

REVIEW OPEN ACCESS

Social Media Influencers in Firm-Based Marketing Campaign Phases—A Content Analysis and Future Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the different phases of social media influencers in firm-based marketing campaigns using a content analysis. The authors categorized the existing studies into twenty (20) major themes of social media influencers in consumer engagement by considering the analytical framework of Maciel and Fischer. Furthermore, we conducted additional research to gain a deeper understanding of social media influencers and their role in firm-based marketing. Social media influencers are used in modern marketing campaigns to promote products and brands to a targeted audience by leveraging their authenticity, reach, and engagement. This study incorporated TCM frameworks with the PRISMA protocol to identify the key themes, contexts, and methodologies used in previous literature on social media influencers in modern marketing campaigns. As part of Study 1 (Synthesis Stage), a comprehensive overview of existing research on social media influencer marketing is compiled and synthesized. A content analysis of two decades of literature is conducted in Study 2 (Market-Shaping Process for Social Media Campaign Activities), which highlights trends, shifts, and emerging practices in influence-driven market-shaping activities. As a final study, Study 3 (Practice-Shaping Behaviors: Practitioners' Viewpoints and Perspectives) examines how industry professionals interact with the three stages of market-shaping behaviors: Infusion, Formation, and Retention.

1 | Introduction

Modern marketing relies heavily on social media influencers (SMIs) to influence consumer behavior. Influencers connect with large audiences, provide authentic content, and establish trust and credibility with their followers. Influencers sharing their beauty tips, such as skincare routines or makeup brands, will often endorse specific products based on their trust and experience with them (Balaban and Mustăea 2019; Vrontis et al. 2021). Instagram remains the leading platform for influencer marketing, with 76.6% of marketers utilizing it in 2023, a figure expected to rise to 80.8% in 2024 (Kumar 2024). Influencers influence how

brands are perceived. A well-respected influencer can enhance a brand's image, while a negative influencer can harm it (Han and Balabanis 2024). Consumer behavior and brand perception are shaped by SMIs' authenticity, engagement, credibility, storytelling, and targeted reach (Balaban and Mustăea 2019; Kurdi et al. 2022). Recent researchers have identified that, by leveraging influencer marketing, brands can enhance their visibility, trustworthiness, and appeal, ultimately influencing consumer purchasing decisions (Chen et al. 2011; Guan and Li 2021; Lou 2022).

The novelty of this review compared to existing literature on SMIs is that while numerous reviews focus on influencer

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