Influencers Based on Citespace Research Hotpots and Research Prospects

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Abstract: With the rise of online live streaming and short videos, influencers have attracted more and more attention, and many scholars have also devoted themselves to the research field of influencers. With the help of Citespace visual analysis technology, this paper systematically sorted out 445 core literature (CSSCI) on influencers from 2016 to 2022 in CNKI, including the annual distribution of published quantity, the distribution of authors and journals of highly cited articles, and keyword co-occurrence analysis. The research found that first, the number of articles on influencers is constantly enriched, and scholars continue to broaden the depth and breadth of study. Second, the content of the research is relatively diverse and scattered, among which the current Internet celebrity economy is the most popular. At last, this paper points out the direction of future research by summarizing and sorting out previous studiees on influencers.

Keywords: Influencers; Citespace Visual Analysis; Research Hotpots; Research Prospect

1 INTRODUCTION

With the rise of online live streaming and short video platforms in 2019, the emerging role of influencers has emerged in the eyes of more and more people, which also makes the cash ability of influencers strongly highlighted. Influencers economy which is developed by influencers show explosive growth, especially since the COVID-19 outbreak, live-streaming e-commerce as a kind of online marketing, on the premise of effectively, reducing the risk of the spread of epidemic, and satisfying the social interaction of consumers and purchase demand, get the attention of consumers. Now this business model has become a mainstream trend, and live-streaming e-commerce is significantly changing people's lives, society and consumption patterns.

In this context, it is of great significance to systematically sort out and summarize the past research on influencers, and lay the foundation for further study in the future. Citespace can systematically sort out literature scientifically and find out research hotspots through keyword co-occurrence analysis, keyword clustering, and other methods. Through literature search, it was found that the core literature of the research on influencers was concentrated after 2016. Therefore, this paper took 2016 as the starting point of literature search to systematically sort out the literature research on influencers.

2 DATA SOURCES AND RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Data sources

For the literature data, the researcher searched all core literature (CSSCI) in the CNKI database using the keyword "influencers", spanning the period of 2016-2022. In order to ensure the representativeness and accuracy of the literature, the researcher conducted a secondary manual screening, eliminating irrelevant literature such as press releases, news reports, book recommendations, missing authors, and exporting the valid literature by "Refworks" for subsequent analysis, including "title, keywords, abstract" and other data. A total of 445 valid documents were obtained, which were used to sort out the literature on influencers research.

2.2 Research methods

In terms of literature research, based on the cooperative network analysis and co-word analysis methods of bibliometrics, we focus on the following ideas to analyze the hotspots of domestic influencers research: using Citespace to conduct co-word analysis on the research samples to understand the development history of influencers research and the knowledge base of each influencers research from the macro level; in addition, analyzing the literature authors, highly cited articles and journals to present the relationship between academic community and research on influencers. Finally, the results of the above data analysis are summarized and formed research conclusions, and combined with the actual situation in China.

3 VISUAL ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

3.1 Paper Time Distribution Trend

Influencers are those who have attracted wide attention from the masses for an event or behavior in reality or online, and thus have certain social assets. The study of influencers began in the 1990s and has been conducted for more than 20 years, but the number of articles on the study of influencers began to higher in 2016. After 2016, along with the development of mobile Internet and social media, especially since 2019, the rapid growth of short videos such as TikTok, the number of articles on the study of influencers has increased rapidly.
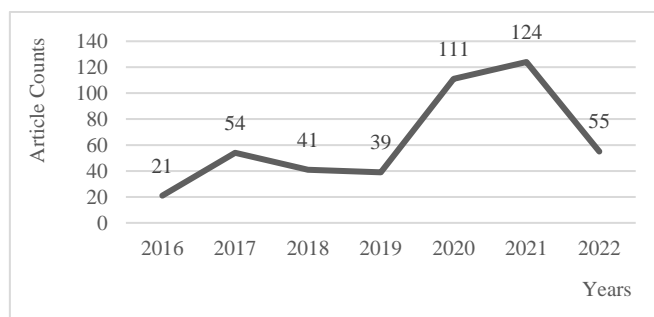
Figure 1　Annual distribution of the number of studies on influencers

As shown in Figure 1, the number of articles published in the field of research related to influencers and the Internet, social media, and reality in China correspond in time. This indicates that the research fervor in academia is positively associated with the existence of the influencers phenomenon. Our scholars have conducted relevant and in-depth research to solve reality-oriented problems, which fully reflects the academic sensitivity of scholars.

3.2 Periodical Distribution and Influence

By analyzing the highly cited articles, it is possible to know which authors and journals are more influential in the research field. The higher the citation rate of an article, the more effective the piece is, and the more authoritative the corresponding journal is in the research field.

Title	Author	Journal	Year of publication	Citation frequence	Number of downloads
Why is influncer so popular? Interpretation and thinking based on the phenomenon of influencers	Ao Peng	Contemporary Communication	2016	261	23352
Can I Evoke You? A Study on the Influence Mechanism of Information Source Characteristics of Different Types of Live Broadcasting Celebrity on Consumers' Willingness to Purchase	Meng Lu; Liu Fengjun; Chen Siyun; Duan Shen	Nankai Business Review	2020	227	23809
The impact of Network Celebrities' Information Source Characteristicis on Purchase Intention	Liu Fengjun; Meng Lu; Chen Siyun; Duan Shen	Chinese Journal of Management	2020	222	19682
The Development History, Feature Analysis and Governance Countermeasures of Instant Online Celebrities in China	Shen Xiao; Wang Guohua; Yang Tengfei; Zhong Shengyang	Journal of intelligence	2016	198	15519
The generation logic, ethical reflection and normative guidance of influencer economy	Wang Weibing	Truth Seeking	2016	192	19278

Figure 2 High-frequency co-cited documents

Figure 2 shows the articles with higher citation rates (more than 150 citations). It can be seen through Figure 2 that the most cited papers in the research related to inf00luencers have 261

citations, and ten papers have more than 100 citations. This also indicates that more and more scholars are devoting themselves to research on influencers. Among the papers with high citation rates, three of them were published in 2016, and the period mainly focused on the concept of influencers generating logic. Ao Peng analyzed the motives and elements of the dissemination of the current hot influencers culture from three levels: the influencers subject, the intermediate pushers, and the audience of influencers, trying to summarize the characteristics of this Internet culture and the social psychology behind it, while pointing out the potential role and influence of the influencers craze on society (Ao,2016). Shen Xiao et al. make multiple interpretations of the incubation platform, identity image, content dissemination, fan characteristics, and evolution mode of influencers through the method of content analysis, summarize and analyze the influencers violation by combining with the case study method (Shen et al.,2016). Wang Weibing studied the logic of influencers generation, discovered the problems arising from the phenomenon of influencers, and proposed to regulate and guide the influencers economics (Wang,2016). And by 2020, it mainly focuses on the influencers economy that emerged from influencers, and two highly cited articles published by Meng Lu and Liu Fengjun both focus on live-streaming e-commerce by influencers (Meng et al.,2020; Liu et al.,2020)

3.3 Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis

Keywords are a distillation of the core content of the literature, and the keywords with high frequency in the literature can reflect the research hotspots in the field. Therefore, the researcher uses the keyword visualization analysis function of CiteSpace to calculate the frequency and centrality of keywords in net popularity research to grasp the main research hotspots in this field.

Keywords	Frequency	Centrality
Influencers	70	0.61
Short video	31	0.25
Influencers economy	24	0.10
Live-streaming e-commerce	22	0.10
Intertnet live-streaming	14	0.07
Mainstream media	9	0.04
Intertnet	8	0.09
Influencers City	8	0.03
Rural revitalization	8	0.06
Undergraduate	8	0.02
Live-streaming	7	0.05
Tik Tok	7	0.02
Knowledge of influencers	6	0.03
Social media	6	0.02

Figure 3 Distribution table of high-cited keywords

As can be seen from Figure 3, the centrality of terms such as "influencers", "influencers economy", "short video", and "live-streaming e-commerce" is the highest, and they are very prominent. They are the most famous and represent the research focus of researchers to a certain extent. At the same time, the frequency of "internet live-streaming" ," mainstream

media", "influencers city", "rural revitalization" and "social media" is also high. Excluding the term influencers as a limited research object, the keywords were clustered, and combined with the statistical results of the key words, the study found that the influencers economy and live-streaming e-commerce developed through short videos are the hottest research topics in this field nowadays.

Influencers economy is a new business model, meaning that influencers relies on the internet to gather traffic and heat on social media, market to a huge fan base, and convert fans' attention to purchasing power, thus cashing in on the traffic and eventually forming an industrial chain. The emergence of MCN (Mulit-Channel Network) in the United States in 2009 is one of the earliest business models of the influencers economy, in which companies create content and build personas for influencers and gain revenue by undertaking advertising, and social platforms such as YouTube and Facebook are the birthplaces of foreign influencers. The advancement of information technology has given birth to the influencers economy, and the influencers economy has gradually grown into an important variable in the business model in the mobile Internet, and has become a new hot spot for domestic scholars to study. Domestic influencers celebrities have gathered traffic to drive consumption through the use of social platforms and short video platforms, and the emergence of influencers e-commerce in particular has long established the profit model of China's digital economy. In particular, since the outbreak of COVID-19, traditional offline consumption has been dramatically hindered, and live-streaming e-commerce has risen rapidly. Academics have likewise conducted research on it, and the existing studies have focused on the influencers effect of celebrity anchors. Firstly, the information source characteristics of influence. Liu Fengjun et al. found that the credibility, professionalism, interactivity, and attractiveness of netroots influence consumers' perceived shopping value and thus influence purchase intention (Liu et al.,2020). Yang Nan found that the professionalism, matching degree and relationship strength of influencers' live streaming have a significant contribution to consumer trust, and the professionalism and matching degree have a positive effect on brand attitude; conveying brand-related information through influencers' live streaming influences consumers' brand attitude, in which consumer trust plays a mediating role; perceived quality plays a negative role in the relationship between consumer trust and brand attitude. Perceived quality plays a negative moderating role in the relationship between consumer trust and brand attitude (Yang,2021). Li Baoku et al. found that the higher the influencers trait, the weaker the negative effect of post-purchase cognitive dissonance on repeat purchase intention. When the influencers trait is high, post-purchase cognitive dissonance affects repeat purchase intention through consumers' avoidance response; when the influencers trait is low, post-purchase cognitive dissonance affects repeat purchase intention through consumers' confrontation response. When the influencers trait is high, post-purchase cognitive dissonance affects repeat purchase intention through consumers' avoidance response; when the influencers trait is low, post-purchase cognitive dissonance affects repeat purchase intention through consumers' confrontation response (Li et al.,2022). Secondly, in studies on match-ups, Huang Minxue et al. found that the selection of different types of anchors for different types of products (tangible and hedonic) had an impact on purchase intention by stimulating internalization and identification mechanisms (Huang et al.,2021). Meng Lu et al. found that live web-host characteristics and content consistency positively moderate the influence of social presence on consumer identification, and strengthen the mediating role of consumer identification between social presence and purchase intention (Meng et al.,2020). Gong Yanping et al. Using fsQCA

analyzed the platform sociality, pop-up activity, influencers information source characteristics (credibility, professionalism, attractiveness), influencers responsiveness and topicality involved in live marketing, and found four configurations that lead to high social presence and three configurations that lead to low social presence of consumers. At the same time, among the configurations that lead to high and low social presence, this paper identifies and reveals seven types of anchors based on the combination of influencers information source characteristics and their matching effects with other conditions, so that the matching results of influencers information source characteristics with platform sociality, pop-up activity, anchor responsiveness and topicality can be further scenarioized (Gong et al., 2022). Park and Lin found that the consistency of influencers and products affects consumers' trust in influencers and the attractiveness of influencers, and the consistency of live content and products affects the utilitarian and hedonic attitude, both of which eventually have an impact on purchase intention through these two different paths (Park and Lin,2020). Thirdly, in studies about interactions, Wu Na et al. and others classified the interaction styles of weblebrities as task-oriented and relationship-oriented, and explored the interactions with consumers with different communication styles, respectively (Wu et al.,2020). Fan jun et al. found that in the relationship-oriented webcast scenario, the influencers adopts a weak interaction strategy to more easily trigger the audience's willingness to reward. In the task-oriented webcast scenario, it is more likely for the influencers to show strong interaction strategy to trigger the audience's willingness to reward.In the task-oriented webcast scenario, the influencers are more likely to trigger the audience's willingness to reward by adopting a strong interaction strategy; the emotional energy and influencers' identity are more important in the interaction type and interaction strategy on the audience's willingness to reward. And influencers' identification play a mediating role in the interaction between interaction type and interaction strategy on audience's willingness to reward. Emotional energy and influencers' identification play a mediating role in the interaction between interaction type and interaction strategy on audience's willingness to reward. (Fan et al.,2020).

4   CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

This paper compares the knowledge system and research hotspots in the field of influencers research since 2016 based on Citespace visual analysis technology, specifically including the annual time distribution of the number of articles published about influencers research, the authors and journals of highly cited articles, and the co-occurrence of research hotspot keywords. This paper draws the following conclusions: firstly, the more the number of articles about influencers research comes, the more frequently the articles are cited. Among them, there are many articles with high citation frequency, which indicates that many scholars are paying attention to the field of influencers and constantly broadening the breadth and depth of research. Secondly, the research on influencers is diversified and scattered, from the early exploration of the concept and generation logic of influencers to the knowledge influencers and Netflix city in the middle, and then to the influencers economy that emerged from influencers, in which the live-streaming e-commerce has become the fastest growing e-commerce model. This is more in line with the actual situation in China, which fully reflects the academic sensitivity of scholars. Third, the academic research results on the phenomenon of influencers have been rich. Still, most focus on the celebrity effect of influencers, among

which the influencers economy is the most concerned. On the one hand, the future research direction is oriented to provide new solutions to the problems arising from the combination of influencers economy and reality. On the other hand, the Internet is becoming more and more a structural condition of social and cultural practices, and influencers exists in society as a whole. The question of the long-term structural transformation caused by influencers in culture and community, and the co-construction and development of influencers communication practices with socio-political, economic, and cultural aspects is also a question worth considering in the future.

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