

# **A Decade Landscape of Digital Marketing Research (2014–2023): A Bibliometric Review of Global Trends, Themes, and Influential Contributions.**

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## **Abstract:**

*Digital marketing has been a prominent option for all businesses for marketing and other growth perspectives. This field is transforming with time and new tools and techniques are coming into existence. Since the advent of internet technology year by year new technologies came and helped marketer use them in the promotion of their businesses online. This study focuses on the bibliometric analysis of the last ten years research has been done in the field of digital marketing since 2014-2023. Data collection has been done by 1118 papers or books in the Scopus database and 231 relevant papers data has been used to showcase the current pattern of digital marketing use in the industries. VOS viewer has been used to represent the data in graphical form. This study tries to identify the trends of digital marketing over time and the major contribution in the digital marketing field in the last ten years. The Findings of the literature review provide helpful insights into their study. It will also assist new research by providing future scope for their studies.*

**Keywords:** *Internet, Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Artificial Intelligence (AI), E Commerce & Small and Medium Enterprise (SME)*

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## **I. Introduction**

The rapid technological evolution and shift in consumer behaviors have redefined the way businesses interact with customers through the use of digital marketing. In the last decade, there has been an observable boom in the academic study of marketing, especially with the global shift to digitalization propelled by the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses were forced to adopt social media marketing, AI-driven tactics, big data, and automation to capture and retain customer attention. The availability of new digital platforms coupled with the increasing reliance on data for decision-making has created new paradigmatic methods of marketing that redefine brand and customer interactions. Consequently, the field is characterized as highly dynamic and interdisciplinary which integrates business, psychology, and data science (Kannan, 2017; Saura, 2021). With regard to research, there is a clear gap pointed out by several scholars, stating that there is a lack of rigor in the academic study of digital marketing. Roy et al. (2016) state there is an explosive growth in literature focusing on digital marketing which to some extent shows a positive sign regarding its relevance to business and consumer behavior.

E-commerce and the internet have been two major driving forces for the growth actively researched by marketers regarding the impact of online marketing on consumer behavior (Kannan & Li, 2016).

The research in digital marketing is built around three major pillars which are the effectiveness of online marketing, the perception of marketing by consumers, and the adoption of e-commerce. Several studies look into social media, SEO, consumer attitude, as well as changes in digital retailing (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Roy et al., 2016). This research adds value by conducting a bibliometric analysis of the available literature on digital marketing from 2014 to 2023, focusing on citation patterns, top scholars, the contributions of different countries, and key findings. The findings shed important light on the evolution of digital marketing scholarship and the focus of subsequent studies.

This study analyzes scholarly publications on digital marketing from 2014 to 2023 in order to determine emerging trends, major contributors, and directions for future research, applying a bibliometric methodology.

### **1.1. Digital Marketing in Various Industries**

Digital marketing has been adopted across various industries to facilitate better connections and operations between businesses and customers. In the last decade has seen a massive increase in revenue and eased business operations, the e-commerce, retail, hospitality, tourism, finance, and healthcare industries, as well as B2B efforts, have integrated such strategies.

#### **1.1.1. E Commerce Industry**

The e-commerce sector greatly benefited from the advancements in digital marketing due to improved customer interaction, sales optimization, and expanded business reach. Businesses leveraged data-oriented techniques, AI algorithms, and focused marketing efforts to enhance customer acquisition and retention (Goldman et al., 2021). Digital marketing strategies designed for specific markets have also tremendously aided in the growth of cross-border e-commerce (Saura et al., 2019). As pointed out, there is a constant transformation of techniques that helps to remain competitive in the market and ensure customers are acquired and retained effectively (Ponzoa & Erdmann, 2021).

#### **1.1.2. Retail Industry**

For instance, the retail industry functions digitally through a connected digital marketplace which fosters brand awareness, customer interaction, and sales opportunities. Many of the most dynamic applications of digital marketing occur in retail (Bansal et al., 2021). This is because online shopping has emerged with extensive support for digital real estate. Many businesses utilize social media campaigns, email marketing, and even influencer-focused videos to get people to click 'buy now' (Dolega et al., 2021).

#### **1.1.3. Hospitality and Tourism**

Digital marketing has also championed the hospitality and tourism industry. For instance, many people decide on restaurants and hotels based on online reviews, meaning that restaurants, hotels, and comparable businesses must digitally engage via social media and review sites (De Pelsmacker et al., 2018, Jagwan S.S, 2023). Since businesses now allow consumers to share their stories, digital marketing channels have expanded word-of-mouth phenomena globally (Bassano et al., 2019). Finally, AI has filtered down to customer service bookings and personalized accommodation at the transaction stage. So, digital marketing strategies are involved extensively here (Armutcu et al., 2023).

#### **1.1.4. Banking & Financial Services**

The banking and finance industry has also adopted digital marketing trends to provide better customer interaction and service. Even if some banks use a more traditional integration method, elements of digital marketing innovations such as chatbots, AI engagement, and data analytics to determine customer needs have positively changed the standard interaction methodologies (Mogaji et al., 2020).

#### **1.1.5. Healthcare Industry**

In the healthcare sector, digital marketing has been impactful in dealing with patient engagement as well as in awareness campaigns. Social media, SEO, and email marketing have also been adopted by hospitals and healthcare service providers to educate patients on preventive care and other services offered (Sharma et al., 2020).

#### **1.1.6. Education and E-Learning**

The COVID-19 pandemic massively accelerated the adaptation of digital marketing in the educational landscape — webinars, virtual open houses, and AI-driven learning were beyond most people's perceptions until 2019 when the pandemic hit. Content marketing, social media, and targeted advertising have been utilized by universities and e-learning platforms to reach potential students (Jayaram et al., 2015).

#### **1.1.7. Evolution of Digital Marketing:**

Since the internet increased its reach to customers businesses are using internet-based technologies for marketing purposes as per the evolution (Table 1) and currently, we use it in the form of digital marketing.

Kim et. al. Marketing evolution defined (2021) (table 1) can be considered in terms of the stages which have passed through time, the stages matched with new technologies which focused on stages.

Stage	Time Period	Stage Name	Key Focus Areas
1 <sup>st</sup>	Up to 2000	<b>Foundation</b>	"Internet marketing, Customer trust, telemarketing, online advertising, internet forums"
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2000–2005	<b>Customer-Centric</b>	"Email Marketing, Customer satisfaction, online communities"
5 <sup>th</sup>	2006–2010	<b>Social Media &amp; Multichannel Growth</b>	"Customer satisfaction, online reviews"
4 <sup>th</sup>	2011–2015	<b>Social Media Engagement &amp; Data-Driven Marketing</b>	"Social Media, Co-creation, customer engagement, e-Tourism, data mining"
5 <sup>th</sup>	2016–2019	<b>AI &amp; Emerging Technologies</b>	"Big data analytics, customer engagement, content marketing,

			video ads, IoT applications”
6 <sup>th</sup>	2020–2024	Smart & AI-Driven Marketing	“AI, chatbots, eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth), automation”

*Table 1.Source Credit: Kim et. Al.2021*

## II. Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the publication trends in digital marketing research over the past decade.
- To identify the most influential authors, journals, and institutions contributing to the field.
- To examine the most cited papers and their impact on digital marketing literature.
- To explore thematic clusters and emerging research trends in digital marketing.
- To assess the geographical distribution of research contributions.
- To identify gaps and future research directions in digital marketing studies.

### 2.1 Scope of the Study

This bibliometric study assesses the expansion of research pertaining to digital marketing from the year 2014 to 2023 utilizing information retrieved from the Scopus Database. Initially, 1,118 publications were identified, out of which 231 peer-reviewed articles were chosen for further scrutiny following a meticulous screening process. The analysis aids in understanding the developmental landscape of digital marketing by tracking its citation patterns, prominent contributors and publications, contributions according to country, major findings, and delineated future research prospects. The sharp increase in publications within this area of study suggests that the field of digital marketing is rapidly gaining attention from researchers internationally (Marchiori et al., 2020).

## III. Methodology

### 3.1 Bibliometric Analysis Process

This study followed a systematic process to do the bibliometric analysis as followed in fig 1.



*Fig.1. Bibliometric Process of the study*

### **3.2 Data Collection**

Data was collected from the Scopus database which is started with 1118 papers & books and further 231 highly cited papers from 2014 to 2023, covering topics such as Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing, SEO (Search Engine, Optimization), E-WOM (Electronic Word-of-Mouth), etc included for the qualitative and quantitative study.

### **3.3 Data Analysis Methods**

The study uses "Publish & Perish software" to check the citation metrics from Google Scholar. VOSviewer was used for data visualization, citation networks, and keyword clusters. MS Excel was used in Data Cleaning and tabulation of the papers.

## **IV. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Digital Marketing in the Decade (2014–2023)**

- **2014–2016: Foundations and Early Adoption**

Digital marketing was recognized as a significant component in business frameworks in 2014. Social media was highly effective in engaging consumers and broadening the reach of businesses (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014). Businesses were fully embracing customer acquisition through content marketing, SEO, and PPC advertising. The widespread implementation of data-driven marketing was being hindered by technological and organizational constraints (Leeftang et al., 2014).

At the same time, B2B digital content marketing developed as a new area of focus regarding best practices for engaging corporate clients (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). The importance of analytics also grew, as they were able to measure and enable campaign optimizations more effectively (Järvinen & Karjaluo, 2015).

- **2016–2018: Integration of Emerging Technologies**

In the period of 2016 to 2018, there was an uptake in the use of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and automation within business marketing. Chatbots for customer support, recommendation engines, predictive analytics, and other AI tools enhance customer experience (Ardito et al., 2018 and Jagwan et. al, 2023). Influencer marketing and video content also became more popular changing the dynamics of brand-customer relationships (Stephen, 2016).

- **2019–2021: Acceleration Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 accelerated the pace of digital transformation across the globe. Businesses had to adopt a more digital-centric approach to their marketing strategies (Melović et al., 2020). Brands that were caught off guard due to the pandemic disruption of digital marketing channels turned to e-commerce, digital advertising, and AI marketing. Social media became the primary engagement platform, fueled the surge of data-driven marketing (Saura, 2021), and businesses leveraged AI-powered CRM systems to improve B2B interactions (Saura et al., 2021).

- **2021–2023: Refinement & Ethical Considerations**

Businesses adopted AI solutions for marketing optimization and predictive analytics (Shah & Murthi, 2021). Between 2021 and 2023 there was a fine-tuning of digital marketing strategies as there was an increased focus on personalization, customer experience, and ethical usage of data.

- **Other notable trends included:**

The emergence of digital storytelling in tourism marketing, advocating for a strong brand narrative (Bassano et al. 2019). Further Guided by consumer preferences, omnichannel marketing became the norm, especially in retail and tourism, (Dolega et al., 2021; Armutcu et al., 2023).

## 4.2 Keyword Analysis

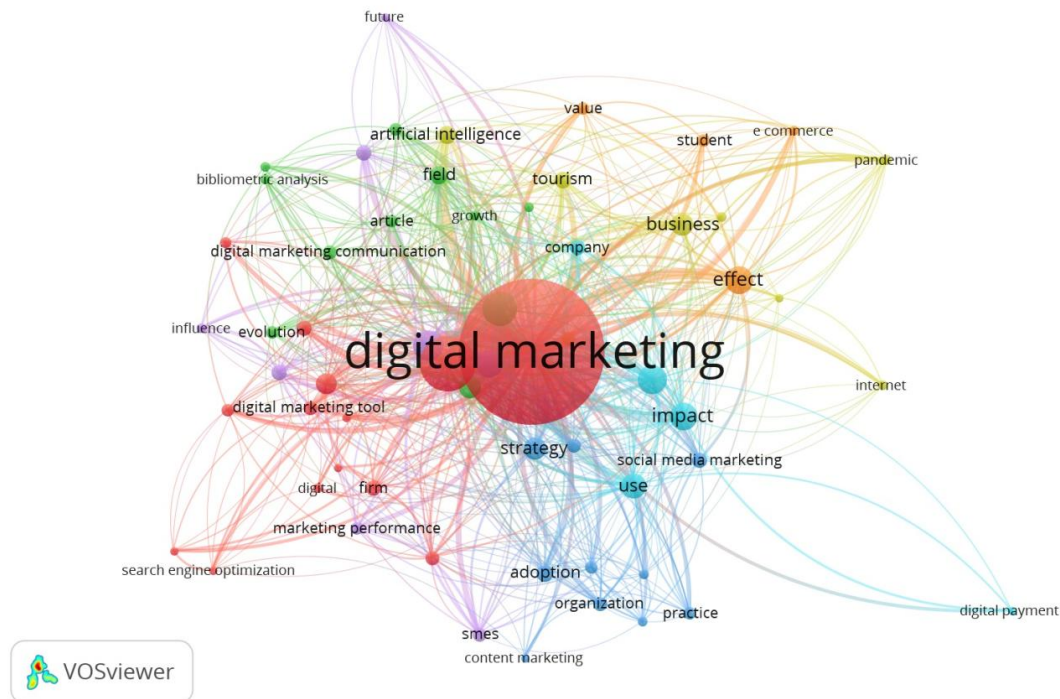


Fig.2. Keyword Analysis by VOS viewer

As per the result (Fig.2) the main focus of the studies is digital marketing. The network suggests that digital marketing research is the main keyword throughout the decade and it is diversifying, with increasing interest in AI, social media, and post-pandemic business strategies. Social media marketing, search engine optimization, content marketing, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, digital marketing communication, marketing performance, internet, business analysis, evolution, influence, strategy, adoption and use are some other keywords, which were being used in study in last decade. Major keywords are the sub parts of the digital marketing.

## 4.3 Major Publishers

The publication distribution (Table.2) across major publishers highlights Springer as the leading contributor, with 348 research articles, books, and chapters published in digital marketing. IEEE follows with 166 publications, indicating a strong presence in technology-driven marketing research. Atlantis Press, Emerald, and Elsevier maintain significant contributions, with 124, 110, and 109 publications, respectively. Sagepublication (103), Taylor & Francis (89), and Wiley (69) have comparatively fewer publications, reflecting their focused but notable engagement in the field. This distribution showcases the diverse academic platforms driving digital marketing research.

Sr. No.	Publisher Name	Number of Research Articles/Books/Chapters Published
1.	Atlantis Press	124
2.	Elsevier	109
3.	Emrald	110
4.	IEEE	166
5.	Sage Publication	103
6.	Springer	348
7.	Taylor & Francis	89
8.	Wiley	69

Table 2. Major Publishers

#### 4.4 Year-wise Citations

The citation trend (Table.3 & Fig.3) from 2014 to 2023 shows variation in digital marketing research influence. Citations peaked in 2021 (11,285), indicating heightened academic interest, likely driven by the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on digital transformation. The lowest citation count was recorded in 2018 (2,377), suggesting a temporary decline in research traction. A significant rise is observed from 2019 (5,043) to 2021, followed by a decline in 2022 (3,978) and 2023 (2,789), indicating a possible shift in research focus or saturation in certain areas.

Years	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Citations	5445	3908	4409	4199	2377	5043	6409	11285	3978	2789

Table 3. Major Citations Year wise

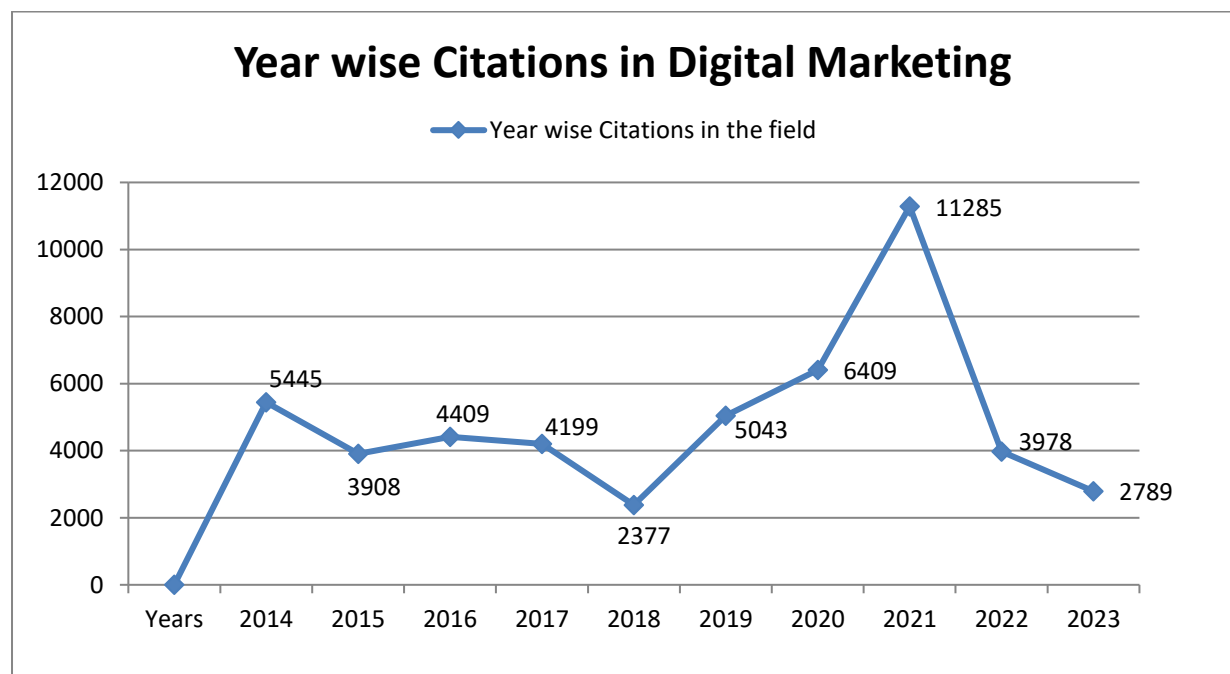


Fig.3. Year wise papers citation trend

#### 4.5 Country-wise Research Focus

The bibliometric analysis reveals a geographical concentration of research in specific regions. Recently in last decade India, China, USA and the UK emerge as leading contributors, indicating a global interest in digital marketing practices and their regional adaptations. Australia, European nations (Germany, France, Italy), Southeast Asian countries (Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand) also been the centre point of the research in the area of digital marketing.

This distribution reflects diverse approaches and the varying impact of digital marketing across different economic and cultural contexts.

#### 3.2 Most Contributing Authors

Here is the list of top 30 contributors (Table. 4) in the field of digital marketing published their research work in Scopus indexed journals or books.

Sr. No.	Authors & Contribution	Sr. No.	Authors & Contribution
1.	S Gupta - 8 times	16.	MT Nuseir - 4 times
2.	A Hanlon - 8 times	17.	TL Tuten - 4 times
3.	YK Dwivedi - 7 times	18.	H Kartajaya - 4 times
4.	A Sharma - 7 times	19.	NT Giannakopoulos - 4 times
5.	DP Sakas - 7 times	20.	A Kumar - 4 times
6.	U Schneider - 7 times	21.	A Al - 4 times
7.	NP Rana - 6 times	22.	I Setiawan - 4 times
8.	H Karjalanto - 5 times	23.	V Ratten - 4 times
9.	P Thaichon - 5 times	24.	I Kaufman - 4 times

10.	S Sharma - 5 times	25.	C Horton - 4 times
11.	P Kotler - 5 times	26.	EP Morais - 4 times
12.	C Halkiopoulos - 5 times	27.	CR Cunha - 4 times
13.	JR Saura - 4 times	28.	GE Imanova - 4 times
14.	R Gupta - 4 times	29.	G Imanova - 4 times
15.	D Zahay - 4 times	30.	J Hoika - 4 times

Table:4. Top 30 Authors and their contribution in digital marketing (2014-23)

#### 4.6 AuthorsCollaborationCluster Network

The network is divided into several color-coded clusters, indicating groups of authors who frequently collaborate.

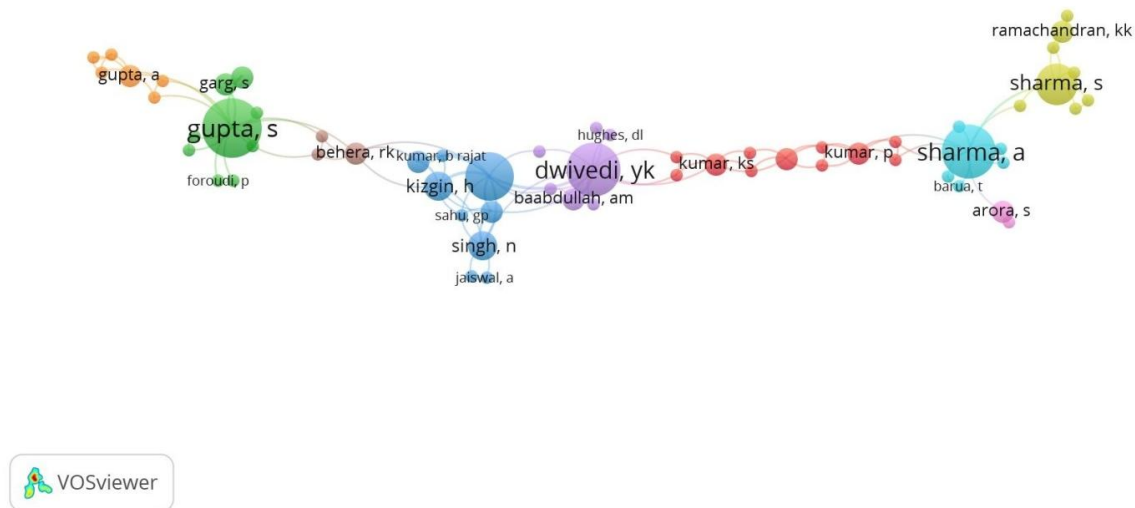


Fig.4. Authors cluster network group in digital marketing from 2014-2023

The fig 4.reveals five distinct author clusters, each centered on key influential researchers. In the Green Cluster, S. Gupta emerges as the central node, indicating a high level of collaboration, particularly with authors like A. Gupta and S. Garg. The Blue Cluster is led by YK Dwivedi, who has strong research partnerships with H. Kizgin, N. Singh, and GP Sahu, reflecting significant contributions and collaborations within this domain. The Red Cluster revolves around KS Kumar and P. Kumar, who are actively linked to multiple co-authors, signifying a well-connected research network. In the Cyan Cluster, A. Sharma plays a pivotal role, closely collaborating with S. Sharma and T. Barua, suggesting a specialized research focus. Similarly, the Yellow Cluster highlights S. Sharma as a central researcher, with KK Ramachandran as a key collaborator in this segment. Overall, S. Gupta, YK Dwivedi, A. Sharma, and KS Kumar emerge as the most influential authors across clusters, acting as "bridges" between researchers and facilitating knowledge exchange through extensive collaboration.

#### 4.7 Top 15 Most Cited Digital Marketing Papers (2014–2023)

Rank	Citations	Authors	Title	Year	Source	Publisher
1.	2707	(YK Dwivedi, E Ismagilova, DL Hughes, J Carlson, R Filieri, J Jacobson, V Jain, H Karjaluoto)	"Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions"	2021	"International Journal of Information Management"	Elsevier
2.	2650	(P.K. Kannan)	"Digital marketing: A framework, review, and research agenda"	2017	"International Journal of Research in Marketing"	Elsevier
3.	1729	(C Lamberton, AT Stephen)	"A thematic exploration of digital, social media, and mobile marketing: Research evolution from 2000 to 2015 and an agenda for future inquiry"	2016	"Journal of Marketing"	Sagepub
4.	1646	(Tiago & Verissimo)	Digital marketing and social media: Why bother?	2014	"Business Horizons"	Elsevier
5.	1516	(Chaffey & Smith)	Digital marketing excellence: Planning, optimizing, and	2022	"Routledge"	Taylor & Francis

			integrating online marketing			
6.	1506	(PSH Leeflang, PCVerhoef, P Dahlström, T Freundt)	“Challenges and solutions for marketing in a digital era”	2014	“European management journal”	Elsevier
7.	1211	(G Holliman, J Rowley)	“Business to business digital content marketing: marketers' perceptions of best practice”	2014	“Journal of research in interactive marketing”	Emerald
8.	1061	(Taiminen & Karjaluoto)	“Usage of digital marketing channels in SMEs”	2015	“Journal of Small Business and Enterprise”	Emerald
9.	1019	(AT Stephen)	“The role of digital and social media marketing in consumer behaviour”	2016	“Current opinion in Psychology”	Elsevier
10.	655	(J.R. Saura)	“Using data sciences in digital marketing”	2021	“Journal of Innovation & Knowledge”	Elsevier
11.	620	(Järvinen & Karjaluoto)	“Web analytics for digital marketing performance”	2015	“Industrial Marketing Management”	Elsevier
12.	573	(De Pelsmacker et al.)	“Digital marketing strategies and hotel performance”	2018	“International Journal of Hospitality Management”	Elsevier
13.	572	(Royle & Laing)	“The digital marketing skills gap”	2014	“International Journal of Information Management”	Elsevier
14.	516	(Charlesworth)	“Digital marketing: A practical approach”	2014	“Routledge”	Taylor & Francis
15.	434	(Herhausen et al.)	“The digital marketing capabilities gap”	2020	“Industrial Marketing Management”	Elsevier

**Table 5:** List of top 15 citations and authors work

These papers focus on social media marketing, SEO, AI-driven marketing, and consumer engagement strategies.

#### 4.8 Emerging Research Trends

Recent studies highlight the following trends:

- **AI-Driven Marketing** – AI is revolutionizing marketing through automated content, personalized recommendations, and Chabot's (Dwivedi et al., 2021).
- **Social Media and Influencer Marketing** – Brands increasingly use influencers for marketing (Grewal et al., 2022).
- **Ethical Marketing and Data Privacy**– Herhausen et al., 2020 raised their concerns related to ethical marketing practices and data privacies issues in digital age.
- **MSME Digital Adoption** – Challenges faced by MSMEs in adopting digital strategies (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2015).

#### V.Future Research Directions

Several future research avenues are noted in the reviewed literature:

- Adoption and Impact on SMEs:** Research emphasizes the low adoption of digital marketing tools by SMEs, suggesting investigating the barriers and motivations for accepting those (Elyusufi & Tristante, 2022). Further investigation is needed to understand the unique challenges and advantages that SMEs face with digital marketing implementation.
- Emerging Technologies in Digital Marketing:** Automation and data-driven customization of AI are greatly advancing digital marketing. There are few empirical studies on the use of blockchain and cybersecurity technologies to provide greater transparency and data protection in digital advertising.
- Sustainability in Digital Marketing:** The evolving trends in digital marketing and their ethical considerations for future extensions demand further attention.
- Sector-Specific Research:** Strategic research in certain areas such as tourism is crucial to ascertain the optimal application of digital marketing frameworks in specific contexts.

#### VI.Conclusion

This bibliometric review captures the survey of the research on digital marketing from the year 2014 to 2023 marking its important trends, technological developments, and new emerging areas of focus. Last decade was majorly focused on SMM, SEM, Web Analytics, and somewhere around Email marketing the most. Research outcomes noticed the role of AI, SEO and e-WOM is increasing their importance for the market and consumer behaviour, thus the marketing strategies that use these technologies are also increasing. Future research needs to look into the role of blockchain technology in digital marketing, the impact of Artificial Intelligence in personalized advertisements, and the ethical implications of AI in marketing concerning privacy



and data security regulations. These insights provide valuable guidance for academics, practitioners, and policymakers in navigating the future of digital marketing and its role in shaping consumer interactions and business success.

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