DIGITAL CREATORS AS MODERN MARKETERS: EXPLORING THE PROSPECTS AND HURDLES IN THE ONLINE ECONOMY

Carmel Karaniya Wigayha [1], Benediktus Rolando [2]

[1] Digital Business Department, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universitas Bunda Mulia, Indonesia

[2] Management Department, Faculty of Management and Business Science, Universitas Dinamika Bangsa, Indonesia

E-mail: [1] s35220096@student.ubm.ac.id, [2] benediktus@unama.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study presents a systematic literature review examining the evolving role of content creators in the digital economy, particularly their function as strategic actors in digital marketing and entrepreneurship. Drawing from 33 peer-reviewed publications between 2020 and 2025, the review investigates key issues surrounding the effectiveness, challenges, and opportunities of content creator marketing. Methodologically, the study adopts a multi-stage systematic approach using academic databases to identify and synthesize relevant literature. The findings reveal that content creators are highly effective in enhancing brand engagement through perceived authenticity, niche alignment, and trust-based communication. However, creators operate within precarious platform-driven environments shaped by algorithmic opacity, monetization instability, and ethical tensions surrounding transparency and identity performance. Simultaneously, the review identifies emerging opportunities linked to AI-driven personalization, cross-platform storytelling, and the scalability of digital ventures. The study concludes that content creators are no longer peripheral actors but central to value creation in digital business, while also highlighting the need for more equitable collaboration models, regulatory clarity, and platform accountability. This review contributes to theory and practice by offering a synthesized framework for understanding the strategic, economic, and sociotechnical dimensions of content creator marketing.

Keywords: **Social Media Influencer, Content Creator, Digital Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Platform.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The The proliferation of social media platforms and the growth of the digital economy have fundamentally altered the dynamics of content creation, distribution, and consumption. These developments have positioned content creators particularly social media influencers as central actors in the evolving landscape of digital marketing and digital entrepreneurship. The increasingly important role of creators in shaping consumer behaviour, brand strategies, and marketing outcomes has prompted scholars to explore their influence within the broader context of the digital economy. This literature review provides a critical synthesis of prior studies, outlining the effectiveness,

challenges, and opportunities related to content creator marketing, while also identifying gaps that this systematic review seeks to address.

Content creators now operate within intricate ecosystems that span multiple platforms and involve collaborations with brands, advertisers, and audiences. They are not merely digital entertainers or informal marketers; rather, they function as influential economic agents, shaping trends, creating demand, and driving brand engagement. The emergence of user-generated content (UGC) as a cornerstone of digital marketing strategies has reshaped how value is created and perceived in the market. UGC has proven essential for building trust and fostering community among consumers (Lou & Xie, 2021; Geng et al., 2020). Their findings point to the power of authentic, creator-driven content in facilitating consumer-brand interactions that are more organic and credible than traditional advertising methods (Arma, 2022; Mardhiyah, 2022; Tan, 2022; Winata, 2022).

As brands increasingly turn to social media as a primary avenue for marketing, they face a highly competitive environment where capturing user attention is more difficult than ever. Although social media enables direct engagement with consumers, the attention economy presents a barrier—brand messages must compete with personal posts, viral content, and news cycles (Moran et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021). This necessitates that both brands and creators adopt sophisticated content strategies that go beyond aesthetics and rely on behavioural insights, platform algorithms, and evolving user preferences (Putri, 2022; Rolando et al., 2022; Setiawan, 2022; Wijaya, 2022).

The role of influencers in navigating this complex terrain is particularly prominent. Unlike traditional brand ambassadors, influencers build their value through perceived authenticity, relatability, and continuous audience interaction (Kapitan et al., 2022; Enke & Borchers, 2019). Influencer marketing relies on personal narratives and trust-based relationships with followers. Perceived authenticity and transparency significantly affect engagement, conversion, and brand loyalty (Karagür et al., 2022). As consumers grow more skeptical of corporate messaging, influencers offer a bridge—presenting marketing messages within the frame of peer recommendations and lifestyle storytelling. Yet, this reliance on authenticity also places pressure on creators to continuously negotiate their identity and commercial obligations (Arriagada & Ibáñez, 2020).

The economic dimension of content creator marketing reveals deeper structural challenges. Creators operate in a precarious labour environment where platform algorithms, monetization rules, and content visibility are outside their control. Algorithmic changes can drastically impact revenue streams, making income unpredictable and reinforcing creators' dependency on platform infrastructures (Kopf, 2020; Haenlein et al., 2020). These findings highlight the paradox of opportunity and exploitation—creators have access to global audiences and monetization tools, yet remain vulnerable to opaque policies and shifting digital architectures (Mulyono, 2024; Rolando & Mulyono, 2025a, 2025b).

This vulnerability has become even more pronounced during global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. As live events halted and physical spaces closed, the digital sphere became a primary venue for both communication and commerce. Brands and creators adapted by intensifying their reliance on social media to maintain consumer engagement (Mason et al., 2021); (Hayes, 2020). These adaptations demonstrated the agility and innovative potential of digital entrepreneurship. In the absence of live sports, for instance, organizations reimagined engagement through virtual campaigns and creator collaborations, reinforcing the need for dynamic marketing strategies in times of crisis (Ingriana et al., 2024; Rolando, 2024; Rolando & Ingriana, 2024).

Digital transformation is another key theme shaping the research discourse. Digital entrepreneurship reflects a shift in business logic where innovation, interactivity, and technological fluency redefine value creation (Antonizzi & Smuts, 2020); (Sahut et al., 2021). In this context, content creators are emblematic of the digital entrepreneur—individuals who leverage data, digital tools, and social capital to build brands, monetize content, and influence consumption patterns. The concept of "digital sustainable entrepreneurship" suggests that creators can also contribute to social and environmental value beyond commercial objectives (Gregori & Holzmann, 2020).

Despite the proliferation of literature on social media marketing and influencer dynamics, there remains a lack of comprehensive synthesis that unites these findings through a systematic and critical lens. Most existing studies focus on specific platforms or industries, resulting in fragmented insights. Research has not sufficiently explored the strategic implications of creator-brand partnerships or the operational challenges creators face across various platforms. This review addresses these gaps by systematically analyzing how content creator marketing functions across contexts, with particular attention to its effectiveness, constraints, and emergent opportunities in digital business (Maha et al., 2025; Mulyono et al., 2025; Rahardja et al., 2025).

The challenges associated with content creation in the digital economy are multifaceted. Platform saturation leads to diminished visibility and increased content fatigue among consumers. Creators must constantly recalibrate their strategies to remain relevant amidst algorithmic shifts and evolving audience expectations (Arriagada & Ibáñez, 2020). Ethical and regulatory concerns around disclosure, transparency, and data privacy further complicate influencer-brand collaborations (Haenlein et al., 2020). Moreover, the commercial pressure to maintain engagement can lead to burnout, content commodification, and authenticity erosion, yet these issues remain underexplored in empirical literature (Rolando, Chandra, et al., 2025; Rolando, Widjaja, et al., 2025; Widjaja, 2025).

Opportunities, however, are equally expansive. Digital platforms offer scalability, low barriers to entry, and the ability to experiment with content formats ranging from short-form videos to live streams and AR experiences (Tafesse & Wood, 2021). Creators who strategically leverage data analytics, niche targeting, and personalized storytelling can build sustainable digital ventures. Research suggests that hybrid strategies involving both user-generated and brand-generated content can optimize consumer trust and engagement (Lou & Xie, 2021; Terho et al., 2022). Furthermore, advancements in AI-driven personalization, social commerce, and mobile-first strategies expand the creative and commercial horizons for content creators (Kumar et al., 2023).

This systematic review is therefore justified by the need to consolidate existing knowledge on content creator marketing and to contextualize it within the broader transformations in digital business. It seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How effective is social media content creator marketing in achieving business and marketing objectives
2. What are the primary challenges faced by content creators and brands in implementing content creator marketing strategies?
3. What opportunities exist for enhancing the role of content creators in the digital economy?

The scope of this review encompasses peer-reviewed journal articles, industry reports, and scholarly analyses published between 2020 and 2025, ensuring that the synthesis reflects recent trends, especially post-COVID-19 developments. It focuses on digital content creation practices

across diverse industries while maintaining a clear emphasis on marketing and entrepreneurship implications. Studies with a primary focus on traditional media or those not directly addressing monetization, branding, or consumer interaction in digital spaces are excluded.

By identifying, analyzing, and integrating findings across this emerging field, this literature review aims to contribute both conceptually and practically. Conceptually, it clarifies the multifaceted roles of content creators and the interdependencies within platform-based economies. Practically, it offers insights for brands, marketers, and policymakers on how to better support, regulate, and collaborate with creators in ways that align business goals with consumer expectations.

In sum, the review positions content creators as pivotal agents in the digital transformation of marketing and entrepreneurship. As the lines between consumer, producer, and marketer continue to blur, understanding the mechanics and implications of content creator marketing becomes imperative. The subsequent sections of this paper will present the methods used to conduct the review, followed by the analysis of key findings, and a discussion of their theoretical and practical implications.

2. RESEARCH METHOD
2.1 Protocol Review

The This study adopts a systematic literature review approach to examine the effectiveness, challenges, and opportunities of content creator marketing within the context of digital business. Systematic reviews are increasingly used in management and social science research to synthesize existing knowledge and provide an evidence-based foundation for theory building and practical insights. This method was chosen to ensure rigor, replicability, and transparency in identifying, selecting, and analyzing the literature, which is particularly important given the fast-evolving nature of digital media and marketing ecosystems. The review follows established methodological frameworks for systematic reviews in social science, including guidelines proposed by Tranfield et al. (2003) and more recent best practices for digital business contexts outlined by Snyder (2019).

The decision to conduct a systematic review was driven by the growing fragmentation of literature on content creator marketing across disciplines such as marketing, media studies, entrepreneurship, and communication. While many studies provide rich insights into specific platforms, consumer behaviors, or branding strategies, there has been limited effort to synthesize findings across these domains to build a more comprehensive understanding of the content creator phenomenon. A systematic review allows for the consolidation of diverse empirical and conceptual contributions and helps reveal patterns, contradictions, and research gaps that are not easily discerned in individual studies. It is particularly suited for addressing the central research question of this review: how social media content creator marketing contributes to digital business outcomes in terms of effectiveness, challenges, and emerging opportunities.

To ensure a rigorous and comprehensive review, a multi-stage process was used to identify, screen, and analyze relevant studies. The literature search covered major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Keywords used in the search included combinations of terms such as "social media influencer," "content creator," "digital marketing," "digital entrepreneurship," "brand engagement," "influencer marketing," and "platform economy." The search strategy aimed to capture both general and domain-specific studies, ensuring coverage of literature that discussed content creators in relation to business objectives, digital marketing strategies, and platform-based economic activities. The time frame for the search was limited to publications between 2020 and 2025 to focus on contemporary developments, including the impact

of COVID-19 on digital business strategies and the rise of new platforms such as TikTok and Clubhouse.

2.2 The Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for selecting articles were guided by their relevance to the research questions and their empirical or conceptual engagement with content creator marketing within business contexts. Only peer-reviewed journal articles, reputable industry reports, and scholarly conference proceedings were included in the final analysis. Studies that focused on traditional celebrities, mass media, or offline brand ambassadors were excluded unless they explicitly compared those roles to social media influencers or digital creators. The final dataset consisted of 52 articles that met the inclusion criteria and were subjected to full-text analysis. Reference lists from these articles were also examined to identify additional studies through backward snowballing.

Data extraction focused on key themes related to the three research objectives: assessing the effectiveness of content creator marketing, identifying the challenges faced by creators and brands, and mapping the opportunities for innovation and strategic advancement. These themes were used to guide the coding and synthesis process. Thematic analysis was conducted using an interpretive approach to capture recurring patterns, contradictions, and emerging constructs in the literature. This approach allowed for the integration of qualitative and quantitative findings, providing a richer understanding of how content creators operate as economic actors within digital ecosystems. The analysis also considered contextual factors such as platform characteristics, audience demographics, and industry type to ensure the generalizability of insights across different sectors.

Throughout the review process, efforts were made to minimize bias and ensure methodological transparency. All inclusion and exclusion decisions were documented, and ambiguous cases were resolved through iterative discussions and cross-referencing. While the review did not employ a formal quality assessment tool, priority was given to studies published in high-impact journals or those that demonstrated methodological rigor in terms of sample size, analytical depth, and theoretical grounding. The review also acknowledges the limitations of focusing primarily on English-language sources, which may exclude valuable insights from non-English academic and practitioner communities.

The scope of the review is intentionally focused on the intersection of content creator marketing and digital business strategy. It does not attempt to cover all dimensions of social media or influencer culture. Instead, it concentrates on how creators contribute to value generation, brand development, and consumer engagement in the digital economy. This includes examining business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) contexts where applicable, while prioritizing strategies that align with measurable business outcomes such as reach, conversion, engagement, and brand perception. The review also considers platform-specific dynamics where they affect creator performance or business strategy, such as algorithmic visibility, monetization mechanisms, and content format constraints.

The research questions guiding the review are designed to capture both descriptive and explanatory insights. First, the review explores how effective content creator marketing is in achieving digital business goals such as sales growth, brand awareness, and customer retention. Second, it identifies the practical and structural challenges that limit the potential of content creator strategies, including creator burnout, algorithmic bias, and ethical concerns about transparency and disclosure. Third, the review investigates the emerging opportunities for innovation in content creator marketing, such as cross-platform storytelling, AI-driven personalization, and creator-brand co-creation models.

This methodological approach contributes to the literature by offering a structured and integrative synthesis of the current state of knowledge in a rapidly evolving field. It bridges disciplinary boundaries and highlights practical implications for digital marketers, business

strategists, and policymakers. By systematically identifying where content creator marketing is most effective, where it encounters limitations, and where it holds promise for future development, the
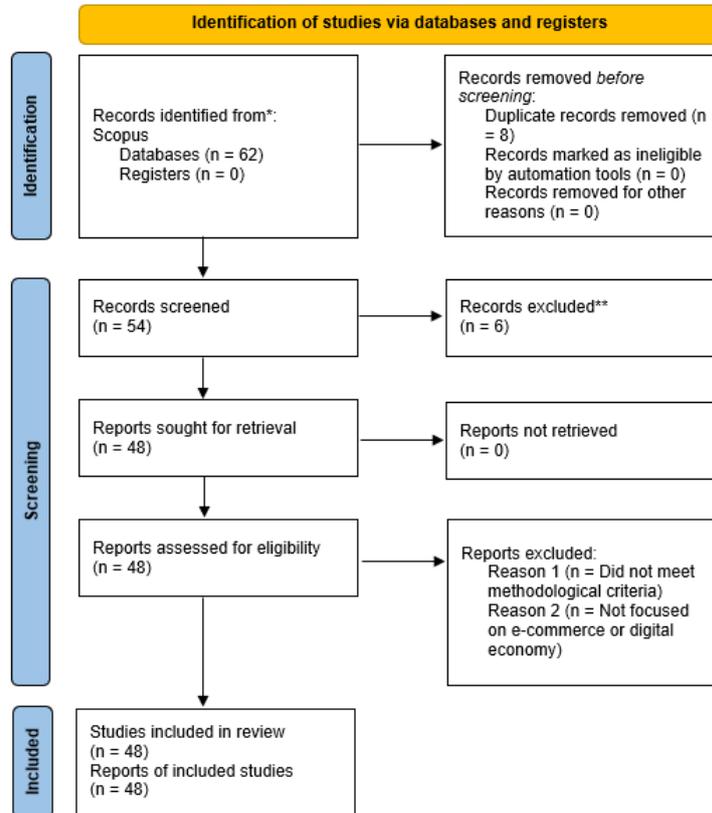
review adds conceptual clarity and strategic direction to a topic that is both commercially significant and theoretically underdeveloped.

Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart from this study

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

3.1.1 Thematic Syntheses.

This systematic review set out to explore how social media content creator marketing operates within the broader landscape of digital business, focusing specifically on its effectiveness, challenges, and emerging opportunities. The review was grounded in the recognition that content creators have become pivotal actors in shaping brand-consumer interactions, influencing market behaviours, and driving innovation across industries. Drawing from a curated selection of literature published between 2020 and 2025, this study consolidates and interprets current academic and practical insights to provide a more comprehensive understanding of content creator marketing as both a business strategy and a sociotechnical phenomenon.

The findings reaffirm that content creator marketing is not only effective in enhancing brand visibility and engagement but also increasingly central to digital business models. Studies consistently show that creators are able to cultivate trust-based relationships with audiences, often leading to higher levels of consumer engagement and brand loyalty compared to traditional advertising channels. This effectiveness is largely attributed to the perceived authenticity of content

creators, the personalized nature of their messaging, and their deep familiarity with platform-specific content strategies (Kapitan et al., 2022; Karagür et al., 2022). The review also highlights that creator campaigns tend to perform best when aligned with the creator's niche, values, and follower expectations, underscoring the importance of relational over transactional dynamics in influencer-brand collaborations.

However, the review also reveals significant challenges that complicate the consistent success of content creator marketing. One of the most persistent issues is the precariousness of the creator economy, which is heavily shaped by opaque platform algorithms, fluctuating monetization systems, and the constant pressure to remain visible in a saturated digital landscape. These structural constraints not only introduce economic instability but also contribute to creator burnout and the erosion of perceived authenticity over time (Arriagada & Ibáñez, 2020;Haenlein et al., 2020)). The complexity of sustaining audience engagement, while navigating the commercial pressures of partnerships and sponsorships, requires creators to operate not just as marketers but also as content strategists, data analysts, and digital entrepreneurs.

Another layer of complexity emerges from the ethical and regulatory dimensions of content creator marketing. The review identifies concerns around transparency, particularly in relation to paid partnerships and sponsorship disclosures. While regulatory guidelines exist in many jurisdictions, enforcement remains inconsistent, and creators often struggle to balance clarity with creativity. This creates ambiguity for consumers and may undermine trust if not managed effectively. Furthermore, the normalization of parasocial relationships where followers perceive intimate connections with creators raises questions about emotional influence and potential exploitation. These concerns are especially relevant in sectors such as health, finance, or politics, where creator opinions may carry unintended consequences.

The findings also reveal meaningful opportunities that are expanding the boundaries of content creator marketing. Technological advances such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data-driven personalization offer creators and brands new tools to refine targeting, content delivery, and performance analytics (Kumar et al., 2023). Additionally, the rise of new formats such as live streaming, augmented reality, and vertical short-form video has enabled greater experimentation with interactive and immersive content. These innovations are particularly beneficial for brands seeking deeper consumer engagement and for creators aiming to differentiate themselves in increasingly competitive markets. The review further notes that creators who diversify across platforms and adopt a long-term entrepreneurial mindset tend to build more sustainable digital ventures.

Importantly, this review emphasizes the interdependence between content creators and digital platforms. While platforms provide the infrastructure, tools, and algorithms that enable content distribution and monetization, creators supply the value-driving content that fuels user engagement and platform growth. This mutual dependence, however, is asymmetrical in power. Platforms retain control over visibility, monetization policies, and audience analytics, often leaving creators with limited agency. This raises critical questions about labour conditions, revenue equity, and algorithmic fairness in the creator economy. Addressing these systemic issues requires not only technical adjustments but also collaborative efforts between platforms, creators, regulators, and brands to create more equitable and transparent digital ecosystems.

The review contributes to the existing body of literature by integrating diverse disciplinary perspectives into a coherent analysis of content creator marketing. It moves beyond fragmented case studies to offer a broader framework for understanding creators as entrepreneurial agents embedded in dynamic, data-driven, and commercially mediated environments. Conceptually, it reframes content creators not merely as digital laborers or brand assets, but as co-creators of economic and cultural value in the platform economy. Practically, it provides insights for marketers and brand managers on how to design creator partnerships that are ethically sound, strategically aligned, and resilient to shifts in platform infrastructure.

While the scope of this review is limited to English-language literature and a defined publication window, the insights derived remain applicable across various global contexts where digital platforms shape consumer-brand relations. The findings also highlight critical areas for future research, including the long-term career trajectories of content creators, the implications of platform governance on creative freedom, and the evolving dynamics of trust and transparency in digital influence. These research gaps underscore the need for ongoing academic engagement with a phenomenon that continues to reshape how businesses connect with consumers in an increasingly digital-first world.

This discussion reinforces the central argument of the review: content creator marketing represents a paradigm shift in digital business strategy, offering both strategic leverage and structural complexity. As creators continue to blur the boundaries between media production, entrepreneurship, and brand communication, understanding their multifaceted roles becomes essential for navigating the future of marketing and consumer engagement.

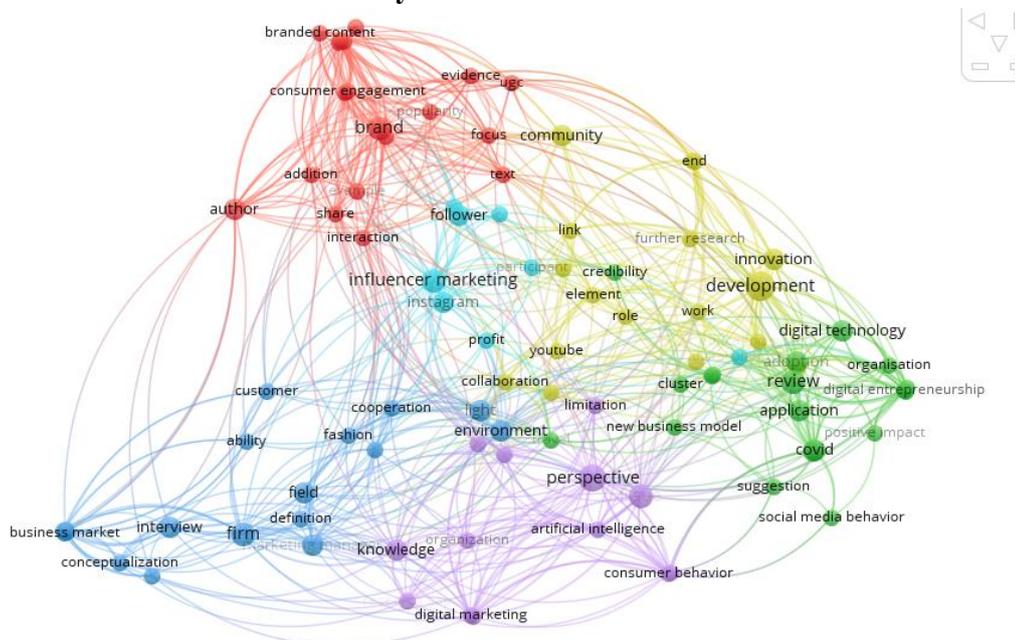### 3.1.2 Network & Bibliometric Analysis.

Figure 2. Network Visualization

The red cluster in the upper-central region is anchored by the term "brand", and includes related concepts such as *consumer engagement*, *branded content*, *interaction*, and *author*. This cluster predominantly reflects research on digital branding, content creation, and consumer-brand

relationships in online environments, particularly within the context of influencer marketing. The green cluster positioned to the right revolves around "development" and "digital technology", and is strongly connected to terms such as *innovation*, *application*, *covid*, *social media behaviour*, and *digital entrepreneurship*. This thematic grouping emphasizes the technological transformation of commerce and its role in catalyzing digital economy evolution, especially in post-pandemic contexts. The blue cluster on the left includes terms such as "firm", *interview*, *business market*, *conceptualization*, and *definition*, indicating studies that engage with organizational strategy, firm behaviour, and conceptual modelling in the context of e-commerce. The purple cluster, located in the lower-central region, features "perspective", *artificial intelligence*, *consumer behaviour*, and *digital marketing*. This group indicates a conceptual and analytical focus, especially on the role of emerging technologies like AI and their implications for personalized marketing and digital consumer experience. The yellow cluster, which intersects with multiple others, includes terms such as *review*, *credibility*, *further research*, *role*, and *cluster*. These keywords suggest an emphasis on methodological reflection, systematic reviews, and theoretical development within the literature. The cyan/light-blue cluster, centered on "influencer marketing", includes *Instagram*, *YouTube*, *interaction*, *follower*, and *profit*, reflecting the strategic role of social media influencers and content platforms in driving digital marketing performance and consumer engagement.

Notably, several keywords serve as bridging nodes positioned centrally and connecting multiple clusters such as "influencer marketing", "development", and "perspective". Their centrality reflects their cross-thematic relevance, indicating that they are pivotal concepts across various subdomains within the field.
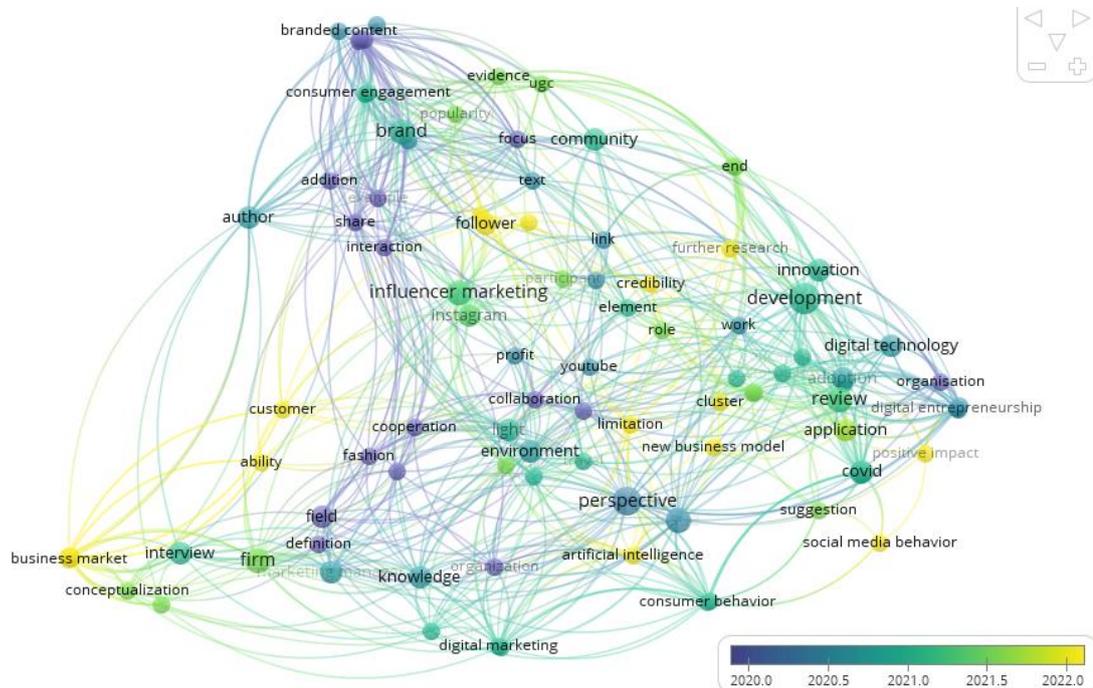

Figure 3. Overlay Visualization

The overlay visualization in Figure X presents a temporal analysis of keyword co-occurrence within the literature corpus spanning from 2020 to 2022. The colour gradient—from deep blue to yellow—represents the average publication year associated with each keyword. Terms appearing in

earlier studies are shown in cooler colours (blue to green), while more recent themes are marked by warmer hues (light green to yellow). The temporal mapping reveals a progressive evolution in thematic focus across the research landscape. Keywords such as "brand," "consumer engagement," and "author," located primarily in blue-to-green regions, indicate early emphasis (2020–2021) on branding strategies, influencer-generated content, and user engagement mechanisms especially in relation to social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. In contrast, yellow-coloured keywords like "follower," "suggestion," "further research," and "customer" reflect more recent scholarly attention (2022), suggesting a shift toward impact measurement, participatory behaviour, policy relevance, and empirical refinement. Notably, the emergence of keywords such as "covid," "social media behaviour," and "new business model" in the yellow spectrum signals a post-pandemic contextualization of digital economy research where scholars began exploring how e-commerce and marketing models adapted in response to global disruptions. Additionally, terms such as "digital technology," "application," "development," and "innovation" occupy transitional colours (green to yellow), highlighting their sustained and evolving relevance over the reviewed period. These keywords indicate a continued interest in technological integration and its application across business models and consumer interactions. The presence of "artificial intelligence," "perspective," and "environment" in blue-to-green regions suggests that these topics were part of initial theoretical explorations and have since been built upon by newer studies focusing on practical implementations and user-level behaviour. This overlay visualization underscores a dynamic research trajectory, transitioning from foundational investigations into influencer marketing and brand engagement toward more granular, interdisciplinary inquiries into digital adaptation, post-pandemic consumer behaviour, and technological affordances. It also reveals that while some themes (e.g., *digital marketing, AI, firm-level strategies*) formed the core of earlier studies, newer research increasingly interrogates outcomes, ethical dimensions, and contextual responses—marking a maturation of the field.
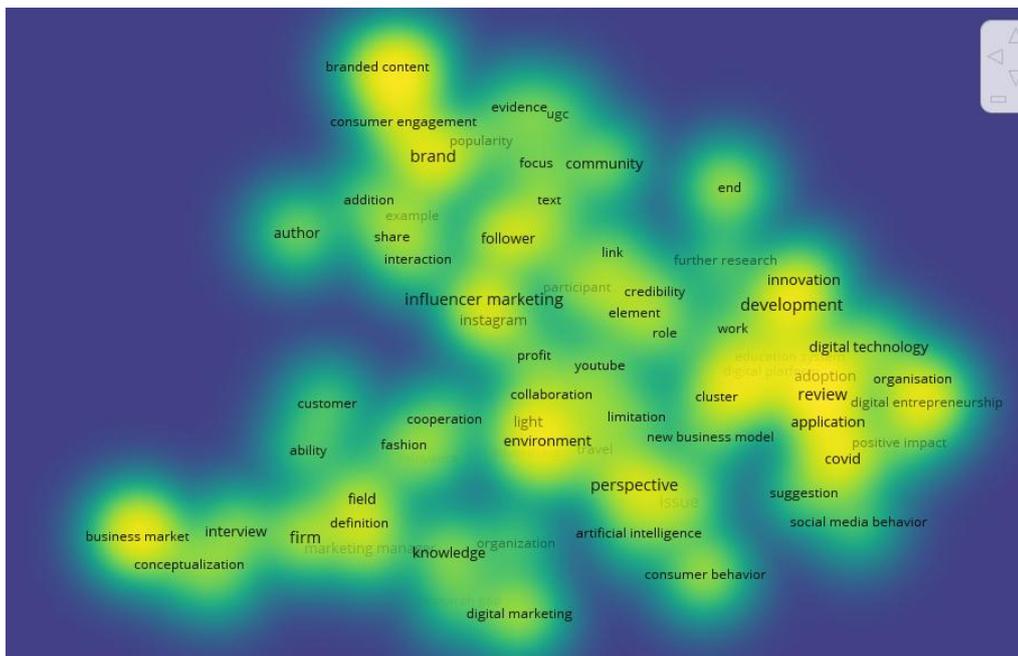

Figure 4. Density Visualization

The central-right cluster shows the most significant heat concentration, with core keywords such as "development," "digital technology," "application," "review," and "innovation." This indicates that the technological transformation of commerce, the implementation of digital tools, and evaluations through literature reviews represent intensely studied themes in the domain. A secondary high-density region appears in the top-central zone, revolving around "brand," "consumer engagement," "branded content," and "interaction." The vibrancy in this area reflects a strong academic emphasis on digital branding, user experience, and content strategies, particularly within the context of influencer marketing ecosystems. At the center of the map, the area around "influencer marketing," "Instagram," and "follower" shows another concentrated yellow zone. This visualizes how social media marketing and influencer dynamics have become a focal research point, especially in relation to engagement and platform-based commerce models. In the bottom-central zone, keywords like "perspective," "environment," "artificial intelligence," and "consumer behaviour" form a medium-density cluster. While not yet as prominent as the branding and technology clusters, this suggests growing scholarly interest in theoretical, ethical, and behavioural dimensions of the digital economy. Conversely, low-density zones (shaded in blue) are visible at the bottom-left and far-right areas, around keywords such as "conceptualization," "business market," "interview," "suggestion," and "positive impact." These peripheral nodes represent underexplored or emerging areas within the current body of literature, offering potential avenues for future research, especially in empirical design and outcome-oriented evaluation.

Overall, this visualization reflects a clustered research landscape, where scholarly attention has largely converged around technological enablers, digital branding, and platform-based marketing strategies, while conceptual theory-building and policy-related themes remain comparatively less saturated. The visual heat distribution thus serves not only to validate dominant thematic streams but also to highlight strategic entry points for advancing knowledge in areas with lower research density.

4. CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review set out to critically examine the evolving role of social media content creators in the context of digital business, with a focus on their effectiveness, the challenges they face, and the opportunities they generate. Rooted in the recognition that content creators have become central to digital marketing strategies, the review was designed to consolidate existing research and provide a more comprehensive understanding of their impact on business outcomes and brand-consumer dynamics. The need for this review was grounded in the fragmented state of current literature, where insights from marketing, media, and entrepreneurship studies have not yet been systematically synthesized to guide future research or practice.

The findings confirm that content creator marketing has become a powerful tool for brands seeking authentic, targeted, and community-driven engagement. Influencers and digital creators possess the ability to build trust-based relationships with their audiences, often driving higher levels of brand loyalty and conversion than traditional marketing methods. However, the review also reveals the complexity of the creator economy, highlighting structural limitations, platform dependencies, and ethical concerns that can undermine the effectiveness and sustainability of creator strategies. These challenges are amplified by algorithmic control, inconsistent monetization frameworks, and the increasing pressures faced by creators to maintain visibility, relevance, and perceived authenticity.

Through a systematic synthesis of recent studies, the review also identifies a range of emerging opportunities that are reshaping how creators and brands interact. The integration of new technologies, the expansion of content formats, and the evolution of consumer expectations are contributing to a more dynamic and diversified digital marketing landscape. At the same time, the growing strategic importance of content creators in digital business demands more nuanced and equitable models of collaboration, regulation, and platform governance.

This review addressed three key questions: how effective content creator marketing is in achieving business goals, what challenges are faced by both creators and brands, and what opportunities exist for future development. In answering these questions, the review contributes both conceptually and practically. It provides a framework for understanding creators not only as promotional partners but as entrepreneurial actors embedded within platform ecosystems. It also offers insights for businesses, marketers, and policymakers on how to engage with content creators more ethically, strategically, and sustainably.

The scope of the review was defined to include literature published between 2020 and 2025, capturing recent post-pandemic trends and platform shifts. While limited to English-language academic and industry sources, the review presents findings that are broadly relevant across geographic and sectoral boundaries. As digital platforms continue to evolve and redefine consumer-brand relations, ongoing research will be essential to address unresolved questions, such as the long-term viability of creator careers, the implications of algorithmic bias, and the role of platform accountability in shaping the future of digital entrepreneurship.

In conclusion, content creators are no longer peripheral to digital business—they are central to how value is generated, how brands are perceived, and how consumers engage. This review affirms their importance while also calling attention to the systemic and ethical considerations that must inform future research, policy, and practice in the rapidly transforming digital economy.

REFERENCES

Antonizzi, J., & Smuts, H. (2020). The Characteristics of Digital Entrepreneurship and Digital Transformation: A Systematic Literature Review. *Lecture Notes in Computer Science (Including Subseries Lecture Notes in Artificial Intelligence and Lecture Notes in Bioinformatics)*, *12066 LNCS*, 239–251. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-44999-5_20

Arma, O. (2022). THE IMPACT OF VIRTUAL ANCHOR PERCEIVED WARMTH AND COMPETENCE ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION IN DIGITAL MARKETING. *Artificial Intelligence Research and Applied Learning*, *1*(1). https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/aira

Arriagada, A., & Ibáñez, F. (2020). "You Need At Least One Picture Daily, if Not, You're Dead": Content Creators and Platform Evolution in the Social Media Ecology. *Social Media and Society*, *6*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120944624

Enke, N., & Borchers, N. S. (2019). Social Media Influencers in Strategic Communication: A Conceptual Framework for Strategic Social Media Influencer Communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, *13*(4), 261–277. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2019.1620234

Geng, R., Wang, S., Chen, X., Song, D., & Yu, J. (2020). Content marketing in e-commerce platforms in the internet celebrity economy. *Industrial Management and Data Systems*, *120*(3), 464–485. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-05-2019-0270

Gregori, P., & Holzmann, P. (2020). Digital sustainable entrepreneurship: A business model perspective on embedding digital technologies for social and environmental value creation. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *272*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.122817

Haenlein, M., Anadol, E., Farnsworth, T., Hugo, H., Hunichen, J., & Welte, D. (2020). Navigating the New Era of Influencer Marketing: How to be Successful on Instagram, TikTok, & Co. *California Management Review*, *63*(1), 5–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125620958166

Hayes, M. (2020). Social media and inspiring physical activity during COVID-19 and beyond. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2020.1794939

Ingriana, A., Prajitno, G. G., & Rolando, B. (2024). THE UTILIZATION OF AI AND BIG DATA TECHNOLOGY FOR OPTIMIZING DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES. *International Journal of Economics And Business Studies*, *1*(1), 21–42. https://doi.org/10.1234/IJEBS.V1I1.1

Kapitan, S., van Esch, P., Soma, V., & Kietzmann, J. (2022). Influencer Marketing and Authenticity in Content Creation. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, *30*(4), 342–351. https://doi.org/10.1177/18393349211011171

Karagür, Z., Becker, J. M., Klein, K., & Edeling, A. (2022). How, why, and when disclosure type matters for influencer marketing. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *39*(2), 313–335. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2021.09.006

Kopf, S. (2020). "Rewarding Good Creators": Corporate Social Media Discourse on Monetization Schemes for Content Creators. *Social Media and Society*, *6*(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120969877

Kumar, S., Lim, W. M., Sivarajah, U., & Kaur, J. (2023). Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain Integration in Business: Trends from a Bibliometric-Content Analysis. *Information Systems Frontiers*, *25*(2), 871–896. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10796-022-10279-0

Li, F., Larimo, J., & Leonidou, L. C. (2021). Social media marketing strategy: definition, conceptualization, taxonomy, validation, and future agenda. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *49*(1), 51–70. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00733-3

Lou, C., & Xie, Q. (2021). Something social, something entertaining? How digital content marketing augments consumer experience and brand loyalty. *International Journal of Advertising*, *40*(3), 376–402. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2020.1788311

Maha, V. A., Hartono, S. D., Prajitno, G. G., & Hartanti, R. (2025). E-COMMERCE LOKAL VS GLOBAL: ANALISIS MODEL BISNIS DAN PREFERENSI KONSUMEN. *JUMDER: Jurnal Bisnis Digital Dan Ekonomi Kreatif*, *1*(1), 21–44. https://doi.org/10.1234/JUMDER.V1I1.9

Mardhiyah, A. S. (2022). TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE IN RESHAPING THE E-COMMERCE LANDSCAPE. *Artificial Intelligence Research and Applied Learning*, *1*(2). https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/aira

Mason, A. N., Narcum, J., & Mason, K. (2021). Social media marketing gains importance after Covid-19. *Cogent Business and Management*, *8*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2020.1870797

Moran, G., Muzellec, L., & Johnson, D. (2020). Message content features and social media engagement: evidence from the media industry. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, *29*(5), 533–545. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2018-2014

Mulyono, H. (2024). Pengaruh Diskon Tanggal Kembar Pada E-Commerce Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian | International Journal of Economics And Business Studies. *International Journal of Economics And Business Studies (IJEBS)*, *1*(1), 1–20. https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/IJEBS/article/view/2

Mulyono, H., Hartanti, R., & Rolando, B. (2025). SUARA KONSUMEN DI ERA DIGITAL: BAGAIMANA REVIEW ONLINE MEMBENTUK PERILAKU KONSUMEN DIGITAL. *JUMDER: Jurnal Bisnis Digital Dan Ekonomi Kreatif*, *1*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1234/JUMDER.V1I1.10

Putri, L. W. B. (2022). TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARKETING IN THE AI ERA: A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE ANALYSIS. *Artificial Intelligence Research and Applied Learning*, *1*(1). https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/aira

Rahardja, B. V., Rolando, B., Chondro, J., & Laurensia, M. (2025). MENDORONG PERTUMBUHAN E-COMMERCE: PENGARUH PEMASARAN MEDIA SOSIAL TERHADAP KINERJA PENJUALAN. *JUMDER: Jurnal Bisnis Digital Dan Ekonomi Kreatif*, *1*(1), 45–61. https://doi.org/10.1234/JUMDER.V1I1.6

Rolando, B. (2024). CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND AUTOMATED SYSTEMS IN E-COMMERCE COPYWRITING: OPTIMIZING CONVERSION RATES IN THE INDONESIAN MARKET. *International Journal of Economics And Business Studies*, *1*(1), 57–86. https://doi.org/10.1234/IJEBS.V1I1.4

Rolando, B., & Ingriana, A. (2024). SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODELS IN THE GREEN ENERGY SECTOR: CREATING GREEN JOBS THROUGH RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION. *International Journal of Economics And Business Studies*, *1*(1), 43–56. https://doi.org/10.1234/IJEBS.V1I1.3

Rolando, B., & Mulyono, H. (2025a). Diverse Learning Environments on Students Entrepreneurial Intentions. *International Journal of Pedagogy and Teacher Education-9*, *9*(1), 119–137. https://doi.org/10.20961/ijpte.v9i1.98592

Rolando, B., & Mulyono, H. (2025b). E-Commerce as a Catalyst for Digital Economy Development: A Study of Marketing Strategies and Their Impact. *Journal of Distribution Science*, *23*(4), 61–79. https://doi.org/10.15722/jds.23.04.202504.61

Rolando, B., Ariyanto, K., Alexia, K. R., & Hartanti, R. (2022). PERAN AI DAN BIG DATA DALAM MENGOPTIMALKAN STRATEGI PEMASARAN DIGITAL. *Artificial Intelligence Research and Applied Learning*, *1*(1). https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/aira

Rolando, B., Chandra, C. K., & Widjaja, A. F. (2025). *TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS AS KEY DRIVERS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF MODERN E-COMMERCE ECOSYSTEMS.* *1*(2). https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/Jumder

Rolando, B., Widjaja, A. F., & Chandra, C. K. (2025). *UNDERSTANDING FASHION PURCHASING DECISIONS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN RETAIL* (Vol. 1, Issue 1). https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/mosaic

Sahut, J. M., Iandoli, L., & Teulon, F. (2021). The age of digital entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics*, *56*(3), 1159–1169. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-019-00260-8

Setiawan, B. L. T. (2022). ANALISIS PERAN AUGMENTED REALITY (AR) DALAM PEMASARAN DAN DAMPAKNYA PADA PERILAKU KONSUMEN. *Artificial Intelligence Research and Applied Learning*, *1*(1). https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/aira

Tafesse, W., & Wood, B. P. (2021). Followers' engagement with instagram influencers: The role of influencers' content and engagement strategy. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *58*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102303

Tan, D. M. (2022). A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE AI-POWERED MARKETING REVOLUTION: FROM TRADITIONAL TO DATA-DRIVEN APPROACHES. *Artificial Intelligence Research and Applied Learning*, *1*(2). https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/aira

Terho, H., Mero, J., Siutla, L., & Jaakkola, E. (2022). Digital content marketing in business markets: Activities, consequences, and contingencies along the customer journey. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *105*, 294–310. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2022.06.006

Widjaja, A. F. (2025). *FACTORS INFLUENCING PURCHASE INTENTION IN E-COMMERCE: AN ANALYSIS OF BRAND IMAGE, PRODUCT QUALITY, AND PRICE.* *1*(3). https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/Jumder

Wijaya, A. J. (2022). PERAN DAN IMPLEMENTASI TEKNOLOGI KECERDASAN BUATAN DALAM PENGALAMAN KONSUMEN E-COMMERCE: SEBUAH TINJAUAN SISTEMATIS. *Artificial Intelligence Research and Applied Learning*, *1*(1). https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/aira

Winata, V. (2022). OPTIMIZING BIG DATA PROCESSING THROUGH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW. *Artificial Intelligence Research and Applied Learning*, *1*(2). https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/aira