

MALAYSIAN ACTORS AS INFLUENCERS IN INSTAGRAM MARKETING: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract. This study aims to assess the role of Malaysian actors as social media influencers in Instagram marketing and their influence on consumer behavior, especially among Generation Z. This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by the PRISMA framework by analyzing 12 relevant articles from databases such as Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar. The study findings show that the main factors that influence the effectiveness of influencers include credibility (trust and expertise), attractiveness, compatibility between influencers and products, and technological factors such as perceived usefulness and ease of use. In addition, influencers also play a role as social and cultural agents that shape consumer identity, perception and purchasing decisions. The importance of this study lies in its contribution to a deeper understanding of the integration between source credibility theory and technology acceptance models in the context of digital marketing. This study also provides practical implications for the marketing industry in selecting more strategic influencers and assisting policymakers in formulating guidelines related to the use of influencers. In terms of new knowledge, this study emphasizes the specific role of Malaysian actors as hybrid influencers who combine the characteristics of celebrities and digital influencers in the Instagram ecosystem. Overall, this study concludes that influencers play an important role in shaping consumer behavior in the growing era of the digital economy.

Keywords: *social media influencer, Instagram marketing, Malaysian actors, consumer behaviour, Generation Z*

Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology and the increasing use of social media have brought about significant changes in the modern marketing landscape, particularly through the emergence of influencer-based marketing. Platforms such as Instagram are now the main medium for organizations and brands to interact with consumers in a more dynamic and visual way, especially among Generation Z who are dominant users of social media. Influencers are seen as important agents in influencing consumer perceptions through more authentic and approachable content. Previous studies have shown that credibility elements such as influencer trust and expertise play a significant role in influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Wang et al., 2026). In addition, influencer marketing has been found to be more effective than traditional methods in shaping consumer purchasing behavior, especially among the younger generation (Tan et al., 2024). Along with this development, there has been a transformation in the role of celebrities, especially Malaysian actors, who are now no longer limited to the role of traditional endorsers but also function as social media influencers. However, there are several key issues that have not yet been fully explored in the existing literature. First, there is ambiguity in understanding the role of actors as influencers, with most studies clearly distinguishing between celebrities and influencers without assessing the hybrid role that is increasingly relevant in the digital era (Ramly et al., 2024). Second, previous research findings show inconsistencies in determining the

effectiveness of celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing. For example, some studies emphasize the importance of attractiveness and product suitability in celebrity endorsement (Azmi et al., 2022), while other studies highlight the importance of authenticity, trust, and social connections in influencer marketing (Ayob et al., 2023; Sharipudin et al., 2023). Third, although social media is often discussed in general, there is still a lack of research that specifically focuses on Instagram as a major visual marketing platform that significantly influences consumer behavior (Duffett and Mxunyelwa, 2025).

Based on this gap, this study aims to systematically examine the role of Malaysian actors as influencers in Instagram marketing and its impact on consumer behavior. Specifically, this study assesses how the role of actors has evolved in the context of digital marketing, analyzes the differences between celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing, and assesses the importance of Instagram as a platform in increasing marketing effectiveness. In the context of consumer behavior, factors such as content authenticity, influencer-product fit, and emotional connection with followers have been found to influence consumer purchase intentions and attitudes (Mehboob et al., 2025; Che Wel et al., 2024). Furthermore, emotional factors and visual stimuli on Instagram also contribute to impulsive purchasing behavior among Generation Z (Muhammad et al., 2024). In terms of importance, this study contributes to various parties. For the government, this study helps in understanding the role of the digital economy in driving the creative and marketing industries. For the marketing and entertainment industries, the findings of this study can be used as a strategic guide in utilizing actors as influencers more effectively. For the consumer community, especially Generation Z, this study increases understanding of the factors that influence their purchasing decisions. From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the development of knowledge by integrating the concepts of celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing in a more holistic framework. The scope of this study includes an analysis of selected articles as listed in *Table 1*, which involves studies related to influencer attributes such as credibility, attractiveness, authenticity and their effects on consumer behavior including purchase intentions and consumer attitudes (Duffett and Mxunyelwa, 2025; Wong et al., 2024).

Table 1. Summary of included studies.

Author and year	Title of article	Findings
Wang et al. (2026)	The Role of Credible Social Media Influencers in Brand Attitude, eWOM, and Purchase Intention	Credibility (trustworthiness and expertise) significantly influences brand attitude, eWOM, and purchase intention; consumers prefer authentic and unbiased influencer content.
Mehboob et al. (2025)	Mediating Roles of Customer Attitude and Parasocial Relationship between Attributes of Instagram Influencers and Purchase Intention	Influencer attributes (popularity, similarity, knowledge, comprehensibility) significantly affect purchase intention, mediated by customer attitude and parasocial relationships.
Tan et al. (2024)	The Effectiveness of Social Media Influencers and Its Impact on Digital Marketing Towards the Buying Behaviors among Generation Z in Malaysia	Social media influencers positively and significantly influence Gen Z buying behavior; influencer marketing is effective in shaping purchasing decisions.
Sharipudin et al. (2023)	The Influence of Social Media Influencer (SMI) and Social Influence on Purchase Intention among Young Consumers	Trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and similarity significantly predict purchase intention; social influence also plays a strong role.
Wong et al. (2024)	The Relationship of Social Media Celebrities' Attributes and Online Consumer Behavior towards Malaysian Purchase Intention	Trustworthiness, attractiveness, and informativeness are key factors influencing online purchase intention.
Qing et al. (2024)	The Impact of Social Media	Influencer marketing strongly shapes consumer

Che Wel et al. (2024)	Influencers Towards Consumers' Attitude The Effect of Social Media Influencers on Purchase Intentions: A Quantitative Investigation of Malaysian Consumers	attitudes and increases trust and purchase likelihood compared to traditional advertising. Authentic content, product quality, and influencer-consumer alignment significantly influence purchase intention.
Azmi et al. (2022)	Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention: What Influenced Malaysian Youth Most?	Attractiveness, product match-up, and perceived quality significantly influence purchase intention among youth.
Muhammad et al. (2024)	A Mixed Study on the "Wow" of Impulse Purchase on Instagram: Insights from Gen-Z in a Collectivistic Environment	Emotional responses, aesthetic appeal, and scarcity significantly drive impulsive purchase behavior among Gen Z.
Ramly et al. (2024)	Celebrities and Digital Marketing: The Importance of Celebrity Engagement on Instagram Social Media Platform	Active engagement with followers enhances marketing effectiveness and revenue generation via Instagram.
Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025)	Instagram Mega-Influencers' Effect on Generation Z's Intention to Purchase	Attractiveness, expertise, perceived usefulness, and ease of use significantly influence purchase intention among Gen Z.
Ayob et al. (2023)	Social Influencer Factors that Affect Young Adult Buying Behaviour	Source credibility, attractiveness, and influencer-product fit significantly affect buying behavior.

Literature review

This literature review was developed based on a systematic analysis of the articles listed in *Table 1* as summary of included studies. This approach allowed researchers to identify patterns of findings, similarities, and research gaps related to the role of Malaysian actors as social media influencers in the context of Instagram marketing and user behavior. To facilitate understanding, the literature findings were organized into several main themes as summarized in *Table 2* of themes and corresponding studies, namely, (1) influencer attributes and credibility, (2) celebrity transformation into influencer, (3) the role of Instagram as a marketing platform, and (4) the impact on user behavior. The first theme focuses on influencer attributes and credibility as key factors in determining marketing effectiveness. Based on the findings in *Table 1*, most studies emphasize that influencer credibility, which includes trust and expertise, is the most significant element in influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Wang et al., 2026). This finding is in line with a study by Ayob et al. (2023) which shows that factors such as source credibility, attractiveness, and fit between influencers and products have a direct impact on consumer purchasing behavior. Furthermore, Sharipudin et al. (2023) found that elements such as trustworthiness, expertise, and similarity play an important role in shaping purchase intentions among young consumers. Wong et al. (2024) also supported this finding by emphasizing that trust, attractiveness, and informative content are critical factors in influencing consumer behavior in Malaysia. However, there is a difference of opinion when Che Wel et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of content authenticity and fit between influencers and consumers as dominant factors compared to traditional attributes such as attractiveness. This shows that influencer attributes are not only static but also evolve according to the current digital context.

Table 2. Themes and corresponding studies.

Theme	Description	Corresponding studies
Theme 1: Influencer Credibility and Attributes	This theme focuses on key influencer characteristics such as trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, authenticity, and influencer-product fit that influence consumer attitudes and purchase intention.	Wang et al. (2026); Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025); Che Wel et al. (2024); Wong et al. (2024); Ayob et al. (2023); Sharipudin et al. (2023)
Theme 2: Transformation from Celebrities to Influencers	This theme highlights the evolving role of celebrities, particularly actors, from traditional endorsers to social media influencers, including the emergence of hybrid	Mehboob et al. (2025); Ramly et al. (2024); Sharipudin et al. (2023); Azmi et al. (2022)

	roles and parasocial relationships.	
Theme 3: Instagram as a Marketing Platform	This theme examines Instagram's role as a visual and interactive platform that enhances engagement, facilitates eWOM, and supports influencer marketing effectiveness.	Wang et al. (2026); Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025); Muhammad et al. (2024); Ramly et al. (2024)
Theme 4: Impact on Consumer Behaviour	This theme explores how influencer marketing affects consumer behavior, including purchase intention, consumer attitudes, and impulse buying, particularly among Generation Z.	Mehboob et al. (2025); Che Wel et al. (2024); Muhammad et al. (2024); Qing et al. (2024); Tan et al. (2024); Wong et al. (2024)

The second theme relates to the transformation of the role of celebrities to influencers. The study in *Table 1* shows that celebrities, including actors, are now shifting from the traditional role of endorsers to influencers who are active on social media. Ramly et al. (2024) explained that celebrities use Instagram to interact directly with followers, thus increasing marketing effectiveness and revenue generation. However, the literature shows inconsistent findings in comparing the effectiveness of celebrities and influencers. Azmi et al. (2022) found that factors such as attractiveness and product suitability are still significant in celebrity endorsement, while other studies have emphasized that influencers are more effective due to their authenticity and emotional connection with consumers (Mehboob et al., 2025; Sharipudin et al., 2023). Mehboob et al. (2025) in particular emphasize the role of parasocial relationships as an important mediator between influencer attributes and purchase intentions. Therefore, it can be seen that Malaysian actors have the potential to play the role of “hybrid influencers” that combine the advantages of celebrities and influencers. The third theme focuses on Instagram as a major platform in influencer marketing. Based on the study in *Table 1*, Instagram is identified as a very effective platform due to its visual and interactive nature. Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025) found that factors such as perceived usefulness and ease of use in using Instagram increase the effectiveness of influencers in influencing purchase intentions. Wang et al. (2026) also emphasized the role of eWOM in strengthening influencers' influence on consumers. In addition, Ramly et al. (2024) showed that the level of engagement between celebrities and followers on Instagram plays an important role in increasing marketing effectiveness. However, the literature shows that most studies still combine various social media platforms without specifically focusing on Instagram. This creates a gap in understanding in depth how the unique features of Instagram affect influencer marketing strategies.

The fourth theme is related to the impact of influencers on consumer behavior. Based on the findings in *Table 1*, almost all studies show that influencers have a significant influence on consumer purchase intentions and attitudes. Tan et al. (2024) found that influencer marketing significantly influences the purchasing behavior of Generation Z in Malaysia. In addition, Qing et al. (2024) showed that influencers also influence consumer attitudes towards brands through increased trust. A study by Muhammad et al. (2024) also emphasized that emotional factors such as visual appeal, scarcity, and emotional arousal play an important role in driving impulsive purchases on Instagram. However, there is debate in the literature regarding the dominant factors that influence consumer behavior. For example, Wang et al. (2026) emphasized the importance of credibility, while Che Wel et al. (2024) asserted that content authenticity is more important in the context of digital marketing. Cross-analysis between these themes shows that all the factors discussed are interrelated with each other. Influencer attributes such as credibility and authenticity (Theme 1) influence the formation of parasocial relationships (Theme 2), which are reinforced through interactions on Instagram (Theme 3), and ultimately impact consumer behavior such as purchase intentions and

attitudes (Theme 4). This shows that the effectiveness of Malaysian actors as influencers cannot be assessed in isolation, but needs to be seen as an ecosystem involving interactions between individual attributes, digital platforms, and consumer psychology. This finding is also in line with the concept of theoretical integration such as the Source Credibility Model, TAM, and SOR that are often used in influencer marketing studies (Duffett and Mxunyelwa, 2025). Overall, the literature shows that influencer marketing is an effective strategy in influencing consumer behavior, especially among Generation Z. However, there is a clear research gap regarding the role of Malaysian actors as influencers, inconsistency of findings between celebrities and influencers, and a lack of focus on Instagram as the main platform. Therefore, this study is important to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth synthesis through a systematic literature review approach.

Materials and Methods

This study used the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach as the primary method to identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous studies in a systematic and structured manner. The SLR approach was chosen because of its ability to provide comprehensive empirical evidence through a transparent and repeatable process (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). In addition, this study followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol to ensure that the search and selection process of articles was carried out systematically and met international reporting standards. The PRISMA diagram shows the systematic article selection process in this study (*Figure 1*). At the identification stage, a total of 280 articles were identified through primary databases and manual searches. After the process of removing duplicate articles, a total of 240 articles remained for the screening stage. In the screening stage, articles were screened based on title and abstract, and a total of 180 articles were removed as they were not relevant to the scope of the study. Next, at the eligibility stage, 60 articles were assessed in full (full-text) to ensure suitability with the study objectives. Of these, 48 articles were excluded for several reasons such as not being in line with the study objectives, lack of complete data, or methodological weaknesses. Finally, 12 articles were selected and included in the qualitative analysis. This process ensured that only relevant and high-quality studies were used in the literature review.

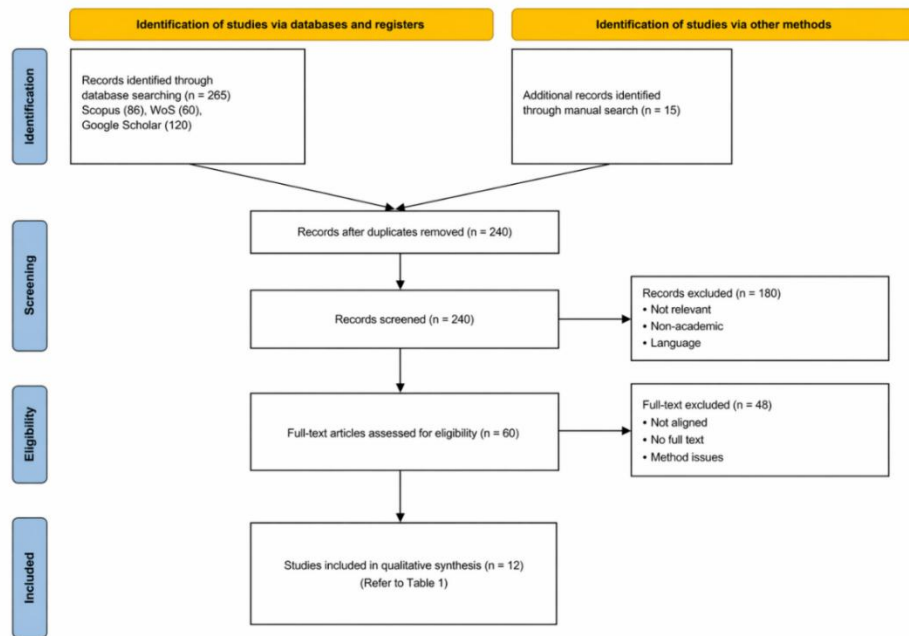


Figure 1. PRISMA flow.

Search strategy

The literature search strategy was implemented using several major databases, namely Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and Google Scholar. The selection of these databases was based on their credibility and broad coverage of refereed articles. Complete details of keyword combinations, Boolean operators, and the number of articles retrieved for each database are referred to in *Table 3* of search string details for databases. Keywords were constructed based on the main concepts of the study and combined using Boolean operators such as AND and OR to increase the accuracy of the search. For example, the keyword structure used was as follows: (“celebrity” OR “social media influencer”) AND (“Instagram marketing”) AND (“consumer behaviour”). Truncation and wildcard techniques were also used to broaden the search results, in line with systematic research practices that emphasize data inclusiveness (Dawson, 2002). The publication period of the selected articles was between 2015 and 2025 to ensure relevance to current developments in the field of digital marketing.

Table 3. Search string details for databases.

Databases	Search string	Applied filters	Results (n)
Scopus	(“celebrity” OR “actors” OR “social media influencer*”) AND (“Instagram marketing”) AND (“consumer behavior” OR “purchase intention”)	2015-2025; Articles; English	85
Web of Science (WoS)	(“celebrity endorsement” OR “social media influencer*”) AND (“Instagram”) AND (“consumer behavior”)	2015-2025; SSCI; English	60
Google Scholar	(“Malaysian actors” OR “celebrity influencer”) AND (“Instagram marketing”) AND (“consumer behavior”)	2015-2025	120
Manual Search	Reference lists and related articles	No restrictions	15
Total	-	-	280

Selection criteria

The selection of articles was based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria included: (1) articles directly related to influencer marketing, celebrity endorsement or consumer behavior; (2) articles available in full text; and (3) articles published in refereed journals. On the other hand, articles that did not meet the criteria such as non-academic publications, languages other than English or Malay, and articles that were not relevant to the study objectives were excluded. The establishment of these criteria is important to ensure the quality and validity of the study findings (Marczyk et al., 2005).

Article selection process

The article selection process was conducted according to PRISMA guidelines involving several main stages, namely identification, screening, eligibility and final selection. Complete statistics on the number of articles identified, screened, excluded and finally selected are summarized in *Table 4* of study selection statistics. Initially, a large number of articles were identified through the selected databases. Duplicate articles were then removed before a screening process based on titles and abstracts was carried out. Potentially relevant articles were then assessed through full-text reading. Finally, only articles that met all criteria were included in the final analysis. These articles, as listed in *Table 1*, were used as the basis for the study synthesis and are referred to throughout the discussion of findings.

Table 4. Study selection statistics.

Stage	Description	Number of article (n)
Identification	Records identified through database searching	265
	Additional records identified through manual search	15
	Total records identified	280
Screening	Records after duplicates removed	240
	Records screened (title & abstract)	240
	Records excluded	180
Eligibility	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	60
	Full-text articles excluded	48
Included	Studies included in qualitative synthesis	12

Data analysis, tables and visualizations as well as theme validation and evaluation

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach, where selected articles were classified into main themes based on conceptual similarities and study findings. This approach is in line with qualitative analysis methods that emphasize in-depth interpretation of literature data (Silverman, 2017). The identified themes were then compared and synthesized to produce a comprehensive understanding of the study phenomenon. In addition, the quality of the articles was assessed using several criteria such as clarity of study objectives, methodological appropriateness, and discussion of study limitations. This process is important to ensure that only high-quality studies are used in the analysis, in line with the principle of validity in social research (King et al., 1994). In terms of data management, software such as Mendeley is used to organize references and manage literature sources systematically. The use of this software helps increase efficiency and accuracy in handling literature data. To enhance the transparency and understandability of the study, several tables and visualizations were used. These include *Table 3* which details the search strategy, *Table 4* which shows the

article selection statistics, and *Table 1* which summarizes the selected articles along with important information such as authors, year and study findings. In addition, a PRISMA flowchart is also provided to visually illustrate the entire article selection process. To ensure the reliability of the findings, the process of classifying themes was carefully conducted through cross-comparison between articles. A consensus approach was used to ensure uniformity in the categorization of themes. In qualitative research, this validation process is important to increase credibility and accuracy of interpretation (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). Overall, the methodology used in this study was systematic, transparent and structured, in line with best practices in academic research.

Results and Discussion

Overview of selected studies (Table 1 and Table 2)

Based on *Table 1*, a total of 12 studies were selected covering the period between 2022 and 2025. These studies involve various contexts such as Malaysia, South Africa and other countries, with a main focus on the use of influencers in digital marketing. In general, studies such as Ayob et al. (2023), Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025) as well as Ramly et al. (2024) show that influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. In terms of methodology, as shown in *Table 2*, most studies use a quantitative approach through questionnaires (Duffett and Mxunyelwa, 2025; Ayob et al., 2023), while a small number use qualitative approaches such as thematic analysis (Ramly et al., 2024) and netnographic studies (Badrul Hisham et al., 2025). This mixed approach provides a more comprehensive picture of the SMI phenomenon. A study by Ayob et al. (2023), for example, used 388 respondents to assess factors such as influencer credibility, attractiveness and product suitability, and found that all of these factors had a significant impact on purchasing behavior. Meanwhile, Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025) used 497 Generation Z respondents and integrated the TAM and Source Credibility models to study purchase intentions. Overall, these initial findings show that previous studies are consistent in emphasizing the importance of influencers as a dominant digital marketing tool in the digital economy era.

Theme 1: Influencer credibility (Trustworthiness and expertise)

The first and most dominant theme in this analysis is influencer credibility, which encompasses aspects of trustworthiness and expertise. Based on *Table 3*, almost all studies support that credibility is a key factor influencing purchasing behavior. A study by Ayob et al. (2023) showed that source credibility significantly influences purchasing decisions among young adults. This is in line with the findings of Rizal Putri et al. (2023) who found that the trust and expertise of influencers directly impact the purchasing attitudes and behaviors of Gen Z Muslim consumers in Malaysia. Furthermore, Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025) found that influencer expertise was positively related to purchase intention, and also served as a factor mediated by perceived usefulness. This suggests that not only is credibility directly important, but it also enhances the effectiveness of other factors in consumer behavior models. In the Malaysian context, Rosli et al. (2023) pointed out that consumers often rely on influencers as a source of information before making purchasing decisions, as they are considered more trustworthy than traditional advertisements. Overall, this theme shows

that without high credibility, influencers' effectiveness in influencing consumers is limited. Therefore, selecting influencers with reputation and expertise is critical in a marketing strategy.

Theme 2: Influencer attraction and personality

The second theme identified was influencer attractiveness, which includes physical appearance, personality, and user liking of the influencer. Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025) study showed that influencer attractiveness has a positive effect on purchase intention, and is also influenced by factors such as perceived ease of use. This suggests that attractive influencers not only attract users' attention, but also enhance the platform usage experience. In a local study, Ayob et al. (2023) also found that the attractiveness of influencers is a significant factor in influencing purchasing decisions. In addition, Rizal Putri et al. (2023) added that the element of likeability or liking for influencers plays an important role in shaping consumer attitudes. However, there are also findings that show a negative effect if the attractiveness is not in line with the product. For example, in the literature discussion, the use of overly attractive celebrities can affect consumer self-confidence and subsequently have a negative effect on purchase intentions (Ayob et al., 2023). Overall, influencer appeal serves as a powerful psychological factor in capturing consumer attention, but needs to be aligned with the product context to ensure effectiveness.

Theme 3: Influencer-Product fit

The third theme is the fit between influencers and products. Based on Table 4, the study shows that this fit is an important factor in ensuring that marketing messages are well received by consumers. Ayob et al. (2023) emphasized that the fit between influencers and products increases consumer trust in the content delivered. This is in line with the findings of Ramly et al. (2024), who showed that celebrities with high engagement with followers can increase the effectiveness of product promotions through more authentic relationships. In the cultural context, Badrul Hisham et al. (2025) show that influencers also act as cultural intermediaries who help consumers adapt global products to local values. This shows that the fit is not only in terms of the product, but also in terms of the consumer's values and identity. Therefore, selecting influencers that suit your brand is important to ensure that your marketing messages are more credible and effective.

Theme 4: Technology factors (Perceived usefulness and ease of use)

The fourth theme is related to technological factors based on the TAM model, namely perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU). Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025) study showed that both of these factors have a positive impact on purchase intention, and also act as mediators between influencer attributes and consumer behavior. This suggests that consumer experience with the platform plays an important role in determining influencer effectiveness. In addition, Rosli et al. (2023) stated that the use of easy and accessible social media increases the effectiveness of SMI as a marketing tool. Therefore, technological factors cannot be ignored in influencer marketing studies, as they affect how users interact with the content being delivered.

Theme 5: Social and cultural influences

The final theme is social and cultural influence, which shows how influencers shape social norms and consumer identities. Badrul Hisham et al. (2025) study shows that influencers play a role as cultural agents that shape the identity and lifestyle of young people. This includes influencing food choices, fashion and lifestyle. Additionally, Rosli et al. (2023) showed that SMI is used in various sectors such as tourism, fashion and health, demonstrating the diversity of their influence in society. This finding shows that influencers not only influence purchasing decisions, but also shape consumers' values and social identities.

Study quality assessment

Based on *Table 5*, most studies showed high quality with scores ranging from 80% to 100%. This indicates that the selected studies are relevant and reliable. Studies such as Wang et al. (2026), Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025) as well as Mehboob et al. (2025) achieved full scores (100%), indicating sound methodology and comprehensive discussion. In contrast, some studies such as Tan et al. (2024) scored lower (60%) due to lack of comparison or discussion of limitations. Overall, the level of study quality was high, which supports the validity of the findings in this study.

Table 5. Quality assessment of studies (QA1–QA5).

No	Study	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	Total score	%
1	Wang et al. (2026)	1	1	1	1	1	5	100%
2	Mehboob et al. (2025)	1	1	1	1	1	5	100%
3	Tan et al. (2024)	1	1	1	0	1	4	80%
4	Sharipudin et al. (2023)	1	1	1	1	0	4	80%
5	Wong et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	5	100%
6	Qing et al. (2024)	1	1	1	0	0	3	60%
7	Che Wel et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	5	100%
8	Azmi et al. (2022)	1	1	1	1	0	4	80%
9	Muhammad et al. (2024)	1	1	1	1	1	5	100%
10	Ramly et al. (2024)	1	1	1	0	1	4	80%
11	Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025)	1	1	1	1	1	5	100%
12	Ayob et al. (2023)	1	1	1	1	0	4	80%

Interpretation of study findings

Overall, the study findings show that social media influencers (SMIs) play a significant role in influencing consumer purchasing behavior, especially among Generation Z and young adults. Based on the analysis in *Table 3*, the main factors influencing this behavior are credibility (trustworthiness and expertise), attractiveness, and fit between the influencer and the product. Credibility emerged as the most dominant factor in almost all studies analyzed. A study by Ayob et al. (2023) showed that source credibility has a significant relationship with purchasing behavior. Similarly, Rizal Putri et al. (2023) found that influencer trust and expertise influence consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions. This shows that consumers tend to trust influencers who are perceived to be knowledgeable and honest in conveying information. In addition, the influencer attractiveness factor also plays an important role in attracting consumer attention and increasing emotional engagement. Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025) found that influencer attractiveness has a direct and indirect effect on purchase intention through mediating variables such as perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. This indicates that psychological factors and consumer perceptions of influencers are critical in shaping purchasing behavior. Additionally, the findings in

Table 4 highlight the importance of influencer-product fit. Studies have shown that this fit increases consumer trust and the effectiveness of marketing messages (Ayob et al., 2023). This means that selecting influencers who are relevant to the product is important to ensure the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Finally, technological factors such as perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use also play an important role, especially in the context of digital platforms such as Instagram. This finding suggests that user experience with the platform influences the effectiveness of influencers in influencing purchasing decisions.

Comparison with previous studies

The findings of this study are in line with most previous studies that emphasize the important role of influencers in digital marketing. Based on *Table 1*, a study by Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025) supports the finding that attributes such as attractiveness and expertise have a positive relationship with purchase intention. This is consistent with a study by Ayob et al. (2023) that also emphasizes the importance of credibility and attractiveness in influencing purchase behavior. In addition, this finding is also in line with the study by Ramly et al. (2024) which showed that celebrities and influencers use social media to increase engagement with followers and subsequently influence consumer behavior. This study emphasizes that the two-way relationship between influencers and followers plays an important role in increasing consumer trust and loyalty. In a global context, the findings of this study also support the study by Rosli et al. (2023) which showed that SMI has been widely used in various sectors such as fashion, tourism and food, and has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior. This shows that the influence of influencers is not limited to one sector, but encompasses various industries. However, there are also differences in the findings of certain studies. For example, Badrul Hisham et al. (2025) study showed that although influencers have a strong influence in shaping consumers' identities and lifestyles, the level of trust in influencers may vary depending on the cultural and social context. This suggests that cultural factors also need to be taken into account in understanding the influence of influencers.

Theoretical implications

The findings of this study provide empirical support for two main theories, namely the Source Credibility Model (SCM) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Factors such as influencer credibility and attractiveness support the main components of SCM, while perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use support TAM (Duffett and Mxunyelwa, 2025). The integration of these two models shows that consumer behavior in the context of influencer marketing is not only influenced by psychological factors, but also by technological factors. Therefore, this study contributes to the development of theory by combining social and technological elements in a more comprehensive analytical framework.

Practice implications

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study provide guidance to marketers and organizations in selecting the right influencers for their marketing campaigns. Based on the findings, marketers need to pay attention to factors such as: (1) Influencer credibility (trust and expertise), (2) Influencer charm and personality, (3) Compatibility

between influencers and products. For example, Rosli et al. (2023) emphasized that SMI can increase brand awareness and sales if used with the right strategy. In addition, Ramly et al. (2024) showed that active engagement between influencers and followers can increase marketing effectiveness.

Policy implications

From a policy perspective, the findings of this study indicate the need to regulate the use of influencers in digital marketing. Issues such as transparency, authenticity and ethics in product promotion need to be addressed to protect consumers from misleading information. Ayob et al. (2023) study also highlights the issue of trust in influencers due to the use of fake followers and non-transparent promotions. Therefore, authorities need to consider stricter guidelines or policies on the use of influencers to ensure integrity in digital marketing.

Study limitations

Although this study provides significant findings, there are several limitations that need to be taken into account. First, this study relies on a literature review that is limited to specific articles as listed in *Table 1*, and may not encompass all studies related to influencer marketing. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings may be limited. Second, most of the studies analyzed used a quantitative approach (*Table 2*), which may not fully capture qualitative aspects such as emotions and user experiences. Future studies could use a mixed approach to obtain a more comprehensive picture. Third, there are differences in geographical and cultural contexts in the studies analyzed, such as Malaysia and South Africa, which may have influenced the findings. For example, Badrul Hisham et al. (2025) showed that cultural factors play an important role in shaping influencer influence. Finally, based on *Table 5*, although most studies were of high quality, there were some studies with lower scores that may have affected the accuracy of the overall findings.

Conclusion

Overall, this study successfully summarized several key findings regarding the role of Malaysian actors as social media influencers in Instagram marketing and their influence on consumer behavior. Based on the systematic synthesis of studies summarized in *Table 1* to *Table 5*, it can be concluded that factors such as credibility (trustworthiness and expertise), influencer attractiveness, and fit between influencers and products are the main drivers that influence consumer purchase intentions. This finding is in line with the study by Ayob et al. (2023) which asserted that influencer credibility and attractiveness have a significant relationship with consumer purchasing behavior. Similarly, Rizal Putri et al. (2023) showed that influencer trust and expertise have a direct impact on consumer attitudes, which in turn influence purchase decisions. In addition, the study findings also highlight the importance of technological factors such as perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use in increasing influencer effectiveness, as discussed by Duffett and Mxunyelwa (2025). This shows that the effectiveness of influencer marketing depends not only on the individual characteristics of the influencer, but also on the user's experience with the digital platform. In the Malaysian context, Rosli et al. (2023) emphasized that SMI has become an increasingly

important marketing tool across various economic sectors, especially in the era of the digital economy. Furthermore, the study by Badrul Hisham et al. (2025) shows that influencers also play a role as cultural agents that shape the identity and lifestyle of consumers, especially among Generation Z.

In terms of future research suggestions, several research gaps are identified. First, future research is recommended to focus specifically on Malaysian actors as influencers, as most existing studies still combine the categories of celebrities and influencers without a clear distinction. Second, future research can apply a longitudinal study approach to understand changes in consumer behavior over the long term. Third, qualitative studies such as in-depth interviews and digital ethnographic analysis can be used to understand the emotional, identity and parasocial aspects between consumers and influencers in more depth. Finally, future research can also explore contextual factors such as culture, religion and social norms that influence the effectiveness of influencers in the Malaysian context. Overall, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of influencers in digital marketing, as well as opening up space for further research in this rapidly growing field.

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Conflict of interest

This study was independently conducted by the author without external funding or commercial involvement. No conflicts of interest are declared.

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