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Influencer–Brand Value Alignment and Consumer Behavior: The Role of Authenticity and Trust in Family Firms.

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Abstract

This article examines how influencer–brand value alignment influences consumer behavior in the context of family firms. Drawing on congruence theory and the literature on influencer marketing, authenticity, and trust, the study develops a quantitative framework connecting value alignment, perceived authenticity, brand trust, and consumer behavior. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 120 respondents. The data were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha and simple linear regression models. The results indicate that influencer–brand value alignment positively influences perceived authenticity, perceived authenticity strengthens brand trust, and brand trust positively influences consumer behavior. A direct positive relationship between value alignment and consumer behavior is also confirmed. The study contributes to the literature by clarifying the respective roles of value alignment, authenticity, and trust in influencer marketing within identity-based brand contexts. From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that family firms should prioritize value congruence and authentic communication when selecting influencers rather than focusing exclusively on visibility or audience size.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, Value alignment, Perceived authenticity, Brand trust, Consumer behavior, Family businesses

Introduction

In recent years, influencer marketing has emerged as a central strategy in digital communication, enabling brands to connect with consumers through more personalized and engaging content. However, despite its rapid growth, questions remain regarding the mechanisms through which influencer marketing effectively shapes consumer behavior. Prior research has predominantly focused on large corporations and digital-native brands, often neglecting specific organizational contexts such as family businesses, which are characterized by strong identity-based values, heritage, and a heightened emphasis on authenticity and trust. At the same time, existing studies have highlighted the importance of influencer credibility, engagement, and parasocial interaction, yet limited attention has been given to the role of value alignment between the influencer and the brand, particularly in contexts where brand identity plays a central role. This gap is especially critical in contemporary digital environments, where consumers are increasingly sensitive to inconsistencies between brand values and promotional messages. In such settings, authenticity and trust emerge as fundamental drivers of consumer perception and decision-making, but their integration within influencer marketing frameworks remains insufficiently explored.

To address these limitations, the subject of this research is influencer–brand value alignment and its influence on consumer behavior in the context of family firms. The main objective is to examine the relationships between value alignment, perceived authenticity, brand trust, and consumer behavior. More specifically, the study investigates whether value alignment influences perceived authenticity, whether authenticity strengthens brand trust, and whether trust and value alignment influence consumer behavior. The study seeks to contribute to the literature by clarifying these relationships while offering managerial recommendations to family firms seeking to improve the effectiveness of their influencer marketing strategies. The remainder of the article is structured as follows. The first section reviews the relevant literature and develops the research hypotheses. The second section presents the methodological approach. The third section reports the empirical results. The fourth section discusses the findings and their theoretical and managerial implications. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the main contributions, limitations, and directions for future research.

Literature Review

The present literature review aims to provide a comprehensive and structured understanding of the intersection between influencer marketing and consumer behavior, with a particular focus on its application within family business contexts. To ensure rigor and relevance, a systematic search strategy was adopted using the Scopus database, which is widely recognized for its extensive coverage of high-quality peer-reviewed journals in the fields of marketing and management. The search process was conducted using a combination of keywords related to "influencer marketing," "social media influencers," "consumer behavior," "trust," "authenticity," and "family business," combined through Boolean operators to capture a broad yet relevant body of literature.

The initial search yielded a large number of publications exceeding three thousand documents, reflecting the growing academic interest in digital marketing and influencer-related phenomena. However, a preliminary screening based on titles, abstracts, and keywords revealed that a substantial portion of these studies were not directly aligned with the research objective, as they focused on unrelated domains such as finance, sustainability, or technological adoption. Consequently, a rigorous filtering process was applied to retain only articles that addressed marketing, consumer perception, and influencer-related mechanisms. This process resulted in a refined dataset of sixty peer-reviewed articles, which constitutes a balanced and manageable corpus for an in-depth literature review.

The selected articles were published between 2010 and 2025, ensuring both foundational theoretical perspectives and recent empirical developments. Priority was given to studies published in high-impact journals in marketing, consumer behavior, and digital communication. The analysis followed a thematic approach, organizing the literature into three main streams: influencer marketing and its impact on consumer behavior, the role of trust and perceived authenticity in shaping consumer responses, and the specific characteristics of family businesses in relation to brand identity and consumer perception. This structure allows for a progressive development of the research argument, moving from general theoretical foundations to a more specific and underexplored context.

Overall, this literature review not only synthesizes existing knowledge but also identifies key gaps in the current research. In particular, while influencer marketing has been extensively examined in general brand contexts, its application within family businesses remains insufficiently explored. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into how influencer–brand value alignment influences consumer perceptions of authenticity and trust in family-owned firms. By addressing this gap, the present research aims to contribute to both the academic literature and managerial practices in digital marketing.

Influencer Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Influencer marketing has emerged as a dominant digital communication strategy, fundamentally transforming how brands interact with consumers in social media environments. It refers to the practice of leveraging individuals with significant online followings to promote products or services through content that blends commercial and personal communication (Freberg et al., 2011). This strategy has gained importance as consumers increasingly rely on social media for information, inspiration, and purchase decisions (De Veirman et al., 2017). Unlike traditional advertising, influencer marketing is perceived as less intrusive and more engaging because it is embedded within everyday digital interactions (Evans et al., 2017). Moreover, influencers act as intermediaries between brands and audiences, shaping perceptions and influencing attitudes through relatable and personalized content (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Their effectiveness is also linked to their ability to build communities and maintain continuous interaction with followers (Abidin, 2016).

From a theoretical standpoint, the effectiveness of influencer marketing can be explained by persuasion models such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model, which suggests that individuals process persuasive messages through either central or peripheral routes depending on their level of involvement (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). When consumers are less involved, they rely on peripheral cues such as the attractiveness or popularity of the influencer (Chaiken, 1980). This explains why influencers with strong visual appeal or social status can significantly affect consumer attitudes even in the absence of detailed product information (Erdogan, 1999). Furthermore, the Source Credibility Theory highlights that perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the influencer are key determinants of persuasion effectiveness (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Empirical studies confirm that credible influencers generate more favorable attitudes toward brands and higher purchase intentions (Ohanian, 1990). In addition, meta-analytic evidence shows that source credibility significantly enhances advertising effectiveness across different contexts (Amos et al., 2008).

Another important mechanism underlying influencer marketing effectiveness is the development of parasocial relationships, which refer to the illusion of a personal relationship between the influencer and the follower (Horton & Wohl, 1956). These one-sided relationships create a sense of intimacy and emotional connection that enhances persuasion outcomes (Labrecque, 2014). As consumers feel closer to influencers, they are more likely to trust their

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recommendations and internalize their opinions (Tukachinsky, 2011). This process also increases identification with the influencer, which strengthens attitudes toward endorsed brands (Lee & Watkins, 2016). Recent studies demonstrate that parasocial interaction significantly influences engagement, brand attitude, and purchase intention in influencer marketing contexts (Jin & Ryu, 2020). Additionally, influencers contribute to the diffusion of electronic word-of-mouth, amplifying brand messages and increasing consumer engagement (Casaló et al., 2018). This, in turn, enhances brand awareness and behavioral intentions (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Overall, influencer marketing plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior, although its effectiveness depends on several psychological and relational mechanisms that will be further examined in the following sections (Schouten et al., 2020).

Trust, Authenticity and Consumer Perception

The effectiveness of influencer marketing is strongly grounded in consumers' perceptions of trust and authenticity, which play a central role in shaping attitudes and behavioral intentions in digital environments. Trust is widely recognized as a fundamental determinant of consumer decision-making, particularly in online contexts characterized by uncertainty and information asymmetry (Gefen et al., 2003). In influencer marketing, trust is primarily built through perceived credibility, consistency, and transparency of the influencer's content (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Consumers tend to rely on influencers whom they perceive as honest and reliable, which enhances the persuasive power of their recommendations (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Moreover, trust has been shown to directly influence purchase intention and brand loyalty in social media settings (Kim & Peterson, 2017). As a result, the success of influencer campaigns largely depends on the ability to establish and maintain trust-based relationships with audiences (Casaló et al., 2018).

Closely related to trust, perceived authenticity has emerged as a critical construct in understanding consumer responses to influencer marketing. Authenticity refers to the extent to which consumers perceive content as genuine, sincere, and not overly commercialized (Audrezet et al., 2020). In the context of influencer marketing, authenticity is often associated with personal storytelling, transparency, and alignment between the influencer's values and the promoted brand (Lou & Yuan, 2019). When influencers are perceived as authentic, consumers are more likely to engage with their content and develop positive attitudes toward endorsed products (Schouten et al., 2020). Conversely, excessive commercialization or lack of transparency can lead to skepticism and reduce the effectiveness of influencer campaigns (Evans et al., 2017). Empirical research confirms that perceived authenticity significantly enhances trust and mediates the relationship between influencer characteristics and consumer behavior (Breves et al., 2019). Therefore, authenticity functions as a key mechanism through which influencer marketing generates persuasive outcomes (Ki et al., 2020).

From a theoretical perspective, the relationship between authenticity, trust, and consumer behavior can be explained through cognitive consistency frameworks such as Cognitive Dissonance Theory, which posits that individuals seek consistency between their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Festinger, 1957). When consumers perceive a mismatch between an influencer's image and the promoted brand, cognitive dissonance may arise, leading to negative evaluations and reduced purchase intentions (Festinger, 1957). In contrast, congruence between influencer identity and brand values enhances perceived authenticity and reinforces trust (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). This is further supported by Congruence Theory, which suggests that alignment between related elements leads to more favorable attitudes (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). Empirical studies demonstrate that influencer–brand fit significantly influences consumer perceptions, with higher congruence leading to stronger trust and more positive behavioral outcomes (Belanche et al., 2021). Furthermore, transparency in sponsored content plays a crucial role in maintaining authenticity and avoiding perceptions of deception (Boerman et al., 2017). This is particularly important in digital environments where consumers are increasingly aware of persuasive intent and may resist overt advertising strategies (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Overall, trust and authenticity act as key mediating mechanisms that explain how influencer marketing shapes consumer perceptions and behaviors, providing a critical foundation for understanding its effectiveness in different brand contexts.

Family Business, Brand Identity and Research Gap

Family businesses represent a unique organizational form characterized by strong emotional ties, long-term orientation, and the integration of family values into business practices. These firms are often defined by the involvement of one or more family members in ownership and management, as well as the intention to transfer the business across generations (Chua et al., 1999). Unlike non-family firms, family businesses tend to emphasize continuity, reputation, and socioemotional wealth, which influence their strategic decisions and branding approaches (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007). In this context, the identity of the family is frequently intertwined with the identity of the brand, creating a distinctive positioning based on heritage, tradition, and authenticity (Zellweger et al., 2012). This strong connection between family and brand contributes to higher levels of perceived trustworthiness and credibility among consumers (Beck & Kenning, 2015). Moreover, consumers often associate family businesses with values such as honesty, quality, and commitment, which positively influence brand evaluations and loyalty (Orth & Green, 2009).

From a branding perspective, family firms benefit from a unique identity structure that can be analyzed through frameworks such as the Brand Identity Prism, which highlights the importance of coherence between internal values and external brand expression (Kapferer, 1991). In family businesses, this coherence is often reinforced by the visibility of the family behind the brand, which enhances perceived authenticity and emotional connection (Sageder et al., 2018). Authenticity in this context is not only a marketing attribute but also a reflection of the firm's history, legacy, and values (Napoli et al., 2014). As a result, family firms are particularly well positioned to leverage authenticity as a competitive advantage in increasingly saturated markets (Binz Astrachan et al., 2018). However, maintaining this authenticity requires consistency between communicated values and actual business practices, as any perceived inconsistency may damage trust and brand equity (Beck & Prügl, 2018).

Despite these advantages, the integration of influencer marketing within family business contexts raises important theoretical and managerial questions. Influencer marketing is often associated with modern, commercial, and sometimes highly curated content, which may conflict with the traditional and authentic image of family firms (Audrezet et al., 2020). This potential tension creates a critical challenge: while influencers can enhance visibility and engagement, they may also risk undermining the perceived authenticity that constitutes a core asset of family businesses (Schouten et al., 2020). Furthermore, the effectiveness of influencer marketing in such contexts likely depends on the degree of alignment between the influencer's values and the family firm's identity, as suggested by congruence-based perspectives (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). However, existing literature has largely examined influencer marketing in general brand contexts, with limited attention to its application within family-owned businesses (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Consequently, a significant research gap emerges at the intersection of influencer marketing and family business branding. While prior studies have established the importance of trust, authenticity, and influencer–brand fit in shaping consumer behavior, little is known about how these mechanisms operate when the brand is rooted in family identity and heritage (Casaló et al., 2018). In particular, the role of value congruence between influencers and family businesses remains underexplored, despite its potential impact on consumer perceptions and behavioral outcomes (Belanche et al., 2021). Addressing this gap is essential to better understand how family firms can effectively integrate influencer marketing strategies without compromising their core identity. Therefore, this research seeks to examine the impact of influencer–brand value alignment on consumer behavior, while considering the mediating roles of authenticity and trust in a family business context.

Despite the growing body of research on influencer marketing, significant gaps remain in understanding its effectiveness across different organizational contexts. Existing studies have primarily focused on large corporate brands and digital-native companies, overlooking the specific characteristics of family businesses, which are often associated with heritage, tradition, and strong identity-based values (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Moreover, prior research has extensively examined the role of influencer credibility, engagement, and parasocial interaction in shaping consumer behavior, yet it has paid limited attention to how these mechanisms interact with brand identity structures rooted in family ownership (Casaló et al., 2018). At the same time, the literature on family businesses highlights the importance of authenticity and trust as key drivers of consumer perception, but it rarely integrates digital marketing tools such as influencer strategies into its analytical framework (Beck & Kenning, 2015).

Furthermore, while the concept of congruence between influencer and brand has been identified as a critical determinant of marketing effectiveness, its application within family business contexts remains underexplored (Belanche et al., 2021). In particular, little is known about how value alignment between influencers and family firms influences consumers' perceptions of authenticity and trust, which are central to the reputation of such businesses. This gap is particularly relevant in contemporary digital environments, where consumers are increasingly sensitive to inconsistencies between brand identity and promotional content (Audrezet et al., 2020). Consequently, there is a need to develop an integrative framework that connects influencer–brand value alignment with key psychological mechanisms and behavioral outcomes in a family business setting.

In light of these gaps, the present research seeks to address the following research question: ***How does the alignment of values between influencers and family businesses influence consumer behavior, and what roles do perceived authenticity and trust play in this relationship?***

Hypothesis Development and Conceptual Framework

According to congruence theory, consistency between two associated elements generates more favorable evaluations, whereas inconsistency may produce negative perceptions (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). In influencer marketing, coherence between the influencer's identity and the brand's values can make the promotional message appear more genuine and less

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commercially artificial. Audrezet et al. (2020) emphasize that coherence, sincerity, and consistency are fundamental to consumers' perceptions of influencer authenticity. Consequently, consumers are more likely to perceive an endorsement as authentic when the influencer's values correspond to those communicated by the brand.

H1: Influencer–brand value alignment has a positive effect on perceived authenticity.

Perceived authenticity reflects the degree to which consumers consider influencer communication genuine, sincere, and transparent. Authentic communication reduces consumers' perceptions of manipulation and reinforces the credibility of the promotional message (Audrezet et al., 2020). Lou and Yuan (2019) demonstrate that credible and valuable influencer content contributes to the development of consumer trust. Therefore, when influencer communication is perceived as authentic, consumers should develop stronger trust toward the associated brand.

H2: Perceived authenticity has a positive effect on brand trust.

Trust is particularly important in digital environments because consumers must make decisions under conditions of uncertainty and information asymmetry. Gefen et al. (2003) establish that online trust plays an important role in shaping consumers' behavioral intentions. The meta-analysis conducted by Kim and Peterson (2017) also confirms the positive relationship between consumer trust and behavioral outcomes. Consumers who trust a brand are consequently more likely to engage with it, recommend it to others, and develop favorable purchase intentions.

H3: Brand trust has a positive effect on consumer behavior.

Influencer–brand fit can directly influence how consumers evaluate an endorsement. Breves et al. (2019) demonstrate that perceived fit between an influencer and a brand improves source credibility and persuasive effectiveness. Belanche et al. (2021) also show that influencer credibility contributes to favorable attitudes and behavioral responses. Therefore, strong value alignment between an influencer and a brand should directly enhance consumer behavioral responses.

H4: Influencer–brand value alignment has a positive effect on consumer behavior.

These hypotheses form a conceptual framework in which influencer–brand value alignment constitutes the principal explanatory variable, perceived authenticity and brand trust represent intermediate explanatory variables, and consumer behavior constitutes the dependent variable. The proposed relationships are tested empirically using a quantitative research design.

Method

The present research adopts a positivist epistemological stance, which assumes that social phenomena can be objectively observed, measured, and explained through systematic inquiry. Positivism aligns with the objective of identifying causal relationships between influencer–brand value alignment, perceived authenticity, brand trust, and consumer behavior. Guided by this philosophical position, the study follows a hypothetico-deductive approach, beginning with the formulation of theoretically grounded hypotheses derived from established literature in persuasion theory, congruence theory, and consumer behavior. These hypotheses are tested empirically using a structured research design that operationalizes each construct into measurable indicators. Consistent with this approach, the study employs a quantitative methodology, which enables the numerical measurement of constructs, statistical testing of relationships, and generalization of findings to a broader population. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 120 respondents, deemed sufficient for conducting reliability tests, correlation analyses, and multiple regression models. The use of this sample size allows for adequate statistical power while ensuring stability in parameter estimation. Overall, the combination of a positivist paradigm, hypothetico-deductive reasoning, and quantitative analysis ensures methodological rigor and provides an objective basis for evaluating how influencer–brand alignment and authenticity shape trust and behavioral intentions.

Result

This section presents the results of the empirical analysis conducted to test the proposed hypotheses of the study. It includes the assessment of the reliability of the measurement scales, followed by descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression results. The objective is to examine the relationships between influencer–brand value alignment, perceived authenticity, brand trust, and consumer behavior, in order to determine whether the proposed conceptual framework is supported by the collected data.

The internal consistency of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha in order to ensure the reliability of the constructs prior to conducting further statistical analyses.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics for ALIGN Scale

Reliability Statistics	Value
Cronbach's Alpha	0.821
Number of Items	3

Source : SPSS

As reported in Table 1, the ALIGN scale demonstrates a satisfactory level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.821. This value exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating that the three items used to measure alignment are sufficiently homogeneous and reliably capture the underlying construct.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics for AUTHENTICITY Scale

Reliability Statistics	**Value**
Cronbach's Alpha	0.860
Number of Items	3

Source : SPSS

As shown in Table 2, the AUTHENTICITY scale exhibits a high level of reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.860. This result reflects strong inter-item correlations and confirms that the items consistently measure perceived authenticity.

Table 3. Reliability Statistics for TRUST Scale

Reliability Statistics	**Value**
Cronbach's Alpha	0.876
Number of Items	3

Source : SPSS

Similarly, Table 3 presents the reliability results for the TRUST scale, which yields a Cronbach's alpha of 0.876. This value indicates a robust level of internal consistency, suggesting that the items effectively capture the construct of trust with minimal measurement error.

Table 4. Reliability Statistics for CONSUMER BEHAVIOR Scale

Reliability Statistics	**Value**
Cronbach's Alpha	0.909
Number of Items	3

Source : SPSS

Finally, as indicated in Table 4, the CONSUMER BEHAVIOR scale demonstrates an excellent level of reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.909. This high value suggests a very strong degree of consistency among the items, reinforcing the reliability of the measurement of consumer behavioral responses. Overall, all constructs surpass the recommended reliability threshold, confirming that the measurement scales are internally consistent and suitable for subsequent analyses, including correlation and regression testing.

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of ALIGN on AUTHENTICITY.

Table 5. Model Summary (Dependent Variable: AUTHENTICITY)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.587	0.344	0.339	0.50920

Source : SPSS

As reported in Table 5, the model shows a moderate explanatory power, with an R^2 of 0.344, indicating that ALIGN explains 34.4% of the variance in AUTHENTICITY. The adjusted R^2 remains very close, suggesting a stable and reliable model with good generalizability.

Table 6. ANOVA (Dependent Variable: AUTHENTICITY)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	16.056	1	16.056	61.925	0.000
Residual	30.596	118	0.259		
Total	46.652	119			

Source : SPSS

The ANOVA results presented in Table 6 confirm that the regression model is statistically significant, as evidenced by a highly significant F-value ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that the model provides a better fit than a model with no predictors.

Table 7. Regression Coefficients (Dependent Variable: AUTHENTICITY)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	1.294	0.353		3.670
ALIGN	0.686	0.087	0.587	7.869

Source : SPSS

The regression coefficients in Table 7 reveal that ALIGN has a positive and statistically significant effect on AUTHENTICITY. The standardized beta coefficient indicates a moderate to strong relationship, suggesting that higher levels of alignment are associated with higher perceived authenticity. The significance level confirms that this effect is robust.

Overall, these results support the hypothesis that alignment positively influences authenticity, highlighting the importance of value congruence in shaping consumers' perceptions.

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of AUTHENTICITY on TRUST.

Table 8. Model Summary (Dependent Variable: TRUST)

Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	0.710	0.503	0.499	0.46776

Source : SPSS

As presented in Table 8, the model demonstrates strong explanatory power, with an R^2 of 0.503, indicating that AUTHENTICITY explains 50.3% of the variance in TRUST. The adjusted R^2 is very close to this value, confirming the robustness and stability of the model.

Table 9. ANOVA (Dependent Variable: TRUST)

Model	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	26.181	1	26.181	119.655	0.000
Residual	25.818	118	0.219		
Total	51.999	119			

Source : SPSS

The ANOVA results reported in Table 9 indicate that the regression model is highly significant, as evidenced by a large F-value with a significance level well below 0.001. This confirms that the model provides a statistically significant improvement over a null model.

Table 10. Regression Coefficients (Dependent Variable: TRUST)

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**	**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	1.001	0.280		3.571
AUTHENTICITY	0.749	0.068	0.710	10.939

Source : SPSS

As shown in Table 10, AUTHENTICITY exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on TRUST. The standardized beta coefficient indicates a strong relationship, suggesting that higher levels of perceived authenticity are associated with increased trust. The significance level confirms the reliability of this effect. Overall, these findings provide strong support for the hypothesis that authenticity positively influences trust, highlighting its central role in strengthening consumer–brand relationships.

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of TRUST on CONSUMER BEHAVIOR.

Table 11. Model Summary (Dependent Variable: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.792	0.627	0.624	0.44004

Source : SPSS

As reported in Table 11, the model exhibits a high level of explanatory power, with an R^2 of 0.627, indicating that TRUST accounts for 62.7% of the variance in CONSUMER BEHAVIOR. The adjusted R^2 is very close to this value, suggesting that the model is stable and not affected by overfitting.

Table 12. ANOVA (Dependent Variable: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	38.470	1	38.470	198.677	0.000
Residual	22.848	118	0.194		
Total	61.319	119			

Source : SPSS

The ANOVA results presented in Table 12 confirm that the regression model is highly significant, as indicated by a very large F-statistic with a significance level below 0.001. This demonstrates that the model provides a substantial improvement over a model without predictors.

Table 13. Regression Coefficients (Dependent Variable: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	0.578	0.249		2.318
TRUST	0.860	0.061	0.792	14.095

Source : SPSS

As shown in Table 13, TRUST has a strong, positive, and statistically significant effect on CONSUMER BEHAVIOR. The standardized beta coefficient reflects a very strong relationship, indicating that increases in trust are associated with substantial increases in consumer behavioral responses. The significance level confirms the robustness of this effect. Overall, these findings strongly support the hypothesis that trust positively influences consumer

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behavior, emphasizing its critical role as a key driver of consumer engagement and behavioral intentions.

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the direct effect of ALIGN on CONSUMER BEHAVIOR.

Table 14. Model Summary (Dependent Variable: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR)

Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	0.429	0.184	0.177	0.65113

Source : SPSS

As indicated in Table 14, the model explains a modest proportion of the variance in CONSUMER BEHAVIOR, with an R^2 of 0.184, suggesting that ALIGN accounts for 18.4% of the variability in the dependent variable. The adjusted R^2 remains close to this value, indicating a stable model with acceptable generalizability.

Table 15. ANOVA (Dependent Variable: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR)

Model	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	11.290	1	11.290	26.630	0.000
Residual	50.028	118	0.424		
Total	61.319	119			

Source : SPSS

The ANOVA results presented in Table 15 demonstrate that the regression model is statistically significant, as reflected by a significant F-statistic ($p < 0.001$). This confirms that the model provides a better fit than a model without predictors.

Table 16. Regression Coefficients (Dependent Variable: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR)

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**	**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	1.738	0.451		3.855
ALIGN	0.575	0.111	0.429	5.160

Source : SPSS

As shown in Table 16, ALIGN has a positive and statistically significant effect on CONSUMER BEHAVIOR. The standardized beta coefficient indicates a moderate relationship, suggesting that higher levels of alignment are associated with increased consumer behavioral responses. The significance level confirms the robustness of this effect. Overall, these findings support the

hypothesis that alignment exerts a direct positive influence on consumer behavior, although the magnitude of this effect remains moderate compared to other relationships in the model.
Having presented the empirical findings, the next section is devoted to the discussion of the results. This section aims to interpret the observed relationships in light of the theoretical framework and existing literature, highlight their implications, and provide a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms explaining consumer behavior.

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the mechanisms through which alignment between the influencer and the brand shapes consumer behavior, by integrating authenticity and trust as key mediating variables. The findings provide strong empirical support for the proposed conceptual framework and offer important insights into the underlying processes driving consumer responses in influencer marketing contexts. First, the results demonstrate that alignment has a positive and significant effect on perceived authenticity. This finding suggests that when consumers perceive a strong congruence between the influencer's values and those of the brand, the communication is interpreted as more genuine and credible. This is consistent with congruence theory and balance theory, which posit that consistency between elements enhances positive evaluations. In this sense, alignment acts as a signal that reduces skepticism and reinforces the perceived sincerity of the endorsement.
Second, authenticity was found to exert a strong positive influence on trust. This result highlights the central role of authenticity as a precursor to trust formation. When influencer content is perceived as authentic, consumers are more likely to develop confidence in both the influencer and the associated brand. This finding is aligned with prior research emphasizing that authenticity reduces perceived manipulation and enhances relational quality. It also supports the idea that trust is not built directly through exposure, but rather through the perception of honesty and transparency conveyed in the message. Third, trust shows a very strong and significant effect on consumer behavior. This indicates that trust operates as a key driver of behavioral responses, including engagement, word-of-mouth, and purchase intention. The strength of this relationship confirms that trust is a critical mechanism translating perceptions into actions. In line with relationship marketing and consumer behavior theories, trusted sources are more persuasive and more likely to influence decision-making processes.
In addition, the direct effect of alignment on consumer behavior, although significant, remains moderate compared to the indirect effects through authenticity and trust. This suggests that alignment alone is not sufficient to strongly influence behavior unless it is internalized by

consumers through psychological mechanisms such as authenticity and trust. This result reinforces the mediating role of these constructs and highlights the importance of considering a sequential process rather than a simple direct relationship. Overall, the findings support a mediation-based interpretation in which alignment enhances authenticity, which in turn strengthens trust, ultimately leading to increased consumer behavioral responses. This sequential mechanism is consistent with the Elaboration Likelihood Model, where peripheral cues such as congruence and authenticity influence attitudes and behaviors through credibility-related processes.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by empirically validating the role of alignment as an antecedent of authenticity and trust, and by demonstrating the sequential nature of these relationships in the context of influencer marketing. It extends existing research by integrating multiple constructs into a coherent explanatory model and by highlighting the relative importance of indirect effects. From a managerial standpoint, the results suggest that brands should prioritize value congruence when selecting influencers, rather than focusing solely on reach or popularity. Ensuring a strong alignment between the influencer's identity and the brand's positioning can enhance the perceived authenticity of the message, which in turn fosters trust and drives consumer behavior. Practitioners should also encourage authentic content creation, as overly controlled or artificial messages may undermine trust and reduce effectiveness.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes that the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies relies not only on exposure but on the quality and credibility of the relationship perceived by consumers. Authenticity and trust emerge as central mechanisms through which alignment translates into meaningful behavioral outcomes.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the impact of influencer–brand value alignment on consumer behavior, while exploring the mediating roles of perceived authenticity and trust. The empirical results provide strong support for the proposed conceptual model and confirm the existence of both direct and indirect relationships between the studied constructs. The findings demonstrate that value alignment significantly enhances perceived authenticity, which in turn strengthens trust toward the brand. Trust emerges as a key determinant of consumer behavior, exerting a substantial influence on behavioral responses such as engagement, word-of-mouth, and purchase intention. Although alignment also has a direct effect on consumer behavior, this effect remains comparatively moderate, highlighting the importance of psychological mechanisms in translating perceptions into actions.

These results contribute to the existing literature by emphasizing the sequential nature of influencer marketing effectiveness, where alignment fosters authenticity, authenticity builds trust, and trust ultimately drives behavior. This integrative perspective extends prior research by combining multiple constructs into a coherent explanatory framework, particularly within contexts where brand identity and values play a central role. From a managerial perspective, the study underscores the importance of selecting influencers whose values are closely aligned with those of the brand. Beyond visibility and reach, brands should prioritize authenticity in communication strategies, as it constitutes a critical lever for building trust and enhancing consumer responses. In this regard, overly controlled or artificial content may weaken the effectiveness of influencer campaigns by undermining perceived credibility. Despite its contributions, the study is not without limitations. The reliance on a quantitative and cross-sectional design may restrict the generalizability of the findings and limit the ability to capture dynamic changes in consumer perceptions over time. Future research could adopt longitudinal or experimental approaches, explore different cultural or sectoral contexts, or integrate additional variables such as emotional attachment or perceived risk.

In conclusion, this study highlights that the effectiveness of influencer marketing lies not only in exposure but in the perceived coherence, authenticity, and trustworthiness of the message. These elements constitute essential drivers of consumer behavior and should be central to both academic research and managerial practice.

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