



**UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION
GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

**EXPLORING HOW INFLUENCER MARKETING SHAPES
CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN GHANA**

BY

LEOPOLDINA ASEYE ADZO DEY

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Leopoldina Aseye Adzo Dey, declare this thesis, except quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been duly identified and acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or in whole, for either degree elsewhere. Therefore, I bear the responsibility of any shortcomings.

.....

DATE:

Student(s)

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I the undersigned supervisor, declare that I supervised the preparation and presentation of this work in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of MA thesis as laid down by University of Media, Arts and Communication (UNIMAC).

.....

DATE:

RHODALENE AMARTEY (PhD)
(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God, to Myself for completing this thesis and my family for their tireless support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank the Almighty God for His grace and guidance which made it possible. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my family especially my parents and siblings for their immense support. I also wish to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Rhodalene Amartey her guidance in my journey.

ABSTRACT

The rise of has brought about a transformation to how consumers interact with brands and vice versa. Instagram has emerged as one of the most dominant platforms for influencer-driven marketing in Ghana. As brands increasingly collaborate with influencer to endorse their products or services, questions arise regarding how their content shapes consumer purchase intentions within a digitally evolving society. This study aims to explore how Instagram influencer marketing shapes purchase intentions of consumer in Ghana with focus on the perceptions, interpretations and psychological processes that guide consumer responses to influencer content. Guided by the Source Credibility Theory, the study examines how trustworthiness, credibility and attractiveness of influencers shape consumers' attitudes and decision-making processes. A qualitative exploratory design was employed to gain detailed understanding of consumer experiences. Purposive sampling was adopted to select 12 active Instagram users who follow at least an influencer and interact with their content regularly. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicated that Ghanaian consumers perceive Instagram influencers as credible when they align their lifestyle to the brands they promote. Trust and credibility emerged as important determinants of purchase intentions with participants emphasizing on honest reviews, expertise in product categories and visible use of the promoted products or services. Cultural relatability and emotional connection also shaped participants' interpretation of influencer messages and their eventual purchase decisions. The study concludes that Instagram influencer marketing has a substantial impact on consumer purchase intentions in Ghana, primarily driven by perception of credibility and authenticity. The result contributes to existing literature by offering context-specific insights into influencer-consumer dynamics in a developing digital market. The study presents practical implications for marketers, influencers and policy makers to enhance ethical practices and build consumer trust. Recommendations for future study include; exploring influencer marketing other social media platforms such as X and TikTok and also examine diverse demographic groups.

Key words: Instagram, influencers, influencer marketing, credibility, consumer purchase intentions

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter of the research lays the foundation for exploring how Instagram influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase intentions in Ghana. It highlights the significance of Instagram influencer marketing in shaping consumer purchase intentions in Ghana. It outlines the research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study. The chapter concludes by presenting the roadmap for subsequent chapters, aiming to shed light on the relationship between Instagram influencer marketing and purchase intentions in Ghana.

1.1 Background of the study

In recent times, social media platforms have become crucial in marketing goods and services, with Instagram being one of the most commonly used because of its visually-appealing content, storytelling features, high level of user engagement and wide audience reach (Tharoon & Banu, 2024; Park & Namkung, 2022). The use of Instagram in Ghana has witnessed drastic shift from just posting photos and commenting on posts for fun to actual content creation for business and marketing purposes. Over the past decade, the rise of Instagram has significantly changed how businesses communicate with consumers and promote their products or services (Mishra & Ashfaq, 2023). Instagram has the ability to foster parasocial relationships through influencer content (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Instagram influencers are personalities that have substantial following on the platform based on their lifestyle, expertise or personality. Also, they are people who are perceived to have authority in specific niches. Businesses or brands partner with these influencers to promote their products and service on their pages in a way that is credible, authentic and relatable (Lou & Yuan, 2019). This is to shape consumers' attitudes, preferences and purchasing behaviour (Fregberg et al, 2018).

Instagram influencer marketing relies on perceived credibility, trust and relatability of influencers. This form of marketing thrives because influencers create content often sharing personal experiences with a product or service which creates emotional resonance with audience and peer-like influence (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). The persuasive appeal of influencer content is mostly attributed to the perceived credibility of influencers which the Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1990) explains through the dimensions of expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness. Research has proven that consumers tend to trust recommendations from influencers they perceive as authentic, knowledgeable and relatable making influencer marketing more effective than traditional advertising (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Globally, Instagram influencer marketing has proven to be effective especially in the areas of fashion, beauty, tourism, health and technology. It is estimated that by 2025 the value of social media influencer marketing will reach 30 billion dollars (Statista, 2025), with Instagram being a dominant platform.

In Africa, including Ghana there has been a major shift in advertising strategies from the traditional to digital platforms. According to DataReport (2025) there are over 2.15 million active users on Instagram in Ghana, making the platform rife for influencer marketing in Ghana.

In Ghana, Instagram influencers have positioned themselves as brand ambassadors, content creators and opinion leaders, with the likes of Nana Ama McBrown, Dr. Louisa Satekla, Berla Mundi and many others. These influencers frequently endorse brands in fashion, skincare, beauty, fashion, travel, electronics, food and tech, combining entertainment with persuasive marketing. Ghana has a young, active digitally active population, with increasing smartphone penetration and rising social media usage. This encourages businesses both local and international to involve influencers in their marketing strategies.

Despite the increasing collaborations with influencers by brands and businesses in Ghana, academic research on how their activities shape consumers purchase intentions in Ghana remain limited. Questions still remain regarding how Ghanaian consumers interpret influencer content, what psychological or cultural dynamics influence their responses and the extent to which influencer credibility drives trust and purchase behaviour. Most existing studies in Ghanaian consumer are quantitative. A detailed investigation into how Instagram influencer marketing shapes purchase intentions in Ghana can reveal the meanings consumers attach to digital endorsements and how it motivates their buying decisions.

1.2 Problem Statement

Instagram influencer marketing has gained traction over the years. This is mostly among young people who are more active on the platform. Brands partner with influencers to promote their products or services on their pages. Their activities on Instagram are shaping attitudes and behaviours of consumers through personalized contents.

Despite the momentum Instagram influencer marketing has gained in Ghana, there is limited research on how it shapes consumer purchase intentions. Many of the existing literature focus on other countries. Evidence of these studies (Wibowo & Hartono, 2024; Joyce, 2024; Duffet

& Mxunyelwa, 2025). Other existing studies employed quantitative approach which does not provide data on the lived experiences of consumers, their perceptions and meanings they attach to Instagram influencer activities. Also, there is a short fall in the understanding of the psychological, social and cultural mechanisms that underlie how Instagram influencers shape purchase decisions of Ghanaian consumers.

Duffet and Mxunyelwa (2025) in their study sought to find out the effects of Instagram Mega- influencers on Gen Z purchase intentions in South Africa. The use of quantitative approach limits the investigation of a broader variety of factors that cause influencers to shape the purchase intentions of gen Z consumers especially how they interpret influencer content. Also, their research was conducted in South Africa limiting findings to the country. Since Instagram Influencer marketing has seen a significant rise in Ghana, there is a need to study how their activities shape the purchase intentions of Ghanaian consumers.

Tharoon & Banu (2024) explored the impact of Instagram marketing strategies on consumer purchase intentions including influencer collaborations. Mixed method was employed however; the research was conducted within the context of Western economies. There is a need to also conduct the study within the Ghanaian context in order to broaden existing the literature and fill the contextual gap.

Therefore, the problem this study seeks to address is the limited empirical understanding of how Instagram influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase intentions in Ghana, particularly with regards to consumer perceptions, cultural and psychological influences and the role of trust, credible and attractiveness.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To explore how Ghanaian consumers perceive and interpret Instagram influencer content.

2. To understand the psychological and cultural factors that influence consumer purchase intentions.
3. To examine the role of trust, credibility and attractiveness in shaping consumer attitude towards Instagram influencer marketing.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do Ghanaian consumers perceive and interpret content shared by Instagram influencers?
2. What are the psychological and cultural factors that influence consumer purchase intentions?
3. What is the role of trust, credibility and attractiveness in shaping consumer attitude towards Instagram influencer marketing?

1.5 Scope of Study

This study is limited to examining the influence of Instagram influencer marketing on consumer purchase intentions among Ghanaian consumers especially those in urban areas in Accra where Instagram usage is more prevalent.

This study targets Instagram users aged 18-35 because these demographics are most active on Instagram and most likely to engage with influencer content. The participants must follow at least one influencer and have made or considered making a purchase influenced by influencer content. This study will not include influencers themselves, marketing

professionals or individuals who do not actively on Instagram and do not engage with influencer content.

Finally, the research is only on influencer marketing carried out on Instagram. It explores consumers' perceptions of influencers trust, credibility and emotional connections and how these factors shape purchase decisions.

1.6 Significance of Study

This study adds valuable insights into the emerging field of digital marketing by exploring how Instagram influencers shape consumer purchase intentions within the Ghanaian context.

As influencer marketing continue to gain momentum and becoming a dominant force in digital marketing landscape, comprehending its influence on consumer behaviour is important for many stakeholders.

This research contributes to the growing knowledge of literature on digital marketing, consumer behaviour and influencer marketing by focusing on Instagram; a highly visual, interactive and popular platform.

While a lot of the existing literature originates from other countries (Joyce, 2024; Hudders et al., 2020), this study offers insights from Ghanaian consumers. By doing so filling the contextual gap.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This paper has been arranged into 5 independent but interconnected chapters. Chapter one provided an introduction to the subject matter in the background of the study. The problem statement gives an overview of the problem area, pointing out gaps in literature. Moreover, it provides the research objectives, research questions, significance and scope of the study.

Chapter two provides a review of existing literature on the subject matter with the aim to determine the aspects of the subject matter that have already been researched, determine the gaps and compare and contrast the results of similar studies. It also provides definition to the key terms of the study, theoretical framework and relevance of theory to the study.

Chapter three provides the research design, research approach, population, sampling strategy, data collection technique, data collection process, primary data and secondary data ethical considerations, authenticity and trustworthiness, and data analysis technique.

The chapter four presents a summary of the findings of the study discusses findings in line with the study's research questions and discusses the theoretical relevance of the findings.

Finally, the chapter five provides summary of the findings, conclusions that were derived from the findings, limitations as well as recommendations. It also provides direction for future research.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the study by presenting the background and context of Instagram influencer marketing as a promotional tool that has gained traction within Ghana's digital landscape. It highlighted the increasing relevance of social media particularly Instagram, in shaping consumer behaviour and influencing purchasing decisions especially among young, digitally active consumers.

The problem statement stressed the lack of sufficient research on how Ghanaian consumers perceive, interpret and respond to influencer marketing within their psychological and cultural context.

The research objectives and questions were outlined to guide the inquiry, focusing on exploring consumer perceptions, identifying the psychological and cultural influences as well as examining the roles of trust, credibility and attractiveness of Instagram influencers in shaping purchase intentions.

The significance of the study points to the contributions of the study to the literature of digital marketing in Ghana, comprehending consumer behaviour and influencer marketing. The scope of the study was also defined with attention given to active Instagram users in Ghana and the limitations in terms of geographic coverage.

Finally, the organization of the study was provided, outlining the structure of the thesis from chapter one through to the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents reviews of relevant academic and empirical literature to provide a foundation for the study. It begins by providing reviews of relevant literature, examines existing studies on influencer marketing and purchase intentions with specific attention to how Instagram influencers and their influence on consumer attitudes and behaviour.

It then explores the theoretical perspectives including; Source Credibility Theory which provides understanding for influencer-consumer dynamics.

Moreover, it presents definitions to key terms and concepts such as; Instagram, Instagram influencer, Instagram influencer marketing, consumer purchase intention and credibility.

Furthermore, the chapter identifies gaps in the current literature especially the limited research in the Ghanaian contexts where socio-cultural dynamics may shape influencer effectiveness differently from Western markets and other markets. By synthesizing these insights, this chapter establishes the conceptual and theoretical foundation that will guide the investigation into how Instagram influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase intentions among Ghanaian consumers.

2.1 Review of Relevant Literature

The emergence of social media has brought a rise to influencer marketing which has become one of the most effective tools for digital engagements, surpassing the traditional marketing methods (Migkos et al., 2025). Modern brands have turned to influencer marketing to promote their products and services and also create brand awareness (Lim et al., 2017). They collaborate with personalities who have large following on the various social media platforms. These influencers leverage on their large following to promote products and services. One of the social media platforms that enable influencer marketing is Instagram. Instagram's emergence as a marketing platform rests on its visual format, story-driven interfaces and commerce friendly tools such as; feed posts, stories, reels, live and hashtags. Scholars argue that these features of Instagram have transformed how consumers discover and evaluate products rather than passive exposure to ads, consumers increasingly encounter peer-like recommendations embedded in influencers' personal narratives (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016; DeVirman et al., 2017). This shift is important because consumers perceive influencers' contents as more relatable and authentic than traditional advertising. Influencer messages often carry stronger persuasive potential and can mentally shape consumer purchase intentions (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Instagram influencers are able to influence the attitude of their followers towards brands, products and services by fostering authentic connections, increasing awareness (Lee & Mai, 2025). Belanche et al., (2021) found that when followers perceive influencer- product congruence, it positively affects followers' perception of influencer's credibility. It also enables a positive attitude towards influencers, their contents and the product or service they promote. Credibility of influencers are negatively impacted if they are perceived by followers or consumers to have been paid to promote products or services (Belanche et al, 2021).

Researchers have argued that parasocial relationships contribute to influencer effectiveness (Han & Balanis, 2023; Liu, 2025, Masuda et al., 2022; Sokolova & Kefi, 2019). Parasocial relationship is a one-sided relationship bonds formed between followers and Instagram influencers (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Factors such as homophily, social attractiveness of influencers, likeability enable stronger parasocial relationships. Parasocial relationships with Instagram influencers have significant impact on followers' attitudes thereby shaping their purchase intentions (Sokolova & Kefi, 2019; Labrecque, 2014). When followers have emotional bond with the influencers they tend to be more receptive to their recommendations and a greater likelihood of purchasing the products endorsed by the influencers (Joyce. 2024).

Masadu et al., (2022) focused on influencer strategies based on the personal attitudes and parasocial relationship being factors that impact consumer purchase intentions. The researchers argued that social attractiveness such as friendliness of influencers enhance parasocial relationships with followers than physical attractiveness.

Credibility of Instagram influencers and their content is one of the major factors that enhance consumer purchase intentions (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Chen et al., 2024; Khan & Asim, 2025; Chen et al., 2024). Many past studies have proven that consumer attitudes towards influencers are positively affected if they perceive them to be trustworthy, knowledgeable and attractive (Ohanian, 1990; Audrezet et al., 2020)

DeVeirman et al., (2017) noted that popularity induced by the large number of followers have increased the influencers' perceived opinion leadership.

However, many of the existing studies focused on Western markets. The existing studies on influencer marketing in the Ghanaian market are rather limited. This leaves a gap that needs to be filled.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

Liu (2025) investigated the factors affecting consumers' purchase intention in social media-based influencer marketing context. The study findings revealed that social media influencers when perceived to be credible, showing high levels of expertise, trustworthiness can positively shape purchase intentions which is consistent with the Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1991). Also added that the "Fear of Missing Out", homophily and establishing parasocial relationships with influencers can enhance purchase intentions. The study went further to examine the ties between Source Credibility and parasocial relations in the context of influencer marketing experienced by consumers by adding the impact of smart recommendation, algorithms and emotional anxiety experienced by consumers. However, the research was conducted in China making findings inapplicable to the Ghanaian context.

Chen et al., (2024) investigated the impact of influencer marketing on consumer purchase decisions. They based their research on the Consumer Attitude Theory. The study's findings indicated that influencers' credibility, professionalism and transparency can have significant positive impact on consumer purchase intentions. It further suggested that influencers should disclose their collaboration with the brands and use relevant research and data to support their product recommendations in order to enhance credibility. This study has provided some insights into influencer marketing however, it was conducted on residents of Suzhou City, limiting the findings to the geographical area. Also, the research fell short of providing deeper theoretical support and explanations for consumer purchase intentions. Therefore, there is a need to explore the underlying mechanisms of consumer behaviour.

Gadhiya and Sidapara (2025) examined the increased influence of Instagram influencers on consumer purchase behaviour within the Indian fashion industry. They sought to find out how

various types of content (reels, posts, stories) and characteristics of influencers i.e.; credibility, follower counts, engagement shape consumer trust and preferences for fashion brands. The results of the study highlighted the effectiveness of influencer marketing over traditional advertising in the fashion industry in India. The study further indicated that there is significant influence of Instagram influencers in shaping consumer purchase intentions. This is through higher engagement and relevant content leading to greater trust and purchase intentions. However, the research focused on the fashion industry in India therefore making the findings applicable within that context. Also, it focused on only the fashion industry requiring further studies to examine other industries. Also, findings are limited to India and cannot be generalized to other parts of the world including Ghana.

Arora et al., (2025) examined the relationship between consumer perceptions of influencer attributes and their purchase intentions. The findings showed that credibility and trustworthiness have significant positive impact on purchase intentions while engagement showed marginal effect. The research has contributed to the knowledge of influencer marketing and how their perceived characteristics shapes consumer purchase intentions however it lacked the Ghanaian consumer perspective. There is a need to localize the study in order to provide insights into how influencer marketing thrives in Ghana.

Akand (2024) comprehensively examined the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase intentions across industries. Mixed methods approach was employed with both surveys and interviews used to collect data from sample of diverse demographics and industries. The finding also highlighted the role of influencer credibility and content authenticity in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviours. The study was more detailed because aside employing mixed-methods approach, it conducted longitudinal studies, cross cultural comparisons and exploration of emerging trends in influencer marketing. The research's conclusion which highlights influencer credibility and authenticity in shaping

consumer purchase intentions which is consistent with past studies and also source credibility theory (Ohanian, 1990). However, there is a need to replicate similar research in Ghana. The findings will add more depth to the existing literature.

Joyce (2024) assessed the influence of influencer marketing on consumer purchase intentions. Data was collected from secondary sources such as; other published works. The findings are consistent with Sabitha et al., (2024) which indicated that consumers are likely to be influenced to make purchases by influencers due to perceived trust, credibility and authenticity. The study also points out influencer marketing relying on the power of social proof and word-of-mouth to drive consumers interest and purchase intentions more effectively than many conventional marketing strategies such as; traditional advertising. The study also highlighted the role the interactive nature of social media platforms which affords influencers the opportunity to respond timeously to their followers. This further boosts purchase intentions of followers. However, there is a need for data collection from primary sources for empirical evidence and also, further research has to be conducted to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms driving influencer impact on consumer purchase behaviour especially within the Ghanaian context.

Tharoon and Banu (2024) conducted a comprehensive analysis on impact of Instagram marketing strategies on consumer purchase intentions. The researchers examined the various Instagram marketing strategies including, influencer partnerships. The researchers employed the mixed method approach which includes both quantitative and qualitative to examine how several aspects of Instagram marketing including; influencer partnerships are used by companies. More so, it examined how customers' attitudes and perceptions of Instagram marketing efforts are influenced by credibility and demographics which in turn shapes consumers' buying intentions. The research findings revealed that influencer partnerships are effective in positively shaping purchase intentions and went further to recommend this type

of social media marketing strategy. The study adds to the body of knowledge on Instagram influencer marketing however, it lacks the Ghanaian consumer perspective which has to be explored.

Hoang and Hua, (2024) sought to unravel the complex relationships between various factors influencing purchase intentions in the context of beauty influencer marketing. Their finding indicated the significant role of Perceived Influencer Credibility in shaping consumer response to influencer marketing. This is consistent with Ohanian (1990) study on the essence of Source Credibility in persuasive communication. Just like Tharoon and Banu (2024), they adopted mixed method approach with the findings offering valuable insights. However, the study lacks Ghanaian context just like most of existing studies.

Rajput and Gandhi, (2024) investigated the impact of homophily, influencer social presence and influencer physical attractiveness on affinity in the beauty and fashion industry through influencer marketing. They explored trust and loyalty as mediating roles in connection with customer purchase intention. The findings indicated that positive influence of homophily, influencer physical attractiveness on consumer purchase intentions, partially mediated by affinity, trust and loyalty. The significance of affinity suggests that strong emotional bonds with influencers play a critical role in shaping purchase intentions. This aligns with Sokolova & Kefi, (2019) findings. However, there is a need to study the impact of influencer marketing on purchase intentions on Instagram as a platform since it has peculiar features that can also affect influencer content.

Ur Rahman (2023) studied the effectiveness of influencer marketing as an emerging and developing discipline in the marketing industry. The study employed the communication model to investigate how influencer who is the sender, the influencer content which is the message and the receivers who are the followers all shape the success of influencer marketing.

The results indicate that, followers' trust in influencers' branded posts is positively impacted by informative value of influencer-generated content, the influencers' credibility, attractiveness and similarly to followers. The trust then translates into brand awareness and purchase intentions. They further asserted that finding the right type of influencer who would provide curated tips, stories and recommendations to interest the audience is important for effective influencer marketing. Qualitative research approach was employed by the researchers. The majority of the participants agreed that influencer marketing is more effective than the traditional advertising.

Khan and Asim (2025) in their work sought to examine the impact of social media influencers on purchase intentions. The research was conducted through the theoretical lens of Source Credibility. According to findings, influencers with high credibility significantly increase consumer trust and this has a positive impact on their purchase intentions. This aligns with past research findings. The study underscored the role influencers have in shaping purchase among Gen Z in Pakistan. However, the study was conducted in Pakistan limiting findings to that country. Also, the used quantitative approach used limited the understanding of a variety of factors that can shape consumer purchase intentions like cultural relatability. This study leaves a contextual gap and methodological gap that needs to be filled.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Source Credibility Theory

Source credibility theory provides the framework for comprehending how communicators can shape the purchase intentions of consumers through perceived credibility. The credibility

comprises of three main dimensions; they include perceived expertise of the communicator, trustworthiness and perceived attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990; Hovland & Weiss, 1951).

With regards to Instagram influencer marketing, consumers are more likely to develop positive purchase intentions if they perceive the influencer to be credible, authentic, trustworthy and genuinely connected to the product or service promoted (Mishra & Ashfaq, 2023; Subitha et al., 2024).

Source Credibility is important because it explains why certain influencers are successful with persuading consumers and how perceived credibility of influencers drives buying decisions.

The Source Credibility Theory asserts that the effectiveness of a persuasive message depends largely on perceived credibility of the source which is determined by expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990)

In relation to Instagram influencer marketing, this theory gives a strong conceptual foundation for comprehending how consumers evaluate and respond to promotional messages from influencers.

In this research, which aims to explore how Instagram influencer marketing shapes purchase intentions in Ghana, the source credibility theory is highly relevant because it explains the psychological mechanisms that lead consumers to trust or distrust influencers and consequently decide whether or not to purchase the products or services being promoted.

Influencers that show enough expertise in their niche e.g.: beauty, fashion, technology are perceived as more knowledgeable and capable of making well informed recommendations. In Ghana, where digital literacy and social media engagement is rapidly increasing, influencers

who are known to provide accurate and useful information are likely to positively influence purchase decisions of consumers.

In addition, trust is an essential factor of influencer effectiveness. According to Source Credibility Theory, a message from a source that is perceived honest, sincere and unbiased is more persuasive. Instagram influencers who maintain transparency by disclosing sponsorships or providing genuine reviews are more likely to earn the trust of Ghanaian consumers thereby increasing purchase intentions (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Moreover, the attractiveness of the influencer is not only about the physical appeal but also likeability and relatability. This is recognized as an important driver of persuasion (Ohanian, 1990).

In the Ghanaian context, consumers often engage with influencers they perceived as relatable in terms of culture, language and lifestyle which strengthens emotional connections thereby enhancing the persuasiveness of marketing messages.

In linking the theory to consumer purchase intentions, it suggests that credible sources can positively shape consumers' attitudes towards a product or service which also shapes their behavioural intentions. When an Instagram influencer is perceived as credible, their endorsements are more likely to lead into actual buying decisions among their followers in Ghana (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2018)

2.4 Definition of Key Terms

2.4.1 Instagram

Instagram is a social networking platform launched in 2010 and acquired by Facebook (now Meta) in 2012. It provides users the opportunity to create content, share and interact with visual content such as; photos, reels and live broadcast often enhanced with filters, hashtags and geo tags. It is primarily mobile-based though also accessible via desktop and widely recognized for its visual storytelling features.

Instagram has become one of the leading platforms for influencer marketing because of its highly visual and interactive nature. Influencers use it to build personal brands, foster parasocial relationships with followers and promote products or services authentically. The platform's algorithms and engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares, follower counts) serve as social proof, amplifying trust and shaping purchase intentions (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

2.4.2 Instagram Influencer

Instagram influencers are personalities with large followers on Instagram (Lou & Yuang, 2019) who can influence the purchase decisions of their followers. Unlike traditional celebrities that are well known, influencers can also be ordinary people who have gained popularity on Instagram. These people collaborate with brands or marketers to promote their products and services (Saternus et al., 2024). Influencers through personalized contents shape the purchase decisions of followers. Influencers play an important role in brand marketing (Chen et al., 2024).

Instagram influencers are perceived to be more credible as they share personal experiences with the products and services of the brands they promote on their pages.

2.4.3 Instagram Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has become a popular marketing strategy on Instagram for modern brands (Hsiao & Lin, 2025). Influencer marketing is a form of social media marketing that involves endorsements and product placements from individuals who have high level of visibility and influence in a particular niche or among specific audience (Lou & Yuan, 2019) on Instagram. It combines elements of celebrity endorsements and word-of-mouth marketing. This form of marketing is perceived as credible because these influencers create and share content of their personal experiences with the product or service (Freberg et al., 2011) unlike traditional advertising that is perceived to be staged. The digital era has brought fourth this type of marketing strategy as a means of promoting consumer experiences (Subitha et al., 2024). Instagram influencer marketing is a dominant force in the digital marketing landscape (Arora, 2025)

Past researchers have proven that Instagram influencer marketing can drive high level of brand awareness, purchase intentions and product adoption (Munir & Watts, 2025; Chen et al., 2024; Dutta & Bhattacharya, 2023).

2.4.4 Consumer Purchase Intentions

Consumer purchase intention refers to a consumer's conscious plan, willingness or likelihood to buy a product or service in future (Spears & Singh, 2004). It reflects the motivational factors that drive consumers towards making a purchase decision, serving as a reliable

indicator of actual buying behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). While intentions do not always end in behaviour, it is a critical stage in decision making process particularly in digital and social media contexts where the paths from awareness to purchase can be shaped by multiple cues.

2.4.5 Credibility

Credibility refers to the degree to which a communicator (such as an influencer) is perceived as trustworthy, knowledgeable and reliable, which determines how persuasive and influential their messages are (Hovland et al., 1953). In marketing, Source Credibility is a critical determinant of whether consumers accept or reject promotional messages (Ohanian, 1990).

High influencer credibility increases consumer trust, which is essential in shaping positive attitudes towards brands and driving purchase intentions (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Youssef & Lebdaoui, 2020). Research has proven that credibility of influencers and their content is an important feature that positively influence purchase intentions (Bogoevska-Gavrilova & Ciunova, 2022; Liu, 2025; Ao et al., 2023). Influencers perceived as authentic and transparent are more effective because credibility is closely tied to authenticity.

In the Ghanaian Instagram influencer marketing context, credibility is particularly important because consumers are wary of paid advertising and often rely on trust-based relationships with influencers to reduce uncertainty about products and services. Thus, credibility is one of the strongest enhancers of consumer purchase intention in influencer marketing.

2.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter examined the body of literature relevant to understanding how Instagram influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase intentions. It began by a review of prior empirical studies which revealed that influencer marketing is a powerful driver of consumer attitudes and purchase intentions particularly because of its authenticity, perceived relatability compared to traditional advertising.

The chapter then explored theoretical perspectives that underpin the study. The Source Credibility Theory emphasized the importance of trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness of influencers in shaping consumer responses.

Moreover, the chapter provided the conceptual foundations of key terms including; Instagram, Instagram influencer, Instagram influencer marketing, consumer purchase intentions and credibility.

Furthermore, the review unraveled research gaps especially in the Ghanaian context, where socio-cultural dynamics, digital adoption patterns and consumer trust perception may alter the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies.

In conclusion, this chapter established that while influencer marketing on Instagram has been widely studied in Western contexts its impact on consumer purchase intentions in emerging markets such as Ghana remains under- researched. These insights provide the basis for the present study which aims to address these gaps by examining how Instagram influencer marketing shapes purchase intentions among Ghanaian consumers.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter Introduction

The chapter provides an overview of the research methodology employed to achieve the research objectives. It provides detailed description of the research design, population, sampling technique, data collection methods and data analysis procedures adopted in the research. It also explains the rationale for choosing qualitative research approach and discusses measures taken to ensure validity, reliability and ethical integrity.

In addition, the chapter presents how data was collected through semi-structured interviews and how secondary data was collected. The sampling strategy, data collection procedures and methods of handling and analyzing data are also explained to ensure transparency.

Overall, this chapter establishes methodological foundation that underpins the credibility of the study findings.

3.1 Research Design

The study employs an exploratory research design to examine how Instagram influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase intention among Ghanaian consumers. The exploratory design was deemed appropriate because the researcher seeks to gain detailed and nuanced understanding of an emerging marketing phenomenon. Unlike descriptive or explanatory research, exploratory research focuses on unraveling patterns, meanings and relationships that may not yet be well-documented or understood (Saka et al., 2023).

Exploratory research is suitable when the researcher intends to explore new insights, ideas and establish a foundation for future researches (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since influencer marketing on Instagram is a relatively nouvelle form of digital marketing in Ghana's retail and marketing space, this design enables flexibility in investigating consumer attitudes, perceptions and motivations that underlie their purchase.

This design allows the researcher to explore participants' lived experiences and subjective interpretations through semi-structured interviews which will provide detailed qualitative data.

The exploratory research design is also effective for examining subjective experiences such as trust and credibility perceptions which are central to the research objectives.

Through this approach, the study will be able to uncover underlying psychological, cultural and emotional factors shaping consumer responses to Instagram influencer marketing.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this current study includes active Instagram users in Ghana who follow or engage with influencers on the platform. The group is a diverse mix of individuals including; young adults, professionals, students and entrepreneurs who use Instagram for social interactions, brand engagement and entertainment.

The focus on active users is critical because they are most likely to be exposed to influencer marketing content and provide relevant insights into how such content influences perceptions, attitudes as well as purchase intentions.

According to DataReportal (2025), there is a continuous rise in the use of social media in Ghana with Instagram being one of the most popular platforms among users ages 18-35 (NapoleonCat, 2025). This demographic segment is particularly important because it includes individuals who actively participate in online brand communities and are highly receptive to influencer content. Therefore, targeting this population allows the research to capture the lived experiences and attitudes towards influencer marketing activities on Instagram.

As a result of the qualitative nature of the research, the study does not seek to generalize findings to the entire Ghanaian population but rather to provide a detailed understanding of consumer behaviour with this specific context.

3.3 Sample Size

For this particular study, the sample size will be determined through the principle of data saturation which occurs when additional interviews do not provide new insights or themes relevant to the research objectives (Guest et al., 2006).

According to Guest et al., (2006), findings indicate that data saturation occurs after twelve interviews. Given this finding, the sample size of 12 to 20 participants is deemed suitable for qualitative research.

The sample size was considered adequate for the study because qualitative research prioritizes information power over numerical size (Malterude et al., 2016). Information power refers to the extent to which each participant contributes meaningfully, in-depth and contextually rich data that gives more understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. As a result, the interviews will continue until the researcher observes no new themes emerged signaling that data saturation had been achieved.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The study employs a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, to identify and select participants. Purposive sampling is suitable for qualitative research because it affords researchers the chance to intentionally select individuals who have specific knowledge, experiences or characteristics relevant to the study objectives (Tajik et al., 2024).

In this study, the target participants are active users of Instagram in Ghana who follow influencers and are exposed to the influencer-generated content. These people are the best to provide insights into how influencer marketing shapes their purchase intentions. By choosing participants who engage with Instagram influencers, the research ensures that data collected is rich, relevant and consistent with the research problem.

In order to enhance richness of perspectives, the sampling will consider the following factors; the age of participants which should be the ages between 18 and 35 years. These are the demographics that are most active on Instagram. Next is the occupation of participants who should be tertiary students or young professionals. Last but not least, people who engage with influencers and their content. For instance; liking, commenting or purchasing products promoted by Instagram influencers.

The purposive sampling will be complemented by snowball sampling if necessary. This allows initial participants to recommend other eligible individuals who meet the study criteria (Naderifar et al., 2017). The strategy helps to broaden the pool of participants while ensuring all participants fit within the defined population.

In conclusion, purposive sampling ensures that participants are not chosen by chance but based on their relevance to the research topic, thereby enhancing validity and depth of findings.

3.5 Data Collection Method

The study utilizes semi-structured interview as a primary data collection method. Semi-structured interviews are widely employed in qualitative research because they allow flexibility, depth and rich exploration of participants' experiences while focusing on the study (Ruslin et al., 2022). Using this method, the researcher can probe participants' perceptions, attitudes and experiences regarding how Instagram influencers impact their purchase intention.

An interview guide will be developed based on research objectives and relevant literature on influencer marketing, consumer behaviour and consumer purchase intentions.

3.5.1. Secondary Data

To add up to the primary data collected through semi-structured interviews, this study will make use of secondary data to provide context, triangulate findings and bolster credibility of the results. Secondary data is information that has been collected, analyzed and published already by other researchers, institutions or organizations (Perez-Sindin, 2017). It gives support to interpretation of primary data and situated the study within broader academic and industry context. In qualitative research, secondary data is often used to complement findings obtained from the interviews, validate emerging themes and provide comparative perspectives.

For this current study, secondary data was obtained from academic journals, scholarly articles from databases such as; Emerald Insights, Science direct, ResearchGate, Sage, Google Scholar and Taylor and Francis. These scholarly articles were reviewed to gather insights

into how influencer marketing impacts consumer purchase intentions in both developed and emerging markets.

3.5.2 Primary Data

Primary data is the information obtained directly from participants of interviews for the specific purpose of addressing the research objectives (Creswell & Poth. 2018). In this study, primary data will be collected through semi-structured interviews to explore how Ghanaian consumers perceive, interpret and respond to influencer marketing content on Instagram.

The decision to choose primary data collection was guided by the qualitative nature of the study which seeks to comprehend lived experiences, opinions and attitudes of Ghanaian consumers rather than quantify patterns or relationships. According to Bryman (2016), qualitative primary data enables researchers to capture detailed insights, emotions and meanings that cannot be expressed through numerical data or surveys.

3.6 Data Analysis and Handling

Data analysis is a critical aspect of qualitative research as it allows the researcher to interpret and make sense of the raw data collected from participants. The aim of data analysis in this research is to identify key patterns, meanings and insights that explain how Instagram influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase intentions among Ghanaian consumers.

As a result of the study employing qualitative approach, the analysis is interpretive and thematic, focusing on comprehending participants' subjective experiences, perceptions and attitudes. According to Braun and Clarke (2019), thematic analysis is particularly appropriate

for exploring how people make sense of their social and cultural realities, making it suitable for this current study.

Triangulation was also adopted as data from the interviews were cross-validated with secondary data such as past research and reports to strengthen the credibility and authenticity of results.

Proper data handling procedures were followed to maintain confidentiality, accuracy and integrity throughout the research process. All audio recording, transcripts and analysis files were securely stored in password-protected folders which is only accessible to the researcher.

Participants' identity such as real names will be omitted and rather be replaced with pseudonyms to maintain anonymity.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity is an important aspect of qualitative research, particularly when data collection involves direct interactions with human participants (Taquette, 2022). The study was conducted in accordance with established research ethics to ensure participants are protected, respected and treated with utmost dignity.

First, informed consent was obtained from participants before conducting the interviews. Consent forms were given to them to fill.

In order to protect the identities of participants, no names or identifiable information or Instagram handles were connected to the data collected. Instead, codes were used during transcription and analysis. All the information collected during interviews were handled with strict confidentiality.

For the sake of transparency and authenticity, the researcher disclosed the role, purpose, academic intentions. Additionally, reflexivity was practised to acknowledge any possibility of

biases arising from the researcher's background or experience. This guaranteed that interpretations were as objective and balanced as possible.

3.8 Chapter Summary

The chapter presented and justified the methodological framework employed by the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study. It provided the methodological choices that guided the research process. The study adopted a qualitative approach because it sought to gain detailed understanding of how Instagram influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase intentions among Ghanaian consumers. The approach enabled the researcher to explore participants' perceptions, experiences and interpretations in an in-depth manner.

The target population consists of active Instagram users in Ghana who follow and engage with influencers on the platform. A purposive sampling technique was used in choosing participants for the semi-structured interviews. The sample size was determined by data saturation to ensure interviews went on until no new themes emerged.

Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews from participants while secondary data were obtained from online academic journals to provide theoretical and contextual support.

In addition, the collected qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thorough ethical procedures were followed throughout the study including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and maintaining anonymity of participants.

In conclusion, this chapter detailed how the research was described, implemented and analyzed to address the research objectives. The methodology ensured that the findings

would be valid, credible and relevant to understanding the impact of Instagram influencer marketing on consumer purchase intentions in Ghana.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Chapter Introduction

The chapter provides the findings of the qualitative exploratory study investigating how consumers in Ghana perceive and interpret Instagram influencer content, the psychological and cultural factors influencing their purchase intentions and the role of trust, credibility and attractiveness in shaping the attitudes toward influencer marketing.

Data collection was done through semi-structured interviews with 12 participants. These participants are active users of Instagram between the ages of 18-35 years.

Thematic Analysis was employed to generate patterns of meaning. For easy reference in the report and keeping participants anonymous, Participants 1, Participants 2 to 12 will be used to refer to participants who were interviewed.

4.2. Objective one: Exploring how Ghanaian consumers perceive and interpret influencer content.

Theme 1: Perceptions are formed of influencer content based on the genuineness of their content.

Participants are able to distinguish between influencers who are genuine and those just doing paid promotions.

Participant 1

Mostly on Instagram, they don't show lived experience, try to make you buy into it. You can actually read into the lines. So, you can see they are trying to convince me. They

may not have used the product; they are telling me to buy the product. Here's the case that someone is telling you about clothing and they are actually wearing the clothing so they are embodying it or they are showing you perfume or taking a drink that they are showing you, it makes it more believable to me. So, the content, the delivery mode is what matters. If you show lived experience, it is genuine.

Participant 2

I like the more genuine ones. I think those are very few because paid promotions are being showcased as genuine promotions but I like the ones where the people actually use the product.

Participant 8

You can tell it is advert when they talk about products they don't use.

Participant 10

You can notice when an influencer is selling something it looks rehearsed.

Interpretation

Consumers interpret influencer content by watching their motives. Those whose lifestyles align or consistent with the product or service they promote are viewed as genuine.

Theme 2: Visual storytelling shapes interpretation of influencer content

Instagram visual nature significantly affects user interpretation.

Participant 4

The appearance of the pictures or videos can inform you if the product is good or not

Participant 8

Good reels make me imagine myself actually using the product.

Interpretation

Aesthetic appeal helps consumers imagine being in the place of experience of the influencer.

Theme 3: Interpretation based on value and relevance to consumers

Participants interpret influencer content based on their personal needs and lifestyle relevance.

Demonstrations, tutorials and reviews help to evaluate product usefulness.

Participant 5

They do live testing of some of the products and so you are able to get convinced that the product is good and that you should go ahead and buy it.

Participant 7

Normally what I do is I go and read people's reviews, people that have probably used the product before their review, what they make of it, if it was something that was useful to them, it might shape my decision to either purchase it to try or to ignore but not all the time.

Sometimes I see their product and just ignore them.

Participant 8

When they show how to use it, it clicks better for me.

Interpretation

Consumers interpret influencer content based on the usefulness of the products or service showcased to them.

4.3 Objective Two: To understand the psychological and cultural factors influencing purchase intentions

Theme 4: Economic realities shape consumer purchase intentions

The economic situation in Ghana can affect whether consumers would act on influencer recommendations or not.

Participant 2

Sometimes you want to purchase but the cost is high

Participant 12

I keep the items in mind until I can afford to buy them.

Interpretation

Purchase intentions can also be shaped by the economic situation of Ghana and also personal economic situation of consumers.

Theme 5: Emotional connection and relatability

Participants admit that emotional connection and lifestyle relatability with influencers shape their purchase intentions.

Participant 1

I look up to Adjetey Anang, his lifestyle is something I really love. So, whenever I see him talking about a product, I really want to buy it because I can relate to him. He inspires me.

Participant 4

It makes it easier to purchase from them or patronize what they are talking about.

Participant 6

That's how it is with human beings in general, when you see people that you see a bit of you in them or are sort of linked to them in a way. So it does have some influence on your decision to purchase.

Interpretation

Emotional connection and relatability with influencer make consumers more susceptible to their recommendations.

Theme 6: Cultural values and cultural relatability

Some participants prefer influencers who express Ghanaian values and lifestyles.

Participant 7

I relate better when influencers use local languages

Participant 8

Once there was an influencer promoting a hair care brand. She is a nudist and our culture frowns on nudity so it turns me off.

Participant 10

Most of these influencers are foreigners and the food that they consume are not on a daily basis consumed here, so if I see an influencer posting something on Instagram and it has this local effect with it, I'm happy. There are some people that have been able to do well to market certain foods locally made foods or Ghanaian dishes. They are able to teach you this kind of food it will help you with your goals when it comes to fitness. It is something I can relate to.

Interpretation

Cultural relatability and alignment with the cultural values of consumers enhances psychological connection with influencers. Ghanaians resonate with messages embedded in local norms and values.

4.4 Objective three: Examining the role of trust, credibility and attractiveness

Theme 7: Trust Is the Dominant Factor Influencing Purchase Intention

Participants consistently emphasized that trust determines whether they act on influencer recommendations.

Participant 1

If I trust you, I'll buy anything you recommend.

Participant 3

Trust is the only reason I follow some influencers.

Interpretation

Trust is an important factor to persuasion, supporting prior studies showing its centrality in influencer effectiveness in Ghana.

Theme 8: Credibility Enhances Believability and Reduces Perceived Risk

Credibility was described in terms of honesty, transparency, expertise and consistency.

Participant 5

When an influencer is known for honesty, you believe them more.

Participant 6

If there is honesty in what the person is saying. They should not only show the positive aspect of the product but also show the negative aspects as well.

Interpretation

Credible influencers serve as opinion leaders, reducing uncertainty and enhancing confidence. This aligns with Source Credibility Theory. Also, credibility from influencers includes giving honest reviews about products or services promoted.

Theme 10: Attractiveness Increases Attention and Curiosity but Not Always Trust

Participants admitted being drawn to attractive influencers but did not always equate attractiveness with trustworthiness.

Participant 3

I follow some people because they look good, but I don't buy what they advertise.

Participant 4

Beauty grabs attention, but personal experience makes me buy.

Interpretation

Attractiveness is a peripheral cue it captures attention and creates interest, but credibility is needed to convert interest into purchase intention.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

This study aims to explore how Instagram influencers shape the purchase intentions of Ghanaian consumers. Employing semi-structured interviews with 12 participants, 3 major themes emerged; Consumers' perceptions and interpretation of influencer content, psychological and cultural factors influencing purchasing decisions and the role of trust, credibility and attractiveness of influencers.

In relation to consumers' perceptions and interpretations of Instagram influencers' contents, findings indicated that participants often perceive influencer content as a combination of authentic and persuasive marketing. They opined that influencers who share relatable stories

or product demonstrations or use feel a lot more genuine. This is consistent with the Source Credibility Theory which asserts that audience evaluate messages based on the perceived trustworthiness of the communicator (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian 1990). Also consistent with Djafarova and Rushworth (2017), participants indicated that authenticity and transparency of influencer content boost the likelihood of considering purchase.

Also, the study revealed that consumers prefer influencers to be consistent in their products promotions. Participant see influencer content as credible and genuine when they use the products they promote and show their lived experiences rather than paid promotions which is staged and lacks authenticity.

Participants also admitted that the visuals of influencer content, product demonstrations enhance believability while overly edited or staged posts created doubts. This is consistent with (Alalwan, 2018) which notes that consumers rely on visual cues when assessing influencer content.

In relation to the psychological and cultural factors that shape purchase intentions. Consumers are more likely to be influenced to purchase products promoted by Instagram influencers they have emotional connections to. These emotional connections can be enhanced through influencers regularly interacting with followers. However, this finding is in contrast with (Chen et al., 2024) whose findings indicated that consumers prefer influencer objective recommendations and professional insights rather than direct interactions when making purchase decisions. In addition, influencers that give honest reviews of products are perceived to be honest and even admit product defect. More so, Ghanaian consumers are more likely to appreciate influencers who use local languages for their contents on Instagram. Local Instagram influencers are more relatable for Ghanaian consumers because they perceived them to understand the daily realities and context of Ghanaians.

In relation with the role of trust, credibility and attractiveness of influencers in shaping purchase intentions. Trust in influencers and their content is one important factor that can positively shape consumer purchase intentions (Wibisono et al., 2023). Credibility has been proven to be a factor in positively shaping consumer purchase decisions (Bansah et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the physical attractiveness of influencers draws attention in terms of physical appearance or lifestyle. However, effect of credibility and trust outweighs that of attractiveness which is a supporting factor.

4.6 Theoretical Implication of Findings

The findings of the study make several contributions to the Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953 ; Ohanian,1990), which formed the basis for the research. The theory proposes that an influencer's expertise, trustworthiness, authenticity and attractiveness significantly shape consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions. The findings of the study strongly reinforce these propositions and extend their applicability within the context of social media and the Ghanaian digital retail landscape.

First, the study strengthens theoretical evidence on the role of trustworthiness in influencer marketing. Consistent with prior studies (Sachu et al., 2025; Bogoevska-Gavrilova, 2022; Garg & Bakshi, 2024), participants demonstrated higher purchase intentions when influencers appeared honest, transparent and authentic. These results imply that trust is increasingly tied to the perceived authenticity of influencers' content.

Also, the results also show that attractiveness also plays a role. Physical attractiveness remains relevant but its effect is moderate as it draws attentions of consumers but is not enough to lead to purchase intentions. This introduces a potential modification to the Source

Credibility Theory by suggesting that trustworthiness and expertise of influencers are more significant vital in contrast with attractiveness. This finding is consistent with (Fowler & Thomas, 2023).

Overall, the findings affirm the enduring relevance of the Source Credibility Theory while expanding its scope within digital marketing, influencer communication and emerging markets.

4.7 Chapter Summary

Overall, the chapter has proven that Instagram influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase intentions in Ghana through a complex interplay of perceptions, psychological processes, cultural alignment, trust-based evaluation. These insights gained form the basis for the concluding chapter which is the chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Chapter Introduction

The chapter is the conclusion to the work on the topic of Exploring How Instagram Influencer Marketing Influences Consumer Purchase Intentions in Ghana. The research purpose was to investigate the perception and reaction of consumers in Ghana to influencer content on Instagram, and in specific terms, the role of trust, credibility, cultural relatability, and psychological variables in determining purchase intention.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study explored how Instagram influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase intentions in Ghana with focus on three key areas; how consumers perceive and interpret influencer content, the psychological and cultural factors influencing purchase intentions and role of trust, credibility and attractiveness in shaping purchase intentions. This was motivated by the growing use of Instagram in Ghana and increasing reliance on influencers as marketing intermediaries. Also, there is limited study on how consumers in Ghana respond to their contents.

A qualitative exploratory research design was adopted to gain detailed insights into consumer interpretations and experiences. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from active Instagram users in Ghana who follow influencers and their content. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns of their responses.

The findings indicate that consumers interpret influencer content by watching their motives. Consumers positively respond to the content of influencers whose lifestyles are aligned or consistent with the product or services they promote. Consumers prefer genuine content where the influencers showcase lived experiences with the products rather than paid promotions which lacks authenticity. This finding is consistent with (Sarkis et al., 2024) whose findings suggested that consumers perceive unpaid collaborations as more genuine therefore enhancing brand authenticity and consumer purchase intentions.

Moreso, consumers interpret influencer content based on the visual storytelling. This enables consumers to be informed whether the product is good or not. In addition, visual appeal and high-quality content increased interest in product. However, that alone is not enough to lead to purchase intentions.

Moreover, consumers interpret influencer content based on the value and relevance to them. When consumers have a personal need for the product or service being promoted in the influencer content, they are more likely to respond positively to it. Influencer content that show live testing of the products and show reviews from those who have used the product are likely to influence purchase decisions.

The study further found that psychological factors such as emotional connection and relatability with influencers make it easier for consumers to decide to purchase products and service being promoted. Cultural relevance also emerged as a factor with consumers preferring influencers to reflect Ghanaian culture, values and norms.

Also, aside psychological factors, consumers spoke about their economic situation that can significantly influence purchase decisions. Consumers admitted that they sometimes show interest in the products but cannot afford them.

The findings also showed that trust, credibility are the most influential factors driving purchase intentions. Though physical attractiveness of influencers mainly helps in drawing

attention, it alone is not enough to make consumers make purchase decisions. Trust is one of the factors that determine whether consumers would act on influencer recommendations or not. Participants also pointed that they prefer influencers showing both positives and negatives of the product or service they promote. This reflects honesty and credibility on the side of the influencer. Consumers also added the need for brands to select influencers who have knowledge or expertise in the type of product or service. For instance, in promoting a phone brand, it makes it more credible when the influencer is a known tech person. Also, promoting a camera brand, using photographers is more ideal.

In conclusion, the study proved that Instagram influencer marketing affects purchase intentions of Ghanaian consumers through a complex interplay of perception, psychological motivation, cultural alignment and trust-building. The insights gained provide valuable guidance for influencers, marketers and future research.

5.2 Conclusion

This study set out to explore how Instagram influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase intentions in Ghana, with focus on consumer perceptions, psychological and cultural influences and the role of trust, credibility and attractiveness in shaping consumer attitudes towards influencer content. The study was conducted through the theoretical lens of The Source Credibility Theory. The findings indicated that Instagram influencers play a significant and multifaceted role in shaping the purchase intention of Ghanaian consumers.

The research concluded that Ghanaian consumers do not just accept influencer content at face value, rather they actively interpret and evaluate them based on transparency and relevance. Consumers are able to distinguish between genuine recommendations and paid promotions. Influencer content are perceived positively when they are authentic, informative and visually appealing.

Moreover, the study established that psychological and cultural factors also influence purchase intentions. Emotional connection, relatability and cultural norms significantly drive how consumers respond to influencers. The findings affirm that the effects of Instagram influencer marketing extend beyond product promotion to include emotional connection and cultural resonance.

Trust, credibility emerged as the most dominant factor that determine consumers' attitudes towards influencer marketing. However, physical attractiveness draw attention but does not by itself lead to purchase intentions. Furthermore, influencers who demonstrate honesty, cultural relevance and consistent brand alignment are more likely to positively impact purchase intentions.

Overall, the study concludes that Instagram influencer marketing is effective in the Ghanaian market when built on credibility, emotional connection and genuine communication. The ability of influencers to inspire purchasing behaviour in Ghanaian consumer does not only depend on their aesthetic appeal or popularity but on the degree to which they establish trust and emotional resonance with their audience.

5.3 Recommendations

The study findings on Instagram influencer marketing and how it shapes purchase intentions in Ghana have paved way for actionable recommendations, guiding future marketing strategies.

Firstly, marketers should select influencers who are credible and authentic. Marketers or brands must prioritize influencers who demonstrate transparency, consistent engagement and genuine use of endorsed products. Credible influencers who align with the brand's values and products are more likely to establish trust and positivity shape purchase intentions.

Secondly, influencers on the other hand, should clearly disclose sponsored content to maintain viewer trust. Also, to build trust, influencers should provide honest reviews about the products they promote by also highlighting limitations and defects.

Thirdly, influencers should avoid over-commercialization. Excessive promotional posts can reduce audience trust. They must balance sponsored content with personal, educational and lifestyle posts to appear authentic.

In addition, influencers should establish expertise in specific content areas. Consumers trust influencers who demonstrate domain knowledge. For instance; a tech person should be used in promoting phone brands. Specialization increases perceived expertise and improves persuasion (Ohanian, 1990).

Also, regulatory bodies such as the Advertising Association of Ghana (AAG) should create guidelines for influencer advertising, including accuracy in product presentation and avoidance of deceptive marketing. This will go a long way to promote responsible digital advertising which includes influencer market.

Furthermore, marketers could invest in training programs for influencers. Marketing agencies and brands should provide training on ethical advertising, brand alignment, content creation and consumer engagement. This would enhance their communication strategies and maintain professional standards that support effective outcomes.

Last but not least, influencers should be relatable and culturally connected to the audience. Sharing real-life experiences, challenges and stories rooted in everyday Ghanaian life enhances relatability and emotional connection with followers. When there is emotional connection, consumers are more susceptible to influencer recommendations.

These recommendations emphasize the importance of credibility, cultural relevance, transparency, psychological connection and strategic partnerships in influencer marketing.

Applying the above suggestions will enable brands and influencers maximize the impact of Instagram influencer marketing on consumer purchase behaviour in Ghana.

5.4 Direction for future research

Although this study provides valuable insights into how Instagram influencer marketing shapes consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in Ghana, several important areas remain understudied. This opens for further scholarly exploration. Future research can build on the findings of this study in the following ways.

Expand the scope of the study to focus on other social media platforms such as; TikTok and X. Future research could focus on TikTok and X to also explore how influencer marketing on these platforms shape consumer purchase intentions. Considering TikTok's and X unique features, comparing platforms may provide a deeper comprehension of how content format, audience demographics and engagement features shape influencer effectiveness.

In addition, exploring the perspective of Instagram influencers, future studies could focus on how Instagram influencers themselves. Examining how they build credibility, manage authenticity, engage followers and collaborate with brands. Understanding influencer strategies from creator's point or view could add more to existing knowledge.

Moreover, investigating influencer marketing's impact across different industries. This current study focused generally on consumer purchase intentions. Future research could explore specific sectors such as how influencer marketing affects the beauty, financial, electronics, health and food industries in Ghana.

More so, future studies could examine how age, gender, income level, education and urban, rural differences influence consumer responses to influencer marketing. This could help marketers tailor influencer strategies to specific audience.

Furthermore, future studies should be conducted through the theoretical lens of Theory of Planned Behaviour. This theory will help to investigate how subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and attitudes shape consumer attitudes towards influencer marketing and their content. Findings will add more depth to existing literature of influencer marketing.

Last but not least, examine the long-term effects of influencer marketing on brand loyalty among consumers. This current study explored the immediate perceptions and purchase intentions. However, future studies could study consumer over a period of time to ascertain whether Influencer marketing contributes to long term loyalty and repeat purchases in the retail sector on Ghana.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the study conclusion with emphasis on the most important findings, limitations, and recommendations for both influencers and marketers. The study aimed to determine the effect of Instagram influencer marketing on consumer buying intentions in Ghana with specific focus on the perception of influencer credibility, cultural factors and psychological forces influencing the ultimate buying decisions.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Exploring How Instagram Influencer Marketing Shapes Consumer Purchase Intentions in Ghana

Introduction

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a graduate student at the University of Arts and Communication, conducting a study in partial fulfillment of the award of a Master of Arts degree in Public Relations with Marketing. I will be most grateful if you could take a short time off your busy schedule to answer the questions to the best of your ability. Your responses will be treated confidentially and used for academic purposes only.

Section A: Introduction and Background

1. Can you briefly tell me about yourself (age range, occupation, and how long you have been using Instagram)?
2. How often do you use Instagram, and what kind of content do you usually engage with?
3. Do you follow any influencers on Instagram? If yes, who are some of your favorites and why?

Section B: Exploring Perceptions and Interpretations of Instagram Influencer Content (Relates to Objective 1: To explore how Ghanaian consumers perceive and interpret Instagram influencer content)

4. How would you describe your general perception of Instagram influencers?
5. What type of influencer content attracts your attention the most (e.g., fashion, lifestyle, tech, beauty, etc.)?
6. When you see posts from influencers promoting products, what thoughts usually come to mind?
7. How do you differentiate between genuine content and paid promotions by influencers?
8. Do you think influencer content affects the way you view certain brands or products? Please explain.

Section C: Psychological and Cultural Factors Influencing Purchase Intentions

(Relates to Objective 2: To understand the psychological and cultural factors that influence consumer purchase intentions)

9. What factors motivate you to consider buying a product recommended by an influencer?
10. How do your cultural values or social environment influence your attitude toward influencer marketing?
11. Do you ever discuss influencer recommendations with friends, family, or peers before making a purchase decision?
12. How do you feel when you see influencers using local (Ghanaian) brands compared to international brands?
13. What emotions do you associate with influencers whose lifestyles seem aspirational or relatable to yours?

Section D: Role of Trust, Credibility and Attractiveness

(Relates to Objective 3: To examine the role of trust, authenticity, relatability, and attractiveness in shaping consumer attitudes toward Instagram influencer marketing)

14. What makes you trust or distrust an influencer?
15. How important is authenticity to you when following or engaging with influencers?
16. In what ways do you find certain influencers relatable? How does this affect your interest in the products they promote?
17. Do you think an influencer's physical appearance, confidence, or lifestyle makes you more likely to consider their product recommendations?
18. Can you recall a specific instance where an influencer's credibility influenced your decision to buy (or not buy) a product? Please describe.

Section E: Purchase Intention and Behaviour

19. How often do you buy products because you saw them being promoted on Instagram?
20. What factors finally convince you to make a purchase — the influencer's message, the product's quality, price, or something else?

21. Have you ever regretted purchasing a product promoted by an influencer? Why or why not?
22. How do you think influencer marketing on Instagram has changed your shopping habits overall?

Section F: Closing

23. In your opinion, how can influencers or brands improve their marketing strategies to connect better with Ghanaian consumers?
24. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience with influencer marketing on Instagram?

Thank you for taking the time to share your insights. Your responses will remain strictly confidential and will be used solely for academic research purposes.

