The Role of Influencer Marketing in Driving Global Brand Awareness

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Abstract

Influencer marketing has proved to be one of the most disruptive approaches of digital marketing that has completely revolutionized the process of building global brand awareness. However, little research has been carried out to understand the mechanism of influence of influencer marketing components in terms of creating global brand awareness. The present research attempts to examine the link between various dimensions of influencer marketing, content authenticity, influencer credibility, audience engagement, purchase intention, and cross-cultural appeal with global brand awareness using ELM and SLT theories. Data was collected using a quantitative cross-sectional study methodology from 370 active social media users who were at least 18 years old from India, US, UK, and Singapore. Validated structured questionnaires were developed and distributed through online survey tools. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression analyses were performed using SPSS (v.27). The findings indicate that content authenticity ($\beta = .36$, $p < .001$) was the most significant predictor of global brand awareness, followed by influencer credibility ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$), audience engagement ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$), cross-cultural resonance ($\beta = .22$, $p = .003$), and purchase intention ($\beta = .18$, $p = .025$). The entire regression analysis showed an explanatory power of 61.4% on global brand awareness ($R^2 = .614$, $F(5, 364) = 116.22$, $p < .001$). It is evident that this study shows how crucial it is to ensure that the content used in improving brand visibility is not only valid but also credible. The study offers a complete theoretical foundation for examining marketing effectiveness.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing; Global Brand Awareness; Content Authenticity; Influencer Credibility; Social Media Marketing; Cross-Cultural Resonance; Purchase Intention.

I. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of social media platforms has revolutionized the landscape of marketing by providing businesses with a way to reach their message globally. Influencer marketing, one such method of marketing that involves leveraging the influence of individuals with a large online following to market brands' messages to their audiences, has become very popular in recent years (Abhishek & Srivastava, 2021; Agustian et al., 2023). The global influencer marketing industry was valued at around USD 21.1 billion in 2023, reflecting a CAGR of more than 29% during the period 2016-2024 (Okonkwo & Namkoisse, 2023; Xu, 2023).

Brand awareness may be described as the degree to which a brand is recognized among its intended audience. This becomes the foundation of brand equity and loyalty. Considering the era we are living in today, when information overload and short attention spans prevail, conventional media such as television and print ads are becoming ineffective tools for marketers (Valmohammadi et al., 2025). Influencer marketing provides a possible solution to the problem faced by marketers, as this strategy makes use of curated content to disseminate brand messaging and takes advantage of parasocial connections that exist between viewers and influencers (Anugrah, 2025; Polat et al., 2024).

The part played by the global dimension in influencer marketing requires special scholarly attention (Myers et al., 2024). Global brand marketing efforts are becoming more prevalent in using influencers in several countries, but this also means that there are many complexities in reaching a multicultural audience, particularly concerning the influence of culture and language (Furinto et al., 2024; Angmo & Mahajan, 2024). It remains to be seen whether the same standards of content authenticity and influencer credibility, for example, apply universally, or whether platform or regional moderators change this dynamic.

Research Objectives and Questions

The research will be guided by the following objectives:

- To analyze the effects of content authenticity on brand awareness for global brand awareness in influencer marketing.
- To investigate the contribution of influencer credibility towards brand awareness in different regions.
- To analyze the effects of audience engagement on brand awareness outcomes in influencer marketing.
- To investigate the moderating effect of cross-cultural resonance towards the success of influencer marketing campaigns.
- To analyze the predictive effect of purchase intentions on brand awareness.

The research is driven by the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent do content authenticity, influencer credibility, audience engagement, purchase intention, and cross-cultural resonance affect global brand awareness?

RQ2: What is the most powerful element in influencer marketing influencing global brand awareness?

RQ3: How does cross-cultural resonance moderate the connection between brand awareness and influencer marketing components?

This study contributes to the extant knowledge base in the following ways:

First, by developing a multidimensional framework based on both ELM and SLT theories, particularly within the context of influencer marketing.

Second, by adopting an empirical design in four countries, and third, by offering useful insights to brand managers regarding global influencer marketing campaigns.

The structure of this article will be presented in the following order: Section 2 contains a literature review; Section 3 presents the research methodology; Section 4 contains findings and discussions; Section 5 discusses theoretical and managerial implications; and lastly, Section 6 addresses limitations and future research directions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundations

There are two major theoretical models on which the research is based. The first one is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), suggesting that there are two ways in which persuasion works – the central route, implying cognitive processing, and the peripheral route, implying shallow cues (Abdullah, 2025). In influencer marketing, when consumers see influencers as credible, they use the central route of persuasion and hence achieve attitude change and brand awareness (Dhun & Dangi, 2023). If followers, aesthetics, and social proof work together, consumers take the peripheral route and become aware of brands due to association.

The second model is called Social Learning Theory (SLT), implying that individuals learn from the observation of other people's behaviors. In this respect, social media influencers become role models for consumers, as well as a means of vicarious experience, which leads to consumers' brand awareness. As a result, the combination of two theoretical models – ELM and SLT – allows one to study the phenomenon of influencer marketing (Kilipiri et al., 2023; Tanwar et al., 2022).

2.2 Influencer Marketing and Brand Awareness

Influencer marketing has emerged as a key contributor to CBBE and brand awareness (Lou et al., 2023). The influence of influencers, especially in terms of the number of followers and content originality, has been shown to be instrumental in shaping attitudes toward brands and increasing brand awareness among social media users. Content generated by influencers results in higher brand recall compared to traditional digital marketing strategies, due to the parasocial relationship between the influencer and the audience (Liu, 2022).

Emerging research on influencer marketing has shed light on the potential of nano-influencers and micro-influencers (having between 1,000 to 100,000 followers) in creating brand awareness among niche audiences. It has been observed that influencers with fewer followers have higher engagement than mega-influencers or celebrities, due to the authenticity and accessibility of nano- and micro-influencers. Influencer authenticity has been identified as an important predictor of consumer brand awareness and sharing intentions.

2.3 Content Authenticity

The concept of authenticity in influencer marketing involves perceiving that an influencer's message is authentic, open, and non-commercial (Bakri, 2023). Research findings show that authentic perception has a significant moderating effect on the impact of branded content. Today's customers have developed a high level of cynicism towards advertisements due to their saturation in commercialized messages, and therefore, authenticity plays a vital role as a predictor of brand trust and positive brand evaluation. Authenticity of content has a significant effect on consumer purchases and brand awareness as a mediator of influencer features.

2.4 Influencer Credibility

Credibility, made up of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, is known as one of the fundamental factors influencing the success of an influencer. Credibility perceptions are higher for influencers who openly disclose their collaboration with brands, even if the disclosure suggests the commercial nature of the communication. The trustworthiness aspect of credibility tends to play a more influential role in forming the perception of brand awareness among consumers. However, in a cross-cultural environment, credibility is culture-bound; the influence of the trustworthiness dimension on brand awareness is stronger in collectivist societies.

2.5 Audience Engagement

Audience engagement operationalized using indicators like likes, comments, shares, and saves has been the focus of increasing research interest as a mediator of the influence on brand awareness. High audience engagement works as a social proof indicator, enhancing the perception of brand popularity, and thus extending its reach organically through algorithm-driven promotion. However, it is important to distinguish between engagement volume and engagement quality since engagement that fosters a dialogical conversation has more long-lasting brand awareness effects. The link between engagement and brand awareness is non-linear, showing that its benefits diminish as engagement rises.

2.6 Cross-Cultural Resonance

The global nature of social media has generated both new possibilities and difficulties in conducting international brand marketing campaigns (Holiday et al., 2023). Cross-cultural resonance, defined as the extent to which content created by an influencer resonates with the cultural values and norms of different target populations, is a key moderator influencing the success of influencer marketing efforts (Gross & Von Wangenheim, 2022). International marketing strategies using influencers who are embedded within the culture and are more sensitive will fare better regarding brand awareness in international markets than using international celebrities in campaigns (Chidiac & Bowden, 2023).

2.7 Research Gaps

Although there is an abundance of literature that has been written, there are still some gaps. First, the literature does not consider a multi-country study, limiting the generalizability of findings. Secondly, an examination of several influencer marketing dimensions using regression has never been done. Third, there is a gap in the literature that shows the degree of importance of content authenticity vis-à-vis credibility and engagement empirically. This paper attempts to address this gap.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The present study utilizes a quantitative cross-sectional survey research design to examine the relationships among various dimensions of influencer marketing and global brand recognition. The research design employed here is related to the positivist epistemological paradigm, which corresponds with the necessity for testing the relationships through the use of statistical methods. It can be used since it allows measuring differences among various people regarding the studied phenomenon at one point in time.

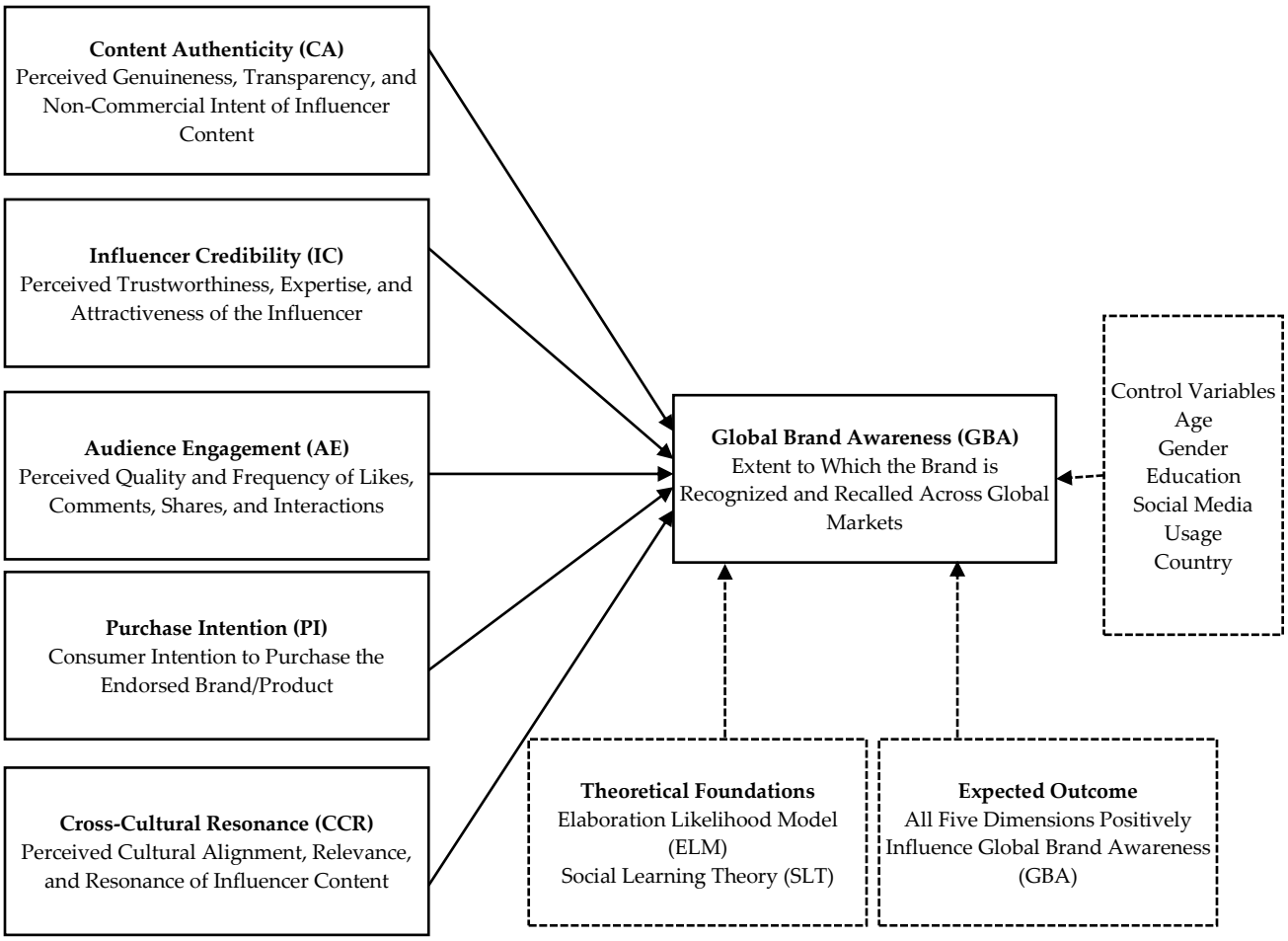


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Influencer Marketing and Global Brand Awareness

Figure 1 demonstrates the conceptual framework of the relationships among five influencer marketing variables, including content authenticity, influencer credibility, audience engagement, purchase intention, and cross-cultural fit associated with global brand awareness.

3.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sampling frame consisted of individuals aged 18 and above who utilized at least one of the four social media channels (Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, or Twitter/X) and were exposed to influencer content for the last three months. The convenience sampling method, complemented by purposive sampling, was utilized to recruit participants from four nations – India, United States, United Kingdom, and Singapore. These nations have been chosen as sample locations to represent different cultural backgrounds as well as various degrees of development of influencer marketing industry.

A total of 410 surveys were sent out through social media and online panels in October to December 2024. With the elimination of low-quality data (n=40), the final sample size obtained was 370 respondents. The sample size is sufficient to conduct structural equation modeling and exceeds the calculated minimum necessary to achieve statistical power with medium effect sizes and five predictors.

3.3 Measurement Instruments

The measures used were constructed with multi-item five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The construct Content Authenticity was measured through five items. The Influence Credibility construct was measured using nine items, which contained sub-items measuring influence trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. The construct Audience Engagement was measured with five items, while Purchase Intention was measured using four items. The construct Cross-Cultural Resonance was measured with four items, designed specifically for this research based on the definition of cultural compatibility. Global Brand Awareness was measured using six items.

The reliability of the instrument was established through Cronbach's alpha analysis, wherein all constructs passed the requirement of at least $\alpha = .70$, including Content Authenticity ($\alpha = .87$), Influencer Credibility ($\alpha = .84$), Audience Engagement ($\alpha = .82$), Purchase Intention ($\alpha = .79$), Cross-Cultural Resonance ($\alpha = .80$), and Global Brand Awareness ($\alpha = .88$).

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

A self-administered questionnaire was administered using Google Forms, which was promoted on targeted social media and through emails. An introduction section that stated the reason for conducting the study and ensured anonymity and voluntarism was included. Ethical clearance was received from the Institutional Review Board. The data obtained were kept safe in an encrypted database, while respondent identities were anonymized before analysis.

3.5 Analytical Techniques

Descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, and skewness, as well as Pearson product-moment correlation, were calculated by means of IBM SPSS Statistics software (version 27). To calculate the level of prediction of global brand awareness through each construct, linear regressions were run. First, correlations among all constructs under study were established via the correlation analysis method. Then, multiple linear regressions were conducted with Global Brand Awareness as a dependent variable and dimensions of influencer marketing as predictors. Assumptions for the regression analysis were checked.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Respondent Profile

Demographic details and platform usage statistics of the total 370 respondents surveyed are listed in table 1 below. The gender split was slightly female, with a majority of respondents being within the 25-34 age group (40.0%), which is characteristic of the social media user demographic group. The top three platforms among all were Instagram (57.0%), YouTube (50.5%), and TikTok (41.4%). The participants were from the following countries in equal numbers: India (n = 98, 26.5%), the US (n = 96, 25.9%), the UK (n = 91, 24.6%), and Singapore (n = 85, 23.0%).

Table 1: Demographic and Platform Usage Profile of Survey Respondents (N = 370)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Cumulative %
Gender	Male	162	43.8	43.8
	Female	194	52.4	96.2
	Non-binary / Other	14	3.8	100.0
Age Group	18–24 years	96	25.9	25.9
	25–34 years	148	40.0	65.9
	35–44 years	82	22.2	88.1
	45 years and above	44	11.9	100.0
Platform Usage	Instagram	211	57.0	57.0
	YouTube	187	50.5	—
	TikTok	153	41.4	—
	Twitter/X	89	24.1	—

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for all constructs used in this study. Global Brand Awareness was found to have the highest mean value of 4.33 with a standard deviation of 0.61, followed by Content Authenticity at 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.68, and Influencer Credibility at 4.09 with a standard deviation of 0.73. The constructs had normal distributions as the skewness levels were less than ±1.0.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Constructs (N = 370)

Construct / Item	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Skewness
Content Authenticity (CA)	4.21	0.68	1	5	-0.42
Influencer Credibility (IC)	4.09	0.73	1	5	-0.38
Audience Engagement (AE)	3.97	0.81	1	5	-0.29
Purchase Intention (PI)	3.84	0.89	1	5	-0.21
Global Brand Awareness (GBA)	4.33	0.61	1	5	-0.51
Cross-Cultural Resonance (CCR)	3.76	0.94	1	5	-0.18

4.3 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 3 below displays the Pearson correlation matrix for all variables used in the current research. All dimensions of influencer marketing showed highly significant positive correlations with Global Brand Awareness (GBA; $p < .01$). The strongest relationship was shown between Content Authenticity and GBA ($r = .67$, $p < .01$), then came Influencer Credibility ($r = .61$), Audience Engagement ($r = .59$), Cross-Cultural Resonance ($r = .54$), and Purchase Intention ($r = .52$). Among predictors, correlations varied from .39 to .63, suggesting that no serious collinearity (VIF < 3.0) problems existed.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix Among Study Variables (N = 370)

Variable	CA	IC	AE	PI	GBA	CCR
CA	1.00					
IC	.58**	1.00				
AE	.51**	.63**	1.00			
PI	.44**	.49**	.55**	1.00		
GBA	.67**	.61**	.59**	.52**	1.00	
CCR	.39**	.42**	.48**	.46**	.54**	1.00

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

The analysis carried out involved multiple linear regression, with Global Brand Awareness (GBA) as the criterion and the five dimensions of influencer marketing as predictors. The entire model was statistically significant and explained 61.4% of the total variance in GBA [$R^2 = .614$, Adjusted $R^2 = .609$, $F(5, 364) = 116.22$, $p < .001$]. Table 4 shows the standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients for each predictor.

Content Authenticity turned out to be the most important predictor for GBA ($\beta = .36$, $t = 5.17$, $p < .001$), followed by Influencer Credibility ($\beta = .29$, $t = 3.86$, $p < .001$), Audience Engagement ($\beta = .25$, $t = 3.43$, $p = .001$), Cross-Cultural Resonance ($\beta = .22$, $t = 3.00$, $p = .003$), and Purchase Intention ($\beta = .18$, $t = 2.25$, $p = .025$). All five predictors were unique and significant predictors of the criterion, indicating that the influence of influencer marketing on global brand awareness is indeed multi-dimensional.

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regression: Predictors of Global Brand Awareness (N = 370)

Predictor Variable	B	SE	Beta (β)	t-value	p
(Constant)	0.74	0.21	—	3.52	.001
Content Authenticity (CA)	0.31	0.06	.36	5.17	<.001
Influencer Credibility (IC)	0.27	0.07	.29	3.86	<.001
Audience Engagement (AE)	0.24	0.07	.25	3.43	.001
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.18	0.08	.18	2.25	.025
Cross-Cultural Resonance (CCR)	0.21	0.07	.22	3.00	.003

Regression diagnostics showed compliance with necessary assumptions, including a non-problematic Durbin-Watson statistic (2.04) for absence of autocorrelation, homoscedasticity based on residual plots, and linearity in a normal P-P plot for standardized residuals indicating normality. All variables had low variance inflation factors (VIFs), varying between 1.41 and 2.67 and falling far short of 10, which ruled out any possibility of multicollinearity.

The relationship between the relative importance of each of the five influencer marketing dimensions affecting brand awareness is illustrated in Figure 2 via the use of standardized beta coefficients obtained from the regression model analysis.

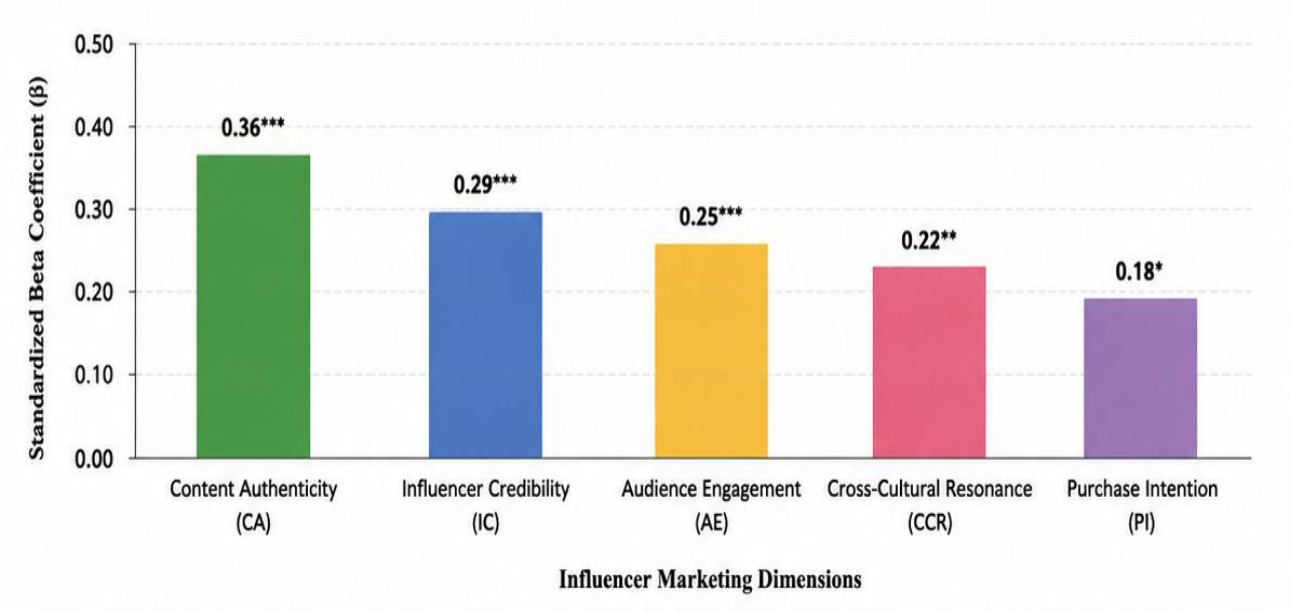


Figure 2: Standardized Beta Coefficients of Influencer Marketing Dimensions

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 Key Findings on Influencer Marketing Dimensions

Content authenticity proved to be the strongest influencer marketing dimension impacting global brand awareness (β = .36) because it allows engaging consumers in deep cognitive processing activities. Another important dimension was influencer credibility (β = .29). It includes aspects such as expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness that help achieve increased awareness of the target audience about products promoted by influencers. At the same time, cross-cultural resonance (β = .22) was another relevant predictor of brand awareness because it is crucial to engage local, rather than global celebrities, in influencing processes.

5.2 Role of Engagement and Purchase Intention

Audience engagement (β = .25) and purchase intention (β = .18), on the other hand, provided positive but less powerful contributions than authenticity and credibility. Audience engagement is considered an amplifier as authentic and credible content motivates the audience to engage, increasing their awareness as a result of social validation. Purchase intention is a predictive indicator representing the future condition of consumers, which could affect as well as be affected by brand awareness.

5.3 Theoretical Implications

The results provide support for the multidimensional framework of influencer marketing effectiveness based on the Extended Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Social Learning Theory (SLT). Authenticity and credibility serve as central route motivators, whereas audience engagement serves as a peripheral route amplifier. Cultural alignment shows that the observational learning of brands from social influencers is best achieved culturally, supporting SLT's principle that perceived similarity enhances learning.

VI. CONCLUSION

The current research has examined the effect of influencer marketing on global brand awareness through the evaluation of five different dimensions namely authenticity of content, credibility of the influencer, engagement of the audience, purchase intention and cross-cultural appeal among 370 social media users from different countries. The outcome of the study indicates that all the aforementioned five dimensions have an effective contribution towards brand awareness, with content authenticity being the strongest determinant factor. Collectively, the identified dimensions have explained a variance of 61.4% of global brand awareness. The results prove that influencer marketing is a multidimensional concept and that authentic, credible and culturally relevant content will have an effect on brand perception of the consumers. From the manager's point of view, the current study suggests that the managers should work with influential marketers who have genuine passion for the brand. Monitoring the quality of engagement as well as quantity is equally vital for maximizing exposure based on social proof and algorithms. The study has some limitations. First, there is the issue of cross-sectional design that precludes causality. Second, the sample used here is a convenience one, leading to possible biases due to self-selection. Third, the study was limited to four countries whose language is English or that have high digital penetration, thus affecting the generalizability of results. Fourth, the data collected were based on self-reports instead of behavior. Potential areas for future studies include longitudinal analysis, structural equation modeling to explore the mediation and moderation effects, analysis of the three social media platforms separately, and investigation of new trends like virtual influencers generated via AI technology. In addition, conducting tests of cross-cultural invariance will allow understanding if the impact of the different dimensions of influencer marketing differs between high-context and low-context cultures.

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