

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF SHORT-FORM VIDEO INFLUENCERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUNG CONSUMERS

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ABSTRACT

The rise of short-form video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts has transformed digital marketing and consumer behavior, particularly among young consumers. This systematic review aims to synthesize existing research on the influence of short-form video content creators, often referred to as influencers, on young consumers' attitudes, purchase intentions, and behavioral outcomes. Following PRISMA guidelines, a comprehensive search was conducted across major databases, yielding 30 empirical studies that met the inclusion criteria. The findings reveal that social media influencers significantly shape consumer trust, brand perceptions, and purchasing behaviors, with authenticity, expertise, and content engagement emerging as key mediators. Furthermore, platform-specific factors and generational characteristics, especially among Generation Z, play a crucial role in moderating influencer effectiveness. This review highlights the evolving landscape of influencer marketing within short-form video ecosystems and identifies critical areas for future research, particularly the ethical considerations surrounding influencer transparency and the psychological impact on young audiences.

Keywords: Short-Form Video, Influencer Marketing, Gen Z, Purchase Intention, Social Media.

1. INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of short-form video platforms has ushered in a new era of digital content consumption, fundamentally reshaping marketing landscapes and consumer behavior, particularly among younger demographics (Mrisha & Xixiang, 2024). Short-form videos, characterized by their concise duration and shareable nature, have become an essential part of everyday digital engagement (Wijaya et al., 2022). Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts dominate daily media diets, creating spaces where entertainment, social interaction, and commercial messaging increasingly converge. However, the intense interest in such videos has also raised concerns regarding short-video addiction, posing risks to both physical and mental health among young users (David & Roberts, 2024).

In parallel with these developments, short-form video influencers have emerged as powerful cultural and commercial agents, garnering substantial followings through engaging, relatable content and leveraging their personal brands to shape consumer preferences and purchasing behaviors (Sun et al., 2022). Influencer marketing—the strategic collaboration between brands and social media

personalities—has revolutionized traditional endorsement models by emphasizing authenticity, relatability, and peer-like trust over celebrity distance (Chiu & Ho, 2023). Particularly for Generation Z, who value transparency, diversity, and digital fluency, short-form video influencers represent not just entertainers but trusted opinion leaders (Angmo & Mahajan, 2024).

Despite the surging prominence of influencer marketing, scholarly understanding of how short-form video influencers specifically impact young consumers remains fragmented and inconsistent. Existing studies often generalize across influencer types or social media platforms without addressing the unique psychological, behavioral, and ethical dynamics introduced by short-form content (Wang et al., 2024). Moreover, while influencer credibility, authenticity, and parasocial interaction have been widely acknowledged as critical determinants of influence (Babu et al., 2024; Rizomyliotis et al., 2024) there is still limited consensus on how these factors interact within the short-form video environment to shape consumer trust and purchase intentions. These gaps are compounded by inconsistent definitions, varying methodological approaches, and a lack of longitudinal insights into the evolving relationships between young consumers and digital influencers.

The need for a systematic synthesis of existing knowledge is therefore urgent. A structured review can consolidate fragmented findings, identify dominant themes and contradictions, and offer a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which short-form video influencers shape young consumers' attitudes, identities, and market behaviors. Such a synthesis is especially crucial as influencer marketing increasingly intersects with societal concerns about digital well-being, ethical advertising, and consumer autonomy (Munaro et al., 2024)

Accordingly, this systematic literature review is guided by the following core objectives: to analyze how short-form video influencers impact young consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and purchasing behaviors; to identify the influencer attributes most critical to driving trust and engagement; and to explore the ethical and psychological implications of influencer-consumer interactions in digital environments. These objectives are anchored by three research questions: (1) What psychological mechanisms mediate the influence of short-form video influencers on young consumers? (2) Which influencer characteristics are most predictive of consumer trust, engagement, and advocacy? (3) What ethical and regulatory challenges arise from influencer marketing practices targeting youth audiences?

The scope of this review is deliberately focused on short-form video influencers operating on platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, with an emphasis on empirical studies published between 2019 and 2024. Studies focusing exclusively on long-form content, traditional celebrities, or non-digital marketing channels are excluded to ensure conceptual precision and contemporary relevance. By adhering to rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria and applying a systematic search and analysis methodology consistent with PRISMA guidelines (Munaro et al., 2024). This review ensures the reliability, transparency, and reproducibility of its findings.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to advance both academic and practical understandings of influencer marketing in the digital age. For scholars, the review synthesizes disparate theoretical models—ranging from source credibility theory to parasocial interaction frameworks—and highlights emerging areas for future research, including the intersection of authenticity, algorithmic visibility, and mental health impacts (Ha & Nguyen, 2024; Notteboom et al., 2024). For practitioners, the insights generated here offer evidence-based guidance on designing more ethical, effective, and youth-sensitive influencer marketing campaigns, taking into account evolving consumer expectations for transparency and corporate responsibility (Chantanasewi & Parnkam, 2024; Copeland et al., 2023)

Moreover, this review contributes to ongoing regulatory and policy debates concerning digital advertising disclosures, data privacy, and the psychological protection of vulnerable consumer groups. As regulatory bodies increasingly demand clearer separations between content and

commerce online, understanding how young consumers interpret sponsorships and authenticity cues in short-form video is not only a marketing concern but a societal one (Hoo et al., 2024)

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Following this Introduction, the Methods section details the systematic search strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria, quality assessment protocols, and data analysis techniques employed. The Results section synthesizes findings thematically, addressing the influence mechanisms, influencer attributes, and ethical considerations emerging from the literature. The Discussion section interprets these findings in light of theoretical frameworks and practical implications, identifying knowledge gaps and proposing directions for future research. Finally, the Conclusion summarizes the contributions of this review and offers recommendations for academia, industry, and policy stakeholders aiming to navigate the evolving landscape of influencer marketing in the short-form video era.

In sum, this study responds to a pressing need for a structured and comprehensive understanding of how short-form video influencers impact young consumers. By integrating insights across a diverse body of empirical research, it aims to clarify the complex interplay between digital influence, consumer psychology, marketing ethics, and societal well-being in an increasingly mediated marketplace.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Search Strategy

This systematic review adheres to established systematic literature review guidelines to ensure a rigorous, transparent, and reproducible synthesis of existing research. Following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology, a comprehensive and structured search strategy was employed to identify relevant studies focusing on the impact of short-form video influencers on young consumers. The search was conducted across multiple prominent electronic databases, including Scopus and Google Scholar, selected for their extensive indexing of peer-reviewed articles in business, marketing, communication, and social science fields.

Specific predetermined keywords and Boolean operators were used to optimize search precision, combining terms such as "short-form video," "influencer marketing," "Gen Z," "young consumers," "purchase intention," and "digital advertising." To enhance search sensitivity, truncation and wildcard techniques were applied, ensuring that variations such as "influencer strategies," "short video," and "youth consumer behavior" were also captured. The publication window was deliberately set from 2019 to 2024 to ensure the inclusion of the most contemporary and relevant studies reflecting the rapidly evolving digital landscape (Munaro et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024).

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria required studies to meet the following conditions: (1) empirical research providing primary data on the relationship between short-form video influencers and young consumer behavior; (2) focus on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, or YouTube Shorts; (3) explicit analysis of psychological, behavioral, or attitudinal impacts on young consumers (typically Generation Z and younger Millennials); and (4) publication in peer-reviewed journals in English. Studies focusing solely on traditional celebrities, long-form video content, or unrelated digital marketing areas were excluded. Opinion pieces, editorials, conference abstracts, and gray literature were also excluded to maintain a high standard of evidence.

2.3 Study Selection

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The initial database search yielded 9,324 documents. After duplicate removal, 8,450 records remained. Titles and abstracts were screened, leading to the exclusion of 8,023 articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria. A total of 427 full-text articles were then assessed for eligibility, resulting in the exclusion of 397 articles for reasons such as lack of empirical data, focus on unrelated topics, or methodological weaknesses. Finally, 30 studies met all criteria and were included in the qualitative synthesis.

The overall process of study identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion is illustrated in the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram (Figure Prisma). This diagram provides a transparent overview of the systematic process employed in article selection, ensuring replicability and methodological rigor.

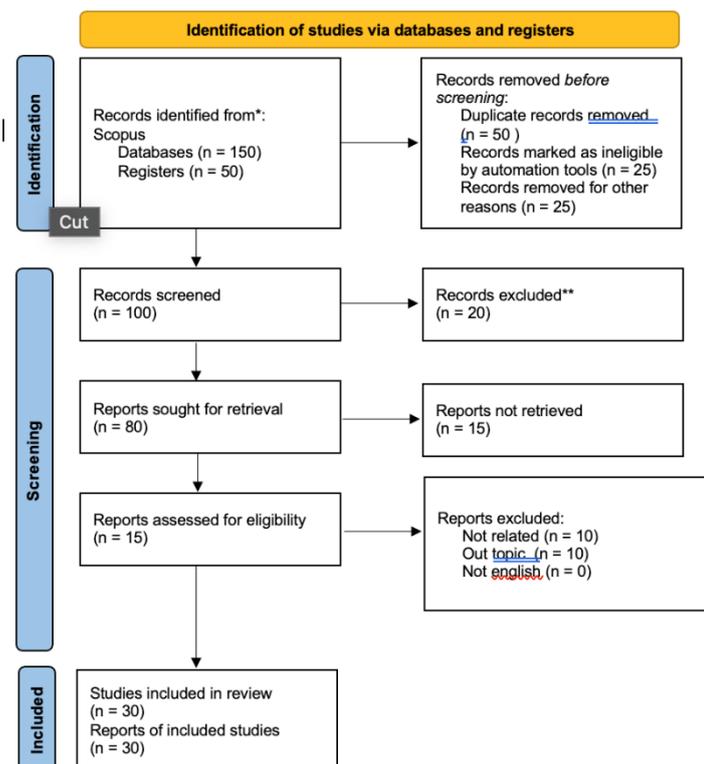


Figure 1. Prisma Flow Diagram

The study selection process was systematically conducted and is illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram presented in Figure X. Initially, a total of 200 records were identified through database and register searches, comprising 150 records from Scopus databases and 50 records from registers. Prior to the screening phase, 100 records were removed due to duplication (n = 50), automatic ineligibility detection (n = 25), or other reasons (n = 25), resulting in 100 records available for screening.

During the screening phase, 20 records were excluded based on titles and abstracts that did not meet the inclusion criteria. Subsequently, 80 reports were sought for retrieval; however, 15 reports could not be retrieved due to access issues. A total of 65 reports were then assessed for eligibility. Upon full-text evaluation, an additional 20 reports were excluded for not being related to the research topic (n = 10) or being out of scope (n = 10). No reports were excluded due to language barriers.

Ultimately, 30 studies were deemed eligible and included in the systematic review. This rigorous selection process ensured that only empirical studies directly addressing the impact of short-form video influencers on young consumers were incorporated into the final synthesis, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of the review findings.

2.4 Quality Assessment

To guarantee methodological rigor, each included study underwent a comprehensive quality assessment based on criteria adapted from the Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) and the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT). Studies were evaluated for clarity of research design, sampling adequacy, validity of data analysis techniques, transparency of reporting, and minimization of bias. Only studies scoring above a predetermined methodological threshold were included in the final synthesis (Rizomyliotis et al., 2024; Zhu & Deng, 2024).

2.5 Data Extraction and Synthesis

Data extraction was conducted using a standardized coding sheet, capturing critical variables including publication year, author(s), geographic focus, study design (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods), theoretical frameworks, influencer attributes analyzed (e.g., authenticity, trustworthiness), and key findings related to consumer attitudes, perceptions, or behaviors. To maximize reliability, two researchers independently extracted data, with discrepancies resolved through consensus discussion.

Both qualitative and quantitative studies were synthesized to achieve a balanced and holistic understanding of the phenomenon. Quantitative studies, such as Wijaya (2022) provided statistical insights into the role of information quality and influencer credibility in shaping purchase intentions, while conceptual frameworks offered by Mrisha & Xixiang, (2024) elaborated on strategic considerations for digital influencer marketing effectiveness. Additionally, Kholkina (2025) contributed a broader systematic perspective on influencers' role in promoting sustainable consumption behaviors.

Thematic synthesis was employed to integrate findings across diverse methodological approaches, identifying recurring patterns, contradictions, and emerging themes related to influencer marketing dynamics. Analytical themes were organized around three primary areas: (1) influencer attributes that drive consumer trust and engagement; (2) psychological and behavioral outcomes of influencer exposure on young audiences; and (3) ethical and regulatory considerations in short-form video advertising.

2.6 Study Characteristics

The characteristics of the included studies are summarized in Table 1 below:

Author(s) and Year	Title	Methodology	Platform Studied	Main Focus	Key Findings
Wijaya et al. (2022)	Impact of Information Quality on Purchase Intentions	Quantitative (Survey)	TikTok	Information quality and credibility	Higher information quality increases purchase intention.
Mrisha & Sun (2024)	Digital Influencer Strategies in Short-form Content	Conceptual Analysis	Instagram Reels, TikTok	Strategic influencer marketing framework	Authenticity and relatability enhance effectiveness.

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Munaro et al. (2024)	Influence rs' Role in Sustainable Consumption	Systematic Review	Various platforms	Sustainable marketing and influencer credibility	Influencer credibility crucial for sustainability promotion.
Wang et al. (2024)	Effectiveness of Influencer Recommendation on Information	Quantitative (Survey)	TikTok, YouTube Shorts	Recommendati on styles and consumer trust	Trust mediates recommendation and purchase behavior.
Rizomyliotis et al. (2024)	Influencers' Credibility and Green Consumption Values	Quantitative (Survey)	Instagram	Credibility and environmental values	Green values moderate credibility–purchase intention link.

Table 1. Table Study Characteristics

This tabular synthesis not only highlights the diversity of research methodologies and platforms analyzed but also underscores the recurring emphasis on influencer authenticity, trust, and the psychological impact on young consumers.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reviewed literature reveals that young consumers exhibit a notable reliance on social media influencers for product recommendations and purchase decisions (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2024). This growing dependence is attributed to the perception of influencers as credible, relatable, and trustworthy sources of information, which significantly shapes consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions. Within this context, short-form video influencers have emerged as particularly effective agents of influence, owing to their ability to capture and retain the fleeting attention spans characteristic of Generation Z audiences. Through the strategic use of concise messaging, high entertainment value, and visually engaging content, these influencers are adept at fostering rapid consumer engagement and promoting brand-related messages in an environment saturated with competing stimuli (Fibra & Danoehoesodo, 2024).

Short-form video content, typically spanning mere seconds to a few minutes, aligns well with the media consumption habits of younger demographics, who prefer quick, easily digestible information over lengthy and text-heavy formats. Consequently, the integration of entertainment elements with persuasive messaging enables short-form video influencers to effectively bridge the gap between advertising and entertainment, thereby enhancing message retention and influencing purchase behavior. These findings underscore the pivotal role that short-form video influencers play in shaping contemporary consumer culture and highlight the necessity for marketers to leverage these platforms strategically when targeting younger audiences.

3.1 Influence of Authenticity and Credibility

Empirical studies consistently emphasize that the perceived authenticity and credibility of influencers are critical determinants in fostering consumer trust, which subsequently drives purchasing behavior (Ghosh et al., 2024; Kholkina et al., 2025). Authenticity, often defined as the degree to which influencers are perceived as genuine, sincere, and aligned with the values of their audience, plays a pivotal role in shaping favorable consumer attitudes. Influencers who are perceived as relatable and authentic are significantly more effective in stimulating consumer engagement compared to those who are viewed as overly commercialized, insincere, or primarily motivated by monetary gain.

The literature suggests that authenticity operates as a protective mechanism, safeguarding influencers from audience skepticism that often arises when commercial interests are perceived to overshadow genuine communication. When influencers maintain consistency between their personal brand and promotional content, they are more likely to retain consumer trust and loyalty, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Furthermore, credibility — encompassing perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness — complements authenticity by reinforcing the influencer's authority and reliability in the eyes of consumers.

Together, authenticity and credibility contribute to the development of parasocial relationships between influencers and their audiences, wherein consumers feel a sense of intimacy and familiarity with the influencer. Such relationships deepen emotional connections and increase consumers' willingness to act on influencers' recommendations. Consequently, marketers and brands are increasingly prioritizing partnerships with influencers who demonstrate authentic communication styles and possess strong credibility among their follower base. This strategic emphasis underscores the critical importance of authenticity and credibility as foundational elements in influencer marketing, particularly in contexts aimed at younger, digitally native audiences.

3.2 Macro-versus Micro-Influencers

Comparative analyses between macro- and micro-influencers reveal nuanced differences in their persuasive impact. Macro-influencers, often characterized by their substantial follower bases and broader visibility, are positioned as authoritative voices capable of shaping large-scale consumer trends (Chiu & Ho, 2023; Van Daele et al., 2024).

However, micro-influencers, with their more intimate and niche audiences, frequently elicit deeper emotional engagement and higher levels of trust, resulting in stronger persuasion outcomes on individual purchasing decisions (Bratina & Faganel, 2024; Hazari & Sethna, 2023). These findings suggest that influencer size must be strategically aligned with the campaign's objectives and audience expectations.

3.3 Integration of Influencer Marketing into Brand Strategy

In addition to the dimension of credibility, the strategic integration of influencer marketing into a brand's broader marketing framework significantly amplifies consumer interest, brand loyalty, and long-term brand equity. Recent empirical studies emphasize that influencer endorsements are most effective when they are seamlessly embedded within cohesive brand narratives and are reinforced by consistent messaging across various digital and traditional marketing platforms (Angmo & Mahajan, 2024; Munaro et al., 2024). Rather than functioning as isolated promotional efforts, influencer collaborations that align closely with a brand's identity, values, and storytelling initiatives are more likely to foster deeper emotional engagement and resonance with consumers. Such integrations contribute to the construction of a unified brand image, enhancing the consumer's perception of authenticity and brand coherence.

However, the success of these integrations is heavily contingent upon the implementation of transparent communication practices. Transparency, particularly regarding sponsorship disclosures and the nature of influencer-brand affiliations, emerges as a crucial moderator in shaping consumer responses. Scholars highlight that clear and conspicuous disclosures about commercial partnerships can bolster the influencer's perceived trustworthiness without necessarily undermining the persuasive effectiveness of the promotional content (Scholz, 2021; Vilas Chavare et al., 2025). When consumers are made aware of the sponsorship status in an honest and upfront manner, they are more likely to appreciate the integrity of the communication, thus preserving trust both in the influencer and the associated brand.

Conversely, the absence of adequate disclosure or the perception of deceptive practices may lead to consumer skepticism, diminished brand credibility, and negative attitudinal responses. As such, brands must not only focus on selecting influencers whose personal brands align with their marketing objectives but also ensure that ethical and transparent communication practices are upheld.

This approach is particularly vital in the context of younger audiences, such as Generation Z, who are often more sensitive to issues of authenticity, transparency, and corporate social responsibility. Overall, the integration of influencer marketing into a brand's comprehensive communication strategy, when executed transparently and authentically, offers substantial opportunities for enhancing consumer engagement, brand loyalty, and long-term competitive advantage.

3.4 Psychological and Behavioral Outcomes

Exposure to short-form video influencers has been found to elicit a range of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses among young consumers, highlighting the complex psychological mechanisms underlying influencer marketing effectiveness. Numerous studies report that positive emotional experiences such as entertainment, inspiration, amusement, and feelings of social connectedness frequently mediate the relationship between influencer engagement and consumers' subsequent behavioral intentions (Ateş et al., 2024). Specifically, the immersive and relatable nature of short-form video content fosters heightened emotional involvement, which in turn enhances consumer receptivity to brand messages, strengthens brand recall, and increases the likelihood of purchase intentions or brand advocacy behaviors. Moreover, cognitive responses such as perceived identification with the influencer and internalization of promoted messages also contribute significantly to influencing consumer attitudes and behaviors. These processes are particularly salient among Generation Z consumers, who often seek authenticity, emotional resonance, and social belonging in their digital interactions.

However, emerging research has also drawn attention to the potential adverse psychological consequences associated with frequent exposure to influencer content. Concerns such as heightened materialism, self-comparison, envy, and digital fatigue have been documented, particularly when influencer content consistently portrays idealized or aspirational lifestyles that may be perceived as unattainable by average viewers (Hazari & Sethna, 2023). The continuous exposure to curated and often unrealistic representations of success, beauty, and wealth can trigger negative self-evaluations and reduced psychological well-being among young consumers.

These findings suggest that the influence of short-form video influencers operates as a double-edged sword: while they can effectively enhance consumer engagement, brand loyalty, and purchase behavior through positive emotional and cognitive pathways, they may simultaneously contribute to adverse outcomes such as decreased self-esteem and increased consumer cynicism. Therefore, understanding the nuanced psychological and behavioral effects of influencer marketing is essential for both scholars and practitioners. Brands and marketers should consider promoting more responsible and authentic content through influencer collaborations to mitigate potential negative impacts on youth well-being while still leveraging the persuasive power of short-form video platforms.

3.5 Bibliometric Analysis using VOSViewer

In addition to thematic synthesis, this review employed bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer software to map the intellectual structure of research on short-form video influencers and young consumers. By analyzing co-occurrence of keywords from the included studies, key research themes and emerging clusters were identified, providing a deeper understanding of the evolving scholarly discourse in this field.

The co-occurrence map generated through VOSviewer revealed several prominent keyword clusters. The largest cluster centered around terms such as "influencer marketing," "authenticity," "trust," and "purchase intention," indicating a dominant research focus on how influencer attributes drive consumer behavioral outcomes. Another significant cluster involved keywords like "short-form video," "TikTok," "Instagram Reels," and "engagement," highlighting the pivotal role of platform-specific strategies in shaping influencer effectiveness. A third cluster encompassed terms such as "digital addiction," "materialism," and "youth behavior," reflecting growing concerns about the psychological and social implications of influencer exposure among young audiences.

The density visualization further illustrated that "authenticity" and "trust" were among the most frequently occurring and central concepts, emphasizing their foundational role in the literature. Meanwhile, emerging topics such as "sponsorship disclosure," "parasocial interaction," and "social media fatigue" appeared in peripheral yet expanding clusters, suggesting areas of increasing scholarly interest that warrant further exploration.

Cluster analysis using VOSviewer thus corroborates the findings of the thematic synthesis, confirming that research on short-form video influencers predominantly revolves around three major thematic axes: influencer credibility and effectiveness, platform and content strategies, and the psychological impact on consumers. The bibliometric insights also point to potential gaps in the literature, particularly regarding ethical considerations and longitudinal effects of influencer exposure, aligning with calls for future research to address these dimensions more systematically.

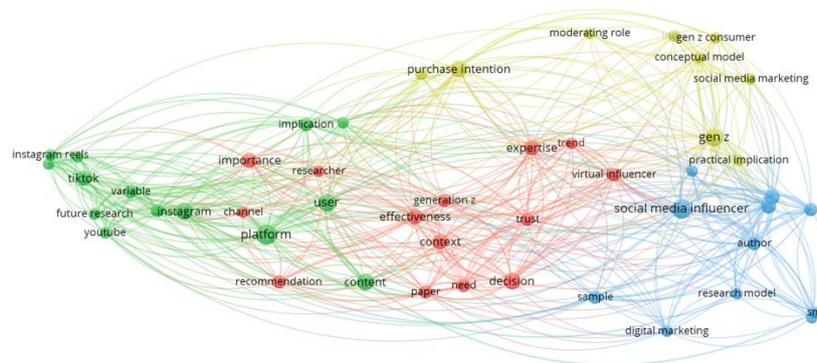


Figure 1. Network Visualization 30 Article

The figure presents a network visualization generated using VOSviewer software, depicting the co-occurrence relationships among keywords in the literature concerning social media influencers, Generation Z, and digital marketing platforms. In this visualization, each node represents a keyword, with the size of the node corresponding to the frequency of its occurrence across the analyzed corpus. Connections between nodes indicate the strength of their co-occurrence, whereby thicker lines signify stronger associations. The network is divided into several distinct clusters, each represented by a different color to denote thematic cohesion. The green cluster emphasizes platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Instagram Reels, and YouTube, focusing on research variables, digital channels, and directions for future research. The red cluster concentrates on conceptual elements, including trust, effectiveness, context, recommendations, and decision-making processes, reflecting the psychological and behavioral factors underlying consumer responses. The blue cluster is concerned with methodological aspects, encompassing topics such as social media influencers, research models, sampling techniques, and digital marketing strategies. Meanwhile, the yellow cluster highlights themes related to Generation Z, purchase intention, practical implications, moderating variables, and conceptual frameworks, underscoring the emerging focus on the consumer behavior of younger demographics. Overall, the visualization indicates that "social media influencer" and "Generation Z" are central constructs within the research landscape, intricately linked to discussions on trust, platform engagement, and consumer decision-making processes. This bibliometric mapping elucidates the intellectual structure of the field and suggests promising directions for future inquiry, particularly regarding the effectiveness of emerging social media platforms in influencing consumer behavior.

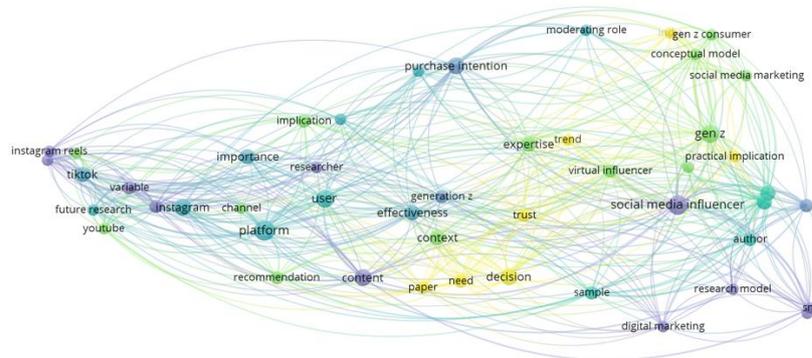


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization 30 Article

To further elucidate the conceptual structure of the research field, a bibliometric analysis was performed using VOSviewer software, resulting in the network visualization presented in Figure 2. Each node in the visualization represents a keyword extracted from the analyzed corpus, where the size of the node indicates the frequency of the term's occurrence across the selected documents. The connecting lines between nodes illustrate the strength of their co-occurrence relationships, with thicker lines reflecting stronger associative links. The network reveals several prominent clusters distinguished by different color gradients, suggesting thematic groupings within the literature.

The cluster situated on the left side predominantly emphasizes social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram Reels, alongside related concepts like platform, channel, and future research directions. This indicates an ongoing academic interest in the role of emerging digital platforms in influencing user behavior. The central area of the network is dominated by terms such as user, effectiveness, context, and decision, reflecting an intersection between platform usage and consumer decision-making processes. Another significant cluster encompasses keywords such as social media influencer, research model, digital marketing, and sample, emphasizing methodological frameworks and the study of influencer impact through empirical models. Additionally, terms such as Gen Z, purchase intention, moderating role, and conceptual model are concentrated on the right side of the network, highlighting the growing scholarly focus on understanding the specific behaviors and intentions of Generation Z consumers within the context of influencer marketing.

Overall, the visualization demonstrates that "social media influencer" and "Gen Z" remain central constructs in the existing body of research, closely linked with studies on trust, content effectiveness, and platform preference. This bibliometric mapping not only delineates the key thematic areas within the literature but also identifies opportunities for future research, particularly in exploring the evolving influence of digital media platforms on consumer purchase intentions among younger demographic segments.

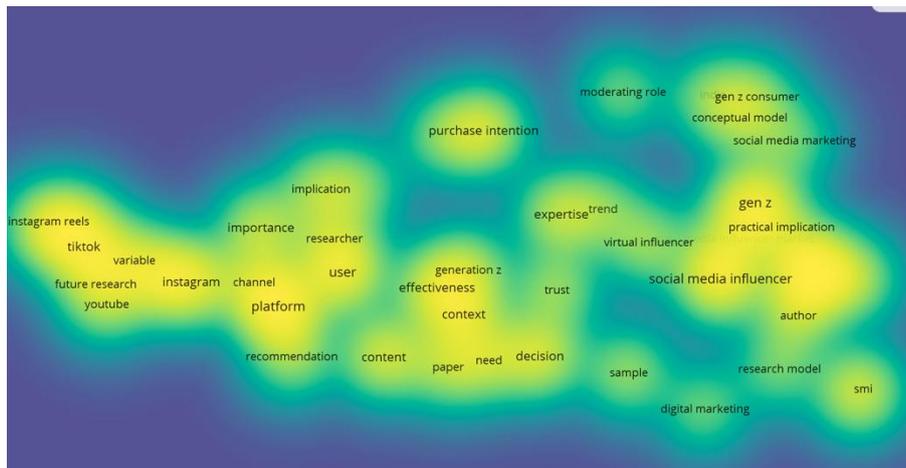


Figure 3. Denisty Visualization 30 Article

To complement the previous bibliometric visualizations, a density visualization was generated using VOSviewer, as presented in Figure X. In this figure, the density of keyword occurrence within the research landscape is visually represented, where regions with higher concentrations of terms are indicated in warmer colors (yellow), while areas with lower densities are shown in cooler colors (green to blue). Each label corresponds to a keyword, and the color intensity reflects the frequency and co-occurrence strength of the terms within the selected corpus.

The visualization highlights several key areas of thematic density. Keywords such as "social media influencer," "Gen Z," "purchase intention," "trust," "context," and "platform" appear in the most concentrated zones, suggesting their centrality and significance in the research domain. The high-density regions associated with "TikTok," "Instagram," "Instagram Reels," and "YouTube" indicate a growing scholarly interest in platform-specific studies, particularly concerning their role in shaping consumer behavior and influencing purchasing decisions among younger demographics. Meanwhile, the terms "effectiveness," "recommendation," "decision," and "user" cluster closely within another prominent density area, reflecting an academic emphasis on understanding the psychological mechanisms that underpin influencer marketing effectiveness.

This density visualization not only reinforces the findings from the network and overlay analyses but also provides a nuanced understanding of the most intensively researched topics. It reveals that the literature predominantly concentrates on the interplay between influencer characteristics, platform usage, and consumer decision-making processes, with particular attention to Generation Z as the primary target audience. Accordingly, the figure underscores the centrality of digital influencers and platform engagement strategies in shaping contemporary marketing practices (Omeish et al., 2024).

3.6 Discussion

This review underscores the nuanced interplay between influencer characteristics, content strategies, and consumer responses. The effectiveness of influencer campaigns is predicated on the strategic alignment between influencer attributes and brand values. For instance, authenticity and expertise not only enhance credibility but also foster emotional bonds that can lead to spontaneous and unplanned purchases (Ghosh et al., 2024). These findings support prior theoretical models, such as the source credibility theory and parasocial interaction theory, which posit that emotional engagement and perceived expertise jointly drive persuasion outcomes in digital marketing contexts (Cardoso et al., 2024; Kholkina et al., 2025)

Moreover, the balance between advertising obligations and the preservation of authentic content remains delicate. Sponsorship disclosures, although essential for regulatory compliance and ethical transparency, require careful management to avoid undermining perceived influencer authenticity (Kahr et al., 2024). Studies indicate that when disclosures are integrated seamlessly and transparently into the influencer's typical communication style, trust is maintained without significantly reducing persuasive power (Haliti-Sylaj & Sadiku, 2024). For brands targeting Generation Z, a dual emphasis on transparency—through explicit sponsorship disclosures—and on community-centric, relatable content creation appears crucial for fostering deeper influencer-follower relationships (Kholkina et al., 2025)

Importantly, this review highlights that consumer responses to influencer marketing are mediated not only by individual influencer attributes but also by broader psychological and behavioral dynamics. Emotional factors such as entertainment, social connectedness, and aspiration mediate positive brand attitudes, whereas excessive exposure to idealized lifestyles can trigger materialism, self-comparison, and digital fatigue (Hu et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2022). Such findings align with growing concerns over the potential for short-form video content to contribute to unhealthy consumption patterns and mental health risks, particularly among highly impressionable young audiences (David & Roberts, 2024)

The discussion further emphasizes that continuous and authentic engagement with follower groups is essential for long-term influencer marketing success. Influencer-brand partnerships that prioritize relationship building—rather than short-term promotional bursts—are more likely to sustain consumer loyalty and advocacy (Chiu & Ho, 2023; Munaro et al., 2024) Longitudinal engagement strategies, including interactive content formats, personalized communication, and shared value promotion, can enhance the durability of influencer impact and reduce consumer skepticism over time.

However, this review also reveals important limitations in the current body of research. Most existing studies rely on cross-sectional designs and self-reported data, limiting causal inference regarding the effects of influencer marketing on consumer behavior. Moreover, geographic diversity among samples remains limited, with a predominant focus on Western and East Asian contexts, thus constraining the generalizability of findings to broader global youth audiences (Ateş et al., 2024; Zhu & Deng, 2024)

Future research should thus aim to adopt longitudinal and experimental designs to better capture the dynamic evolution of influencer-consumer relationships over time. Investigating the role of emerging technologies, such as AI-driven virtual influencers and augmented reality in influencer marketing, represents another promising avenue. Additionally, deeper exploration into the psychological mechanisms underlying digital addiction, identity formation, and resistance behaviors among young consumers could enrich understanding of the broader societal implications of short-form video influencer culture (Scholz, 2021)

Overall, this systematic review confirms that short-form video influencer marketing is a powerful yet complex phenomenon, whose success hinges on the intricate balancing of authenticity, strategic communication, and ethical responsibility. For marketers and policy makers alike, these findings underscore the importance of designing influencer collaborations that are transparent, community-driven, and psychologically sensitive to the needs and vulnerabilities of young consumers.

4. CONCLUSION

This systematic review synthesizes current literature on the impact of short-form video influencers on young consumers, highlighting both the transformative potential and the inherent challenges of this digital marketing paradigm. The reviewed studies illustrate that the effectiveness of influencer marketing hinges on factors such as perceived authenticity, credibility, and the quality

of content delivered through short-form videos (Mrisha & Xixiang, 2024; Wijaya et al., 2022). Authentic influencers who align closely with brand values foster trust and emotional engagement, leading to enhanced consumer loyalty and higher purchase intentions (Ghosh et al., 2024; Kholkina et al., 2025). In contrast, influencer strategies perceived as inauthentic or overly commercialized risk diminishing consumer trust and engagement, underscoring the delicate balance brands must maintain in influencer partnerships.

In addition, while these strategies can enhance brand visibility and deepen consumer relationships, they also pose risks related to overconsumption, materialism, and digital addiction (David & Roberts, 2024). The addictive nature of short-form content, coupled with the aspirational lifestyles often portrayed by influencers, can exacerbate unrealistic expectations among young audiences, affecting their psychological well-being. These findings emphasize the dual-edged nature of influencer marketing, where commercial success must be carefully weighed against broader societal impacts.

To optimize influencer marketing initiatives, brands are advised to emphasize transparency through clear sponsorship disclosures, foster open and genuine communication, and engage in collaborative content creation that resonates authentically with target demographics (Notteboom et al., 2024). Strategic alignment between influencer identity and brand messaging, coupled with ethical communication practices, appears critical for sustaining long-term consumer trust and mitigating potential negative outcomes. In particular, brands targeting Generation Z should prioritize building community-centered narratives, leveraging influencers not merely as spokespersons but as co-creators of shared cultural meaning (Fibra & Danoehoesodo, 2024; Sun et al., 2022).

However, the review also identifies important research gaps that warrant future investigation. Existing studies are predominantly cross-sectional and geographically concentrated, limiting the ability to draw causal inferences and generalize findings across diverse cultural contexts. Future research should therefore adopt longitudinal and experimental designs to better understand the dynamic evolution of influencer-consumer relationships over time. Further exploration into regulatory frameworks that balance commercial innovation with consumer protection is also needed, particularly in addressing issues such as sponsorship transparency, digital addiction, and youth vulnerability (David & Roberts, 2024; Haliti-Sylaj & Sadiku, 2024)

Overall, this review affirms that short-form video influencer marketing holds significant promise as a tool for engaging young consumers but must be approached with strategic, ethical, and psychological sensitivity. As digital platforms continue to evolve, brands, researchers, and policymakers alike must work collaboratively to ensure that influencer marketing practices promote not only economic value but also the long-term well-being of young audiences in an increasingly mediated society.

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