagram advertisements (Federal Trade Commission, 2017). An apparent sponsorship disclosures declaration must hash-tag either "advertising," "sponsored," or "paid review" in order to disclose the brand-influencer relationship, per FTC regulations (Federal Trade Commission, 2017). It is considered an implied sponsorship disclosure if the terms "ad," "sp," or "featured" are used to indicate the purpose of the promotion. Nevertheless, nothing is currently known about the best way to



disclose sponsorships in influencer posts so that readers can identify them as advertisements. In order to create the most useful advertising content that can lower consumers' activation of persuasion information, businesses and marketers must evaluate the FTC guideline (Friestad & Wright, 1994).

Presenting a bibliometric overview of English-language marketing studies published in the Scopus database is the primary objective of the present study. This study will thus offer an insight into the work of earlier scholars and the evolution of bibliometric research in the influencer marketing domain with emphasis on sponsorship disclosures. Well-executed bibliometric studies can lay strong groundwork for progressing a field in fresh and significant ways (Donthu et al. (2021). They empower and enable researchers to "acquire a single-point overview," "pick out knowledge deficiencies," "draw fresh perspectives for investigation," and "position their achievements towards the the discipline." This study makes the following significant contributions. First off, as far as we are aware, no thorough bibliometric study paper has been published in the field of influencer marketing along with sponsorship disclosures. As a result, this is the domain's first comprehensive, systematic quantitative analysis. also, we suggest nine clusters based on the bibliometric analysis, which offer scholars who wish to expand the scope and depth of their work in this area.

## Literature Review

Influencer marketing is becoming more and more important in digital marketing techniques, according to recent research. Influencer marketing is being used by businesses to enhance conventional marketing initiatives and establish "digital relationships" with customers. The proliferation of social media platforms has led to the rise of influencers, who leverage their large follower networks to promote goods and services (Li et al., 2024). According to Yodel (2017), influencer marketing another word that refers to a marketing technique to marketers as an influencer give favor by creating the content of your article and other brand contents and will publish this content to their follower and target customers. Influencers can be divided into a number of categories based on their follower counts, including celebrities (followers over 5 million), mega influencers (followers between 1 and 5 million), top influencers (followers over 500,000), macro-influencers (100,000–500,000), middle-level influencers (20,000–100,000), micro-influencers (less than 20,000), and nano-influencers (followers between 1,000 and 10,000 only) (Biegun et al., 2019). Identifying and categorizing various social media influencer types in order to improve marketing tactics was another area of research interest. Snoopers, informers, entertainers, and infotainers are the "big four" that are included in a number of suggested typologies (Gross & Wangenheim, 2018). Along with rising, retaining, and fading influencers (Liu et al., 2015), studies have also defined influencer categories as activists, opinion leaders, and informational influencers (Soares & Reis, 2023).

According to a study of influencer marketing studies, it boosts customer trust, brand identification, and awareness (Iqbal et al., 2023). Using meta-analyses, Mishra (2023) found that the largest influence on purchase intention comes from customer attitudes on influencer marketing. Businesses can expand their target demographic, raise consumer engagement, and raise brand exposure with influencer marketing (Abbasi et al., 2023). Young consumers' purchasing intentions can be influenced by influencer marketing that uses user-generated content (Panopoulos et al., 2023). Research on influencer marketing and user-generated content has grown significantly, with studies concentrating on a variety of social media networks (Romero-Rodríguez & Castillo-Abdul, 2023). Influencers are more effective than celebrities at influencing consumers' buy intentions, as seen by the move away from traditional marketing strategies and toward influencer marketing (Trivedi & Sama, 2020). In addition to helping brands, influencer marketing enables "influencers" to make a respectable living just from their social media activity (Kamphuis, 2017). Accordingly, influencers can use digital content to assist customers develop positive views, which will then affect their desire to buy (Kim et al., 2021). Because it affects consumers' understanding of the product and their intention to buy,



influencers' popularity, attitude, value, and attractiveness substantially influence customers to buy a product (Kay et al., 2020).

Transparency-related ethical considerations are growing along with influencer marketing. To avoid deceiving customers, regulatory agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have implemented rules requiring unambiguous sponsorship declarations (FTC, 2017). Based on the notion of persuasion knowledge, prior studies on sponsorship disclosure in the media have looked at how sponsorship disclosure affects conceptual persuasion knowledge and brand sentiment. The sponsored program with a longer sponsorship disclosure length aroused individual's persuasive knowledge and negatively affected their brand attitude in comparison to a sponsored campaign with a less lengthy disclosure term (Boerman et al., 2012). Though its efficacy varies depending on the message's nature and the audience's characteristics, sponsorship disclosure can affect customer attitudes, trust, and purchase intentions (Boerman et al., 2017). According to research, open disclosure can decrease the influencer's perceived authenticity even while it increases perceived transparency (Evans et al., 2017). This conflict emphasizes how crucial it is to strike a balance between upholding the influencer's credibility and regulatory compliance. Feifei and Yang (2020), for example, discovered that excessively explicit disclosures, particularly for highly commercialized content, raise audience distrust.

In conclusion, sponsorship disclosure and influencer marketing are quickly developing domains with significant ramifications for consumer protection and advertising tactics. Future studies can offer important insights for enhancing this increasingly important marketing tool by filling in current gaps and integrating interdisciplinary viewpoints.

## Research Methodology

This study examines developments in influencer marketing, with a special emphasis on sponsorship disclosures. The researchers used bibliometric analysis, a well-used method for graphically depicting the conceptual landscape of a certain study subject, to accomplish this purpose. They began by conducting a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) in order to gather pertinent literature, find keywords and search terms, and choose noteworthy articles according to predetermined standards (Jain et al., 2021). Furthermore, as emphasized by Ren et al. (2019), Eduardsen & Marinova (2020), and Singh & Walia (2020), the study employed bibliometric approaches to analyze the literary works and generated a significant amount of information about the trends over time of notable research, notable publications, and notable authors' writings. By employing these methods, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject and shed light on the evolving field of influencer marketing and the disclosure requirements.

## Search Criteria

The study conducted their investigation using the extensive Scopus database, which is well-known for its wide range of papers. Publications that disseminate research findings act as a storehouse of current knowledge. Citations in these articles draw attention to the substantial variables examined and the number of correlations found (Jain et al., 2021). The methodical approach used to choose the final collection of 402 articles is shown in Table 1. We started by going through the 1326 publications about influencer marketing and sponsorship disclosures that were available in the Scopus database. Using a number of criteria, such as topic domain, document category, language, content relevancy, and the detection of inaccurate records, the final selection was diligently developed through screening. The integrity and applicability of the publications that were part of our study were guaranteed by this exacting procedure, which eventually strengthened the validity of our research conclusions. By means of extensive use of the Scopus database and rigorous filtering processes, we were able to collect a targeted and relevant body of literature that was crucial to our research on sponsorship disclosures and influencer marketing.



**Table 1: Search parameters and article selection**

Criteria for Screening	Reject	Accept
Search Term ("Influencer Marketing" OR "sponsorship disclosure")		1326
Subject Area ("Business, Management and Accounting")	659	667
Document Type ("Article," "Conference Paper")	126	541
Language Screening (English)	72	469
Keywords- (Influencer marketing, Sponsorship disclosure, Sponsorship, Sponsored content)	67	402
<b>Total number of articles reviewed</b>		<b>402</b>

(Calculations made by the author using the Scopus database)

## Results and Findings

The research issues outlined in the document are examined in detail in this part of the results. It looks into publication trends, identifies principal writers with the highest citation counts, examines citation distribution in various nations, highlights prestigious journals in the field of influencer marketing and sponsorships, and evaluates their impact on management practices. It examines the landscape of publication, recognizing key players in academic discourses and monitoring the global dissemination of scholarly works. Highlighting well-known publications sheds light on the channels promoting academic discussion and information sharing in the field of influencer marketing. Additionally, it examines how these academic works have affected managerial decisions and influencers approaches, providing insight into how to incorporate scholarly ideas into practical decision-making. This section provides insights into the rapidly developing field of influencer marketing and how their sponsorship disclosures may affect on management practices globally by summarizing an extensive analysis of research developments authorship variations, citation allocations, and scholarly repercussions.

## Sequential Publishing Trend

As seen in Figure 1, the article publishing explores how sponsorship disclosures relate to influencer marketing. Notably, the graphic depicts the original article's conception in 2015. However, there was a noticeable increase in interest in this topic in 2020, as indicated by the 36 articles published to that point. Following that, there was a progressive trend as the overall number of articles increased to 43 in 2021, 63 in 2022, and 92 in 2023. According to the statistics, the function of influencer marketing has garnered more scholarly attention throughout time, with a noticeable uptick in interest starting in 2020.

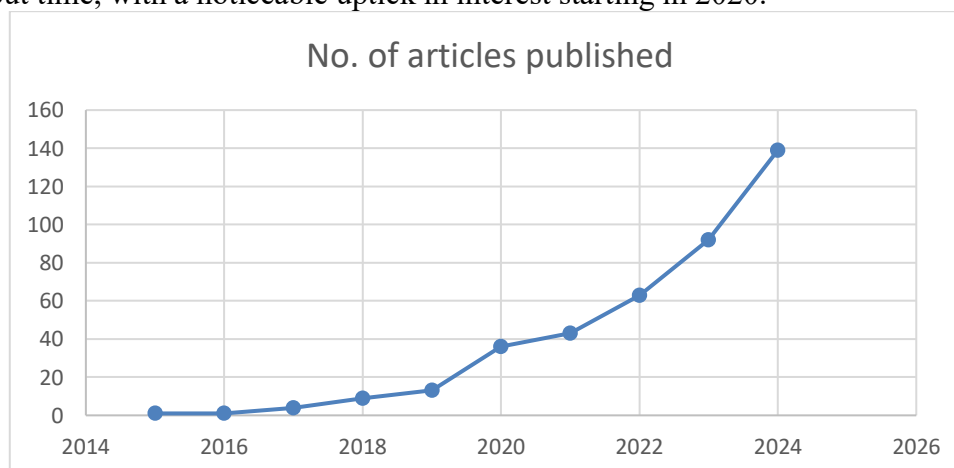


Figure 1. Trend of publishing by sequence (Author's Calculations Using Scopus Database)

## An analysis of the top authors with the most citations

The results of searching the Scopus database for writers with the highest citation counts are shown in Table 2. The top writers are shown in this table based on the quantity of citations they have received. Specifically, it displays the top 10 writers together with the number of citations they received. De Veirman M., Cauberghe V., and Hudders L. are at the top of the table with 1177 citations, followed by Lou C. and Yuan S. with 1166 references. Additionally, with 527





references, Vrontis D.; Makrides A.; Christofi M.; Thrassou A. established their status as highly referred writers.

The table provides a thorough summary of the most significant writers in the given dataset and provides insightful information about the degree of their scholarly influence as indicated by citations. This study emphasizes the significance of the works they produced in their respective fields, as shown by their recognition through citation counts in the scholarly literature.

**Table 2. Most Cited Authors (Own Calculations from Scopus Database)**

Authors	Title	No of citations
De Veirman M.; Cauberghe V.; Hudders L.	Marketing through instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude	1177
Lou C.; Yuan S.	Influencer Marketing: How Message Value and Credibility Affect Consumer Trust of Branded Content on social media	1166
Vrontis D.; Makrides A.; Christofi M.; Thrassou A.	Social media influencer marketing: A systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda	527
Audrezet A.; de Kerviler G.; Guidry Moulard J.	Authenticity under threat: When social media influencers need to go beyond self-presentation	468
Campbell C.; Farrell J.R.	More than meets the eye: The functional components underlying influencer marketing	419
Hughes C.; Swaminathan V.; Brooks G.	Driving Brand Engagement Through Online Social Influencers: An Empirical Investigation of Sponsored Blogging Campaigns	383
Ki C.-W.; Kim Y.-K.	The mechanism by which social media influencers persuade consumers: The role of consumers' desire to mimic	349
Hudders L.; De Jans S.; De Veirman M.	The commercialization of social media stars: a literature review and conceptual framework on the strategic use of social media influencers	345
Ki C.-W.; Cuevas L.M.; Chong S.M.; Lim H.	Influencer marketing: Social media influencers as human brands attaching to followers and yielding positive marketing results by fulfilling needs	320
Boerman S.C.; Willemsen L.M.; Van Der Aa E.P.	"This Post Is Sponsored": Effects of Sponsorship Disclosure on Persuasion Knowledge and Electronic Word of Mouth in the Context of Facebook	316

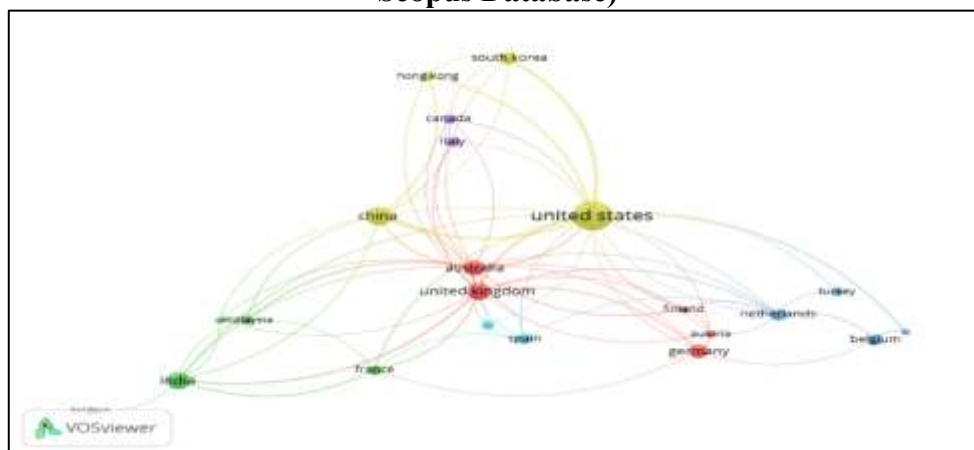
## Bibliographic Coupling among the Nations

The countries that have produced the most collaborative articles with researchers from other countries are shown in Figure 3. The United States has collaborated with, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Germany, France, Australia, Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Singapore and Austria on many of the articles at the top of the list. India is closely pursuing China, Spain, France, Portugal, Taiwan, Malaysia and Pakistan which is also leading in terms of joint paper publishing. The information demonstrates the wide participation of these countries in international research partnerships, demonstrating a worldwide commitment to combine resources and skills for academic pursuits. These articles' collaborative character highlights the interdependence of the international scientific community and the value of cross-border collaborations in promoting innovation and knowledge. By working together, nations may take

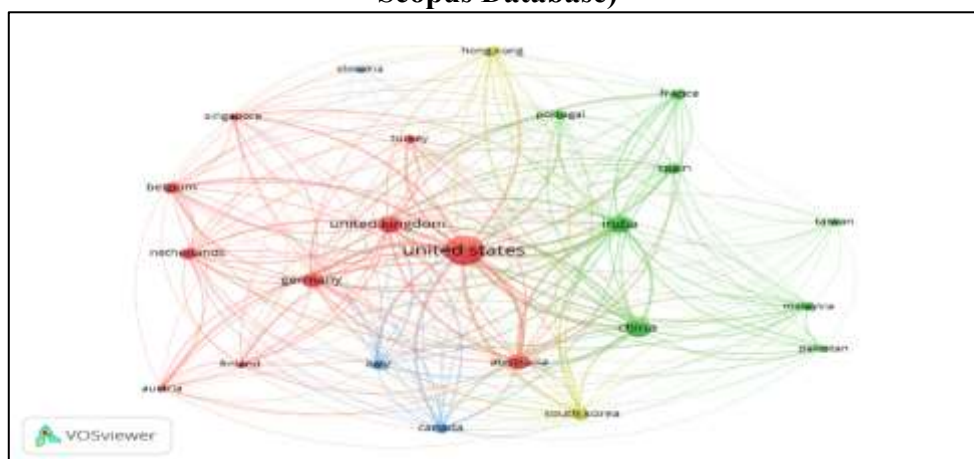


advantage of different viewpoints, pool resources, and tackle difficult problems that cut over national borders, thus creating a more vibrant and significant scientific environment on a worldwide basis.

**Figure 3.a) Bibliographic coupling among the nations (Author's Calculations from Scopus Database)**



**Figure 3.b) Bibliographic coupling among the nations (Author's Calculations from Scopus Database)**



## Thematic Framework of Influencer Marketing and Sponsorship Disclosures

Figure 4 shows several clusters that provide examples of each keyword the writers used in relation to the given topic. The following nine thematic clusters are identified following a bibliometric analysis within the topic of influencer marketing and sponsorship disclosures in this report: The cluster lists keywords that correspond to closely related fields or terms, which hint at different aspects or directions associated with this emerging discipline. Here's an explanation of the clusters, in detail:

### Cluster 1 (Red): Digital and AI-Driven Marketing

There are 12 elements in this cluster, such as:

**Artificial intelligence, digital influencers** and **virtual influencers** which points to the direct use of technology in influencer marketing, AI can be used to create or improve influencer campaigns, and for the novel growth of virtual influencers; Discussing **brand awareness**, consumer behavior, content marketing and purchase intentions in the context of how influencer campaigns influence consumer decisions and enhance brand recognition; Retailing and source credibility shows how influencers increase trustworthiness affecting the retail industry. The cluster covers more of the technological and strategic sides of influencer marketing and illustrates how upcoming trends in technology such as AI will impact the industry as a whole.

### Cluster 2 (Green): Ethics and Transparency

It includes 10 elements such as

**Trust, Transparency**, and **authenticity** are the key topics in ethical marketing practices,



particularly with respect to disclosing sponsorships. **Native advertising, sponsored content and sponsorship** are the deceiving formats and consequences of disclosed advertisements. We also need to consider the role of educated consumers and ethical practices in shaping effective influencer marketing practices with **advertising literacy and ethics**. This cluster highlights the ethical issues and regulatory needs to protect transparency in influencer marketing.

### **Cluster 3 (Blue): Parasocial Relationships and Credibility**

This cluster identifies 7 elements, including:

**Parasocial relationships and communication** aspects delves into researching the one-sided emotional relationships that consumers create with influencers, and how this motivates brand involvement. So, lets to dig into the key points of trust, the three elements, **Credibility, congruence** and **perception** which stresses on the need for influencer consistency and credibility to build trust. Mass statement of **celebrity endorsement** vs **social media influencer** as a form of marketing. It delves into the psychological dynamics that underlie consumer trust and the engagement they develop through influencer relationships.

### **Cluster 4 (Yellow) – Generational Engagement and Trustworthiness**

This cluster contains 7 elements, focusing on:

**Gen Z, Millennials** and **TikTok** determining the role of social media platforms and generational preferences in influencer marketing approaches. **Brand trust, engagement, and human behavior** collectively covering the topic of how influencers gain trust with different audience segments and insight into behavior. This cluster delves into the generational aspects of influencer marketing, as well as how trust drives consumer behavior.

### **Cluster 5 (Purple): The Role of Media and Influencers in Specific Platforms**

This cluster consists of (5 elements are):

Platform-specific Marketing Insights: (e.g. Youtube) - Discovering the unique **engagement** dynamics across social media platforms, especially the influence of UGC video content platforms like **YouTube** on influencer marketing campaigns. This cluster stresses the importance of **internet** platform and **media** format in influencing **influencer** strategies and audience interactions.

### **Cluster 6 (Light Blue) — Sponsorship Disclosure and Persuasive Knowledge**

This cluster containing 5 elements concentrates on:

**Influencers type, sponsorship disclosure, persuasion knowledge & perceived authenticity:** Investigating the effects of different types of influencers and their disclosure practices on how consumers perceive and identify the intent behind **advertisements**. This cluster focuses on the interplay between disclosure practices and psychological mechanisms such as persuasion knowledge.

### **Cluster 7 (Orange): Social networks and sales**

There are 5 elements in this group:

**Economic and social effects** of influencer marketing: The paper examines the impact of **social media engagement** and **social network** on **sales** as well as **purchases** and provide insights on economic outcomes. It represents the real impact of influencer marketing campaigns on business results.

### **Cluster 8- (Brown): User-generated content and Consumer interaction**

This cluster consists of 5 elements:

**Consumption behavior, influencer credibility, parasocial interaction, social commerce, and user-generated content:** Examining the connections between consumer-generated content, influencer credibility, and interactions and purchases on social commerce platforms. This cluster issues on consumer behaviour and the influence of content on making a purchase.

### **Cluster 9 (Pink): Research Methodologies and Opinion Leadership**

This cluster consists of the following 4 elements:

**Bibliometric analysis, celebrity endorsement, opinion leadership, word-of-mouth:** A review of the methodology used to understand influencer marketing with an emphasis on opinion leaders and word-of-mouth. It gives a meta-formulation to the field, about what the

Most of these thematic clusters provide a well-rounded perspective on influence marketing and sponsorship disclosures, ranging from technological innovations to ethical implications, audience psychology, platform-specific dynamics, and methods. The convergence of these clusters illustrates the diverse landscape of the field, revealing both conceptual blueprints and real-world implementations.

Influencer marketing is changing, which emphasizes the need for more in-depth studies on sponsorship disclosure procedures in the future. Understanding how these developments affect customer behavior and brand impression is becoming more and more important as social media services continue to improve. Scholars' ought to concentrate on the intricate details of disclosure techniques, investigating how different degrees of transparency affect participation and trust across a range of populations. Furthermore, qualitative research could reveal the reasons behind consumers' and influencers' reactions to sponsorship disclosures, giving the quantitative data that is already available a more comprehensive context. Brands must, in reality, negotiate the challenges of upholding authenticity while complying with disclosure laws, which calls for a cooperative strategy that incorporates influencers in the development of open messaging. In the end, ongoing research in these fields will not only advance scholarly understanding but also educate marketers on the most effective strategies required to cultivate real customer relationships in a time when influencer authenticity is being scrutinized more than ever.

The study conducts a thorough analysis of the body of research on the influencer marketing and sponsorship disclosures. It finds important trends, significant writers, and new study topics in the ever-evolving field of influencer marketing using exacting bibliometric techniques. The analysis provides insights into the development of concepts and the interconnection of ideas in this junction by carefully reviewing scholarly works, citation trends, and associations of collaboration. The chapter improves our comprehension of significant contributions by outlining the field's conceptual framework, which directs future research pursuits. It highlights important areas of study including uncovering important works, developing research horizons, and possible gaps in the body of literature.

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