

# Influencer marketing in the tourism industry: A systematic review of theories, methods, and findings

Sadakat Akram<sup>1\*</sup> and Rukhsana Majeed<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*Purpose* - This study aims to analyse behavioural outcomes shaped by social media influencers in tourist decision-making, identify dominant theoretical and methodological approaches, and examine how influencer marketing has been applied within the tourism sector.

*Methodology/Design/Approach* - A systematic literature review was conducted using the PRISMA approach. Publications from 2010 to 2025 indexed in Web of Science and Scopus were screened. Following the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion, 32 relevant studies on influencer marketing in tourism were selected for in-depth analysis.

*Findings* - The results indicate that influencer marketing has become an effective communication tool for many organisations; however, academic research in tourism remains limited and methodologically fragmented. Key factors influencing travel intention, destination loyalty, word-of-mouth, and experience sharing include credibility, authenticity, emotional engagement, parasocial interaction, and influencer–destination fit. Emerging themes such as virtual influencers, platform-specific content, ethical promotion, and green tourism messaging are also evident. Overall, influencer marketing significantly affects tourist behaviour when aligned with audience preferences, destination branding, and emotionally engaging narratives, although contextual differences highlight the need for comparative and integrative research.

*Originality/Value* - This study contributes to tourism literature by mapping the evolution of influencer-based destination promotion, identifying theoretical and empirical gaps, and proposing directions for future research while offering practical insights for data-driven influencer collaboration strategies.

**Keywords:** Influencer Marketing, Travel Intention, Destination Marketing, Source Credibility, Social Media Platforms

## Introduction

Tourism research as a distinct and structured topic of study has historically received a very less attention in scholarly literature. Tourism has a tremendous social, cultural, and economic impact on a global and local scale, yet it has gotten little attention from scholars in many academic areas (Wilson et al., 2008) states that it is a relatively new phenomenon that has seen significant changes in the field of investigation in recent decades. It is a topic with significant relevance because, tourism is one of the key industries that strengthens a nation's economic growth.

There is an increasing demand for organisations to better understand and respond to the needs of tourists due to the intense competition in today's tourism sector. Service providers must develop a deeper understanding of tourists' interests and behaviour, as these are crucial to the growth and sustainability of the travel industry. The academic literature highlights the importance of examining tourist behaviour to identify the key factors influencing travel choices. This understanding is essential for developing effective marketing strategies aimed at meeting tourist expectations and enhancing overall satisfaction.

\*Correspondence:

Sadakat Akram  
[sadakatakram6@gmail.com](mailto:sadakatakram6@gmail.com)

Department of Management Studies, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri, India

252-277



© The Author(s) 2026. Published by Borneo Novelty Publishing. **Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

In this context, several researchers emphasise the importance of understanding the factors that influence tourists' travel decisions. For instance, [Varkaris & Neuhofer \(2017\)](#) argues that research aimed at understanding and influencing consumer decision-making is becoming increasingly important in the face of intense global competition, making it a necessary condition for the effective development of market strategies that support business success.

Numerous researchers have also highlighted the growing need for in-depth studies on the evolving dynamics of tourist decision-making ([Kumar & Valeri, 2022](#); [Vrontis et al., 2021](#); [Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2023](#)). Collectively, these scholars advocate for a more comprehensive and systematic examination of the various factors influencing tourist behaviour. In particular, they emphasise the importance of exploring thematic patterns, methodological approaches, and sector-specific variations that shape travellers' decision-making processes and motivations. The decision-making process is influenced by multiple factors, including psychological, social, technological, cultural, and economic dimensions; therefore, understanding these factors requires a nuanced and interdisciplinary approach.

The researchers emphasise that traditional models may not adequately represent the complexity of contemporary tourist behaviour, given the dynamic nature of consumer expectations in the travel industry and the growth of digital and influencer-driven marketing tactics. To better understand decision-making in a more contextualised manner, they consequently recommend studies that not only classify existing research but also investigate gaps, emerging trends, and innovative frameworks. In the fields of tourism marketing, product development, and strategic destination planning, such studies are considered crucial for both academic advancement and practical application. Furthermore, tourists do not always base their decisions solely on rational thinking ([Decrop, 1999](#); [Pham, 2007](#)). Instead, these studies highlight the importance of behavioural factors that frequently influence travel decisions, particularly emotional responses, individual preferences, and psychological tendencies. Their findings indicate that cognitive biases are commonly present at different stages of the tourist journey, including pre-trip, during the trip, and post-trip reflections. These biases—such as confirmation bias, impulsivity, and over-optimism—often shape perceptions and lead travellers to make decisions that are not entirely rational or utility-based. Therefore, understanding these irrational elements provides important insights into how travellers evaluate destinations, interpret promotional content, and ultimately choose their experiences. This perspective also challenges the traditional notion of the rational consumer and underscores the need for tourism marketers and planners to integrate behavioural science insights into their strategies.

Moreover, [Jeng and Fesenmaier \(2002\)](#) and [Stylos \(2020\)](#) argue that technological developments have a significant impact on how travellers choose their destinations. Furthermore, [Munar et al. \(2013\)](#) disclose that social networks have transformed how people communicate in society, enabling the creation of communicational bridges that allow members of digital communities to become prescribers through the content they create, thereby influencing their audience. This process expands tourists' perspectives and aligns their views and opinions within a global discourse that affects their travel choices.

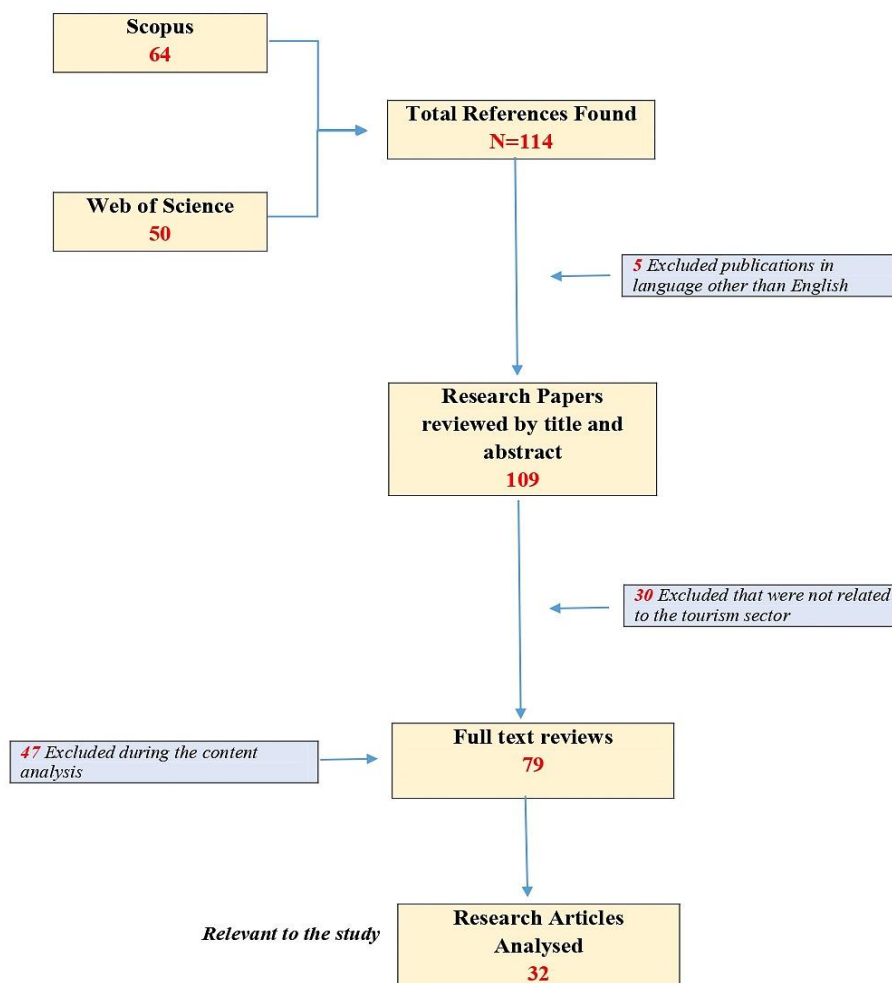
In terms of methodology, previous research has used a variety of approaches, such as surveys, experiments, and content analyses, to investigate how influencer marketing affects travel intention and destination loyalty ([Rodríguez-Hidalgo, et al. 2023](#)). However, despite the literature continues to expand, but there are still gaps in the theoretical integration, contradictory regional findings, and a lack of attention paid to new trends like platform-specific dynamics, virtual influencers, and micro-influencers. This emphasises how important it is to examine the phenomena and how further research is required to understand that how influencers affect promotional tactics. With the increasing shift to digital, it is necessary to also conduct a systematic review of the available knowledge on influencer marketing in tourism. This paper seeks to review literature, determine theoretical approaches, identify methodological trends and highlight new themes that characterize the field, in relation to tourism, between 2010 to 2025. The findings are intended to inform both academic inquiry and practical strategies for tourism marketers seeking to leverage influencer partnerships effectively.

The main objective of this study is to perform a comprehensive and systematic examination of influencer marketing in the travel industry from 2010 to 2025 in order to comprehend how digital influencers will affect traveler behaviour and destination marketing success. The study's specific goal is to determine the theoretical

underpinnings, methodological strategies, antecedents, mediators, moderators, and behavioural outcomes related to influencer-driven tourism promotion. The study aims to identify prevailing research themes, assess the strategic role of influencers for Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs), and investigate how factors like credibility, authenticity, emotional engagement, content type, and digital platform dynamics will impact travel intention, brand loyalty, word-of-mouth, and experience sharing by synthesising empirical evidence across various geographical and digital contexts. The ultimate goal will be consolidate disparate knowledge, identify gaps in the body of existing research, and offer a conceptual framework that will direct future scholarly investigations and useful strategies for tourism marketers to successfully leverage influencer relationships. The ultimate goal will be consolidate disparate knowledge, identify gaps in the body of existing research, and offer a conceptual framework that will direct future scholarly investigations and useful strategies for tourism marketers to successfully leverage influencer relationships.

## Review methodology

The literature review used in this investigation was informed by the PRISMA framework, which incorporates new conceptual and methodological developments in systematic reviews. Consequently, the evaluation proceeded through four main stages, which are briefly described below: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** PRISMA Diagram. Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025

In relation to the identification phase, a search was carried out in the Web of Science and Scopus-indexed databases for scholarly works on influencer marketing. A few keys were used to search the articles viz "Influencer, social media influencer, influencer marketing, tourism influencer". The 2010–2025 time frame was taken into consideration for this procedure since it included the first studies that addressed the problem,

allowing for an explanation of the development of those studies. A total of 114 papers pertaining to the keywords were found.

During the screening stage, 5 duplicate publications appearing across multiple databases, were removed. Furthermore, only peer reviewed scientific articles were retained leading to the exclusion of review papers. The selection was further refined by including only those articles published in English language, ultimately reducing the search to 109 research articles.

In the eligibility phase of selecting articles, only those research studies that clearly addresses the topic in their title, abstract and keywords were selected. As a result, 30 research articles not directly connected to the tourism sector were excluded, and reduced to a total of 79 documents.

During the inclusion stage, articles were thoroughly evaluated to make sure they were in line with the research focus. The first screening process was based on titles, abstracts, and conclusions; full-text reviews were conducted where the relevance was not clear. As a result of this process, 47 articles were excluded since their research objectives were inconsistent with the present research. In the final phase, 32 articles were chosen for content analysis since they were considered appropriate.

## Results

A thorough analysis of regional and global research outputs was carried out in order to interpret the ways in which the subject of influencer marketing has been studied. The results show that influencers are becoming more and more important in a variety of industries, including business, healthcare, education, and most importantly communication. An increasing understanding of the influencer as a key player in contemporary communication ecosystems is reflected in this integrative study. Despite this, there are still very few research specifically focused on the tourism industry, suggesting a lack of understanding and use of this phenomena in this setting.

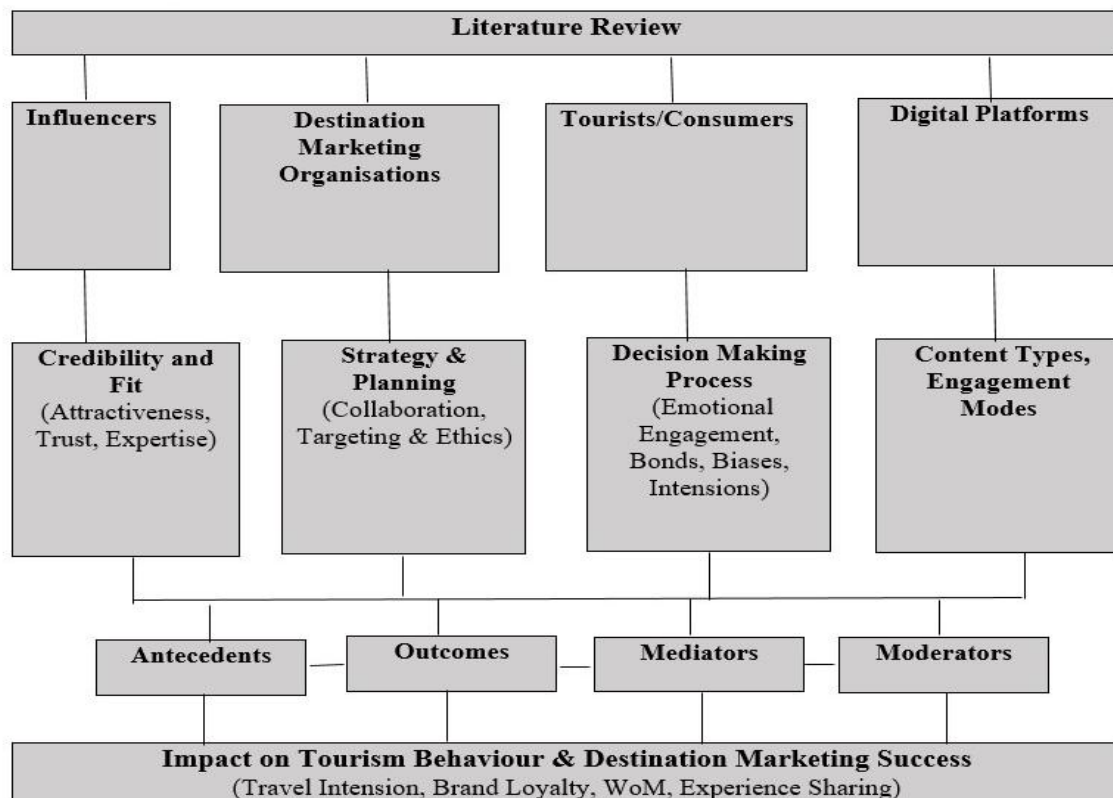
The examined research revealed a number of fundamental components thought necessary for influencer marketing to be implemented successfully. These include of audience involvement, credibility, authenticity, and the strategic application of digital platforms. These elements have been identified to be crucial in influencing consumer perception and influencing marketing results. Nevertheless, the application of these concepts specifically to the tourism industry is still in its early stages. Numerous articles only briefly discuss tourism, indicating an overlooked opportunity to use influencer marketing to promote destinations and engage tourists.

The impact that social personalities, sometimes known as opinion leaders, have on influencing attitudes and actions is a recurrent issue in the literature evaluated. Such individuals frequently act as intermediaries between cultures that can change consumer behaviour and increase brand value by communicating in a specialised way. However, academic discussion about the theoretical and methodological frameworks that may methodically explain how influencers function in the marketing of tourism is still lacking. In order to develop an adequate comprehension of the ways in which influencers shape travel preferences and tourism-related decision-making, more targeted study is required. To enhance comprehension of the reviewed literature, the analysis is divided into two main sections. The first sections presents the subjects that have been the focus of research and identified across the reviewed papers. The second section of this study emphasizes more intently on the particular dimension of the influencer phenomenon in relation to the tourism & hospitality sector. As illustrated in [Figure 2](#), the proposed framework integrates these dimensions to explain the role of influencer marketing in tourism.

## Influencers

There is a wide range of conceptualisations in the literature on digital influencers, much of which has been addressed in foundational studies. [Freberg et al. \(2011\)](#) provide a frequently cited definition, describing influencers as individuals who have developed a substantial network of followers and are perceived by their audiences as credible sources of information. These individuals leverage their perceived authority and authenticity to shape opinions and influence purchasing decisions, particularly within specialised domains of

interest. Unlike traditional media personalities, influencers are not only content distributors but also active participants in the communication process, which enhances their persuasive power (Boerman et al., 2017).



**Figure 2.** Propose Framework: Influencer Marketing in Tourism. Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025

Differentiating influencers from celebrities or other media figures is essential. Influencers typically emerge from more organic, interest-driven networks, whereas celebrities often operate within environments characterised by mass popularity and managed exposure. Marwick and Boyd (2011) argue that influencers' effectiveness depends largely on their ability to build relatable, peer-like relationships with their audiences. Their close social proximity enhances both credibility and influence over decision-making. Rather than relying solely on visibility, their authority is often domain-specific and grounded in experiential expertise. This intimacy positions influencers as micro-celebrities whose authenticity and trustworthiness can outweigh mere fame (Abidin, 2016).

Several researchers have identified measurable indicators of influence (De Veirman et al., 2017; Belanche et al., 2021). Metrics such as follower counts, engagement rates (e.g., likes, comments, and shares), and audience interaction are commonly used to assess an influencer's effectiveness and reach. These indicators reflect the extent to which audiences actively engage with and interpret content. In addition, scholars have examined the motivations underlying influencers' content creation to better understand their communication styles. Key drivers include the desire for social connection, perceived usefulness, trust-building, and self-expression (Huang et al., 2009; Seeler et al., 2019). Meanwhile, Okonkwo and Namkoisse (2023) emphasise the importance of content quality, narrative coherence, platform suitability, and authenticity in building and sustaining influence.

Furthermore, Enke and Borchers (2021) argue that influencer power is not inherent but is constructed through audience targeting, strategic content creation, and an evolving understanding of social media ecosystems. They suggest that influencers' effectiveness lies in their adaptability and their ability to produce content that resonates with the interests and preferences of specific communities, rather than merely in their personal attributes. This perspective aligns with the arguments of Keller and Richey (2006) and Azoulay and Kapferer (2003), who view influencers as strategic communication entities rather than fixed identities. From this viewpoint, the concept of an influencer is less about inherent personal traits and more about their

communicative role. Consequently, influencer identity is dynamic and shaped by context, audience engagement, and communicative purpose.

Table 1 shows a number of characteristics identified by researchers in the figure of the influencer that contribute to the effective communication of their messages and the adoption of these messages by their audience.

**Table 1.** Influencer Characteristics

Variable	Dimensions	No. of Articles	Weight %	Articles
<b>Credibility</b>	Experience, reliability, and attractiveness	4	12.5	Breves et al. (2019); Fink et al. (2020); Reinikainen et al. (2020); Sakib et al. (2020)
<b>Experience</b>	Knowledge or skill derived from observation, participation, and experience of an event	3	9.37	Hughes et al. (2019); Ki & Kim (2019); Trivedi & Sama (2020)
<b>Physical Attractiveness</b>	Public attention and interest in the influencer	2	6.25	Lee & Watkins (2016); Sakib et al. (2020)
<b>Familiarity</b>	Way of being and acting that makes them pleasant to others	2	6.25	Torres et al. (2019); Trivedi & Sama (2020)
<b>Popularity</b>	Admission, approval, acceptance, or appreciation by the majority for a particular activity	2	6.25	Hill et al. (2017); Ladhari et al. (2020)
<b>Reliability</b>	Ability to perform efficiently and effectively without mistakes based on action and knowledge	1	3.13	Schouten et al. (2020)
<b>Power of Influence</b>	Ability to influence, determine, or alter the thinking or behaviour of their audience	1	3.13	Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández (2019)
<b>Prestige</b>	Good reputation, positive opinion, recognition, respect, and trust	1	3.13	Ki & Kim (2019)
<b>Not Specified</b>		16	50.0	

*Note: Relative frequencies are based on 32 articles. Source: Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025*

### **Destination Marketing Organisations:**

A vast range of stakeholders are included in destination marketing organisations (DMOs), and each one contributes in a different way to the growth and promotion of travel destinations. These Organisations may comprise both private sector players like lodging establishments, travel agencies, and transportation companies that concentrate on more focused, product-specific marketing initiatives, as well as publicly financed tourism organisations in charge of more general national or regional branding. In order to adjust communication strategies to changing audience behaviours, specialised marketing consultants are becoming more and more prevalent as intermediaries that assist in bridging the gap between DMOs and online content creators, such as social media influencers (Kilipiri et al., 2023).

In the contemporary digital ecosystem, influencers have become prominent contributors to destination branding. When Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) integrate influencers into their strategic marketing activities, they can access peer-driven and authentic communication channels that resonate with younger, technologically savvy audiences. Influencer marketing is considered a flexible and cost-effective strategy that enables tourism stakeholders to remain competitive in an increasingly crowded global market (Iswanto et al., 2024). Additionally, by fostering the development of online communities centred on travel experiences, these digital figures enhance both the emotional appeal and social visibility of destinations (Gretzel, 2017).

Consequently, influencers contribute to improved performance indicators such as user engagement, follower growth, and conversion rates. Influencer collaborations have been shown to positively impact key performance indicators (KPIs), including reach, engagement rate, and ultimately return on investment (ROI)

(Kapitan & Silvera, 2016). As a result, DMOs increasingly prioritise partnerships with influencers who demonstrate strong audience alignment and thematic relevance, rather than focusing solely on follower numbers. Casalo et al. (2018) argue that an influencer's ability to generate authentic engagement and convey a credible destination narrative is as important as their level of visibility.

Additionally, the relational component of influencer collaboration is crucial to destination marketing, as DMOs benefit from the capability of influencers to create engaging, experiential content that elevates a place and promotes trust among prospective tourists. This narrative style improves perceived authenticity, which is a quality that contemporary tourists are increasingly considering, and allows for more credible two-way communication than conventional advertising or institutional tourism websites (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). Significantly, research has shown that the audience's intention to visit is greatly influenced by the perceived consistency between the influencer and the destination brand, highlighting the significance of choosing ambassadors whose image is consistent with the identity of the place being promoted (Pencarelli, 2020).

As the travel industry develops further, DMOs need to take a more logical and research-based approach to influencer marketing. In addition to finding influencers whose audiences and ideals complement the destination's objectives, this entails becoming ready for the wider effects of influencer partnerships on reputation management, branding, and enduring tourist loyalty (Trunfio & Della Lucia, 2019). In the digital age, influencer marketing is becoming a crucial component of destination promotion plans rather than a supplemental approach.

### **Tourists/Consumers**

An individual who obtains and uses goods and services is considered as consumer (Terry, E. 2016). The behaviour of consumer comprehends not only the process of purchasing but also the roles people perform before, during and after consumption. In this case these consumers can be divided into numerous roles based on their contribution in the process of decision-making, like as , influencers, initiators, buyers, deciders and users (Kotler et al., 2021). In the perspective of tourism, however these roles frequently appears within a single person i.e the tourist; who analyzes the purchases and experiences service directly (Gretzel et al., 2006). The consumer acts as the primary focus of persuasion efforts, in strategic communication, especially influencer marketing. In the digital ecosystem, they are not just the recipients of messages but also active responders and interpreters. These people may be loyal followers of influencers viewers who come across commercial contents on platforms such as Instagram or YouTube etc. (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Their reaction to persuasive content is influenced by a huge number of internal factors consisting personal attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences, which are consistent with the traditional concept of persuasion proposed by McGuire (1989).

Present studies has emphasised on the motivations beyond engagement of consumers with contents of influencer. As indicated by (Ki et al. 2020) recognizes that the main motivators of effective influencer are emotional connection, entertainment, trust, informational value, and perceived authenticity. Similarly Sokolova and Perez (2021) indicates that credibility and relatability of influencer improves acceptance of message, which may openly impacts purchasing intentions. These outcomes stresses the significance of consistent persuasive tactics with motivations of customer to adopt engagement deeply.

The impact of influencer communication is further enhanced by customers' social nature. Digital communities are crucial places for identity building and comparison as people want for social approval and a sense of belonging (Niarawati, 2024). Influencers contribute in this approach by regularly disclosing details of their personal life, which promotes parasocial interactions; one-sided emotional bonds that develop between viewers and media personalities. This closeness sets influencers apart from conventional superstars and strengthens their ability to persuade (Giles, 2002). In addition to these relational variables, consumers' internalisation and response to influencer messaging are also influenced by psychological characteristics such as aspirational identification, resemblance, adoration, and inspiration. Influencer marketing is successful, according to Vrontis et al. (2021), when customers view influencers as idealised representations of themselves or as real extensions of themselves. When paired with effective message and consistent content, this emotional resonance fosters behavioural impact.

Many factors have been found to understand how influencers impact consumer decision-making after a thorough study of pertinent academic literature. A variety of behavioural effects that businesses seek to induce through influencer marketing methods have been studied by academics. Purchase intention, brand trust, brand attitude, product appeal, consumer interest in the influencer and the product, emotional engagement, brand loyalty, brand recognition, and ultimately persuasive purchase behaviour are some of these outcomes (Vrontis et al., 2021). The type of product or service being promoted, the target audience's profile, and the organization's overarching strategic goals all influence how successful these results are.

Researchers advise against excessively commercialising influencer content, though. Overt or inadequately disclosed sponsorships can harm the credibility of the influencer and the company if they are not done correctly (Reijmersdal et al., 2016; Hudders et al., 2021). The employment of influencers entails strategic and ethical obligations, much like other persuasive communication techniques. Overly forced, scripted, or commercial messaging can backfire by undermining the endorsement's sincerity and eroding consumer confidence.

In order to ensure that promotional content is in line with both the influencer's own brand and the expectations of their audience, influencer marketing should place a high priority on authenticity and relevancy. This strategy not only maintains the message's integrity but also strengthens consumers' perceptions of the endorsed brand's worth.

Table 2 displays a few variables identified after analysing some literatures, which have been studied to understand the influencer phenomenon and its intervention in consumer decision-making.

**Table 2.** Consumer Characteristics

Variable	No. of Articles	Weight %	Articles
Inspiration	1	3.13	Ki et al. (2020)
Self-Congruence with the Influencer	1	3.13	Kim & Kim (2020)
Parasocial Interaction	4	12.5	Hu et al. (2020); Jin et al. (2019); Lee & Watkins (2016); Sokolova & Kefi (2020)
Enjoyment	2	6.25	Ki et al. (2020); Magno (2017)
Homophily	3	9.37	Ki et al. (2020); Magno (2017); Schouten et al. (2020)
Influencer–Fan Bond	1	3.13	Folkvord et al. (2019)
Identification of Desires	1	3.13	Hu et al. (2020)
Sense of Friendship	1	3.13	Kim & Kim (2020)
Not Specified	18	56.25	

*Note:* Relative frequencies are based on 32 articles. Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025

### Digital Platforms

The marketing landscape has changed dramatically as a result of the quick spread of digital platforms, especially with the rise and development of influencer marketing. Influencer marketing uses people with a solid social media following and established credibility to promote goods and services, frequently through genuine interaction and personal narratives (Lou & Yuan, 2019; De Veirman, 2017). Influencers primarily communicate with their fans through digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. These platforms allow for real-time communication, visual branding, and algorithmic content amplification.

In contrast to conventional marketing methods, digital platforms provide a dynamic and interactive environment where users can co-create content in addition to receiving messages (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Because digital influencers, particularly micro- and nano-influencers, develop trust and perceived authenticity through consistent engagement and relatability, this interactivity has made influencer marketing highly effective (Sokolova & Perez, 2021; Ki et al., 2020). These platforms enable brands to more effectively segment and contact specific consumers through scalable, targeted, and economical marketing techniques.

Based on recent research, platform features—including content format (e.g., short-form videos on TikTok), algorithmic visibility, and audience demographics—play a crucial role in determining the success of influencer campaigns (Boerman et al., 2017; Jin et al., 2019). Additionally, there are new issues with disclosure, openness, and consumer trust when sponsored material is integrated into native digital settings (Evans et al., 2017). Researchers want a comprehensive understanding of how platform affordances affect influencer reputation, engagement metrics, and behavioural effects as legislation and consumer awareness change. A thorough analysis of the current state of research on influencer marketing on digital platforms is both necessary and appropriate given the growing reliance on these platforms in contemporary marketing strategies. The purpose of this study is to summarise academic findings, pinpoint research gaps, and suggest future paths for comprehending the relationship between influencer efficacy and digital media settings.

### ***Credibility and Fit (Attractiveness, Trust, Expertise)***

Due to consumers' increasing involvement and trust in social media content creators, influencer marketing has emerged as a major force in digital branding initiatives. The credibility of the influencer, which is frequently viewed via three main dimensions: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise is a fundamental component underpinning the success of influencer marketing (Ohanian, 1990). Together, these factors influence the influencer's persuasiveness and the degree to which viewers regard them as genuine, trustworthy, and informed information providers. Credibility in the context of digital marketing is intricately linked to the influencer's alignment with audience expectations and brand values rather than just being a function of fame. According to research, consumers' views, brand assessments, and purchase intentions are more inclined to be influenced by influencers with high source credibility (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). By improving message relevance and perceived authenticity, endorser-brand congruence the fit between the influencer and the endorsed brand, further fortifies this link (Breves et al., 2019). Influencers' initial audience attention and emotional connection are greatly influenced by their attractiveness. The source attractiveness concept states that likeability and physical appeal encourage emotive reactions that can boost message adoption (Till & Busler, 2000). But integrity is frequently the most important component, especially when it comes to long-term brand partnerships. Consumer trust is increased by influencers who are seen as genuine and honest, and this can result in increased brand credibility. In a similar vein, persuasive results are reinforced by expertise, which is defined as the influencer's perceived knowledge or skill on the topic matter, particularly in fields like technology, fitness, and health (Jin et al., 2019). Although each of these aspects of credibility affects consumer behaviour on individual basis, an extensive study of their combined effects and relationship to brand-influencer fit is necessary. According to earlier research, Lee and Kim (2020) and Schouten et al. (2020) found that a strong alignment between an influencer's image and a brand's identity enhances message persuasiveness and reduces perceived advertising bias. In light of these revelations, the goal of this systematic literature review is to summarise what is already known about how influencer credibility and brand fit affect customer reactions, spot conceptual and methodological trends, and suggest future study avenues in this quickly developing topic.

### ***Strategy & Planning (Collaboration, Targeting & Ethics)***

Influencer marketing's strategic and planning dimensions have become important focal points for both industry practice and scholarly research. As influencer marketing develops from a fad to a disciplined field, more focus is being placed on how companies plan their partnerships, target markets, and handle moral dilemmas (Boerman et al., 2017; Schouten et al., 2020). Influencer marketing, in contrast to traditional advertising, necessitates a sophisticated and meticulously crafted strategic strategy that incorporates relational, ethical, and market-based factors to guarantee effect, authenticity, and alignment. Influencer-brand collaboration has changed from transactional to strategic partnerships with the goal of co-creating value through shared narratives and sustained engagement (Glucksman, 2017). According to research, influencer credibility, shared values, and alignment with the brand's identity and mission are critical components of a successful influencer-brand partnership (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Co-creating content and storytelling techniques that appeal to the influencer's audience while upholding brand consistency is another aspect of strategic

collaboration (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). In influencer marketing, targeting strategy is essential to increasing campaign efficacy. In order to ensure message relevance and engagement, brands are increasingly dividing influencer audiences according to demographics, psychographics, and behavioural traits (Ki et al., 2020). For instance, despite having less followers, micro- and nano-influencers are frequently carefully selected due to their highly engaged niche audiences (De Veirman et al., 2017). Data analytics and AI solutions enable marketers to match influencers whose audience characteristics closely fit their campaign objectives, supporting this intentional targeting (Jin et al., 2019). Strategic planning now places a high priority on ethics in influencer marketing, especially when it comes to disclosure, transparency, and the possible manipulation of customer perceptions. In the US, regulatory organisations like the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have made disclosure requirements for sponsored material mandatory, highlighting the importance of ethical communication (Evans et al., 2017). But according to studies, not all influencers follow disclosure guidelines, which raises questions about authenticity and trust (Boerman et al., 2017). As a result, ethical issues are becoming crucial to influencer marketing tactics, necessitating the establishment of precise rules, accountability systems, and transparency procedures by brands. The purpose of this systematic literature review is to compile the body of knowledge about the strategic and planning aspects of influencer marketing, with a particular emphasis on collaborative models, targeting tactics, and ethical frameworks. By looking at these three pillars, the review hopes to give readers an extensive understanding of how strategic planning supports effective influencer marketing initiatives and point out areas that still require investigation.

### ***Decision Making Process (Emotional Engagement, Bonds, Biases, Intensions)***

Influencer marketing (IM) has become a highly effective digital marketing strategy in recent years, transforming how consumers develop preferences and make purchasing decisions. Consumer decision-making in this context is no longer purely rational or information-driven, but is increasingly shaped by emotional, relational, and psychological factors (Casaló et al., 2018; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Furthermore, Lou and Yuan (2019) emphasise that these influences play a critical role in shaping consumer responses. Schouten et al. (2020) also argue that influencers build emotional connections with their followers, fostering familiarity and trust that affect every stage of the decision-making process, from awareness and evaluation to purchase and post-purchase behaviour. Consumer perceptions and behaviour are greatly influenced by the emotional interaction between influencers and followers. Influencers provide realistic stories, real-life experiences, and genuine interactions that, in contrast to traditional advertising, promote parasocial relationships—one-sided emotional bonds that customers develop with influencers (Jin et al., 2019). These connections strengthen persuasive power, fostering emotional attachment and loyalty in addition to brand awareness (Sokolova & Perez, 2021). The likelihood of positive attitudes and behavioural intentions, such as purchase and recommendation, rises with emotional involvement (Lim et al., 2017). Moreover, cognitive biases such as halo effect, confirmation bias, and social proof are commonly activated in influencer marketing environments. Consumers may instinctively attach good features to a product just because they like the influencer (Freberg et al., 2011). Furthermore, influencer trustworthiness and message consistency have a major impact on intention formation, a crucial precursor to decision-making (Martensen et al., 2018). Additionally, studies show that followers are more likely to embrace the viewpoints of influencers when they identify with them personally or share their values (Lee & Watkins, 2016). This influences both long-term brand advocacy and short-term behaviours like purchases.

The goal of this systematic literature review (SLR) is to compile and critically analyse the academic literature on the psychological and emotional processes that influence consumer decision-making in influencer marketing. In order to comprehend their functions, relationships, and implications within this developing field of marketing research, the review specifically focusses on four essential constructs: emotional engagement, interpersonal attachments, cognitive biases, and behavioural intents.

### ***Content Types, Engagement Modes***

Influencer marketing (IM) has completely changed as a result of the emergence of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and others. This has opened up new channels for consumer interaction and brand communication. These platforms function as interactive ecosystems where influencers

create a range of content formats and cultivate unique modes of engagement with their followers, rather than just being digital advertising places (Khamis et al., 2017; Hudders et al., 2021). Understanding the interaction between content types and user engagement tactics in influencer marketing is crucial since platform-specific affordances have a substantial impact on the creation, distribution, and consumption of marketing content. Particular types of information and forms of engagement are promoted by each platform. For instance, Instagram supports both short-term and long-term influencer marketing by promoting beautiful visual material like Stories, Reels, and static photographs (Casaló et al., 2018). Long-form, narrative-driven videos, such as vlogs, product reviews, and tutorials, are made possible by YouTube and are especially useful for in-depth brand discussions and storytelling (Ferchaud et al., 2018). Using algorithmic exposure and user interaction, TikTok, which is well-known for its short-form video format, relies on entertaining, trend-based, and extremely viral material (Montag et al., 2021). Facebook, on the other hand, facilitates both community-driven and educational content in a range of formats, including live video, posts, and group discussions (Boerman et al., 2017). Influencers use a variety of content genres, including as educational (tutorials, product demos), amusing (challenges, skits), and experiencing (travel vlogs, behind-the-scenes). According to Schouten et al., (2020), these forms not only fulfil several communication objectives but also appeal to a range of consumer psychological requirements, including inspiration, utility, identification, and emotional connection. The platform's affordances and the nature of the influencer-follower connection frequently influence the choice of content type. In contrast, different platforms and content formats have different ways of involvement, ranging from passive consumption (likes, views) to active engagement (comments, shares, duets, stitches, polls, DMs). For example, TikTok promotes engagement through remixing or duplicating content, Instagram Stories encourages rapid connections through polls or swipe-ups, and YouTube comments frequently lead to deeper conversations (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Lee & Kim, 2020). According to Jin et al. (2019), these forms of interaction promote customer participation, trust, and parasocial relationships all of which are important factors in influence and conversion.

There is still a need to thoroughly investigate how platform-specific content and engagement strategies affect customer reactions, despite the increasing scholarly interest in influencer marketing. The comparative and cross-platform dynamics that define contemporary influencer efforts have been overlooked by the majority of research to far, which has either examined platform effects in isolation or concentrated on certain content categories (Sokolova & Perez, 2021). Researchers and marketers may maximise influencer strategies in a variety of digital contexts with a thorough grasp of this dynamic phenomenon.

The purpose of this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is to gather and evaluate the existing research about content kinds and modes of engagement on the main influencer marketing platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. This study aims to uncover important trends, theoretical foundations, and research needs in the multi-platform digital influence environment by mapping the literature on platform affordances, content strategies, and user interactions.

### **Impact on Tourism Behaviour & Destination Marketing Success (Travel Intention, Brand Loyalty, WoM, Experience Sharing)**

The last stage of the influencer-DMO-consumer interaction cycle deals with the behavioural results that appear when tourists are exposed to platform-driven engagement, strategic DMO messaging, credible influencer content, and psychologically anchored decision-making processes. Influencer-generated material significantly influences travel behaviour, impacting not only short-term travel intentions but also longer-term relationship outcomes including brand loyalty, word-of-mouth promotion, and sharing of destination experiences, based to a substantial body of research.

#### ***Travel Intention***

Due to their perceived competence, authenticity, and experience storytelling, influencers have a considerable impact on travellers' destination selections and visitation intents (Casaló et al., 2018; Sokolova & Perez, 2021). When followers view influencers as reliable sources whose advice fits with their own interests and lifestyle goals, their ambition to travel is strengthened. Jin et al. (2019) argue that persuasive impact is further

enhanced by emotional involvement, which is fostered through parasocial interactions and increases the likelihood that consumers will move from desire to action. According to research, intention creation is significantly influenced by the influencer's and the destination brand's congruence. High influencer-destination fit improves destination appeal, decreases perceived bias, and promotes message relevance (Breves et al., 2019; Pencarelli, 2020). When taken as a whole, these results show that influencers not only increase awareness but also dramatically alter tourists' behavioural intentions towards particular locations.

### **Brand Loyalty**

Influencer marketing fosters emotional ties and reinforces good opinions over time, strengthening destination brand loyalty beyond original travel intentions. Audiences start to link a destination with dependability and emotional worth when influencers continuously present coherent narratives about it through recurrent storytelling, follow-up experiences, and genuine endorsements (Hudders et al., 2021). Short-term persuasion is transformed into longer-term loyalty behaviours by parasocial interactions, trust, and identification with the influencer (Lee & Watkins, 2016). A key factor is the idea of authenticity: devoted followers often incorporate influencer recommendations into their own preference system, creating a strong bond with the promoted location (Vrontis et al., 2021). Additionally, DMOs that maintain influencer relationships over time foster a consistent brand image, which strengthens the development of loyalty.

### **Word-of-Mouth (WOM) and eWOM**

Positive opinions of influencer authenticity and content quality have a significant impact on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) activities, including sharing posts, leaving comments, reposting travel experiences, and suggesting places to peers. Consumers are more likely to share influencer-related information when it elicits strong feelings, provides practical benefit, or strengthens their own social identity, according to research on digital persuasion (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Through peer-to-peer dissemination, influencers serve as catalysts for the amplification of destination narratives, giving DMOs access to larger social networks. In the tourism industry, where tourists primarily rely on social evidence and recommendations to assess places, the influence of eWOM is especially crucial (Filiari & McLeay, 2014). Additionally, studies show that visually rich content, such YouTube vlogs or Instagram trip photos, improves persuasive eWOM effects by offering vivid mental simulations of the destination experience (Ferchaud et al., 2018; De Veirman et al., 2017). As a result, influencer-driven eWOM immediately boosts destination competitiveness and serves as a crucial byproduct of effective communication strategies.

### **Experience Sharing**

The post-visit behavioural consequence that completes the consumer decision loop is experience sharing. Influencers encourage tourists to record and share their own experiences on digital platforms in addition to providing inspiration for travel. According to theories of co-creation and digital engagement, visitors take on the role of secondary destination boosters, which is consistent with this participatory behaviour (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). Emotional fulfilment, perceived social value, and the desire to imitate influencer behaviour all have an impact on experience sharing (Ki et al., 2020; Niarawati, 2024). According to research, tourists who were first inspired by influencer material frequently share their experiences using comparable visual styles, captions, or storylines, which increases the destination's online visibility (Casaló et al., 2018). By increasing organic reach, boosting authenticity, and encouraging peer-driven validation, such user-generated content greatly enhances destination marketing success.

### **Antecedents of the study**

Table 3 presents a detailed overview of the antecedents explored in influencer marketing research within the tourism domain, based on a review of 32 articles. These antecedents represent the key factors that influence consumer attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors toward influencers and the content they share. The most frequently studied antecedent is Influencer Type, investigated in 5 articles (15.63%), indicating a strong research interest in how different types of influencers (e.g., celebrity, micro, virtual) affect audience

engagement and persuasion. This emphasis reflects the importance of selecting the right kind of influencer for effective marketing communication. Several other variables appeared in 2 articles each (6.25%), such as: Content Type/Format, Trustworthiness of the Influencer, Influencer's Popularity and Follower Base, Influencer Marketing (as a broader strategy), Destination Type, Social Media Influencer Marketing (SMIM) and Content Presented by Influencers. These topics suggest that both influencer characteristics (e.g., trust, popularity) and content-related features are crucial drivers of consumer response. The presence of multiple articles focusing on these aspects highlights their consistent relevance in shaping influencer effectiveness. Most of the other antecedents like AI-generated influencers, ethical messaging, emotional connection, green influencer passion, bio-digitalisation, and visual design were only examined in one article each (3.13%). These reflect emerging, niche, or highly specific research interests, suggesting potential areas for further exploration.

**Table 3.** Antecedents of the study

Variables	No.	Weight (%)	Key References
AI-generated Influencer	1	3.13	Ochoa et al. (2025)
Ethical Messaging in Posts	1	3.13	Ochoa et al. (2025)
Content Type/Format	2	6.25	Ochoa et al. (2025); Kapoor et al. (2022)
Posting Frequency & Timing	1	3.13	Ochoa et al. (2025)
Website Quality	1	3.13	Almakayeel (2023)
Trustworthiness	2	6.25	Bastrygina et al. (2024); Bidabadi Amin et al. (2021)
Perceived Expertise	1	3.13	Bastrygina et al. (2024)
Influencer Popularity	2	6.25	Bastrygina et al. (2024); Rajput & Gandhi (2024)
Emotional Connection	1	3.13	Bastrygina et al. (2024)
Cultural Heritage & Authenticity	1	3.13	Babu & Barik (2024)
Social Media Presence	2	6.25	Babu & Barik (2024); Szymkowiak et al. (2021)
Influencer Marketing	2	6.25	Kvítková & Masárová (2021); Banerjee et al. (2025)
Influencer Type	5	15.63	Meng et al. (2025); Liu et al. (2025); Chu et al. (2024); Zhang et al. (2025); Barbe & Neuburger (2021)
Destination Type	2	6.25	Meng et al. (2025); Son & Park (2024)
Social Attractiveness	1	3.13	Abate et al. (2025)
Physical Attractiveness	1	3.13	Abate et al. (2025)
SMIM	2	6.25	Raj (2023); Fas & Zumstein (2019)
Loyalty Programs	1	3.13	Fas & Zumstein (2019)
Exposure to Influencers	1	3.13	Mohanty et al. (2022)
Influencer Content	2	6.25	Fedeli & Cheng (2023); Tsai & Hsin (2023)
Influencer Recommendations	1	3.13	Rajput & Gandhi (2024)
Virtual Influencers	1	3.13	Choi & Choi (2024)
Visual Impact	1	3.13	Choi & Choi (2024)
Seasonality Content	1	3.13	Son & Park (2024)
Green Influencer Passion	1	3.13	Ding et al. (2024)
Travel Lifestyle Desire	1	3.13	Li et al. (2024)
Source Credibility	1	3.13	Yu et al. (2025)
Trust in Instagram	1	3.13	Choi et al. (2024)
Behavioral Realism	1	3.13	Kim et al. (2024)
Form Realism	1	3.13	Kim et al. (2024)

*Note: Relative frequencies are based on 32 articles. Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025*

Some unique antecedents such as Behavioral Realism, Desire for Travel Lifestyle, and Trust in Instagram Marketplace reflect the increasing complexity of digital environments and evolving consumer expectations in tourism promotion. Overall, the findings show that while a few core antecedents have received concentrated attention, the field is also branching out into diverse and innovative areas. This mix of established and emerging themes offers opportunities for future studies to deepen the understanding of influencer effectiveness in tourism marketing.

## Outcomes of the study

Table 4 presents a comprehensive summary of the outcomes explored in influencer marketing research within the tourism domain. These outcomes reflect the behavioral, attitudinal, and perceptual

**Table 4.** Outcomes of the study

Variables	No.	Weight (%)	Key References
Audience Engagement	1	3.13	Ochoa et al. (2025)
Ethical Purchase Intentions	3	9.38	Ochoa et al. (2025); Almakayeel (2023); Bastrygina et al. (2024)
Attitude Toward Ethical Travel	1	3.13	Ochoa et al. (2025)
Trust in Virtual Influencers	1	3.13	Ochoa et al. (2025)
Brand Support / Loyalty	2	6.25	Ochoa et al. (2025); Babu & Barik (2024)
Travel Podcast Consumption	1	3.13	Manisha (2024)
Travel Podcast Listening	1	3.13	Manisha (2024)
Brand Awareness	3	9.38	Bastrygina et al. (2024); Babu & Barik (2024); Fas & Zumstein (2019)
Brand Loyalty	1	3.13	Bastrygina et al. (2024)
Tourism Supply Chain	1	3.13	Ding et al. (2023)
Marketing Effectiveness	2	6.25	Ding et al. (2023); Babu & Barik (2024)
Online Interest in Destinations	1	3.13	Kvítková & Masárová (2021)
Tourism Demand Signals	1	3.13	Kvítková & Masárová (2021)
Visit Intention	3	9.38	Seçilmiş et al. (2022); Meng et al. (2025); Barbe & Neuburger (2021)
Green Destination Image	1	3.13	Abate et al. (2025)
Influencer Effectiveness	1	3.13	Raj (2023)
Endorsement Effectiveness	3	9.38	Liu et al. (2025); Zhang et al. (2025); Kapoor et al. (2022)
Customer Loyalty	1	3.13	Fas & Zumstein (2019)
Word-of-Mouth (WOM)	1	3.13	Fas & Zumstein (2019)
Influencer Credibility Perception	1	3.13	Mohanty et al. (2022)
Unethical Influencer Behavior	1	3.13	Fedeli & Cheng (2023)
Experience Sharing	1	3.13	Bidabadi Amin et al. (2021)
Destination Preference	2	6.25	Banerjee et al. (2025); Tsai & Hsin (2023)
Engagement Levels	1	3.13	Son & Park (2024)
Destination Perception	1	3.13	Rajput & Gandhi (2024)
Travel Content Engagement	1	3.13	Rajput & Gandhi (2024)
Bio-digital Influencer Perception	1	3.13	Jauffret et al. (2025)
Campaign Engagement	1	3.13	Choi & Choi (2024)
Consumer Engagement	1	3.13	Son & Park (2024)
Support for Green Initiatives	1	3.13	Ding et al. (2024)
Sense of Belonging	1	3.13	Li et al. (2024)
Purchasing Intention	4	12.50	Yu et al. (2025); Choi et al. (2024); Kim et al. (2024); Szymkowiak et al. (2021)

Note: Relative frequencies are based on 32 article. Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025

responses of consumers influenced by social media influencers. The most frequently studied outcome is Purchasing Intention, addressed in 4 articles (12.50%), highlighting that a primary goal of influencer marketing in tourism is to drive consumer buying decisions. This suggests a strong emphasis on measuring influencers' ability to convert interest into action. Following this, Ethical Purchase Intentions, Brand Awareness, Visit Intention, and Endorsement Effectiveness are each investigated in 3 articles (9.38%). Other outcomes, such as Brand Support or Loyalty and Destination Preference, appeared in 2 articles each (6.25%), showing a moderate focus on long-term consumer relationships and preferences influenced by marketing efforts. The majority of outcomes—such as Audience Engagement, Perception of Influencer Credibility, and Tourist Support for Green Initiatives, Experience Sharing, and Unethical Behavior of Influencers—are each

studied in 1 article (3.13%). These diverse themes indicate the breadth of research but also the scattered nature of focus in the literature. Additionally, newer and niche outcomes like Trust in Virtual Influencers, Perceptions of Bio-digital Influencers, and Sense of Belonging to Influencer Communities reflect emerging trends shaped by technological and social shifts in digital tourism marketing.

### Mediators of the study

Table 5 summarizes the mediating variables investigated in influencer marketing research within the tourism context. Mediators explain the mechanisms through which influencer marketing impacts

**Table 5.** Mediators of the study

Variables	No.	Weight (%)	Key References
Perceived Authenticity	3	9.38	Ochoa et al. (2025); Babu & Barik (2024); Fedeli & Cheng (2023)
Emotional Engagement	5	15.63	Ochoa et al. (2025); Bastrygina et al. (2024); Babu & Barik (2024); Son & Park (2024); Kim et al. (2024)
Perceived Ethical Value	1	3.13	Ochoa et al. (2025)
Satisfaction	1	3.13	Almakayeel (2023)
Loyalty	1	3.13	Almakayeel (2023)
Engagement Behaviours	2	6.25	Bastrygina et al. (2024); Kvítková & Masárová (2021)
Content Relevance	4	12.50	Bastrygina et al. (2024); Fas & Zumstein (2019); Son & Park (2024); Rajput & Gandhi (2024)
Social Media Platforms	1	3.13	Ding et al. (2023)
Marketing Effectiveness	1	3.13	Ding et al. (2023)
Consumer Awareness	1	3.13	Kvítková & Masárová (2021)
Destination Attractiveness	2	6.25	Kvítková & Masárová (2021); Tsai & Hsin (2023)
Influencer Credibility	3	9.38	Meng et al. (2025); Choi & Choi (2024); Barbe & Neuburger (2021)
Environmental Concern	1	3.13	Abate et al. (2025)
Perceived Experience	3	9.38	Liu et al. (2025); Mohanty et al. (2022); Bidabadi Amin et al. (2021)
Trust in Influencers	2	6.25	Mohanty et al. (2022); Yu et al. (2025)
Social Categorization	1	3.13	Zhang et al. (2025)
Cultural Understanding	1	3.13	Zhang et al. (2025)
Hotel Sustainability Perception	1	3.13	Kapoor et al. (2022)
Destination Evaluation	2	6.25	Bidabadi Amin et al. (2021); Banerjee et al. (2025)
Biodigital Influencer Usefulness	1	3.13	Jauffret et al. (2025)
Attitude Toward Technology	1	3.13	Jauffret et al. (2025)
Tourist Passion	1	3.13	Ding et al. (2024)
Trust in Tour Sellers	1	3.13	Choi et al. (2024)

*Note: Relative frequencies are based on 32 articles. Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025*

consumer behavior, helping to uncover the "how" and "why" behind its effectiveness. The most prominent mediator is Emotional Engagement, explored in 5 articles (15.63%). This reflects the crucial role of emotional connections in shaping tourist perceptions and intentions. Influencers who evoke emotional responses appear to have greater persuasive power. Another frequently studied mediator is Perceived Relevance of the Influencer's Content, found in 4 articles (12.50%). This underscores the importance of message relevance in capturing attention and influencing decisions—especially in digital tourism marketing, where content overload is common. Three mediators were studied in 3 articles each (9.38%): Perceived Authenticity, Perceived Credibility of the Influencer, Perceived Experience. Several other variables were examined in 2 articles each (6.25%), such as: Engagement Behaviours, Perceived Attractiveness of the Destination, Trust in Influencers and Destination Evaluation. These mediators suggest that the user's interaction with content,

perceptions of destination appeal, and level of trust play key roles in influencing outcomes. Most other mediators like Satisfaction, Loyalty, Environmental Concern, Social Categorization, Perceived Hotel Sustainability, and Attitude Toward Technological Change appeared in only one article (3.13%) each. These represent more niche or emerging areas of interest, pointing to the expanding scope of the research field.

### **Moderators of the study**

Table 6 highlights the moderators investigated in influencer marketing research in the tourism sector, showing how different factors influence the strength or direction of influencer marketing outcomes.

**Table 6.** Moderators of the study

Variables	No.	Weight (%)	Key References
Digital Literacy	2	6.25	Ochoa et al. (2025); Barbe & Neuburger (2021)
Audience Demographics	3	9.38	Ochoa et al. (2025); Bastrygina et al. (2024); Kvítková & Masárová (2021)
Skepticism Toward Influencers	2	6.25	Ochoa et al. (2025); Kapoor et al. (2022)
Ethical Consumerism Interest	1	3.13	Ochoa et al. (2025)
Social Media Usage	2	6.25	Bastrygina et al. (2024); Babu & Barik (2024)
Cultural Background	2	6.25	Bastrygina et al. (2024); Zhang et al. (2025)
Destination Context (Geo–Socioeconomic)	1	3.13	Ding et al. (2023)
Influencer Cultural Identity	1	3.13	Ding et al. (2023)
Influencer–Heritage Fit	1	3.13	Babu & Barik (2024)
Destination Type	2	6.25	Kvítková & Masárová (2021); Liu et al. (2025)
Need for Uniqueness (TNFU)	1	3.13	Meng et al. (2025)
Physical Attractiveness	1	3.13	Abate et al. (2025)
Loyalty Programs	1	3.13	Fas & Zumstein (2019)
Influencer Impact on Decisions	3	9.38	Mohanty et al. (2022); Bidabadi Amin et al. (2021); Banerjee et al. (2025)
Eco-tourism Involvement	1	3.13	Kapoor et al. (2022)
Source Credibility	2	6.25	Rajput & Gandhi (2024); Son & Park (2024)
Tourism Market Type	1	3.13	Jauffret et al. (2025)
Organizational Digital Maturity	1	3.13	Jauffret et al. (2025)
Familiarity with Virtual Influencers	1	3.13	Choi & Choi (2024)
Goal Specificity	1	3.13	Ding et al. (2024)
Cultural Norms	1	3.13	Li et al. (2024)
Influencer–Product Congruence	1	3.13	Yu et al. (2025)
Influencer/Post Type	2	6.25	Choi et al. (2024); Szymkowiak et al. (2021)
Realism Interaction (Form × Behavior)	1	3.13	Kim et al. (2024)

*Note:* Relative frequencies are based on 32 articles. Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025

The most frequently studied moderator is audience demographics, examined in 3 articles (9.38%), indicating that characteristics like age, gender, and income play a crucial role in shaping consumer responses. Moderators such as digital literacy (2 articles, 6.25%), skepticism toward influencers (2 articles, 6.25%), level of social media usage (2 articles, 6.25%), cultural background (2 articles, 6.25%), and type of destination (2 articles, 6.25%) also appeared prominently, suggesting that the effectiveness of influencer campaigns depends significantly on technological familiarity, user attitudes, and contextual relevance. Several moderators were examined in only one article each (3.13%), including previous interest in ethical consumerism, geographical and socioeconomic conditions, cultural identity and geographical characteristics, relevance of influencer's niche to heritage tourism, tourists' need for uniqueness (TNFU), physical attractiveness, loyalty programs, consumer involvement with eco-tourism, source credibility, type of tourism market, level of digital maturity, familiarity with virtual influencers, goal specificity, cultural norms, influencer–product congruence, influencer/post type, and interaction between form and behavioral realism. These less-studied variables reflect emerging and niche areas of interest, indicating the growing complexity of the field. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the impact of influencer marketing in tourism is not uniform, but moderated by various

demographic, psychological, cultural, and technological factors, calling for more targeted and context-specific strategies.

### Theoretical perspectives

Table 7 shows a series of theoretical perspectives used by researchers to describe how influencer marketing functions across digital environments. A theory is a collection of related concepts, definitions, and assertions that clarify or anticipate phenomena by detailing the relationships between variables (Wacker, 1998).

**Table 7.** Theories used in Influencer Marketing research

Theory	No.	Weight (%)	Key References
Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R)	5	15.63	Ochoa et al. (2025); Seçilmiş et al. (2022); Tsai & Hsin (2023); Szymkowiak et al. (2021)
Source Credibility Theory	4	12.50	Meng et al. (2025); Fas & Zumstein (2019); Rajput & Gandhi (2024); Yu et al. (2025)
Emotional Contagion Theory	3	9.38	Ding et al. (2024); Choi et al. (2024); Kim et al. (2024)
Para-social Interaction Theory	3	9.38	Chu et al. (2024); Mohanty et al. (2022); Manisha (2024)
Match-up Hypothesis	2	6.25	Fas & Zumstein (2019); Ochoa et al. (2025)
Source Attractiveness Model	2	6.25	Fas & Zumstein (2019); Mohanty et al. (2022)
eWOM / Reputation Theory	2	6.25	Chu et al. (2024); Barbe & Neuburger (2021)
Mind Perception Theory	2	6.25	Meng et al. (2025); Liu et al. (2025)
Social Categorization Theory	2	6.25	Zhang et al. (2025); Fedeli & Cheng (2023)
Consumer Decision-Making Process (CDMP)	2	6.25	Banerjee et al. (2025); Bidabadi Amin et al. (2021)
Social Identity Theory	2	6.25	Choi & Choi (2024); Li et al. (2024)
Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)	2	6.25	Kapoor et al. (2022); Son & Park (2024)
Social Learning Theory	2	6.25	Banerjee et al. (2025); Abate et al. (2025)
Social Influence Theory	2	6.25	Babu & Barik (2024); Ding et al. (2023)
Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)	1	3.13	Manisha (2024)
AIDA Model	1	3.13	Almakayeel (2023)
ADO Framework	1	3.13	Bastrygina et al. (2024)
Media Influence Theory	1	3.13	Kvítková & Masárová (2021)
Conceptual Framework Approach	1	3.13	Son & Park (2024)
SMMS Framework	1	3.13	Jauffret et al. (2025)
No Guiding Theory	1	3.13	Raj (2023)

Note: Relative frequencies are based on 32 articles. Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025

Reviewing a complicated phenomenon like influencer marketing via a theoretical perspective provides more insight into its mechanics and strategic implications. Despite increased interest, current research lacks theoretical consistency. This study uses a systematic review to identify major theories, frameworks, and gaps before providing an integrative model that increases understanding and directs future research (Vrontis et al., 2021). As shown in Table 7, researchers have used a variety of theoretical frameworks in Influencer Marketing study to clarify relevant consequences. This section briefly discusses some of the most prevalent theories in the area of study.

Table 7 presents a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations underpinning influencer marketing research in the tourism industry, based on 32 selected articles. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) emerges as the most frequently applied framework, used in 5 studies (15.63%), indicating its central role in explaining how environmental stimuli (like influencer content) affect tourists' emotional responses and behavioral outcomes. Following this, the Source Credibility Theory (Hovland & Weiss, 1951) is used in 4 studies (12.5%), highlighting the importance of influencer trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness in shaping consumer behavior. Theories like Emotional

Contagion and Para-social Interaction Theory are each used in 3 articles (9.38%), reflecting a growing interest in the emotional and relational dynamics between influencers and their followers. A range of other theories—such as the Match-up Hypothesis, Source Attractiveness Model, eWOM Theory, Mind Perception Theory, Social Categorization Theory, CDMP, Social Identity Theory, ELM, Social Learning Theory (Akers & Jennings, 2015), and Social Influence Theory appear in 2 articles each (6.25%). This diversity illustrates the multidisciplinary nature of influencer marketing, drawing from psychology, communication, consumer behavior, and social sciences. Meanwhile, theories such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 2011), AIDA model, ADO Framework, Media Influence Theory, Conceptual Frameworks, SMMS Framework, and studies with no guided theory are each applied in only one article (3.13%). These are either niche in application or emerging in relevance and demonstrate a potential area for future theoretical expansion and empirical validation. While some theories like S-O-R and Source Credibility dominate the current discourse, the wide range of less-frequently used theories suggests opportunities for integrating alternative perspectives to enrich the understanding of influencer marketing in tourism contexts. Future research may benefit from combining multiple theoretical lenses to capture the complex and evolving nature of influencer-consumer relationships.

### Organisation/ Industry investigated in Influencer Marketing research

Table 8 shows the main organisations and industries identified in the analysed literature, which have been examined to understand the contexts in which influencer marketing operates in different organisation.

**Table 8.** Organisation/ Industry investigated in Influencer Marketing research

Organisation / Industry	No.	Weight (%)	Key References
Tourism & Hospitality Industry	25	78.13	Ochoa et al. (2025); Manisha (2024); Almakayeel (2023); Bastrygina et al. (2024); Ding et al. (2023); Kvítková & Masárová (2021); Seçilmiş et al. (2022); Meng et al. (2025); Abate et al. (2025); Raj (2023); Liu et al. (2025); Fas & Zumstein (2019); Chu et al. (2024); Mohanty et al. (2022); Fedeli & Cheng (2023); Zhang et al. (2025); Kapoor et al. (2022); Bidabadi Amin et al. (2021); Banerjee et al. (2025); Rajput & Gandhi (2024); Choi & Choi (2024); Tsai & Hsin (2023); Yu et al. (2025); Choi et al. (2024); Barbe & Neuburger (2021)
Tourism Organizations / DMOs	2	6.25	Ding et al. (2024); Babu & Barik (2024)
Marketing & Advertising Industry	1	3.13	Kim et al. (2024)
Not Specified	4	12.50	Son & Park (2024); Jauffret et al. (2025); Li et al. (2024); Szymkowiak et al. (2021)

Note: Relative frequencies are based on 32 articles. Source: Authors fieldwork, 2025

Table 8 classifies the articles selected in the context of influencer marketing research from 2010 to 2025 based on the industry or organisational focus. The tourism and hospitality sector accounts for 25 out of 32 papers, or 78.13% of the total, making it the dominant research landscape. In the tourism industry, which includes hotels, travel agencies, and experience-based marketing, influencer marketing strategies are being used with great academic and practical interest, as evidenced by this dominating representation. Examples of this trend are researchers like Tsai & Hsin (2023), Meng et al. (2025), and Ochoa et al. (2025). A moderate amount of attention was paid to tourism organisations and DMOs, since they contributed two articles (6.25%). These studies specifically examined the use of influencers by national or regional tourism boards to advertise travel destinations (e.g., Babu & Barik, 2024; Ding et al., 2024). There is just one article (3.13%) about the marketing and advertising industry in the literature on tourism, despite the fact that it is crucial to influencer marketing in general (Kim et al., 2024). In tourist research, this points to a gap where the involvement of larger marketing organisations in influencer strategies are still limited. Interestingly, four papers, or 12.50% of the studies, did not identify the precise company or sector being studied. These include research that are

conceptual or framework-based (e.g., [Son & Park, 2024](#); [Li et al., 2024](#)), where the context is abstract or generic and not sector-specific.

### **Countries investigated in Influencer Marketing research**

[Table 9](#) presents the countries identified in the analysed literature, highlighting how influencer marketing practices vary across different national contexts. The geographical distribution of studies on influencer marketing in the travel and tourism sector suggests a global yet uneven focus across nations. China emerges as the most extensively examined country, with six articles (18.75%), reflecting its dynamic digital landscape and large consumer base, and active usage of social media influencers in tourism marketing. Followed by India, the second most represented, with 3 (9.38%) articles, indicating its fast expanding tourism industry, digital penetration, and emerging influencer economy. Several additional nations (i.e. Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, the Czech Republic, Turkey, Finland, and others) have only one study each (3.13%) respectively, showing a lack of country-specific research and a need for greater regional exploration. Additionally, 11 (34.38%) research did not mention any country setting. This "Not Specified" group accounts for a sizable proportion of the sample, raising concerns regarding the contextual validity and relevance of these research' findings. Studies that lack a regional focus may struggle to address localised behaviours, cultural variations, or platform-specific trends, which are frequently important in influencer marketing. Based on the data,

**Table 9.** Countries investigated in Influencer Marketing research

Country	No.	Weight (%)	Key References
China	6	18.75	<a href="#">Ding et al. (2023)</a> ; <a href="#">Meng et al. (2025)</a> ; <a href="#">Liu et al. (2025)</a> ; <a href="#">Zhang et al. (2025)</a> ; <a href="#">Li et al. (2024)</a> ; <a href="#">Yu et al. (2025)</a>
India	3	9.38	<a href="#">Manisha (2024)</a> ; <a href="#">Babu &amp; Barik (2024)</a> ; <a href="#">Banerjee et al. (2025)</a>
Singapore	1	3.13	<a href="#">Ochoa et al. (2025)</a>
Saudi Arabia	1	3.13	<a href="#">Almakayeel (2023)</a>
Malaysia	1	3.13	<a href="#">Bastrygina et al. (2024)</a>
Czech Republic	1	3.13	<a href="#">Kvítková &amp; Masárová (2021)</a>
Turkey	1	3.13	<a href="#">Seçilmiş et al. (2022)</a>
Finland	1	3.13	<a href="#">Abate et al. (2025)</a>
Switzerland	1	3.13	<a href="#">Fas &amp; Zumstein (2019)</a>
Australia	1	3.13	<a href="#">Fedeli &amp; Cheng (2023)</a>
Italy	1	3.13	<a href="#">Zhang et al. (2025)</a>
United States	1	3.13	<a href="#">Kapoor et al. (2022)</a>
Iran	1	3.13	<a href="#">Bidabadi Amin et al. (2021)</a>
South Korea	1	3.13	<a href="#">Choi &amp; Choi (2024)</a>
Taiwan	1	3.13	<a href="#">Tsai &amp; Hsin (2023)</a>
Not Specified	11	34.38	<a href="#">Raj (2023)</a> ; <a href="#">Chu et al. (2024)</a> ; <a href="#">Mohanty et al. (2022)</a> ; <a href="#">Son &amp; Park (2024)</a> ; <a href="#">Rajput &amp; Gandhi (2024)</a> ; <a href="#">Jauffret et al. (2025)</a> ; <a href="#">Ding et al. (2024)</a> ; <a href="#">Choi et al. (2024)</a> ; <a href="#">Kim et al. (2024)</a> ; <a href="#">Szymkowiak et al. (2021)</a> ; <a href="#">Barbe &amp; Neuburger (2021)</a>

*Note: Relative frequencies are based on 32 articles. Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025*

Western nations (for example, the United States, Australia, Switzerland, and Italy) are under-represented in tourism influencer marketing study when compared to Asia, particularly China. This could indicate a geographical bias in current research, probably due to the importance of tourism and technology platforms.

### **Methodology used in the Influencer Marketing research**

[Table 10](#) presents the methodological approaches used in the analysed influencer marketing literature, highlighting the diversity of research designs adopted across 32 tourism-related studies. The most common approach is quantitative (primary), used in 9 articles (28.13%), indicating a strong preference for statistically testing hypotheses and measuring consumer responses using structured data collection tools like surveys or

experiments. Within the qualitative domain, semi-structured interviews were conducted in 5 articles (15.63%), and qualitative approaches in general appeared in 4 articles (12.50%), demonstrating researchers' interest in capturing in-depth, contextual insights about influencer dynamics.

**Table 10.** Methodology used in the Influencer Marketing research

Research Approach	No.	Weight (%)	Key References
Quantitative (Primary)	9	28.13	Almakayeel (2023); Meng et al. (2025); Abate et al. (2025); Mohanty et al. (2022); Bidabadi Amin et al. (2021); Banerjee et al. (2025); Son & Park (2024); Tsai & Hsin (2023); Yu et al. (2025)
Secondary Data / Review	6	18.75	Raj (2023); Fas & Zumstein (2019); Chu et al. (2024); Fedeli & Cheng (2023); Barbe & Neuburger (2021); Ochoa et al. (2025)
Semi-Structured Interviews	5	15.63	Ding et al. (2023); Jauffret et al. (2025); Choi & Choi (2024); Li et al. (2024); Choi et al. (2024)
Experimental Data	5	15.63	Jauffret et al. (2025); Ding et al. (2024); Choi et al. (2024); Kim et al. (2024); Szymkowiak et al. (2021)
Qualitative (Primary)	4	12.50	Bastrygina et al. (2024); Ding et al. (2023); Babu & Barik (2024); Kvítková & Masárová (2021)
Survey Data	3	9.38	Manisha (2024); Liu et al. (2025); Fas & Zumstein (2019)
Case Study	1	3.13	Manisha (2024)

*Note: Relative frequencies are based on 32 articles. Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025*

Additionally, case studies were used in 1 article (3.13%), suggesting limited reliance on this method. Experimental data was also used in 5 studies (15.63%), showing the field's growing inclination toward causal analysis and controlled testing of influencer marketing strategies. Survey-based research, although overlapping with quantitative methods, was explicitly identified in 3 articles (9.38%), confirming its role as a staple method for collecting user perceptions and behavioral intentions. Finally, secondary data was employed in 6 articles (18.75%), indicating the importance of analyzing existing datasets, content, or prior records especially, when primary data collection is not feasible. The findings reveal a balanced mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, with a slight dominance of quantitative approaches. There is also a noticeable use of experimental and secondary data, reflecting the field's evolution toward diverse and robust research designs. However, the limited use of case studies and mixed methods suggests potential areas for methodological expansion in future research.

## Discussion

The results of this systematic analysis show that influencer marketing, which emphasises authenticity, emotional storytelling, and parasocial relationships, has developed into a key element of tourism promotion, progressively displacing traditional advertising strategies. The analysed research consistently show that travellers now rely more on social media influencers whose content reflects real-life experiences, realistic lives, and reliable advice rather than just institutional information sources. Influencers are therefore increasingly influencing not only destination awareness but also travel motivations, decision-making processes, and post-travel behaviours including sharing experiences and spreading word of mouth.

But the analysis also reveals a fragmented field of study. The interrelated role of mediators and moderators is currently understudied, despite the fact that several research address influencer attributes including credibility, expertise, attractiveness, and content relevance. Though significant contextual moderators, such as demographic differences, cultural backgrounds, and levels of digital literacy, need more empirical attention to comprehend variations in behavioural responses across tourist segments, emotional engagement and perceived authenticity have emerged as significant mediating factors that drive behavioural intentions.

The results also show a theoretical gap. Despite the application of numerous theories, including the S-O-R framework, Source Credibility Theory, Emotional Contagion, Para-social Interaction Theory, Elaboration Likelihood Model, and Social Identity Theory, the discipline lacks a dominant or cohesive theoretical

framework. A lot of research adopts hypotheses in isolation, which restricts the development of cumulative knowledge. Similarly, a disproportionate reliance on quantitative survey-based research has hindered the field's capacity to uncover deeper emotional and psychological dynamics contained in tourist–influencer connections, notwithstanding methodological diversity.

One last important observation concerns new patterns. Influencers with an emphasis on sustainability, virtual influencers, micro-influencers, and platform-specific reaction mechanisms are all in its early stages. . In the meantime, despite their growing significance in digital marketing practices, fields like AI-generated content, live streaming, podcast-based travel persuasion, and immersive technologies are still under-represented. This suggests that there are a lot of chances for future academics to investigate into how ongoing behavioural and technical changes will alter the effectiveness of influencers in the travel industry.

## **Conclusion**

Influencer marketing has grown to be a very powerful and strategically essential instrument for influencing traveler behaviour and boosting destination competitiveness in the digital age, according to the review's conclusion. Through digital communities and experience sharing, influencers play a multifaceted role in creating destination awareness, encouraging travel intention, strengthening destination loyalty, and promoting traveler engagement. Perceived credibility, authenticity, emotional connection, and match between the influencer and the marketed destination are the main factors that determine the effectiveness of influencer marketing in the travel industry.

Despite its efficacy, the field's research is still philosophically and methodologically disconnected, requiring more integration with fields like psychology, communication, digital behaviour, and tourism studies. Research on new phenomena including virtual influencers, ethical endorsement practices, platform-specific interaction strategies, and responses from culturally varied audiences is limited, which points to significant areas for further study. To advance knowledge in this field, it will be crucial to broaden analysis to new digital ecosystems, vary methodological techniques, and strengthen theoretical underpinnings.

Influencer marketing will continue to transform travel promotion overall, but its sustainable use requires careful alignment between influencer identity, audience expectations, destination branding objectives, and ethical communication standards. In order to support long-term destination growth in an increasingly competitive digital marketplace, this review offers academics and practitioners a foundation for understanding current developments, filling in research gaps, and developing marketing strategies that can leverage influencer partnerships.

## **Acknowledgments**

Not applicable.

## **Declaration**

### **Ethics approval and consent to participate**

Not applicable.

## **Consent for publication**

Not applicable.

## **Availability of data and materials**

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon request.

## **Competing interests**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding this work.

## **Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies**

During the preparation of this work the author used Grammarly in order to correct spelling mistakes and help me make better sentences. After using this tool/service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the published article.

## Author contributions

SA and RM contributed to Conceptualization, Methodology, and Writing –Original Draft.

## Funding

Not applicable.

## Author detail

<sup>1</sup>Department of Management Studies, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri, India

Received: 25 November 2025

Accepted: 12 April 2026

Published online: 12 April 2026

## References

- Abate, Y. A., Ukpabi, D. C., & Karjaluoto, H. (2025). Eco-influencers: a cross-generational investigation on the role of social media influencer marketing on green destination image. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2024.2332365>
- Abidin, C. (2016). "Aren't these just young, rich women doing vain things online?": Influencer selfies as subversive frivolity. *Social media+ society*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116641342>
- Ajzen, I. (2011). The theory of planned behaviour: Reactions and reflections. *Psychology & health*, 26(9), 1113-1127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08870446.2011.613995>
- Akers, R. L., & Jennings, W. G. (2015). Social learning theory. *The handbook of criminological theory*, 230-240.
- Almakayeel, N. (2023). Relationship modeling of travel website quality toward customer satisfaction influencing purchase intention. *Sustainability*, 15(10), 8225. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15108225>
- Asyraf, M. A., Hanafiah, M. H., Aminuddin, N., & Mahdzar, M. (2023). Adoption of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model in hospitality and tourism research: systematic literature review and future research directions.
- Azoulay, A., & Kapferer, J. N. (2003). Do brand personality scales really measure brand personality?. *Journal of brand management*, 11, 143-155. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540162>
- Babu, K. V., & Barik, B. (2024). Revitalizing a Traditional Heritage Hotel for Modern Tourism in Asia Pacific Using Influencer Marketing. In *Teaching Case Studies for Tourism and Hospitality in Asia and The Pacific: With Cartoon Illustrations* (pp. 129-152). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- Banerjee, A., Nag, K., Das, S., & Das, M. (2025). The Impact of Influencer Marketing in India Affecting the Decision-Making Process of Potential Travelers. In *Sustainable Business Ecosystems and Social Perspectives* (pp. 187-200). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- Barbe, D., & Neuburger, L. (2021). Generation Z and digital influencers in the tourism industry. In *Generation Z marketing and management in tourism and hospitality: The future of the industry* (pp. 167-192). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Bastrygina, T., Lim, W. M., Jopp, R., & Weissmann, M. A. (2024). Unraveling the power of social media influencers: Qualitative insights into the role of Instagram influencers in the hospitality and tourism industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 58, 214-243. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2023.12.012>
- Belanche, D., Casaló, L. V., Flavián, M., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2021). Building influencers' credibility on Instagram: Effects on followers' attitudes and behavioral responses toward the influencer. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 61, 102585. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102585>
- Bidabadi Amin, M., Islambolchi, A., & Rezaei Rad, M. (2021). The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Travel Decisions: The Role of Trust in the Consumer Decision-Making Journey. *Islamic lifestyle with a focus on health*, 5(4), 839-849.
- Breves, P. L., Liebers, N., Abt, M., & Kunze, A. (2019). The Perceived Fit Between Instagram Influencers and the Endorsed Brand: How Influencer-Brand Fit Affects Source Credibility and Persuasive Effectiveness. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 59(4), 440-454. <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-2019-030>
- Buhalis, D., & Sinarta, Y. (2019). Real-time co-creation and nowness service: lessons from tourism and hospitality. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 36(5), 563-582.
- Boerman, S. C., Willemsen, L. M., & Van Der Aa, E. P. (2017). "This post is sponsored": Effects of sponsorship disclosure on persuasion knowledge and electronic word of mouth in the context of Facebook. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 38, 82-92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2017.01.003>
- Campbell, C., & Farrell, J. R. (2020). More than meets the eye: The functional components underlying influencer marketing. *Business Horizons*, 63(4), 469-479. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2020.03.003>
- Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2018). Influencers on Instagram: Antecedents and consequences of opinion leadership. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 510-519. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.005>
- Choi, M., & Choi, Y. (2024). Exploration of the diversity of virtual influencers used as tourism ambassadors in South Korea. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 29(10), 1272-1285.
- Choi, M., Choi, Y., & Lee, H. (2024). Gen Z travelers in the Instagram marketplace: Trust, influencer type, post type, and purchase intention. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 48(6), 1020-1034.

- Chu, S. C., Yim, M. Y. C., & Mundel, J. (2024). Artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, social media, online reviews, and influencers: a review of how service businesses use promotional devices and future research directions. *International Journal of Advertising*, 1-31.
- De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>
- Decrop, A. (1999). Tourists' decision-making and behavior processes. *Consumer behavior in travel and tourism*, 103-133.
- Ding, A., Legendre, T. S., Lee, H. S., & Min, J. (2024). The transferability of passion: how green influencers inspire tourists' green initiative support. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1-18.
- Ding, J., Syed, M. A. M., & Shamshudeen, R. I. (2023). Exploring the status Quo of all-for-one tourism development in Meishan City, China: Insights from local travel influencers. *Studies in Media and Communication*, 11(7), 166-179.
- Djafarova, E., & Rushworth, C. (2017). Exploring the Credibility of Online Celebrities' Instagram Profiles in Influencing the Purchase Decisions of Young Female Users. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.009>
- Enke, N., & Borchers, N. S. (2021). Social media influencers in strategic communication: A conceptual framework for strategic social media influencer communication. In *Social media influencers in strategic communication* (pp. 7-23). Routledge.
- Evans, N. J., Phua, J., Lim, J., & Jun, H. (2017). Disclosing Instagram influencer advertising: The effects of disclosure language on advertising recognition, attitudes, and behavioral intent. *Journal of interactive advertising*, 17(2), 138-149.
- Fas, J., & Zumstein, D. (2019). Loyalty programs in tourism-How influencers and communities change word-of-mouth marketing. In *18th International conference on WWW/internet*.
- Fedeli, G., & Cheng, M. (2023). Influencer marketing and tourism: Another threat to integrity for the industry?. *Tourism Analysis*, 28(2), 323-328. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354223X16717294995143>
- Ferchaud, A., Grzeslo, J., Orme, S., & LaGroue, J. (2018). Parasocial attributes and YouTube personalities: Exploring content trends across the most popular YouTube channels. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 80, 88–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.10.041>
- Filieri, R., & McLeay, F. (2014). E-WOM and accommodation: Influencing booking intentions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 53(1), 44–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287513481274>
- Fink, M., Bachmann, P., & Schlegelmilch, B. B. (2020). Customer perceptions of influencer credibility on social media. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 26(8), 1–15.
- Folkvord, F., Bevelander, K. E., Rozendaal, E., & Hermans, R. C. J. (2019). Children's bonding with popular YouTube vloggers and their attitudes toward brand and product endorsements. *Young Consumers*, 20(2), 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-12-2018-0896>
- Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. *Public relations review*, 37(1), 90-92.
- Giles, D. C. (2002). Parasocial Interaction: A Review of the Literature and a Model for Future Research. *Media Psychology*, 4(3), 279–305. [https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532785XMEP0403\\_04](https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532785XMEP0403_04)
- Glucksman, M. (2017). The rise of social media influencer marketing on lifestyle branding: A case study of Lucie Fink. *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 8(2), 77–87.
- Gretzel, U. (2017). Influencer marketing in travel and tourism. In *Advances in social media for travel, tourism and hospitality* (pp. 147-156). Routledge.
- Gretzel, U., & Yoo, K. H. (2008). Use and impact of online travel reviews. In P. O'Connor, W. Höpken, & U. Gretzel (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2008* (pp. 35–46). Springer.
- Gretzel, U., Fesenmaier, D. R., Formica, S., & O'Leary, J. T. (2006). Searching for the Future: Challenges Faced by Destination Marketing Organizations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 45(2), 116–126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287506291598>
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D. (2004). Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: What motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the internet? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 18(1), 38–52. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dir.10073>
- Hill, S., Figueroa, C., & Alarcón, A. (2017). Influencer popularity and the spread of information on digital platforms. *Social Influence*, 12(1), 1–16.
- Hovland, C. I., & Weiss, W. (1951). The influence of source credibility on communication effectiveness. *Public opinion quarterly*, 15(4), 635-650.
- Hu, Y., Manikonda, L., & Kambhampati, S. (2020). What we Instagram: A first analysis of Instagram photo content and user types. *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*, 8(1), 595–598.
- Huang, Y., Shen, C., Williams, D., & Contractor, N. (2009, August). Virtually there: Exploring proximity and homophily in a virtual world. In *2009 International Conference on Computational Science and Engineering* (Vol. 4, pp. 354-359). IEEE.
- Hudders, L., De Jans, S., & De Veirman, M. (2021). The commercialization of social media stars: A literature review and conceptual framework on the strategic use of social media influencers. *International Journal of Advertising*, 40(3), 327–375. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2020.1836925>
- Hughes, C., Swaminathan, V., & Brooks, G. (2019). Driving brand engagement through online influencers: A framework for engaging customers. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 27(4), 381–398.
- Iswanto, D., Handriana, T., Rony, A. H. N., & Sangadji, S. S. (2024). Influencers in tourism digital marketing: A comprehensive literature review. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, 19(2), 739-749.

- Jauffret, M. N., Hallem, Y., & Aubrun, F. (2025). Biodigital Influencers in Tourism Marketing: A Social media Marketing System Analysis of Industry Practitioner Perspectives. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 02761467251336762.
- Jeng, J., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2002). Conceptualizing the travel decision-making hierarchy: A review of recent developments. *Tourism analysis*, 7(1), 15-32.
- Jiménez-Castillo, D., & Sánchez-Fernández, R. (2019). The role of digital influencers in brand recommendation: Examining their impact on engagement, trust, and purchase intention. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 379–386.
- Jin, S. V., Muqaddam, A., & Ryu, E. (2019). Instafamous and Social Media Influencer Marketing. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 37(5), 567–579. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-09-2018-0375>.
- Kapitan, S., & Silvera, D. H. (2016). From digital media influencers to celebrity endorsers: attributions drive endorser effectiveness. *Marketing letters*, 27, 553-567.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68.
- Kapoor, P. S., Balaji, M. S., Jiang, Y., & Jebarajakirthy, C. (2022). Effectiveness of travel social media influencers: A case of eco-friendly hotels. *Journal of travel research*, 61(5), 1138-1155.
- Keller, K. L., & Richey, K. (2006). The importance of corporate brand personality traits to a successful 21st century business. *Journal of Brand management*, 14, 74-81.
- Khamis, S., Ang, L., & Welling, R. (2017). Self-branding, ‘micro-celebrity’ and the rise of social media influencers. *Celebrity Studies*, 8(2), 191–208.
- Ki, C. W. C., Cuevas, L. M., Chong, S. M., & Lim, H. (2020). Influencer marketing: Social media influencers as human brands attaching to followers and yielding positive marketing results by fulfilling needs. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 55, 102133.
- Ki, C. W., & Kim, Y. K. (2019). The impact of prestige and credibility of influencers on follower attitudes. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 25(6), 1–17.
- Kilipiri, E., Papaioannou, E., & Kotzaivazoglou, I. (2023). Social media and influencer marketing for promoting sustainable tourism destinations: The Instagram case. *Sustainability*, 15(8), 6374.
- Kim, I., Ki, C. W., Lee, H., & Kim, Y. K. (2024). Virtual influencer marketing: Evaluating the influence of virtual influencers’ form realism and behavioral realism on consumer ambivalence and marketing performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 176, 114611.
- Kim, D. Y., & Kim, H. Y. (2020). Influencer advertising on social media: The multiple inference model on influencer–product congruence and consumer responses. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 405–413.
- Kotler, P., Keller, K. L., Koshy, A., & Jha, M. (2021). *Marketing Management: A South Asian Perspective* (16th ed.). Pearson.
- Kumar, S., & Valeri, M. (2022). Understanding the relationship among factors influencing rural tourism: a hierarchical approach. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 35(2), 385-407.
- Kvítková, Z., & Masárová, Š. (2021). Using Google Trends for measuring the influencer’s impact on the demand in tourism and its limits. In *Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies* (Vol. 205, pp. 781–793). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4183-8\\_63](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4183-8_63)
- Ladhari, R., Massa, E., & Skandrani, H. (2020). YouTube vloggers’ popularity and influence: The role of homophily, emotional attachment, and expertise. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 54, 102047.
- Lee, J. E., & Kim, K. H. (2020). YouTube vs. Instagram: How platform type influences content creation and engagement. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 20(1), 40–54.
- Lee, J. E., & Kim, M. (2020). The Effect of Instagram Influencer’s Credibility on Consumer Attitude and Behavioral Intention: Focusing on the Moderating Role of Fit. *International Journal of Advertising*, 39(3), 430–451. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1678328>
- Lee, J. E., & Watkins, B. (2016). YouTube vloggers’ influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(12), 5753–5760.
- Li, J., Jing, S., Shang, Y., Li, A., & Cheng, M. (2024). Travel influencers and their social identity: a phenomenological approach. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-16.
- Lim, X. J., Radzol, A. M., Cheah, J. H., & Wong, M. W. (2017). The impact of social media influencers on purchase intention and the mediation effect of customer attitude. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, 7(2), 19–36.
- Liu, X., Wan, L. C., & Mattila, A. S. (2025). Virtual influencers going head-to-head with human influencers: the impact of influencer type on trust perceptions of endorsement. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.
- Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 19(1), 58–73.
- Manisha, M. (2024, September). Innovative Frontiers: Exploring Factors Influencing Travel Podcast Consumption in the Web 4.0 Era. In *European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship* (pp. 917-927). Academic Conferences International Limited.
- Martensen, A., Brockenhuus-Schack, S., & Zahid, A. L. (2018). How citizen influencers persuade their followers. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 22(3), 335–353.
- Marti-Ochoa, J., Martín-Fuentes, E., & Ferrer-Rosell, B. (2025). AI-driven virtual travel influencers and ethical consumerism: analysing engagement with Sena Zaro’s Instagram content. *Young Consumers*.
- Marwick, A., & Boyd, D. (2011). To see and be seen: Celebrity practice on Twitter. *Convergence*, 17(2), 139-158.
- McGuire, W. J. (1989). Theoretical foundations of campaigns. In R. E. Rice & C. K. Atkin (Eds.), *Public Communication Campaigns* (2nd ed., pp. 43–65). Sage.
- Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. A. (1974). *An approach to environmental psychology*. MIT Press.

- Meng, L. M., Bie, Y., Yang, M., & Wang, Y. (2025). The effect of human versus virtual influencers: The roles of destination types and self-referencing processes. *Tourism Management*, 106, 104978.
- Magno, F. (2017). The influence of cultural blogs on their readers' cultural product choices. *International Journal of Information Management*, 37(3), 142–149. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2017.01.007>
- Mohanty, R., Samal, A., Mohite, S., & Shukla, S. (2022). Impact of influencer market on consumers of the tourism industry. *ECS transactions*, 107(1), 12347.
- Montag, C., Lachmann, B., & Sariyska, R. (2021). TikTok and the psychology of short-form video consumption. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 45, 101294.
- Munar, A. M., & Jacobsen, J. K. S. (2013). Trust and involvement in tourism social media and web-based travel information sources. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 13(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2013.764511>
- Niarawati, E. (2024). The Influence of Social Media Influencers, Brand Image on Customer Buying Decision Through Trustworthiness on Gojek. *J-CEKI: Jurnal Cendekia Ilmiah*, 3(5), 4145-4154.
- Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1990.10673191>
- Okonkwo, I., & Namkoisse, E. (2023). The role of influencer marketing in building authentic brand relationships online. *Journal of Digital Marketing and Communication*, 3(2), 81-90.
- Pencarelli, T. (2020). The digital revolution in the travel and tourism industry. *Journal of Travel Research*, 59(2), 244–259.
- Pham, M. T. (2007). Emotion and rationality: A critical review and interpretation of empirical evidence. *Review of general psychology*, 11(2), 155-178.
- Raj, L. (2023). Exploring the Role of Social Media Influencer Marketing in the Tourism Sector. In *Handbook of Research on Sustainable Tourism and Hotel Operations in Global Hypercompetition* (pp. 100-117). IGI Global.
- Rajput, A., & Gandhi, A. (2024, March). Influencer voices: Exploring how recommendations drive tourism intent. In *2024 International conference on automation and computation (AUTOCOM)* (pp. 586-592). IEEE.
- Reinikainen, H., Munnukka, J., Maity, D., & Luoma-aho, V. (2020). You really are a great big sister—Parasocial relationships, credibility, and the moderating role of audience comments in influencer marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 36(3–4), 279–298.
- Rodríguez-Hidalgo, A. B., Salcedo, A. L. T., & Castro-ricalde, D. (2023). INFLUENCER MARKETING IN TOURISM: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW. *Revista de Comunicación de la SEECI*, 56, 99-124.
- Sakib, M. N., Zolfagharian, M., & Yazdanparast, A. (2020). Does personality matter? Consumer personality and the effectiveness of influencer endorsements. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 57, 102229.
- Schouten, A. P., Janssen, L., & Verspaget, M. (2020). Celebrity vs. micro-influencer credibility and its effect on attitudes and behavioral intentions. *Journal of Promotional Communications*, 8(2), 210–236.
- Seçilmiş, C., Özdemir, C., & Kılıç, İ. (2022). How travel influencers affect visit intention? The roles of cognitive response, trust, COVID-19 fear and confidence in vaccine. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 25(17), 2789-2804.
- Seeler, S., Lück, M., & Schänzel, H. A. (2019). Exploring the drivers behind experience accumulation—The role of secondary experiences consumed through the eyes of social media influencers. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 41, 80-89.
- Sokolova, K., & Perez, C. (2021). You follow fitness influencers on Instagram, but do you actually exercise? How parasocial relationships, and perceptions of credibility and motivation influence intentions to exercise. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 58, 102276.
- Son, H., & Park, Y. E. (2024). A deep understanding of influencer marketing in the tourism industry: A structural analysis of unstructured text. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-11.
- Stylos, N. (2020). Technological evolution and tourist decision-making: a perspective article. *Tourism Review*, 75(1), 273-278.
- Szymkowiak, A., Gaczek, P., & Padma, P. (2021). Impulse buying in hospitality: The role of content posted by social media influencers. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 27(4), 385-399.
- Terryn, E. (2016). 'Consumers, by Definition, Include Us All'... But Not for Every Transaction. *Eur. Rev. Private L.*, 24, 271.
- Till, B. D., & Busler, M. (2000). The Match-Up Hypothesis: Physical Attractiveness, Expertise, and the Role of Fit on Brand Attitude, Purchase Intent and Brand Beliefs. *Journal of Advertising*, 29(3), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2000.10673613>
- Tsai, C. M., & Hsin, S. P. (2023). The Influence of Influencer Marketing on the Consumers' Desire to Travel in the Post-Pandemic Era: The Mediation Effect of Influencer Fitness of Destination. *Sustainability*, 15(20), 14746.
- Torres, P., Augusto, M., & Matos, M. (2019). Influence of celebrity endorsement on Instagram: The role of congruence and authenticity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 28(5), 567–579.
- Trivedi, R. H., & Sama, R. (2020). The effect of influencer marketing on consumers' brand perceptions: Parasocial relationships and persuasion knowledge. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 26(2), 251–270.
- Van Reijmersdal, E. A., Rozendaal, E., & Buijzen, M. (2016). Effects of disclosing sponsored content on children's advertising recognition and attitude. *Communication Research*, 43(8), 1216–1236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650214565919>
- Varkaris E, Neuhofer B (2017), "The influence of social media on the consumers' hotel decision journey". *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, Vol. 8 No. 1 pp. 101–118, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTT-09-2016-0058>
- Vrontis, D., Makrides, A., Christofi, M., & Thrassou, A. (2021). Social media influencer marketing: A systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(4), 617–644. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12695>

- Wacker, J. G. (1998). A definition of theory: Research guidelines for different theory-building research methods in operations management. *Journal of Operations Management*, 16(4), 361–385.
- Wilson, E., Harris, C., & Small, J. (2008). Furthering critical approaches in tourism and hospitality studies: Perspectives from Australia and New Zealand. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 15(1), 15-18.
- Yu, T., Teoh, A. P., Bian, Q., Liao, J., & Wang, C. (2025). Can virtual influencers affect purchase intentions in tourism and hospitality e-commerce live streaming? An empirical study in China. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 37(1), 216-238.
- Zhang, K., Sun, X., & Li, G. (2025). Virtual influencer and cultural heritage destination: Endorsement effectiveness of virtual versus human influencers. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 110, 103873.
- Zillmann, D. (2002). Exemplification theory of media influence. In *Media effects* (pp. 29-52). Routledge.

## **Publisher Notes**

Borneo Novelty Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.