

THE IMPACT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS AND PURCHASING BEHAVIOR IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

NAME: ALEXANDER YAW GATTOGO

INSTITUTION: SOUTHSORE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, GHANA

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of influencer marketing on consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior within the digital space. The research was guided by three key objectives: (1) to examine how influencer marketing shapes consumer perceptions of brands; (2) to assess the extent to which influencers affect consumers' purchase intentions and buying behavior; and (3) to analyze the factors that enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing. The researcher employed the Parasocial Interaction Theory (PTI) and the concept of emotional connections; the study adopted a quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 150 respondents. Findings reveal that influencer marketing significantly shapes consumer brand perceptions, with increasing brand awareness, influencing attitudes, and strengthening brand trust. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook were identified as the most influential in terms of engagement. The study also revealed that influencer-brand alignment and trust are the strongest predictors of consumer purchase behavior. Consumers prioritize authenticity and emotional connection over technical expertise. Exposure to influencer content enhances purchase, while, purchasing decisions are influenced by affordability and necessity. The study recommends clear paid promotions, enforcement of ethical guidelines for influencers, and strategic alignment between brands and influencers.

1. Introduction

Influencer marketing refers to strategic collaborations between brands and individuals who possess sizable, loyal online followings, enabling brands to leverage influencers' credibility, expertise, and reach to enhance brand awareness, shape consumer perceptions, and influence purchasing behavior (Johnson & Simpson, 2022; Yesiloglu & Costello, 2020). Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers are often perceived as more relatable, accessible, and trustworthy due to their consistent engagement and niche-oriented content, which strengthens their persuasive power (Goanta & Ranchordás, 2020; Dave, 2020).

The digital revolution has shifted marketing power away from conventional media such as television, radio, and print toward online platforms including Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Facebook (Meta), and X (Twitter) (Martínez-López et al., 2020). Research indicates that influencers function as digital word-of-mouth marketers and trusted opinion leaders whose endorsements significantly affect consumer trust, brand attitudes, and buying intentions (Farivar & Wang, 2022; Mensah et al., 2024). Globally, the influencer marketing industry was valued at \$16.4 billion in 2022 and is projected to reach \$143.10 billion by 2030, underscoring its increasing strategic importance (Statista, 2023). High engagement levels further support its effectiveness, with 89% of

marketers reporting superior return on investment compared to other marketing channels (Mallipeddi et al., 2022).

In Ghana, rising internet penetration and smartphone usage have accelerated the adoption of social media, making influencer marketing a vital branding tool (Baako, 2023). Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and X have gained widespread popularity, contributing to increased consumer preference for digital influencers (Boadee, 2024). Local influencers—ranging from celebrities to micro-influencers—leverage cultural relevance and relatability to engage audiences effectively across sectors such as fashion, cosmetics, agriculture, hospitality, technology, and banking (Mensah et al., 2024). Research indicates that Ghanaian consumers place greater trust in peer and influencer recommendations than in traditional corporate advertisements, enhancing the effectiveness of influencer endorsements (Baako, 2023). Overall, influencer marketing has become a powerful intermediary in the digital marketplace, significantly shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions through trust, authenticity, and social proof.

1.1.Objectives

- To examine how influencer marketing shapes consumer perceptions of brands;
- To assess the extent to which influencers affect consumers' purchase intentions and buying behavior; and
- To analyze the factors that enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing

The research questions below seek to deepen our understanding on influencer marketing on consumer perception and purchasing behavior in the digital space.

1.2. Research Questions

- How does influencer marketing influence consumer perceptions of a brand?
- What factors make influencers effective in shaping consumer perceptions and driving purchases?
- What is the role of trust and authenticity in the relationship between influencers and consumer behavior?

2. Literature Review

Source Credibility Theory

This was developed by Hovland and Weiss in 1951 argues that the persuasiveness of any message is dependent largely on the perceived credibility of the source of that message. For influencer marketing it would imply the audience's perception of an influencer's trustworthiness and authority (Koay et al., 2022). The Ghanaian market shows unique manifestations of this theory. Local influencers such as *Wode Maya* for Travel and technology or *Nana Ama McBrown* for lifestyle products have successfully built credibility through consistent, knowledgeable content in their niches (Joshi et al., 2023). However, this credibility is fragile since the surge in influencer-related scams in Ghana has made consumers increasingly wary of endorsements that appear overly commercial or disingenuous (Farivar and Wang, 2022). The strength of Source Credibility Theory (SCT) lies in its ability to explain why micro-influencers often achieve better engagement rates than celebrities in specific product categories (Dave, 2020).

Social Influence Theory

Kelman's Social Influence Theory (1958) provides another critical lens for understanding influencer-marketing dynamics. The theory identifies three distinct processes through which influence occurs: compliance (responding to direct pressure), identification (seeking group belonging), and internalization (genuine belief adoption) (Mensah et al., 2024). In Ghana's collectivist society, where community ties and social harmony are highly valued, the identification and internalization processes are particularly strong (Baako, 2023). A fashion influencer creating content around traditional Ghanaian textiles, for example, taps into both cultural pride (identification) and genuine appreciation for local craftsmanship (internalization) (Mensah et al., 2024). Meanwhile, time-sensitive promotions with countdown timers exploit the compliance mechanism by creating artificial urgency (Baako, 2023)

The theory's strengths are its capacity to account for both short-run buying behavior (e.g., flash sales) and long-run brand loyalty. The theory, however, also suggests the possible ethical issues involved, with respect to vulnerable consumers, who can be deceived by exploitative behavior. (Mensah et al., 2024). In Ghana, where digital literacy is still developing among some population segments, this vulnerability becomes particularly concerning (Baako, 2023).

Parasocial Interaction Theory and Emotional Connections

Horton and Wohl's Parasocial Interaction Theory of 1956 explains the one-sided emotional attachments between media personalities and audiences. For Ghanaian influencer marketing, these exist in the form of the intimate personal relationships between followers and their favorite content creators (Baako, 2023). Influencers like *Kwadwo Sheldon* have mastered the craft of enhancing pseudo-relations through persistent, close-talking-feeling content mimicking interpersonal communication (Mensah et al., 2024). The strength of these parasocial relationships places a higher engagement rate Ghanaian influencers enjoy. Specifically, live videos, direct messaging, and interactive content deepen these parasocial bonds.

However, these parasocial processes are not without risk. The emotional investment risks generating unrealistic expectations, with followers sometimes expecting personal attention or becoming disproportionately disappointed when an influencer's offline actions do not match their online personality (Chen and Chen, 2021). The theory is appropriate because it explains why and how influencer marketing works on a psychological level. Hence, followers may buy simply because they do not want to disappoint their "virtual friend" (the influencer).

3. Empirical Review

Influencer Credibility and Consumer Trust

Credibility, typically defined through trustworthiness, expertise, and authenticity, determines whether influencer endorsements are perceived as persuasive or manipulative. According to Yesiloglu and Costello (2020), micro-influencers (10,000–100,000 followers) often outperform celebrity influencers in influencing purchase decisions. Surveying 1,200 social media users in the UK, they concluded that micro-influencers are perceived as more accessible, relatable, and trustworthy than traditional celebrities, making their endorsements more persuasive. Farivar and Wang (2022) examined influencer marketing through a social identity and credibility lens, emphasizing that content congruence with an influencer's personality significantly enhances authenticity. Authenticity therefore acts as a mediator between influencer credibility and consumer trust. Hanna et al. (2011), in Singapore, revealed that influencers who clearly disclosed sponsored

content maintained stronger audience trust, while those who concealed paid partnerships faced reputational backlash. These findings are highly relevant to the Ghanaian context, where influencers such as Wode Maya (technology and travel) and Nana Ama McBrown (lifestyle) thrive largely because they align with these credibility markers—expertise, relatability, and transparency.

Conclusion

Influencer marketing in Ghana is a powerful but fragile tool. Its success depends on credibility, psychological influence, and cultural alignment. Influencers such as Wode Maya and Nana Ama McBrown demonstrate that transparency, relatability, and audience engagement foster trust and effectiveness. However, weak regulation, fake promotions, and ethical lapses threaten long-term sustainability. To protect consumers and preserve trust, brands must vet influencers carefully, influencers must prioritize authenticity, and regulators must enforce clear advertising standards. When grounded in ethical practice and cultural sensitivity, influencer marketing can remain a credible and effective strategy within Ghana's evolving digital economy.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in established behavioral and communication theories, notably Source Credibility Theory (SCT) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). These theories posit that credibility attributes such as trustworthiness and expertise, alongside social influence, significantly shape consumer attitudes, perceptions, and purchasing behavior. Drawing from these foundations, the framework conceptualizes influencer marketing as a strategic mechanism through which influencer characteristics and content features affect two primary consumer outcomes: consumer perception and purchasing behavior.

Koay et al. (2022) describe influencer marketing as a hybrid communication approach that blends advertising with peer-based recommendations. Joshi et al. (2023) identify three core characteristics that distinguish influencer marketing. First, audience trust, as followers often perceive influencers as more authentic and credible than traditional advertisements. Second, content integration, where promoted products are embedded organically within lifestyle narratives rather than presented as overt sales messages. Third, two-way interaction, facilitated through comments, live streams, and direct messaging, which strengthens community bonds and enhances engagement. Influencers present themselves as everyday individuals, openly sharing experiences, opinions, and routines. Johnson and Simpson (2022) describe influencer marketing as a paradigm shift in digital commerce, where advertising is interwoven with personal connection.

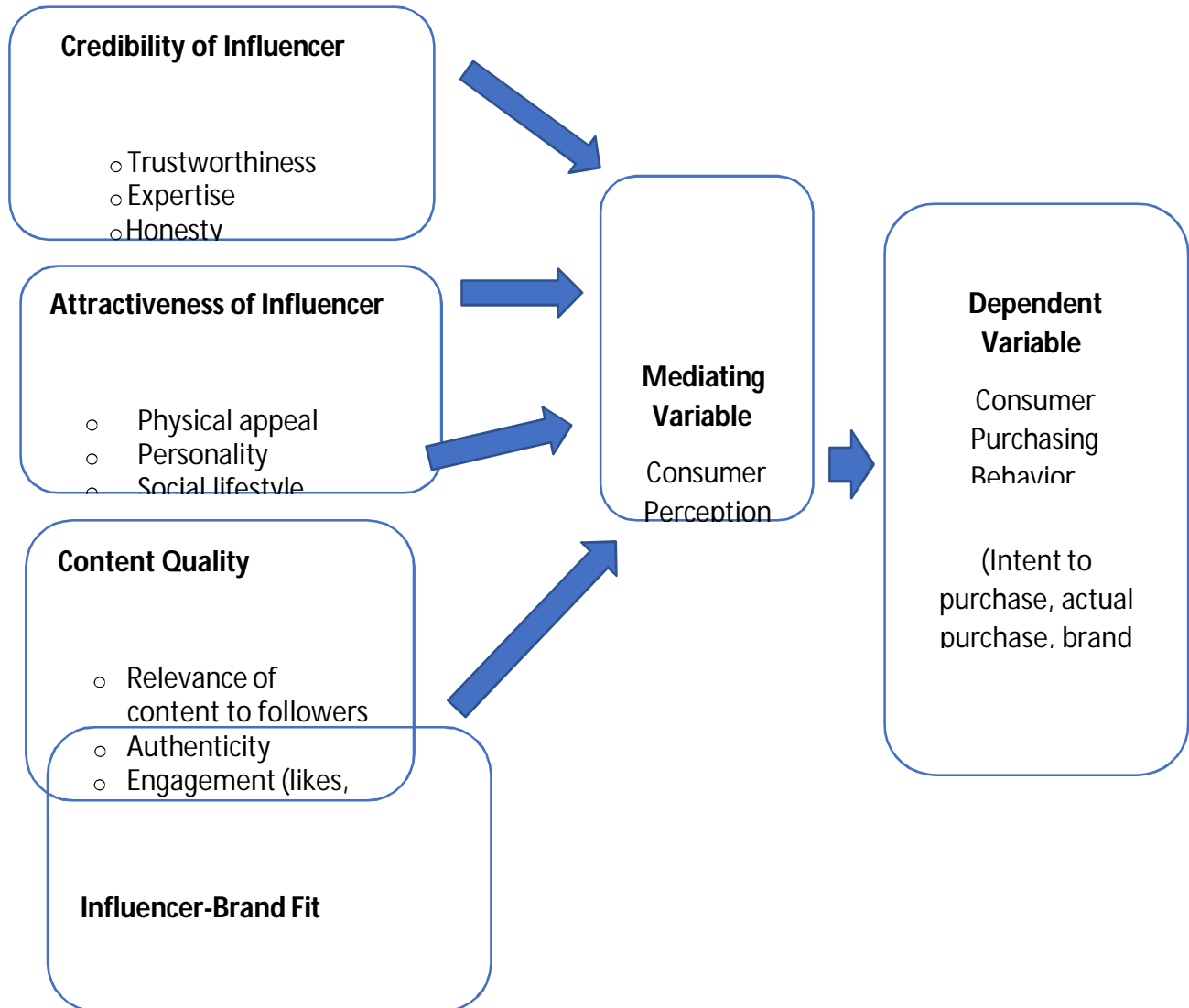
The Transformative Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Purchasing Behavior

Erwin et al. (2022) argue that consumers no longer move sequentially from awareness to consideration and decision. Instead, they engage in a dynamic and circular decision-making process heavily influenced by social proof and peer validation. Product discovery increasingly occurs through algorithmically curated influencer content rather than traditional advertising channels. Influencers reduce perceived risk by showcasing real-life usage scenarios, while audience comments provide additional validation. The decision stage has also been compressed through influencer-driven tactics such as limited-time offers and scarcity messaging, which create artificial urgency and accelerate purchasing decisions (Dehalwar & Sharma, 2024). Post-purchase behavior has similarly evolved. Consumers now share their experiences through comments, reviews, and reposts, seeking social affirmation and reinforcing community norms around consumption (Joshi et

al., 2023). The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is systematically activated through time-bound promotions and scarcity cues, while aspirational identity alignment positions products as tools for self-improvement rather than functional goods.

Despite its effectiveness, influencer marketing raises critical concerns. Joshi et al. (2023) report increased impulse buying and higher return rates associated with influencer-driven purchases. Erwin et al. (2022) highlight the risk of reality distortion when actual product performance fails to match curated influencer portrayals. Most concerns are the financial implications for younger consumers, who may accumulate debt through influencer-induced overconsumption and reliance on buy-now-pay-later services (Johnson & Simpson, 2022).

Independent Variables (Influencer Marketing Factors)



Source: Conceptual review, 2025

3. Methodology

This section presents the research design, including the population of interest, sampling technique, and sample size. It tells more about the approach, strategy and the appropriate method of research to be used. The researcher would specify the population and sample size to be used and the data process to gather data. Besides, it would also state the technique for data analysis, reliability and validity measures in the context of the impact of influencer marketing on consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior in the digital space.

3.1 Proposed Mythological Approach

A research approach is a plan and procedure that consists of the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Pregoner, 2024). There are three primary types of research approaches: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Qualitative research focuses on understanding phenomena from a contextual, in-depth perspective (Dong, Y. (2023). It often involves collecting non-numeric data like interviews, observations, and text analysis. One advantage is that it is adaptable to changes during the research process, allowing for the exploration of new issues as they arise (Halevi Hochwald et al., 2023). Besides, it captures the context and setting of the phenomenon, providing a holistic view. However, results can be influenced by the researcher's interpretations, potentially leading to bias.

Quantitative research on the other hand focuses on quantifying variables and analyzing numerical data to identify patterns, relationships, and causation (Arthur and Clark, 2023). It provides objective, measurable, and replicable results. Results can often be generalized to larger populations due to the use of statistical sampling techniques (Braun and Clarke, 2022). However, it focuses on numerical data, which might miss deeper, underlying meanings. Mixed methods research combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of a research problem (Braun and Clarke, 2022). It offers a fuller picture by integrating qualitative depth with quantitative breadth (May and Perry, 2022). Although most of these methods of research have their relative merits and demerits, the researcher applied quantitative method. It will shed light on the impact of influencer marketing on consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior in the digital space and in turn provide insights on developing evidence-based strategies for improving academic outcomes. Findings from large sample sizes can inform interventions for entire space (influencers, regulators, brands and consumers), by maximizing the potential for positive impact.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is crucial as it ensures the study is systematic and scientifically sound (Fein et al., 2022). This depends on the research objectives, the nature of the study, and the type of data required based on the research topic (Otsuka, 2022). Experimental research design involves manipulating one variable to determine if changes in one variable cause changes in another variable (Fein et al., 2022). This type of design is highly controlled and structured. One advantage is that the structured nature allows for replication of the study to verify results whereas a key disadvantage is that manipulating variables, especially in human studies, can raise ethical issues (Matanda, 2022). Descriptive research design is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon. It involves collecting data to answer questions about the status of the subject under study. It has the advantage of being used with a wide range of research questions and subjects (Pregoner, 2024). Qualitative research design involves collecting non-numeric data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It is used to gain in-depth insights into complex issues. Dehalwar and Sharma, (2024). It is adaptable to changes and new findings during the research process. Quantitative research design focuses on quantifying variables and using statistical methods to analyze the relationships between them (Fein et al., 2022).

It is structured, objective, and often used to test hypotheses (Halevi-Hochwald et al., 2023).

The researcher uses deductive approach because it contained a very clear and structured framework for research. Among the advantages of the deductive approach is that it allows researchers to have a clear hypothesis from which they begin, and manipulate variables to test causal relationships through gathered data.

3.3 Research Settings

This study assesses the influence of influencer marketing on buying behavior and consumers' attitudes

online, with an emphasis on the Ghanaian case. This is confined to social media networks such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter (X), as they are the most commonly used channels by influencers and consumers in Ghana. Individuals between the ages of 18 and 40 years, were targeted who are social media engaged users and likely to engage with influencer campaign marketing (Matanda, 2022).

Geographically, the study is limited to urban cities in Ghana, namely Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi, where access to social media and the internet is quite common. The research does not extend to rural areas, where digital platform use and awareness of influencers may be low (Pregoner, 2024) In addition, the study is cross-sectional, collecting information at one point in time via surveys and quantitative testing. Longitudinal long-term effects of influencer marketing fall outside the scope of this effort.

3.4 Population, Sampling and Sampling Technique

The study population comprises active social media users in Ghana, specifically individuals between the ages of 18 and 40 years who follow or engage with social media influencers on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter (X). This population segment is selected because it represents the most digitally active demographic in the country (Pregoner, 2024). These individuals are also more likely to be exposed to influencer marketing campaigns and advertisements within the digital space (Matanda, 2022)

Sample size of 150 respondents was selected using a non-probability sampling technique specifically, purposive and convenience sampling. This sample size is considered adequate for conducting meaningful quantitative analysis and drawing reliable conclusions regarding the relationship between influencer marketing, consumer perceptions, and purchasing behavior (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

The researcher made efforts to ensure gender and age diversity within the sample to capture varied perspectives across different consumer groups. The sample size for is determined using established statistical formular such as the Yamane's formula. With the aim of calculating the sample size "S" as required to estimate a population proportion "N" with a desired margin of error "E", as well as the confidence level "Z" which is equally considered as the margin of error.

The formula is written as:

$$S = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Given that the population size 250 and the margin of error = 0.05

Where; "S" = sample size, "N" = is the population size and "e" = is the margin of error. The formular is written as: $S = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$

Given that the population size 250 and the margin of error = 0.05

Where; "S" = sample size, "N" = is the population size and "e" = is the margin of error.

Calculating the sample size:

$$S = \frac{250}{1 + 250 (.0.5)^2} = S = 150 \quad \text{Therefore: 150 will be use.}$$

Since there cannot be a fraction of a human, the sample size would round it up to 150 respondents. This study adopts a non-probability sampling technique, specifically a combination of purposive sampling and convenience sampling, to select participants from the study population. Arthur and Clark, (2023) stated that purposive sampling is used to intentionally select individuals who meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, in this case, individuals aged 18 to 40 years who are active users of social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter (X), and who follow or engage with social media influencers.

May and Perry, (2022) stated that convenience sampling is applied by approaching potential respondents based on their availability and willingness to participate, in the context of the study, it's in urban areas such as Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi, where internet penetration and social media activity are highest.

3.5 Data Collection method

The primary data collection begins with the development of a structured questionnaire specifically tailored to capture the impact of influencer marketing on consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior in the digital space (May and Perry, 2022). The researcher employed purposive sampling to capture diverse perspectives from three key stakeholder groups: consumers, influencers, and industry experts. The primary research instrument for this study is a structured questionnaire, designed to collect quantitative data from social media users. The questionnaire consists mainly of closed-ended questions and uses a 5-point Likert scale to assess respondents' levels of agreement with various statements related to influencer marketing, consumer perception, and purchasing behavior. The instrument is in four sections:

1. Demographic Information
2. Social Media Usage and Exposure to Influencer Marketing
3. Influencer Marketing Characteristics
4. Consumer Perception and Purchasing Behavior

The researcher undertook a pilot test with 50 participants (survey volunteers) to refine the research instruments. The data collection process is to last for a week. The researcher undertook a pilot test with 50 participants (survey volunteers) to refine the research instruments. The data collection process is to last for a week. During this period, the researcher and trained assistants oversees the process, provide clarification when necessary, and ensure that questionnaires are in order.

3.6 Ethical consideration

The participants use in this research are pre-informed of its purpose and assured of their privacy. Respondents are given informed consent, in written or verbal form, before actual participation in the study. The researcher prevent bias in data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings and objectively represent the findings. Example, if the researcher has affiliations with any influencers or brands, this will be disclosed to maintain objectivity. The researcher prefers to use coding systems or identifiers instead of participants' names in the process of data collection and reporting. The researcher ensured that the data gathered are secure to prevent unauthorized access. There is fair treatment and a guarantee of equal participation irrespective of gender, socio-economic status, among many other aspects.

3.7 Data Analysis

This Section examines the responses base on impact of influencer marketing on consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior in the digital space through data gathered from respondents.

Arthur and Clark, (2023) define reliability as a process in research that ensures measurement tools and instruments used produce consistent and stable results over time. The researcher used a Cronbach's Alpha and the results are in table 1.

Table .1 Reliability statistics

Item (Objective)	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Examine how influencer marketing shapes consumer perceptions of brands	0.884	5
Assess the extent to which influencers affect consumers' purchase intentions	0.897	5
Analyze factors (e.g., trust, authenticity, expertise) that enhance effectiveness	0.912	7

Source: *Authors construct, 2025*

Table.1 shows that the Cronbach's Alpha values (0.884, 0.897, and 0.912) for each research objective items are highly reliable and internally consistent. This enhances the overall credibility and validity of your study, ensuring that the constructs related to impact of influencer marketing on consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior in the digital space.

3.8 Normality Testing

Base on the research objective, the researcher used the Shapiro-Wilk test with a result of Statistic (W): 0.9 and p-value: 0.05, which help safeguarding the integrity and robustness of the research outcomes.

3.9 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Respondents' demographic data are analyze below giving a clear view of their background. Questionnaires numbering 170 were distributed to people who fall within our sample group. Only 150 responded (88%) to the survey. The researcher used 150 responses from the field with other characteristics analyzed below.

Table 2. Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	58	38.7
Female	92	61.3
Total	150	100

Source; *Authors construct, 2025*

Table .2. above shows that out of the 150 respondents, 58 (38.7%) are male, while 92 (61.3%) are female. This indicates a higher proportion of female respondents than males.

Table 3 Age group

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
18- 24	47	31
25- 31	43	29
32-38	39	26
39 -45	21	14
Total	150	100

Source: *Authors construct 2025*

In table 3, the most represented age group is 18–24 years, with 47 respondents (31%), suggesting younger individuals form the bases of the sample. Also 43 respondents (29%) fall into this category Young Adults, showing a relatively high percentage of young adults engaging in the study. On the other hand, 39 respondents (26%) belong to the middle-aged group, slightly lower than the younger age ranges but still a notable share. The 39–45 years group has the fewest respondents (21 individuals, 14%), indicating that older participants are less frequent in this sample. The implications are that, purchasing behavior, or social media influence, the results may highlight age-related preferences in consumption patterns or brand engagement.

3.10 Descriptive Statistics

Examine how influencer marketing shapes consumer perceptions of brands.

Table 5 Social Media Platforms Used

TikTok	120	80%
Facebook	90	60%
Instagram	110	73%
YouTube	85	57%
Twitter	40	27%

Source: *Authors construct 2025*

Table 5 above shows that 120 out of 150 respondents prefer TikTok, making it the dominant platform. This suggests strong influencer presence and engagement on TikTok. Also, Instagram (110 respondents) and Facebook (90 respondents) show high levels of adoption. Instagram. 85 respondents actively engage with YouTube. Only 40 respondents use Twitter. This suggests that the platform is less relevant for influencer marketing or those users engage with influencers differently on this platform.

Table 6 Frequency of Engaging with Influencer Content

Option	Count	Percentage
Very Frequently	45	30%
Frequently	60	40%
Occasionally	30	20%
Rarely	10	7%
Never	5	3%

Source; *Authors construct 2025*

Table 6 above shows that a combined 70% of respondents (Very Frequently + Frequently) state that influencer marketing influences their perception of brands. This indicates that influencer-driven content plays a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes, increasing brand awareness, and strengthening brand trust. Besides, 30 respondents (20%) engage with influencer marketing occasionally, meaning it affects their brand perception in some instances but is not a primary factor. Zero respondents (7%) rarely engage, and 5 respondents (3%) never engage with influencer-driven branding. This suggests a small subset of consumers remain unaffected by influencer marketing, likely due to personal preferences or skepticism toward online endorsements.

Table 7 Purchase Behavior Due to Influencer Promotions

Platform	Count	Percentage
Yes	105	70%
No	45	30%

Source: Authors construct 2025

Table 7 above indicates that respondents numbering 105 agree influencer marketing influences their perception of brands. This suggests that most consumers trust influencer endorsements and view influencer-promoted brands favorably. Besides, 45 respondents stated that influencer marketing does not shape their brand perception. This group might rely on personal experiences, traditional advertisements, or peer recommendations instead of influencers.

Assess the extent to which influencers affect consumers' purchase intentions and buying behavior.

150 responses were descriptive analyze and summarizes to consumer purchase behavior patterns. Besides, regression analysis taken to understand influencer engagement that drives buying behavior of consumers.

Table 8 Consumers' purchase intentions and buying behavior.

No.	Statement	Mean (μ)	Stand. Dev. (σ)
1	Influencer-brand alignment affects perception	3.73	1.06
2	Influencer knowledge about promoted products	3.70	1.05
3	Content authenticity and relatability	3.68	1.08
4	Trust in influencer recommendations	3.67	1.12
5	Expertise increases brand confidence	3.52	1.14

Source: Authors construct 2025

Table 8 above shows that Influencer-brand alignment ($\mu = 3.73$, $\sigma = 1.06$) is the highest factor which implies that consumers strongly associate a brand's credibility with the influencer promoting it. The relatively low standard deviation ($\sigma = 1.06$) suggests that responses are consistent, meaning most consumers agree on its importance. Influencer Knowledge about products is valued at second position with a mean of ($\mu = 3.70$). This reinforcing the idea that expertise helps build trust in influencer recommendations. Trust (3rd highest) plays a key role in influencer marketing, but its higher standard deviation ($\sigma = 1.12$) suggests some consumers are skeptical of influencer endorsements. Expertise ranked the lowest, although

recognized, it is rated lowest, meaning consumers may prioritize relatability and alignment over technical knowledge.

Regression analysis

Table 9 Consumers' purchase intentions and buying behavior.

No.	Statements	Beta Coefficient (β)	Significance (p-value)
1	Influencer-brand alignment affects perception	0.42	$p < 0.05$
2	Influencer knowledge about promoted products	0.22	$p < 0.05$
3	Content authenticity and relatability	0.25	$p < 0.05$
4	Trust in influencer recommendations	0.38	$p < 0.05$
5	Expertise increases brand confidence	0.30	$p < 0.05$

Source: *Authors construct 2025*

Table 9 shows that “Most Influential Factor was Influencer-Brand Alignment” ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that consumers are more likely to trust and engage with a brand when the influencer fits the brand’s identity and values. Second highest factor was “Trust in Influencer Recommendations” ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that consumers rely on influencers they perceive as credible and honest, influencing their willingness to purchase.

Third highest was “Expertise in Brand Confidence” ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that influencer expertise boosts brand credibility, making consumers more confident in the endorsed products/services. Content Authenticity & Relatability ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.05$) placed fourth showing that consumers respond better to natural, unscripted content than overly promotional material. The lowest rank was “Influencer Knowledge about Products” ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that consumers value an influencer’s trustworthiness and authenticity more than their technical expertise in products.

Factors that enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing

With 150 responses, the researcher uses descriptive analysis and multiple regression would analyze how influencer marketing (independent variable) affects consumer behavior (dependent variable).

Table 10 Factors that enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing

No.	Statement	Mean (μ)	Stand. Dev. (σ)
1	Consideration of consistently promoted brands	3.73	1.06
2	Influencer marketing awareness	3.67	1.07
3	Favorable perception of influencer-endorsed brands	3.58	1.09
4	Influencer recommendations influence purchase intent	3.50	1.12
5	Likely to purchase product due to influencer	3.52	1.15

Source; Authors construct 2025

Table 10 above shows that the highest Mean (3.73) was "Consideration of Consistently Promoted Brands". This mean that consumers favor brands that influencers promote frequently. The second highest is "Influencer Marketing Awareness" ($\mu = 3.67$) indicating influencer marketing effectively exposes brands to consumers. The third highest is "Favorable Perception of Influencer- Endorsed Brands" ($\mu = 3.58$) This shows that consumers trust brands endorsed by influencers, but the slightly lower mean suggests that endorsement alone may not always guarantee positive brand perception. Influencer Recommendations Influence Purchase Intent ($\mu = 3.50$) placed fourth indicating that recommendations affect purchase decisions, but their impact is slightly lower compared to awareness and brand perception. Likely to Purchase Due to Influencer ($\mu = 3.52$) is the least rank indicating that influencers create awareness; they do not always guarantee immediate purchases.

Table 11 Factors that enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing (Regression Analysis)

Predictor (statements)	Unstd. β	Std. Error	Std. β (β^*)	t-value	p-value
Constant (Influencer Marketing)	1.20	0.10	-	12.00	p < 0.05
Awareness of brands	0.38	0.07	0.36	5.43	p < 0.05
Favorability of endorsed brands	0.32	0.06	0.30	4.91	p < 0.05
Purchase intention	0.42	0.08	0.40	5.75	p < 0.05
Consideration of consistently promoted brands	0.30	0.06	0.28	4.65	p < 0.05

Source: Authors construct 2025

Table 11 above shows that the constant (1.20, p < 0.05) represents the baseline level of purchase likelihood when none of the independent variables contributes. It further indicates that purchase

intention, favorability of endorsed brands, and awareness of brands are strong predictors of consumer purchase behavior influenced by influencer marketing.

4 Findings and discussions

Influencer marketing and consumer perceptions of brands.

Majority of the respondents agree that influencer marketing influences their perception of brands. Influencer marketing is an effective strategy, as 70% of consumers acknowledge its impact on brand perception. This aligns with the study by Joshi et al., (2023) which added that influencer-driven content plays a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes, increasing brand awareness, and strengthening brand trust

Social media engagement is strongest on TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, suggesting that influencer-marketing efforts have risen to prioritize these platforms. YouTube remains relevant for video content, tutorials, and in-depth brand storytelling, while Twitter appears to be less impactful for direct influencer-driven marketing. This conforms to the literature by Baako, 2023; Farivar and Wang, 2022; Mallipeddi et al., 2022 who added that Instagram, TikTok and YouTube popularity might stem from visual content and influencer marketing, while Facebook remains a key channel for broad audience reach.

Influencers affect consumers' purchase intentions and buying behavior.

Influencer-brand alignment and trust are the most significant factors influencing consumer purchase behavior. Authenticity and expertise also contribute to purchase decisions, but their impact is slightly lower. This aligns with the study by Hanna et al., (2011) which stated that consumers are more likely to buy if they believe the influencer aligns well with the brand. Arora and Gupta, (2021) indicated that trust plays a major role in shaping purchase decision. Relatable and genuine content positively affects purchase intention. This is in line with the literature by Balabanis et al., 2018 titled "*The impact of social media influencers on purchase intentions and the mediating role of customer attitude*". The authors added that consumers prefer authentic influencer messaging over scripted promotions. While influencer knowledge is important, it has the least impact compared to other factors. This conforms to the work by Chen and Chen, (2021) stating that knowledge alone does not guarantee purchase influence without trust and authenticity. Hence, it is insufficient unless supported by credibility and engagement.

Factors that enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing.

Actual purchase behavior influenced by influencers is moderate, showing that while influencers create awareness, they do not always guarantee immediate purchases. This aligns with the study by Boadee, (2024) titled "*Assessing the impact of social media adoption on sales growth of SMES in Ghana*" which indicated that consumers may take time to act on influencer recommendations. People favor brands that influencers promote frequently. This conforms to the literature by Baako, (2023) stating that repeated exposure of brands strengthens consumer consideration of brands.

5 Conclusion and recommendations

Findings reveal that influencer marketing significantly shapes consumer brand perceptions, with the majority of participants acknowledging its role in increasing brand awareness, influencing attitudes, and strengthening brand trust. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook were identified as the most influential in terms of engagement. The study also found that influencer-brand alignment and trust are the strongest predictors of consumer purchase behavior, while product knowledge was deemed less influential. Consumers prioritize authenticity and emotional connection over technical expertise. Influencer marketing has a measurable baseline

effect, even when individual factors are removed. Brand awareness and trust matter, but intent plays a more crucial role in actual sales. Purchase intent remains the strongest predictor of consumer buying behaviour.

6. Recommendations

There should be clear disclosure of paid promotions to prevent misleading advertising. Mandate clear disclosure of paid partnerships to protect consumers from deceptive promotions. Enforcing clear labeling of paid promotions can help build trust among consumers and reduce Authorities should make clear guidelines for ethical influencer behavior, ensuring consumer protection. There can be penalties for influencers/brands that fail to comply (e.g., fines or platform bans). There should be a collaboration between government agencies and digital platforms can ensure influencers adhere to ethical standards, particularly in industries like healthcare, finance, or food where misleading endorsements can pose risk.

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