

Social media influencer marketing and consumer behaviour: A systematic review, bibliometric analysis, and future research agenda using the TCCM framework

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Abstract

Social media influencers have become central actors in shaping consumer behaviour, yet the field lacks a comprehensive synthesis that integrates theoretical, contextual, and methodological dimensions. This systematic literature review analyses 153 articles sourced from Scopus, Web of Science, and Science Direct using the PRISMA framework, combined with bibliometric analysis via Bibliometrix R-tool and VOSviewer. Guided by the Theory, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology (TCCM) framework, this study maps the theoretical landscape, contextual distribution, thematic characteristics, and methodological trends in influencer marketing research. The findings reveal that source credibility and social cognitive theories dominate the literature, while emerging frameworks including two-step flow communication, performativity theory, and cue utilisation theory, remain underexplored. Empirically, research is concentrated in developed economies and on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, leaving developing-country contexts and emerging platforms understudied. Thematic gaps are identified in narrative creativity, platform dynamics, virtual influencer ethics, self-congruence mechanisms, and cross-cultural consumer responses. A conceptual framework and forward-looking research agenda are proposed, integrating affective, symbolic, and contextual variables to advance evidence-based influencer marketing theory and practice. This review contributes to marketing scholars and practitioners by consolidating fragmented knowledge and identifying high-priority directions for future inquiry.

Keywords: Social Media Influencer Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Systematic Literature Review, Bibliometric Analysis, TCCM Framework, Source Credibility, Purchase Intention, Virtual Influencers

JEL Classification: M31, M37, D91

1. Introduction

In this digital era, consumer behavioural responses are shaped by influencers across industries worldwide (Hudders et al., 2021). Influencers are the content creators who provide entertainment, inspiration, and shopping cues by engaging individuals through disseminating authentic content and brand communication to the target audience (Sammis et al., 2015). The influencers create value for marketers, who possess expert knowledge in a particular domain and have an established network of followers, creating engaging content on various platforms (Lou & Yuan, 2019). The main objective of studying influencer marketing is to examine how and why followers are influenced by content creators who strategically adopt product communication and narrate brand stories in behavioural intention and shape purchase decisions among buyers (Archer & Harrigan, 2016). Based on the literature review, it is found that the influencer traits are the key influencing factor in improving the behavioural intention (Vrontis et al., 2021), and these characteristics are authenticity, credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness (R. Gupta & Wadhvani, 2020). Businesses and marketers recognise influencer value as a prominent promotional tool to engage the target audience, and successful marketing campaigns (Borges-Tiago et al., 2023). Influencer marketing continues to evolve and transform the consumer's shopping journey through social media platforms to recommend what and why to buy the products (Sun et al., 2022). Influencer marketing literature focuses on both positive and negative aspects of how it affects the mental and physical health of the users, and studies suggest potential theoretical frameworks for further study (Hudders & Lou, 2023). Study found influencer marketing trends, characteristics, and themes like consumer engagement, authenticity, and parasocial interaction through bibliometric and content analysis (Joshi et al., 2025). Ye et al., (2021) highlighted studies on product categories, stakeholder roles, influencer selection, and ethical concerns through bibliometric and thematic analysis. Vrontis et al., (2021) studied content features, source attributes, and psychological elements like credibility and trust through citation and thematic analysis. Tanwar et al., (2022) carried out bibliometric mapping for knowledge structures and performance analysis.

Despite the valuable contributions, most studies rely on behavioural intention and lack a conceptual perspective on combining the emerging psychological, ethical factors, and new-age influencer traits between content creators and followers. Additionally, some studies have identified psychological and ethical factors, but few have investigated influencer and follower alignment. Furthermore, researchers need to explore the constructs such as influencer brand fit, ethical congruence, personal branding and perceived value, which remain underexplored in the current reviews. The research uses a multimethod approach, drawing on the influencer marketing literature to study the alignment between influencer traits and behavioural response through TCCM approach and bibliometric analysis by the Bibliometrix R-tool, BiblioShiny application extended by VOS Viewer (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010) to identify the theoretical patterns and constructs and understanding the evolution of influencer marketing in behavioural outcomes by analysing the

performance of materials, examiners, studies, regions, and key terms to focus on the conceptual framework and thematic studies by exploring the research questions (RQ).

RQ1: What are the existing research trends and emerging themes in influencer marketing and behavioural outcomes to take effective marketing decisions?

RQ2: How does influencer marketing navigate future research trends in behavioural outcomes and influencer consumer alignment?

RQ3: What are the marketing implications of influencer characteristics and purchase behaviour among generations?

This study employs the “PRISMA” framework to synthesise consumer theories and constructs by the “TCCM” model and Bibliometric Analysis to address the research questions to enhance academic and industry perspectives. This study analyses the shift in performance evaluations of important scientific contributors in creating and interpreting information frameworks, such as “network analysis of keywords co-occurrence” and “bibliographic coupling of authors”, to delineate research trajectories (Tanwar et al., 2022). The subsequent conclusions focus on content analysis of essential data, techniques, prominent businesses, study settings, theories, and replicas used in the research domain. Table 1 summarises literature studies to describe the study focus, methodologies, major findings, and limitations.

Table 1: Summary of Literature Studies

Authors	Study Focus	Methodology	Findings	Limitations
Van Reijmersdal et al., (2024)	Self-presentation strategies on brand responses	Online experiment with 229 female participants.	Self-presentation strategies are more persuasive than celebrity strategies because they convey greater trust and expertise.	Limited to a female influencers sample, and to media platforms.
Pan et al., (2024)	Influencer effectiveness on marketing outcomes	Meta-analysis, synthesising 251 papers	Influencer characteristics and antecedents’ impact on marketing outcomes.	Insufficient data on transactional marketing outcomes.
Joshi et al., (2023)	Influencer characteristics, trends.	Bibliometric analysis and Content analysis.	Theoretical foundations and practical implications for	Qualitative evaluation of constructs using a single WOS database.

			marketing strategies.	
(Charles et al., 2022)	Influencer characteristics and brand engagement	Online survey with 281 followers through Qualtrics' online panel and PLS-SEM using Smart PLS.	Popularity and attractiveness impact influencer efficacy mediated between follower-influencer and brand outcomes.	Lack of other heuristic cues and focus on brand impact.
Pradhan et al., 2022	Gen Z avoid influencers and endorsed brands due to moral responsibility.	Three experimental studies and one quasi-experimental study, and PLS-SEM	Gen Z avoid macro influencers and endorsed brands as morally irresponsible	Ignored trustworthiness, authenticity and antecedents of influencer, and brand's past negative experiences e-WOM
Brooks et al., 2021	Influencer Celebrification and celebrity capital formation.	A qualitative grounded theory approach based on 40 in-depth interviews with practitioners and influencers	Celebrification occurs through generative, collaborative, and evaluative processes and increases audience engagement and authenticity	The study lacks various types of celebrity capital.
Charles R. Taylor	Pandemic-driven shifts in consumer engagement with influencer content.	Conceptual and narrative review synthesising literature and industry reports.	Improves digital engagement and precise targeting during the pandemic.	Concerns about measurement accuracy, effectiveness, ethical disclosure and the long-term impacts of the pandemic situation.
Yan Shan et al., (2019)	Consumer and influencer congruence	Online survey of Chinese adult social media users	Strong alignment between a consumer's ideal	The study used only congruence with the ideal self-image, not

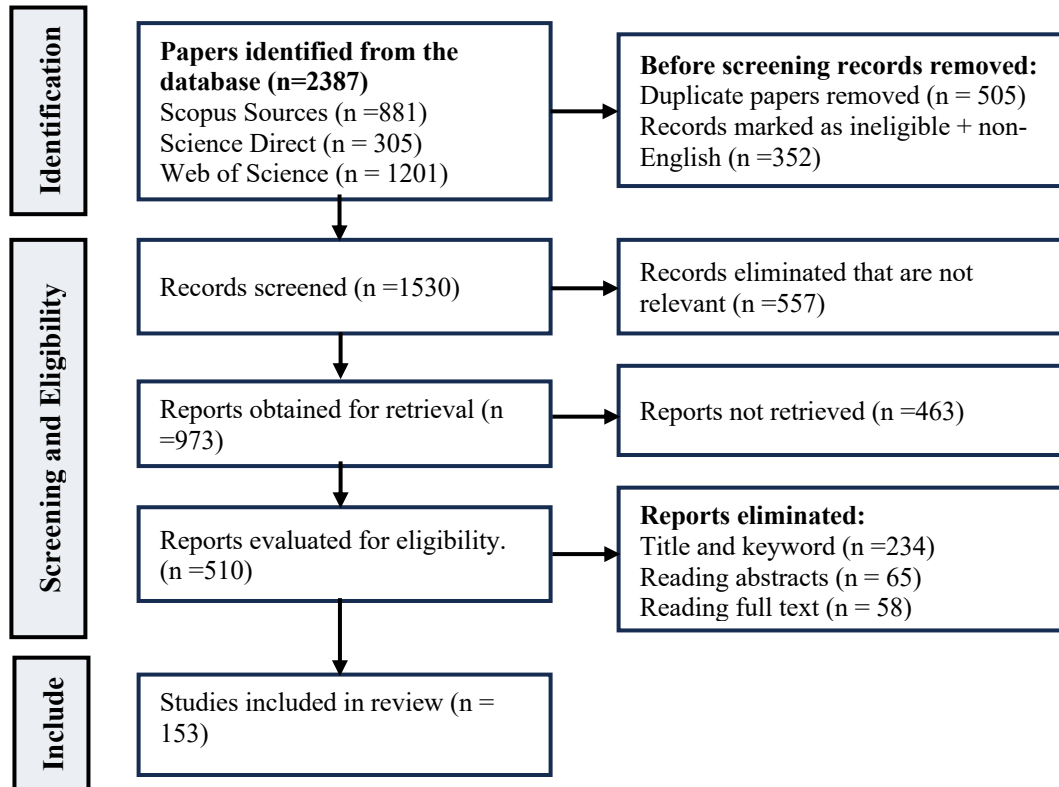
			self and an influencer's image	other domains of self-concept.
(Chopra et al., 2021)	Influencer marketing strategies and behavioural theories	Qualitative research design through in-depth interviews with Millennials from Tier I and Tier II cities in India	Strategic guidance for marketers on selecting appropriate influencers and content distribution strategies	The study is restricted to urban millennial consumers.
Koay & Lim, 2025	Consumer and influencer congruence on impulse buying intentions	An online survey of 232 samples from social media users was analysed through PLS-SEM	Consumer-product congruence drives online impulse buying mediated by desire.	Focused on Instagram and the lack of accuracy in impulse buying

Source: compiled by authors

2. Method

The researcher follows the PRISMA framework, as shown in Figure 1, and the Theory, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology (TCCM) model to enhance the interpretation and implementation of research gaps identified from the literature for a better understanding by following the identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion steps in the systematic literature review (SLR) process. The TCCM framework is particularly suited to review-based research in marketing because it provides a structured and replicable lens through which a body of literature can be mapped across four complementary dimensions: the theoretical foundations that underpin empirical findings, the contextual conditions under which studies are conducted, the characteristics of the constructs and variables examined, and the methodological approaches employed by researchers. Compared to purely bibliometric or thematic review approaches, the TCCM framework offers a more holistic synthesis by integrating quantitative mapping with qualitative theoretical interpretation (Paul & Criado, 2020).

Figure 1. PRISMA Framework



2.1 Identification

The SLR approach critically evaluates and synthesises the studies for future research directions to integrate theories and empirical insights (Paul & Criado, 2020). First, use an online database and conduct an SLR (Carins & Rundle-Thiele, 2014) using Boolean keyword searches through online databases from Scopus, Web of Science, SpringerLink, Emerald and Wiley. The selected keywords were entered in the online sources with the following terms “Influencer marketing” AND “Purchase intentions”, “Influencer characteristics”, “Social media influencer”, “Influencer credibility” AND “Influencer expertise”, “Virtual influencer”, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, online, vlog, blog”, marketing, advertis*, promotion, “product placement,” and sponsor*. Searched keywords identified through “title-abstract-keywords” to increase the broader range of articles, papers and journals for relevant studies.

2.2 Screening and Eligibility

During the screening and eligibility process, the researcher reviewed inclusion and exclusion criteria and selected the relevant and quality documents. Full journal papers in English and quality journals were included. Furthermore, the titles, abstracts, and main texts of the identified articles

were manually assessed based on predetermined eligibility criteria to determine whether they were suitable for the study objectives.

2.3 Inclusion

After the screening and eligibility process, the researcher considered 153 articles for further literature analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Theory, Characteristics, Context, and Methodology Framework

3.1.1 Theoretical Insights

Influencers affect behavioural outcome, which is grounded in theoretical concepts of communication, psychology, and consumer behaviour, organised into four broad theoretical categories: (1) source influence theories, (2) social influence theories, (3) persuasion theories, and (4) behavioural theories to explain the influencer phenomenon presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Theoretical Review

Theory	Theoretical Perspective	Key Authors	Applications
Source Influence Theories	Source Credibility Theory	(Hovland, 1959)	Influencer traits act as a message source, which is more favourable attitudes toward purchase intentions by balancing relatability and aspiration. (Hugh Wilkie et al., 2022)
	Opinion Leadership Theory	(Katz et al., 2017)	
	Signalling Theory	(Spence, 2002).	
	limited similarity theory	(Kao et al., 2020)	
	Cue Congruence Theory	(Rahim et al., 2015)	
Social Influence Theories	Social Learning Theory	(Bandura, 1991)	Individuals learn attitudes and behaviour by observing role models, and this social construction shapes consumer emotions and expressions, and consumers adapt attitudes and behaviours to align with socially desirable models.
	Social Comparison Theory	(Lim, 2022)	
	Social Cognitive Theory	(Shi et al., 2024)	
	Social Judgment Theory	(Delbaere et al., 2021)	
	Social Adaptation Theory		
	Parasocial Interaction Theory		
	Social Exchange Theory		
Social Presence Theory			

Persuasion Theories	Persuasion Knowledge Theory	(Myers et al., 2024)	Consumer reactions to influencer marketing are significantly shaped by the influencer's presentation style, source attributes, and individual characteristics, which jointly influence attitudinal formation and downstream behavioural intentions
	Elaboration Likelihood Model	(Cacioppo et al., 1986)	
	McGuire's Communication Persuasion Matrix	(Aghazadeh et al., 2022)	
	Information Adoption Model	(Y. Chen et al., 2024a),	
	Stimulus Organism Response Model	(Chiu & Ho, 2023).	
Behavioral Theories	Theory of Reasoned Action	(Fishbein, 1979)	Influencer marketing applies the behavioural theories as a conceptual framework to understand how consumers' cognitive and affective reactions are shaped by behavioural outcomes through external factors
	Theory of Planned Behaviour	(Ajzen, 1991)	
	Theory of Interpersonal Behaviour	(Z. Liu, 2024)	
	Behavioural Reasoning Theory	(S. Kumar & Hsieh, 2024)	
	Human Behaviour Theory	(Nyrhinen et al., 2024)	
	Attribution Theory		
	Behaviour Theory		

Source: Based on the author's literature review

3.1.2 Source Influence Theories

In this study, the primary focus is on how influencer characteristics, such as expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as a message source, influence positive attitudes toward purchase intentions, which affect behavioural intention (Rahim et al., 2015). Popularity and physical attractiveness function as exploratory cues that shape consumer judgments of influencer effectiveness (Erdogan, 1999). Influencer efficacy mediates the relationship between follower and influencer relationships, which is the key brand outcome, including perceived brand authenticity, consumer engagement, and attitudes toward influencer-generated posts (Hugh Wilkie et al., 2022). Therefore, expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and credibility have a significant impact on consumer behaviour outcomes and explain why an influencer is selection of strategic decision over just a reach (Chiguvi et al., 2025).

3.1.3 Social Influence Theories

The social influence theories explain that a follower is influenced through social observation, identification, and emotional attachment. The dynamics of social connectedness, norms, and interactions that guide strategies to enhance social inclusion and improve social isolation during challenging times (Lim, 2022). Influential celebrities' interaction in social settings shapes

consumer emotions and public expressions (Delbaere et al., 2021). Social celebrities influence customers when they perceive them as relatable (Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021). The principle of exchange suggests that the social resources between influencers and followers facilitate the formation of social, psychological bonds that support the change and continue relationships (Kim & Kim, 2021).

3.1.4 Persuasion Theories

Persuasion theories demonstrate influencer message, information disclosure, authenticity, review usefulness, and advocacy impact on behavioural outcome (Chiu & Ho, 2023). Promotional message quality and processing cues significantly influence brand assessments and purchase intentions, emphasising central and peripheral routes to persuasion, shaped by motivation and the capacity to process message content (Lien, 2001). The presentation elements have a persuasive intent that may be accepted or rejected based on the brand. Finally, consumers strongly respond to the messages based on the influencer's presentation style, source and characteristics, which shape consumer attitudes and responses (Masuda et al., 2022).

3.1.5 Behavioural Theories

In this review, behaviour theories are used by influencers to explain the causal mechanisms through which influencer messages shape consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours (Ki et al., 2020). Influencer product congruence develops a favourable attitude toward the brand communication, higher purchase intentions, and more effective marketing campaigns (Belanche et al., 2021). These theories are used to understand the cognitive and affective reactions of consumers towards influencers and external factors (S. Kumar & Hsieh, 2024). Future research scope is to understand advertising messages and investigate how message authenticity and appeal affect consumer perceptions and reactions by using the two-step flow communication theory (Kay et al., 2023a). Further, to understand the behavioural outcome, studying antecedents of influencer marketing and interactions with intrinsic and extrinsic cues is useful for the cue utilisation theory (Tseng & Wang, 2023). The impact of content creation calibration on consumer responses and decision-making can be examined using performativity theory (Jacobson & Harrison, 2022).

3.2 Context

This study describes the conditions and history of influencer marketing research, using the TCCM model, which classifies the contextual domain into platforms, geographical regions, and industry trends for future research gaps. Based on the literature review, the geographical distribution of influencer marketing research shows a strong concentration in a limited number of countries, with the majority of empirical studies conducted in these countries, followed by Indonesia, America, and India. The study highlights 15 industry categories, and the distribution shows that fashion, beauty, and cosmetics studies are more concentrated, followed by technology, electronics, gaming, and fintech. Moderate study in the tourism, hospitality, travel, food, beverage, health, wellness,

wearables, and fitness. On the other hand, emerging sectors include services, green, sustainability, energy, environment, education, industrial products, and B2B businesses, which are still underrepresented in the previous studies. The researcher also identified that social media platform studies distribution shows a strong and persistent focus on Instagram, followed by YouTube and TikTok. Other platforms, such as LinkedIn, Snapchat, Facebook, X formerly Twitter, and online community platforms, remain under study with respect to influencer marketing.

3.3 Characteristics

This study highlights the major themes that are recurring patterns related to how influencer marketing is perceived, evaluated, and implemented by marketers and consumers. Thematic analysis is used to explain the evolution and effectiveness of influencer marketing by identifying the key themes presented in Table 3.

3.3.1 *Influencer Characteristics*

This study examines influencer traits, and these attributes are classified into psychological, social, behavioural, and demographic qualities (Masuda et al., 2022). The relationship between influencer and follower is largely dependent on influencer characteristics, which make an influencer marketing campaign successful (Ooi et al., 2023). Attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, perceived credibility, authenticity, and popularity are the key factors in influencing consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural intentions (Sohaib & Han, 2023). Further, influencer effects on social media platforms are the level of exposure, fame, and likability, which are considered to be crucial (Piehler et al., 2022; Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024). Virtual influencers are an emerging concept over human influencers, and marketers are using virtual influencers to improve brand communication, which is more effective in influencer marketing (Deng et al., 2024). Virtual influencers are gaining more prominence in digital marketing, making it harder to distinguish between fact and fiction, which raises questions about customer trust and transparency (X. (Stella) Liu et al., 2025). Content creators employ virtual influencers in promotional campaign when not disclosing their human nature can result in dishonest marketing tactics and unethical practices (Gerrath et al., 2024). Hence, researchers critically evaluate how consumers view and interact with virtual influencers, affecting their behaviour.

3.3.2 *Narrative Creativity and Content Techniques*

Narrating creative stories emerged as a key factor used by influencers to establish emotional connection, symbolic significance, and perceived authenticity to interact with the audience to build a strong relationship and trust in influencer marketing campaigns (Jacobson & Harrison, 2022). Studies demonstrated that stories that are real and ethically focused on a particular event increase emotional interest and influence consumer behaviour (Drossos et al., 2024). Creativity in narrating stories about brand experiences develops a positive brand image, improves emotional connections and shapes consumer perceptions and loyalty (Amrita, 2025). Personal storytelling with brand

communication attracts audience attention and credibility (Y. Li & Peng, 2021). Influencer creativity in framing the message and presenting information about products affects audience emotion and cognitive behaviour (Kapoor et al., 2022). Creative message structure significantly affects follower trust and intention to purchase the product (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In addition, content works as a mediating factor that connects influencer marketing strategies, and content disclosure influences how consumers interpret and react to the content (Wu et al., 2023). Verbal and sensory elements related to language, emotional tone, and visual coherence shape audience perception about the content make more engaging and appealing (Argyris et al., 2021). Further, sensory elements strengthen content authenticity and build a strong relationship with the content creator (Kay et al., 2023a). The voice-based content can generate stronger emotional engagement than a text-based format, influencing audience experience depending on the platform features (Cascio Rizzo et al., 2024). Limited studies on how influencers adapt storytelling intensity, emotional tone in message, product congruence, sensitivity, and platform characteristics impact behavioural response (Jaiswal et al., 2024). Further, how sensory cues such as voice, text, and visual elements affect emotional engagement (R. Wang et al., 2025).

3.3.3 Psychological Factors

This research discusses how psychological factors, source credibility, brand trust, and parasocial interaction influence consumer engagement and intention to purchase (Drossos et al., 2024). Further, how consumers perceive the message and behave responsibly (Reinikainen et al., 2020). In addition, influencer and follower connections built through interactive features like emojis, hashtags, comments, and real-time responses increase social presence (Masuda et al., 2022). Emotional factors, including attachment and perceived similarity, are associated with higher levels of consumer engagement, loyalty, and electronic word-of-mouth influences behaviour outcomes (Cheah et al., 2024). Emotions often act as mediators between content and behavioural outcomes when the influencer's values align with those of the audience (Kay et al., 2023). However, there is scope for research on how “emotional factors interact with message appeals and platform context to behavioural outcome” (Kapoor et al., 2022). Future research investigates how affective trust and emotional cues in influencer messages encourage transactional behaviours and non-transactional behaviours (H. Li et al., 2023).

3.3.4 Platform Dynamics

Platform dynamics are fundamental, procedural, and intellectual features that include interaction, presentation and participatory forms of “social media platforms that outline how content is distributed, interpreted, and acted upon by users” (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). Platform dynamics influence recommendations, interactions with users by likes, shares, and commenting on posts, and it evaluates the content as presented through Instagram on visual curation and aesthetic presentation, and TikTok spontaneity and participatory forms of engagement (R. Wang et al., 2025). Influencers use various social media platforms to increase brand engagement and

purchasing behaviour through content, visualisation, and user-generated reviews (A. Kumar et al., 2024).

Platform characteristics, content design, communication modalities, text, images, video, tone, and platform models strongly influence how users perceive influencer authenticity and relationship (Shen, 2023). Platform technical features influence symbolic meaning, and user behaviour acts as an active context rather than just neutral channels of communication (Högberg, 2023). Use of text over voice significantly impacts emotional engagement and sensory appeal, such as live streaming (Cascio Rizzo et al., 2024). However, fewer studies examined how platform features interact with audience psychological factors, including trust, intimacy, and parasocial interaction, to influence symbolic consumption and behavioural intentions (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021).

3.3.5 Information Disclosure

Influencer content disclosure is a central issue with growing concerns about transparency, ethical standards, and monitoring compliance in product promotion (Musiyiwa & Jacobson, 2024). Information disclosures are highlighted to the audiences by tags and descriptions to differentiate sponsored posts and organic posts (Woodroof et al., 2020). Effective disclosure of sponsorship improves the audience's ability to identify advertising content, perceptions, trust and purchase intention (Wen et al., 2023). Over-disclosure of information disrupts narrative immersion and weakens emotional trust (Deng et al., 2024). Informal storytelling style and negative emotional tone affect consumer scepticism and parasocial engagement by ambiguous content, mechanistic disclosures, and high commercial intent (Weismueller et al., 2020). The positive tone, conversational disclosure, and aesthetic framing of message disclosures affect audience responses and build trust over a mechanical or insincere sponsored post, and this varies across types of influencers (Borges-Tiago et al., 2023). Studies lack in “how sponsorship disclosure interacts with constructs such as trust, parasocial interaction, and self-congruence” (L. Chen et al., 2024). In addition, platform types, traits, and follower expectations are unexplored in the existing literature (Zhou et al., 2023). This review conceptualises disclosure as a relational construct and effects across cultural, emotional, and technological contexts (Jhawar et al., 2023). Future research focuses on how disclosure congruence among disclosure format, platform feature, message tone, and influencer traits shapes behavioural responses (S. Gupta et al., 2023).

3.3.6 Influencer Congruence

This review examines how the perceived association between traits of an influencer and a follower's identity is grounded in expertise, values, and lifestyle (Belanche et al., 2021). Influencer and follower congruence enhances message authenticity and effectiveness, thereby increasing trust and behavioural intention (Foroughi et al., 2024). Studies suggest that endorsements are more effective when influencers reflect actual or ideal self-concepts supported by self-congruity theory (X. (Stella) Liu et al., 2025). Previous studies have primarily emphasised category-based fit, emotional congruence, such as consistency, values, and ethical significance, particularly in the

context of source-based and sponsored campaigns (Kapoor et al., 2022). Human influencers often cultivate parasocial intimacy by emotional storytelling, whereas virtual influencers are perceived as more moderate and sensitive (Gerrath et al., 2024).

3.3.7 Mediation Effects

This review identifies key broad themes in the mediation effects of influencer marketing on behavioural outcomes. First, audience-related including follower information seeking, hedonic motivation, utilitarian, willingness to pay, and entertainment. Brand-related themes such as product knowledge, brand image, trust, credibility, loyalty and value. Content-related, such as message authenticity, engagement, and appeal. Influencer categories related include mega, macro, mini and niche types based on the number of followers. This helps the researchers to understand the influencer effect on behavioural response, and result shows that mediators related to influencer categories, brand relationships and audience constructs are the most common studies. On the contrary, research related to content, cognitive and emotional factors, and virtual influencer traits is less explored in this study (Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021).

3.3.8 Moderation Effect

This review further identifies key themes of moderating effects across key perspectives, including audience, brand, content, advertising, and influencer. The majority of the studies in influencer marketing research show that influencer context, brand, and content-related factors have a positive moderating effect. Whereas the negative impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavioural outcomes is overlooked (Jain et al., 2024). The research demonstrates that adverse behaviours by influencers generate adverse consumer perceptions, and undesirable behaviours can cause consumer disengagement and lead to hostile responses (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016). Given the difficulty of reversing an influencer’s undesirable post, create negative perceptions and functions as a moderating factor in the relationships among followers (Jung & Im, 2021).

Table 3. Key Variables in Influencer Marketing Research

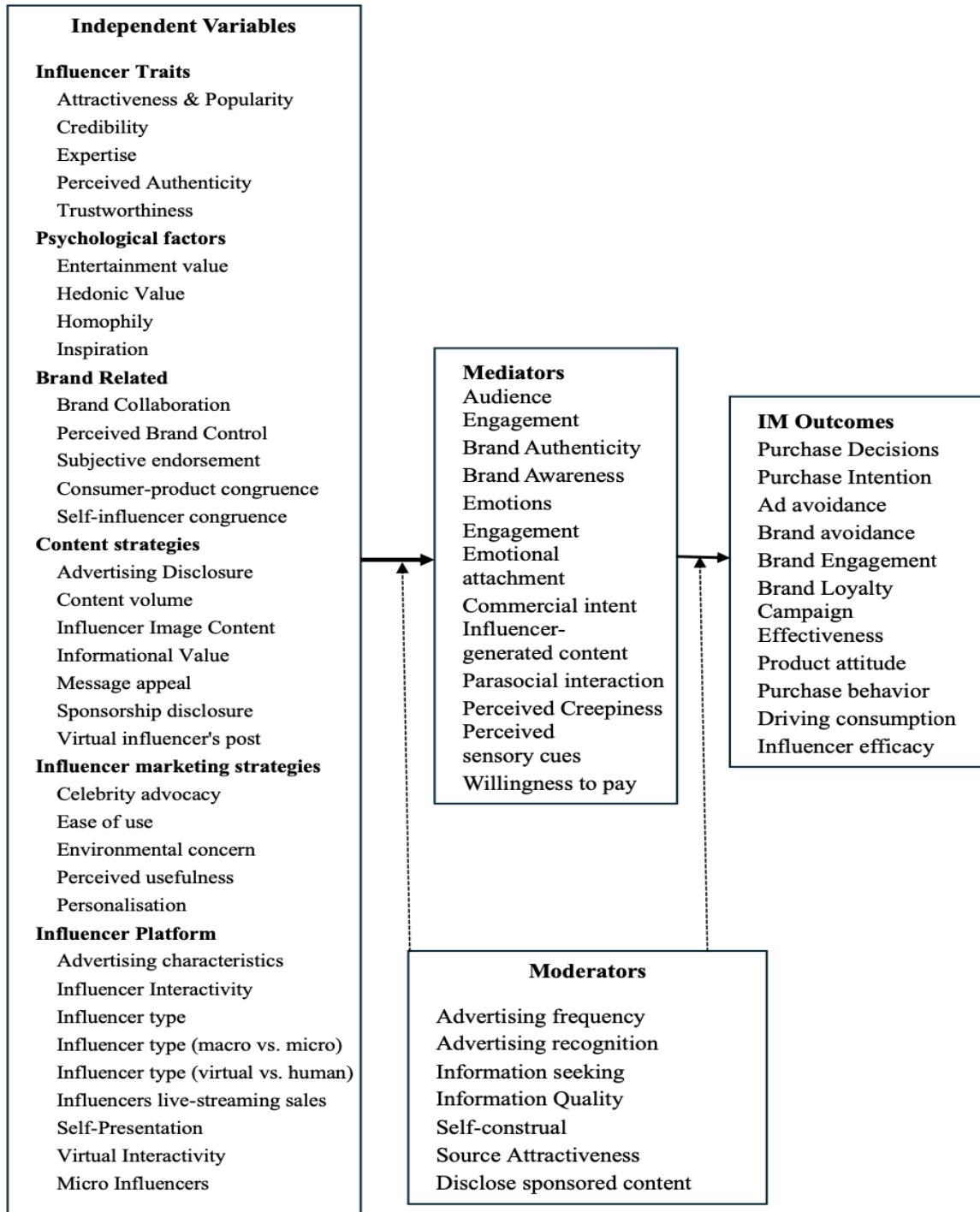
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Effect	Key study (Authors)
Perceived Authenticity	Purchase Intention	Positive	(Anjaria & Satpati, 2024) (Mohammed & Sundararajan, 2025)
Credibility	Purchase Decisions	Positive	(Vijaya Deepika & Pranev, 2024)
Attractiveness, Popularity, Self-Presentation,	Purchase Intention and Brand Responses	Positive	(Van Reijmersdal et al., 2024)
Expertise	Intention to Purchase	Positive	(Bonus et al., 2022)

Homophily	Purchase Intention	Positive	(Ao et al., 2023) (Bu et al., 2022)
Trustworthiness	Purchase Intention	Positive	(Chiguvi et al., 2025)
Brand Collaboration	Influencer efficacy	Positive	(Hugh Wilkie et al., 2022)
Virtual Interactivity	Brand equity	Positive	(C. Liu et al., 2020)
Perceived Brand Control	Brand avoidance	Negative	(Pradhan et al., 2023)
Influencers live-streaming sales	Purchase intention	Positive	(Y. Chen et al., 2024b)
Influencer Interactivity	Brand Loyalty	Positive	(Jun & Yi, 2020)
Hedonic Value and Informational Value	Purchase intention	Positive	(Pan et al., 2025)
Environmental concern	Purchase intention	Positive	(Chaturvedi et al., 2020)
Entertainment value	Brand awareness & Purchase intention	Positive	(Lou & Yuan, 2019)
Sponsorship disclosure (Presence vs. Absence)	Brand Attitude and Product Attitude	Positive	(Kanaveedu & Kalapurackal, 2024)
Content volume	Consumer engagement	Negative	
Perceived usefulness	Customer engagement	Positive	(Pan et al., 2025)
Ease of use	Intention to purchase	Negative	(Duffett & Maraule, 2024)
Micro Influencers	Consumer emotions	Positive	(Ghosh et al., 2024)
Self-influencer congruence	Purchase intention	Positive	(Shan et al., 2020)
Personalisation	Brand Engagement, Ad avoidance	Positive	(De Keyzer et al., 2024)
Consumer-product congruence	Purchase recommendation	Positive	(Belanche et al., 2021)
Macro vs. micro influencers	Purchase intention	Negative	(Kay et al., 2023b)
Virtual influencer vs. human influencer	Endorsement effectiveness	Negative	(H. Li et al., 2023)

Message appeal (concrete vs. abstract)	Driving consumption	Positive	(Kapoor et al., 2022)
Virtual influencer's post	Advertising recognition	Negative	(Deng et al., 2024)
Advertising Disclosure	Purchase intention	Negative	(Weismueller et al., 2020)
Influencer Image Content	Campaign Effectiveness	Positive	(Lee et al., 2023)
Celebrity advocacy	Intention to Purchase	Positive	(Jain et al., 2024)
Inspiration	Purchase behavior	Negative	(Beckert & Naderer, 2023)
Subjective endorsement	Consumer engagement	Negative	(Chen et al., 2024)

Source: Based on the author's literature review

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework



Source: Based on the author's literature review

3.4 Synthesis and Development of Conceptual Frameworks

Figure 2 demonstrates that the conceptual framework based on the constructs identified in this systematic review, the researcher proposes a conceptual framework that provides influencer marketing effectiveness on behavioural outcomes with significant practical value for marketers and businesses. The conceptual framework classifies independent constructs into major domains, namely influencer traits, content factors, psychological factors, brand, and platform dynamics. These antecedents are hypothesised to influence a range of key outcomes, including behavioural intentions through brand attitudes toward the influencer, loyalty, willingness to pay, hedonic utilitarian, information seeking and consumer engagement. This approach considers key themes, which are content strategies, virtual influencers, psychological, and platform-related factors, to design marketing strategies and digital communication on social media platforms.

3.5 Methodology

This review analyses that most of the studies in influencer marketing on behavioural outcome research employ quantitative methodologies. Within this body of work, survey-based designs are the most prevalent, followed by experimental approaches. With respect to analytic techniques, structural equation modelling and regression analysis are the most frequently applied methods. Qualitative studies are very few, and mixed methods approaches remain comparatively underutilised.

4. Findings and Discussion

In this section, the researcher discusses a multimethod review study conducted to address the research questions and organises the studies into theoretical perspectives, characteristics, contextual differences, thematic analysis, the author's contribution, keyword occurrences, and various methodologies and implications for future research. In this theoretical perspective, reviews identified that source influence theory acts as a trust factor for the followers to accept information from the influencer's promotional content, likely to develop a favourable attitude and shape the purchase intention (Hugh Wilkie et al., 2022), and marketers are considered influencers as a strategic marketing decision (Chiguvu et al., 2025). Social influence theories highlight that the followers imitate the influencer's cognitive and psychological behaviours, attitudes and purchase patterns, which facilitates deeper relationships and supports positive behavioural response (Lim, 2022). Persuasion theories suggest that influencer domain knowledge, self-presentation style, information disclosure, storytelling technique and advocacy impact consumer behaviour (Chiu & Ho, 2023). Behavioural theories focus on the consumer perception, attitudes, learning, and behaviour that affect favourable response towards product communication and marketing campaigns (S. Kumar & Hsieh, 2024).

The contextual domain of influencer marketing is mainly focused on platforms, geography and industry trends. In this review, studies distribution focus is more on the Instagram platform,

followed by YouTube and TikTok. The geographical distribution of empirical studies focused on Indonesia, America and India. Industry categories like fashion, beauty, and cosmetics are more concentrated, followed by technology, electronics, gaming and fintech and moderate studies in tourism, hospitality, travel, food, beverage, health, wellness, wearables, and fitness.

The major theme of this review is influencer traits, which are classified into psychological, social, and behavioural in nature. These characteristics include credibility, authenticity, trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness, are effective in shaping behavioural response and help in building strong relationships towards the endorsed brand (Ooi et al., 2023). Mediation and moderator constructs in influencer marketing effectiveness on behavioural outcomes play a key role, and the most common variables are related to brand, audiences, content, advertising, and influencer congruence (Jung & Im, 2021). Methodological review in this study is distributed in the survey method, followed by experimental approaches, analytical techniques, SEM modelling and regression are the most frequently applied methods based on the literature. The researcher demonstrates that influencer marketing has grown significantly from 2017 onwards, with a rise in publications from 2021 and a peak in 2024. The figures reveal that most documents are co-authored, with just 21% being single-authored, suggesting a greater prevalence of cooperation in this study domain. Research identifies the most influential writers, revealing that the bulk of these authors exhibited heightened productivity in 2018. Further revealed that the most frequently referenced publications were derived from research within the dataset (Ahmed et al., 2017; Xie-Carson, Benckendorff, et al., 2023). Among the 200 sources, papers were the most significant source of theoretical literature in this domain, accounting for 83% of the total publications. The findings reveal that, up to 2019, seven journals were the primary suppliers of papers about Influencer Marketing. Cogent Business and Management, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, and Innovative Marketing were the three most prolific sources, exhibiting the highest annual occurrences from 2017 to 2024, indicating a significant increase in the volume of papers published in these publications.

In the study, researchers applied both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in influencer marketing majority of the papers used content analysis, followed by document analysis, and applied regression analysis, respectively (Ferraro et al., 2024). Content analysis is used to examine several facets in this research domain, including advertising activities, viewpoints, trends adopted by influencers, and social media influencer profiles that constitute their online persona (Cheah et al., 2024). The method used in conceptual analysis provides guidance, criticisms, and models for practitioners and researchers (Suryani et al., 2022).

5. Conclusion and Implications of the Study

This study presents a comprehensive systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis of influencer marketing research, synthesising 153 peer-reviewed articles through the TCCM framework to examine how psychological, social, and contextual constructs shape consumer behavioural

responses. By integrating the PRISMA protocol with bibliometric tools including Bibliometrix R-tool and VOSviewer, this review maps the theoretical landscape, contextual boundaries, thematic characteristics, and methodological trends that define the current state of influencer marketing scholarship.

The theoretical analysis reveals that source credibility theory and social cognitive theory remain the dominant frameworks in the field, while emerging perspectives such as two-step flow communication theory, performativity theory, and cue utilisation theory are underutilised despite their explanatory potential for contemporary influencer–follower dynamics. This theoretical concentration signals a need for greater pluralism in how researchers conceptualise the mechanisms of influence, particularly as digital communication environments continue to evolve.

Contextually, the review identifies a persistent geographic imbalance, with the majority of empirical studies conducted in developed economies, particularly China, the United States, and select European nations. Developing and underdeveloped markets remain significantly underrepresented, limiting the generalisability of existing findings and constraining the development of culturally nuanced influencer marketing strategies. Similarly, platform coverage is heavily skewed toward Instagram and YouTube, with emerging and alternative platforms such as LinkedIn, Snapchat, and live-streaming environments receiving comparatively limited scholarly attention.

Thematically, the review uncovers substantive gaps in several high-relevance areas, including narrative creativity and storytelling intensity, virtual influencer ethics and consumer trust, self-congruence and identity alignment mechanisms, platform-specific content dynamics, and the moderating role of cultural context on persuasion outcomes. These gaps collectively point toward a richer and more complex influencer marketing ecosystem than current literature has captured, and they form the basis of the forward-looking research agenda proposed in this study.

Methodologically, the field continues to rely heavily on quantitative survey-based designs and PLS-SEM analysis, with comparatively limited use of experimental, longitudinal, or mixed-method approaches. Greater methodological diversity would strengthen causal inference, improve construct validity, and enable researchers to examine the temporal dynamics of influencer–consumer relationships more rigorously.

This review makes several contributions to theory and practice. For marketing scholars, it consolidates fragmented knowledge across four analytical dimensions, identifies underexplored theoretical territories, and proposes a conceptual framework that integrates affective, symbolic, and contextual variables into a unified model of consumer behavioural response. For practitioners and brand managers, the findings highlight the strategic importance of influencer–follower congruence, disclosure transparency, platform-specific content design, and the responsible deployment of virtual influencers in promotional campaigns.

5.1 Future Research Directions and Limitations

Based on the conceptual framework, Previous studies have discussed the efficacy of influencer marketing, theories, traits, endorsement, methods, industry trends, and the content outlines the future research produced by authors to advance content creators in making effective marketing decisions.

Several theories and models have been discussed in this review, and these theories are useful in making effective marketing decisions. “The two-step flow communication theory is used to interpret advertising messages better and examine how message authenticity, message appeal, and influencer-message congruence influence follower behavioural responses”. (Kay et al., 2023a). Performativity theory can be applied to investigate how content creation calibration stimulates consumer pro-environmental behaviour and sustainable consumption (Jacobson & Harrison, 2022). Attribution theory examines how message authenticity and influencer-brand congruence stimulate consumer responses (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016). Further studies may employ cue utilisation theory to explore influencer marketing antecedents to investigate the interaction effects of extrinsic and intrinsic cues (Tseng & Wang, 2023). Extending these theories helps in understanding influencer-follower interactions and their effect on behavioural responses.

The contextual study of influencer marketing primarily focused on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. However, other platforms like LinkedIn, Snapchat, Facebook, X formerly Twitter, and online community platforms remain underexplored. Additionally, findings of this synthesis show that much of the research is from developed economies (Drossos et al., 2024), with less attention towards developing and underdeveloped nations, to improve the generalizability of the study (Nyrhinen et al., 2024). Further, based on the review, research is focused more on fashion, beauty, cosmetics and luxury brands (Sinh My et al., 2024). Little attention is given to sustainable food consumption practices, technology, e-commerce, and the mobile and telecommunication sectors (Maduku, 2024).

Drawing from the review, gaps were identified in the influencer characteristics, including excessive disclosure practices, frequent hashtag usage and impact on consumer engagement and scepticism, to enhance the transparency of its persuasive effect (Jhawar et al., 2023; L. Chen et al., 2024). Exploring narrative creativity and content techniques includes how influencer tone, structure and message framing style, like emotional versus rational, self-focused versus other-focused, concrete versus abstract, impact consumer trust, engagement and behavioural response (F. Wang et al., 2024). Therefore, future research focuses on how message framing, appeal, and recipient response differ when presenting information (Jaiswal et al., 2024). Platform dynamics like visibility characteristics, interactive tools, and cultural practices in influencer marketing are unexplored, despite their strong influence on consumer response (Högberg, 2023). Future study encouraged to investigate how cross-platform research influences interpretation and develop impactful strategies. Limited studies have focused on human versus virtual influencers and brand congruence (Tseng & Wang, 2023). Ethical alignment, emotional and relational factors of

influencer marketing have received less research, although purchases can only affirm trust rather than transactions (G. Li et al., 2023). Therefore, future studies examine factors that drive actual sales impact, relational and commercial (Ren et al., 2023). Quantitative study methodology is more commonly used in the influencer marketing literature. Qualitative studies are very few, and future research is encouraged to use both approaches, that is, mixed methods, to get novel results. Further, the reviewer identified a research gap on influencer personal branding to explore how marketers select and collaborate with influencers to improve brand efficiency by positioning their personal branding. Additionally, potential research focuses on gender selection to examine the personal branding practices of male influencers, which is underexplored (Khamis et al., 2017). Future research includes databases such as ProQuest, EBSCO, books, conference papers and case studies to broaden the research to improve the generalizability of the findings and also consider non-English source provides a valuable insight. Overall, this review provides a robust foundation for understanding the effectiveness of influencer marketing in shaping behavioural responses.

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