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The Impact of Social Media Marketing Strategies on Consumer Brand Loyalty

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
Article History Received: June 2026 Accepted: August 2026 Published Online: September 2026	This paper is a systematic literature review (SLR) on the impact of social media marketing (SMM) strategies on consumer brand loyalty and closely related constructs, such as brand equity, brand trust and repurchase intention. The review is performed according to the PRISMA 2020 protocol. A search in Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar resulted in 687 records. The author has no institutional access to Web of Science and Google Scholar does not have a bulk citation-export function; full title-and-abstract data suitable for record-level screening were available only for the Scopus export. The 589 records from those two sources could therefore not be screened and the review is in effect a single-database review of Scopus-indexed gold open-access literature. Of 98 records screened (exclusion: off topic or non-qualifying, n=13), 85 reports were to be retrieved. 2 records had no full text available. 83 reports were assessed for eligibility. At this stage, another 34 were excluded, mainly because one of the four focal constructs was not the ultimate tested outcome but merely a mediator toward another dependent variable, because the predictor was not a social-media-marketing or influencer-marketing construct, or because the sample was not consumers. This resulted in 49 included studies published from 2020 to 2026. One reviewer did the screening, eligibility assessment, quality appraisal and data extraction without independent-rater cross-validation. The most tested terminal outcome among the 49 included studies is brand loyalty (27 studies) followed by brand equity and repurchase intention (12 each). Brand trust is a terminal outcome in only 4 studies but is a mechanism mediating in a further 8 studies, suggesting that it is more often a mechanism than an endpoint in this literature. The two main predictor flows are social media marketing activities (SMMA) - entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) – and influencer marketing. The influence of influencer marketing on loyalty and equity is through both direct and indirect channels. The main mediating factors in the SMM-loyalty and the SMM-equity relationships are consumer brand engagement and brand trust. The paper concludes with theoretical and managerial implications, a synthesized research model and an agenda for future research emphasizing multi-database, multi-coder and longitudinal designs.
Keywords Social media marketing Social media activities Influencer marketing Brand loyalty Brand equity Brand trust Repurchase intention Systematic literature review	
JEL Codes D16, D91, E71, M30	
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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have changed the way brands interact with consumers, moving from one-way marketing to interactive, personalized and community-oriented marketing (Kim & Ko, 2012; Godey et al., 2016). Today, companies across the board - from banking and insurance to fashion, food and beverage and consumer electronics - are investing a lot of marketing effort into social media marketing (SMM) activities such as entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and influencer marketing, expecting that these investments will translate into stronger and more loyal customer relationships (Yang et al., 2022; Jung & Kim, 2025). However, the empirical literature on SMM and consumer brand loyalty is fragmented despite this general managerial interest. Studies vary according to the SMM dimensions they address (some focus narrowly on influencer credibility, while others measure the five-dimension SMMA scale), the outcome construct they highlight (brand loyalty, brand equity, brand trust, or repurchase intention), the mediating and moderating mechanisms they explore (brand engagement, brand love, brand trust, gender), and the industry and cultural context in which they are conducted. This fragmentation makes it difficult for researchers and practitioners to draw a consolidated picture of how and under what conditions SMM strategies build brand loyalty.

This study aims to fill this gap by conducting a systematic review of empirical research published between 2020 and 2026 that examines the relationship between social media or influencer marketing and consumer brand loyalty, brand equity, brand trust, and repurchase intention. The review follows the PRISMA 2020 protocol (Page et al., 2021) and has five research questions:

RQ1. What social media marketing strategies and dimensions have been empirically examined in relation to consumer brand loyalty and what are the results?

RQ2: How does social media marketing affect brand equity?

RQ3: What is the impact of social media marketing on brand trust?

RQ4: The impact of social media marketing on repurchase intention?

RQ5: What are the mediating and moderating processes that explain the link between social media marketing and consumer brand loyalty?

Following the systematic review approach demonstrated in the course-provided exemplar reviews on digital transformation and electronic service quality this review is organized into five further sections: a literature review defining the core constructs; a methodology section describing the search strategy, screening procedure and quality assessment; a results and discussion section organized around the five research questions and closing with a synthesized research model; a conclusion summarizing theoretical and managerial implications and limitations; and the references and appendices.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section defines the core constructs examined across the 49 included studies and fits them within the established branding literature from which they derive.

2.1. Social media marketing and social media marketing activities (SMMA)

Social media marketing (SMM) is the use by firms of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WeChat) to communicate, engage and influence current and prospective customers (Kim & Ko, 2012). A large number of the studies employ the five-dimension social media marketing activities (SMMA) scale developed by Kim and Ko (2012) in a luxury-fashion context and subsequently adapted across industries as diverse as banking (Hafez, 2022), telecommunications (Hafez, 2021), logistics (Lin et al., 2024), and green or sustainable products (Hu et al., 2024). Throughout this review we reserve the term SMMA for this multi-dimensional scale. Studies that measure social media marketing as a single undifferentiated construct are described as using general SMM (Zhou, 2023; Puspaningrum, 2020; Chen et al., 2023).

2.2. Influencer marketing

A related but conceptually distinct line of research is influencer marketing, in which brands use people with an existing online audience to endorse products and shape consumer perceptions (Jung & Kim, 2025; Sarkis et al., 2026). Most often is operationalized within the included studies through source-credibility attributes such as credibility, intimacy, attractiveness and product match-up (Jung & Kim, 2025; Narongkananukul et al., 2025; Amperawati et al., 2024). Its effect on brand outcomes is mediated through significant direct paths as well as significant indirect paths via consumer engagement, brand trust and brand attachment (Zahran & Aljuhmani, 2025; Li et al., 2026; Jung & Kim, 2025).

2.3. Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is a deeply held commitment to rebuying a preferred brand consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior (Oliver, 1999). It is often conceptualized as a multidimensional construct with cognitive, affective, conative and action-based loyalty (Bashir et al., 2025) and is the most studied terminal outcome in this review, appearing in 27 of the 49 included studies.

2.4. Brand equity

Brand equity is the additional value a brand name adds to a product and is typically measured by brand awareness, brand association or image and perceived quality (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Consumer-based brand equity is the most widely used conceptualization across the reviewed studies (Cheung et al., 2020; Dananjoyo & Udin, 2025) and a terminal outcome in 12 of the 49 studies included.

2.5. Brand trust

Brand trust is the consumer's willingness to rely on a brand's ability to perform its stated function, given the consumer's perceptions of reliability, honesty and benevolence (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Its place in this literature is unique: brand trust is the final outcome in only 4 of the 49 studies included (Haudi et al., 2022; Rico et al., 2024; Sarkis et al., 2026; Bashir et al., 2024) while in another 8 it is modelled as a mediator transmitting the effect of SMM on brand loyalty (e.g., Puspaningrum, 2020; Althuwaini, 2022; Santoso, 2023; Jung & Kim, 2025). Therefore, in the literature reviewed, brand trust is largely an explanatory mechanism rather than an end point in its own right.

2.6. Repurchase intention

Repurchase intention is considered in the services literature as an important behavioral outcome of positive brand evaluations (Zeithaml et al., 1996). It is defined as the subjective probability that a consumer will purchase again from the same brand. It is the final outcome in 12 of the 49 studies incorporated (e.g., Zhou, 2023; Jalil et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2024), often investigated together with brand awareness or brand equity as antecedents. Electronic word-of-mouth is one of the SMMA dimensions and is rooted in the consumer-opinion-platform literature (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in five stages, following the systematic review procedures demonstrated in the course-provided exemplar reviews (Digital Transformation on Product Innovation; Electronic Service Quality on Electronic Loyalty) and the PRISMA 2020 reporting guideline (Page et al., 2021): (1) data sources and search strategy, (2) inclusion and exclusion criteria, (3) PRISMA-based screening and eligibility assessment, (4) quality assessment, and (5) data coding and synthesis. No protocol was published and the review was not preregistered.

3.1. Data sources and search strategy

Records were identified by searching three databases and search engines using combinations of the keywords “social media marketing”, “SMMA”, “influencer marketing”, “brand loyalty”, “brand equity”, “brand trust”, and “repurchase intention”, restricted by empirical-study terms (“empirical”, “survey”, “correlation”, “SEM”, “regression”). All searches were last run on 13 August 2026. The exact search strings were:

Scopus: TITLE-ABS-KEY(("social media marketing" OR "SMMA" OR "influencer marketing") AND ("brand loyalty" OR "brand equity" OR "brand trust" OR "repurchase intention") AND ("empirical" OR "survey" OR "correlation" OR "SEM" OR "regression")), filtered to 2020-2026, Article, English, Final publication stage, Gold open access.

Web of Science: TS=(("social media marketing" OR "SMMA" OR "influencer marketing") AND ("brand loyalty" OR "brand equity" OR "brand trust" OR "repurchase intention") AND ("empirical" OR "survey" OR "correlation" OR "SEM" OR "regression")), filtered identically.

Google Scholar: "social media marketing" "brand loyalty" "correlation" OR "regression" OR "survey", limited to articles and reviews from 2025-2026.

Table 1 summarizes the number of records returned by each source. The narrower Google Scholar window (2025-2026, against 2020-2026 for the two indexed databases) reflects the volume of unfiltered results returned by that platform and is acknowledged as a limitation in Section 5.

Table 1. Databases and search results

Database / Search Engine	Records Identified	Search Range
Scopus	98	2020-2026
Web of Science	65	2020-2026
Google Scholar	524	2025-2026
Total records identified	687	

3.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The only source for which full title and abstract data for each record was available for individual-record screening was the Scopus export ($n = 98$). Two access constraints prevented equivalent screening of the other two sources: the author did not have institutional access to Web of Science through the university library, and Google Scholar does not have a bulk citation-export function comparable to Scopus or Web of Science. The same search strings identified 65 Web of Science records and 524 Google Scholar records that were thus excluded at the identification stage due to issues of database access rather than relevance, duplication or quality. In practical terms, the review is substantively limited by the use of a single-database, gold open-access corpus, as discussed further in Section 5.

The 98 Scopus records were screened at title-and-abstract level and then assessed at full-text level according to the criteria in Table 2. The main eligibility criteria in the full-text phase were that one of the four focal constructs (i.e., brand loyalty, brand equity, brand trust, or repurchase intention) should be the ultimate outcome tested in the model, not just a mediator on the way to another dependent variable such as purchase intention or purchase decision.

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Social media marketing, SMM activities, or influencer marketing is the focal predictor construct	Predictor is not an SMM/influencer-marketing activity construct (e.g., consumer-side engagement, online brand community, general digital marketing)
Brand loyalty, brand equity, brand trust, or repurchase intention is the terminal tested outcome	These constructs are absent, or appear only as mediators toward a different terminal outcome (e.g., purchase intention, purchase decision, e-WOM)
Empirical study using primary data (survey, SEM, regression, correlation, experiment, panel data)	Conceptual, purely qualitative, literature review/meta-analysis, or no quantitative modelling of the relationship
Sample consists of individual consumers	Non-consumer sample (e.g., firms, B2B buyers, employees)
Published 2020-2026, English, journal article, final publication stage, gold open access	Outside the window, non-English, non-final, or not gold open access

3.3. PRISMA flow diagram

Figure 1 shows the identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion stages applied to the 687 records retrieved across the three databases. At identification, the 589 Web of Science and Google Scholar records were removed for the access reasons described above. The 98 Scopus records were screened by title and abstract, and 13 were excluded as off-topic or non-qualifying. For the other 85 reports the full text was obtained. For 2 reports only abstracts were available and full text could not be obtained. Of the 83 reports reviewed in full text, 34 were excluded: 23 because none of the four focal constructs was the terminal outcome; 10 because the predictor was not a social-media-marketing or influencer-marketing construct; and 1 because the sample was of firms rather than consumers. Thus, 49 studies were included. Appendix B gives a complete list of excluded studies at the full-text stage, with reasons.

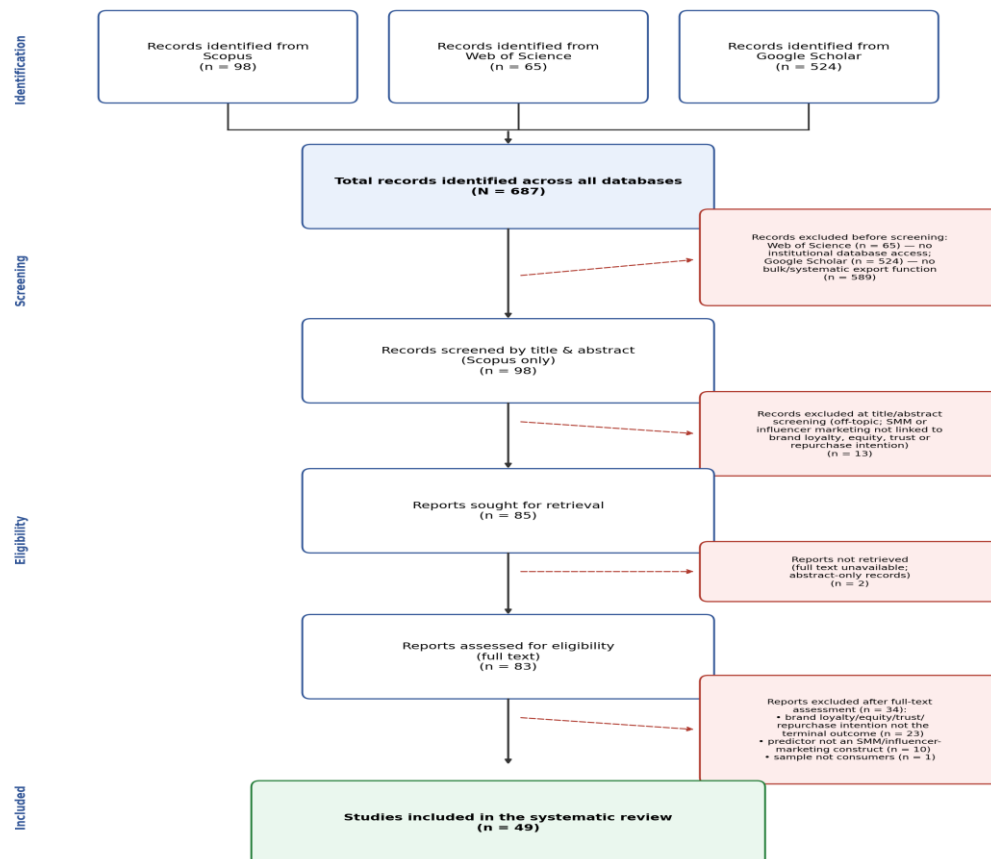


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram of the study selection process

3.4. Quality assessment

A quality assessment checklist was used for each of the 49 included studies, consisting of eight questions based on Kitchenham (2007) and the course exemplar reviews (Table 3). Since full text was already obtained for all included studies during the eligibility screening, each question was scored 0 (No), 0.5 (Partially), or 1 (Yes) based on full-text reading rather than only abstract-level information.

Table 3. Quality assessment checklist

No.	Quality Assessment Question
1	Are the research objectives clearly identified?
2	Was the study designed to achieve these objectives (clear method described)?
3	Are the variables/constructs considered by the study clearly specified?
4	Is the study context/region clearly specified?
5	Does the study clearly describe the methodology (sample, data collection, analysis technique)?
6	Does the study report reliability/validity or statistical rigor (e.g., SEM fit, Cronbach's alpha, significance)?
7	Do the results clearly add to the literature (novel angle, gap addressed, contribution stated)?
8	Does the study report clear, complete results?

The overall mean quality score across the 49 included studies was 7.78 (out of 8; 97.2%). Forty-six studies scored 87.5% or higher, two studies scored between 75% and 87.5%, and one study (Albdour et al., 2024) scored below 75% (68.8%) because it did not report any reliability or validity statistics and used simple regression and ANOVA. Two other studies (Puspaningrum, 2020; Mayasari et al., 2023) scored 81.2%. A critical caveat to the interpretation of these findings is that the instrument exhibits a significant ceiling effect with 46 of 49 studies falling at or near the maximum and limited ability to differentiate between the studies included. The scores are therefore best interpreted as confirming that the corpus meets a basic standard of reporting, rather than as a fine-grained ranking of methodological rigor. Scores for each study are reported in Appendix A.

3.5. Data coding and synthesis

Each of the 49 included studies was coded for: (a) country and context, (b) industry, (c) the social media marketing predictor construct(s) examined, (d) the terminal outcome construct(s), (e) any mediating or moderating variables tested, (f) the empirical method used, and (g) the sample size. The full coding for all 49 studies is reported in Table 4 (Section 4.7). These codes are the basis for the narrative synthesis in Section 4. One reviewer performed the coding and synthesis. A second coder was not available, so no statistics for inter-rater reliability could be calculated.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the descriptive profile of the 49 included studies, addresses the five research questions and ends with a synthesized research model based on the reviewed evidence.

4.1. Descriptive profile of included studies

In the review window, the output of empirical on social media marketing and brand loyalty increased from 2 each in 2020 and 2021 to 11 and 12 in 2024 and 2025 respectively (Figure 2). The 2026 figure (7 studies) is only partial-year indexing as of the time searches were run in August 2026 and should not be interpreted as a decline.

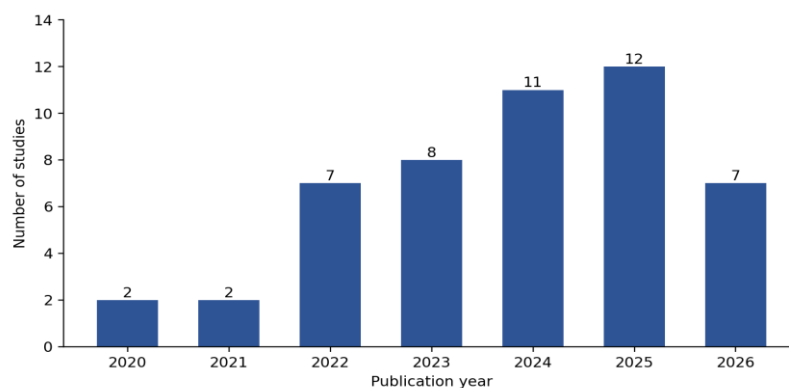


Figure 2. Number of included studies by publication year (2020-2026)

The reviewed literature has a geographic concentration in Southeast and South Asia. The 49 studies included are from 16 different countries - Indonesia (n=16), China (n=5), Vietnam (n=4), Saudi Arabia (n=3), Malaysia (n=2), Bangladesh (n=2), Jordan (n=2), Taiwan (n=2), Thailand (n=2), and a further 9 countries (one study each) - with 2 studies not stating a country context (Figure 3). This concentration is a geographic imbalance which limits the generalizability of the findings to Western European, North American and sub-Saharan African markets.

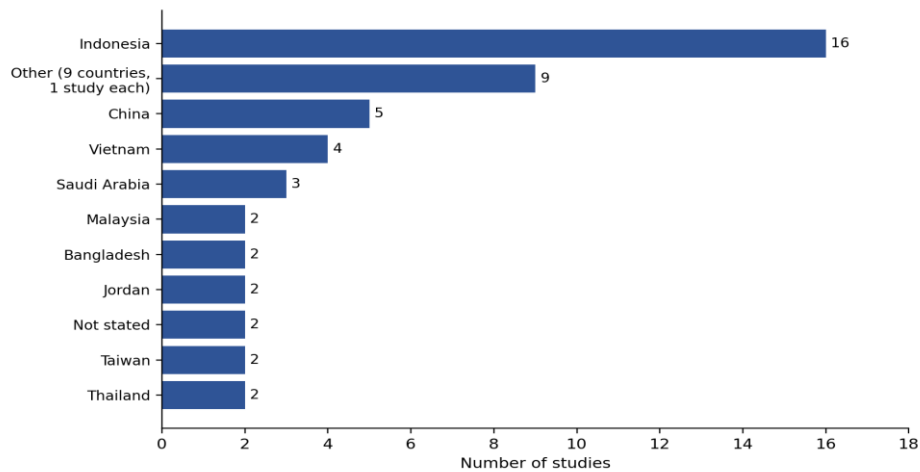


Figure 3. Number of included studies by country or region

Of the outcome constructs, brand loyalty is the most studied terminal outcome (27 studies), followed by brand equity and repurchase intention (12 each), and brand trust (4). Figure 4 makes a distinction between constructs tested as terminal outcomes and constructs that are only present as mediators, a distinction that matters a lot for brand trust: it is a terminal outcome in 4 studies but a mediator in a further 8. Some studies consider more than one terminal outcome at the same time (e.g. Haudi et al., 2022; Al-Hujri et al., 2025).

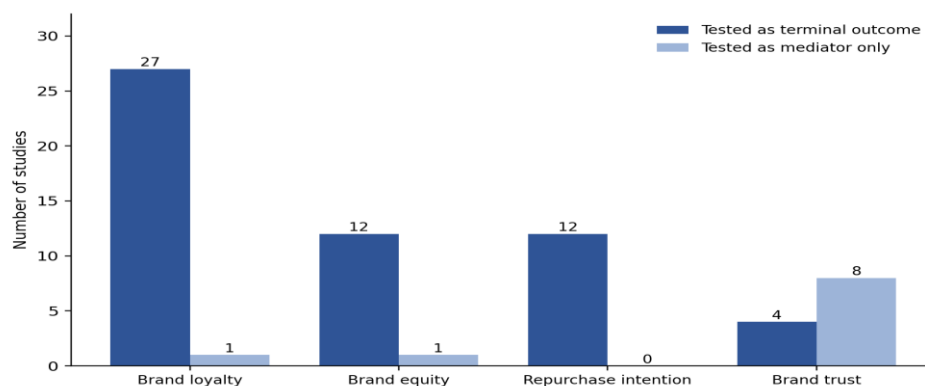


Figure 4. Focal constructs by role: terminal outcome versus mediator only

4.2. RQ1: Social media marketing dimensions and consumer brand loyalty

Of the 49 studies included, 27 examine brand loyalty as a terminal outcome. The five-dimension SMMA scale emerges as the dominant predictor, with a consistent influence on brand loyalty, albeit with varying pathways. Several report significant direct effects. Abdou (2025) reports a strong direct path from SMMA to brand loyalty among Gen Z coffee-shop consumers. Al-Hujri et al. (2025) also report a significant direct effect in Yemen's telecom sector, along with a satisfaction-mediated path. Tazkia and Ariyanti (2025) report a significant direct effect for a sportswear brand. Some other models are fully mediated. For example, Malarvizhi et al. (2022) do not specify any direct path from SMMA to loyalty, routing the effect entirely through brand awareness and brand image.

Literature is generally dominated by indirect ways. Brand love (Linh et al., 2024), brand romance (Bashir et al., 2025), brand attachment (Laradi et al., 2026), consumer brand preference (Abdou, 2025), and online brand engagement (Nguyen et al., 2024) give rise to loyalty. Also, general non-decomposed SMM is associated with brand loyalty in insurance, digital banking and retail (Albdour et al., 2024; Sang, 2023; Limphaiboon, 2025). In a Saudi Arabian sample, where SMM is broken down into sub-dimensions, word-of-mouth is found by Alanazi (2023) to be the highest impact dimension. This is a single-study finding and is not supported elsewhere in the corpus.

Influencer marketing is a smaller, but growing, stream in the loyalty literature. The evidence suggests influencer marketing works through direct and indirect routes, not just indirect routes. Zahran and Aljuhmani (2025) found that influencer marketing had a significant direct effect on brand loyalty ($\beta = .351$) which was greater than its indirect effect on consumer engagement ($\beta = .215$). Jung and Kim (2025) found the significant direct paths from influencer credibility ($\beta = .301$) and intimacy ($\beta = .186$) to brand loyalty. Li et al. (2026) found that all six of their influencers and fan-page content dimensions have significant direct paths to brand loyalty, in addition to indirect effects.

4.3. RQ2: Social media marketing and brand equity

Twelve studies treat brand equity as a terminal outcome, most often operationalized by awareness, association or image, and perceived-quality subdimensions. The evidence shows two different structures. First, SMMA dimensions enhance brand awareness and brand image, which further strengthen the overall brand equity (Malarvizhi et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2022). In the second, brand equity is directly impacted by SMMA, and brand equity itself mediates toward a downstream behavioral outcome (Lin et al., 2024, where brand equity mediates the pathway to reuse intention). A third group directs the effect through consumer brand engagement instead of through awareness or image (Chen et al., 2023; Ali & Alqudah, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2026; Rossanty et al., 2024). Another tested pathway is brand experience (Hafez, 2022; Dananjoyo & Udin, 2025). Value co-creation is tested in one study (Hafez, 2021).

Entertainment is the SMMA sub-dimension most frequently reported as non-significant for brand equity (Lin et al., 2024; Hamarat et al., 2026). Yet, as is discussed in Section 4.6, interaction is reported as non-significant just as often, thus there is no one dimension that is consistently weaker across the corpus. A similar pattern of positive effects on brand equity is observed in influencer marketing. Narongkananukul et al. (2025) found that source attractiveness, source credibility, product match-up, and meaning transfer are important drivers of brand equity, whereas Kalaivani et al. (2026) considered influencer credibility as a single predictor that influences consumer engagement, consumer trust, and purchase intention.

4.4. RQ3: Social media marketing and brand trust

Literature has a peculiar position for brand trust. The terminal outcome is only seen in 4 of the 49 studies included (Haudi et al., 2022; Rico et al., 2024; Sarkis et al., 2026; Bashir et al., 2024) and is present as a mediating mechanism in another 8. Thus, the most substantively useful finding of this review regarding RQ3 is structural: researchers overwhelmingly treat brand trust as the psychological mechanism through which social media marketing produces loyalty rather than as an end in itself.

Among the studies that do test trust as an outcome, Bashir et al. (2024) and Haudi et al. (2022) find significant positive effects of SMM on brand trust using general consumer samples. Within the framework of influencer marketing, Sarkis et al. (2026) find that influencer-brand fit is the most important driver of brand trust (indirect $\beta = .182$) above credibility ($\beta = .109$), with the effect fully mediated through consumer engagement. Jung and Kim (2025) examined credibility, expertise, intimacy and informativeness in their study and found that only credibility ($\beta = .286$) and intimacy ($\beta = .243$) significantly predict brand trust whereas expertise and informativeness are non-significant and expertise is negatively signed on brand loyalty.

Rico et al. (2024) report an unusually large coefficient ($\beta = .952$) for social media marketing on trust in Colombian retail banking. This estimate should be viewed with skepticism: the study reports t-statistics in excess of 70,000 on a sample of 528, reports the identical coefficient for two different dependent variables, and reports elsewhere in the same paper that no relationship was found between social media use and customer trust. It is included in the corpus for completeness but is not considered as evidence of effect magnitude in this synthesis.

4.5. RQ4: Social media marketing and repurchase intention

In twelve studies, repurchase intention is studied as a final outcome. Effects are transmitted through several mechanisms. Brand awareness is a repeated mediator: Jalil et al. (2021) found that social media marketing significantly predicts repurchase intention for halal cosmetics both directly and indirectly through brand awareness, whereas eWOM did not significantly predict repurchase intention in that model. Repurchase intention is mediated by brand awareness and brand image via SMMA effects (Yang et al., 2022). In the Chinese context, the mediating effect is through relational bonding, with the mediating mechanism being the *guanxi* (Zhou, 2023), and for Indonesian MSMEs, the mediating effect is through brand resonance value (Munir et al., 2025).

Sustainability-related mechanisms appear in eco-conscious product categories. Hu et al. (2024) identify environmental concern and brand image as mediators of the SMMA-repurchase intention relationship for green products in Taiwan. Yosita et al. (2026) frame the same relationship within the theory of planned behaviour, with attitude and subjective norm as mediators and green awareness as a moderator rather than a mediator. Brand love and brand centrality mediate the relationship in Indonesian fashion (Mayasari et al., 2023), and brand equity does so for e-commerce repurchase (Maskuroh et al., 2022).

Li et al. (2026) also model consumer engagement and brand loyalty as parallel mediators of influencer and fan-page content on repurchase intention. The model estimates separate paths from each content dimension to engagement and to loyalty and does not test a serial engagement-to-loyalty chain. Working in a doctor-influencer context, Amperawati et al. (2024) find that expertise, success appeal, and congruency are significant drivers of brand attitude, while physical attractiveness and familiarity are not, as a result the authors suggest challenges the traditional emphasis on influencer attractiveness.

4.6. RQ5: Mediating and moderating mechanisms

Consumer brand engagement is the most frequently tested mediator across the corpus, appearing in models linking SMM to brand loyalty, brand equity, and repurchase intention alike (Chen et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2024; Ali & Alqudah, 2022; Sarkis et al., 2026; Zahran & Aljuhani, 2025). Brand trust is the second most common mediator, appearing in 8 studies, and as discussed under RQ3 it typically

constitutes the final psychological step before loyalty is realized (Puspaningrum, 2020; Althuwaini, 2022; Santoso, 2023; Tazkia & Ariyanti, 2025). Affective mechanisms form a smaller but theoretically important cluster: brand love (Linh et al., 2024; Mayasari et al., 2023), brand romance (Bashir et al., 2025), brand attachment (Laradi et al., 2026; Jung & Kim, 2025), and brand affect (Santoso, 2023). Their presence indicates that emotional bonding, and not only cognitive trust, is a route from social media exposure to loyalty.

The relative strength of individual SMMA dimensions showed that entertainment was non-significant in 3 studies (Lin et al., 2024; Hamarat et al., 2026; Linh et al., 2024) and interaction in 3 studies (Malarvizhi et al., 2022; Hamarat et al., 2026; Li et al., 2026). Thus, there is no one dimension that is consistently weaker. Claims that entertainment is uniquely ineffective are not borne out by this corpus.

On the moderation side, gender is tested as a moderator in 2 studies (Amperawati et al., 2024; Li et al., 2026), and brand awareness (Abdou, 2025), product involvement (Cheung et al., 2020), and green awareness (Yosita et al., 2026) are tested in each one study. Some moderation tests show non-significant or marginal results, for instance nationality in Yuswita and Maulidah (2024). Given the small number of studies testing any given moderator, the evidence for moderation in this literature is best described as preliminary rather than established.

4.7. Overview of included studies

Table 4 presents the full coding of all 49 included studies, including the country and context, the social media marketing predictor(s) examined, the terminal outcome construct(s), any mediating or moderating variables, the empirical method, and the sample size.

Table 4. Analysis of included articles (N = 49)

#	Citation	Country	SMM Predictor(s)	Outcome(s)	Mediator / Moderator	Method	N
1	Abdou (2025)	Saudi Arabia	SMMA (formative 2nd-order: informativeness, interactivity, personalization, trendiness); interactivity strongest contributor ($\beta=.426$)	Brand Loyalty	Mediator(s): Consumer Brand Preference; Moderator(s): Brand Awareness	PLS-SEM	412
2	Afifah & Utari (2025)	Indonesia	SMM activities	Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty	-	PLS-SEM	170
3	Al-Hujri et al. (2025)	Yemen	SMMAs (2nd-order)	Brand Loyalty, Brand Awareness	Mediator(s): Customer Satisfaction	PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 3.0	209
4	Alanazi (2023)	Saudi Arabia	SMM dimensions (eWOM, interactive, promotion, entertainment)	Brand Loyalty	-	SEM (AMOS)	1692
5	Albdour et al. (2024)	Jordan	"Social marketing"/social media marketing (descriptive dims)	Brand loyalty (behavioral & attitudinal; expenditure level, intensity of repurchase)	-	Simple regression, t-tests, ANOVA	288
6	Ali & Alqudah (2022)	Jordan	Influencer Marketing (SMIs)	Overall Brand Equity	Mediator(s): Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Engagement	SEM (SPSS23/CFA-SEM fit indices)	438
7	Althuwaini (2022)	Saudi Arabia	SMM activities (customization, entertainment, promotions strongest)	Brand Loyalty	Mediator(s): Brand Trust	PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 3.0	252
8	Amperawati et al. (2024)	Indonesia	Influencer attributes: physical attractiveness, familiarity, expertise, success appeal, congruency	Brand attitude, repurchase intention	Moderator(s): gender	PLS-SEM	221
9	Bashir et al. (2024)	Not stated	SMM (SMMA)	Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty (cognitive/affective/conative/action)	Mediator(s): Brand Trust	PLS-SEM (SmartPLS)	315
10	Bashir et al. (2025)	Pakistan	Social media marketing (unidimensional)	Brand loyalty (4 phases: cognitive, affective, conative, action)	Mediator(s): brand romance	PLS-SEM (predictive analysis)	331

#	Citation	Country	SMM Predictor(s)	Outcome(s)	Mediator / Moderator	Method	N
11	Chen et al. (2023)	China	Social media marketing (unidimensional)	Brand equity	Mediator(s): customer brand engagement	SEM; SPSS 22 + AMOS 20	275
12	Chen et al. (2025)	Taiwan	Sense of belonging, Interactivity, eWOM, Information value	Brand Loyalty, Purchase Intention	Mediator(s): Brand Community Identification, Brand Community Trust	SEM (LISREL 8.54, SPSS 18)	468
13	Cheung et al. (2020)	Hong Kong	Firm-Created Social Media (FCSM), User-Generated Social Media (UGSM), Distribution Intensity	Consumer-Based Brand Equity (awareness, association, perceived quality, loyalty)	Moderator(s): Product Involvement	PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 3.2.8	210
14	Dananjoyo & Udin (2025)	Indonesia	SMMA (collaboration, content sharing, interactivity)	Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE)	Mediator(s): Brand Experience	SEM, AMOS 24 + Sobel test	226
15	Hafez (2021)	Bangladesh	Social Media Marketing (SMM)	Overall Brand Equity	Mediator(s): Value Co-Creation; Moderator(s): Brand Love	CB-SEM, AMOS 23.0	241
16	Hafez (2022)	Bangladesh	SMMA (Kim & Ko 2012 framework, 11-item unidimensional/higher-order construct: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, eWOM)	Brand Equity	Mediator(s): Brand Experience; Moderator(s): Perceived Uniqueness	SEM, AMOS 23 (CFA + structural model)	222
17	Hamarat et al. (2026)	Türkiye	SMMA dims personalization, trendiness, advertisement (significant → inspiration); entertainment, interaction (not significant → inspiration)	Repurchase Intention, eWOM Intention, Willingness to Pay More (WPM)	Mediator(s): Consumer Inspiration (to RI/eWOM/WPM); Food Pleasure partially mediates Inspiration→eWOM and →WPM only, NOT →RI	PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 4	425
18	Haudi et al. (2022)	Indonesia	SMMA: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, eWOM	Brand trust, brand equity, brand loyalty (→ SMEs performance)	-	PLS-SEM	450
19	Hu et al. (2024)	Taiwan	Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA)	Repurchase Intention	Mediator(s): green values, environmental concern, brand image → brand involvement	SEM (TRA-based, SPSS 23.0 + AMOS)	438
20	Jalil et al. (2021)	Malaysia	Social media marketing (SMM, unidimensional)	Repurchase Intention	Mediator(s): brand awareness (BA), eWOM	PLS-SEM (PLS-Graph); Sobel test for mediation	300
21	Jung & Kim (2025)	South Korea	Influencer characteristics (credibility, expertise, intimacy)	Brand Loyalty	Mediator(s): Brand Trust, Brand Attachment	Multiple regression (SPSS 29.0)	220
22	Kalaivani et al. (2026)	Not stated	Social Media Influencer Marketing (credibility)	Brand Equity	Mediator(s): Consumer Engagement, Consumer Trust, Purchase Intention	SEM + ARIMA hybrid	1248
23	Laradi et al. (2026)	Algeria	SMMA sub-dims: interactivity, informativeness, personalization, trendiness, eWOM	Brand Attachment→Brand Loyalty, CEBSM (engagement)	-	PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 4	502
24	Li et al. (2026)	China	Influencer/fan-page content: interactivity (INT), entertainment (ENT), informativeness (INF),	Repurchase Intention	Mediator(s): Consumer Engagement (CEG), Brand Loyalty	SmartPLS SEM (PLS-SEM); multi-group analysis by gender	637

#	Citation	Country	SMM Predictor(s)	Outcome(s)	Mediator / Moderator	Method	N
			perceived relevance (PRR), fan-page usage intensity (FPU), fan-page attachment (FPA)		(BLY); Moderator(s): gender		
25	Limphaiboon (2025)	Thailand	Social Media Usage (SMU)	Brand Loyalty	Mediator(s): Consumer Engagement, Brand Awareness, Brand Image	SEM	300
26	Lin et al. (2024)	China	SMMA: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, eWOM + trust	Brand equity, reuse intention	Mediator(s): brand equity	PLS-SEM	932
27	Linh et al. (2024)	Vietnam	SMMA: customization, trendiness, interaction, entertainment	Brand loyalty	Mediator(s): brand love	PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 3.3.3	532
28	Malarvizhi et al. (2022)	Malaysia	SMMA: entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customization, eWOM	Brand loyalty; Willingness to pay premium	Mediator(s): brand awareness, brand image	PLS-SEM (SmartPLS)	1332
29	Maskuroh et al. (2022)	Indonesia	SMM activities (unidimensional, 2nd-order)	Repurchase intention	Mediator(s): brand equity, customer relationship	SEM, IBM SPSS AMOS	210
30	Mayasari et al. (2023)	Indonesia	Social Media Marketing (SMM)	Repurchase Intention	Mediator(s): Brand Love, Brand Centrality	PLS regression	280
31	Munir et al. (2025)	Indonesia	Social Media Marketing (3 items)	Repurchase Intention	Mediator(s): Brand Resonance Value	SEM (AMOS-style fit indices)	230
32	Narongkarnukul et al. (2025)	Thailand	Influencer attributes: Source Attractiveness, Source Credibility, Product Match-up, Meaning Transfer	Brand Equity, Purchase Intention	Mediator(s): Brand Equity	SEM (SPSS 22 + AMOS 21)	200
33	Nguyen et al. (2024)	Vietnam	SMMA (composite)	Brand loyalty	Mediator(s): hedonic value, utilitarian value, online brand engagement; Moderator(s): luxury vs. non-luxury brand	PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 4; PLSpredict/CVPAT, MGA	501
34	Nguyen et al. (2026)	Vietnam	SMM elements: customization, trendiness, eWOM, brand storytelling	Consumer-Based Brand Equity	Mediator(s): Brand Engagement	SEM, SPSS 20 + AMOS 24	562
35	Puspaningrum (2020)	Indonesia	Social Media Marketing (5 indicators: advantageous campaigns, relevant content, popular content, various platforms, applications on social media - Erdogan & Cicek 2012 framework)	Brand Loyalty	Mediator(s): Brand Trust	SEM, AMOS 22	130
36	Rico et al. (2024)	Colombia	SMM (7 dims: personalization, entertainment, engagement, marketing, eWOM)	Brand loyalty; Trust	Trust as key intermediary	EFA (factorial analysis) + regression; SPSS; +25-person focus group	528
37	Rossanty et al. (2024)	Indonesia	SMM (entertainment, interaction, personalization dims)	Consumer-Based Brand Equity	Mediator(s): Consumer Brand Engagement (cognition/emotion/behavior)	PLS-SEM	322
38	Samosir et al. (2023)	Indonesia	SMM	Brand Loyalty, eWOM	Mediator(s): Brand Awareness, Brand Image	SEM-PLS (SmartPLS 3.0)	100
39	Sang (2023)	Vietnam	Social Media Marketing exposure	Brand Loyalty, Continued Use Intention	Mediator(s): Brand Loyalty	PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 3.2.7 + SPSS 23	244

#	Citation	Country	SMM Predictor(s)	Outcome(s)	Mediator / Moderator	Method	N
40	Santoso (2023)	Indonesia	Social Media (Communication)	Brand Loyalty	Mediator(s): Brand Affect, Brand Trust, Value Consciousness	SEM, AMOS	240
41	Sarkis et al. (2026)	Lebanon	Influencer attributes: Credibility, Brand Alignment, Interactivity, Authenticity	Brand Trust	Mediator(s): Consumer Engagement	PLS-SEM	400
42	Tarigan (2024)	Indonesia	SMM	Customer Loyalty	Mediator(s): Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Enjoyment, Brand Trust	SEM-PLS (SmartPLS)	1294
43	Tazkia & Ariyanti (2025)	Indonesia	SMM (5 dims: entertainment, customization, interaction, eWOM, trendiness)	Brand Loyalty	Mediator(s): Cognitive Engagement, Brand Trust	PLS-SEM	350
44	Warbung et al. (2023)	Indonesia	Social Media Marketing	Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty	-	PLS-SEM, SPSS + SmartPLS	111
45	Yang et al. (2022)	China	SMMA: entertainment, customization, trendiness, interaction, eWOM	Brand awareness, brand image, repurchase intention	Mediator(s): brand awareness, brand image	PLS-SEM + Artificial Neural Network (hybrid)	477
46	Yosita et al. (2026)	Indonesia	Social Media Marketing	Repurchase Intention	Mediator(s): Attitude, Subjective Norm; Moderator(s): Green Awareness	PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 4	362
47	Yuswita & Maulidah (2024)	Indonesia	SMM activities (perceived)	Local Brand Loyalty	Mediator(s): Local Brand Awareness, eWOM; Moderator(s): nationality	SEM-PLS (WarpPLS 7.0)	40
48	Zahrán & Aljuhmani (2025)	Palestine	Social Media Influencer Marketing (SMIM)	Brand Loyalty	Mediator AND Moderator(s): Customer Engagement (CE)	PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 4.0	279
49	Zhou (2023)	China	Social media marketing (unidimensional)	Online repurchase intention	Mediator(s): guanxi (ganqing, renqing, xinren)	CB-SEM, AMOS 22	363

Note. N denotes the number of individual consumer respondents in the analytic sample. Mediator and moderator variables are as specified in each source study's tested model.

4.8. A synthesized research model for future testing

Bringing together the mediating and moderating mechanisms revealed in Sections 4.2 to 4.6, this subsection synthesizes the reviewed evidence into one conceptual model (Figure 5). The model is framed within the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) paradigm used by a number of the included studies (Malarvizhi et al., 2022; Abdou, 2025). Social media marketing activities and influencer marketing are the stimulus; consumer brand engagement, brand trust and brand love or attachment are the internal organism states through which consumers process that stimulus; and brand equity, brand loyalty and repurchase intention are the behavioral responses. The model, presented as a synthesized output of this review, is for guiding future primary research and meta-analytic testing; it is not empirically tested here.

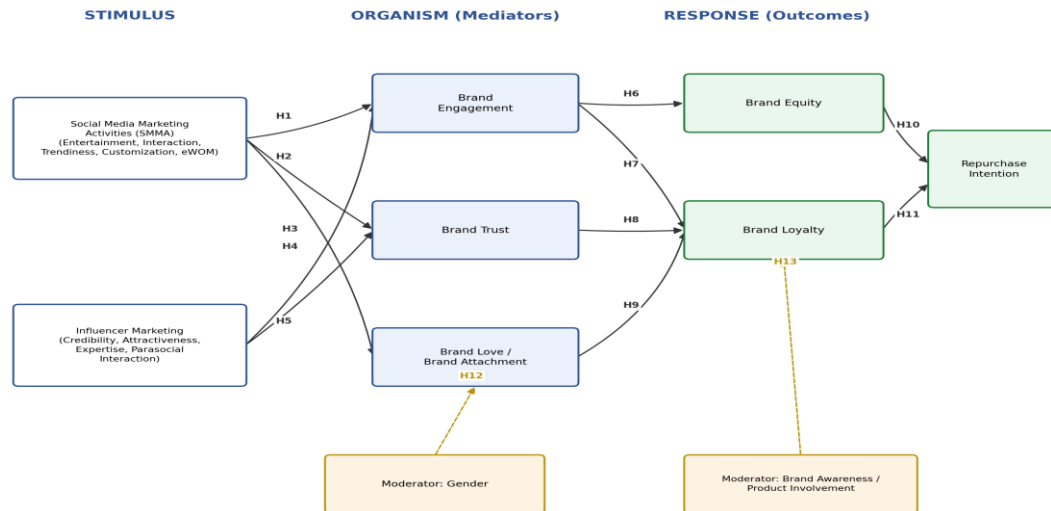


Figure 5. Proposed conceptual research model (stimulus-organism-response)

Thirteen hypotheses are proposed (Table 5). We hypothesize that social media marketing activities will affect all three organism-level constructs (H1-H3) and influencer marketing will affect two of them (H4-H5). It is hypothesized that brand engagement influences brand equity and brand loyalty (H6-H7). It is hypothesized that brand trust and brand love or attachment influences brand loyalty (H8-H9). Brand equity and brand loyalty are hypothesized to affect repurchase intention (H10-H11). The influencer marketing pathway is proposed to be moderated by gender due to its recurrent role in reviewed literature (H12). The loyalty repurchase intention link is proposed to be moderated by brand awareness and product involvement (H13).

Table 5. Summary of proposed hypotheses

Hyp.	Statement
H1	Social media marketing activities positively influence consumer brand engagement.
H2	Social media marketing activities positively influence brand trust.
H3	Social media marketing activities positively influence brand love/attachment.
H4	Influencer marketing positively influences consumer brand engagement.
H5	Influencer marketing positively influences brand trust.
H6	Brand engagement positively influences brand equity.
H7	Brand engagement positively influences brand loyalty.
H8	Brand trust positively influences brand loyalty.
H9	Brand love/attachment positively influences brand loyalty.
H10	Brand equity positively influences repurchase intention.
H11	Brand loyalty positively influences repurchase intention.
H12	Gender moderates the relationship between influencer marketing and brand engagement/trust.
H13	Brand awareness and product involvement moderate the relationship between brand loyalty and repurchase intention.

5. Conclusion

This systematic literature review analyzed 49 empirical studies that have been published between 2020 and 2026 to explore the impact of social media marketing and influencer marketing strategies on consumer brand loyalty, brand equity, brand trust and repurchase intention. There are three patterns in the evidence. First, the five-dimension SMMA framework remains the dominant framework used to operationalize social media marketing, but no one dimension is consistently stronger or weaker across the corpus: entertainment and interaction were reported as non-significant in three studies. Second, consumer brand engagement and brand trust are the two important mediating mechanisms through which social media marketing effects are transmitted onto loyalty, equity and repurchase intention. In particular, brand trust functions predominantly as a mechanism. It is a terminal outcome in only 4 of the 49 studies but a mediator in a further 8. Third, influencer marketing has a significant direct and a significant indirect pathway, so treating it as a purely indirect lever underestimates its effect.

The review theoretically integrates a fragmented literature that has studied the relationship of social media marketing to loyalty, equity, trust and repurchase intention largely in isolation and clarifies the sequential and parallel roles of engagement, trust and affective mechanisms across these four outcomes. From a managerial perspective, the findings imply that marketers should develop content around informational, interactive and personalized value and authentic influencer partnerships, and should treat engagement and trust metrics as intermediate performance indicators that lead to loyalty rather than as end goals. The importance of entertainment and interaction is

comparable, which means that it is not a question of choosing between different types of content in practice, but that the effectiveness of content seems to be dependent on the context.

There are some limitations to this review. The most consequential is the search coverage: the author had no institutional access to Web of Science, and Google Scholar does not have a bulk export function, so only Scopus records could be screened at the level of the individual record. 65 Web of Science and 524 Google Scholar records retrieved by the same strings were not assessed individually and may contain relevant studies not found in Scopus. It's an access constraint, not a suggestion that those records were duplicate or irrelevant. It means that the review is, in practice, a single-database review. The Google Scholar search window (2025-2026) is also different from that used for the two indexed databases (2020-2026).

Three additional limitations qualify the findings. First, the corpus was limited to English-language, gold open access articles. Gold open access was an access constraint, not a design choice, and it biases the corpus toward article-processing-charge-funded outlets, which are unevenly distributed across regions and disciplines. Second, the requirement for methodological keywords ("empirical", "survey", "correlation", "SEM", "regression") to appear in the title, abstract or keywords will have excluded many quantitative studies that do not use those words in indexed fields and is a probable reason the Scopus search returned only 98 records for a large literature. Third, screening, assessment of eligibility, quality appraisal and data extraction were all undertaken by a single reviewer, so no inter-rater reliability could be calculated, and the review is subject to the interpretive bias of a single coder. This bias is most consequential for the 34 full-text exclusions, which hinged on the judgement of whether a focal construct was a genuine terminal outcome, or an upstream mediator; the full list of those decisions is reported in Appendix B so that readers may assess them independently. The quality assessment instrument also showed a marked ceiling effect and should not be used as a detailed ranking of rigor.

Future research should replicate this review with full-text and bulk exports from all three databases, preferably with institutional Web of Science access and a systematic Google Scholar extraction tool; expand the search window and eliminate the methodological-keyword constraint; employ at least two independent coders with a reported inter-rater reliability statistic; and progress toward a formal meta-analysis of the effect sizes reported in the quantitative studies identified here, so that the strength of the social media marketing-brand loyalty relationship can be quantified rather than merely described. Section 4.8 discusses a conceptual model that offers a starting structure for such work.

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