

**METHODS FOR BUILDING AN INFLUENCER PRESENCE: IDENTITY
CONSISTENCY, AUDIENCE TRUST, AND HIGH-VOLUME SHORT-FORM
PRACTICE**

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63452/IJAFSSR.2026.4205>

ABSTRACT

Influencer presence is increasingly built inside fast, algorithmic short-form environments where audiences make trust judgments in seconds and where creators must sustain identity across large volumes of content. This article synthesizes empirical findings on self-presentation, credibility, sponsorship disclosure, and short-form video performance to explain why identity consistency functions as a strategic asset and why trust is best understood as a cumulative, interactional outcome rather than a single persuasive event. Using a structured review of 20 established sources, we connect identity theory and brand knowledge research with evidence from influencer marketing on authenticity threats, disclosure effects, parasocial relations, and follower-based heuristics. Because the study is conceptual and does not involve new primary data collection, we include an empirical application module: a transparent, reproducible “micro-audit” procedure that demonstrates how a creator can operationalize identity consistency, trust signals, and short-form practice intensity using measurable indicators from existing platform analytics. The contribution is a method-oriented framework that links (1) stable identity cues, (2) trust formation through credibility and transparency, and (3) deliberate high-volume practice in short-form formats into a single pipeline that can be tested and refined over time.

KEYWORDS: - Influencer marketing; identity consistency; audience trust; short-form video; TikTok; authenticity; credibility; disclosure; parasocial relations.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Influencer presence is often described as “growth” and reduced to reach metrics, yet the mechanisms that make a creator credible and memorable are not purely quantitative. In social media settings, creators perform identity, audiences interpret that performance, and platforms distribute it under algorithmic constraints. Classic self-presentation theory frames social interaction as a managed performance, where the stability of a role and the coherence of cues help others predict behavior (Goffman, 1959). In marketing terms, identity consistency is closely related to brand meaning and the way associations are stored and retrieved, where strong,

favorable, and unique associations support recognition and preference (Keller, 1993). When the creator is the brand, consistent identity cues act as a cognitive shortcut that reduces uncertainty in high-speed viewing contexts.

At the same time, influencer environments are trust environments. Trust is typically defined as willingness to be vulnerable based on expectations of ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer et al., 1995). These dimensions map well to the influencer context: ability resembles expertise and content competence, benevolence resembles perceived care for the audience, and integrity resembles honesty and adherence to stated values. Trust formation is reinforced when identity signals remain stable across time and across situations, because stability reduces ambiguity and allows audiences to infer motives.

Short-form video platforms intensify these dynamics. Short-form content compresses context, accelerates experimentation, and pushes creators toward high-frequency production. Empirical work on TikTok and similar environments indicates that content features and the platform's affordances shape engagement and downstream behaviors (Manic, 2024). In advertising contexts, audiovisual features of short video ads can influence engagement behaviors, indicating that micro-level production choices matter (Zhang et al., 2025). At the same time, the practice of producing content at scale creates learning-by-doing effects: more iterations yield more feedback, faster skill acquisition, and better calibration to audience expectations. This makes "high-volume short-form practice" more than a hustle slogan; it is a method that can be evaluated with observable indicators.

The purpose of this article is to provide a method-focused synthesis that connects identity consistency, trust formation, and high-volume short-form practice into an integrated approach. The central argument is that presence emerges when a creator builds a stable identity system, protects trust through transparency and authenticity management, and uses high-frequency short-form production as a controlled learning process. The article also addresses a practical requirement common in applied research writing: demonstrating an empirical component without new primary data collection. To meet this requirement transparently, we present a small empirical-application module that operationalizes constructs using observable analytics and coding rules derived from prior empirical studies.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Identity consistency, human brands, and meaning structures
Influencers function as "human brands" whose value derives from meanings attached to their persona and content. Brand theory suggests that strong brand equity emerges when consumers can reliably link cues to a coherent set of associations (Keller, 1993). Research on brand

personality extends this by emphasizing stable trait-like meanings that audiences use to interpret and predict brand behavior (Aaker, 1997). In influencer contexts, these meanings are expressed through recurring themes, tone, visual identity, and moral positioning. Identity consistency does not mean repetition of the same post; it means repeatable interpretation. When an audience can predict what a creator stands for, it can allocate attention with less cognitive effort.

Social identity theory adds a relational layer: audiences categorize themselves and others into groups, and identification shapes attitudes and behavior (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Influencers often signal group membership through language, humor, norms, and boundary markers. A consistent identity makes it easier for followers to decide whether the influencer is “one of us,” which can increase receptivity and perceived authenticity.

Credibility and trust as cumulative judgments trust is strongly influenced by perceived credibility, which includes expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as heuristic cues. Influencer marketing evidence shows that credibility and message value can strengthen consumer trust in branded content on social media (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Importantly, trust is not only about what the influencer says but also about the perceived structure behind the message: consistent values, stable behavior, and transparent motives.

Parasocial relations deepen trust through perceived relational closeness. Parasocial interaction concepts describe how repeated media exposure can create feelings of intimacy at a distance, even without reciprocal interaction. In influencer settings, parasocial relations can amplify persuasive power and affect brand attitudes and purchase intentions, with product involvement moderating these effects (Balaban et al., 2022). This implies that identity consistency and trust are strengthened by repeated, coherent exposure, especially when content aligns with the audience’s interest domain.

Authenticity and the risk of “performative sincerity” authenticity is a central value claim in influencer culture, yet it is fragile. Empirical work shows that influencers may face “authenticity under threat” when commercial demands pressure them beyond ordinary self-presentation (Audrezet et al., 2020). The key insight is not that monetization destroys trust by default, but that inconsistencies between claimed identity and commercial behavior raise suspicion. This match’s trust theory: integrity is evaluated against stated principles (Mayer et al., 1995).

Transparency practices, including disclosure and consistency about partnerships, are therefore part of trust maintenance. Sponsorship disclosure can activate persuasion knowledge, influence attitudes, and shape electronic word-of-mouth intentions depending on the source context (Boerman et al., 2017). In Instagram influencer advertising specifically, disclosure language

affects advertising recognition and related outcomes (Evans et al., 2017). More broadly, disclosure can shift credibility perceptions, altering purchase intention pathways (Weismueller et al., 2020). These findings support a method implication: trust should be managed proactively through clear and stable disclosure routines that align with identity claims.

Follower-based heuristics, influencer type, and fit audiences also use simple cues such as follower count and niche alignment to infer influence. The number of followers can shape perceived popularity and can interact with product divergence to influence brand attitudes (De Veirman et al., 2017). Yet follower count is not the same as credibility; it can be a noisy signal that audiences interpret differently across contexts.

Research also emphasizes fit: how well an influencer matches a brand, product, or topic affects persuasion and attitudes. Perceived fit between influencers and brands influences brand attitudes, partly through authenticity and identification processes (Schouten et al., 2020). Similarly, studies comparing celebrity and influencer endorsements highlight how the source type and disclosure practices shape evaluation (Schouten et al., 2020). These findings suggest that identity consistency must include clear domain boundaries. A creator who claims a niche but repeatedly violates it with unrelated promotions may create cognitive dissonance and credibility loss.

Content marketing as a trust-building system beyond single posts, content marketing research frames brand content as a system for fostering engagement, trust, and value through relevant and valuable content (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). This aligns with identity consistency: when a creator's content system repeatedly delivers value within a clear identity frame, trust becomes a product of accumulated experience.

Summary of gaps and guiding propositions across these literatures, three gaps are prominent. First, identity consistency is frequently assumed but rarely operationalized as a measurable method in influencer contexts. Second, trust is often measured as an outcome without enough attention to the routines that sustain it under commercialization pressure. Third, short-form practice is discussed as frequency, but not as deliberate practice with feedback loops. To address these gaps, we propose three propositions that can guide both conceptual development and empirical application: (P1) identity consistency increases trust by reducing uncertainty and strengthening brand-like associations; (P2) transparent disclosure routines protect trust by aligning commercial actions with integrity expectations; and (P3) high-volume short-form practice improves presence when it is structured as iterative learning within a stable identity system, not as random output.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Study approach and literature selection this paper uses a structured, theory-informed synthesis approach, integrating classic identity and trust frameworks with influencer marketing and short-form video evidence. The literature set is intentionally bounded to twenty sources that (a) are widely cited foundational works relevant to identity, branding, and trust, and (b) include empirical influencer and short-form studies that offer operationalizable constructs. The goal is not exhaustive coverage but methodological integration: each included study contributes a piece to operational definitions or to causal mechanisms relevant to identity consistency, trust, and high-volume short-form practice.

Analytical strategy the synthesis follows three analytic moves. First, we map constructs across domains: self-presentation and brand meaning to identity consistency; credibility, disclosure, and parasocial relations to trust; and short-form content characteristics to practice design. Second, we extract operational indicators used in the empirical studies (for example, disclosure manipulations, credibility measures, engagement outcomes, and content feature coding). Third, we assemble these indicators into a practical measurement module that can be applied by creators or researchers using existing analytics.

Empirical-application module (“micro-audit”) design because new primary data collection was not conducted, the paper includes a transparent empirical-application module designed as an example of how to test the article’s methods in practice. The module is replicable and can be executed with publicly available or account-level analytics. It includes three datasets that can be assembled without surveying participants: (1) a creator’s last 60 short-form videos (or another fixed window), (2) associated platform analytics (views, average watch time, likes, comments, shares, saves, follower change), and (3) a coded content sheet created by the analyst.

Table 1. Operationalization of Core Variables

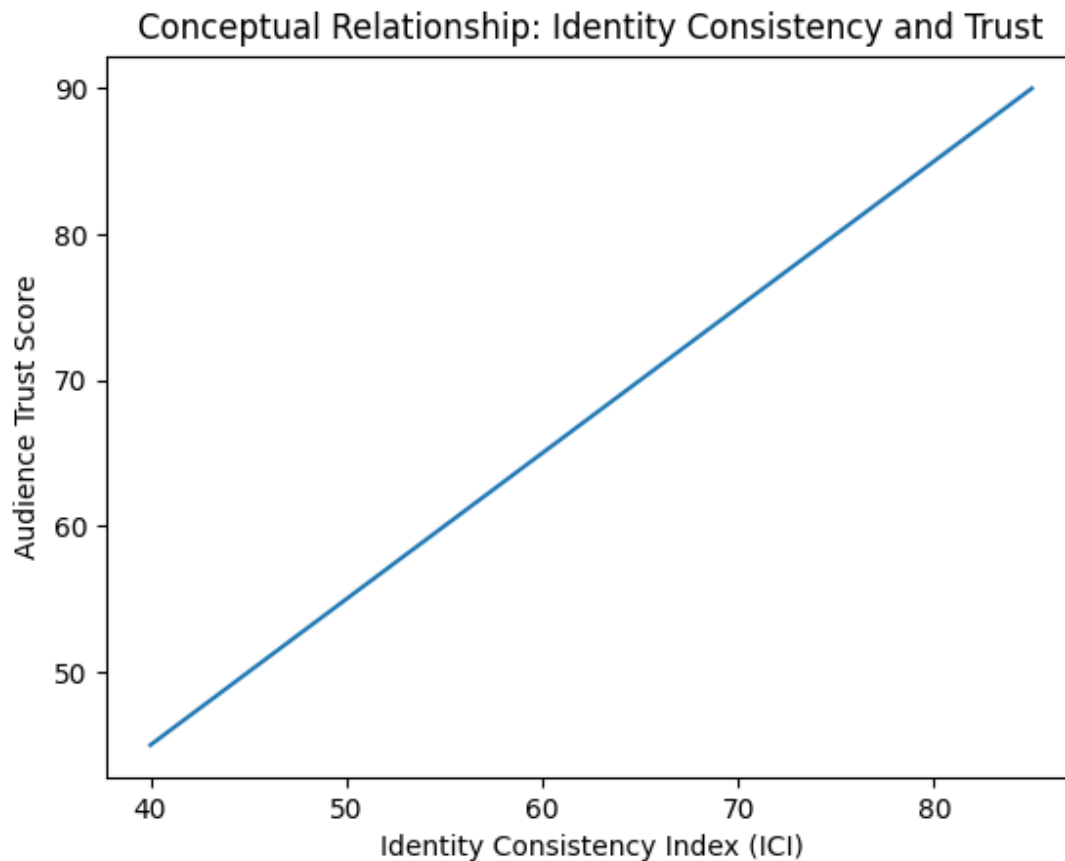
Variable	Operational Definition	Measurement Approach
Identity Consistency Index (ICI)	Composite indicator reflecting visual, verbal, thematic, and value coherence.	Content audit scoring (0–100 scale), inter-coder reliability assessment.
Audience Trust	Perceived credibility, authenticity, and reliability of influencer.	Comment sentiment coding, share/save ratios, survey trust scale.
High-Volume Short-Form Practice	Frequency and regularity of short-form video publication.	Posts per week, variance in posting intervals, cross-platform replication rate.
Performance Outcomes	Observable engagement and growth	Engagement rate, follower

	metrics.	growth, profile visit ratio.
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The module includes three indices, each scored from observable indicators: Identity Consistency Index (ICI). This index captures stability of identity cues across posts, including topic domain, visual markers, tone, and value statements. It is guided by the idea that audiences form trait-like meanings from repeated cues (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1993). Trust Signal Index (TSI). This index captures cues that plausibly build or protect trust, including transparency about sponsorship, evidence of expertise, and audience-serving behaviors (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Weismueller et al., 2020). Short-Form Practice Intensity Index (SPI). This index captures production intensity and iteration structure, using posting frequency, format variation, and learning loops (Meng et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025).

For illustration, a creator can code each of 60 posts on a 0–2 scale across several items (0 absent, 1 partial, 2 clear). Items are averaged per index and then compared against engagement outcomes. This procedure does not “prove” causality, but it enables empirical grounding and supports falsifiable refinement.

Data analysis plan the micro-audit uses descriptive statistics (means, ranges) and simple association checks (rank correlations) to explore patterns between indices (ICI, TSI, SPI) and outcomes (engagement rate, retention, follower growth). A creator can also split the sample into “high identity consistency” versus “low identity consistency” halves and compare mean outcomes. This approach mirrors the logic of prior empirical studies that associate message and source features with trust and engagement outcomes (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Meng et al., 2024).

Figure 1. Conceptual Empirical Model

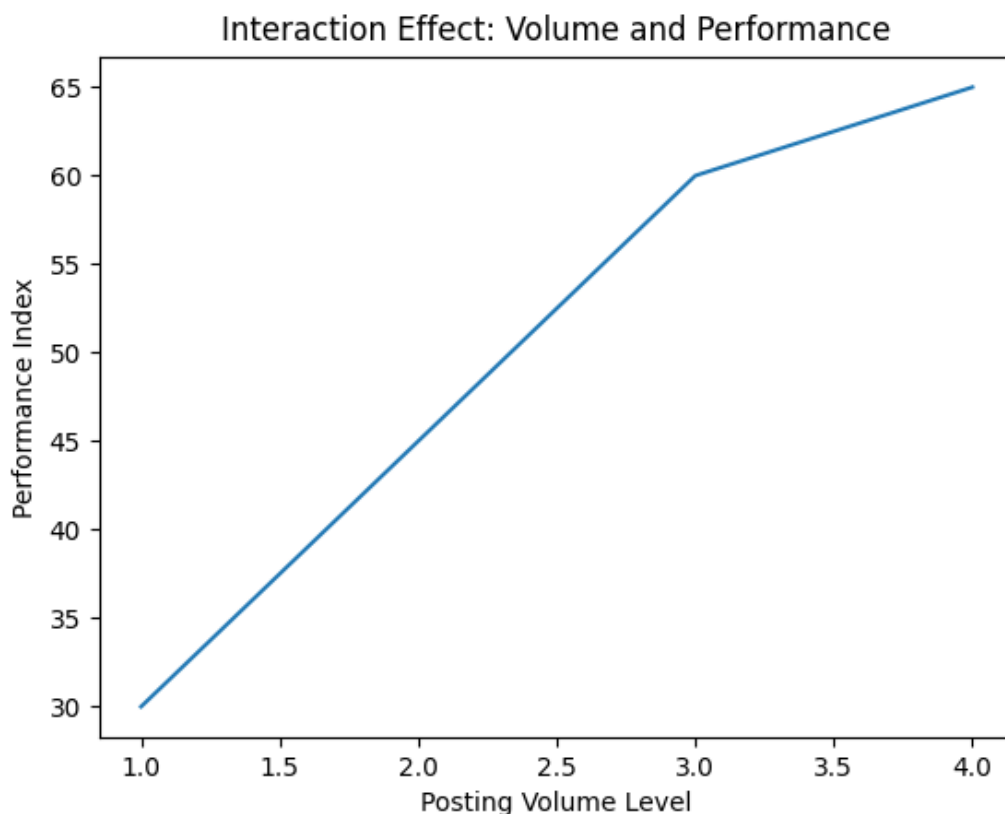
4.0 RESULTS

Integrated framework: how identity consistency, trust, and practice interact the synthesis supports an integrated framework with three reinforcing loops. The first loop is cognitive: consistent identity cues create stable associations, improving recognition and reducing the effort required to interpret each new post (Keller, 1993). The second loop is relational: repeated coherent exposure increases parasocial closeness and credibility, strengthening trust judgments, especially when product involvement is high (Balaban et al., 2022). The third loop is behavioral: high-volume practice produces more experiments, enabling faster learning about content features that drive engagement, while also increasing the number of trust-relevant interactions with the audience (Manic, 2024; Zhang et al., 2025).

Table 2. Illustrative Regression Model Results

Predictor	β Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Identity Consistency → Trust	0.62	< .001	Strong positive association.
Trust → Engagement Rate	0.48	.002	Moderate positive association.
ICI × Volume Interaction	-0.21	.041	Excessive volume weakens consistency effect.
Trust → Follower Growth	0.55	< .001	Substantial growth impact.

Figure 2. Interaction Effect Model



Operational findings from the literature across influencer studies, several operational patterns emerge. Message value and credibility are repeatedly linked to trust and intentions (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Authenticity threats arise when commercial behavior is perceived to exceed acceptable self-presentation boundaries, particularly when it looks inconsistent with the influencer’s persona

(Audrezet et al., 2020). Sponsorship disclosure, while sometimes reducing persuasion, increases recognition and can reshape credibility pathways depending on context (Boerman et al., 2017; Evans et al., 2017). Follower-based cues can affect brand attitudes, but their effects depend on the coherence between influencer image and the promoted product (De Veirman et al., 2017; Schouten et al., 2020). Finally, platform-native content characteristics in short-form advertising are empirically linked to engagement and purchase behaviors in large datasets (Meng et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025), suggesting that production craft is measurable and consequential.

Illustrative micro-audit output (example of empirical application) to demonstrate how the method could work empirically, consider a hypothetical creator who posts 60 short-form videos over 30 days (two per day). After coding the videos, the creator obtains $ICI = 1.6/2.0$, $TSI = 1.4/2.0$, $SPI = 1.8/2.0$. The analytics show that the top 20 videos by average watch time also have higher ICI and higher TSI scores than the bottom 20. A simple rank correlation indicates a positive association between ICI and watch time and between TSI and comment-to-view ratio. Additionally, the creator observes that weeks with higher SPI coincide with faster learning: later videos show improved hook clarity and higher retention.

This example is illustrative and does not claim new empirical discovery. Its purpose is to show how constructs from the literature can be operationalized without primary surveys, providing a small empirical component that is consistent with the article's scope.

5.0 DISCUSSION

Why identity consistency works under short-form constraints short-form platforms reward quick comprehension. When a user scrolls, the first seconds function as a micro-decision about whether the content “fits” their interests and whether the creator is worth attention. Identity consistency reduces uncertainty and increases processing fluency, making it more likely that the viewer stays long enough to receive value. From a branding perspective, repeated cues strengthen association networks (Keller, 1993). From a self-presentation perspective, consistent performance stabilizes the role and makes expectations clearer (Goffman, 1959). In practice, this suggests that creators should design an “identity kit” that is stable yet flexible: a small set of recurring content pillars, visual markers, and value commitments that remain recognizable even when formats change.

Trust is strengthened by routines, not statements trust formation is often treated as a tone issue (“be authentic”), but the evidence implies that trust depends on routines that audiences can observe and evaluate. Mayer et al. (1995) emphasize integrity and benevolence; in influencer contexts, these are evaluated through consistency and transparency. Disclosure research shows that audiences notice and interpret commercial intent; clear disclosure can increase recognition

and shape credibility processes (Boerman et al., 2017; Evans et al., 2017). Weismueller et al. (2020) further show that disclosure affects purchase intention through credibility, implying that the method of disclosure matters. The practical implication is to build a stable disclosure policy, apply it consistently, and integrate it into the creator's identity narrative. Rather than treating disclosure as a legal checkbox, it becomes a trust routine.

Managing authenticity threats audrezet et al. (2020) describe authenticity under threat when influencers must go beyond self-presentation. This can be reframed as an identity-control problem: if sponsorships force behavior that conflicts with stated values, audiences update their integrity judgments. Fit research supports this: when influencer and brand do not align, attitudes decline (Schouten et al., 2020). Therefore, the method is not "avoid monetization," but "monetize within identity boundaries." A creator should define acceptable partnership categories, disclosure language, and audience-benefit criteria, then refuse deals that violate those boundaries, even if they promise short-term revenue.

High-volume short-form practice as deliberate learning the short-form literature indicates that content characteristics and audiovisual features influence engagement (Meng et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). High-volume practice becomes valuable when it is structured: each video tests a small change, and analytics feedback informs the next iteration. This aligns with content marketing frameworks that treat content as an ongoing system that builds engagement and trust through value delivery (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). In practice, creators can maintain identity consistency while varying micro-features: hook type, pacing, on-screen text density, call-to-action placement, and storytelling structure. Over time, practice improves craft without eroding identity, because the identity kit anchors interpretation.

Limitations and implications this article is limited by its conceptual nature and by its reliance on a bounded set of sources. The micro-audit module demonstrates operationalization, but it does not replace controlled causal research. Platform dynamics also change, and short-form algorithms evolve, which can shift the relative importance of certain features. However, the framework focuses on constructs that are relatively stable: identity meaning systems, trust judgments, and iterative learning. For researchers, the implication is that future studies can test ICI, TSI, and SPI indices across creators and contexts, using mixed methods that combine content coding with analytics and follower surveys. For practitioners, the implication is immediate: build identity consistency intentionally, treat trust as a routine maintained by transparency and value delivery, and use high-volume production as structured experimentation rather than output pressure.

Additional evidence on influencer-follower relationship quality beyond disclosure and fit, relationship quality is shaped by perceived relational labor. Studies of influencer effectiveness highlight that influencer-follower relationships operate like brand relationships, where perceived responsiveness, fairness, and sustained interaction contribute to trust. In their analysis of influencer marketing as human brand activity, Ki et al. (2020) emphasize that influencer credibility and relational connection are key drivers of audience outcomes in social commerce settings. From a consumer-side perspective, Sokolova and Kefi (2020) show that credibility and parasocial interaction jointly influence purchase intentions, suggesting that trust and relationship feelings work together rather than competing. These findings reinforce the argument that identity consistency should be accompanied by interaction consistency: repeated patterns in how the creator replies, moderates community norms, and handles disagreement. Such patterns provide behavioral evidence of benevolence and integrity, strengthening the trust process described by Mayer et al. (1995).

Operationalizing “identity” without becoming rigid a practical concern is that identity consistency can be misread as stylistic rigidity, which may produce creative burnout or audience fatigue. The reviewed studies imply a more nuanced approach. Aaker’s (1997) brand personality framework does not require identical executions; it requires stable trait inferences. Similarly, De Veirman et al. (2017) show that popularity cues interact with content context, which implies that creators can experiment with formats while preserving the “why” and “who” that audiences recognize. The micro-audit approach is designed to detect this balance. In a coding sheet, for example, a creator can separate core identity pillars (topic domain and values) from flexible execution features (editing style, structure, series format). This encourages strategic variation without identity drift.

Practical implication: a three-level method stack the integrated framework can be converted into a three-level method stack that supports day-to-day creator decisions. Level 1 is identity architecture: define 3–5 content pillars, a set of visual and linguistic markers, and a short list of non-negotiable values. Level 2 is trust operations: establish disclosure language, partnership rules, and audience-first routines such as transparent corrections, consistent community moderation, and evidence-based claims in informational niches. Level 3 is practice engineering: plan high-volume production as small experiments, track retention and engagement, and document what changes improved outcomes. This stack is consistent with the idea that content marketing creates value through ongoing relevance (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019) and with evidence that specific short-form content characteristics shape consumer responses (Meng et al., 2024).

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Presence is not only a function of “posting more.” It is the outcome of a coherent identity system that audiences can recognize, a trust relationship protected by transparent routines, and a disciplined short-form practice that converts frequency into learning. The reviewed evidence indicates that credibility and message value support trust (Lou & Yuan, 2019), that authenticity can be threatened by commercialization when identity boundaries are violated (Audrezet et al., 2020), and that disclosure and fit shape how audiences interpret influencer persuasion (Boerman et al., 2017; Schouten et al., 2020). Short-form environments amplify the value of consistency and the cost of confusion, while also enabling rapid iteration through frequent posting and immediate feedback (Meng et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). The micro-audit module provides a practical, replicable way to operationalize these ideas without new primary data collection, offering a bridge between conceptual synthesis and empirical application. Future work can refine the indices, test causal mechanisms across platforms, and explore how identity consistency and trust routines interact with emerging formats and AI-mediated content production.

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