

<https://doi.org/10.26565/2524-2547-2025-72-08>
UDC 659.1:004.738.5:61:016

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INFLUENCER MARKETING AND HEALTHCARE: BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Abstract. Recently, there has been a decline in the effectiveness of traditional marketing approaches amidst the growth of the global influencer marketing market. This article summarizes the arguments and counterarguments within the scholarly discussion on influencer marketing over the past 12 years. The main goal of the research is to understand the content and characteristics of existing studies in the field of influencer marketing to determine the direction of future research for both academics and practitioners. The relevance is due to the fact that while the use of influencer marketing is becoming increasingly popular and covers more and more areas, it remains under-researched in healthcare. The study was conducted in the following sequence: determining the influence of journals, authors, and articles on influencer marketing, analyzing keywords, identifying marketing clusters, and analyzing the evolution of research direction changes. The object of the study is 563 relevant works published in various scientific sources between 2014 and 2025. 68% of the works on influencer marketing were published over the last three years, with only 6.9% of the sample directly related to the healthcare sector and related disciplines. The most influential journals regarding influencer marketing were found to be «International Journal of Advertising», «Journal of Business Research», «Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services», and in healthcare – «International Journal of Consumer Studies». The most influential authors regarding influencer marketing are Hudders L., Lou C., Farivar S., and in healthcare – Christiansen P. Most articles were published by researchers from the USA, China, India, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, and concerning influencer marketing in healthcare – India, the United Kingdom, and the USA. Five key clusters were identified in influencer marketing: 1) influence, trust, and consumer behavior; 2) interaction, platforms, and demographics; 3) strategy, user engagement, and digital advertising; 4) social influence, brands, and sustainability; 5) artificial intelligence and virtual influencers. Influencer marketing research is developing actively and dynamically, shifting from traditional psychological aspects to technological, socially-oriented, and highly specialized topics over the past few years. Areas for future research may include artificial intelligence and virtual influencers, using TikTok for generation Z reach, marketing strategy, and user engagement. The results of this study can be useful to academics and marketers for developing more targeted and effective marketing strategies, and to specialists in healthcare institutions for studying successful cases and implementing influencer marketing in their activities.

Keywords: *Influencer Marketing, Influencers, Partnership, Digital Marketing, Healthcare, Social Influence.*

JEL Classification: I10; M31; M37; L86.

In cites: Khomenko, L. (2025). Influencer marketing and healthcare: bibliometric analysis. *Social Economics*, 72, 91–99. <https://doi.org/10.26565/2524-2547-2025-72-08>

Introduction. Marketers worldwide are facing a number of challenges: traditional scripts, mass mailings, and cold approaches are no longer effective. People are tired, they take longer to think, they doubt more often, and they are less likely to say «yes» on the first

try. A Forrester study shows that an average of 6 to 22 people may be involved in the decision-making process¹.

However, in recent years, an instrument such as influencer marketing has been actively developing. For instance, the global influencer marketing market value was US\$10 billion, and it is expected to reach US\$33 billion in 2025. In the US alone, spending on influencer marketing in 2024 was US\$7.1 billion².

Among the platforms companies choose for cooperation with opinion leaders, Instagram is in the lead. In 2025, the global Instagram influencer market was valued at US\$22 billion for the first time. TikTok is also growing rapidly, where the most successful brands earned over US\$0.5 billion in the first half of 2024 thanks to their influencer marketing campaigns³.

The relevance of the research is determined by the increasing role of opinion leaders in shaping consumer behavioral models and the influence of innovative platforms on marketing strategies.

The main objective of this study is a bibliometric analysis of the literature on influencer marketing. It allows for a comprehensive view of the full spectrum of research in this field from an objective, quantitative perspective.

There is a need to analyze existing scholarly publications on influencer marketing and develop recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of such campaigns. It is also important to identify the most influential publications, authors, articles, and to distinguish scientific schools and organizations that finance this research.

The goal of the work is to analyze the content and characteristics of existing studies on influencer marketing to determine the direction of future research for both academics and practitioners.

The objectives of the research are:

- to identify the most influential authors, organizations, journals, publications, and countries regarding influencer marketing in general and healthcare in particular;
- to reveal marketing clusters within influencer marketing;

- to analyze the content and present a visualization of the scholarly literature on influencer marketing;

- to determine directions for future research.

The object of the study is 563 scholarly publications (articles, reviews, conference proceedings in the titles) on influencer marketing, published in English and indexed by the Scopus database during 2014–2025.

The subject of the study is publications on influencer marketing, their authors, countries of origin, publishing houses, research sponsors, and keywords.

Literature Review. A total of 28 literature reviews on influencer marketing, published between 2014 and 2025, were found in the Scopus database.

Seven literature reviews are dedicated to explaining the concept of influencer marketing, its theoretical foundations, research landscape, and key drivers (Tanwar et al., 2021; Kanaveedu & Kalapurackal, 2022).

Another seven studies focus on new forms of influencers (particularly virtual or AI influencers) and the use of artificial intelligence and big data in influence marketing (Laszkiewicz & Kalinska-Kula, 2023).

Six reviews are devoted to target groups: children, adolescents, and Generation Z. Their authors investigate the influence of influencers on young audiences and their behavior, particularly in the areas of diet and purchasing (De Veirman et al., 2019; Hazari & Sethna, 2022).

Five reviews concern specific sectors and industries. These studies apply the concept of influencer marketing to specific fields such as healthcare, tourism, fashion, and beauty. Contemporary research on influencer marketing is primarily focused on analyzing consumer decision-making and behavior, source credibility and trust, social influence and engagement, and psychological and perception-based aspects (Buglyó-Nyakas & Gál, 2025).

The authors found that influencer marketing is widely used by medical professionals; however, it is ethically questionable and therefore needs to be used with extreme caution (Krisam & Altendorfer, 2021). Although influencers can play an important role in health promotion, there is currently insufficient knowledge about the use of influencers to promote health (Etheredge et al., 2021).

Four reviews raise ethical and legal aspects, issues of transparency, and the use of influencer marketing to promote prosocial behavior (Theodorakopoulos et al., 2025).

Three reviews focus on specific types of influencers (e.g., micro-influencers) or the

1 Zhao J. The Complexity Of The B2B Buying Process In Asia Pacific. forrester.com. 2024. URL: https://www.forrester.com/report/the-complexity-of-the-b2b-buying-process-in-asia-pacific/RES181577?ref_search=0_1761583220469 (дата звернення: 27.08.2025).

2 Statista. Influencer marketing market size worldwide from 2015 to 2025. URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1092819/global-influencer-market-size/> (дата звернення: 27.08.2025).

3 Statista. Influencer marketing market size worldwide from 2015 to 2025. URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1092819/global-influencer-market-size/> (дата звернення: 27.08.2025).

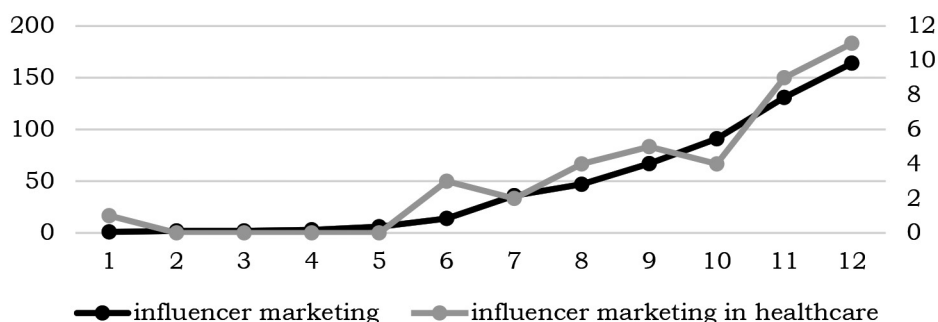


Fig. 1. Dynamics of publications on influencer marketing by years

Sources: developed by the author based on the Scopus database (<https://www.scopus.com/>)

analysis of the consequences of their activities, such as purchase intentions (Chen et al., 2024).

At the same time, the application of influencer marketing in the B2B sector and highly regulated sectors (finance, education, industry), the use of rapidly growing platforms and formats (TikTok, Twitch, Live-streaming, offline interaction), questions of the economic effectiveness of cooperation with bloggers, long-term brand value, crisis management, conflict of interest between the brand and the influencer, and blogger burnout remain under-researched. Furthermore, there is currently very little academic literature on the use of influencer marketing in the healthcare context.

Research Methodology. This study begins with a systematic literature review to describe the existing knowledge about research in this field and to identify gaps that provide opportunities for new research. Twenty-eight literature reviews on influencer marketing were found in the Scopus database. The selection of this database is related to its wide usage in modern research (Khomenko et al., 2021; Rosokhata et al., 2021).

In the first stage, the key phrase «influencer marketing» was defined for further analysis and the literature sample was formed. The search was performed in the Scopus database using the keyword «influencer marketing» in the titles of publications (articles, conference proceedings, reviews) published in English. The sample included 563 works (including 28 reviews) on influencer marketing, published during 2014–2025. The selection of this range is due to the fact that starting only from 2014, a minimum of one article on this topic was published.

In the next step, the titles of articles, authors, journal names, affiliations, sponsors, publication dates, and citation counts were used for further analysis.

Based on keywords and abstract content, the content was analyzed, and a leading

hierarchical cluster analysis was conducted, allowing for an understanding of the research clusters in influencer marketing. The visualization of the scholarly literature topics was performed using the VOSviewer software.

The topics for future research were projected based on the change of keywords over the analyzed period.

Main Results. The majority of works on influencer marketing (68%) were published over the last three years (Figure 1). Most research has been conducted in the fields of business, management and accounting (337 works), social sciences (171 works), computer science (149 works), economics, econometrics and finance (61 works), and decision sciences (53 works). Despite the significant interest in influencer marketing overall, only 6.9% (39 works) of the total sample of publications directly relate to the healthcare sector and related disciplines (medicine, nursing, health professions, and pharmacology, toxicology and pharmaceuticals).

The largest number of works were published in the following journals: «International Journal of Advertising» (14 works), «Journal of Business Research» (14 works), «Journal of Digital and Social Media Marketing» (13 works), «Springer Proceedings in Business and Economics» (11 works), and «Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services» (11 works), which collectively account for 11.2% of the sample (table 1). Among the journals covering influencer marketing in healthcare, the leader is the «International Journal of Consumer Studies», which has published 5 works and accumulated 889 citations.

The largest number of publications belong to Hudders L. (8 works), Farivar S. and Wang F. (7 works each). Chan-Olmsted S., van Reijmersdal E.A., Feng Y., Lou C., and Christiansen P. each have 4 publications (table 2).

Christiansen P.'s four publications are all dedicated to influencer marketing in healthcare, making him the most prolific author in that

Table 1. Scientific sources with the largest number of publications on the influencer marketing

Journal	Number of publications, pcs.	Number of citations, pcs.
International Journal of Advertising	14	2141
Journal of Business Research	14	1243
Journal of Digital and Social Media Marketing	13	72
Springer Proceedings in Business and Economics	11	33
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	11	1402
Journal of Marketing Management	10	940
Sustainability Switzerland	10	279

Sources: developed by the authors based on the Scopus database (<https://www.scopus.com/>)

Table 2. Authors with the largest number of publications on the influencer marketing

Author	Number of publications, pcs.	Number of citations per author, pcs.
Hudders L.	8	2617
Farivar S.	7	511
Wang F.	7	511
Lou C.	4	1797
Christiansen P.	4	421
Chan-Olmsted S.	4	393
van Reijmersdal E.A.	4	291
Feng Y.	4	190

Sources: developed by the authors based on the Scopus database (<https://www.scopus.com/>)

specific thematic area (Coates et al., 2019; Coates et al., 2020; Evans et al., 2023).

The largest number of studies are conducted by researchers from the USA (107 authors), China (68 authors), India (67 authors), the United Kingdom (42 authors), Malaysia (31 authors), Australia and Indonesia (27 authors each). At the same time, most research concerning influencer marketing in healthcare belongs to scholars from India (8 authors), the United Kingdom and the USA (7 authors each).

Among the organizations that conduct research on influencer marketing, the leaders are Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia (11 publications), Universiteit Gent, Belgium (10 publications), University of Florida, USA (9 publications), Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea (8 publications), and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong (8 publications). Simultaneously, 10 out of the 39 publications on influencer marketing in healthcare are affiliated with the University of Liverpool, Keck School of Medicine of USC, and the University of Southern California.

The largest number of studies were funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (22 publications), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

(6 publications), the Ministry of Education (5 publications), the Ministry of Science and Technology, Taiwan (5 publications), and the University of Liverpool (4 publications). The largest sponsor of research in influencer marketing in healthcare is the University of Liverpool (4 works), followed by the American Beverage Association and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (3 works each).

The most cited works on influencer marketing are presented in Table 3.

Among the most cited works is a publication by Vrontis et al. (2021) concerning influencer marketing in healthcare, which is the first comprehensive systematic review of existing research on Influencer Marketing (IM) in the social media environment. It highlights the contextual factors that affect consumer behavior.

Key research directions are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 1 shows five clusters of research on the influencer marketing:

Cluster 1 – 23 items. Influence, Trust, and Consumer Behavior.

Cluster 2 – 18 items. Interaction, Platforms, and Demographics.

Cluster 3 – 17 items. Strategy, User Engagement, and Digital Advertising.

Table 3. The most cited articles on influencer marketing

Title of publications	Authors	Journal (quartile), year	Number of cites, psc	Average number of cites per year, psc
Influencer Marketing: How Message Value and Credibility Affect Consumer Trust of Branded Content on Social Media	Lou, C., Yuan, S.	Journal of Interactive Advertising (Q1), 2019	1663	277,2
Marketing through instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude	De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., Hudders, L.	Journal of Interactive Advertising (Q1), 2017	1552	194
Social media influencer marketing: A systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda	Vrontis, D., Makrides, A., Christofi, M., Thrassou, A.	International Journal of Consumer Studies (Q1), 2021	801	200,3
Instafamous and social media influencer marketing	Jin, S.V., Muqaddam, A., Ryu, E.	Marketing Intelligence and Planning (Q2), 2019	632	105,3
More than meets the eye: The functional components underlying influencer marketing	Campbell, C., Farrell, J.R.	Business Horizons (Q1), 2020	614	122,8

Source: compiled by the author based on database Scopus (<https://www.scopus.com/>)

Cluster 4 – 12 items. Social Influence, Brands, and Sustainability.

Cluster 5 – 8 items. Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Influencers.

Cluster 1 is central and focuses on the main psychological mechanisms of influencer marketing. It explores how trust, credibility, and parasocial interaction influence purchase intention and consumption behavior.

Cluster 2 focuses on specific platforms (TikTok, YouTube), demographic groups,

and contexts. Significant attention is paid to research related to food, children, gender aspects, and Generation Z, often addressing the impact of influencers on youth audiences and specific topics, such as nutrition.

Cluster 3 has a strategic and business-oriented focus. It covers studies related to the integration of influencer marketing into the overall marketing strategy and advertising, measuring user engagement, increasing brand awareness, and ultimate sales.

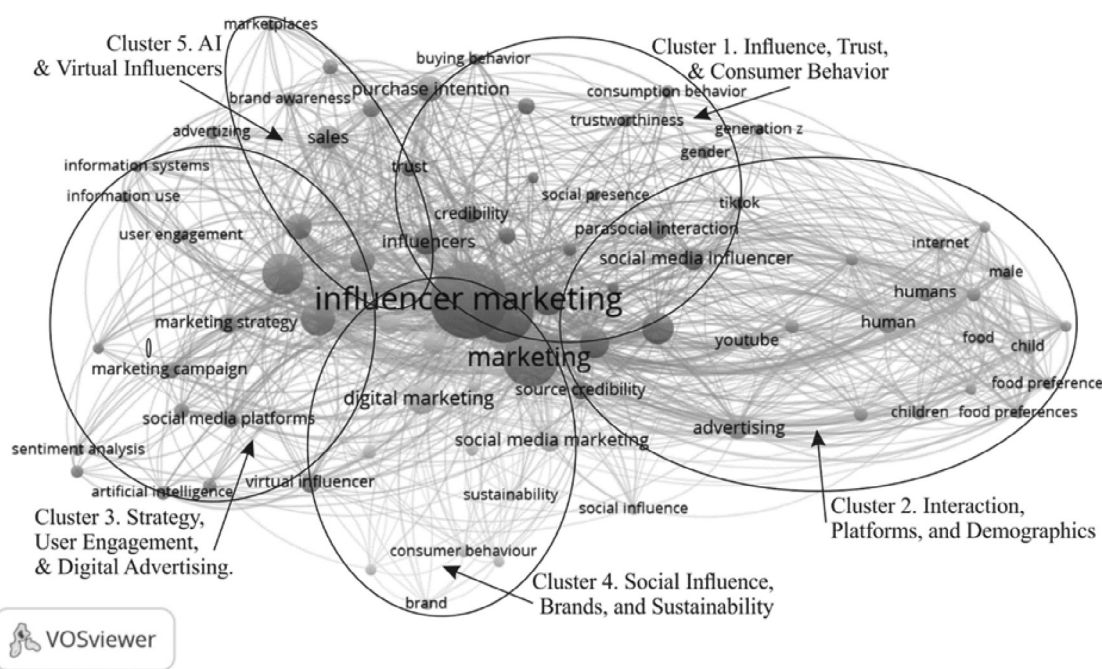


Fig. 2. Clusters research devoted to the influencer marketing

Source: compiled by the author based on database Scopus (<https://www.scopus.com/>) with VOSviewer <https://www.vosviewer.com/>

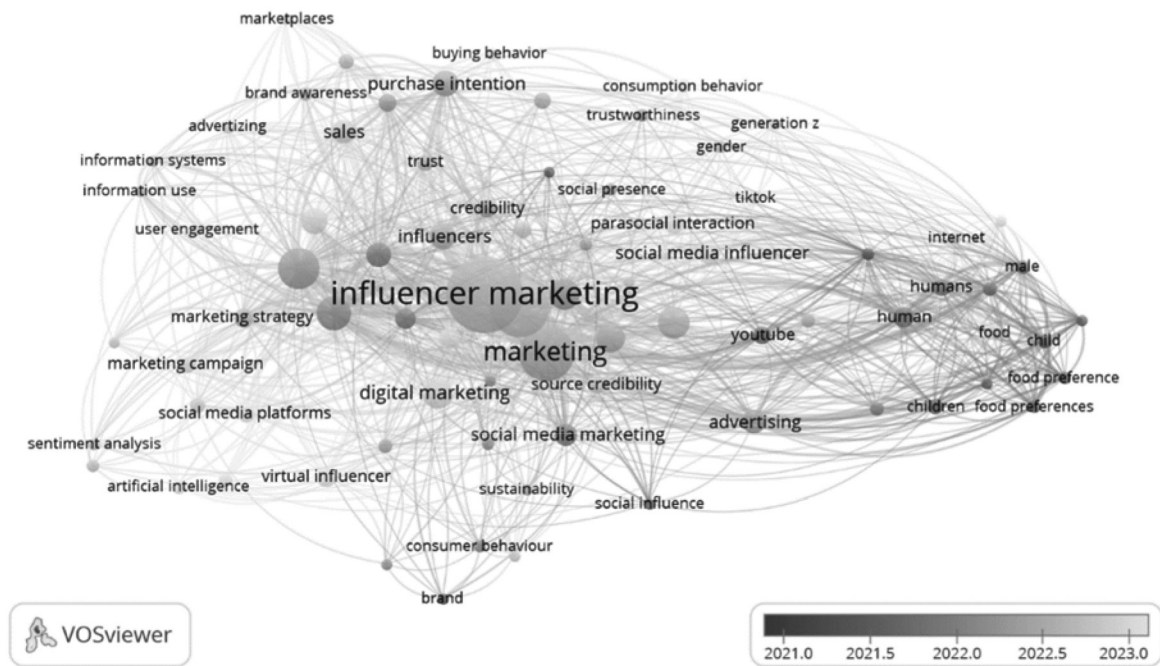


Fig. 3. Dynamic of areas of research devoted to influencer marketing

Sources: developed by the author based on database Scopus (<https://www.scopus.com/>) with VOSviewer <https://www.vosviewer.com/>

Cluster 4 is related to the broader impact on society and business ethics. It includes research on social influence, the role of the brand, and consumer behavior in the context of sustainability, which is an important direction in modern digital marketing.

The technologically-oriented Cluster 5 investigates the use of advanced technologies. Specifically, it includes research on the virtual influencer and the application of artificial intelligence, particularly for sentiment analysis on social media platforms.

The evolution and current trends in scholarly research on influencer marketing are demonstrated in Figure 3.

Influencer marketing research is developing actively and dynamically, shifting from traditional psychological aspects to technological, socially-oriented, and highly specialized topics over the last few years.

The newest studies (2022–2023) focus on specific platforms such as TikTok and their influence on specific demographic groups, particularly Generation Z and children, especially in the context of food preference. This indicates a growing interest in young, mobile, and rapidly changing audiences.

Newer themes also include technological aspects such as virtual influencer, artificial intelligence, and sentiment analysis, which points to a transition toward automated and synthetic forms of influence.

Topics related to marketing strategy and user engagement are also becoming relevant,

highlighting their integration into broader business models.

At the same time, the Healthcare theme remains niche and under-researched, as none of the key terms related to medicine and health, such as medicine, pharmaceuticals, public health, vaccination, patient engagement, or health influencer, are directly reflected on either the cluster or the temporal graphs.

Conclusion. A clear trend of accelerated research was observed, with 68% of all influencer marketing publications appearing within the last three years. Despite this surge, only a small fraction (6.9%) of the analyzed literature directly addresses the healthcare sector and its related fields. The leading journals for general influencer marketing research include the International Journal of Advertising, the Journal of Business Research, and the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services. However, the International Journal of Consumer Studies dominates the niche area of healthcare influencer marketing. Hudders L., Lou C., and Farivar S. are recognized as the top authors in the broader field, while Christiansen P. leads the output specifically within the healthcare context. Geographically, the USA, China, India, the UK, and Malaysia contribute the most articles overall, with research focused on healthcare primarily emerging from India, the UK, and the USA.

The main body of research, encompassing the 563 publications in the sample, is almost entirely focused on commerce, marketing,

consumer psychology, and social media, rather than on medical or public health issues. The terms most closely related to healthcare (e.g., child, food, food preference) belong to Cluster 2. This indicates that most adjacent research is centered on nutrition and the influence on child/youth audiences, rather than on clinical or systemic aspects of healthcare.

Despite Healthcare being only a small fraction of the total sample (less than 7% of the works), existing bibliometric trends point to new directions that are highly relevant and promising for researchers seeking to fill this gap in healthcare.

For instance, emerging topics such as artificial intelligence and virtual influencer can be applied in Healthcare to create reliable, scientifically validated «digital health influencers» to combat misinformation or promote vaccination.

Since research on TikTok is among the newest, this indicates a need to study how this platform can be used to reach Generation Z and conduct youth-oriented public health campaigns.

The recent surge in the terms marketing strategy and user engagement suggests that academics have started to study the effective implementation of influencer marketing more closely. This strategic approach is critically important for healthcare organizations aiming to use influencer marketing for patient communication.

The results of this study can be useful to academics and marketers for developing more targeted and effective marketing strategies, and to specialists in healthcare institutions for studying successful cases and implementing influencer marketing in their activities.

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МАРКЕТИНГ ВПЛИВУ ТА ОХОРОНА ЗДОРОВ'Я: БІБЛІОМЕТРИЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ

Останнім часом спостерігається зниження ефективності традиційних маркетингових підходів на тлі зростання глобального ринку інфлюенсер маркетингу. У цій статті узагальнено аргументи та контраргументи в рамках наукової дискусії щодо інфлюенсер маркетингу за останні 12 років. Головною метою дослідження є розуміння змісту та характеристик існуючих досліджень у галузі інфлюенсер маркетингу для визначення напрямку майбутніх досліджень як для науковців, так і для практиків. Актуальність пов'язана з тим, що хоча використання інфлюенсер маркетингу стає все популярнішим та охоплює все більше сфер, однак залишається малодослідженим в охороні здоров'я. Дослідження проводилося в такій послідовності: визначення впливу журналів, авторів, та статей щодо інфлюенсер маркетингу, аналіз ключових слів, ідентифікація маркетингових кластерів, аналіз еволюції змін напрямів досліджень. Об'єктом дослідження є 563 релевантні роботи, опубліковані у різних наукових джерелах протягом 2014-2025 рр. 68% робіт про інфлюенсер маркетинг було опубліковано протягом останніх трьох років, лише 6,9% із вибірки безпосередньо стосуються галузі охорони здоров'я та суміжних дисциплін. Найбільш впливовими журналами щодо інфлюенсер маркетингу виявилися «International Journal of Advertising», «Journal of Business Research», «Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services», в охороні здоров'я – «International Journal of Consumer Studies». Найбільш впливовими авторами щодо інфлюенсер маркетингу є Hudders L., Lou C., Farivar S., в охороні здоров'я – Christiansen P. Більшість статей були опубліковані дослідниками з США, Китаю, Індії, Об'єднаного Королівства, Малайзії, в охороні здоров'я – Індії, Об'єднаного королівства та США. Було визначено п'ять ключових кластерів у інфлюенсер маркетингу: 1) вплив, довіра та споживча поведінка; 2) взаємодія, платформи та демографія; 3) стратегія, залученість користувачів та цифрова реклама; 4) соціальний вплив, бренди та стійкість; 5) штучний інтелект та віртуальні інфлюенсери. Дослідження інфлюенсер маркетингу активно та динамічно розвиваються, зміщуючись від традиційних психологічних аспектів до технологічних, соціально-орієнтованих та вузькоспеціалізованих тем протягом останніх кількох років. Галузі майбутніх досліджень можуть включати штучний інтелект та віртуальні лідери думок, TikTok для охоплення покоління Z, маркетингова стратегія та залучення користувачів. Результати даного дослідження можуть бути корисними науковцям, маркетологам для розробки більш цільових та ефективних маркетингових стратегій, фахівцям в установах охорони здоров'я для вивчення успішних кейсів та впровадження інфлюенсер маркетингу у своїй діяльності.

Ключові слова: *маркетинг впливу, лідери думок, партнерство, цифровий маркетинг, охорона здоров'я, соціальний вплив.*

JEL Classification: I10; M31; M37; L86.

Received: 10 September 2025
Revised: 21 October 2025
Accepted: 27 November 2025
Published: 31 December 2025.

Стаття надійшла до редакції 10.09.2025 р.
Стаття пройшла рецензування 21.10.2025 р.
Стаття рекомендована до друку 27.11.2025 р.
Стаття опублікована 31.12.2025 р.