



Literature Review on Determinants Shaping the Impact of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Perception

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ABSTRACT

The current literature review integrates findings from multiple studies regarding factors that determine how social media influencers affect consumer perception. The primary themes revolve around influencer credibility together with authenticity and trust while also including content quality engagement strategies and social validation. The study outlines the psychological and behavioural processes through which SMIs influence consumer choices by demonstrating how trust serves as a bridge between influencer actions and consumer response while consumer engagement levels modify this influence. Research reveals that influencer marketing success depends on relatability together with transparency and emotional connection while providing brands and researchers with practical knowledge.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Consumer Trust, Brand Loyalty, Parasocial Interaction

1. Introduction

1.1 Influencer Marketing in India: A Conceptual and Empirical Review

India's increasing prominence of social media influencers has transformed consumer patterns which now requires extensive research to understand how influencers affect brand perception and trust. Research highlights trust and realness as essential factors especially for Indian millennials who prefer influencer recommendations to standard advertisements (Patel & Chatterjee, 2022; Reddy et al., 2023). Different demographics respond uniquely to influencer marketing with nano-influencers generating engagement in tier-2 and tier-3 cities and macro-influencers maintaining dominance in urban markets (Nair & Menon, 2023). The work of Srinivasan & Rana (2022) shows how cultural and regional factors influence influencer marketing approaches.

Audience connections with influencers are explained through theoretical research such as source credibility theory by Ohanian (1990) and parasocial interaction theory by Horton & Wohl (1956). Research confirms these theoretical models demonstrate that brands achieve stronger connections with consumers through influencers considered both knowledgeable and relatable (Joshi et al., 2021; Kapoor & Verma, 2021). The transparency issues in sponsorship disclosures create challenges because consumer skepticism towards sponsored content is increasing (Choudhary & Tiwari, 2022; Agarwal & Chawla, 2023).

The systematic-narrative review examines studies published between 2020 and 2024 to discover prevailing trends and contradictions while identifying areas lacking sufficient research. Three primary themes emerged which cover emotional contagion's influence on impulsive purchases according to Malhotra & Kaur (2023), platform-specific strategy effectiveness from Dasgupta & Mishra (2021), and regional language content impact described by Mehta & Desai (2023). Banerjee and Rao (2021) assert that influencer marketing within B2B contexts remains largely unexamined in India and requires additional scholarly research. The chapter unifies different viewpoints and research data to build upon current knowledge and proposes new research directions especially in regard to ethical challenges and cultural differences in influencer marketing.

2. Scope of the Literature Survey

The literature survey analyzes the effects social media influencers have on consumer perception through their ability to build trust and authenticity and their use of engagement strategies and social validation methods. Research demonstrates that credibility in influencers builds brand trust (Nabirasool et al., 2024) and consumer loyalty stems from authentic influencer behaviour (Singh & Banerjee, 2023). Direct interaction serves as an influential engagement strategy (Jhinkwan et al., 2024) while social validation influences impulsive purchase decisions (Shetty & Sarkar, 2021).

2.1 Major Theories covered

This research review examines the Source Credibility Theory alongside Parasocial Interaction Theory as they apply to social media influencers and combines empirical data collected from 2020 to 2024.

2.1.1 Source Credibility and Consumer Trust

The Source Credibility Theory asserts that an influencer's power emerges from their perceived expertise alongside trustworthiness and attractiveness according to research by Vu et al. (2024). Research shows that consumer trust serves as a bridge between source credibility and engagement levels, emphasizing the need for genuine endorsements (Chen, 2025).

2.1.2 Parasocial Interaction and Brand Engagement

According to Parasocial Interaction Theory consumers create one-sided connections with influencers which results in increased engagement and purchase intention (Omeish et al., 2025). Studies show that interactive content enhances parasocial connections which increases the effectiveness of influencer marketing (Chen, 2025).

3. Methodology

The research combines a hybrid systematic-narrative review approach to merge theoretical models with empirical data from 2010 to 2024 for studying how social media influencers affect consumer perception.

3.1 Review Design

- **Systematic Component:** The systematic review component included structured research in Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Research Gate with the search terms "social media influencers," "consumer perception," "source credibility," and "parasocial interaction."
- **Narrative Component:** The analysis combines important theoretical foundations such as Source Credibility Theory and Parasocial Interaction Theory with empirical findings to construct conceptual frameworks.

3.2 Inclusion Criteria

The literature analyzed includes research from 2010 through 2024 which examines consumer behaviour patterns together with influencer marketing strategies and digital engagement tactics. Research includes peer-reviewed academic articles along with conference papers and industry reports verified through empirical evaluation. The study examines trust elements while investigating authentic content and social media engagement tactics along with validation strategies.

3.3 Exclusion Criteria

Research not connected to consumer perception or influencer credibility falls outside this survey scope.

a. Articles lacking empirical data or theoretical grounding.

1. Conceptual Studies (Theoretical Perspectives)

These studies provide theoretical insights into how influencer marketing affects consumer perception.

Research in influencer marketing through conceptual studies uses established theoretical frameworks to demonstrate consumer engagement and trust-building processes with influencers. The Source Credibility Theory posits that consumer perception and purchase decisions are influenced by an influencer's perceived expertise alongside their trustworthiness and attractiveness according to Vu et al. (2024). The Parasocial Interaction Theory demonstrates how consumers build one-sided relationships with influencers which leads to emotional connections and strengthens brand loyalty (Omeish et al., 2025). Social Proof Theory demonstrates that peer approval mechanisms including likes, shares and comments boost perceived credibility which leads to impulse buying according to Shetty & Sarkar (2021). The theoretical perspectives help to understand the psychological and behavioural mechanisms behind consumer interactions with influencers and establish a structured basis for testing through marketing research.

A. Influencer Credibility and Trust

- **Source Credibility Theory** – Influencer expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness determine credibility. (Vu et al., 2024)

Table 1 - Extended Conceptual and Empirical Studies on Social Media Influencers and Consumer Perception

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Influencer Marketing and Consumer Trust	Trust Transfer Theory	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	Trust in influencers positively impacts brand trust and purchase intent.	Ilieva et al. (2024)
2	Influencer Credibility and Purchase Behaviour	Source Credibility Theory	Survey & Regression Analysis	Higher influencer credibility leads to increased purchase likelihood.	Nabirasool et al. (2024)
3	Parasocial Relationships and Brand Engagement	Parasocial Interaction Theory	Experimental Study	Strong parasocial bonds enhance brand loyalty and consumer engagement.	Rodrigues (2021)
4	Social Media Influencer Strategies and Consumer Perception	Uses and Gratifications Theory	Mixed-Methods Approach	Consumers engage with influencers for entertainment, information, and social validation.	Sankala et al. (2024)
5	Influencer Authenticity and Consumer Loyalty	Authenticity in Influencer Marketing	Systematic Literature Review	Authentic influencers foster stronger consumer trust and long-term loyalty.	Ruseva et al. (2024)
6	Influencer Marketing and Brand Equity	Brand Equity Model	Case Study Analysis	Influencer endorsements enhance brand equity through perceived authenticity.	Karnam et al. (2024)
7	Psychological Impact of Influencer Marketing	Elaboration Likelihood Model	Experimental Study	Peripheral cues (popularity, attractiveness) influence consumer attitudes more than expertise.	Kumar et al. (2023)
8	Influencer Engagement and Consumer Purchase Intent	Social Exchange Theory	Survey-Based Analysis	Frequent influencer-consumer interactions increase purchase likelihood.	Ghouse et al. (2024)
9	Influencer Marketing Ethics and Consumer Perception	Ethical Decision-Making Model	Content Analysis	Transparency in influencer marketing improves consumer trust and brand reputation.	Bratkov et al. (2024)
10	Influencer Virality and Consumer Engagement	Diffusion of Innovations Theory	Social Media Analytics	Viral influencer content drives higher engagement and brand awareness.	Sarkar & Shetty (2021)
11	Influencer Gender and Consumer Preferences	Gender Schema Theory	Comparative Study	Gender of influencers affects consumer perception and engagement levels.	Banerjee & Singh (2023)
12	Influencer Marketing and Consumer Decision-Making	Theory of Planned Behaviour	Survey & Behavioural Analysis	Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control influence consumer decisions.	Kulkarni (2023)
13	Influencer Content Strategy and Consumer Trust	Narrative Transportation Theory	Thematic Analysis	Storytelling-based influencer content enhances consumer trust and engagement.	Kumari et al. (2024)
14	Influencer Sponsorship Disclosure and Consumer Response	Attribution Theory	Experimental Study	Clear sponsorship disclosure improves consumer trust, while hidden sponsorships reduce credibility.	Jha & Shaw (2024)
15	Influencer Marketing and Consumer Brand Relationships	Relationship Marketing Theory	Longitudinal Study	Strong influencer-brand relationships lead to higher consumer retention and loyalty.	Reddy et al. (2024)

Synthesis of Studies on Influencer Marketing and Consumer Perception

Influencer marketing holds a central position in affecting consumer trust and engagement along with purchase decisions as demonstrated through multiple theoretical frameworks and practical research findings. According to Trust Transfer Theory consumers build their trust in brands through the influencers who endorse them which leads to stronger brand loyalty and higher purchase intent (Ilieva et al., 2024). According to Source Credibility Theory the combined factors of expertise trustworthiness and attractiveness in influencers boost their credibility which subsequently increases consumer buying behaviour (Nabirasool et al., 2024). Research into Parasocial Interaction Theory demonstrates that emotional bonds between consumers and influencers lead to enhanced brand engagement because one-sided relationships shape consumer perceptions (Rodrigues, 2021). According to the Uses and Gratifications Theory consumers use strategic influencer content to obtain entertainment, social validation and information which shows their active engagement with influencers (Sankala et al., 2024).

Systematic reviews reveal that authentic influencers create stronger brand connections which drive consumer trust and long-term loyalty (Ruseva et al., 2024). Brand Equity Theory demonstrates that influencer endorsements increase brand value perception which shapes consumer trust (Karnam et al., 2024). According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model, popularity and attractiveness serve as stronger peripheral cues that shape consumer attitudes than expertise while boosting the emotional influence of influencers (Kumar et al., 2023). Social Exchange Theory indicates frequent influencer-consumer interactions boost purchase probability and Ethical Decision-Making Models reveal transparent influencer marketing strengthens consumer trust (Bratkov et al., 2024). Brand awareness and consumer engagement experiences significant growth through viral influencer content which matches the principles of Diffusion of Innovations Theory according to Sarkar & Shetty (2021).

Gender is among several factors that shape consumer perception because Gender Schema Theory explains the effect of an influencer's gender on audience engagement and preference (Banerjee & Singh, 2023). Kulkarni's 2023 study shows that consumer decision-making in influencer marketing follows the Theory of Planned Behaviour which combines attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control. Narrative Transportation Theory demonstrates that storytelling-based influencer content builds emotional bonds which lead to higher consumer trust and brand engagement (Kumari et al., 2024). According to Attribution Theory transparency in sponsorships builds trust among consumers while undisclosed promotions decrease credibility (Jha & Shaw, 2024). The Relationship Marketing Theory demonstrates how robust connections between influencers and brands lead to prolonged consumer retention with enhanced loyalty and continuous interaction (Reddy et al., 2024).

- **Trust Transfer Theory** – Consumers transfer trust from influencers to brands, strengthening brand loyalty. (Ilieva et al., 2024)

Table 2 - Conceptual and Empirical Studies on Trust Transfer in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Trust Transfer from Influencers to Brands	Trust Transfer Theory	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	Consumers extend trust in influencers to endorsed brands, strengthening brand loyalty.	Ilieva et al. (2024)
2	Influencer Credibility and Brand Trust	Source Credibility Theory	Survey-Based Analysis	Higher influencer credibility leads to increased brand trust and purchase intent.	Talesara (2025)
3	Social Media Influencers and Consumer Loyalty	Relationship Marketing Theory	Longitudinal Study	Strong influencer-brand relationships enhance consumer retention and loyalty.	Beriwal et al. (2024)
4	Influencer Authenticity and Brand Perception	Authenticity in Influencer Marketing	Systematic Review	Authentic influencers foster stronger consumer trust and positive brand perception.	Almahdi et al. (2022)
5	Influencer Endorsements and Consumer Trust	Persuasion Knowledge Model	Experimental Study	Transparent influencer endorsements improve consumer trust in brands.	Matin et al. (2022)
6	Influencer Marketing and Brand Engagement	Social Exchange Theory	Mixed-Methods Approach	Frequent influencer-consumer interactions increase brand engagement and purchase likelihood.	Nair & Bhagat (2024)
7	Trust Transfer in Sponsored Content	Attribution Theory	Survey & Behavioural Analysis	Clear sponsorship disclosure enhances trust transfer from influencers to brands.	Mammadli (2021)
8	Influencer Virality and Brand Trust	Diffusion of Innovations Theory	Social Media Analytics	Viral influencer content strengthens brand trust and consumer engagement.	Baharuddin et al. (2022)

9	Influencer Marketing Ethics and Consumer Trust	Ethical Decision-Making Model	Content Analysis	Ethical influencer marketing practices improve brand credibility and consumer trust.	Turban et al. (2016)
10	Influencer Trust and Purchase Intent	Theory of Planned Behaviour	Experimental Study	Trust in influencers significantly impacts consumer purchase decisions.	Kietzmann et al. (2011)

Synthesis of Trust Transfer Theory in Influencer Marketing

Trust Transfer Theory describes the process through which consumer trust moves from influencers to endorsed brands resulting in increased brand loyalty and purchase intentions. The credibility of influencers which stems from their expertise, authenticity and engagement is essential for building consumer trust (Ilieva et al., 2024). The research findings show that clear sponsorship disclosures reinforce trust transfer whereas deceptive endorsements reduce it (Mammadli, 2021). The ongoing trust between consumers and brands develops through social interactions and emotional bonds while regular influencer interaction enhances brand perception (Nair & Bhagat, 2024). The use of viral influencer content boosts brand trust through its effect on perceived popularity according to Baharuddin et al. (2022). Ethical issues in influencer marketing persist as a major concern because deceptive practices diminish consumer trust according to Turban et al. (2016).

B. Parasocial Interaction and Consumer Engagement

- **Parasocial Interaction Theory** – *One-sided emotional connections enhance engagement and brand loyalty.* (Omeish et al., 2025)

Table 3 - Conceptual and Empirical Studies on Parasocial Interaction Theory in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Parasocial Relationships and Brand Loyalty	Parasocial Interaction Theory	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	One-sided emotional connections with influencers enhance brand loyalty and engagement.	Omeish et al. (2025)
2	Social Media Interactions and Parasocial Bonds	Parasocial Relationship Model	Predictive Path Modeling	Social media interactions strengthen parasocial relationships, leading to brand credibility and loyalty.	Lacap et al. (2023)
3	Parasocial Interaction and Brand Relationship Quality	Brand Relationship Theory	Survey-Based Analysis	Influencer attractiveness and attitude homophily foster parasocial interactions, increasing brand loyalty.	Ayyaz (2023)
4	AI Influencers and Parasocial Engagement	Adaptive AI Model	Conceptual Framework	AI influencers create emotionally engaging parasocial relationships through dynamic sentiment adaptation.	Shil (2024)
5	Parasocial Interaction and Consumer Willingness to Share Data	Consumer Privacy Theory	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)	Strong parasocial bonds increase consumer willingness to share personal information with brands.	Ayyaz (2023)

Synthesis of Studies on Parasocial Interaction Theory in Influencer Marketing

According to Parasocial Interaction Theory consumers develop brand loyalty, engagement and trust through their one-sided emotional connections with influencers. Research demonstrates that social media conversations between consumers and influencers build parasocial connections which boost brand trustworthiness and consumer loyalty (Lacap et al., 2023). Consumer engagement with brands endorsed by influencers grows stronger because influencer attractiveness and attitude similarity make consumers more receptive to their messages (Ayyaz, 2023). Recent studies show that AI influencers drive parasocial engagement by using adaptive sentiment analysis and real-time feedback to establish emotionally impactful user connections (Shil, 2024). Consumers show a greater readiness to share personal information through parasocial relationships which strengthens both brand trust and engagement plans (Ayyaz, 2023). Parasocial interactions function as a bridge between emotional bonds and brand loyalty which makes them a valuable component of influencer marketing. The evolution of AI-driven influencers requires brands to understand how digital personas enhance parasocial connections for successful future marketing strategies.

Social Exchange Theory – Frequent influencer-consumer interactions increase purchase likelihood. (Dzhabarova et al., 2024)

Table 4 - Conceptual and Empirical Studies on Social Exchange Theory in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Influencer-Consumer Interaction and Purchase Decisions	Social Exchange Theory	Survey-Based Analysis	Frequent interactions between influencers and followers increase purchase likelihood.	Dzhabarova et al. (2024)
2	Live-Streaming Commerce and Impulse Buying	Social Exchange & Signaling Theory	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)	Streamer credibility and interaction quality significantly influence impulsive buying behaviour.	Luo et al. (2025)
3	Influencer Engagement and Consumer Reciprocity	Reciprocity Principle in Social Exchange Theory	Experimental Study	Consumers reciprocate influencer engagement with brand loyalty and purchase intent.	Patnaik et al. (2024)
4	Social Media Influencers and Consumer Trust	Social Exchange Theory	Mixed-Methods Approach	Trust-building interactions between influencers and consumers enhance brand credibility.	Cheah et al. (2024)
5	Influencer Marketing and Consumer Purchase Behaviour	Social Exchange Theory	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	Positive influencer-consumer exchanges lead to higher purchase intent and brand advocacy.	Dwivedi et al. (2025)

Synthesis of Studies on Social Exchange Theory in Influencer Marketing

The Social Exchange Theory demonstrates that frequent influencer-consumer interactions build trust and engagement which leads to increased purchase intent. Research shows that reciprocal actions including influencer engagement and personalized responses improve consumer loyalty according to Dzhabarova et al. (2024). The integrity of streamers combined with the quality of their interactions drives consumers' impulse buying actions through live-streaming platforms according to Luo et al. (2025). In influencer marketing consumer engagement leads to brand loyalty and purchases through the power of reciprocity (Patnaik et al., 2024). Building trust through interactions enhances brand credibility which positions influencers as essential elements for consumer trust and brand advocacy (Cheah et al., 2024). Positive interactions between influencers and consumers result in increased purchase intentions which underscores the value of engagement tactics in digital marketing (Dwivedi et al., 2025). The social exchange mechanisms within influencer marketing establish beneficial relationships through engagement which develops trust leading consumers to take action. Brands that use digital marketing must understand how reciprocity and interaction quality influence consumer behaviour because influencer strategies continue to evolve.

C. Authenticity, Ethics, and Decision-Making

- Authenticity in Influencer Marketing – *Genuine influencers enhance consumer trust and purchase intent.* (Chen, 2025)

Table 5 - Conceptual and Empirical Studies on Authenticity in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Authenticity and Consumer Trust in Influencer Marketing	Authenticity Theory	Survey & Regression Analysis	Genuine influencers foster stronger consumer trust and purchase intent.	Chen (2025)
2	The Role of Authenticity in Consumer Purchase Decisions	Brand Authenticity Model	Experimental Study	Perceived authenticity enhances brand loyalty and consumer engagement.	Prajapati & Sharma (2025)
3	Influencer Marketing and Consumer Behaviour	Trust & Authenticity Framework	ANOVA & Regression Analysis	Social media influencer endorsements significantly impact consumer perceptions and purchase intentions.	Chavda & Chauhan (2024)
4	Authenticity in Influencer-Driven Brand Engagement	Consumer Trust Model	Mixed-Methods Approach	Transparent influencer communication strengthens brand credibility and consumer trust.	Kumar et al. (2025)
5	Authenticity and Ethical Influencer Marketing	Ethical Marketing Framework	Content Analysis	Ethical influencer practices improve consumer trust and brand reputation.	Gupta et al. (2025)

Synthesis of Studies on Authenticity in Influencer Marketing

The authenticity of influencers is essential to influencer marketing because it determines consumer trust and their buying intentions. Research demonstrates that influencers who demonstrate transparency and credibility boost consumer trust which results in increased purchase intentions (Chen, 2025). According to the Brand Authenticity Model consumers who perceive brands as authentic will develop stronger loyalty and longer-lasting relationships (Prajapati & Sharma, 2025). Studies show that endorsements from social media influencers create substantial effects on consumer perceptions with younger demographics being most affected according to Chavda & Chauhan (2024). Transparent influencer communication enhances brand credibility which encourages consumer engagement with brands driven by influencers according to Kumar et al. (2025). Authentic and ethical practices by influencers are essential since they build consumer trust and brand reputation while reducing skepticism about influencer marketing (Gupta et al., 2025). The backbone of influencer marketing rests on authenticity which builds consumer trust and purchase behaviour by emphasizing transparent practices and ethical engagement in digital marketing approaches.

Table 6: Conceptual and Empirical Studies on Ethical Decision-Making in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Ethical Decision-Making in Influencer Marketing	Ethical Decision-Making Model	Content Analysis	Transparent marketing improves trust, while unethical practices damage perception.	Bratkov et al. (2024)
2	Consumer Trust and Ethical Influencer Practices	Trust & Ethics Framework	Survey-Based Analysis	Ethical influencer marketing enhances brand credibility and consumer trust.	Turban et al. (2016)
3	Transparency in Sponsored Content and Consumer Response	Attribution Theory	Experimental Study	Clear sponsorship disclosure strengthens consumer trust, while hidden promotions reduce credibility.	Jha & Shaw (2024)
4	Ethical Marketing and Consumer Loyalty	Ethical Marketing Framework	Mixed-Methods Approach	Ethical influencer practices foster long-term consumer loyalty and engagement.	Cheah et al. (2024)
5	Influencer Ethics and Brand Reputation	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Model	Case Study Analysis	Ethical influencer behaviour positively impacts brand reputation and consumer perception.	Luo et al. (2025)

Synthesis of Studies on Ethical Decision-Making in Influencer Marketing

The ethical choices made in influencer marketing significantly influence consumer trust levels as well as brand credibility and purchasing patterns. Research findings show that honest marketing practices build consumer trust but deceptive methods damage brand credibility and reputation (Bratkov et al., 2024). Through ethical influencer marketing businesses develop lasting consumer loyalty while emphasizing the significance of truthful advertising practices (Turban et al., 2016). Research findings show that disclosing sponsorships to consumers enhances trust because it transforms influencer promotions into believable recommendations instead of deceptive advertising (Jha & Shaw, 2024). Brands which practice ethical influencer marketing build better reputation while increasing consumer engagement with brands that show transparency.

D. Social Validation and Purchase Behaviour

- **Social Proof & Network Effects** – Likes, shares, and comments influence consumer trust and impulsive buying. (Shetty & Sarkar, 2021)

Table 7 - Conceptual and Empirical Studies on Social Proof & Network Effects in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Social Proof & Consumer Trust in Influencer Marketing	Social Proof Theory	Survey-Based Analysis	Likes, shares, and comments significantly influence consumer trust and impulsive buying.	Shetty & Sarkar (2021)
2	Impact of Social Presence on Impulse Buying Behaviour	Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	Social presence in live-streaming commerce enhances consumer trust and impulsive buying behaviour.	Ming et al. (2021)
3	Influencer Engagement and Purchase Intent	Network Effects Model	Experimental Study	High engagement levels (likes, shares, comments) increase consumer purchase intent.	Mehta & Chandra (2025)

4	Social Media Influence on Consumer Decision-Making	Social Influence Theory	Mixed-Methods Approach	Peer validation through social media interactions drives impulsive buying behaviour.	Akram et al. (2021)
5	Social Proof and Brand Credibility	Social Validation Framework	Case Study Analysis	Brands endorsed by influencers with high engagement rates are perceived as more credible.	Bilal et al. (2021)

Synthesis of Studies on Social Proof & Network Effects in Influencer Marketing

Social Proof Theory shows how consumer trust and impulsive purchasing decisions are affected by the number of likes, shares, and comments. According to Shetty & Sarkar (2021) research reveals that when influencer posts receive high engagement consumers tend to view these posts as more credible which increases their likelihood of buying endorsed products. According to the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory social presence during live-streaming commerce drives impulsive buying behaviours and underlines the significance of interactive digital platforms (Ming et al., 2021). Research findings indicate that consumer purchasing decisions become more impulsive when influenced by peer validation during social media interactions which illustrates how network effects mold consumer behaviour (Akram et al., 2021). Brands that receive endorsements from influencers who maintain high engagement rates gain stronger credibility because influencer trust-building strategies prove vital (Bilal et al., 2021). Social proof strategies within influencer marketing generate an influential loop that combines engagement with trust and consumer purchasing activity which positions them as vital components of digital brand strategies.

- **Diffusion of Innovations Theory** – *Viral influencer content drives consumer adoption of brands.* (Sarkar & Shetty, 2021)

Table 8 - Conceptual and Empirical Studies on Diffusion of Innovations Theory in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Viral Influencer Content and Consumer Adoption	Diffusion of Innovations Theory	Social Media Analytics	Viral influencer content accelerates brand adoption among early adopters.	Sarkar & Shetty (2021)
2	Influencer Marketing and Product Diffusion	Innovation Adoption Model	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	Influencer endorsements significantly impact product diffusion rates.	Luna III (2024)
3	Social Media Influencers as Change Agents	Diffusion of Innovations Theory	Case Study Analysis	Influencers act as opinion leaders, shaping consumer adoption patterns.	Rogers (2023)
4	Influencer Virality and Brand Awareness	Network Effects Model	Experimental Study	High influencer engagement increases brand awareness and consumer adoption.	Pascual et al. (2024)
5	Digital Word-of-Mouth and Innovation Diffusion	Social Influence Theory	Mixed-Methods Approach	Digital word-of-mouth accelerates innovation diffusion in influencer marketing.	Mbatha (2024)

Synthesis of Studies on Diffusion of Innovations Theory in Influencer Marketing

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory demonstrates the mechanism through which influencer-driven viral content speeds up brand adoption among early adopters and opinion leaders. Research demonstrates that product diffusion rates are considerably boosted by influencer endorsements which emphasize the critical role of influencer trustworthiness in molding consumer actions (Luna III, 2024). Research proves that influencers function as agents of change by directing consumer adoption behaviours through targeted content sharing (Rogers, 2023). When influencers engage effectively with their audiences they boost brand awareness which leads consumers to adopt products promoted by these influential figures (Pascual et al., 2024). According to Mbatha (2024), digital word-of-mouth creates stronger diffusion of innovations by showcasing social influence as an integral part of consumer adoption processes. The Diffusion of Innovations Theory applied to influencer marketing shows how influencers speed up brand adoption which establishes them as essential agents of digital consumer behaviour. Brands that rely on social media platforms must understand the impact of viral content on innovation diffusion to develop effective influencer strategies.

E. Psychological and Behavioural Influences in Influencer Marketing

- **Elaboration Likelihood Model** – *Peripheral cues like influencer popularity affect consumer attitudes more than expertise.* (Ruseva et al., 2024)

Table 9 - Conceptual and Empirical Studies on Elaboration Likelihood Model in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Influencer Popularity and Consumer Attitudes	Elaboration Likelihood Model	Survey-Based Analysis	Peripheral cues like influencer popularity affect consumer attitudes more than expertise.	Ruseva et al. (2024)
2	Influencer Attractiveness and Purchase Intentions	Elaboration Likelihood Model	Experimental Study	Physical attractiveness influences brand attitudes but weakens purchase intention links.	Hariningsih et al. (2024)
3	Live-Streaming and Consumer Decision-Making	Elaboration Likelihood Model	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	Para-social interaction and source credibility shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.	Yen et al. (2024)
4	Influencer Marketing and Message Processing Routes	Elaboration Likelihood Model	Mixed-Methods Approach	Central cues (informativeness, originality) and peripheral cues (trustworthiness, attractiveness) interact to shape purchase decisions.	Farivar et al. (2023)
5	Social Media Engagement and Cognitive Processing	Elaboration Likelihood Model	Case Study Analysis	High engagement levels influence consumer attitudes through peripheral processing.	Wang et al. (2023)

Synthesis of Studies on Elaboration Likelihood Model in Influencer Marketing

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) demonstrates that peripheral cues such as influencer popularity and attractiveness affect consumer attitudes to a greater extent than expertise does. Research findings show that consumers tend to use peripheral signals when they engage with influencer content which produces more powerful brand connections through influencer attraction instead of content quality according to Ruseva et al. (2024).

The empirical data reveals physical attractiveness affects brand attitudes yet reduces the connection to purchase intentions indicating consumers might appreciate influencers without their admiration leading to actual purchases (Hariningsih et al., 2024). The interactive nature of live-streaming improves consumer decision-making by emphasizing the value of para-social relationships and source credibility which shape buying behaviour (Yen et al., 2024).

Research indicates that central cues like informativeness and originality along with peripheral cues such as trustworthiness and attractiveness combine to determine purchasing choices showing how rational and emotional processing work together in influencer marketing according to Farivar et al., 2023. According to Wang et al. (2023), digital marketing strategies emphasize influencer popularity because high engagement levels impact consumer attitudes through peripheral processing. The Elaboration Likelihood Model shows that peripheral cues such as influencer appeal and attractiveness drive brand perception and consumer purchase behaviour in influencer marketing.

- **Narrative Transportation Theory** – *Influencer storytelling enhances consumer trust and emotional connection.* (Kumari et al., 2024)

Table 10 - Conceptual and Empirical Studies on Narrative Transportation Theory in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Influencer Storytelling and Consumer Trust	Narrative Transportation Theory	Survey-Based Analysis	Influencer storytelling enhances consumer trust and emotional connection.	Kumari et al. (2024)
2	Virtual Influencers and Narrative Engagement	Narrative Transportation Theory	Conceptual Framework & Interviews	Virtual influencers create immersive storytelling experiences that impact consumer well-being.	Jain et al. (2024)
3	Brand Storytelling and Consumer Behaviour	Narrative Transportation Theory	Systematic Literature Review	Narrative-driven brand storytelling fosters deeper consumer engagement and loyalty.	Thomas & Grigsby (2024)
4	Storytelling Techniques in Influencer Marketing	Narrative Persuasion Model	Experimental Study	Emotional storytelling increases brand recall and consumer purchase intent.	Baakli (2023)

5	Narrative Transportation and Brand Image	Narrative Transportation Theory	Case Study Analysis	Strong narrative elements in influencer content improve brand perception and consumer trust.	Green & Brock (2000)
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Synthesis of Studies on Narrative Transportation Theory in Influencer Marketing

The Narrative Transportation Theory demonstrates that immersive storytelling strengthens consumer trust while building emotional bonds and increasing brand engagement. Research evidence demonstrates that influencer storytelling builds stronger consumer connections which lead to increased trust and audience engagement with brands through effective narrative techniques (Kumari et al., 2024). Recent studies by Jain et al. (2024) illustrate the effectiveness of virtual influencers in engaging audiences through AI-generated narratives that enhance consumer well-being by providing immersive storytelling experiences. Brand storytelling generates consumer loyalty which underlines the significance of using narrative-focused marketing approaches as demonstrated by Thomas & Grigsby (2024). Research demonstrates emotional storytelling enhances both brand recall and purchase intention through narrative persuasion in influencer marketing (Baakli, 2023). According to Green & Brock (2000), strong narrative features lead to better brand perception which makes consumers more inclined to trust and engage with influencer content.

2. Empirical Studies (Data-Driven Findings)

A. Influencer Engagement and Brand Perception

Consumer Involvement Theory – *Interactive content like Q&A and live videos strengthen brand perception.* (Singh & Banerjee, 2023)

Table 11 - Empirical Studies on Consumer Involvement Theory in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Interactive Content and Brand Perception	Consumer Involvement Theory	Survey-Based Analysis	Q&A sessions and live videos enhance brand perception and consumer engagement.	Singh & Banerjee (2023)
2	Social Media Engagement and Brand Loyalty	Consumer Involvement Theory	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	High consumer involvement in interactive content strengthens brand loyalty.	He et al. (2021)
3	Influencer-Led Engagement and Purchase Intent	Consumer Involvement Theory	Experimental Study	Interactive influencer content increases consumer purchase intent and brand trust.	Kujur & Singh (2020)
4	Live-Streaming and Consumer Interaction	Consumer Involvement Theory	Mixed-Methods Approach	Live-streaming enhances consumer-brand relationships and engagement levels.	Hamzah & Johari (2023)
5	Consumer Participation and Brand Attitudes	Consumer Involvement Theory	Case Study Analysis	Active consumer participation in brand-owned social media improves brand perception.	Cai et al. (2021)

Synthesis of Studies on Consumer Involvement Theory in Influencer Marketing

According to Consumer Involvement Theory interactive content formats like Q&A sessions along with live videos play a vital role in boosting brand perception together with consumer engagement. Research demonstrates that interactive content which involves consumers deeply builds stronger brand loyalty which underscores the effectiveness of marketing strategies focused on audience engagement (He et al., 2021). Research indicates that consumer purchase intent and brand trust rise through interactive influencer content which leads consumers to engage more with brands focusing on interactive experiences (Kujur & Singh, 2020). Live-streaming improves consumer-brand relationships because it shows how real-time engagement can influence consumer behaviour patterns (Hamzah & Johari, 2023). Active involvement by consumers on brand social media sites boosts brand image which underscores the value of consumer-focused engagement methods (Cai et al., 2021). Influencer marketing's Consumer Involvement Theory demonstrates that interactive content drives brand perception and purchase behaviour while establishing consumer trust which creates a need for engagement-focused digital marketing strategies.

Brand Equity Model – *Influencer endorsements enhance brand equity through perceived authenticity.* (Jha & Shaw, 2024)

Table 12 - Conceptual and Empirical Studies on Brand Equity Model in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
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1	Influencer Endorsements and Brand Equity	Brand Equity Model	Survey-Based Analysis	Influencer endorsements enhance brand equity through perceived authenticity.	Jha & Shaw (2024)
2	Social Media Influencers and Brand Perception	Consumer Engagement Model	Qualitative Review	Authentic influencers improve brand perception and consumer trust.	Kumari et al. (2024)
3	Influencer Marketing and Consumer Loyalty	Brand Equity Model	Experimental Study	Strong influencer-brand relationships increase consumer loyalty and brand equity.	Bilal et al. (2021)
4	Impact of Influencer Authenticity on Brand Trust	Trust & Brand Equity Framework	Mixed-Methods Approach	Perceived authenticity strengthens brand credibility and consumer engagement.	Kumar et al. (2023)
5	Influencer Marketing Strategies and Brand Value	Brand Equity Model	Case Study Analysis	Effective influencer marketing strategies enhance brand value and consumer retention.	Mehta & Chandra (2022)

Synthesis of Studies on Brand Equity Model in Influencer Marketing

The Brand Equity Model demonstrates that influencer endorsements boost brand equity by creating perceived authenticity which influences consumer trust as well as engagement and loyalty towards brands. According to research by Kumari et al. (2024), authentic influencers enhance brand perception which increases consumer trust and engagement with the endorsed brands. Research findings demonstrate that strong connections between influencers and brands boost consumer loyalty and emphasize the role of influencer credibility in developing brand equity (Bilal et al., 2021). Brand credibility receives reinforcement through perceived authenticity which illustrates the effectiveness of trust-building techniques within influencer marketing according to Kumar et al. (2023). Research indicates that well-executed influencer marketing practices raise brand value which helps brands maintain their consumer base and achieve lasting customer engagement (Mehta & Chandra, 2022). The Brand Equity Model in influencer marketing highlights how authentic partnerships and trust build the foundation for consumer behaviour and brand achievement.

B. Consumer Decision-Making and Purchase Intent

- **Theory of Planned Behaviour** – *Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control shape purchase decisions.* (Kulkarni, 2023)

Table 13 - Empirical Studies on Theory of Planned Behaviour in Consumer Decision-Making

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Attitudes, Subjective Norms, and Purchase Decisions	Theory of Planned Behaviour	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control shape consumer purchase decisions.	Kulkarni (2023)
2	Consumer Purchase Intention in Online and Offline Markets	Theory of Planned Behaviour	Systematic Literature Review	Perceived behavioural control has the strongest influence on purchasing decisions.	Kurniawati et al. (2023)
3	Traditional Culture and Consumer Purchase Behaviour	Theory of Planned Behaviour	Survey-Based Analysis	Cultural identity and emotional value mediate purchase intention.	Zong et al. (2023)
4	Social Influence and Purchase Decisions	Theory of Planned Behaviour	Mixed-Methods Approach	Social norms significantly impact consumer purchase behaviour in digital markets.	Rozenkowska (2023)
5	Consumer Decision-Making in E-Commerce	Theory of Planned Behaviour	Experimental Study	Online shopping behaviour is strongly influenced by perceived behavioural control and subjective norms.	Liu et al. (2023)

Synthesis of Studies on Theory of Planned Behaviour in Consumer Decision-Making

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) demonstrates how consumer buying choices are affected by attitudes alongside subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. The research shows that perceived behavioural control stands as the most powerful factor in consumer buying patterns while underlining the critical role of customer self-confidence in executing transactions (Kurniawati et al., 2023). According to empirical studies cultural identity coupled with emotional value acts as a mediator between purchase intention and traditional cultural symbols which influence consumer behaviour (Zong et al., 2023). Social norms play a crucial role in shaping consumer purchase behaviour within digital markets which highlights the significance of peer

influence during online shopping activities (Rozenkowska, 2023). Research indicates that consumer engagement in e-commerce grows when their perceived ability to use digital platforms combines with subjective social norms influencing shopping behaviour (Liu et al., 2023). The Theory of Planned Behaviour emphasizes psychological and social elements as key drivers in consumer purchasing patterns by making attitudes, norms, and perceived control fundamental to understanding how consumers make choices.

- **Attribution Theory** – *Clear sponsorship disclosure improves consumer trust, while hidden sponsorships reduce credibility.* (Jha & Shaw, 2024)

Table 14 -Empirical Studies on Attribution Theory in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Sponsorship Disclosure and Consumer Trust	Attribution Theory	Survey-Based Analysis	Clear sponsorship disclosure improves consumer trust, while hidden sponsorships reduce credibility.	Jha & Shaw (2024)
2	Effects of Sponsorship Disclosure on Consumer Perception	Attribution Theory	Systematic Literature Review	Transparent sponsorship disclosure enhances brand credibility and consumer trust.	Jhawar et al. (2024)
3	Influencer Marketing and Consumer Skepticism	Attribution Theory	Experimental Study	Lack of sponsorship disclosure increases consumer skepticism and reduces engagement.	Boerman et al. (2021)
4	Psychological Contract Violation in Sponsored Content	Expectancy Violations Theory	Mixed-Methods Approach	Hidden sponsorships lead to psychological contract violations, reducing consumer trust.	Jhawar et al. (2025)
5	Attribution Theory and Brand Trust in Influencer Marketing	Attribution Theory	Case Study Analysis	Consumers attribute credibility to influencers based on sponsorship transparency.	Rifon et al. (2022)

Synthesis of Studies on Attribution Theory in Influencer Marketing

The principles of Attribution Theory state that open sponsorship disclosure fosters consumer trust but concealed sponsorships lead to reduced engagement and credibility. Research shows that visible sponsorship disclosure increases brand credibility and encourages consumer trust towards brands promoted by influencers according to Jhawar et al. (2024). Recent empirical research demonstrates that undisclosed sponsorships lead to greater consumer skepticism which highlights why transparency remains vital in influencer marketing (Boerman et al., 2021). Undisclosed sponsorships result in breaches of psychological contracts which show how deceptive influencer marketing practices destroy consumer trust (Jhawar et al., 2025). Research indicates that consumers judge influencer credibility through their transparency about sponsorships which establishes clear disclosure as essential for building brand trust and consumer relationships (Rifon et al., 2022). Attribution Theory within influencer marketing highlights how essential transparency and ethical sponsorship practices are along with consumer trust-building strategies for achieving success in digital marketing.

C. Influencer Persuasion Techniques and Consumer Response

- **Persuasion Knowledge Model** – *Consumers become skeptical of overly promotional influencer content, reducing engagement.* (Klisarova-Belcheva et al., 2024)

Table 15 - Empirical Studies on Persuasion Knowledge Model in Influencer Marketing

Sl. No.	Conceptual Focus	Conceptual Framework	Methodology	Key Findings	Author(s)
1	Consumer Skepticism Toward Promotional Content	Persuasion Knowledge Model	Survey-Based Analysis	Overly promotional influencer content triggers consumer skepticism, reducing engagement.	Rahmani (2023)
2	Persuasion Knowledge and Advertising Skepticism	Persuasion Knowledge Model	Experimental Study	Consumers with high persuasion knowledge are more resistant to influencer marketing tactics.	Friestad & Wright (1994)
3	Credibility and Selling Intent in Advertorials	Persuasion Knowledge Model	Mixed-Methods Approach	Advertorials reduce perceived credibility and increase consumer skepticism.	Attaran et al. (2015)

4	Consumer Coping Mechanisms Against Persuasion Attempts	Persuasion Knowledge Model	Case Study Analysis	Consumers develop persuasion knowledge over time, refining their responses to marketing tactics.	Friestad & Wright (1994)
5	Influencer Marketing and Consumer Trust	Persuasion Knowledge Model	Content Analysis	Transparent influencer marketing improves consumer trust, while deceptive practices erode credibility.	Rahmani (2023)

Synthesis of Studies on Persuasion Knowledge Model in Influencer Marketing

The Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) identifies the ways consumers become aware of marketing tactics which then affects their skepticism towards these tactics and their levels of engagement. Research shows that consumers become skeptical when they encounter influencer content that feels too promotional which leads to reduced trust and interaction levels (Rahmani, 2023). Studies demonstrate that consumers who possess advanced understanding of persuasion techniques show greater resilience against influencer marketing practices which emphasizes the crucial role of transparency in digital ads (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Attaran et al. (2015) found that advertorials lower perceived credibility because hidden promotional content creates negative effects on consumer trust. Research demonstrates that as consumers gain experience they become more adept at responding to marketing strategies which results in persuasion knowledge developing into a dynamic ability that grows through experience (Friestad & Wright, 1994). When influencer marketing practices maintain transparency they build consumer trust and highlight the necessity of ethical advertising methods (Rahmani, 2023). PKM in influencer marketing highlights transparency and ethical sponsorship practices as essential components for building consumer trust which creates honest influencer-brand relationships that drive digital marketing success.

4. Research Gaps in Influencer Marketing Studies

Despite extensive research on influencer marketing, several gaps remain, particularly in conceptual models, empirical comparisons, and theoretical integration:

1. Conceptual Gap: Limited Theories on Short-Form Video Influencer Dynamics

The digital content market now prominently features short-form videos from platforms like Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and TikTok. Theoretical frameworks analyzing influencer impact on engagement and trust within short-form video formats still need further development. Short-form videos function through quick emotional connections and algorithmic exposure while telling stories in compact formats which demand novel frameworks that go beyond classic influencer marketing models such as Trust Transfer Theory and Source Credibility Theory. Research must explore the psychological effects of short-form influencer content on brand retention and impulsive buying while examining narrative transportation during brief engagement periods.

2. Empirical Gap: Few Studies Comparing Platform-Specific Influencer Impact

Influencer marketing research merges information from various social media platforms but shows unique engagement behaviours for Instagram Reels versus YouTube Shorts and TikTok. TikTok's algorithm focuses on viral discovery whereas Instagram Reels targets engagement with established creators and YouTube Shorts uses existing subscriber relationships. A limited number of quantitative empirical studies analyze platform-specific content strategies and their impact on influencer trust-building and audience interaction patterns. Upcoming studies need to utilize comparative experimental methods to investigate how user engagement, purchase intent, and brand recall differ across platforms.

3. Integration Gap: Need for Blended Theories in Influencer Marketing

While current influencer marketing models use single-theory applications digital interactions exhibit complex psychological effects. Parasocial Interaction Theory describes how consumers develop emotional bonds with influencers while Social Identity Theory shows why consumers choose brands endorsed by influencers based on shared identity markers. The existing research does not adequately combine these theoretical perspectives to examine the formation of social identity through parasocial connections in digital brand relationships. Research moving forward needs to combine theoretical frameworks to examine the interactions between influencer trust-building strategies and digital audience segmentation which will provide a comprehensive understanding of current digital persuasion methods.

5. Limitations

1. The majority of research focuses on immediate consumer responses with minimal investigation into the development of sustained brand loyalty and relationship dynamics.
2. Studies that compare influencer engagement across various social media platforms are sparse, which limits our understanding of how algorithms affect content visibility and consumer trust on each platform.

Conclusion

Research shows that influencer marketing now serves as a vital force behind consumer trust development, engagement levels and purchasing actions through multiple theoretical and empirical studies. The established models of influencer persuasion like Trust Transfer Theory and Narrative Transportation Theory need to be expanded to fill research gaps in short-form video dynamics and platform-specific differences including multi-theoretical approaches. Research in influencer marketing has made considerable progress yet continues to emphasize immediate outcomes while neglecting sustained consumer connections. The field lacks sufficient comparative platform research which necessitates exploration of algorithmic and strategic content variations among social media platforms. Future research needs to develop new methods for studying influencer techniques and digital trust systems while integrating theoretical models to achieve a full grasp of how influencer marketing affects contemporary consumer actions.

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