

Social media influencers and consumer engagement: A review and future research agenda

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Abstract

The rise of social media influencers (SMIs) in the recent decade garnered wide interest from academicians and marketers. Academicians try to understand the effect of influencers on consumer behaviour, while marketers use influencers as part of their strategy to achieve marketing objectives. Although, plenty of practical and conceptual research is available in this area, literature reviews in the domain of SMIs and consumer engagement are scarce as it is still developing, and most of the studies have focused on these two concepts separately. In this study, the authors attempted to combine and understand how social media influencers affect consumers engagement. This systematic review of the literature offers a comprehensive view of previous research on social media influencers and consumer engagement. The study reviewed articles published in the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC), Scopus, and Web of Science indexed journals till 5 June 2021. To understand consumers' engagement with SMIs, authors identified and theorized the antecedents, decision and outcome of such engagement. It also discusses the influencer-follower parasocial relationship on different social media platforms. The study proposes an integrated conceptual framework that can be further used to test and validate the impact of social media influencer's marketing efforts on consumer engagement. This framework also may serve as a foundation for marketers to develop effective influencer strategies for brand promotions. The review concludes the discussion by highlighting theories, methodology, and context of studies conducted by past researchers.

KEYWORDS

brand attitude, consumer engagement, parasocial relationship, social media influencers, source credibility, sponsorship disclosure

1 | INTRODUCTION

The ubiquitous presence of social media platforms has made them an important place for consumers to seek information. The ever-increasing social media users generate and share a large amount of content on these platforms (Burtch et al., 2021; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Shiao et al., 2018). In 2020, there were 3.6 billion social media users, estimated to reach around 4.41 billion in 2025 (Statista, 2021a), making it essential for firms to use social media to engage consumers (Osei-Frimpong & McLean, 2018; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). Firms

are using social media in every possible way to promote brands, boost engagement, and influence consumers to buy their products. Social media offers dedicated brand pages, virtual communities, online marketing, an online marketplace, and many more avenues for firms and consumers to inform, interact, and make purchase decisions (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Rodríguez-López, 2021; Wang et al., 2021). This growth in social media activities has given the ability to some individuals to influence their followers with unique content that they create and share on their profiles. These individuals are both traditional celebrities and non-celebrities who have achieved celebrity-like

status from their large number of followers (Nascimento et al., 2020). This persuasive power of social media influencers (SMIs) over their audience makes firms co-create their brand stories and promotions with them (Nyangwe & Buhalis, 2018). SMIs have the potential to become influential brand ambassadors due to direct and two-way communication with a large number of followers through their social media content (Yuan & Lou, 2020). Although, previous studies described influencers on social media as having followers in large numbers, which most individual social media users do not have (Lou & Yuan, 2019). However, recent studies have further classified influencers into mega-, micro-, and nano-based on their number of followers (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; Ouvrein et al., 2021).

This ability to influence followers initiated a new term in the marketing scholarship known as Influencer Marketing. The Association of National Advertisers (ANA, 2021) defined it as “a type of marketing which focuses on leveraging individuals who have influence over potential buyers and orienting marketing activities around these individuals to drive a brand message to the larger market.” Thus, influencers are individuals on social media who have built online reputations for their expertise on a specific topic. Currently, Instagram is the leading platform for influencer marketing, followed by YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter (Delbaere et al., 2021; Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019; Statista, 2021b). These digital platforms and the interactivity they offer are changing the marketing landscape.

Recently, SMIs gained wide attention from researchers, and studies have used multiple typologies of influencers, such as digital influencers, opinion leaders, micro-celebrity, brand endorsers, and online celebrities (Ouvrein et al., 2021).

Given the relevance of this emerging topic, several recent studies suggested the advantages of collaborating with SMIs to promote brands. For instance, Childers et al. (2019) highlighted that one of the advantages is the influencers' ability to connect to the intended audience and facilitate interactions. Some studies considered influencers a perceived source of valuable and believable information messages (de Veirman et al., 2017; Kapitan & Silvera, 2016). Hence, influencers can increase the impact of the brand message. Others also confirmed that using influencers as a brand communication strategy improves the brand image and value (Casaló et al., 2020; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014). The reason is that influencers are persuasive in their endorsement (Childers et al., 2019; Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Other studies stated that Influencers are also seen as “experts” in their interest area who simultaneously portray an “ordinary” image to their audience, giving the audience a sense of credible source to get authentic and unbiased information (Audrezet et al., 2020; Luoma-aho et al., 2019; Mir & Rehman, 2013; Sundermann & Munnukka, 2022; Thakur et al., 2016).

On the other hand, past research defined consumer engagement “as a means to create, build and enhance consumer relationships with the brands” (Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Prior research also highlighted how social media channels provided marketers and consumers with the opportunity to engage with the brand. It is changing the traditional marketing research landscape (Dolan et al., 2016; Harmeling et al., 2017). Additionally, firms leverage social media

channels to increase their reach and engagement with potential customers. Considering influencers' impact on consumer engagement, a systematic inquiry into literature is critical.

1.1 | Problem statement and identification of research gap

Although there is a surge in the literature on influencer marketing and consumer engagement, reviews focusing on a broad overview of the relationship between the two are scarce. While there are few reviews in the area, their primary focus was on social media and influencer marketing rather than the consumer engagement perspective (de Veirman et al., 2019; Tanwar et al., 2022; Vrontis et al., 2021; Ye et al., 2020). For instance, de Veirman et al. (2019) reviewed influencer marketing literature to explore the persuasiveness of SMIs among young children. While, Ye et al. (2020) performed a bibliometric analysis to provide an overview of influencer marketing that highlighted persuasiveness, stakeholders, product categories, selection, and ethical issues in influencer marketing. Further, Vrontis et al. (2021) conducted a citation and thematic analysis of influencer marketing literature and examined vital themes such as influencers' characteristics, psychological factors and content attributes. A recent study by Tanwar et al. (2022) analysed influencer marketing trends through bibliometric analysis. Although these reviews offered valuable and critical insights into influencer marketing, their scopes were limited to identifying influencer characteristics and social media behaviours. While existing literature offers valuable insights on SMIs and consumer engagement separately, many studies have emphasized how it is critical to study the relationship between influencers and consumers to understand how consumers engage with influencers on social media. However, existing reviews were limited to structuring the definitions and exploring the phenomena of how SMIs are attracting their followers. These included early investigations on influencers, the types of content they create, and brands they collaborated with to create social media posts. Furthermore, with firms increasing the use of influencers for promotional activities, it is critical to understand how consumers are engaged with these self-proclaimed opinion leaders. Specifically, identifying the antecedents and outcomes of this relationship is critical as it will help organizations optimize efforts and maximize their marketing outcomes.

Driven by these research trends and gaps, this study followed a systematic review of the literature to identify and analyse the available studies on SMIs and consumer engagement. This review aims to synthesize the current understanding of SMIs and consumer engagement, develop an integrated framework considering SMIs' engagement with consumers on social media, and suggest future research directions. This review advances the current knowledge and offers new insights into this field by focusing on SMIs from consumer engagement perspectives. It also provides an understanding of influencers' and consumers' engagement-related factors, which will help marketing practitioners develop and implement strategies for successful influencer-brand collaborations. Therefore, the review begins by

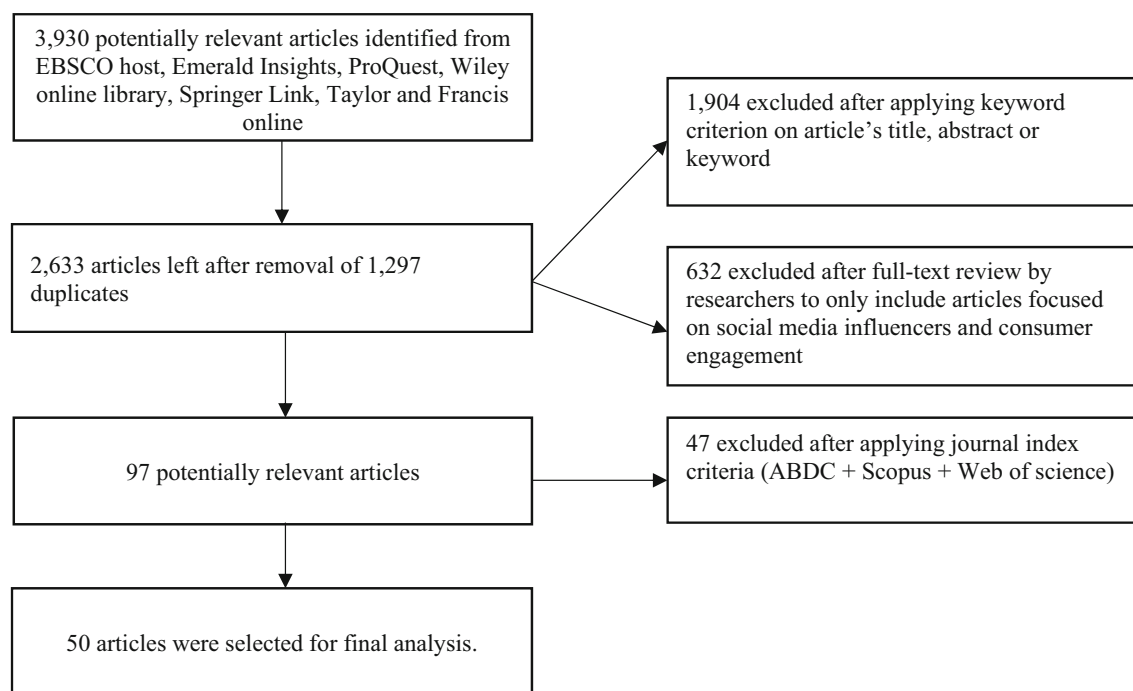


FIGURE 1 SLR flow-diagram.

underlining the constructs, context, antecedents, outcomes, and methodologies adopted in the available literature. Further, a proposed conceptual framework is discussed, followed by future research directions, implications, and conclusions.

To summarize, the paper is structured into six sections. The current section discussed the study's introduction, problem statements, and identification of the research gap. The second section discusses the methodology followed by the review, which examines and analyses findings from the systematic review in section three. The fourth section outlines future research directions, encouraging researchers, academicians, and practitioners to take the research to the next level. The implications for marketers, influencers, and future researchers are discussed in section five. Last but not least, the sixth section summarizes the findings of this study with the conclusion.

2 | METHODOLOGY AND IDEATION

The authors reviewed previous studies to analyse and understand the relationship between social media influencers (SMIs) and consumers' engagement. This article adopted the systematic literature review (SLR) method from previous review articles (Kumar et al., 2020; Mamun et al., 2020; Rana & Paul, 2017; Rosado-Serrano et al., 2018). The authors then conducted a framework-based thematic review (Lim et al., 2021; Paul & Benito, 2018) to analyse and organize emerging themes. It helped authors analyse topics, concepts, and underlying theories related to SMIs and consumers' engagement. This study concentrated on articles published in the time period 2012 to 2021, as influencer marketing and SMIs are relatively new concepts. Hence,

selecting articles from the last decade will provide an overview of concept evolution and contemporary insights into the topic. Following this, authors searched extensively on databases like EBSCO host, Emerald Insights, Web of Science, ProQuest, Wiley Online Library, Springer Link, Taylor and Francis Online, to identify all the articles published in the area of SMIs and consumer engagement. This search helped in including all the notable studies in our review. Boolean query was used to search articles from databases (Social media influencers, social media influencers AND consumer engagement, "social media influencers" AND "consumer engagement", SMI AND consumer engagement, social media influencers AND engagement, influencer marketing AND consumer engagement, influencers AND online engagement). To include relevant articles, a keyword strategy was followed with relevant keywords like "influencers", "social media influencers", "social media influencers and consumer engagement", "influencers and followers", "Instagram celebrity", "consumer engagement on social media", and "online-celebrity" in their title, abstract and keyword. The systematic literature review process is presented in a flow-diagram (see Figure 1). The flow-diagram for the SLR is prepared based on the studies by the researchers (Bhatia et al., 2021; Cavallinhos et al., 2021; Loureiro et al., 2020). Finally, a selection criterion was established to include articles published in Australian Business Dean Council, Scopus, and Web of Science indexed journals. These indexes are widely accepted for academic progression and excellence across academic communities (Dagenais Brown, 2014). Further, these three popular indexes are frequently referred to and used in recent literature reviews (Hao et al., 2021; Mishra et al., 2021; Ng et al., 2020; Paul & Dhiman, 2021; Sharma et al., 2020; Yadav & Bansal, 2021). It left us with the final list of 50 articles for in-depth review (see Table 1).

TABLE 1 Articles selected from journals

Journal	No of articles	References	Impact factor (Clarivate)	Cite score (Scopus)
Marketing Intelligence & Planning	1	Jin et al., 2019	4.338	5.4
Information, Communication & Society	1	Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019	5.054	9.4
Journal of Business Research	2	Aw & Chuah, 2021; Kim & Kim, 2021	10.969	11.2
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal	3	Chetoui et al., 2020; Quelhas-Brito et al., 2020; Martensen et al., 2018	4.184	5.7
Journal of Brand Management	1	Jin & Muqaddam, 2019	4.35	6.5
Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal	1	Lima et al., 2019	N/A	3.3
Journal of Advertising	4	Lou, 2021; Voorveld et al., 2018; Pentina et al., 2018	6.528	8.5
Journal of Marketing Management	3	Martínez-López et al., 2020; Reinikainen et al., 2020; Kay et al., 2020	4.707	5.2
Journal of Interactive Advertising	4	Lou & Yuan, 2019; Yuan & Lou, 2020; Daniel et al., 2018; Lou et al., 2019	N/A	7.1
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	5	Jin & Ryu, 2020; Ki et al., 2020; Sokolova & Perez, 2021; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Tefesse & Wood, 2021	10.972	11.4
International Journal of Strategic Communication	2	Luoma-aho et al., 2019; Woodcock & Johnson, 2019	N/A	6.0
Journal of Internet Commerce	2	Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019; Trivedi & Sama, 2020	N/A	6.7
Journal of Product & Brand Management	2	Tafesse, 2016; Taillon et al., 2020;	5.248	6.2
Psychology & Marketing	2	Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020; Delbaere et al., 2021	5.507	4.9
International Journal of Information Management	3	Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014; Hu et al., 2020; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019	18.958	28.8
Information Technology & People	1	Wang et al., 2020	4.481	6.6
International Journal of Advertising	4	Shan et al., 2020; Feng et al., 2020; Breves et al., 2021; De Veirman et al., 2017	5.888	7.6
Journal of Relationship Marketing	1	Silva et al., 2020	N/A	3.9
Telematics and Informatics	1	Chmait et al., 2020	9.14	13.9
Journal of Marketing	1	Hughes et al., 2019	15.357	15.7
Journal of Media Business Studies	1	Xiao et al., 2018	N/A	4.0
Computers in Human Behaviour	1	Argyris et al., 2020	8.957	14.9
Review of International Business and Strategy	1	AlFarraj et al., 2021	N/A	4.3
Media Psychology	1	Chae, 2018	3.912	7.3
New Media & Society	1	Wellman, 2020	5.31	13.9
Journal of Media Ethics	1	Wellman et al., 2020	1.15	1.6
Total no. of articles	50			

This study starts by underlining the objective of the review. An introduction to SMIs and their engagement with consumers provided a peek into definitions and general research trends on the concepts. The authors conducted a systematic literature review to identify SMIs and consumer engagement factors. A search criterion was applied to include relevant articles in this review. The authors selected 50 research articles for the final in-depth review. This review identified some relevant factors related to the topic. Findings are reported throughout the paper using tables: Table 1 outlines articles selected for this review, Table 2 (a–d) provides a detailed look into relevant

components of published articles (objectives, method, themes, constructs, context, and findings), and Table 3 highlights major themes studied by several research papers out of the selected 50 articles. In addition, the authors categorized key factors as antecedents, decisions, and outcomes based on the Antecedents Decisions Outcomes (ADO) framework by Paul & Benito, 2018. The framework helped organize and outline relevant themes where antecedents refer to the factors influencing consumers' engagement with SMIs, decisions refer to consumers' decision to engage or form a relationship with SMIs, and outcomes refer to the results of such engagement, which are

TABLE 2 Summary of research progression

Sr. No.	Reference	Objective(s)	Methodology	Social media influencers (SMIs) related phrase	Construct(s)	Social media platform(s)	Key findings
(a) Progression of research on social media influencers and consumer engagement							
1.	Tafesse, 2016	To develop and test an experiential model of consumer engagement on social media	Content analysis	Influencers	Consumer Experience, Social Experience, Perceptual Experience, epistemic Experience, Embodied Experience	Facebook	Proposed an experiential model of consumer engagement Perceptual experience and social experience influences consumer engagement on brand pages
2.	Voorveld et al., 2018	Role of consumer engagement in driving an advertisement on social media platforms	Survey	-	Social Media Engagement	Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest	Social media engagement varies based on platforms and offerings such as Snapchat and YouTube for entertainment, Instagram and Facebook for pastime, Pinterest for practical use
3.	Lima et al., 2019	To investigate and validate the conceptual model of consumer engagement's assumptions	Netnography, content analysis	-	Consumer Engagement	Facebook	This study tested and confirmed the five processes of engagement on social media: Learning, Sharing, Advocacy, Socializing, and Co-creation Emotional, Cognitive and Behavioural dimensions
4.	Pentina et al., 2018	To identify consumer's motivation to engage with luxury brands on social media	Interview	-	Consumer-Brand Engagement	-	Categorized consumer-brand engagement into five aspects: intended engagement audience, the intensity of efforts and creativity, content creation medium (text, image, or video), motivational drivers, and differences and similarities of platforms
5.	Hughes et al., 2019	To understand the role of social media influencers in influencing consumers by analysing campaign intent	Content Analysis and Statistical Modelling	SMI	Brand Engagement, Social Media Engagement	Facebook, Blogs	Campaign intents was high for high expertise influencers than low expertise influencers
6.	Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019	To understand digital influencers and consumer's brand engagement in self-concept (BESC), brand value and purchase intentions	Survey	Internet microcelebrities – non-traditional celebrities	Brand Engagement	Any social media user	Brand engagement in self-concept influences perceived value and purchase intention
7.	Woodcock & Johnson, 2019	To understand the strategic communication effectiveness of video "streamer"	Interview	SMI, Video Streamer	Strategic communication, interactivity, Engagement	Twitch.tv	Data driven sponsorship and emotional engagement impacts even outside of the video streaming platform Twitch
8.	Silva et al., 2020	Analysis of digital influencer's product endorsement to understand the forms of engagements on Instagram	semiotic image analysis	SMI, Digital Influencers, Opinion Leaders	Online engagement, Digital Engagement	Instagram	Online engagement is categorized by positive, negative, cognitive, emotional, and behaviour involvement of consumers

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Reference	Objective(s)	Methodology	Social media influencers (SMIs) related phrase	Construct(s)	Social media platform(s)	Key findings
9.	Chnait et al., 2020	To understand social media engagement in sports	Social media analysis	Tennis Influencers	Social Media Engagement	Any social media user	Tennis player's influence on demand of event attendance is linked to their social media engagement
10.	Argyris et al., 2020	To develop a conceptual framework of "Visual-Congruence-induced Social Influence" VCSI	Image-analysis using deep learning	SMI	Brand engagement, Follower's engagement	Instagram	The extent to which images shared by influencers and followers (Visual congruence) overlap increases shared interests and positively relates to followers' engagement with influencers
11.	Kostygina et al., 2020	To analyse how content and source influences popularity, support, and reach of twitter message	Text analysis	SMI	Reach, Engagement	Twitter	Twitter messages where the source is influencer had higher reach compared with non-influencer messages.
12.	Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020	To better understand brand engagement as a self-concept (BESC)	Experiment	Influencer	Brand Engagement, Consumer Engagement, Post-engagement	Instagram	Higher incorporation of brand engagement as a self-concept (BESC) among individuals resulted in higher engagement with luxury brands
13.	Delbaere et al., 2021	To understand the role of social media influencer in follower's brand engagement	Text Analysis	SMI	Brand Engagement	-	SMIs act as facilitator of brand engagement for followers in the aspects of cognitive processing, affection, and activation
14.	Tafesse & Wood, 2021	To examine the relationship between influencers' content measures and followers' engagement	Web-scraping	SMI	Follower Count, Domain Interest Follower Count, Volume of Content	Instagram	Influencers' follower count and content volume negatively affect follower's engagement but follower count positively affect follower's engagement
(b) Progression of research on influencers' source credibility							
1.	Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019	To understand how source credibility and self-presentation influences consumer's behaviour towards micro-celebrity endorsements	Interview	Micro-celebrity	Source Credibility Model, Self-presentation	Instagram	High quality pictures and text posted by influencers were found to be essential elements in appealing followers and Instagram filters are perceived positively by users
2.	Jin & Muqaddam, 2019	Examining the impact of source types and product-placement types on brand attitude and credibility perception	Experiment-survey	Influencer, Social media celebrities	Source Credibility, Corporate Credibility, Source Likeability, Brand Attitude	Instagram	Parasocial interaction is related to product placement types and corporate credibility
3.	Martínez-López et al., 2020	To explore the impact of influencer's credibility factors on follower's willingness to search for posted product	Experiment	Instagram Influencers	Trust, Post-credibility, Interestingness, Willingness to search for posted product, Brand Control, Commercial orientation	Instagram	Commercial orientation negatively associated with trust and credibility of the posted message.

(Continues)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Reference	Objective(s)	Methodology	Social media influencers (SMIs) related phrase	Construct(s)	Social media platform(s)	Key findings
4.	Jin et al., 2019	To compare Instagram celebrity and traditional celebrity's impact on source trustworthiness, brand attitude, envy, and social presence.	Experiment	Instagram Celebrity	Trustworthiness, Social Presence, Envy, Self-discrepancy, Brand Attitude	Instagram	Instagram celebrity's brand post was perceived to be more trustworthy, social presence was felt stronger and envious than celebrity's post.
5.	Xiao et al., 2018	Role of informational cues in credibility evaluations of YouTube influencer's post	Survey	Influencers, Influencer Marketing	Information Credibility, Source Credibility, Trustworthiness, Likability, and Homophily, Social Advocacy, Interactivity, Product Knowledge, Brand Knowledge, Issue involvement, Perceived argument quality, Video Attitude	YouTube	Perceived credibility of influencer is positively associated with brand attitude
6.	Martensen et al., 2018	To investigate characteristics of Citizen Influencers' (CI) characteristics which contributes to persuasiveness of followers	Qualitative-netnography	YouTube Influencers	Source credibility, Expertise, Trustworthiness, Attractiveness, Similarity, Familiarity, Influencer Persuasiveness	Instagram	Perceived similarity is linked with citizen influencer's persuasiveness
7.	Chetioui et al., 2020	Analysing how consumers' attitude towards fashion influencers (FIs) impacts brand attitude and purchase intention.	Survey	Opinion Leaders, Influencers, Citizen Influencers (CI)	Perceived Expertise, Perceived credibility, Trust, Perceived Behavioural Control, Perceived Congruence, Subjective Norms, Brand Attitude, Attitude towards influencer, Purchase Intention	Any social media user	Perceived credibility, expertise and trust are important factors in influencing attitude towards fashion influencers
8.	Wang et al., 2020	To understand the impact of influencer's social power on consumers' economic and social satisfaction	Interview	Fashion Influencers (FI)	Expert power, Referent Power, Reciprocity power, Social Satisfaction, Economic Satisfaction, Social Shopping, Social Sharing	Xiaohongshu	Digital influencers' social power and referent power are considered as critical to consumers' economic and social satisfaction
9.	Lou & Yuan, 2019	To explore how influencer marketing impacts consumers on social media	Survey	Digital Influencer	Expertise, Trustworthiness, Attractiveness, Similarity, trust, Informative Value, Entertainment Value, Brand Awareness, involvement, Purchase Intentions	Any social media user	Informative value of influencer-created content and credibility factors can positively influence follower's trust, brand awareness and purchase intention
10.	Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014	To understand how brands engage with bloggers	Interview	Opinion Leaders, Digital Influencer	Brand communication, Reference point, eWoM, Trust of similarity, Connective	Blogs	A brand communication model was proposed considering digital

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Reference	Objective(s)	Methodology	Social media influencers (SMIs) related phrase	Construct(s)	Social media platform(s)	Key findings
11.	AlFarraj et al., 2021	To examine the impact of influencer's credibility dimensions on purchase intention	Survey	SMI, Vlogger	Communication, Consumer Interactivity Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Expertise, Purchase Intention	Instagram	influencers' credibility factors and consumer interactions Perceived attractiveness and perceived expertise of influencers affect consumer's engagement on social media
12.	Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019	To examine and compare how millennials seek information on social media from celebrity influencers and people whom consumers know personally	Survey	Influencer	Perceived Information Credibility, Purchase Intention	Any social media user	Consumers preferred people whom they know for seeking information about buying clothing/cosmetics products
13.	Ki et al., 2020	To understand how SMIs personal attributes affect followers need fulfilment	Survey	SMI	Attachment mechanism, Identity need fulfilment, relatedness need fulfilment, Competence need fulfilment, Inspiration, Visual aesthetics, Enjoyability, Similarity, Informativeness, Expertise	Any social media user	Followers' attachment to Influencers was significant determinant of Influencers' effect on followers Competence need fulfilment is critical to emotional bond with SMIs.
(c) Progression of research on parasocial interactions							
1.	Quelhas-Brito et al., 2020	What motivates Social Media Fashion Influencer's to share fashion information?	Interview	SMI, travel Influencers	Parasocial Interactions, Opinion leadership, Fashion interest, Fashion leadership, Fashion Consciousness, Perceived Usability	Blogs	Fashion blog's perceived usability is positively related to parasocial relationship
2.	Sokolova & Perez, 2021	Examining the relationship between parasocial interaction, intentions to watch fitness videos and intentions to exercise	Survey	Social Media Fashion Influencers, Fashion Leaders, Fashion Influencers	Parasocial Interaction, Exposure, Credibility, Attractiveness, Social Interactions, Entertainment, Information, Attitude towards videos, Intention to watch fitness videos, Intention to exercise, Attitude towards fitness	YouTube	Parasocial relationship influences intentions to exercise
3.	Hu et al., 2020	To propose a theoretical model of followers' stickiness to digital influencers	Survey	Fitness Influencers	Parasocial relationship, Identity Similarity, Identity Distinctiveness, Identity prestige, Wishful identification, Revenue model genres, Stickiness	Weibo	Parasocial relationship and psychological responses influences follower's stickiness
4.	Shan et al., 2020	To understand the role of endorsement behaviour and	Survey	SMI	Parasocial Identification, Self-influencer congruence,	Instagram	

(Continues)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Reference	Objective(s)	Methodology	Social media influencers (SMIs) related phrase	Construct(s)	Social media platform(s)	Key findings
5.	Daniel et al., 2018	parasocial identification in endorsement process To explore how message strategy makes of commenters' parasocial interactions with Social Media Influencers (SMIs) in Online Vaping Communities	Content Analysis	Digital Influencers	Perceived self-serving motive, Brand content attitude, Brand content engagement, Purchase Intention. Parasocial Interaction, Parasocial Relationship, Brand loyalty, Sales, Word-of-mouth	YouTube	High the self-influencer congruence in followers, high the parasocial identification with influencers Parasocial satisfaction found within YouTube viewer's comments and viewers aligned their identities with social media influencers
6.	Jin & Ryu, 2020	To understand envy and parasocial interaction with celebrity influencers on Instagram	Experiment	SMI	Parasocial Interaction (PSI), Envy, Social comparison, Compulsive buying, Brand Trust, Purchase Intention	Instagram	Parasocial Interaction is positively related to buying intention among female followers
7.	Yuan & Lou, 2020	To investigate the determinants of parasocial relationship and its effect on product interest	Survey	Instagram Celebrities	Parasocial Relationship, Parasocial Experience, Credibility, Communication fairness, Product Interest	Any social media user	Perceived attractiveness and perceived similarity of influencers positively related to parasocial relationship
8.	Sokolova & Kefi, 2020	To explore beauty and fashion influencer's persuasion cues on YouTube and Instagram	Survey	Influencers	Para-social Interaction, Perceived Credibility, Physical attractiveness, Attitude, Homophily, Purchase Intention	Any social media user	Influencers' Credibility and parasocial-interactions with followers impacted purchase intention
9.	Chae, 2018	To investigate how social media usage and personality traits influences envy and social comparison towards influencers	Survey	Instagram Influencers, YouTube Influencers	Social comparison towards Influencers, Self-consciousness, Self-esteem, Envy	Any social media platforms	Highly self-conscious and low self-image individuals (social media users) engage in more social comparison with influencers
10.	Lou, 2021	To theorize trans-parasocial relationship between influencers and followers	Interview	SMI, Microcelebrity	Parasocial Relation, Synchronously Interactive, Co-creation, Persuasion knowledge, Trans- Parasocial Relation	Any social media user	Followers' relationship with social media influencers lies between parasocial and interpersonal relationship
11.	Wellman, 2020	To extend the parasocial relationship theory as trans-mediated parasocial relationship	Qualitative-netnography	SMI	Trans-mediated Parasocial Relationships, Self-disclosure	Facebook	Perceived intimacy with influencers increases self-disclosure
12.	Reimikainen et al., 2020	To investigate the role of audience comments in influencer marketing	Survey	SMI	Parasocial Relationships, Parasocial interaction, Perceived influencer	vlog	Followers' parasocial relationship with influencers reduce uncertainty and leads to brand trust

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Reference	Objective(s)	Methodology	Social media influencers (SMIs) related phrase	Construct(s)	Social media platform(s)	Key findings
13.	Aw & Chuah, 2021	To examine the impact of social media influencers' influence attempts on parasocial relationships with followers	Survey	SMI	credibility, Trust towards brands Parasocial relationships, Attractiveness, Expertise, Perceived Endorser Motives, Purchase Intention, Self-discrepancy, prestige	Any social media user	Perceived visual attractiveness, sense of prestige and expertise among followers is important for parasocial relationship to be established
14.	Breves et al., 2021	To investigate the difference between the parasocial relationships of followers and non-followers	Experiment	SMI	Parasocial interactions, Parasocial relationships Perceived source credibility, Persuasion knowledge, Ad disclosure, Brand evaluation, Purchase Intentions	Facebook, Instagram	High the level of parasocial relationship, less the critical evaluation of advertised content
15.	Belanche et al., 2021	To understand how to achieve positive behaviours towards influencers and advertised product on social media	Survey	Influencers	Consumer Interactions, Product Involvement	Instagram	Fitness of influencer's product posts had no impact on followers' interactions Product involvement is key to customer's reaction towards influencers' posts
(d) Progression of research on sponsorship disclosure, brand attitude, and purchase intention							
1.	Feng et al., 2020	To understand influencer narrative and sponsorship disclose	Image analysis & machine learning	SMI	Self-disclosure, Sponsorship disclosure, Counterargument, Influencer narratives, Influencer endorsement	Instagram	Influencers' sponsorship disclosure had no impact on the number of "likes" on a post
2.	Kim & Kim, 2021	To understand how social media users infer influencer's motives from perceived congruence and sponsorship disclosure	Experiment	SMI	Sponsorship disclosure, Calculative motive inference, Perceived Congruence, Product Attitude, Advertising Recognition	Any social media user	Influencers' sponsorship disclosure was recognized by social media users as advertisement and was negatively associated to brand attitude
3.	Lou et al., 2019	To understand the differences in consumer engagement and sentiments in influencer-promoted ads and brand-promoted ads	Topic modelling & sentiment analysis	SMI	Sponsorship disclosure, Source of ad (brand vs. influencer), Engagement with ads, Sentiments, Topics, Metrics	Any social media user	Influencer promoted ads (including sponsorship disclosure in brand message) driven higher engagement and more comments than brand promoted ads
4.	Kay et al., 2020	To examine how sponsorship disclosure by macro-influencers and micro-influencers affect consumer evaluations of products	Experiment	SMI, Micro Influencers, Macro-Influencers.	Disclosure of native advertising sponsorship, Disclosure interactions, Consumer Evaluations, Product Knowledge, Product	Any social media user	Influencer's sponsorship disclosure positively impacts consumers' purchase intentions

(Continues)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Reference	Objective(s)	Methodology	Social media influencers (SMIs) related phrase	Construct(s)	Social media platform(s)	Key findings
5.	Wellman et al., 2020	To explore influencer's ethical dilemmas in creating sponsored content	Interview-case study	SMI	Attractiveness, Purchase Intentions	Any social media user	Authenticity and credibility were premises for influencers' ethical framework
6.	De Veirman et al., 2017	To analyse how followers count and product divergence influence brand attitude	Experiment/Survey	SMI, Instagram Influencers	Brand Attitude	Instagram	Perceived uniqueness and brand attitude were low for influencers with higher number of followers
7.	Trivedi & Sama, 2020	To compare celebrity and experts influencer's impact on purchase intention of electronic products	Survey	Influencers, Expert Influencers, Celebrity Influencer	Brand Attitude, Purchase Intention	Facebook	Consumer valued expert influencer's opinion more than celebrity while choosing electronics product
8.	Luoma-aho et al., 2019	To explore the relationship between contextual cues and sponsored content	Experiment	SMI	Perceived authenticity, Audience participation with sponsored content, Attitude towards video and product	Travel vlog	Nature of priming did not affect the group and Influencer was perceived to be authentic

consumers' attitudes towards influencers, social media posts, brands and finally, consumers' purchase intention. Based on the findings of this review, the authors proposed a new conceptual framework of consumer engagement using SMIs. Finally, a few research directions are provided to intrigue future researchers to conduct studies related to the concepts.

3 | FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 | Literature and theories

This section discusses current literature on social media influencers (SMIs) and consumer engagement. It follows a scientific approach by combining descriptive reports with a table to highlight the overall progression of research on SMIs and consumer engagement (see Table 2). The table provides a detailed overview of research in the 50 selected articles for this review and discusses their objectives, methods, constructs, context, and main findings. It provides a base to delve deeper into the literature. It also helps identify the related factors discussed in the next section. This section starts with the classification of SMIs in past studies, followed by consumer engagement on social media.

3.1.1 | Social media influencers (SMIs)

SMIs are individuals with large numbers of followers on social media platforms. They are also called opinion leaders who are experts in giving recommendations about products or services to their followers. Campbell and Farrell (2020) described the SMIs to be of five types based on the number of followers: Celebrity/Mega-influencer (1 million +), Macro-influencer (100 k to 1 million), Micro-influencer (10–100 k), Nano-influencer (up to 10 k). Some of the articles included in this analysis have also referred to SMIs as “micro-celebrities.” (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019; Kay et al., 2020). On the other hand, traditional celebrities on social media are called “macro-celebrities.” However, several studies used different terms based on the industry contexts to define SMIs like fashion influencers, fitness influencers, tennis influencers, and beauty vloggers (Berryman & Kavka, 2017; Britt et al., 2020; Chetoui et al., 2020; Chmait et al., 2020; Sokolova & Perez, 2021). Other studies classified influencers based on the platform, like Instagram influencers, YouTube influencers, streamers, and bloggers (Jin & Ryu, 2020; Jin et al., 2019; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014; Xiao et al., 2018). Hence, it is critical to understand the role of SMIs in marketing as it can help marketers achieve marketing objectives on social media by utilizing SMIs' direct connect with the mass followers.

3.1.2 | Consumer engagement on social media

In marketing research, there exists a diverse conceptualization of consumer engagement. van Doorn et al. (2010) explained it as a

TABLE 3 Themes identified from literature

Themes	Related concept	No. of articles out of 50	References
Social media influencers	Opinion leaders, Bloggers, Digital influencers, YouTube influencers, Micro-celebrity, Nano-celebrity, Instagram influencers	47	Uzunoglu and Kip (2014), Tafesse (2016), Silva et al. (2020), Chmait et al. (2020), Tafesse and Wood (2021), Delbaere et al. (2021); Belanche et al. (2021), Hughes et al. (2019), Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández (2019), De Veirman et al. (2017), Kostygina et al. (2020), Argyris et al. (2020), Giakoumaki & Kreppa, 2020, Woodcock and Johnson (2019), Trivedi and Sama (2020), Jin et al. (2019) Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019), Jin and Muqaddam (2019), Martínez-López et al. (2020), Xiao et al. (2018), Martensen et al. (2018), Chetioui et al. (2020), Wang et al. (2020), Lou and Yuan (2019), Luoma-aho et al. (2019), AlFarraj et al. (2021), Cooley and Parks-Yancy (2019), Wellman et al. (2020), Quelhas-Brito et al. (2020), Sokolova and Perez (2021), Hu et al. (2020), Shan et al. (2020), Daniel et al. (2018) Jin and Ryu (2020), Yuan and Lou (2020), Sokolova and Kefi (2020), Chae (2018), Lou (2021), Wellman et al. (2020), Reinikainen et al. (2020), Aw and Chuah (2021), Ki et al. (2020), Breves et al. (2021), Feng et al. (2020), Kim and Kim (2021), Lou et al. (2019), Kay et al. (2020)
Consumer engagement	Brand engagement, Social media post engagement, Online engagement	17	Tafesse (2016), Voorveld et al. (2018), Lima et al. (2019), Pentina et al. (2018), Silva et al. (2020), Chmait et al. (2020), Tafesse and Wood (2021), Delbaere et al. (2021) Hughes et al. (2019), Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández (2019), Kostygina et al. (2020), Argyris et al. (2020), Giakoumaki & Kreppa, 2020, Woodcock and Johnson (2019), AlFarraj et al. (2021), Shan et al. (2020), Lou et al. (2019)
Source credibility	Credibility, Attractiveness, Expertise, Similarity	20	Chetioui et al. (2020), Cooley and Parks-Yancy (2019), Wellman et al. (2020), Reinikainen et al. (2020), Ki et al. (2020), Martínez-López et al. (2020), Jin et al. (2019), Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019), Jin and Muqaddam (2019), Xiao et al. (2018), Martensen et al. (2018), Breves et al. (2021), Lou et al. (2019), Lou and Yuan (2019), AlFarraj et al. (2021), Yuan and Lou (2020), Sokolova and Kefi (2020), Aw and Chuah (2021), Kay et al. (2020), Uzunoglu and Kip (2014)
Parasocial relationship	Interpersonal relationship, Trans parasocial relationship, Relationship with influencers	13	Quelhas-Brito et al. (2020), Sokolova and Perez (2021), Hu et al. (2020), Shan et al. (2020), Daniel et al. (2018), Jin and Ryu (2020), Yuan and Lou (2020), Sokolova and Kefi (2020), Lou (2021), Wellman et al. (2020), Reinikainen et al. (2020), Aw and Chuah (2021), Breves et al. (2021)
Sponsorship disclosure	Paid promotion, Financial disclosure, Brand promotion disclosure	6	Breves et al. (2021), Feng et al. (2020), Kim and Kim (2021), Lou et al. (2019), Kay et al. (2020), Wellman et al. (2020)
Consumers' attitude	Attitude towards social media post, Attitude towards influencers, Brand attitude	10	Kim and Kim (2021), De Veirman et al. (2017), Trivedi and Sama (2020), Jin et al. (2019), Jin and Muqaddam (2019), Chetioui et al. (2020), Xiao et al. (2018), Luoma-aho et al. (2019), Shan et al. (2020), Sokolova and Kefi (2020)
Purchase Intention	Buying intention	11	Trivedi and Sama (2020), Wang et al. (2020), Lou and Yuan (2019), AlFarraj et al. (2021), Cooley and Parks-Yancy (2019), Shan et al. (2020), Jin and Ryu (2020), Sokolova and Kefi (2020), Aw and Chuah (2021), Kay et al. (2020), Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández (2019)

behavioural concept and proposed that “customer engagement behaviors go beyond transactions, and maybe specifically defined as a customer's behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers.” In comparison, others see consumer engagement as a multidimensional concept (Brodie et al., 2013; Kumar et al., 2010; Vivek et al., 2012). Recent studies adhered to this and defined social media engagement as “a multilevel, multidimensional construct that emerges from the thoughts and feelings about one or more rich experiences involved in reaching

a personal goal” (Voorveld et al., 2018). However, before the surge of SMIs, the primary way of consumer engagement on social media was through brand pages (Tsai & Men, 2017). These are dedicated pages of brands on social media platforms where brand messages are published frequently. These brand pages also attract a large number of followers/audiences. Past research proposed and formed diverse models and theories to understand social media engagement (Algharabat et al., 2020; Demmers et al., 2020; Hinson et al., 2019). Early social media engagement models focused on social media

behaviours and activities like engagement on a brand's social media posts (Labrecque et al., 2020). For example, Kabadayi and Price (2014) proposed a framework that describes the relationship between personas, mode of interaction, and Facebook behaviours.

Moreover, early research on brands' social media presence, such as Brodie et al. (2013)'s virtual brand communities' research, defined dimensions of consumer engagement on social media as cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. They also presented socializing, sharing, learning, co-developing, and advocacy as the five subprocesses of engagement. Additionally, Lima et al. (2019), in their analysis of the virtual brand community (i.e., fan pages) of beauty brand L'Oréal, tested these sub-processes and confirmed that member of the virtual community follows them through the platform's features such as like, comment, reactions, and interactions. Likewise, Khobzi and Teimourpour (2015) developed the Likes, Comments, and Polarity (LCP) framework and suggested that companies do LCP segmentation using social media behaviours metrics like the number of likes and comments on a brand's post and sentiments of followers' comments.

On another note, Tafesse's (2016) experiential model provided insights into how consumer experience drives consumer engagement. The model shows affordances of perceptual experiences, social experiences, epistemic experiences, and embodied experiences as factors that facilitate consumers' social media engagement. Whereas, Valentini et al. (2018) defined contributing, creating, and consuming as three levels of online consumer engagement.

Although brand pages and virtual brand communities offer platforms to consumers for interactions, inquiry, and some extent of product or service experience, SMIs have emerged as experts who share their experiences and promote brands through their self-created content (Carter, 2016; Enke & Borchers, 2019). Often, these experiences shared by SMIs are perceived to be "real" by their followers (Coco & Eckert, 2020). Recent studies sought to understand how marketers can leverage consumer engagement using SMIs (Hughes et al., 2019; Kostygina et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2020; Trivedi & Sama, 2020). Some researchers, such as Gräve (2019), provided insights into key performance metrics for Influencers and found that marketers generally relied on quantitative parameters like the number of followers, number of interactivity, and the number of reaches to select and evaluate influencers for their endorsement objectives. Authors believe it is crucial to look at factors critical to engaging customers, such as Influencers' credibility and relationship, because these factors may determine consumers' attitudes towards the influencers and brands they promote.

3.2 | Themes

This section identifies themes (see Table 3) in which antecedents and consequences of consumers' engagement with influencers (SMIs) on social media are discussed. Source credibility was one of the factors that previous researchers believe affects attitude towards influencers, which further leads to attitude towards the brand (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019; Jin & Muqaddam, 2019). These studies also

emphasized how perceived likeability, perceived credibility, perceived similarity, and trustworthiness lead to a positive evaluation of influencers' brand posts, thus driving high brand engagement. Also, some studies underlined the parasocial relationship between SMIs and consumers as another factor influencing consumers' engagement with influencers (Daniel et al., 2018; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Yuan & Lou, 2020).

On the other hand, brand attitude, attitude towards influencers, attitude towards brand posts, and purchase intentions are cited as outcomes of SMIs engagements (Chetioui et al., 2020; de Veirman et al., 2017; Jin & Muqaddam, 2019). It may be because consumers can directly engage with the influencers through actionable steps such as liking, commenting, or following, which may increase the likelihood of purchasing the advertised product (Schouten et al., 2020). This engagement may also influence consumers' attitudes towards influencers, promoting brands and social media posts.

3.2.1 | Antecedents of consumers engagement with SMIs

In this section, the antecedents of consumer engagement through SMIs are discussed. The antecedents can be explained through two significant themes: source credibility and parasocial relationship.

Source credibility

The source credibility model is a well-known model that explains celebrity endorsement (Hovland et al., 1953). The same has been applied to SMIs as their popularity and large number of followers give them the status of "internet celebrity." Based on several studies, source credibility is identified as a critical criterion for consumers to engage with SMIs (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019; Sundermann & Raabe, 2019). Source credibility was also studied in relation to persuasion theory (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Persuasion theory is a well-established theory in psychology that is often used in research on mass communication. In particular, the theory explains how individuals are persuaded. Many studies found that source credibility is a vital factor in persuasion (Artz & Tybout, 1999; Jain & Posavac, 2001; Kumkale et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2013; Tzoumaka et al., 2016). In this context, to be persuasive, SMIs need to gain the trust of their followers. It means that the more consumers perceive the source (Influencers) as credible, the more likely they are to interact with influencers and give attention to the brand message. Further, source credibility is explained by sub-credibility factors: Attractiveness, Expertise, and Trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990). Recently, Chetioui et al. (2020), in their research on fashion influencers, found that perceived credibility was the most substantial factor that influences fashion consumers' attitudes towards influencers.

Most studies reported similar findings considering at least one source credibility sub-factors in their research (Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019; Sokolova & Perez, 2021; Xiao et al., 2018). Out of all the source credibility factors, attractiveness and perceived similarity with influencers were considered by previous researchers to be the most critical for consumer engagement. It may be because consumers view

influencers' social media posts to follow them; the more they find it appealing, the more likely they will engage with the influencers. Similarly, for perceived similarity, the more consumers feel a sense of personal touch with influencers, the more likely they perceive them to be credible. Prior research reported similar findings, such as Martínez-López et al. (2020)'s study, where consumers were shown beauty influencers' social media posts, such as beauty products like creams and cosmetics, as a stimulus, and a survey was conducted afterwards to see their reaction. It was noted that the commercial orientation reduced the consumer's trust in influencers.

Alternatively, Xiao et al. (2018)'s study of popular YouTube influencers found that in evaluation of influencers' credibility, trustworthiness was more important than other factors—likability, expertise, and homophily, that is, followers' perceived similarity with influencers. Thus, the authors believe the importance of these credibility factors varies according to the type of social media platform, industry contexts, and influencer type. For example—in industries like cosmetics, personal care, and fashion, attractiveness is more important than other factors, while in industries like tech gadgets trustworthiness is more important than others.

Similarly, Martensen et al. (2018) conducted netnography research on Instagram and found that attractiveness, expertise, capabilities, and perceived similarity were significant factors for Instagram users to decide which influencers to follow. Additionally, they found that followers perceived influencers' content that lacked personal aspects as fake or staged. Also, AlFarraj et al. (2021) developed a model that explained the influence of credibility factors on cognitive and affective online engagement. In addition to this, Lou and Yuan (2019) added two brand awareness factors: entertainment value and informative value, with source credibility components and explained that these factors could influence brand awareness and brand trust, further resulting in purchase intention.

Parasocial relationship

Early research on parasocial interactions was about television actors and performers of mass media such as radio, television, and movies (Horton & Wohl, 1956). It refers to conversations between actors and the audience such that the audience responds to the actor's stage performance by implying internal social relationships. Although the conversations between SMIs and consumers are considered two-way, recent studies suggest it may still be called parasocial as the followers receive occasional responses from influencers (Stever & Lawson, 2013). In a similar way, researchers have studied parasocial interactions as important factors that influence consumers' involvement with influencers resulting in their closeness, stickiness and purchase intention (Hu et al., 2020; Shan et al., 2020). For instance, Sokolova and Perez (2021) studied fitness influencers on YouTube and offered insights into the affiliation between parasocial relations and the intention to exercise in consumers. They also explored how credibility factors such as exposure, credibility, and attractiveness influence parasocial relationships. This was also supported by Quelhas-Brito et al. (2020), in their study of fashion influencers they found that their perceived usability influences parasocial relationships with followers.

Subsequently, identity similarity is also considered to be a factor that influences parasocial interactions (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Tsiotsou, 2016). For example, Daniel et al. (2018), in their study of vaping communities on YouTube, found that viewers perceived SMI's identity to be similar to theirs, leading to the formation of parasocial relations and satisfaction. Vaping communities on YouTube are a group of people who interact with each other on the shared interest of vaping (e-cigarette). Also, it is more likely that SMIs in vaping communities are only known to individuals with similar interests. Thus, the credibility factor that may influence the parasocial relationship may also depend on the influencer's type and the type of product being endorsed by them. To illustrate, influencers' endorsement of high-involvement products such as technological gadgets, cars, or homes can result in multiple interactions. Therefore, the credibility factors, such as a perceived trust or perceived similarity, will differ from that of a low-involvement product like candy or ice-cream. It may also influence the nature and degree of the relationship between influencers and followers based on the setting.

In addition to the above studies, Aw and Chuah (2021) emphasized attractiveness and influencers' expertise as key factors for parasocial relationships with followers. It may be because followers develop a sense of attachment to influencers. Followers' attachment is considered a factor contributing to the emotional bond between influencers and consumers (Ki et al., 2020; Yuan & Lou, 2020). In comparison, Lou (2021) theorized this relationship as a trans-parasocial relationship because the nature of the relationship between influencers and followers is considered to be reciprocal and co-creative.

Other studies considered components like envy and social comparison as drivers of parasocial relationships (Chae, 2018; Jin et al., 2019; Jin & Ryu, 2020) and found that social media users with low self-esteem and high self-consciousness engage more in social comparison with influencers. Extant literature also focused on envy and social comparison in the context of social network sites (Latif et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2017; Yin et al., 2021). As an example, Appel et al. (2016) suggested that Facebook usage encourages comparison and envy between users and may lead to depression. Other studies also indicated similar findings (Krasnova et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2020). However, envy has two types: benign and malicious (Lange & Crusius, 2015). Although both envies involve substantial adverse effects, in benign envy, the envier may level themselves up to be similar to the other person by increasing personal efforts. On the other hand, a malicious envier may try to level the envied person down. In fact, few studies also investigated the role of benign envy and social comparison in stimulating purchase intention (Jin & Ryu, 2020; Liu et al., 2019). Hence, social comparison and negative self-view lead to envy towards influencers. It may also affect parasocial relationships and the purchase intention of advertised brands.

3.2.2 | Engagement factors

Articles in this review indicated three factors of engagement with SMIs: engagement with social media posts, engagement with

influencers, and engagement with brands (AlFarraj et al., 2021; Argyris et al., 2020; Delbaere et al., 2021; Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020; Hughes et al., 2019; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Kostygina et al., 2020; Shan et al., 2020; Woodcock & Johnson, 2019). Although these engagement factors are used synchronously in the literature, they vary in meaning based on the context in which it is applied (Lee et al., 2018; Tsiotsou, 2020). For example, followers might also engage with influencers' posts without the brand messages. Likewise, the first may subsequently lead to the second and vice-versa. Hence, the authors believe there is a clear need to study how engagement varies in various settings. An early study by Tsiotsou (2015) suggested that consumers' group engagement with social networking sites (SNS) influences their behavioural intention. Their study further highlights consumers' interest in their favourite SNS member, members' ability and identification with the member influences consumers' SNS group engagement. SMI engagement differs from social media group engagement because of their follower base and ability to offer brand engagement on social media (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). A recent study by Silva et al. (2020) categorized these followers' engagement with SMIs as positive, negative, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural involvement of consumers. Even more, Delbaere et al. (2021) recognized SMIs as facilitators of brand engagement and suggested that SMIs influence followers' brand engagement through three aspects: cognitive processing, affection, and activation. At the same time, some studies compared influencers' posts to celebrities' social media posts or brands' posts and acknowledged that influencer's post were more engaging as consumers valued influencers' opinions more than the latter (Jin et al., 2019; Kostygina et al., 2020; Lou et al., 2019; Trivedi & Sama, 2020).

3.2.3 | Outcomes of consumer engagement with SMIs

Brand attitude, attitude towards influencers, and purchase intentions are considered as the outcome of engagement factors studied in the context of SMIs (de Veirman et al., 2017; Jin et al., 2019). These outcomes are discussed below in detail.

Attitude towards influencers' activities

The influencers' activities include social media posts and endorsing the brands. Studies in this review indicated that perceived credibility was the most vital factor influencing consumer attitudes towards influencers (Chetioui et al., 2020; de Veirman et al., 2017). Influencers create a large amount of content to attract followers on their social media pages. These contents often relate to their opinion, lifestyle, and stories where they use their expertise, presentation, and storytelling skills. Thus, it may lead to a sense of affiliation among the followers resulting in a positive or negative attitude towards influencers and their social media posts.

Further, an influencer who is perceived as more credible and trustworthy will often be seen as an authentic source of information, thus resulting in positive evaluation by followers. Jin and Muqaddam

(2019) also emphasized that the source credibility of influencers resulted in consumers' positive attitudes towards the brand. Hence, consumers' engagement with SMIs might influence the perceived credibility of SMIs, resulting in attitudes towards influencers and attitude towards brands.

Purchase intentions

Past studies considered purchase intention as another outcome of consumer engagement using influencers. For example, Lou and Yuan (2019) in their research about influencer mechanisms explained that source credibility factors influence purchase intention. Similar results were reported by multiple studies (Breves et al., 2021; Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019; Kay et al., 2020; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Trivedi & Sama, 2020). Influencers often share their experiences with the product they promote in their social media posts, frequently discussing how to use them and what consumers can expect from them (Audrezet et al., 2020). These brand posts create followers' trust in influencers as they can relate to them personally. Hence, SMIs can significantly affect the purchase intention of consumers. Consequently, it is important for influencers to take care of ethics and integrity while sharing the information to remain trustworthy.

3.2.4 | Influencers' sponsorship disclosure

Past studies considered influencers' sponsorship disclosure as a factor that affects followers' relationship with the influencer, brand attitude, and advertisement evaluations by consumers. A few studies found that sponsorship disclosure had no impact on engagement outcomes of brand evaluation and purchase intention (Breves et al., 2021; Feng et al., 2020). While, Kim and Kim (2021), in their research about social media users' affective and calculative motives, found that sponsorship disclosure was negatively associated with brand attitude. Moreover from influencer's perspective, Wellman et al. (2020), in their research on Influencers' ethical dilemmas, found that influencers did not believe sponsorship disclosure to be a significant ethical concern. In fact, Lou (2021) suggested that followers celebrate influencers' sponsorship disclosure as a success because they perceive it as an inspiration. Conversely, some other studies found that sponsorship disclosure leads to higher engagement and positive sentiments with followers, which further leads to higher purchase intention (Kay et al., 2020; Lou et al., 2019). Thus, authors believe influencers' sponsorship disclosure may work as a determinant of followers' relationship with the influencers.

3.3 | Methods used in articles reviewed

More than half of the papers used qualitative or experimental research design, and the rest followed a quantitative or mixed method approach in their study. Interviews were used to understand and identify factors important for followers' engagement with SMIs (Pentina et al., 2018; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014; Woodcock & Johnson, 2019).

Some new methods of qualitative research, such as netnography, content analysis, image analysis, and text analysis on social media posts, were also used by authors to analyse follower's engagement with brands and influencers (Argyris et al., 2020; Delbaere et al., 2021; Hughes et al., 2019; Kostygina et al., 2020; Martensen et al., 2018). One example of this is Silva et al. (2020)'s study which used semiotic image analysis to understand forms of engagement through SMIs and characterized the engagement as positive, negative, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. Based on these observations, the authors believe qualitative research does provide insights into the factors and relationships, but it is important to employ other methods of investigation to reach more certain outcomes. Few studies followed experimental methodologies to test how customers engage with a brand's post on social media (de Veirman et al., 2017; Giakoumaki & Kreppa, 2020). Only a few selected articles used new methodologies such as machine learning, topic modelling, and semiotic image analysis.

3.4 | Social media platforms used in articles reviewed

This review finds that the majority of past studies were based on the social media platform Instagram (Argyris et al., 2020; Belanche et al., 2021; Silva et al., 2020; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). It is maybe because Instagram has emerged as a platform that generates more engagement than other platforms with its new video and image features; therefore, more appealing visual content can be created (O'Meara, 2019). Thus, it provides a go-to place in terms of features, services, and technology to influencers, followers, and marketers. For example, de Veirman et al. (2017), in their study, used Instagram to analyse the impact of the Influencer's number of followers on brand attitude. Some of the studies were based on Facebook, where they analysed virtual communities on Facebook to understand consumers' engagement with brands (Hughes et al., 2019; Lima et al., 2019; Tafesse, 2016) and found that brand content on Facebook engages customers, encourages learning, sharing, and socializing on the platform. The rest of the articles used YouTube, Weibo, Xiaohongshu, and blogs in their studies to understand followers' attachment, closeness, and parasocial relationship with influencers (Daniel et al., 2018; Delbaere et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). It was noteworthy that only a few selected studies were based on more than one platform.

3.5 | An integrated framework

The current review findings revealed notable themes related to SMIs and consumer engagement. Given that SMIs are new to the field, early articles focused on understanding the interactions between brands, influencers, and consumers, focusing on source credibility (Tafesse, 2016; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014). Later the focus shifted to more factors such as consumers' behavioural factors and influencers-

followers relationships (Chae, 2018; Jin & Ryu, 2020; Lou, 2021; Wellman, 2020). Further, persuasion theory (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), source credibility theory (Hovland et al., 1953), and parasocial theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956) were often used in most articles to investigate the persuasiveness of SMIs (Martensen et al., 2018; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). These theories do offer critical insights into influencers' persuasiveness. Nevertheless, their roles should also be explored in consumer engagement and its outcomes. Finally, most of the articles in this review considered influencers' credibility factors, consumers' behavioural factors to be influencing influencers-followers relationship, engagement, attitude, and intentions (Aw & Chuah, 2021; Breves et al., 2021; Chmait et al., 2020; Delbaere et al., 2021; Trivedi & Sama, 2020; Xiao et al., 2018). However, no conceptualization integrating the factors exists in the literature.

Consequently, based on the identified themes, this study proposes an integrated conceptual framework (see Figure 2) of consumer engagement using SMIs by adopting the ADO Framework (Antecedents, Decisions, and Outcome). ADO is a popular framework, and it was also used in previous review articles (Kapoor & Banerjee, 2020; Paul & Benito, 2018). This review outlined and organized the identified factors into ADO Framework. This integrated framework provides a holistic view and highlights factors related to influencers' engagement with consumers on social media platforms in consonance with persuasion theory, source credibility, and parasocial theory. Specifically, the framework outlines that influencer's credibility factors and consumer's behavioural response factors, such as attractiveness, expertise, and social comparison, as antecedents to follower's relationship with influencers and consumer engagement factors which further lead to outcome factors such as attitude towards social media posts, influencers, and brands. These outcomes can be beneficial in forming a positive attitude towards influencers, brands, social media posts, and purchase intention. The framework also outlines social media type and sponsorship disclosure as determinants of the antecedents, decisions, and outcomes in this framework. This means the relationship between the factors in this framework may depend on the type of social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, etc.) and the disclosure of sponsorship on the influencer's social media post. For example—consumers' perceived expertise of SMIs may vary on social networking, image sharing, or video hosting site. Similarly, the disclosure or non-disclosure of payments received by influencers to post brand messages on their social media page may also impact the overall factors and their relationships.

4 | RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

The previous section of this article identified antecedents and outcomes of consumer engagement with SMIs. This paper finds that majority of the articles considered source credibility as a critical factor that impacts consumers' engagement with influencers. However, the authors found that the comprehensiveness of source credibility and its subfactors remains an area that needs further exploration. Second,

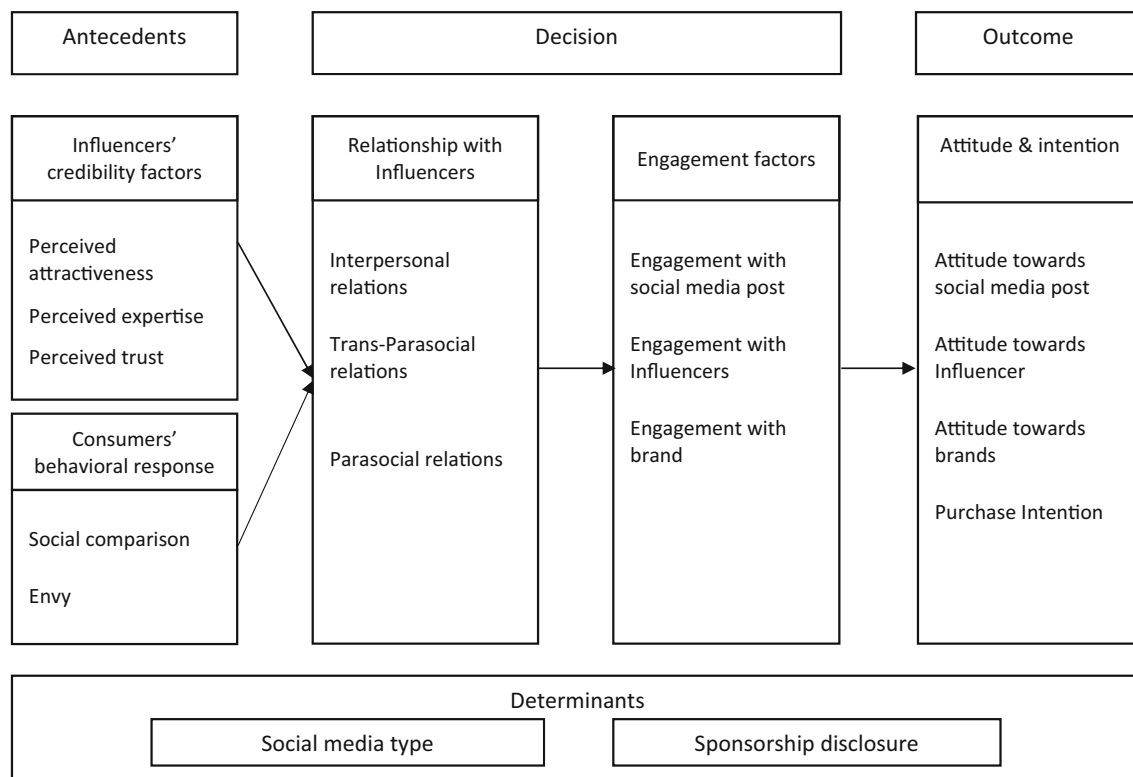


FIGURE 2 Framework of consumer engagement using social media influencers—antecedents, decisions, and outcomes (ADO) adapted by authors from Paul and Benito (2018)

the study also reveals that the complexity of consumers' behavioural responses to SMLs and how they influence consumers' decisions to engage or form a relationship is largely unaddressed. Third, the authors also identified that consumers' relationship with SMLs might also depend on the type of influencers and the type of product they promote. However, it remains largely unaddressed in the articles reviewed in this study. Fourth, the authors believe that factors such as sponsorship disclosure and social media platform type were given less emphasis despite their significance in this current domain. Based on these research issues, the authors discuss a few future research directions related to the framework, theory, models, methodologies, social media platforms, industry context, and influencer type.

4.1 | Identified future research directions—Framework

The framework can be further explored and validated by taking into consideration the following factors: influencer's credibility factors, parasocial relationships, engagement factors, and sponsorship disclosure. First, building upon this framework, influencer's credibility factors may impact consumer engagement with a brand on social media. For example, consumers' perceived trust in influencers may encourage them to develop a parasocial relationship with influencers which further results in more engagement with certain influencers than others. Although extensive research has been carried out on customer

engagement, further developments are needed to understand how these credibility factors motivate the consumer to engage with influencers is important to explore.

Second, this review found that existing literature undermines the role of consumers' behavioural responses in engaging with influencers, and only a few studies explored consumers' behavioural responses (i.e., social comparison, envy) to influencers' posts on social media. These factors may drive trust in influencers and brands. Hence, future research should validate and test how consumers' behavioural responses influence relationships and engagement with influencers.

Third, influencer's credibility factors are critical to understanding consumers' relationship with influencers. Although previous studies highlighted some credibility factors and how they influence consumer's relationships (i.e., parasocial, interpersonal, and transparasocial) with influencers, an in-depth study of the nature of this relationship is critical to understand how it fosters engagement on the social media platform. The parasocial relationship is based on one-sided interactions between media personas and the audience, whereas a transparasocial relationship is based on reciprocated interactions. Most of the articles in this review applied parasocial interaction theory to investigate the influencer-follower relationship. Admittedly, parasocial interaction theory does not fully explain the influencer-follower relationship as it is based on the interactions between traditional celebrities and audiences. As a matter of fact, it is non-reciprocated interaction, as media personas are often unaware of the audience's existence. The possibility of frequent interactions

between influencers and consumers through social media platforms may affect the nature of the relationship between influencers and followers, and it may also be different from that of a traditional celebrity-audience relationship. Thus, the relationship may incline towards transparasocial in nature. Hence, an inquiry is essential to probe further into the nature of consumers' relationship with influencers.

Fourth, sponsorship disclosure's presence or absence in a post may influence consumers' perception of influencers and brands, yet it was underexplored in existing literature as only a few studies explored its impact on influencer-consumer relationships and engagement. Further, this review did not find studies related to advertising policies and guidelines in concern with influencers. Hence, future research endeavours should explore how sponsorship disclosures, advertising and policy guidelines play a role in consumers' perception of influencers. Research focusing on sponsorship disclosure will not only generate new insights into consumers' perceptions but also contribute towards tools and frameworks for practitioners.

4.2 | Identified future research directions: Theory and models

Previous studies have developed and adopted various theories and models of consumer engagement, such as consumer engagement dimensions (Brodie et al., 2013), Likes, Comments, and Polarity (LCP) framework (Khobzi & Teimourpour, 2015), and experiential model (Tafesse, 2016). These studies certainly advance the knowledge about consumer engagement on social media, but using them to understand how brands use influencers for consumer engagement could limit the focus as their context was brand-owned social media pages and groups. Extant literature focuses on improving the grasp of influencers with existing theories of social media engagement which limits our focus to validating and testing rather than building new theories, models, and frameworks for a holistic view. For example, in this review, the authors could not find articles that concentrated on building new theories of consumer engagement with influencers. Hence, future research is required to develop new theories and models related to consumer engagement with influencers to understand and address issues and challenges faced by brands when they employ Influencers to promote on social media. Also, future studies should consider well-established theories that can provide critical insights when developing new theories. For example, source credibility theory is the well-established theory of social justice and is useful for understanding how credibility plays an important role in forming an attitude towards a source of the message. Future studies can work to advance this theory to understand consumers' perception of Influencer credibility.

In addition to this, future research should also explore the impact of influencers' credibility on purchase intentions, re-purchase, and satisfaction with the promoted product. Since influencers use creativity in their content or social media posts to promote brands, exploring how this content strategy creates positive or negative images about

brands and influences purchase intentions will be interesting. This review found very few articles that explored consumer engagement from an Influencer's point of view. Moreover, they play a significant role as an intermediary between brands and consumers on social media; thus, future research can work on new theories and models to explain influencers' choice of sharing content, brand stories, opinions, and experiences on various social media platforms.

Finally, existing literature gave significant attention to the relationship between influencers and consumers, yet there is ample scope to explore this relationship further to shed light on its dynamics. Past studies used well-established theories such as parasocial relationship theory, which refers to the celebrities-audience relationship. Future studies can consider advancing it to explain the differences in consumers' psychological experiences of interactions with influencers and celebrities and how it influences consumers' attitudes towards influencers and brands.

4.3 | Identified future research directions: Methodology

This study found that the majority of the articles in this review used survey-based methods, which might limit the scope of capturing consumers' behavioural aspects. Future research should develop innovative methods and tools such as machine learning models and other statistical tools to analyse images or videos as they can confirm and capture the validity of consumers' perceptions about influencers. In addition to this, qualitative studies and various techniques (e.g., grounded theory, ethnography, case study, etc.) should be further used to explore and understand the behavioural perspectives of consumers and influencers. This review found that a small number of studies used certain qualitative methods like interviews and netnography. Hence, future studies should diversify research methods to analyse extensive evidence related to consumers' engagement with influencers on digital channels. Further, mixed-method studies may help triangulate the research and provide rigorous evidence. Since influencer type and social media platforms can significantly influence consumer engagement, studies can also borrow methods from other disciplines, such as information science and follow analytical tools and techniques to increase validity. This review could not find any longitudinal study despite the fact that they can provide insights into how consumers' attitudes and behaviour towards influencers change over time and identify the factors that influence these behaviours. Although, experimental methods gained significant attention from the literature but were limited in terms of innovative approaches as most of the studies mixed it only with a survey. Hence, future experiments should use other innovative techniques, such as the mix of experiment-qualitative techniques, which can provide context-rich insights into how consumers interpret influencers' brand messages and contents.

To summarize, consumer behaviour on social media and influencer marketing attracted a significant number of studies. However, various authors reported contradictory results that still need further

exploration. Thus, reliable, validated, and conclusive findings are necessary to achieve. Finally, studies need to target future research in theory development, qualitative techniques, mix-methods, and analytical methods to understand and provide a holistic view of consumer engagement with influencers in the social media context.

4.4 | Identified future research directions: Contexts

Contextual studies help understand relevant factors of consumers' engagement with influencers. Since consumers' behaviours may vary based on the social media platform, industry, and type of influencers employed for a brand message, therefore, future research should focus on offering new theoretical perspectives to supplement existing research. Authors in this review found that major studies were focused on the social media platform—Instagram, although they provide an understanding of consumers' behaviours on Instagram yet are limited in terms of generalization of the findings. Thus, comparative studies can offer opportunities to understand how consumers' behaviours towards influencer changes across platforms (i.e., YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) or remains the same.

In addition to this, it is interesting to note that most of the studies are limited to using a single industry perspective. Therefore, future studies should explore comparative analysis and employ data from multiple industries to achieve generalizable findings. Past literature understated sectors like technology, banking, financial products, education, and on-demand services. Thus, these industries offer plenty of opportunities for future research avenues. Additionally, the categorization of influencers specific to the industry, such as fitness influencers, sports influencers, and fashion influencers, can be further explored to understand the impact of personalities and characteristics of these influencers on consumer engagement as it can be fruitful to identify relevant factors that play an important role to develop influencer marketing strategies.

5 | IMPLICATIONS

5.1 | Implications for marketers and brands

Influencer Marketing is projected to be worth \$13.8 Billion in 2021 (Influencer Marketing Benchmark report, 2021). Another report suggests that Instagram Influencer alone is likely to grow by 15% in 2021 (HypeAuditor, 2021). A significant 75% of the agencies intend to have a dedicated budget for Influencer Marketing (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). The report also notes substantial growth in influencer campaigns despite the pandemic threat.

In the above context, the research framework proposed in this study becomes relevant and valuable as it attempts to explain consumer engagement using SMLs. This study finds source credibility, parasocial relationships, and Influencers' sponsorship disclosure as significant factors influencing consumer engagement as proposed in the framework.

The framework details Antecedents (A), Decisions (D), and outcomes (O) of Consumer engagement using SMLs and also identifies 'social media type' and 'sponsorship disclosure' as factors impacting the engagement.

One of the significant factors identified as an antecedent in the framework is 'source credibility'. The source credibility factor implies that more consumers perceive the source (Influencers) to be credible; more likely, they will interact and pay attention to the brand message. Hence, the brands must be very selective about the influencers and work the most on the credibility of the influencers. The influencer's credibility is directly lent to the brand, and hence it can have a proportionate effect either way. Prominent reports have indicated a decline in influencer account-related frauds (especially on Instagram) which is good news for brands and helps to bolster 'source credibility' (HypeAuditor, 2021; Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021).

The framework proposed in this study identifies 'relationship with influencers' as part of the 'decision' component of the influence where 'Parasocial relations' shape the decision.

'Parasocial relations' as a key antecedent influence consumers' involvement with influencers resulting in their closeness and stickiness, and purchase intention.

'Identity similarity' significantly shapes parasocial relationships, which means that if audiences or consumers find influencers to be similar to them, then this can lead to the formation of parasocial relations and also satisfaction (Hu et al., 2020; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). For brands, this translates into strategically selecting an influencer who resembles or by and large has a similar identity as that of the target audiences/consumers. Brands are now focusing on finding and activating suitable influencers who can produce engaging content. As a result, the number of influencers activated by brands in the past 3 years has come down to very few, but the right type of influencers can effectively engage consumers (LINQIA, 2021).

The findings of this study, especially the 'Identity similarity' factor, suggest that brands should qualify influencers not solely by the size of the audience but also by the right audience. Brands must also be careful about ensuring the best possible congruence between the values of the brand and the personality of the influencer. Influencers should, by and large, represent the brand's belief and not deviate too much from it.

As of now, many brands are engaging with consumers on a campaign-to-campaign basis than continually (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). This largely takes care of the fitment of the influencer for the given objective of the campaign and the similarity with the target audience. In terms of engagement rate, micro-influencers have shown better engagement than macro or mega-influencers have. This again highlights the importance of 'Identity similarity.'

For small brands with <10,000 followers, influencer marketing is more effective as they gain efficiency from small or large influencers. On the contrary, Socialbakers (2020) suggests that large brands benefit from partnering with macro-influencers (more than 1 million followers).

The framework proposed in this study identifies 'source credibility' and 'parasocial relationship' as significant factors affecting

consumer engagement with SMIs, but on the other hand, another factor that does not have a very significant effect on engagement is 'Influencer's sponsorship disclosure.' Significant findings suggest an inverse relationship between 'disclosure of sponsorship by influencer' and 'brand attitude.' This effectively means that sponsored content will have a similar effect or influence as that of organic content. However, research needs to be longitudinally done, and brands must periodically assess the effect of 'sponsorship disclosure.'

This study deliberates on the engagement factors as a component of the proposed framework. The effectiveness of SMIs, especially those activated by brands, has strategic implications for marketers. Many methods and metrics are being tried and used to measure effectiveness. However, by far, Consumer Engagement remains the most widely used metric besides product sales and conversions (LINQIA, 2021). This highlights the importance of the findings of this research paper. It might be an excellent strategic move for brands to aggressively start sharing and leveraging influencer content in other marketing channels. This would encourage better consumer engagement on brand-owned marketing channels.

Besides the SMI-Consumer Engagement, the brand's engagement with influencers is also an essential aspect of the proposed framework. Brands will benefit if they seek a deeper long-term relationship with SMIs, provided a selection of SMIs is appropriately made to represent the audience's identity. The benefits of such a relationship can be leveraged to other marketing channels and help significantly in brand building.

Virtual Influencers are becoming popular in Asia with their high engagement rate. These virtual influencers have three times more engagement than real influencers. The virtual influencer trend is growing, and they are being used in various roles such as, promoting diversity, acceptance of technology, and eco-friendliness (HypeAuditor, 2021).

While the importance of SMI's Consumer engagement is well highlighted, marketers and brands are trying to address the significant concern for SMI campaigns. These determine ROI, the time taken to design and manage influencer marketing programs, and, lastly, the selection of the right influencer. The above concerns can be significantly addressed if marketers/brands consider the factors responsible for driving engagement between SMIs and Consumers, as this research highlights in the last part of the paper.

5.2 | Implications for social media influencers

Besides their responsibility towards the followers, SMIs also have a responsibility towards the brands they enter in commercial understanding. Referring to the discussion on source credibility, SMIs must maintain their credibility in the eyes of their followers, consumers, and associated brands.

A successful influencer forms a 'parasocial relationship' with their followers and audiences. 'Identity similarity' is a key to forming such a successful parasocial relationship (Sakib et al., 2020). To achieve this, influencers must very well study their target audiences, followers, and

consumers so that their identity resembles that of the audiences. Influencers should also keep in mind that, nowadays, a significant part of audiences is susceptible to the content they consume and the behaviour of the influencers (HypeAuditor, 2021). Hence maintaining 'Identity similarity' is a tightrope walk that needs to be paid careful attention.

'Sponsorship disclosure' by the SMIs does not seem to affect their influence/relationship with their audiences. However, influencers need to monitor their sponsored v/s organic content continuously and continually gauge the audiences' reactions. The study also finds that followers celebrate influencers' sponsorship disclosure as a success because they perceive it as an inspiration.

5.3 | Implications for researchers and academicians

The framework proposed in the study can work as a crucial discussion point in academics while explaining the impact of SMIs on consumer engagement. The present studies on consumer engagement consider the impact of social media on consumer engagement, but a few go to the granular level of SMIs and their impact on consumer engagement. Based on the findings of this research, academicians and researchers can validate and test how consumers' behavioural responses influence relationships and engagement with influencers.

The framework proposed in this research makes a compelling case to understand further how credibility factors motivate consumers to engage with influencers.

This study provides a good platform for future researchers on the impact of influencers' credibility on purchase intentions, re-purchase, and satisfaction with the promoted product.

This study found that the majority of the research on SMIs used survey-based methods, which might limit the scope of capturing consumers' behavioural aspects. It highlights the need for adopting newer methodological approaches to analyse images or videos as they can confirm and capture the validity of consumers' perceptions about influencers.

This research also pointed towards a dearth of longitudinal and experimental studies concerning SMIs and consumer engagement.

Authors in this review found that most of the studies focused on the social media platform—Instagram. Although they provided an understanding of consumers' behaviours on Instagram yet were limited in generalizing a theory. Thus, future comparative studies can offer opportunities to understand how consumers' behaviours towards influencers change across platforms (i.e., YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) or remain the same.

6 | CONCLUSION

This literature review analysed current literature on SMIs and consumer engagement. The study revealed that SMIs are gaining popularity among scholars, yet there is much scope to explore the topic

further. Currently, the research into SMIs and how they engage with consumers is limited to specific product categories, methodology, social media types, and influencer types. Future research can provide additional insights by extending the concept and theories to many product categories, industries, and industry contexts. It can be concluded from this study that source credibility, parasocial relationship, and consumers' behavioural response are the major factors that impact consumers' engagement with SMIs.

Further, brand attitude, attitude towards influencers, and purchase intentions are considered by a few researchers as the outcome of engagement factors in using SMIs. Finally, influencers' sponsorship disclosure and social media type are determinants of such influences. The authors also discussed, in detail, these antecedents, decision, and outcome factors related to SMIs and consumer engagement. With this understanding, the study developed an integrated conceptual framework concerning consumers' engagement using SMIs. Specifically, the framework is based on influencers' credibility factors (i.e., attractiveness, expertise, similarity with followers), consumers' behavioural responses (i.e., social comparison and envy), and their impact on the relationship between consumers and influencers to create positive effects described in the framework as outcomes. These outcomes can be beneficial in forming a positive attitude towards influencers, brands, social media posts, and purchase intention. Future research can test this framework across the industry to generate meaningful outcomes and a deeper understanding of this field. The study also summarized knowledge in this field and suggested promising future research directions from theory-building, methodology, and practice perspectives. Authors hope that these suggestions will stimulate future scholars for more insightful research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are thankful to the editors and reviewers for their continuous support, guidance and encouragement. The journey from idea to the acceptance stage was a great learning experience and added value to the body of knowledge.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no new datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

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How to cite this article: Pradhan, B., Kishore, K., & Gokhale, N. (2023). Social media influencers and consumer engagement: A review and future research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 47(6), 2106–2130. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12901>