



A Bibliometric Analysis of Beauty, Cosmetic and Media Advertising Research: Trends, Gaps and Emerging Themes

Sathya Narayanan S¹

Research Scholar, Centre for Women's Studies, Pondicherry University

Sathya004032000@gmail.com

Vahiba Nargese P.S.²

Research Scholar, Centre for Women's Studies, Pondicherry University

vahibanargese@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Existing knowledge regarding the influence of media in the narratives of physical appearance and the impact of gender identity is associated with empirical and conceptual studies. Despite the substantial growth of research in the area, the evolution of themes and patterns of collaboration within the research domain remains limited. Therefore, this study employs a bibliometric approach to examine global research on beauty, cosmetics and media advertising with a particular emphasis on gender-related perspectives. The data was extracted from the Scopus database and includes publications spanning the period from 1987 to 2025 for the purpose of conducting a bibliometric analysis. Various indicators related to bibliometric analysis were utilised to analyse the evolution of the field. The indicators examine the intellectual and conceptual structure of the literature, which were employed in identifying dominant, emerging and declining themes. The findings highlight the development and expansion of research on beauty and cosmetic advertising over time. The thematic cluster reveals the evolution in the field. Leading authors, co-citation analysis, influential journals and leading contributing countries were identified. The findings enhance understanding of the development

and current state of the research domain. By identifying underexplored areas, the study proposes future research directions, especially empirical studies in examining the relationship between the media and mediated beauty, their perceived identity and existing gender norms among women.

Introduction

The growing body of literature has heightened the media pressure, creating image concerns among individuals in various cultural settings ((Lang & Ye, 2024). This influence began with television and extended to short-form videos and digital media (Xie, 2024). The advancement of technology and the evolution of the digital era have marked the dominance of social media (Merino et al., 2024) particularly among youth, social media has become a major source of media engagement (Grover et al., 2022). Studies indicate that greater engagement with beauty-enhanced images on visual media can increase the desire for undergoing cosmetic procedures in individuals (Conboy & Mingoia, 2024; Hermans et al., 2022). Visual media platforms, including television, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, not only reflect the beauty ideals, but they also construct and reinforce beauty-centric filtered content, shaping their perceptions and influence in the decision-making process (Wang et al., 2026).

Fashion and advertisement are the most influential factors in amplifying beauty standards. “Beauty standards are the ideals and perceptions of beauty that society and culture place on people” (French, 2024, p. 1). By using models and celebrities as brand ambassadors, they project ideal body images. Beauty and cosmetic advertisements have transcended from print to visual media, creating a consumer culture and behaviour centred on these beauty standards produced by the beauty and cosmetic brands. Media representation of beauty has a greater influence on the perception of women (Lang & Ye, 2024; Xie, 2024), where the unrealistic beauty standards reinforce gender roles and gender norms and create pressure for them to maintain their bodies in a certain manner (French, 2024). These beauty standards construct embodiment located in the unrealistic visual imagery, leading to distorted beauty ideas (Thapan, 2009). However, the intersection of gender and media continues to shape attitudes in gender relations, roles and identities. There is an increase in the research of beauty and cosmetic advertising through conventional and digital media in recent years (Danylova, 2020; Grabe et al., 2008). As the scholarly interest continues to expand, it is important to examine the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of existing literature (Rejeb et al., 2024).



Understanding the ways in which beauty standards and gender identities are communicated and perceived, as well as their impact on the perception of attractiveness, offers a comprehensive perspective on advertising on individuals' beauty culture and attitudes. There is a need to understand the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of the existing literature to provide insights into the development and emerging inquiry of the field (García-Lillo et al., 2019). This study undertakes a bibliometric analysis of the scholarly literature on beauty, cosmetics and media advertising with particular attention to gender. As the research domain on media and cosmetic advertising has gained a scholarly expansion, this calls for a necessity to create a systemic examination of the field's development and knowledge structure. Applying bibliometric analysis provides an approach for evaluating the progression and impact of scholarly work through the analysis of publications, annual growth trends, and patterns of scientific collaboration. Accordingly, this study investigates the research domain of beauty cosmetics and media advertising by evaluating activity citation, leading authors, journals, countries, as well as thematic directions that have shaped the field over time.

By systematically mapping the intellectual development of the field, this research contributes to the expanding body of literature on beauty cosmetics, media advertising and provides a foundation for future empirical and theoretical studies. To achieve these objectives, the study is guided by a set of research questions:

- How has the research on beauty standards, attractiveness, and gender representation evolved over time?
- Which are the most significant authors contributed to this field of research?
- Which journals, publications and sources have had the greatest scholarly influence on the study?
- What patterns of collaboration exist among researchers and countries contributing to this research domain?
- How is the conceptual structure of the field?
- What thematic clusters key research themes characterise the current body of literature?

The article proceeds as follows. Section 2 outlines the methods, followed by the findings and discussion in sections 3 and 4, respectively, and we conclude this paper with future directions, implications, and limitations in section 5.



Methods

The bibliometric analysis in this study follows the four-stage procedure recommended by Fosso Wamba and Mishra (2017).

- I. Figuring out database and keywords
- II. Performing initial data analysis
- III. Conducting network analysis
- IV. Analysing thematic and conceptual dimensions

The Scopus electronic database, by Elsevier, was used to carry out the study. This is one of the largest databases as it covers more than 20,000 journals and other documents (Saravanan et al., 2025) as it include more wide collection of journals than PubMed and Web of Science. The advanced search offered by Scopus helps in refining results (Falagas et al., 2008) by limiting subject areas, types of documents, language, etc. The study did not cover all documents; only journal articles and reviews were considered for this study.

The search in the Scopus database was refined by limiting the search to the subject areas of social science, psychology, arts and humanities and Business, Management and Accounting. Other subjects were excluded from the study. Narrowing down keywords gives a few results where the keywords have shifted to broader TITLE-ABS-KEY ((beauty OR cosmetic* OR makeup OR skincare OR "beauty industry") AND (advertis* OR marketing OR branding OR promotion) AND (media OR television OR TV OR "social media" OR digital OR online OR influencer*)) was used to retrieve the documents.

The timespan from 1987 to journals in 2026 was used for the analysis. To get a deeper understanding of the development and emerging phase of the field, these years were chosen. Document type to journals and review, as well as Language as English, were limited for the study. Other types of documents and languages were removed. The search provides 828 articles, which were imported into CSV files and manually screened by the investigators as part of the data cleaning process. From these 828 results, as per the requirement of the study, 553 were excluded. These files contain unnecessary information not required for the present study. From the data cleaning process, 275 results were retrieved.

Biblioshiny by R Studio and Vosviewer was used for performing bibliometric analysis. The bibliometric indicators were used to answer the research questions of the study. Ethical approval is not required as the study did not involve any human participants and was based on a bibliometric analysis.

Results

3.1 Main Information about the data

A total of 828 documents were retrieved in the search conducted in the Scopus database. The search timespan was from 1987 to 2025. After all, the search limitations in the Scopus database resulted in 275 documents as the final count. Figure 1 shows the flow of data retrieved for the study, showing in each step how many documents were retrieved. Table 1 shows the main information of the documents retrieved.

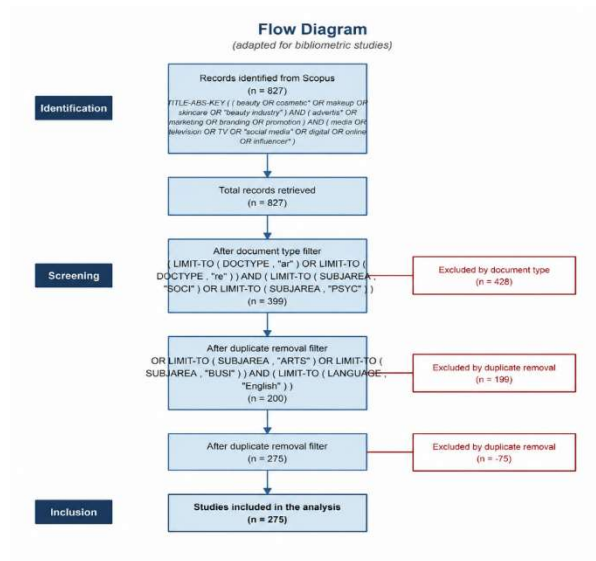


Figure 1

Description	Results
Timespan	1987:2026
Sources	194
Documents	275
Annual Growth Rate %	8.49
Document Average Age	5.72
Average citations per doc	29.08
References	15472
Keywords Plus (ID)	293

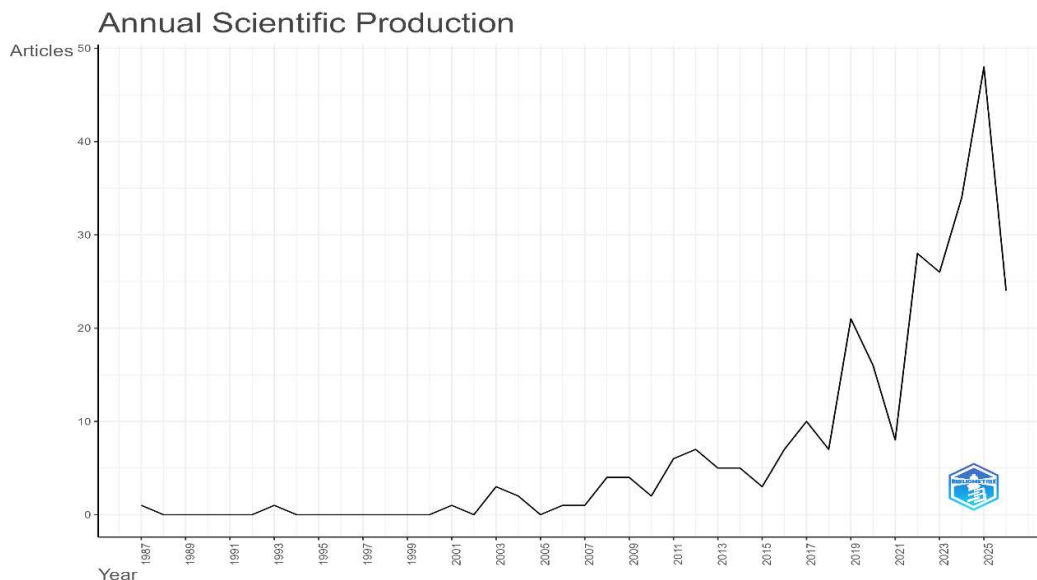


Author's Keywords (DE)	932
Authors	683
Authors of single-authored docs	47
Single-authored docs	50
Co-Authors per Doc	2.68
International co-authorships %	15.27
article	268
review	7

Table 1 (Source from Biblioshiny)

3.2 Annual Growth Publication

The annual growth of published articles on beauty, cosmetics and media advertising began in 1987. In the initial years, very few articles were published with limited scholarly output. Figure 2 shows the annual scientific production of publications over the years. From 1987, the graph remains the same, and from 2017, there is an increase in the publication numbers, and by 2025, it reaches its highest. There is a gradual increase in publications in 2017 with the evolution of digital media. The highest number of publications was in 2025, with a total of 48 articles.

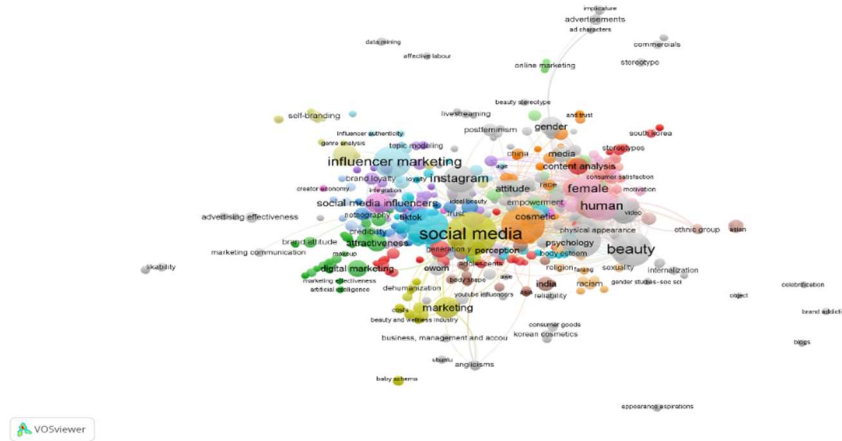


3.3 Frequently Appearing Terms

Figure 3 presents the co-occurrence network of the most frequently appearing terms extracted from the titles and abstracts of retrieved publications. The analysis was performed using VOSviewer to visualise the conceptual structure of the research on beauty, cosmetics and media advertising. In the network, each node represents a term where the node size reflects the frequency with which the term appears in the dataset. The links between each node indicate a co-occurrence relationship, with bolder connections representing stronger associations between terms.

Several interconnected thematic clusters on social media, marketing, gender and consumer behaviour were revealed. The most prominent terms were social media, beauty, female, human, marketing, cosmetic, Instagram, influencer, marketing, gender, attitude and psychology, indicating their dominance in the research domain. A strong association is found between purchase intention, influence, marketing and Instagram. Indian Women, South Korea, Appearance aspiration appears at the margin, linked through the weak co-occurrence relationship.

Figure 3



3.4 Countries

Articles from 46 different countries were published in the time period from 1987 to 2025. Figure 4 represents the topmost countries in the retrieved data. USA (77) has the highest proportion, followed by Malaysia (51) and India (42). Figure 5 shows the inter-country collaboration. The results indicate the research is concentrated within the United States, China, India, the United Kingdom and Australia,

emerging as major contributors. The connection among countries suggests a growing level of international collaboration within the field.

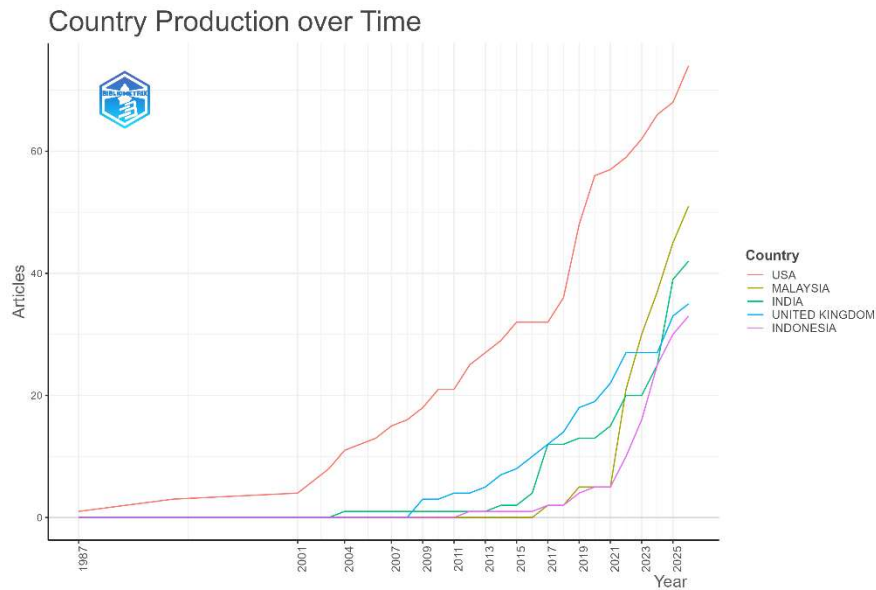


Figure 4

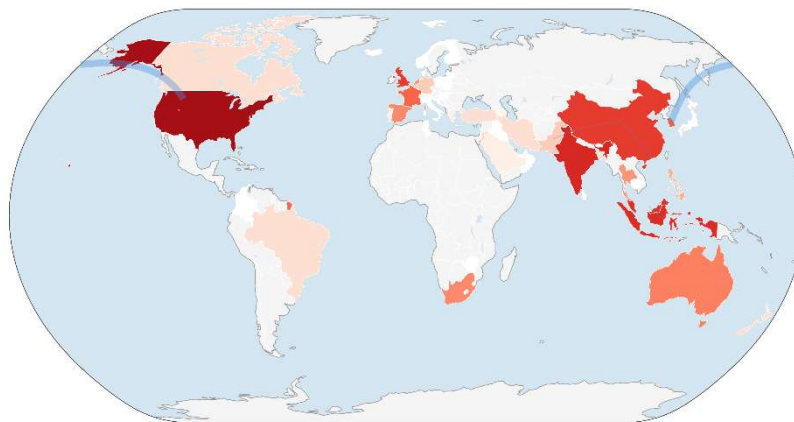


Figure 5

3.5 Authors

The most relevant authors are considered to be Chan T J and Sokolova K, followed by Ahmad K. Figure 6 represents the most relevant authors in the research domain, and Figure 7 represents the most locally cited authors, with Kefi H and Sokolova K with 27 local citations. Analysis of these authors revealed that they are from Malaysia and France. In the institutions, the University of West Attica has the largest number of published journals, with 5 publications.



Figure 6

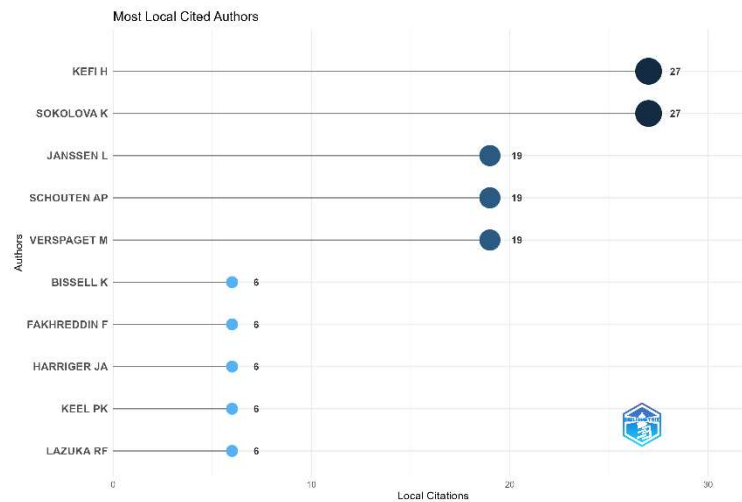


Figure 7

3.6 Highly Cited Articles

Figure 8 represents the most cited publications within the field of beauty, cosmetic and media advertising. Among the top-cited articles, the majority have made substantial contributions to the development of the field. The article by Schouten is the most cited article with 1056 citations till now.

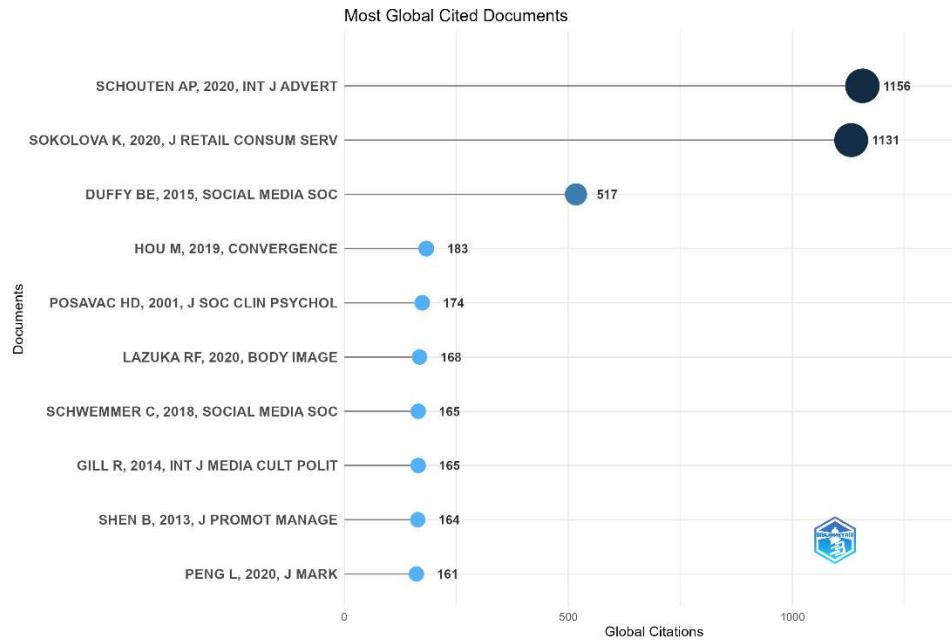


Figure 8

3.7 Journals

The Journal of Promotion Management represents the most relevant journal with 7 articles published in the field. The Body Image and Sex Roles followed with six publications each. The prominence of these publications in journals highlights the theoretical and methodological approaches employed in the study of beauty and cosmetics advertising. Figure 9 represents the most relevant journals in the research domain.

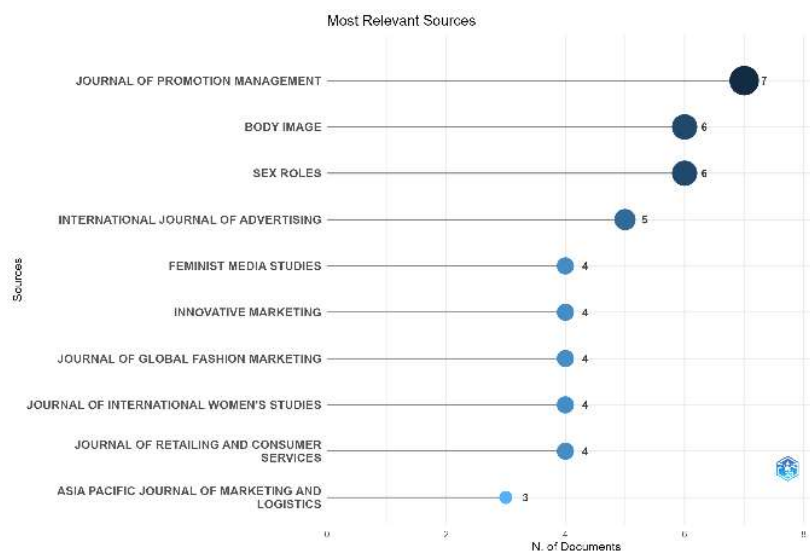


Figure 9

3.8 Trending topics and Themes

Figures 10 and 11, respectively, illustrate the thematic structure and trend topics in the research domain. The thematic map reveals that advertising body image and humans constitute the motor themes of the field, which are highly developed topics. The basic theme comprises social media, influencer marketing, purchase intention, beauty, gender and content analysis. The growing relevance of themes includes cosmetics, cosmetic perceptions, psychology and body positivity. The niche themes are social media influencers and globalisation. These themes together highlight the interdisciplinary nature of the field.

The trend topic indicates the evolution of the research domain in these years. From 2018, the attention has shifted towards topics such as female, human body, beauty, attitudes and in recent years, more studies on social media, Instagram, influencer marketing, social media influencer, cosmetics, eWom, purchase intention, and the beauty industry. This involves the change of research topic underwent these years.

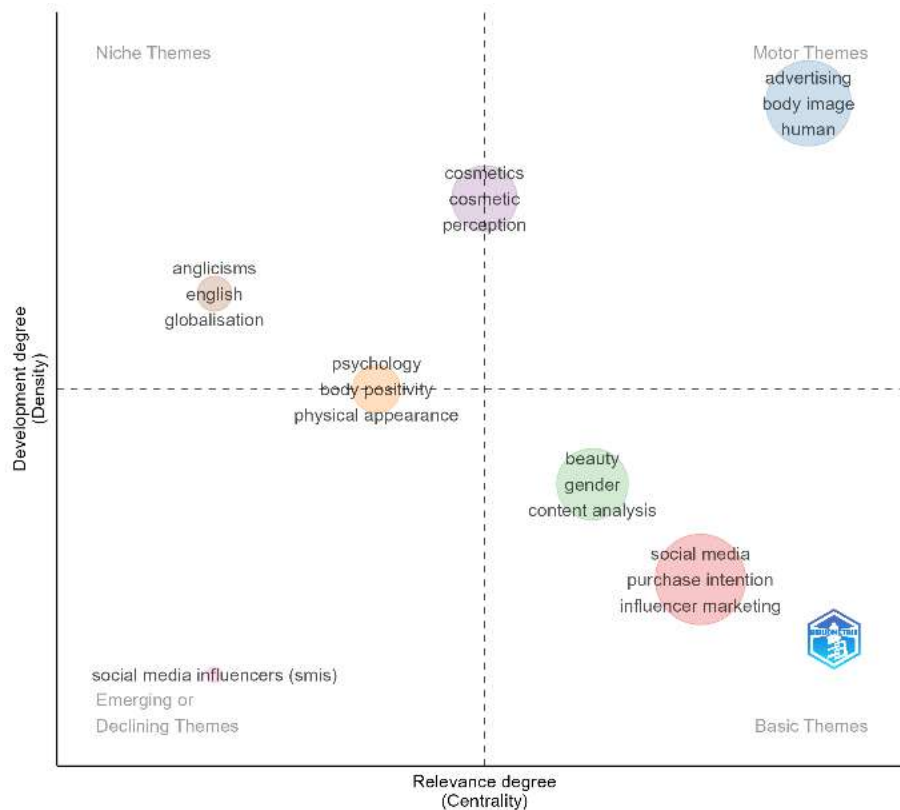


Figure 10

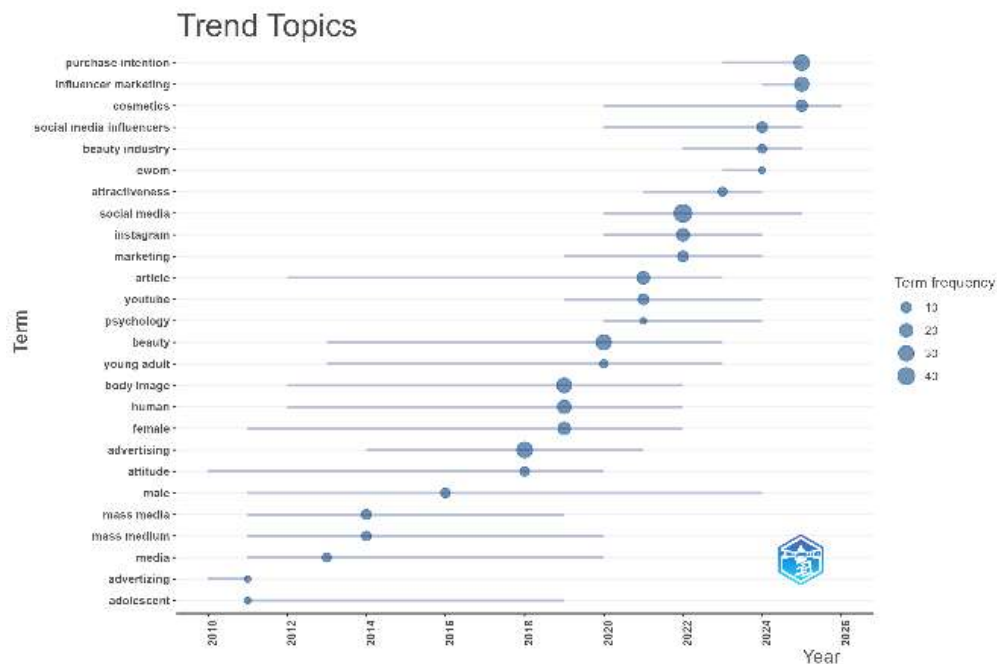


Figure 11

Discussion

The study conducted a bibliometric analysis of research on beauty, cosmetics and media advertising indexed in the Scopus database from the time period 1987 to 2025. The various indicators of bibliometrics of biblioshiny and Vosviewer were used to map the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, annual growth, authors, and collaboration patterns within the research domain. The findings reflect an understanding of how scholarly interest in beauty and cosmetic advertising has developed over time and provide insight into the direction for future research.

The analysis reveals a substantial growth in the publications over the study period. The year 2017 shows a shift of paradigm in the research domain, where the number of studies in the field shows a sudden increase. The rise of digital media and their influence has gained scholarly interest in different fields, thus indicating the interdisciplinary nature of the field. While early studies focused primarily on the traditional advertising media representation, recent years have taken a shift towards influencer marketing, digital engagement and consumer behaviour. The increase in publications reflects the significance of beauty and cosmetic advertising in shaping the perception and purchasing decisions of individuals.

Several influential publications that have significantly contributed to the research understanding was conducted citation analysis. The interdisciplinary nature of the field, where the disciplines of media studies, marketing, psychology and sociology can be observed in the results, indicates that other



disciplines, like gender studies, hold little dominance in the field. The thematic map figured out the motor themes and niche themes. Even though studies are conducted on gender differences, studies with feminist standpoints are missing out in the field, having a weaker connection. Understanding the perspectives of women in various cultural settings is not evident in the publications.

The trend topic analysis demonstrated the gradual transition from traditional media-focused studies to research centred on digital engagement and the beauty industry. The collaboration analysis revealed active contributions from researchers, institutions and countries across different regions of the world, highlighting the global nature of research on beauty and cosmetic advertising. The presence of international collaboration demonstrates the exchange of knowledge across geographical boundaries, contributing to the advancement of the field.

Despite a growing body of literature, several areas remain underexplored. Existing studies have extensively examined body image, the effectiveness of advertising and consumer behaviour. A very few studies have explored how women from various cultural settings interpret, perceive and internalise beauty messages disseminated through both conventional and social media platforms.

Bibliometric analysis provides an overview of the development, current state and emerging direction of the research domain. By identifying influential publications, major themes, collaborative patterns and research gaps, this study enables a systematic understanding of the advancement of knowledge in the field.

Conclusion

This study contributes to a comprehensive bibliometric analysis on beauty, cosmetic and media advertising, offering insights into its conceptual structure, publication trends and collaborative networks. The findings indicate a consistent growth in the field over time, where in the years there is a change in the academic interest according to the advancement and transformation of society. The study contributes to a clearer understanding of the development, structure and knowledge dynamics within the research area.

Despite these contributions, the study has certain limitations. The analysis is restricted to the Scopus database. Moreover, the exclusion of non-indexed sources, such as conference proceedings and book chapters, as well as the exclusion of other languages than English, may result in the limited coverage of the field. Additionally, the bibliometrics as a quantitative method may not be able to capture the contextual meaning of individual studies.



The study provides future direction for the research domain. From the analysis, there is a scarcity of comparative studies in various cultural settings with different types of media. The longitudinal feminist research could enable a context-sensitive understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of women toward the influence of beauty and cosmetic advertising.

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