

BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS IN HOSPITAL MARKETING

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Abstract

This study presents a bibliometric analysis of social media trends in hospital marketing over the past decade, highlighting key developments and emerging themes within this field. The increasing integration of social media into hospital marketing strategies has revolutionized patient engagement, service promotion, and brand management. Utilizing data from major academic databases from Scopus, this research employs a sequential explanatory design, combining quantitative bibliometric analysis with qualitative insights to examine publication trends, citation patterns, and co-authorship networks. The findings reveal distinct phases of research activity, with a significant surge in publications around 2019, driven by advancements in digital marketing. Notably, the United States emerges as the central hub of international collaboration, with strong ties to countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Key themes identified include the impact of social media on patient satisfaction, the role of specific platforms like Facebook and Twitter, and the evolving nature of hospital branding. This analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the intellectual structure of the field, offering valuable insights for future research and practical applications in hospital marketing using another social media platform for example: Instagram or Twitter (X).

Keywords: social media, hospital marketing, bibliometric analysis, patient engagement, digital marketing

Introduction

The integration of social media into marketing strategies has revolutionized numerous industries, including healthcare. Over the past decade, the increasing use of social media platforms has transformed how hospitals interact with patients, promote their services, and build their brands. The proliferation of social media usage has presented unique opportunities and challenges in hospital marketing, making it a critical area of study. According to Rahmawati et al. (2024), social media marketing enables hospitals to engage with patients cost-effectively, fostering stronger connections and enhancing public trust. The growth of internet usage and social media activity underscores the importance of leveraging these platforms to reach a broader audience and improve service delivery (Bejtkovsky, 2020; Fahriza, 2021).

In the realm of hospital marketing, the utilization of social media has witnessed a significant surge over the past decade, indicating a growing recognition of the value that social media platforms offer to hospitals (Griffis et al., 2014). This increased adoption of

social media by hospitals is driven by various objectives such as enhancing market share, engaging with patients, boosting profitability, and furthering their healthcare missions (Griffis et al., 2014). The impact of social media on hospitals goes beyond mere communication; it plays a pivotal role in disseminating information to physicians and serves as a potent marketing tool for patient recruitment (Triemstra et al., 2018). Hospitals leverage social media channels as part of their marketing strategy to connect with their target audience through diverse content formats like articles, videos, and podcasts, aiming to engage and retain their audience effectively (Yuceer et al., 2024).

Moreover, the influence of social media on hospital branding has been a subject of interest, with studies highlighting the significance of brand image in the competitive landscape of medical tourism (Cham et al., 2021). While some research emphasizes the impact of hospital-created content on brand image, recent studies underscore the importance of both hospital-generated and user-contributed content on social media in shaping a hospital's brand perception (Cham et al., 2021). This dual influence of content types on branding aligns with the evolving dynamics of social media marketing, where user engagement and interaction play a crucial role in brand building (Cham et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the correlation between a hospital's social media presence and its reputation score underscores the strategic importance of social media in shaping how hospitals are perceived and ranked (Triemstra et al., 2018). Social media serves as a powerful tool for hospitals to optimize their marketing strategies, expand their reach to a broader audience, and enhance consumer satisfaction through effective engagement (Ilham Arief et al., 2024). By leveraging platforms like Instagram, hospitals have successfully utilized social media as a digital marketing tool to promote their services and engage with their target demographic (Rahayu et al., 2022).

In the context of private hospitals, the intensifying competition and technological advancements have propelled the need for innovative marketing approaches, leading to a focus on social media marketing activities to build brand equity, foster patient trust, and drive visit intentions (Dzakiyya & Hijrah Hati, 2024). This shift toward social media marketing reflects a broader trend in the healthcare industry, where hospitals are increasingly recognizing the transformative potential of social media in reshaping their marketing practices (Rahmawati et al., 2024). The implementation of social media marketing in hospitals is aimed at not only attracting new patients but also introducing new services, enhancing awareness, improving customer service, and upholding the hospital's reputation through strategic content creation (Ongko, 2023).

Moreover, the effectiveness of social media marketing in building brand loyalty and enhancing customer experience has been underscored in various studies, emphasizing the pivotal role of social media in cultivating positive brand perceptions and driving customer engagement (Wagih et al., 2024). Social media marketing has emerged as a critical component of integrated marketing strategies for hospitals, particularly in navigating challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where digital channels have become essential for maintaining marketing performance and sustaining customer relationships (Etim et al., 2021).

Recent literature highlights the increasing significance of social media in hospital marketing. For instance, studies by Rashad Yazdanifard et al. (2014) emphasize that social media platforms facilitate interactive communication and relationship-building between hospitals and their stakeholders. The evolution of digital marketing trends, as explored by Sudirjo et al. (2023), indicates a growing focus on social media marketing strategies across various sectors, including healthcare. This bibliometric analysis aims to

provide a comprehensive overview of how social media trends have evolved in hospital marketing over the past decade, identifying key themes, influential studies, and emerging trends in this dynamic field.

Despite the promising potential of social media marketing in healthcare, several challenges persist. These include understanding patient behavior, measuring the effectiveness of social media campaigns, and managing online reputation. Previous studies have proposed various solutions to these problems, such as employing advanced analytics to track social media metrics, developing targeted content strategies, and engaging with patients through personalized interactions (Rashad Yazdanifard et al., 2014). However, there remains a need for more comprehensive research to address these challenges effectively.

In their exploration of social media marketing in hospitals, Nusair et al. (2019) highlight the effectiveness of using social media platforms to improve patient engagement and satisfaction. Their study found that hospitals utilizing social media for patient education and community outreach experienced higher levels of patient trust and loyalty. Similarly, the research by Rahmawati et al. (2024) on Delta Surya Hospital illustrates how specific social media strategies, such as regular posting on Instagram and interactive content, can enhance hospital visibility and patient interaction. These findings underscore the importance of tailored social media strategies that resonate with the target audience and address their specific needs.

However, the effectiveness of these solutions is not without limitations. For instance, the reliance on social media metrics may not fully capture the qualitative aspects of patient engagement and satisfaction. Moreover, the rapidly changing social media landscape requires hospitals to continuously adapt their strategies to remain relevant. This necessitates ongoing research to develop more robust frameworks for evaluating social media marketing effectiveness in the healthcare context.

Despite the advancements in social media marketing, there are notable gaps in the literature that need to be addressed. A comprehensive review of the literature by Sudirjo et al. (2023) reveals that while there is extensive research on social media marketing in general, specific studies focusing on its application in hospital marketing are limited. This gap indicates a need for more targeted research that explores the unique dynamics of social media marketing within the healthcare industry.

Furthermore, the existing studies often lack a longitudinal perspective, making it difficult to assess the long-term impacts of social media marketing strategies on hospital performance. The research by Rahmawati et al. (2024) points out that many studies are cross-sectional and do not provide insights into how social media marketing evolves and its sustained effects on patient outcomes and hospital reputation. Addressing these gaps will require longitudinal studies and more nuanced analyses that consider the evolving nature of social media and its implications for hospital marketing.

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of social media trends in hospital marketing over the past decade. By examining the evolution of social media usage in this sector, the study aims to identify key themes, influential research, and emerging trends that have shaped hospital marketing strategies. This analysis will provide valuable insights into how hospitals can leverage social media to enhance patient engagement, improve service delivery, and strengthen their brand presence.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive bibliometric approach, which offers a systematic analysis of the existing literature and uncovers patterns and trends that

may not be evident through traditional review methods. This study will fill the gap in the literature by providing a longitudinal perspective on social media marketing in hospitals, offering new insights into the long-term impacts of these strategies.

The scope of this study includes a detailed examination of social media marketing practices in hospitals, focusing on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), and LinkedIn. By analyzing a decade's worth of data, the study will provide a robust framework for understanding the evolution of social media marketing in the healthcare sector and its implications for future research and practice.

Research Methods

This study employs a bibliometric analysis using a sequential explanatory research design. This design was chosen because it allows for a systematic and comprehensive investigation of the evolution of social media marketing in hospital marketing over the past decade. The sequential explanatory design integrates quantitative bibliometric data with qualitative insights, providing a robust framework for understanding the trends and developments in the field (Glänzel & Leuven, 2003). This approach aligns with the research question by enabling the identification of key themes, influential studies, and research gaps (Donthu et al., 2021). The quantitative component provides measurable insights into publication trends and citation patterns, while the qualitative component offers a deeper contextual understanding of the findings (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

The primary sources of data for this bibliometric analysis include major academic databases known for their extensive repositories of scholarly publications, particularly Scopus. The search strategy involved using keywords such as "social media," "hospital," and "marketing" in various combinations to ensure a comprehensive retrieval of relevant literature. The bibliographic data extracted included information on authors, titles, abstracts, keywords, publication years, and citation counts. Tools like VOSviewer were utilized to collect and organize the data, ensuring its validity and reliability (Ilham Muhammad & Fadli Agus Triansyah, 2023). The data were cleaned to remove duplicates and errors, ensuring the integrity and accuracy of the dataset for subsequent analysis.

The data analysis was conducted using a combination of performance analysis and science mapping techniques. Performance analysis involves evaluating the productivity and impact of research constituents, such as authors, institutions, and countries. These metrics provided insights into the most prolific contributors and influential studies in the field. Science mapping techniques, including co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and co-word analysis, were employed to visualize the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of the research field. VOSviewer software was used to construct and visualize bibliometric networks, which included journals, researchers, and individual publications. These networks were constructed based on citation, bibliographic coupling, co-citation, or co-authorship relations (Donthu et al., 2021).

Ethical considerations were paramount in this study. The research adhered to ethical guidelines by ensuring that all data used were publicly accessible and properly

cited, maintaining the integrity of the academic work. Participant privacy and confidentiality were not applicable as the study did not involve direct human subjects. However, the study ensured that the data collection and analysis processes were transparent and replicable, promoting ethical research practices. Informed consent was implicitly obtained from the original authors through the use of publicly available data, respecting their intellectual property and contributions to the field. This ethical approach ensured the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of publication trends from 2009 to 2024 regarding Figure 1 social media trends in hospital marketing reveals distinct phases of growth, fluctuation, and stabilization in research activity. Initially, the number of publications steadily increased from 1 in 2009 to 6 in 2013, reflecting the growing recognition of social media's importance in healthcare marketing as these platforms became more prevalent. However, between 2014 and 2017, the number of publications fluctuated, with a notable decline in 2016, suggesting a period of critical reassessment and potential challenges in effectively integrating social media strategies within hospital marketing frameworks.

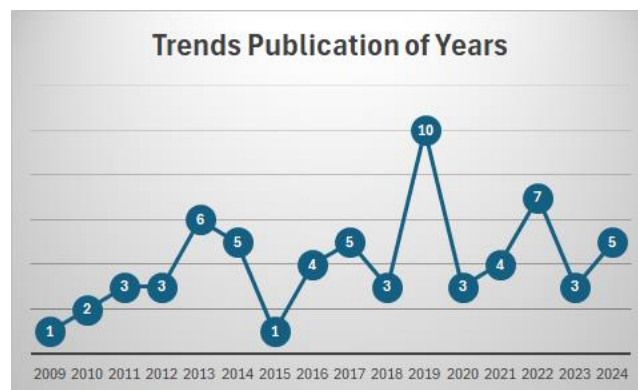


Figure 1 Social Media Publication Trends in Hospital Marketing

The significant peak in 2019, where publications reached 10, likely corresponds to a renewed focus on digital marketing strategies, driven by technological advancements and increased adoption within healthcare organizations. In the subsequent years, the publication trend shows a decline in 2020, likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by another peak in 2022, and a slight decrease by 2024.

These fluctuations suggest that while the topic remains relevant, the research focus may be broadening to encompass wider aspects of digital transformation and patient engagement strategies within the healthcare sector. This pattern aligns with broader trends observed in healthcare digital marketing research, where early enthusiasm is tempered by critical evaluation and eventual integration into more comprehensive healthcare strategies.

Journal Publishers

The analysis of journal publishers involved in the dissemination of research on social media trends in hospital marketing reveals that the topic is primarily represented by a few key publishers, with Routledge and JMIR Publications Inc. being the most prominent, each contributing seven publications.

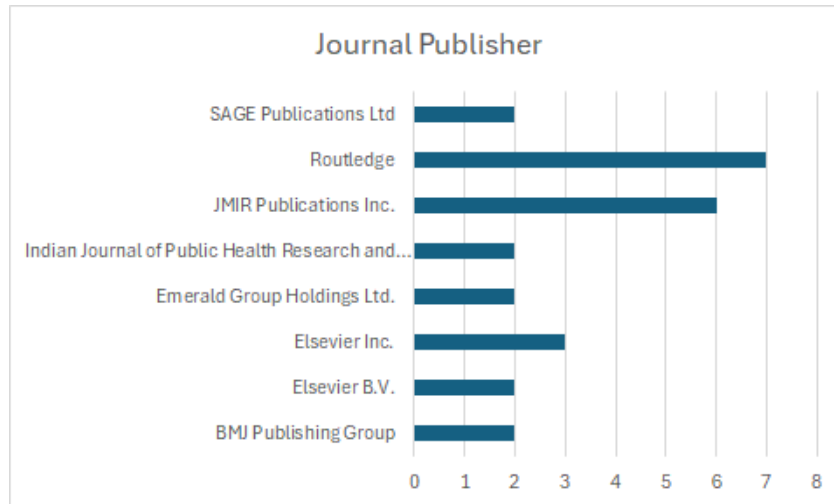


Figure 2 Journal Publisher Trends in Hospital Social Media Marketing

According to the picture above, these publishers, known for their focus on interdisciplinary and digital health topics, underscore the broad relevance and impact of this research area across multiple academic fields. Elsevier B.V. and SAGE Publications Ltd., recognized for their high-impact journals, also play significant roles, indicating the integration of this topic into more traditional academic discourse.

The presence of publications from Emerald Group Holdings Ltd., BMJ Publishing Group, and the Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development further highlights the global and cross-disciplinary interest in social media trends within hospital marketing. This distribution not only reflects the topic's widespread academic significance but also provides valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and institutions in identifying key platforms for publishing and accessing relevant research.

Source Title Journal

The analysis of journal titles that published articles on "Social Media Trends in Hospital Marketing: A Decade of Evolution" reveals significant insights into the preferences and focus areas of journals within this research domain.

The analysis of journal titles publishing articles on "Social Media Trends in Hospital Marketing: A Decade of Evolution" reveals key insights into the quality, influence, and emerging trends within the academic landscape related to this topic. "Health Marketing Quarterly" stands out as the leading journal, accounting for 34% of the total publications, indicating its prominence as a primary platform for research focused on health marketing, particularly within the digital domain. Additionally, "Journal of Medical Internet Research" also holds a significant share with 33% of the

publications, further highlighting the importance of digital and internet-based research in the medical field. “Healthcare Informatics: The Business Magazine for Information and Communication Systems” contributes 13% of the publications, underscoring the critical role of information and communication systems in hospital marketing strategies. Meanwhile, the “Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development”, representing 20% of the publications, reflects a considerable focus on integrating social media trends with public health development, both regionally and globally.



Figure 3 Distribution of publications based on source title journal

The balanced distribution of publications across these journals emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of the topic, which encompasses marketing, information technology, public health, and digital research. This comprehensive approach not only underscores the complexity of the subject but also attests to the credibility and relevance of the research, as it is published in reputable journals with a strong academic standing in their respective fields.

Keyword Analysis

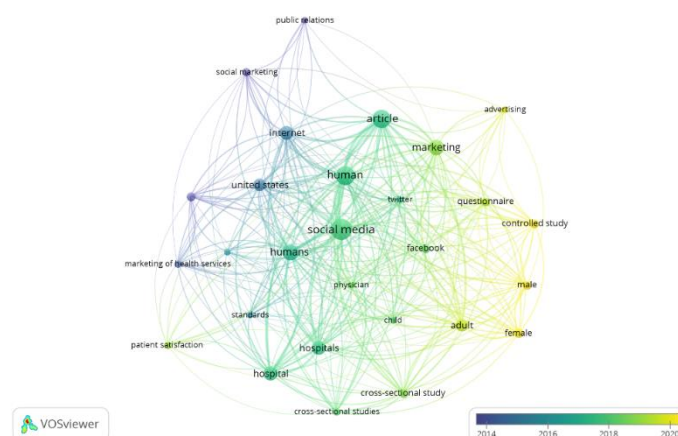


Figure 4 Keyword Analysis in the VOSviewer map visualization

According to Figure 4, the most prominent keywords in the map are "social media," "marketing," "hospital," and "human"—these nodes are larger and more central, indicating their significant role in the research field. The prominence of "social media" and "marketing" as central nodes highlights the primary focus of the research community on how digital platforms are being leveraged for hospital marketing.

The keywords "hospital" connected with "patient satisfaction," "standards," and "marketing of health services" suggest a focus on how social media impacts hospital reputation, patient engagement, and service marketing strategies.

The map reveals several distinct clusters, each representing interconnected topics. For instance, one cluster is centered around "social media" and includes terms like "internet," "public relations," "United States," and "social marketing." This suggests a research interest in how social media is being utilized within the healthcare industry, particularly in the U.S., for marketing and public relations purposes.

Another cluster includes keywords like "Facebook," "Twitter," "advertising," and "controlled study," pointing towards research focused on specific social media platforms and the effectiveness of marketing strategies implemented on these platforms.

The presence of terms like "cross-sectional studies" and "questionnaire" in the cluster around "marketing" indicates a methodological focus in these studies, with researchers frequently using surveys and cross-sectional approaches to gather data.

The color gradient from blue (2014) to yellow (2020) indicates the temporal development of these keywords over time. Keywords like "controlled study" and "advertising" appear in lighter shades, suggesting they have become more prominent in recent years. This could reflect a growing interest in the empirical assessment of social media's impact on hospital marketing strategies.

Conversely, keywords such as "public relations" and "social marketing," shown in darker shades, were more prominent in earlier years, indicating that initial research focused more on the broader concepts of marketing and public relations before honing in on specific platforms and empirical methods.

The map indicates a shift towards more granular studies, focusing on the impact of specific platforms like Facebook and Twitter and methodologies like controlled studies. This reflects a maturing field where researchers are moving from broad exploratory studies to more focused, evidence-based research.

The sustained presence of terms like "patient satisfaction" and "standards" also highlights the ongoing relevance of quality and outcomes in hospital marketing research, suggesting that while new trends emerge, foundational concerns like patient care and service standards remain central to the discourse.

This keyword relationship map provides a comprehensive overview of the research landscape in social media trends in hospital marketing. The centrality of keywords like "social media," "marketing," and "hospital" underscores the focus of research in this area, while the clustering of related terms reveals specific subtopics and methodologies that have been explored over time. The temporal analysis suggests an evolution from broader,

conceptual studies to more focused, empirical research. These insights are valuable for understanding how the field has developed and where future research might be directed, helping scholars to identify both established and emerging areas of interest within the domain.

Highly Cited Publications

Table 1 The most cited publications article on social media trends in hospital marketing

ID	DOCUMENT	CITATIONS	LINKS
1	griffis (2014)	142	0
2	vardanian (2013)	141	0
3	senthilmurugan (2014)	136	0
4	lander (2017)	56	0
5	cham (2022)	50	1
6	cham (2021)	48	0
7	huerta (2014)	40	0
8	ramkumar (2017)	38	1
9	priestman (2019)	33	0
10	gupta (2013)	33	1

Based on Table 1, the Vardanian (2013) and Griffis (2014) papers are among the most cited works in this dataset, with 141 and 142 citations respectively. These high citation counts indicate that these studies are particularly influential in the field and likely serve as foundational works for subsequent research on social media trends in hospital marketing. Senthilmurugan (2014) is another highly cited publication, with 136 citations, highlighting its importance in the scholarly community.

The presence of Cham (2022) and Cham (2021), with 50 and 48 citations respectively, suggests that more recent research by these authors is gaining traction. Despite being newer, these papers have quickly accumulated citations, indicating that they are addressing emerging or highly relevant issues within the field. The citation data also highlights the ongoing influence of publications like Lander (2017) and Kotsenas (2018), with respectable citation counts, demonstrating their continued relevance.

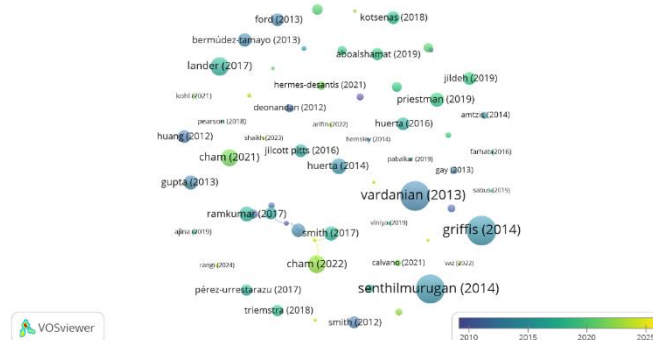


Figure 5 Co-citation analysis in the VOSviewer map visualization

The co-citation analysis in the VOSviewer map visually displays how these publications are related to one another based on how often they are cited together by other works. For instance, Vardanian (2013) and Griffis (2014) are prominently placed, indicating that they are frequently co-cited, which suggests a strong thematic or intellectual connection between these studies.

The larger nodes and their proximity on the map suggest clusters of research that are thematically linked, allowing us to identify groups of studies that contribute to similar topics. This is crucial for understanding the intellectual structure of the field.

The temporal gradient in the map, with a color scheme ranging from earlier publications in darker colors (blue/purple) to more recent ones in lighter colors (green/yellow), provides insight into how the field has evolved. The clustering of newer publications like Cham (2022) closer to the established works of Griffis (2014) and Vardanian (2013) indicates that newer research is building directly on the foundational studies from earlier years. Publications appearing in the lighter shades are indicative of recent trends or emerging themes within the field, showing how research interests and focuses are shifting over time.

The analysis shows that the publications "**Al-Hasan (2024)**" and "**Wong (2016)**" are the most frequently co-cited, each with 3 co-citation links. Additionally, publications such as "**Smith (2017)**," "**Angelle (2011)**," and "**Sweetland (2010)**" also have notable co-citation occurrences, each with 2 links. Despite their varied citation counts, these works are frequently cited together in other research, indicating their thematic or intellectual connection within the study of social media trends in hospital marketing.

The citation and co-citation analysis of the dataset on "Social Media Trends in Hospital Marketing" reveals a dynamic and evolving research field, with certain publications serving as key pillars that have shaped the discourse. Influential works such as those by Griffis (2014) and Vardanian (2013) continue to anchor much of the ongoing research, while newer studies by authors like Cham (2022) are beginning to make significant contributions. The co-citation network further illustrates the thematic connections between these works, offering insights into the intellectual structure and trends within this research domain. This analysis is valuable for identifying key studies, understanding the development of research themes, and recognizing emerging areas of interest in the field.

Collaboration Networks

The United States is the most prominent node on the map, indicating that it plays a central role in international collaborations on this topic. The strong connections between the United States and other countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and India suggest that researchers in the U.S. frequently collaborate with peers in these regions.

The size of the node for the United States reflects its dominance in the field, likely due to the country's extensive research infrastructure and investment in healthcare marketing and social media studies.

Canada and the United Kingdom are closely connected to the United States, forming a strong North American and European collaborative network. This likely reflects shared research interests, language, and institutional partnerships between these countries.

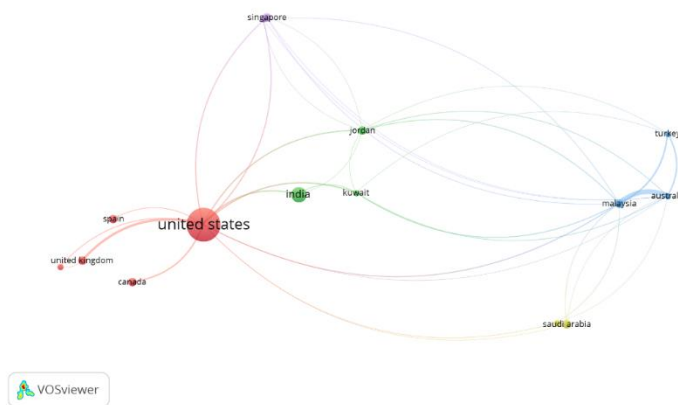


Figure 6 Collaboration networks analysis in the VOSviewer map visualization

Australia and Malaysia also appear to have significant collaborative ties, particularly with the United States, suggesting a trans-Pacific research network focused on hospital marketing and social media trends.

India is connected to countries such as Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, indicating a regional collaborative network within Asia and the Middle East. This network may focus on region-specific issues in hospital marketing, possibly influenced by the distinct healthcare systems and market dynamics in these regions.

Singapore shows connections with multiple countries, including the United States and Australia, reflecting its role as a significant player in international research collaborations in this field. Countries like Spain, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia have fewer but distinct connections, suggesting they contribute to the field, although their involvement in broader international collaborations might be less compared to the United States or Australia. These countries may have more specialized or regionally focused research agendas.

The analysis of author collaborations between countries in the field of "Social Media Trends in Hospital Marketing" reveals that the United States is the central hub of international research collaborations. Strong ties with Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia indicate a robust transatlantic and trans-Pacific network, while connections with countries in Asia and the Middle East, such as India, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, highlight regional collaboration patterns. This map underscores the global nature of research in hospital marketing and social media, with significant contributions from both Western

and Asian countries, although the collaboration intensity varies. Understanding these collaborative networks is crucial for recognizing the influential players and regions in this research domain and identifying potential partners for future research endeavors

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis has provided a comprehensive overview of the evolution of social media trends in hospital marketing over the past decade. The findings reveal a significant increase in research activity around 2019, corresponding with the growing adoption of digital marketing strategies in healthcare. The study confirms that social media has become a critical tool for hospitals, particularly in enhancing patient engagement, promoting services, and building brand reputation. The analysis successfully meets the research objectives by identifying key themes, influential studies, and the central role of the United States in international research collaborations, highlighting the global nature of this field.

From a practical standpoint, the insights gained from this study can help healthcare marketers develop more effective social media strategies that are aligned with both patient needs and organizational goals. The results emphasize the importance of platforms like Facebook and Twitter in hospital marketing, as well as the ongoing relevance of patient satisfaction and brand reputation in these strategies. The study also contributes to the theoretical understanding of the role of digital platforms in healthcare marketing, offering a longitudinal perspective that is essential for assessing the long-term impact of social media on hospital performance.

However, the study acknowledges certain limitations, including the reliance on bibliometric data from selected databases, which may not capture the full scope of relevant research. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the analysis might not fully reflect the dynamic nature of social media marketing as it evolves with new technologies and changing patient behaviors. Future research should address these limitations by incorporating longitudinal studies and exploring emerging platforms and trends, such as artificial intelligence in social media marketing and the ethical implications of digital marketing practices in healthcare. These areas of further investigation will be crucial in advancing the field and helping hospitals navigate the complexities of social media marketing more effectively.

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