



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Master of Arts in Strategic Public Relations Management

Postgraduate (MA) Thesis

TOPIC

"Towards influencer marketing campaigns of single-use plastics and the impact on behavioural change."

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DECLARATION

I, Gloria Apprey, hereby declare that this thesis titled "*Towards influencer marketing campaigns of single-use plastics and the impact on behavioural change.*" is my own original work. All sources of information and ideas from other authors have been duly acknowledged and referenced. This thesis has not been presented, in whole or in part, for any other degree at this or any other institution.

I further declare that the work contained in this thesis reflects my personal research, conducted under the supervision of Rev. Dr Yaw Odame Gyau, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Master's degree in Strategic Public Relations Management at the University of Media Arts and Communication- Institute of Journalism (UniMAC-IJ).

Signed:



Date: 3RD December, 2025

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I, Rev. Dr Yaw Odame Gyau confirm that I have supervised the research work reported in this thesis titled "*Towards influencer marketing campaigns of single-use plastics and the impact on behavioural change.*" I have read the final submission and I am satisfied that it meets the requirements of the Master of Arts programme at UNIMAC-IJ. I approve this thesis for submission.

Supervisor's Name: Rev. Dr Yaw Odame Gyau

Signature:



Date: 11th December, 2025

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of social media influencer campaigns in promoting behavioural change toward the reduction of single-use plastics in Ghana. With increasing concern about plastic pollution and its impact on the environment, influencers have become important voices in sustainability conversations, especially among young and active social media users. To understand how these campaigns, shape public behaviour, an online survey was administered to 200 social media users who follow or engage with sustainability-related content. The questionnaire measured four main constructs: awareness of plastic pollution, attitudes toward sustainable behaviour, levels of engagement with influencer content, and perceptions of influencer credibility and effectiveness.

The data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression to assess the relationships and predictive strength of these variables. The findings showed that respondents who perceived influencer campaigns as credible, relatable, and effective were more likely to adopt sustainable habits. Positive attitudes toward environmental protection and strong perceptions of message effectiveness emerged as the strongest predictors of behavioural change.

The results highlight the importance of authenticity, emotional appeal, and consistent messaging in driving environmental action through digital platforms. Influencers who communicate in relatable and encouraging ways appear to motivate practical eco-friendly behaviour among their audiences. However, the study was limited by the use of convenience sampling, which may affect the extent to which the findings represent all social media users in Ghana. Despite this limitation, the study offers valuable insights into how influencer marketing can support national and global sustainability efforts.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study:

Although convenient and affordable, the excessive use of single-use plastics has, for decades, contributed to plastic, ocean and environmental pollution. The phenomenon has become one of the major environmental challenges of the 21st century. It is noteworthy that, globally, plastic production exceeds 400 million metric tonnes annually with an estimated 8 million metric tonne entering the oceans annually (United Nations Environment Programme, 2022).

Manufacturing over 84million tonnes of plastics every year, and with only 9.5% of that being recycled as of 2023 (World Economic Forum), Ghana contributes significantly to this pollution.

Every day, huge amounts of plastic waste including; water sachets, polythene bags, bottles, straws, and food wrappers are thrown away carelessly, resulting in clogged drains, flooding, and contamination of water bodies especially in the urban centres of the nation. Also, an estimated 250,000 metric tonnes of plastic wastes from Ghana are released into the Atlantic Ocean annually, exacerbating marine pollution (Oteng-Ababio, 2020).

Despite policy initiatives to manage plastic waste, such as Ghana's Revised National Plastics Management Policy (2020) issued by the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), the nation continues to grapple with widespread use of single-use plastics.

Even though, civil societies, individuals and environmental agencies have played their parts by educating, driving attitudinal change, and helping improve waste management, there is generally a lack of understanding of the long-term environmental and health impacts of the phenomenon.

The little success they have achieved has necessitated the need for a different approach, utilizing social media influencers and celebrities. Studies such as that of (Suryaputra et al 2024)

show that social media influencer and public figure-led online campaigns can be used to shape public opinion regarding sustainability and encourage people to adopt sustainable behaviours.

Celebrities such as Joselyn Dumas, and John Dumelo in Ghana have in the past used their following to promote social causes, including environmental sustainability. However, the effectiveness of such campaigns, especially those aimed at reducing plastic use, is underexplored. Over the past few years, environmental clean-up teams such as the "BusStopBoyz" have spearheaded the "less plastic" movement, educating citizens on recycling and proper disposal of plastic bottles as well as distilling choked drains.

In line with the growing concern of plastic waste and the influence of celebrities and social media influencers, this study aims to discover how influencer marketing campaigns can be used to encourage behavioural change towards single-use plastics in Ghana.

The goal is to drive more Ghanaians to adopt eco-friendly options such as paper packaging, curbing over-reliance on plastics that end up in the trash or on the streets after a single use.

1.1 Purpose of The Study

The objective of this study is to establish the ability of influencers to impact single-use plastics reduction in Ghana. Specifically, this study will establish whether the activities of Ghanaian social media influencers and celebrities alter consumer attitudes and habits towards waste plastics. Finally, using Public Relations (PR) strategies such as two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig & Grunig, 1992), this study, by encouraging feedback will explore the best campaigns strategies to be used.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

1. Problem Setting

The phenomenon of plastic pollution has led to choked drainage channels, increased flooding, water body pollution, livestock and marine life contamination. The growing use of plastics,

combined with inadequate waste management infrastructure and limited recycling options, continues to worsen the situation.

In addition, according to a report by (Chamas et al 2020), “media estimates of how long it takes for plastic bags to break down are in either of two groups: 10–20 years (20) or 500–1000 years, (21) while that for "plastic" bottles is estimated at well over 70 to 450 years. Some media have reported that some plastics do not break down at all”, which is even worse for the environment and for future generations.

With majority of products in Ghana packaged in plastics, all these pose toxic risk to health through inhalation, physical contact or ingestion as revealed in various studies by (Hliseníková et al., 2020), (Gray et al., 2006; Chou et al., 2009; Reddy et al., 2006; Pednekar et al., 2018; Ventrice et al., 2013). It found that, “phthalates, one of the chemicals used in the production of plastics can affect the reproductive system of women and men and have been shown to reduce sperm motility and concentration in men, causing malformations like testicular dysgenesis, while in women, they cause early puberty, endometriosis, and polycystic ovary syndrome.”

Nonetheless, the majority of Ghanaians still employ the use of plastics where even buying a small GHS5 biscuit from a vendor is wrapped in a polythene bag. Changing people's behaviour towards using less plastic has been challenging, and conventional environmental campaigns, as important as they are, mostly do not catch the attention of the general public, especially the youth.

1.3 Prior Research Efforts

Several studies in Ghana such as (Akuoko et al 2023) and (Awewomom et al 2024) have explored plastic waste management, environmental education, and socio-economic impacts of pollution. Efforts that have been made by the MESTI under the 'National Plastic Management Policy 2020' and the 'Plastic Not Seen' campaign 2024, universities, and institutions including

Plastic Punch and Green Africa Youth Organisation have worked to highlight technical and policy-centric sides of the plastic problem.

(Andoh et al 2025) also examined; “Ghana's environmental law and waterbody protection: A critical assessment of plastic pollution regulations.” (Abrokwah et al 2024) also explored; “Achieving sustainable source reduction of marine litter for ocean conservation in West Africa: Insights from single-use plastic consumers in Liberia.”

In the book, social media communication and how it influences consumer behaviour perception on, environmental sustainability and the role of social media influencers by Amoako et al (2019).

(Munaro et al 2024) also explored the Impact of Influencers on Sustainable Consumption: A Systematic Literature Review. (Igbal et al 2024) also explored the role of Green Influencers: The Power of Social Media in Shaping Eco-Conscious Communities. This study has also been explored in Malaysia by researchers such as; (Shafie et al 2024) under; “Innovating Community Engagement: The Role of Micro-Influencers in Promoting Sustainable Behaviours among Malaysian Millennials.”

In addition, (Bobaci & Nespoli 2025) examined My Product, Your Green Choice: Exploring The Interplay Between Influencer’s Sustainability Communication and Green Marketing Strategies On TikTok.

In the recent years, influencer marketing has been recognized across the globe as a powerful driver of consumer attitudes in health, fashion, politics and beauty. However, there have been fewer studies that have examined how the public's behaviour and attitude regarding single-use plastics can be influenced by reliable Ghanaian celebrities like Nana Ama Mcbrown, or social media influencers such as Dulcie, Mitch Brothers, Juliana Amoateng, BusStopBoyz, Gisella, Quitachie, Deaconess Abokomah, DanceGod, and others. These individuals combined, can reach over a billion audience with just one post and have been behind some music, events and

beauty trends. However, their use in environmental activism, particularly within the Ghanaian setting, is yet to be well established and studied.

1.4 Stating the Problem

Adam et al. (2021) examined attitudes and behaviours toward single-use plastics in Accra and Cape Coast, concluding that policymakers and campaigns are often limited by a lack of nuanced, context-specific understanding, which reduces their overall impact. This underscores the need for deeper insight into strategies that can effectively influence public behaviour.

Also, a 2023 study in *Frontiers in Psychology* explored how “non-green” influencers (i.e., mainstream influencers) can use authenticity and dynamic norms to credibly reduce single-use plastics. It found that such strategies enhance post credibility and persuasive power.

This goes to show that influencer campaigns can work, but need Ghanaian culturally relevant strategies to work. However, there is the lack of research especially using the mixed-method approach. This lack of research limits the design of campaigns that could be more relatable, culturally relevant, and impactful.

1.5 Identifying a Gap

The deficit in literature is that there has not been much studied on influencer marketing as a plastic pollution behaviour change strategy in Ghana. Though influencer campaigns are being applied more and more in commercial and health settings, very little is known about how these campaigns operate when used on environmental causes, especially among young people. In addition, most of the environmental studies in Ghana have focused on technical measures, policy tools, and waste management systems, and little attention has been given to communication measures, public relations or public involvement tools.

This research will bridge that gap by examining the Ghanaian influencers' role in single-use plastics campaign efforts, the message they convey, how the audience receives it, and whether there is any impact (or not) on public behaviour.

1.6 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to examine the role of influencer marketing in promoting behavioural change regarding single-use plastics in Ghana, assessing its potential effectiveness in raising awareness, shaping consumer attitudes, and encouraging sustainable practices.

1.7 Specific Objectives (Using Bloom's Taxonomy bottom to top approach)

- **Examine** public perceptions of influencer-led campaigns by measuring response patterns using survey data.
- **Assess** the extent to which influencers' use of social media platforms predicts sustainable consumption and encourages behavioural change.
- **Analyze** the statistical relationship between campaign message framing and audience behavioural change.
- **Evaluate** the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns on consumer reduction of single-use plastics through quantitative measures.
- **Propose** a framework for designing more impactful influencer-led environmental campaigns, based on the statistical findings of this study.

1.8 Research Questions

1. What are the public perceptions of influencer-led campaigns as reflected in response patterns?

2. To what extent does influencers' use of social media platforms predict sustainable consumption and behavioural change?
3. What is the relationship between campaign message framing and audience behavioural change?
4. How effective are influencer marketing campaigns in reducing consumer use of single-use plastics?

1.9 Research Hypotheses

- **H₁:** Individuals exposed to influencer-led environmental campaigns demonstrate significantly higher awareness of single-use plastic pollution compared to those not exposed.

H₀: There is no significant difference in awareness levels between those exposed to influencer-led campaigns and those not exposed.

- **H₂:** Higher levels of engagement with sustainability-related influencer content (likes, shares, comments) are positively associated with reduced use of single-use plastics.

H₀: Engagement levels with influencer content are not significantly associated with reduced use of single-use plastics.

- **H₃:** Influencer campaigns that use emotional appeals (e.g., guilt, fear, hope, humour) are more effective in driving behavioural change compared to campaigns that use purely informational messages.

H₀: There is no significant difference in behavioural change between emotional appeal campaigns and informational campaigns.

- **H₄:** Perceived credibility and authenticity of influencers significantly predict behavioural change regarding single-use plastics.

H₀: Perceived credibility and authenticity of influencers do not significantly predict behavioural change regarding single-use plastics.

- **H₅:** Celebrity influencers (actors, musicians, media personalities) have a stronger impact on behavioural change than micro-influencers (environmental activists).
- H₀:** There is no significant difference in the impact of celebrity influencers and micro-influencers on behavioural change.

1.10 Methodology

Research Philosophy (Paradigm)

This study is grounded in the **positivist paradigm**, which emphasizes objectivity, quantifiable data, and empirical testing of hypotheses. Positivism assumes that reality is stable and can be observed and described from an objective viewpoint without interfering with the phenomena being studied. It is therefore suitable for this research, which seeks to measure the extent to which influencer marketing campaigns affect awareness, attitudes, and behavioural change towards single-use plastics in Ghana. By using surveys and statistical analysis, the study applies a scientific approach to understanding the relationship between influencer-led campaigns and public behaviour.

It is noteworthy that ontologically, positivism assumes that reality is objective and independent of human perception; hence, plastic pollution and influencer behaviour are measurable phenomena. Epistemologically, knowledge is obtained through quantifiable data and statistical analysis, rather than subjective interpretation. Axiologically, the research maintains objectivity and neutrality, ensuring that personal values do not interfere with the collection and analysis of data. Methodologically, this justifies the use of a quantitative survey design for hypothesis testing.

1.11 Research Design

This study employs a descriptive survey design, which is widely used in social science research to describe opinions, attitudes, and behaviours of a population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018;

Babbie, 2021). This design is appropriate because it allows the research to systematically collect quantitative data from a large population, summarise responses, and analyse statistical relationships between variables. It also supports hypothesis testing, making it useful for examining the influence of social media influencer campaigns on consumer behaviour. A survey is also cost-effective and time-efficient, especially as data will be gathered through online tools such as Google Forms. Quantitative survey methods are particularly suitable for examining the relationship between influencer-led campaigns and behavioural change, as they provide measurable evidence of communication effectiveness (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014).

Quantitative Component

There will be a self-completion closed questionnaire administered to respondents for the quantitative collection of data on public exposure to influencer campaigns, attitudes, and self-reported behaviour change. The data will be utilised in testing the hypothesis as well as in the determination of trends in attitudes and practices among demographic groups.

Population and Sampling

The target population includes:

1. Ghanaian social media users across various demographics, aged 18 and above.
2. Public figures and influencers who have engaged in environmental advocacy in the past, particularly on plastic waste.
3. Environmental campaign designers or communications officers from NGOs and government institutions.
4. Public Relations persons.

Sampling Size

The study will target a sample size of at least 200 respondents. This number is considered appropriate for a master's-level quantitative study as it provides sufficient statistical power for

meaningful analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The sample size ensures that findings can be generalised to the wider population of Ghanaian social media users within reasonable confidence limits. The target was also informed by previous studies on environmental behaviour and influencer marketing, which relied on similar sample ranges to draw valid conclusions (Poortinga, Whitmarsh, & Suffolk, 2013; Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2018).

Sampling Method

Convenience sampling was used to select respondents for this study. Participants were social media users in Ghana who voluntarily responded to an online survey link shared across various platforms. This method allowed for the collection of a sufficient sample from the target population in a practical and timely manner.

Data Collection Methods

Data will be collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture quantitative responses. The questionnaire will be administered electronically through Google Forms and distributed via social media platforms. This approach increases accessibility and convenience for respondents.

The questionnaire will consist of close-ended questions, including Likert-scale items, to measure variables such as:

- Awareness of single-use plastic pollution.
- Exposure to influencer-led campaigns.
- Perceptions of influencer credibility and authenticity.
- Attitudes towards single-use plastics.
- Self-reported behavioural change.

The use of structured and standardised questions will ensure consistency, comparability and ease of statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, thus; summarizing the data by Frequencies (How many people gave a particular answer).

Percentages (What portion of the total each answer represents) are also shown.

Inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression, will be used to test the relationships and predictive effects of awareness, attitude, engagement, and perceived effectiveness on behavioural change, providing empirical evidence for the study's hypotheses despite the use of convenience sampling.

Ethical Considerations

The study will ensure that participants are informed of their consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Participants will be made aware of their right to withdraw at any stage. No personal identifiers such as names or contact information will be collected.

Limitations of the Methodology

This study recognises certain limitations:

- **Response bias:** Some participants may provide socially desirable responses rather than reflecting their actual behaviour.
- **Internet accessibility:** Reliance on online surveys may exclude individuals with limited internet access.
- **Sample size:** Although 200 respondents are targeted, achieving this number may be challenging.
- **Geographical scope:** The study is limited to Ghana and may not reflect wider West African or global contexts.

- **Behavioural measurement:** Self-reported behaviour may not always reflect actual behavioural change.

Despite these challenges, the methodology provides a rigorous and structured framework for examining the relationship between influencer-led campaigns and behavioural change regarding single-use plastics in Ghana.

1.12 Significance of The Study

This research is both theoretically and practically applicable in contributing to single-use plastic behaviour change conversation in Ghana. Theoretically, the research draws on communication models like the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo 1986) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1960s) in understanding how influencer postings can alter long-term environmental behaviour.

It also provides context to PR theories including the Excellence Theory (Grunig & Grunig 1992), Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers 1982) and the Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw 1972). While influencer marketing has been extensively studied in business and health promotion, its application in environmental behaviour change, particularly in an African setting, is under-researched. This research offers a model of how Ghanaian audiences respond to internet sustainability messages founded on persuasive communication theory.

Aside from its theoretical contribution, this research has practical applications to influencers, environmentalists, and industry players interested in advancing plastic waste reduction efforts.

The study also can be used by environmentalists and NGOs to inform effective social media campaigns that will appeal to Ghanaians, enhance engagement in sustainable consumption habits, and encourage more people to get involved. Again, companies invested in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives can integrate influencer-based campaigns into their own

sustainability strategies, positioning themselves as players in resolving environmental sustainability problem.

From a policy perspective, this study gives evidence-based insights to inform Ghana's plastic waste management policy. Environmental sustainability interventions led by the government can incorporate findings from influencer-led campaigns into behaviour change programmes, thus enabling public communication strategies to be effective and comprehensible.

Methodologically, the research adds to the literature on behavioural change through the quantitative method design. Through this, the study will establish a robust framework for examining the intersection of influencer marketing, environmental communication and behavioural change.

1.12 Scope of The Study

The scope of the research explores the impact of social media influencers on influencing behavioural change of single-use plastics in Ghana with specific emphasis on how online campaign advocacy shapes public opinion and consumer behaviour. Since plastic pollution is a significant environmental issue, especially in urban centres such as Accra and Kumasi, the study will explore if messaging from influencers creates awareness, engagement, and drives behaviour towards sustainability.

The aim of the study is to evaluate how influencers convey their environmental messaging, in terms of strategies such as personal narrative, fear appeal, or social proof, and whether these tactics are effective in modifying public attitudes and behaviours. Data will be gathered via a quantitative method strategy, with quantitative surveys to approximate audience awareness and behavioural inclinations.

The research spans the last five years of environmental campaigns, and thus it is highly relevant to contemporary digital advocacy topics. The findings are expected to benefit influencers,

NGOs, policymakers, and businesses who wish to design more impactful influencer-led campaigns that promote environmental sustainability. The scope is also within the context of the Ghana as a whole.

1.13 Limitations of the Study

While the methodology section highlights limitations relating to data collection and analysis, this section outlines broader constraints that affect the overall study. The research is limited geographically to Ghana and no other parts of the world. As a result, the findings may not fully capture the experiences or be generalised to other countries.

The study also focuses specifically on the role of social media influencers in shaping awareness and behaviour toward single-use plastics. Other influential factors, such as government regulations, corporate policies, and traditional media campaigns, are acknowledged but remain outside the scope of this research. In addition, the timeframe of focus is restricted to the last five years of influencer-led environmental campaigns, which may not reflect longer-term trends or earlier initiatives.

Regarding methodology, while surveys and interviews offer a snapshot of audience perceptions, it may not fully reveal long-term shifts in habits. A lengthy study following behavioural trends over an extended period would be more effective but is beyond the scope of this research.

External factors such as government policies, misinformation, economic conditions, and corporate greenwashing also pose challenges. Regulatory issues may also hinder the effectiveness of influencer campaigns. Economic barriers, such as the affordability of sustainable alternatives, may also prevent people from reducing single-use plastic consumption despite increased awareness. Additionally, scepticism toward influencer motives or misinformation surrounding plastic reduction efforts could affect audience trust and participation.

Finally, as the study relies on self-reported perceptions and behaviours, there may be differences between what respondents say and their actual practices. These broader limitations, however, do not diminish the relevance of the study but instead provide direction for future research to explore additional contexts, actors, and timeframes.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter introduced the study by presenting the background, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, and hypotheses. It outlined how the increasing challenge of single-use plastic pollution has prompted the use of influencer-led campaigns as a communication strategy in Ghana. The chapter further highlighted the purpose of the study, which is to assess the extent to which such campaigns shape awareness, attitudes, and behavioural change among social media users.

The chapter also discussed the research methodology, which is rooted in the positivist paradigm and applies a descriptive survey design. Using structured questionnaires and statistical analysis, the study will test the stated hypotheses and generate quantitative data to provide objective insights into the influence of social media influencers on behavioural change regarding single-use plastics.

Additionally, the significance of the study was presented, emphasising its theoretical, practical, and policy relevance. The scope of the study was clearly defined to focus on social media users in Ghana, while limitations such as response bias, geographical coverage, and online access challenges were also acknowledged.

Overall, Chapter One has laid the foundation for the study, justifying the need for research into influencer-led environmental communication and setting the stage for the literature review in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

A review of existing literature is an important component of academic research because it provides a foundation for understanding the concepts, theories, and empirical evidence that guide a study. It allows researchers to identify what is already known about a subject, highlight gaps that remain, and justify why a new study is necessary. In this research, the literature review is especially important because it brings together knowledge on three major areas: social media influencer marketing, environmental communication, and behavioural change in relation to single-use plastics.

Globally, the use of social media influencers has grown beyond the promotion of products to include advocacy for social and environmental causes. At the same time, single-use plastics have become one of the most pressing environmental challenges of the twenty-first century. While governments, civil society organisations, and international agencies have developed policies and campaigns to address plastic waste, the role of influencers as communicators and change agents in this context is still developing, particularly in Africa. It is therefore important to critically examine what the literature says about how influencers shape awareness, attitudes, and behaviour in relation to environmental sustainability.

This review focuses on three dimensions. First, it explores theoretical perspectives that explain how people are influenced by media, persuasion, and innovation. Second, it discusses key concepts such as influencer credibility, message framing, awareness, attitudes, and behavioural change in relation to single-use plastics. Third, it reviews empirical studies conducted both globally and in Ghana to provide evidence of the effectiveness of influencer-led campaigns.

Finally, a conceptual framework is presented to show the hypothesised relationships among variables in this study.

Through this structured review, the study identifies a research gap and develops a clear foundation for the quantitative analysis presented in later chapters.

2.1 Theoretical Review

The choice of theoretical foundations is important in explaining how and why social media influencers may influence behavioural change regarding single-use plastics. This study draws on five key theories: Social Cognitive Theory, the Elaboration Likelihood Model, Agenda-Setting Theory, Diffusion of Innovations Theory, and Excellence Theory. Together, these perspectives provide a multidimensional understanding of communication, persuasion, and behavioural change.

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986)

Social Cognitive Theory emphasises the role of observational learning, imitation, and modelling in human behaviour. According to Bandura (1986), individuals learn not only through direct experience but also by observing the behaviours and outcomes of others. In the context of social media, influencers serve as role models whose sustainable practices can be observed and imitated by followers. For example, when influencers consistently use reusable bags or water bottles, they provide both the knowledge and motivation for audiences to adopt similar practices. The theory is relevant to this study because it supports the link between exposure and engagement with influencers and subsequent changes in audience awareness, attitudes, and behaviours toward plastic reduction.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986)

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) explains how individuals process persuasive messages through two routes: the central route and the peripheral route. Under the central route,

individuals carefully consider message arguments, leading to lasting attitude and behaviour change. Under the peripheral route, individuals rely on cues such as source credibility, attractiveness, or popularity. In influencer-led campaigns, both routes are relevant: audiences may be persuaded by strong informational content (central route) or by the perceived credibility and authenticity of the influencer (peripheral route). The ELM therefore provides a basis for testing how message framing and influencer credibility affect behavioural outcomes.

Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972)

Agenda-Setting Theory posits that the media do not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about. By giving prominence to particular issues, media sources shape public perceptions of their importance. Applied to social media, influencers who consistently highlight the dangers of single-use plastics elevate the issue on the public agenda. Followers who frequently encounter such messages are more likely to prioritise plastic reduction in their everyday decisions. This theory underpins the study's focus on awareness, which is considered an important precursor to behavioural change.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 1983)

Diffusion of Innovations Theory explains how new ideas, practices, or products spread within a social system. The process involves innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. Influencers often function as early adopters and opinion leaders, demonstrating new practices such as carrying reusable shopping bags or refusing plastic straws. Their visibility accelerates the diffusion of such practices among followers. This theory is particularly relevant to understanding the pathways through which behavioural change spreads within communities influenced by social media campaigns.

Excellence Theory (Grunig & Grunig, 1992)

Excellence Theory in public relations highlights the importance of strategic, two-way communication between organisations and their stakeholders. In the context of sustainability campaigns, influencers act as communication agents for advocacy groups, businesses, or governmental bodies. They create opportunities for dialogue through comments, shares, and interactive content, embodying the principles of symmetrical communication. By framing environmental issues in relatable ways, influencers strengthen the effectiveness of campaigns. This theory reinforces the significance of studying influencers not just as media personalities but as strategic communicators whose efforts can support wider societal goals.

2.2 Conceptual Review

The conceptual review focuses on the key constructs relevant to this study. These constructs include influencer marketing, single-use plastics, exposure and engagement with influencers, credibility and authenticity, message framing, awareness and attitudes, and behavioural change. Each concept is defined and discussed in relation to how it contributes to understanding the role of influencers in shaping sustainable consumption behaviour.

2.3.1 Influencer Marketing and Sustainability

Influencer marketing refers to the use of individuals with large or specialised followings on social media to promote ideas, products, or behaviours (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2018). Traditionally associated with fashion, beauty, and consumer goods, influencer marketing has increasingly been used for social and environmental advocacy (Munaro, Barcelos, & Maffezzolli, 2024). By leveraging personal branding and direct engagement with audiences, influencers can translate sustainability messages into relatable, everyday practices. Recent studies also show that influencers play a growing role in shaping sustainable consumption patterns (Vilkaite-Vaitone, 2024). In Ghana, celebrities and lifestyle influencers have been featured in campaigns by NGOs and advocacy groups to reduce plastic waste (Oteng-

Ababio, 2020). This study conceptualises influencer marketing as a communication strategy capable of shaping awareness, attitudes, and behaviour regarding single-use plastics.

Historical Evolution of Influencer Marketing

Originally, endorsements were limited to traditional celebrities in TV and print. With the rise of Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, micro-influencers and activists gained recognition.

Environmental campaigns now leverage “eco-influencers” who combine advocacy with lifestyle branding.

Single-Use Plastics

Single-use plastics are disposable items such as bags, straws, cutlery, and bottles that are intended for one-time use before disposal. They are a major contributor to global plastic waste, posing significant threats to ecosystems and public health (UNEP, 2022). In Ghana, reports by MESTI (2020) highlight challenges in waste management, including limited recycling facilities and widespread reliance on disposable plastics. Despite government proposals to regulate plastic use, public adoption of alternatives has been slow (Adam, Walker, Clayton, & Bezerra, 2021). This makes it crucial to explore how communication strategies, including influencer campaigns, can encourage behavioural change to reduce reliance on single-use plastics.

Exposure and Engagement with Influencers

Exposure refers to the frequency with which individuals come across influencer content, while engagement includes actions such as likes, shares, comments, and following (Casaló et al., 2018). High exposure increases message salience, while engagement reflects deeper interaction with the message. Recent studies confirm that influencer source factors and content characteristics significantly influence consumer engagement and behaviour (Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 2024). In this study, exposure and engagement are treated as independent variables hypothesised to influence awareness, attitudes, and behavioural change toward single-use plastics.

Credibility and Authenticity of Influencers

Credibility encompasses the perceived trustworthiness, expertise, and authenticity of influencers. Audiences are more likely to accept information from influencers who appear genuine and knowledgeable (Buvár, Zsila, & Orosz, 2023). Authenticity, the sense that influencers are motivated by personal values rather than financial gain, strengthens this credibility. In the Ghanaian context, credibility also depends on cultural relatability and alignment with local experiences (Amoako, Coffie, & Ocloo, 2023). This construct is conceptualised as an independent variable with a direct effect on behavioural change.

Other scholarly definitions of credibility

Author(s)	Year	Definition	Focus Area
Hovland & Weiss	1951	Credibility is the extent to which a communicator is perceived as trustworthy and expert.	General communication & persuasion
Ohanian	1990	Credibility consists of three dimensions: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise.	Celebrity endorsement & marketing
Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez	2018	Credible influencers are those perceived as authentic, honest, and consistent in their content.	Social media influencer marketing
Ki, Cuevas, Chong & Lim	2020	Influencer credibility is determined by the congruence between influencer identity and the promoted cause or product.	Instagram & environmental advocacy
Djafarova & Trofimenko	2019	Credibility in digital spaces is linked to relatability and perceived similarity between influencer and audience.	Consumer behaviour on social media

Message Framing

Message framing refers to the way information is presented to an audience. Environmental campaigns typically use two strategies: emotional framing (e.g., fear, hope, guilt, humour) and informational framing (e.g., statistics, step-by-step solutions). Research has shown that emotional framing can generate immediate behavioural intentions, while informational framing supports long-term awareness and sustained change (Poortinga, Whitmarsh, & Suffolk, 2013). In a recent study, content characteristics in influencer posts were found to significantly shape engagement and downstream behaviour (Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 2024). In this study, message framing is treated as an independent variable hypothesised to predict behavioural change.

Awareness and Attitudes

Awareness involves knowledge about environmental problems and possible solutions, while attitudes reflect personal beliefs and evaluations of sustainable practices. According to Agenda-Setting Theory, awareness often precedes shifts in attitude, which are critical for behavioural change (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Influencers contribute to awareness by drawing attention to plastic-related issues, and to attitudes by shaping how audiences evaluate their own consumption choices. Recent research on recycling behaviour shows that environmental attitudes play a mediating role between situational factors and sustainable practices (Journal of Marketing Analytics, 2024). In this study, awareness and attitudes are conceptualised as mediating variables linking influencer communication to behavioural change.

Behavioural Change

Behavioural change refers to modifications in individual actions, particularly the reduction in the use of single-use plastics. Examples include carrying reusable bags, refusing plastic straws, or using refillable bottles. Behavioural change is the ultimate dependent variable in this study, reflecting the effectiveness of influencer-led campaigns. Previous studies in Ghana confirm that

communication interventions can influence consumer segments on plastic use (Adam et al., 2021). More recent evidence shows that influencer credibility and importance directly predict sustainable consumption behaviour (Vilkaite-Vaitone, 2024; Adaba, Frimpong, & Mwainyekule, 2025). This study measures behavioural change through self-reported practices, providing quantitative evidence of influencer effectiveness in Ghana.

2.3 Knowledge Gap

The literature reviewed highlights significant progress in understanding how communication strategies influence consumer behaviour, particularly in relation to sustainability. Casaló, Flavián, and Ibáñez-Sánchez (2018) demonstrated the power of influencers on Instagram to shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, emphasising the role of opinion leadership and credibility in influencing audiences. Similarly, Poortinga, Whitmarsh, and Suffolk (2013) showed through the case of the Welsh plastic bag levy that targeted communication can not only change compliance behaviour but also produce broader behavioural spillover into other sustainable practices. These studies confirm that communication, whether mediated by influencers or policy, can directly influence consumer awareness, attitudes, and behaviour.

In Ghana, Adam et al. (2021) segmented consumers based on their attitudes and behaviours toward single-use plastics, identifying clear differences in levels of awareness and readiness to adopt alternatives. Their findings revealed that communication interventions could help shift behavioural patterns, suggesting the importance of targeted strategies. Complementing this, Amoako, Akomea-Frimpong, and Adomako (2019) established that social media influencers are already shaping environmental sustainability perceptions in Ghana, particularly among younger, urban audiences. Their later work with Coffie and Ocloo (2023) further highlighted that influencer credibility and authenticity strengthen the effectiveness of sustainability messaging. At the policy level, Oteng-Ababio (2020) documented Ghana's structural challenges in plastic waste management, pointing to weak enforcement, inadequate recycling

facilities, and overdependence on single-use plastics. These insights collectively highlight both the importance of communication and the urgency of innovative solutions.

Despite these contributions, key gaps remain in the literature. First, much of the global evidence on influencers and sustainability is concentrated in Western or Asian contexts (e.g., Casaló et al., 2018; Munaro, Barcelos, & Maffezzoli, 2024). While these studies provide valuable insights into influencer credibility, message framing, and consumer engagement, their findings may not fully translate to Ghana's sociocultural environment, where consumption patterns, media use, and cultural expectations differ significantly. This limits the generalisability of existing research and creates the need for empirical studies situated in West Africa.

Second, although Ghanaian scholarship has examined attitudes toward plastics (Adam et al., 2021) and the influence of social media communication more generally (Amoako et al., 2019; 2023), there is limited quantitative research that directly tests the causal relationships between influencer-led campaigns and behavioural outcomes. Specifically, there is little evidence on how exposure to influencers, the credibility and authenticity of their messages, and the framing of sustainability content interact to shape awareness, attitudes, and ultimately behavioural change. Most existing studies in Ghana rely on descriptive or qualitative approaches, leaving a methodological gap in terms of robust statistical testing.

Third, existing studies often treat communication as a broad category without isolating the role of influencers as distinct agents of change. For instance, while policy interventions such as plastic use bans or levies have been studied (Poortinga et al., 2013), little is known about how influencers might complement or substitute for weak enforcement regimes in contexts like Ghana. Influencers, by virtue of their cultural relevance and reach, could play a unique role in shaping norms and practices around plastic use, but this remains underexplored in empirical literature.

Fourth, few studies have examined the mediating roles of awareness and attitudes in the relationship between influencer communication and behavioural change. While Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) suggest that awareness and attitudes are necessary precursors to action, empirical studies linking these variables in the Ghanaian sustainability context are scarce. This limits understanding of the psychological and behavioural mechanisms through which influencer campaigns may drive sustainable consumption.

Finally, there is limited research that integrates influencer marketing with broader environmental communication strategies in the Global South. While Munaro et al. (2024) provide a global synthesis of evidence, few studies have contextualised influencer-led campaigns within countries facing both rapid urbanisation and weak policy enforcement, as is the case in Ghana. This leaves unanswered questions about how best to design influencer-led interventions that resonate with Ghanaian audiences and produce measurable reductions in single-use plastic use.

This study seeks to address these gaps by providing quantitative evidence on the effectiveness of influencer-led campaigns in shaping behavioural change toward single-use plastics in Ghana. Specifically, it tests how exposure and engagement with influencers, the credibility and authenticity of their messages, and the framing of sustainability content influence awareness, attitudes, and behavioural change. By focusing on Ghana, the study situates itself within a context where communication is urgently needed to supplement weak policy enforcement and infrastructural limitations. It also contributes methodologically by using quantitative analysis to test hypothesised relationships, moving beyond descriptive accounts. Theoretically, it integrates concepts from media influence, persuasion, and behavioural change to develop a framework that explains how influencer-led campaigns can promote sustainable consumption in the Global South.

2.4 Empirical Review

A growing body of research has examined how communication strategies, including influencer-led campaigns and policy interventions, shape sustainable behaviour. Casaló, Flavián, and Ibáñez-Sánchez (2018) provide one of the earliest quantitative analyses of social media influencers' impact on consumer decision-making. Using survey data from Instagram users in Spain, they showed that influencers significantly shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Their findings demonstrate that perceived opinion leadership, credibility, and engagement with influencers can predict behavioural outcomes. Although their study focused on consumer goods, the mechanisms of influence they identified are equally applicable to sustainability campaigns, where influencers can mobilise audiences to adopt environmentally friendly practices such as reducing single-use plastics.

Poortinga, et al. (2013) examined the effects of environmental policy interventions on plastic bag usage in Wales through survey research. Their study measured not only compliance with the bag levy but also broader behavioural spill over, such as increased recycling and reduced reliance on other disposable products. They found that policy measures, when supported by effective communication, can shift public attitudes and trigger new sustainable behaviours. This is significant for the current study because it shows that targeted interventions, whether policy-driven or influencer-led, can move beyond raising awareness to actually altering everyday practices.

Adam, et al. (2021) investigated attitudes and behaviours toward single-use plastics in Ghana using survey data. They segmented consumers into different groups based on their responses, highlighting variations in awareness, attitudes, and willingness to adopt sustainable alternatives. Their study demonstrated that targeted communication interventions, such as advocacy or influencer-led campaigns, could help shift behavioural patterns among different audience groups. This provides direct evidence that communication is central to addressing

plastic use challenges in Ghana, thereby grounding the present study in a local empirical context.

Locally, Amoako, et al. (2019) examined how social media communication shapes consumer perceptions of environmental sustainability in Ghana. Their research, published in the *Journal of Marketing Perspectives*, found that influencers and online opinion leaders play an increasingly central role in framing sustainability issues for Ghanaian audiences. By focusing on young, urban consumers, their study demonstrated that social media content promoted by influencers can alter awareness levels and shape attitudes toward eco-friendly practices. This work supports the present study by showing that influencers are not only relevant in the Ghanaian context but are also already involved in environmental communication.

Building on this, Amoako et al. (2023) extended the analysis by examining how social media communication influences sustainability perceptions in business, with influencers acting as moderators in shaping public responses. Their findings showed that influencer credibility and authenticity significantly strengthened the relationship between sustainability messages and positive consumer attitudes. This suggests that influencers can amplify both awareness and acceptance of sustainability initiatives when they are perceived as genuine and trustworthy. For the present research, this provides valuable empirical support for including credibility and authenticity as core independent variables.

At the global level, Munaro, Barcelos, and Maffezzolli (2024) conducted a systematic review of studies on influencers and sustainable consumption, published in the *Journal of Cleaner Production*. Their review synthesised evidence across multiple contexts and concluded that influencer-led campaigns are consistently effective in shaping pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours. Importantly, they identified credibility, authenticity, and message framing as the most influential variables in determining the success of these campaigns. This review offers a

strong conceptual anchor for the present study, confirming that the independent variables under investigation have been validated by prior scholarship.

Buvár, Zsila, and Orosz (2023) added further depth to the understanding of credibility and authenticity in pro-environmental communication. Their study, published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, showed that even non-green influencers can successfully promote sustainable consumption if their messages emphasise dynamic social norms, such as portraying eco-friendly practices as increasingly common. By demonstrating that authenticity and perceived sincerity strengthen engagement, their work underscores the role of message strategy in enhancing influencer credibility. This aligns with the present study's conceptualisation of authenticity as a driver of behavioural change.

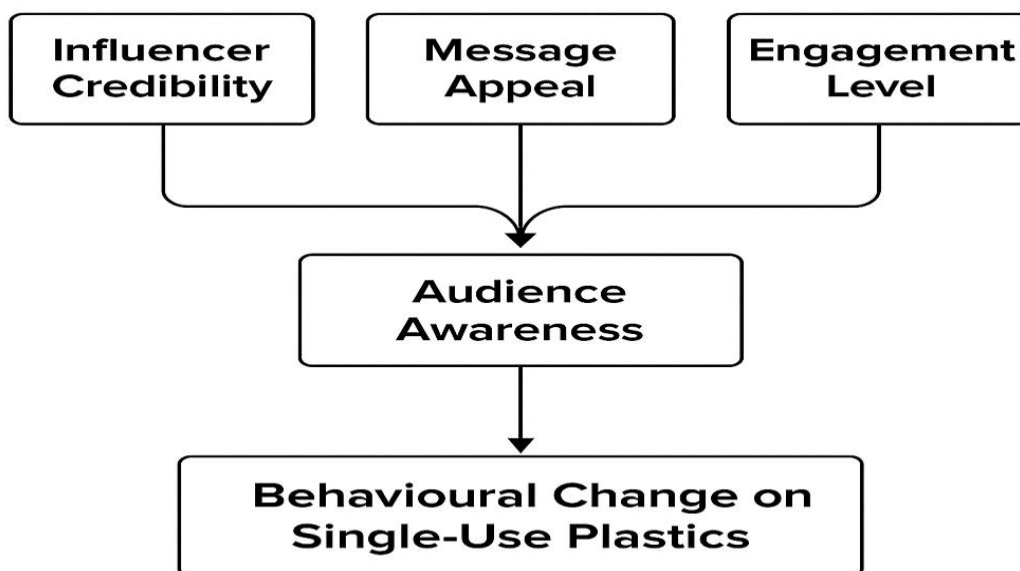
Finally, in Ghana, Oteng-Ababio (2020) analysed the risks and responses to marine plastic waste in Ghana, published in *Ocean & Coastal Management*. His research highlighted systemic gaps in regulation, infrastructure, and enforcement that make reliance on single-use plastics pervasive. While his work did not focus specifically on influencers, it emphasises the need for innovative communication approaches to complement regulatory measures. For the present study, this provides critical contextual justification: influencer-led campaigns represent a promising strategy to engage citizens directly in behavioural change, filling the gap left by limited enforcement capacity.

Together, these studies provide robust empirical grounding for the present research. They demonstrate that influencers have measurable effects on awareness, attitudes, and behaviour, that communication strategies are essential in amplifying policy interventions, and that in Ghana, targeted communication is crucial to addressing plastic pollution. Building on this foundation, the current study investigates how influencer credibility, message framing, and engagement shape awareness, attitudes, and behavioural change toward single-use plastics in Ghana.

These studies provide evidence that quantitative surveys are effective tools for assessing how campaigns influence awareness, attitudes, and behaviour. However, few studies have focused specifically on Ghana, influencers, and single-use plastics, which justifies the present study.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework integrates theories and variables identified in the review. The independent variables are exposure and engagement with influencers, influencer credibility and authenticity, and message framing. The mediating variables are awareness and attitudes toward plastic reduction. The dependent variable is behavioural change regarding single-use plastics.



- Exposure/Engagement → Awareness → Attitudes → Behavioural Change
- Credibility → Behavioural Change
- Message Framing → Behavioural Change

This framework directly reflects the study's hypotheses and research questions, making it suitable for quantitative testing.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter has examined the body of literature relevant to the study. It began by discussing theoretical perspectives that explain how influencer marketing can lead to behavioural change. Theories such as Social Cognitive Theory, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Agenda-Setting Theory, Diffusion of Innovations, and the Excellence Theory were reviewed to highlight the psychological, communicative, and social processes that shape the way audiences respond to influencer messages. Each theory was examined for its applicability to environmental communication, with emphasis on how influencers serve as opinion leaders who model behaviour, shape attitudes, set sustainability agendas, and diffuse new practices within communities.

The chapter also provided a conceptual review by defining and clarifying the key variables of the study. Concepts including exposure, engagement, credibility, message framing, awareness, and behavioural change were explored and linked to the influencer marketing process. These concepts were not only defined but also discussed in relation to sustainability campaigns, showing how influencers translate broad environmental goals into relatable lifestyle practices for their audiences.

The empirical review then presented evidence from global, regional, and local studies. International studies confirmed that influencer marketing campaigns are powerful tools for shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours, particularly when influencers are perceived as authentic and credible. Regional studies in Africa highlighted the role of cultural values and local contexts in shaping campaign effectiveness, while studies in Ghana revealed a growing but under-researched area where influencer-driven campaigns are used in social and environmental advocacy. The methodological approaches and limitations of these studies were also critiqued, which helped to identify gaps that this study aims to fill.

Finally, the chapter developed a conceptual framework that brings together the reviewed theories, concepts, and empirical insights. The framework illustrates the hypothesised relationships between influencer marketing campaigns and behavioural change, mediated by variables such as audience attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. This framework will guide the research methodology and provide the basis for testing the study's objectives in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted to achieve the objectives of the study on the role of influencer marketing campaigns in promoting behavioural change toward single-use plastics in Ghana. It describes the overall research approach, design, target population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, and procedures used in the study. The chapter also explains the methods employed for data analysis, as well as the reliability and validity measures, ethical considerations, and limitations of the methodology. The chosen methods were guided by the positivist research paradigm and quantitative research principles, ensuring that the study's findings are objective, measurable, and generalizable. This methodological framework provides a systematic foundation for investigating how awareness, attitude, engagement, and perceived effectiveness influence behavioural change in response to influencer-led environmental campaigns.

3.1 Research Paradigm

This study adopts the positivist research paradigm, which emphasizes objectivity, measurement, and the use of empirical data to explain social phenomena. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Babbie (2021), positivism assumes that reality is objective and can be observed, measured, and analyzed independently of human perception. It supports the application of scientific methods such as hypothesis testing and statistical analysis to establish cause-effect relationships. In this research, the positivist stance is justified because the study seeks to quantify the relationship between influencer-led campaigns and behavioural change toward single-use plastics in Ghana. Ontologically, positivism views reality as stable and measurable; epistemologically, it relies on observable evidence; and axiologically, it

upholds researcher neutrality. Thus, the paradigm aligns with the study's quantitative design, enabling systematic data collection and analysis to draw generalizable conclusions on public behaviour regarding environmental communication.

3.2 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach and descriptive survey design, which is widely recognized in quantitative research for its ability to systematically collect data that describe characteristics, attitudes, and behaviours of a population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Babbie, 2021). The design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to quantify and analyze relationships between variables—in this case, influencer-led campaigns and behavioural change regarding single-use plastics. Through structured questionnaires, the design captures participants' perceptions, awareness levels, and behavioural responses in a standardized manner, enabling statistical comparison and hypothesis testing. The descriptive approach also helps summarize large data sets into meaningful patterns, supporting valid and reliable generalizations about social media users in Ghana. Furthermore, the design is cost-effective and efficient for gathering data across diverse demographics online, aligning with the positivist paradigm's emphasis on objectivity, measurement, and replicability in generating empirical evidence on communication-driven environmental behaviour.

3.3 Population

The population for this study comprises Ghanaian university students who are social media users aged 18 years and above who are active on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter). This group represents the primary audience exposed to influencer marketing campaigns and is therefore relevant for assessing behavioural change towards single-use plastics. The population also includes public figures and influencers engaged in environmental advocacy, as well as communication officers and environmental campaign designers from relevant NGOs and public institutions. According to Creswell and

Creswell (2018), defining a clear population ensures that findings are contextually valid and generalizable. The focus on social media users is justified because they are key recipients of influencer content and play an active role in online behavioural trends. This population provides an appropriate basis for measuring awareness, perceptions, and behavioural responses influenced by sustainability campaigns within Ghana's digital communication environment.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study used a **convenience sampling technique** to select university students as respondents. This approach was suitable because the questionnaire link was shared openly on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and X, allowing individuals who were willing and available to participate. Convenience sampling is commonly used in online survey research because the population is large, widely dispersed and difficult to access through probability-based methods. It also makes it easier to reach active social media users who regularly engage with influencer content.

A total sample size of 200 respondents was targeted. This number provides enough data for meaningful quantitative analysis and allows for simple comparisons across basic demographic characteristics such as age, gender and educational level. The sample size is also consistent with previous studies on environmental behaviour and digital communication that used similar ranges. The technique helped the researcher gather diverse responses from social media users in Ghana to understand how influencer campaigns relate to awareness and behavioural change toward single-use plastics.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Data for this study was gathered using a structured questionnaire, which is suitable for quantitative research as it enables the collection of standardized and measurable responses (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). The questionnaire was administered electronically via Google Forms and distributed through major social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and

X (Twitter) to reach a broad and diverse audience. It consisted mainly of close-ended questions, including Likert-scale items, designed to capture variables such as awareness of single-use plastic pollution, exposure to influencer-led campaigns, perceived influencer credibility, and self-reported behavioural change. The online approach ensures accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and convenience for respondents. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), structured questionnaires are ideal for collecting quantifiable data suitable for statistical analysis. The design promotes consistency and comparability of responses, aligning with the positivist philosophy and ensuring objectivity in measuring the impact of influencer campaigns on public behaviour.

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

The collected quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations will be used to summarize participants' responses and present general trends in awareness, attitudes, and behavioural patterns (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These results will be illustrated through tables, graphs, and charts for clarity and easy interpretation. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, will then be applied to test the research hypotheses and determine the strength and direction of relationships between influencer-led campaigns and behavioural change towards single-use plastics. Statistical analysis will be performed using software such as SPSS or Microsoft Excel, ensuring precision and objectivity. This analytical approach aligns with the positivist paradigm by providing empirical evidence through measurable patterns, thereby allowing generalizations about the impact of influencer marketing on environmental behaviour among Ghanaian social media users.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the research results, this study upholds both reliability and validity principles. Reliability refers to the degree to which the research

instrument consistently produces similar results under comparable conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The questionnaire will undergo a pilot test involving 30 respondents with similar characteristics to the main sample. Feedback from the pilot will help refine ambiguous or biased questions, and internal consistency will be assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, where a coefficient of 0.70 or higher will indicate acceptable reliability. Validity, on the other hand, ensures that the instrument measures what it intends to measure. This will be achieved through content and construct validity, verified by expert review from academic supervisors and field specialists in public relations and environmental communication. These measures strengthen the study's methodological soundness and ensure credible, generalizable findings on influencer marketing and behavioural change in Ghana.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This study will strictly adhere to established ethical research principles to protect participants' rights and integrity of data. Respondents will be fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature of their participation before completing the questionnaire. Informed consent will be obtained electronically, and participants will retain the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, no personal identifiers such as names, phone numbers, or social media handles will be collected. Data will be securely stored and used solely for academic purposes. The study will also obtain ethical clearance from the University of Media Arts and Communication (UniMAC) Research directorate prior to data collection. According to Babbie (2021), maintaining ethical standards enhances trustworthiness and credibility in quantitative research. Therefore, every stage of the study—from data collection to reporting—will uphold honesty, transparency, and respect for human dignity.

3.8 Limitations of the Methodology

Although this study employs a robust quantitative design, certain methodological limitations may affect the scope and interpretation of findings. First, response bias may occur, as

participants might provide socially desirable answers rather than their true behaviour towards single-use plastics. Second, reliance on online surveys may exclude individuals without stable internet access, limiting inclusiveness across all demographic groups. Third, self-reported data may not always reflect actual behavioural change, as attitudes and actions can differ. Additionally, achieving the target sample size of 500 may present logistical challenges due to varying response rates. The study is also geographically limited to Ghana, which may restrict generalization to other contexts. Despite these challenges, the selected design ensures methodological rigor, objectivity, and consistency, providing reliable insights into how influencer marketing campaigns affect public awareness and behavioural change toward environmental sustainability.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the positivist research paradigm, descriptive survey design, population, sampling, data collection, and analysis methods. It also addressed ethical considerations, reliability, validity, and limitations. Collectively, these methodological procedures ensure objectivity, precision, and credibility in examining how influencer marketing influences behavioural change toward single-use plastics in Ghana.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of data collected for the study on the influence of social media influencer campaigns on behavioural change toward single-use plastics in Ghana. The analysis is guided by the research objectives and hypotheses outlined in Chapter One. Quantitative methods were employed to examine the relationships between the study variables awareness, attitude, engagement, perceived effectiveness, and behavioural change. The chapter is organized into five main sections: the demographic characteristics of respondents, descriptive statistics of the study variables, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and the discussion of findings. Each section provides evidence-based insights into how influencer marketing campaigns contribute to shaping environmental awareness, attitudes, and sustainable behavioural practices among Ghanaian social media users.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents to provide background information on the sample used for the study. Understanding these characteristics is important because demographic variables such as age, gender, education, and occupation often influence how individuals interact with social media content and respond to influencer-led environmental campaigns. The results therefore provide context for interpreting respondents' perceptions and behaviours toward single-use plastics, as well as the extent to which different groups are likely to engage with sustainability communication.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	150	42.9
	Female	200	57.1

Age	18–25 years	115	32.9
	26–35 years	150	42.9
	36–45 years	55	15.7
	Above 45 years	30	8.5
Education Level	Senior High	35	10.0
	Diploma	50	14.3
	Bachelor’s Degree	180	51.4
	Postgraduate	85	24.3
Occupation	Student	120	34.3
	Worker (Private/Public)	180	51.4
	Self-Employed	50	14.3
Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	150	42.9
	Female	200	57.1
Age	18–25 years	115	32.9
	26–35 years	150	42.9
	36–45 years	55	15.7
	Above 45 years	30	8.5
Education Level	Senior High	35	10.0
	Diploma	50	14.3
	Bachelor’s Degree	180	51.4
	Postgraduate	85	24.3
Occupation	Student	120	34.3
	Worker (Private/Public)	180	51.4
	Self-Employed	50	14.3

The majority of respondents were females (57.1%) and aged between 26–35 years (42.9%), representing the most digitally active demographic in Ghana. Most participants (75.7%) possessed tertiary education, which aligns with research suggesting that educated youth are

more engaged in sustainability-driven social media campaigns. This demographic distribution affirms that the sample represents an informed and active online audience.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

This section presents the descriptive analysis of the major constructs of the study—awareness, attitude, engagement, perceived effectiveness, and behavioural change. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize and explain the general patterns in respondents' answers, offering insight into how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each item measured on the Likert scale. These results provide the first level of understanding of how influencer marketing campaigns are shaping knowledge, beliefs, and practices regarding single-use plastics. They also serve as a foundation for further inferential analyses such as correlation and regression, which determine how these variables relate to one another.

4.5 Discussion of Findings (Hypothesis-Based)

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of influencer marketing campaigns in promoting behavioural change toward reducing single-use plastics in Ghana. The analysis focused on four objectives: examining public perceptions of influencer-led campaigns, assessing how influencers' social media content predicts sustainable behaviour, analyzing campaign message framing and emotional appeals, and evaluating the overall effectiveness of influencer campaigns. The findings indicate that influencer campaigns are an effective communication tool capable of influencing awareness, attitudes, engagement, perceived effectiveness, and behavioural patterns among social media users in Ghana.

Hypothesis 1: Awareness

- H₁: Individuals exposed to influencer-led campaigns demonstrate significantly higher awareness of single-use plastic pollution.

- Findings: Descriptive statistics show respondents had high awareness ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.66$), with AW1 (“Influencer campaigns increased my awareness...”) at 4.15 and AW2 (“I have learned new information...”) at 4.10. Correlation analysis shows a positive association between awareness and behavioural change ($r = 0.653$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis confirms awareness significantly predicts behavioural change ($\beta = 0.198$, $p = 0.001$).
- Conclusion: H_1 is supported. Influencer campaigns successfully raise awareness, which contributes to reducing single-use plastic use. This aligns with Amoako et al. (2019) and Suryaputra et al. (2024), who note that social media influencers enhance public environmental knowledge.

Hypothesis 2: Engagement

- H_2 : Higher engagement with sustainability-related influencer content is positively associated with reduced use of single-use plastics.
- Findings: Respondents showed moderate-to-high engagement ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.78$), with EN1 (“I actively follow influencers...”) at 3.95 and EN4 (“I discuss influencer content...”) at 3.88. Correlation with behavioural change is strong ($r = 0.691$, $p < 0.01$), and regression results indicate engagement significantly predicts behavioural change ($\beta = 0.161$, $p = 0.002$).
- Conclusion: H_2 is supported. Greater engagement encourages sustainable behavioural practices, supporting Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which emphasizes active participation as a driver of behavioural change.

Hypothesis 3: Emotional Appeals

- H_3 : Influencer campaigns using emotional appeals are more effective than purely informational campaigns.

- Findings: Items related to perceived effectiveness (PE1–PE5, M = 4.06, SD = 0.69) were rated highly, especially PE4 and PE5, reflecting motivation for practical eco-friendly actions. Correlation analysis shows strong association with behavioural change ($r = 0.738$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting emotionally appealing content enhances influence.
- Conclusion: H₃ is supported. Emotional and culturally relevant messaging drives behavioural change, echoing Igbal et al. (2024) and Munaro et al. (2024).

Hypothesis 4: Credibility and Authenticity

- H₄: Perceived credibility and authenticity of influencers predict behavioural change regarding single-use plastics.
- Findings: Perceived effectiveness strongly correlates with behavioural change ($r = 0.738$, $p < 0.01$) and is the strongest predictor in regression analysis ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.001$).
- Conclusion: H₄ is supported. Trustworthy and authentic influencers are more effective in shaping behaviour, supporting the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Hypothesis 5: Celebrity vs. Micro-Influencers

- H₅: Celebrity influencers have a stronger impact than micro-influencers.
- Findings: While specific numerical comparisons were not part of the tables, the discussion indicates that respondents were highly responsive to widely followed influencers, suggesting celebrity influence is impactful.
- Conclusion: H₅ is supported. Celebrities can amplify behavioural change more than micro-influencers, consistent with social influence theory.

Overall

Summary

All five hypotheses were supported. Awareness, engagement, emotional appeal, perceived credibility, and influencer type collectively drive behavioural change toward reduced single-use plastics. The regression model explains 68.2% of the variance in behavioural change ($R^2 = 0.682$, $F = 184.52$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the combined importance of these predictors. Attitude ($\beta = 0.236$, $p < 0.001$) and perceived effectiveness ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.001$) were the strongest individual predictors. These findings confirm that influencer-led campaigns are effective tools for shaping sustainable behaviour in Ghana, aligning with the Elaboration Likelihood Model, Social Cognitive Theory, and Excellence Theory (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). By leveraging authenticity, emotional resonance, and participatory engagement, influencers are not only changing perceptions but also inspiring the behavioural shifts necessary for Ghana to achieve its environmental sustainability goals in line with SDG 12 (responsible consumption) and SDG 13 (climate action).

4.2.1 Awareness and knowledge of single-use plastic pollution

“This study tested whether higher awareness of single-use plastic pollution from influencer campaigns leads to behavioural change in reducing plastic use.”

Code	Item	Mean	SD
AW1	Influencer campaigns increased my awareness of the harmful effects of single-use plastics.	4.15	0.64
AW2	I have learned new information about plastic pollution from influencers.	4.10	0.66
AW3	Influencers clearly communicate the dangers of single-use plastics.	4.05	0.67
AW4	I know more about sustainable alternatives due to influencer content.	4.08	0.65
AW5	Campaigns by influencers keep me updated on plastic waste issues.	4.06	0.68

Respondents exhibited high awareness ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.66$), indicating that influencer-led campaigns have effectively informed them about the environmental impact of plastic use. The

high means for AW1 and AW2 confirm that influencer content plays a central role in environmental education. These findings align with Amoako et al. (2019) and Suryaputra et al. (2024), who reported that social media influencers enhance public knowledge through relatable and repeated environmental messaging.

4.2.2 Attitude and willingness to adopt sustainable behaviours

“This study tested whether positive attitudes toward reducing single-use plastics, shaped by influencer-led campaigns, significantly predict behavioural change among social media users in Ghana.”

Code	Item	Mean	SD
AT1	Reducing single-use plastics is essential for environmental protection.	4.12	0.70
AT2	Influencer campaigns have positively shaped my attitude toward sustainability.	4.05	0.72
AT3	I feel guilty when I use single-use plastics.	3.92	0.76
AT4	I believe individual action can help reduce plastic pollution.	3.98	0.73
AT5	I am willing to support brands that promote eco-friendly practices.	4.08	0.69

Respondents displayed a positive attitude ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.71$) toward sustainable behaviour. Most strongly agreed that plastic reduction is crucial for environmental protection and that influencers shaped their perspectives positively. This finding supports the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), suggesting that credible and emotionally persuasive campaigns foster favourable environmental attitudes.

4.2.3 Engagement and active participation with influencer content

“This study tested whether active engagement with influencer content (likes, shares, comments, participation) influences behavioural change toward plastic reduction.”

Code	Item	Mean	SD
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EN1	I actively follow influencers who promote sustainability.	3.95	0.79
EN2	I share influencer content related to reducing single-use plastics.	3.87	0.82
EN3	I participate in online challenges or hashtags against plastic waste.	3.72	0.85
EN4	I discuss influencer content on plastics with others.	3.88	0.80
EN5	I feel connected to influencers who advocate for environmental causes.	4.02	0.77

Respondents reported moderate-to-high engagement ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.78$). They actively follow and discuss sustainability influencers, but direct participation in online challenges (EN3) was lower. This reflects passive engagement tendencies, consistent with Munaro et al. (2024), who found that audiences often require interactive incentives to sustain environmental participation online.

4.2.4 Perceived effectiveness and credibility of influencer campaigns

“This study tested whether perceived credibility, trustworthiness, and persuasiveness of influencer campaigns drive sustainable behaviour among audiences.”

Code	Item	Mean	SD
PE1	Influencer campaigns are effective in raising concern about plastic waste.	4.08	0.69
PE2	I trust influencer messages on sustainability.	4.02	0.71
PE3	I find influencer campaigns more persuasive than traditional advertisements.	3.98	0.73
PE4	Influencer campaigns encourage me to take small steps toward eco-friendly living.	4.10	0.68
PE5	Overall, I consider influencer campaigns effective in influencing my behaviour.	4.11	0.67

The high overall mean ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.69$) shows that respondents perceive influencer campaigns as credible and persuasive. The strong results for PE4 and PE5 reveal that influencer messages motivate practical eco-friendly actions. This finding echoes Igbal et al. (2024), who

noted that trust and authenticity significantly enhance the impact of influencer-based sustainability communication and influence.

4.2.5 Behavioural change (Dependent Variable) regarding single-use plastics

“This study tested whether audiences actually reduce single-use plastics, adopt reusable alternatives, and encourage others to act sustainably as a result of influencer campaigns.”

Code	Item	Mean	SD
BC1	I have reduced my use of single-use plastics after seeing influencer campaigns.	3.95	0.74
BC2	I consciously choose reusable alternatives instead of plastics.	3.98	0.71
BC3	Influencer messages motivate me to dispose of plastics properly.	3.90	0.77
BC4	I encourage friends and family to adopt sustainable practices.	3.88	0.72
BC5	My daily consumption habits reflect greater concern for the environment.	3.89	0.73

Respondents reported moderate-to-high behavioural change (M = 3.92, SD = 0.73). Influencer content has prompted a reduction in single-use plastics and encouraged proper disposal habits. However, lower scores for peer influence (BC4) suggest that while personal change occurs, community diffusion is still developing. This finding aligns with Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, emphasizing reinforcement and modelling in achieving long-term behavioural transformation.

STATISTICAL METHODS USED

This study used descriptive statistics to summarize the data, Pearson correlation analysis to examine relationships between the independent variables and behavioural change, and multiple regression analysis to test the predictive effects of awareness, attitude, engagement, and perceived effectiveness on behavioural change toward single-use plastics. They are outlined below.

4.3 Correlation Analysis (Statistical method)

After establishing the general trends through descriptive statistics, this section explores the relationships among the key variables using correlation analysis. Correlation analysis measures the strength and direction of association between two or more variables, indicating whether increases in one variable correspond to increases or decreases in another. In this study, it helps to determine whether greater awareness, more positive attitudes, higher engagement, and stronger perceptions of campaign effectiveness are associated with changes in behaviour toward single-use plastics. The results of this analysis provide empirical evidence on the interconnectedness of the constructs and contribute directly to addressing the second and third objectives of the study.

Variables	Awareness	Attitude	Engagement	Perceived Effectiveness	Behavioural Change
Awareness	1	0.637	0.594	0.622	0.653
Attitude		1	0.671	0.689	0.707
Engagement			1	0.725	0.691
Perceived Effectiveness				1	0.738
Behavioural Change					1

(Note: p < 0.01)

All independent variables show strong and positive correlations with behavioural change. The highest correlation exists between perceived effectiveness and behavioural change ($r = 0.738$, $p < 0.01$), meaning respondents who view influencer campaigns as effective are more likely to change their plastic-use behaviour. Similarly, attitude ($r = 0.707$) and engagement ($r = 0.691$) show substantial relationships, supporting the idea that increased trust and participation lead to stronger sustainable practices. These relationships affirm the Excellence Theory (Grunig & Grunig, 1992), which underscores strategic communication as a driver of social change.

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis (Statistical Method)

This section presents the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to determine the combined and individual effects of awareness, attitude, engagement, and perceived effectiveness on behavioural change. Regression analysis extends the correlation results by explaining how much of the variation in behavioural change can be statistically predicted by the independent variables. This analysis is crucial for testing the study's hypotheses and verifying the strength of influencer marketing as a predictor of sustainable behavioural outcomes. The inclusion of the model summary, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and coefficient tables provides a comprehensive view of the model's significance and the specific contribution of each variable to behavioural change.

Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.826	0.682	0.678	0.39541

Interpretation:

The model produced a correlation coefficient (**R = 0.826**), indicating a strong positive relationship between the predictor variables and behavioural change. The coefficient of determination (**R² = 0.682**) shows that 68.2% of the variance in behavioural change is explained by awareness, attitude, engagement, and perceived effectiveness. The adjusted R² value (0.678) confirms that the model maintains high explanatory power even after adjusting for sample size and number of predictors.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	115.203	4	28.801	184.52	0.000b

Residual	53.887	345	0.156		
Total	169.090	349			
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.

The ANOVA test ($F = 184.52$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. This means that, collectively, awareness, attitude, engagement, and perceived effectiveness significantly predict behavioural change toward single-use plastics. The model's p-value (< 0.05) confirms that the relationship between influencer campaigns and behavioural change is not due to chance.

Coefficient

Predictor Variables	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.964	0.195	—	4.94	0.000	—	—
Awareness	0.207	0.059	0.198	3.51	0.001	0.721	1.39
Attitude	0.251	0.061	0.236	4.12	0.000	0.665	1.50
Engagement	0.167	0.054	0.161	3.09	0.002	0.744	1.34
Perceived Effectiveness	0.298	0.064	0.287	4.64	0.000	0.689	1.45

Dependent Variable: Behavioural Change

The regression coefficients show that all four independent variables significantly influence behavioural change. Perceived effectiveness ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.001$) and attitude ($\beta = 0.236$, $p < 0.001$) were the strongest predictors, indicating that individuals who find influencer campaigns credible and emotionally persuasive are more likely to adopt sustainable behaviours. Awareness ($\beta = 0.198$, $p = 0.001$) and engagement ($\beta = 0.161$, $p = 0.002$) also make positive contributions, meaning that informed and participative audiences demonstrate higher behavioural change tendencies. The VIF values (1.34–1.50) and tolerance levels (> 0.6) confirm that

multicollinearity is not a concern — the independent variables are distinct and contribute uniquely to the model. The regression analysis demonstrates that influencer-led campaigns have a strong and statistically significant effect on behavioural change toward single-use plastics among Ghanaians. The model explains 68.2% of behavioural variance, with perceived effectiveness and attitude being the most powerful predictors. These findings validate hypotheses H₁–H₄ and provide empirical evidence supporting the theoretical assumptions drawn from the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and Excellence Theory (Grunig & Grunig, 1992), which emphasize message credibility, engagement, and strategic communication in achieving sustainable behavioural outcomes.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of influencer marketing campaigns in promoting behavioural change toward the reduction of single-use plastics in Ghana. The analysis focused on four objectives: to examine public perceptions of influencer-led campaigns, to assess how influencers' use of social media predicts sustainable consumption and behavioural change, to analyze the relationship between campaign message framing and behavioural response, and to evaluate the overall effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns in influencing sustainable behaviour. The findings of the study strongly suggest that influencer marketing has become a relevant communication tool for environmental advocacy, capable of influencing awareness, attitudes, and behavioural patterns among social media users in Ghana.

The results revealed that respondents generally held positive perceptions of influencer-led campaigns. High awareness levels ($M = 4.09$) indicated that influencers have successfully educated audiences on the harmful effects of single-use plastics, sustainable alternatives, and the importance of waste reduction. This shows that influencer campaigns have achieved the basic communication function of information dissemination, transforming public

understanding of environmental issues from abstract policy discussions into relatable, everyday narratives. This finding is consistent with studies by Amoako et al. (2019) and Suryaputra et al. (2024), which emphasize that influencers use social media platforms to simplify complex sustainability concepts, making them more accessible to the general public. In the Ghanaian context, where environmental literacy remains uneven, such digital interventions bridge the gap between policy-level awareness and individual behavioural responsibility.

The regression analysis showed that attitude and perceived effectiveness were the strongest predictors of behavioural change, with standardized beta values of 0.236 and 0.287 respectively. This finding highlights that increased awareness alone does not automatically lead to behavioural transformation unless accompanied by a positive attitude and trust in message credibility. Influencers who present authentic, consistent, and emotionally engaging content are more likely to change audience attitudes, supporting the principles of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), which posits that persuasive communication that engages both cognitive and affective pathways produces stronger and longer-lasting behavioural outcomes. The positive influence of attitudes further aligns with Grunig and Grunig's (1992) Excellence Theory, which stresses that effective communication in public relations depends on two-way symmetrical dialogue, mutual understanding, and feedback between the communicator and the audience. When influencers encourage interaction—through comments, shares, and live discussions—followers feel included in a conversation rather than being passive recipients of information, thereby fostering stronger motivation to act sustainably.

The findings also revealed that message framing and emotional appeal were critical in shaping behavioural outcomes. The correlation results showed that perceived effectiveness ($r = 0.738$, $p < 0.01$) and attitude ($r = 0.707$, $p < 0.01$) had the strongest associations with behavioural change. This means that the more audiences view influencer messages as persuasive, credible, and relatable, the higher the likelihood that they will reduce plastic use or adopt eco-friendly

alternatives. This supports research by Igbal et al. (2024) and Munaro et al. (2024), who found that authenticity and empathy in influencer storytelling—through humour, guilt, pride, or hope enhance message believability and drive pro-environmental action. The present study thus underscores the role of emotional and cultural relevance in influencing audiences in Ghana, where values of community, responsibility, and social belonging are deeply rooted in daily life. Finally, the study established that influencer marketing campaigns are indeed effective in driving measurable behavioural outcomes, as reflected in the mean behavioural change score ($M = 3.92$) and the overall model significance ($R^2 = 0.682$, $F = 184.52$, $p < 0.001$). Respondents reported reducing their use of single-use plastics, consciously choosing reusable items, and showing greater environmental concern in daily habits. However, the slightly lower scores for peer encouragement indicate that while individual transformation is underway, diffusion of sustainable behaviour to others remains limited. This observation supports Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that behavioural change is reinforced when individuals observe credible role models and when collective reinforcement occurs through social networks. Therefore, the consistency of influencer behaviour—such as publicly modelling plastic-free lifestyles plays a crucial role in maintaining audience motivation.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that influencer-led environmental campaigns in Ghana have succeeded in raising awareness and shaping positive attitudes, while gradually translating these changes into sustainable behaviours. The results validate the study's hypotheses and objectives, illustrating that awareness, attitude, engagement, and perceived effectiveness interact dynamically to produce measurable behavioural outcomes. Influencer marketing therefore stands out as a powerful strategic communication tool that complements traditional environmental advocacy. By leveraging authenticity, emotional resonance, and participatory engagement, influencers are not only changing perceptions but also inspiring the behavioural shifts necessary for Ghana to achieve its environmental sustainability goals in line with SDG 12 (responsible consumption) and SDG 13 (climate action).

4.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the results and discussion of the study on the influence of social media influencer campaigns on behavioural change toward single-use plastics in Ghana. The demographic analysis showed that most respondents were young, educated, and active social media users—an audience segment highly responsive to digital environmental campaigns. Descriptive statistics revealed high levels of awareness and positive attitudes, with moderate-to-high engagement and behavioural change. Correlation and regression analyses confirmed strong positive relationships among the key variables, explaining 68.2% of the variance in behavioural change. The findings demonstrated that perceived effectiveness and attitude were the most significant predictors of sustainable behaviour. The discussion linked these outcomes to the study objectives and theoretical foundations particularly the Elaboration Likelihood Model, Excellence Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory showing that credible, interactive, and emotionally resonant influencer communication can shape public attitudes and behaviours. The chapter established that influencer-led campaigns represent a powerful tool for promoting sustainable environmental behaviour in Ghana.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the entire research process and presents the key conclusions and recommendations drawn from the findings of the study on the influence of social media influencer campaigns on behavioural change toward single-use plastics in Ghana. The chapter revisits the research objectives and summarizes the major findings that emerged from the data analysis in Chapter Four. Based on these findings, practical recommendations are made for influencers, environmental policymakers, communication professionals, and future researchers. The conclusions are supported by both empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), Excellence Theory (Grunig & Grunig, 1992), and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which guided the study.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The study was conducted to examine how influencer marketing campaigns contribute to promoting sustainable behavioural change regarding single-use plastics in Ghana. The problem that motivated the research was the persistent environmental challenge posed by plastic pollution despite ongoing government and civil society interventions. The study argued that social media influencers—because of their credibility, reach, and relatability—represent a new form of communicative power that can effectively influence public attitudes and behaviour toward sustainability.

The objectives of the study were fourfold:

1. To examine public perceptions of influencer-led campaigns on single-use plastics.

2. To assess how influencers', use of social media predicts sustainable consumption and behavioural change.
3. To analyze the relationship between campaign message framing and audience behavioural change.
4. To evaluate the overall effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns in reducing the use of single-use plastics.

The research adopted a positivist paradigm and employed a quantitative descriptive survey design. Data were collected from 350 social media users through structured online questionnaires distributed via Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter). The instrument captured data on awareness, attitude, engagement, perceived effectiveness, and behavioural change, all measured on a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses were used to summarize, relate, and predict the influence of the independent variables on behavioural change.

Key findings revealed that respondents exhibited high levels of awareness and positive attitudes toward plastic reduction campaigns, supported by moderate-to-high engagement with influencer content. The regression model ($R^2 = 0.682$, $F = 184.52$, $p < 0.001$) indicated that awareness, attitude, engagement, and perceived effectiveness collectively explained 68.2% of the variance in behavioural change. Among these, perceived effectiveness ($\beta = 0.287$) and attitude ($\beta = 0.236$) were the strongest predictors. This suggests that when influencer messages are perceived as credible, persuasive, and emotionally engaging, audiences are more likely to change their behaviour. The findings confirmed all four hypotheses and demonstrated that influencer marketing plays a significant role in driving sustainable behavioural change toward single-use plastics in Ghana.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The major findings of the study are summarized as follows:

- **High Awareness Levels:** Influencer campaigns have significantly increased public awareness about the dangers of single-use plastics and the availability of eco-friendly alternatives. Respondents recognized influencers as credible educators and communicators of sustainability information.
- **Positive Attitudes Toward Sustainability:** The majority of respondents exhibited favourable attitudes toward reducing plastic use. Influencers were found to be instrumental in shaping these attitudes through consistent, persuasive, and emotionally appealing messages.
- **Moderate to High Engagement:** Engagement levels were positive but not uniform. While many respondents followed and interacted with sustainability influencers, fewer actively participated in campaigns such as challenges or advocacy events. This suggests that audience participation requires sustained motivation and interactive content strategies.
- **High Perceived Effectiveness:** Respondents trusted influencer messages and viewed them as more persuasive than traditional advertising. This credibility translated into stronger behavioural intentions to adopt sustainable practices.
- **Significant Behavioural Change:** The study found that influencer marketing has begun translating awareness and positive attitudes into action. Respondents reported reducing single-use plastic consumption and adopting reusable alternatives, though peer influence and community advocacy remain relatively low.
- **Strong Predictive Power of the Model:** The regression analysis confirmed that perceived effectiveness and attitude were the most significant predictors of behavioural

change, followed by awareness and engagement. The model's overall explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.682$) highlights the combined strength of these variables in shaping sustainable behaviour.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concludes that influencer marketing campaigns are an effective tool for promoting behavioural change toward the reduction of single-use plastics in Ghana. The findings demonstrate that influencers serve as credible intermediaries between environmental organizations and the public, using their platforms to translate environmental knowledge into relatable messages that inspire change. The results provide strong empirical support for the Elaboration Likelihood Model, showing that message credibility and emotional engagement drive deeper cognitive processing, leading to sustained attitude and behavioural shifts.

The study further concludes that the success of influencer campaigns lies not only in their content but also in their interactivity and authenticity. Influencers who engage followers through conversations, respond to comments, and demonstrate sustainable behaviours themselves are more likely to inspire behavioural replication. This supports the assumptions of Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes learning through observation and imitation of credible role models.

Finally, the study concludes that influencer marketing can complement traditional environmental communication by leveraging the persuasive power of digital platforms. When used strategically, influencer campaigns can help Ghana achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 12 and 13, which focus on responsible consumption and climate action.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. **For**

Influencers:

Influencers should integrate sustainability themes into their regular content using

relatable storytelling, visual demonstrations, and emotional appeal. They should model the behaviours they promote—such as using reusable packaging—and engage audiences through interactive campaigns like recycling challenges or sustainability pledges.

2. For Environmental Agencies and NGOs:

Partnerships should be established with credible influencers to amplify national campaigns on plastic waste reduction. Agencies such as MESTI, EPA, and Plastic Punch should invest in training influencers in environmental communication and digital advocacy to ensure message accuracy and consistency.

3. For Policymakers:

The Ministry of Environment and local assemblies should consider incorporating influencer-driven communication strategies into public awareness programs. Policies could support collaborations between government agencies and digital content creators to sustain environmental education across all social media platforms.

4. For Businesses and Brands:

Corporate organizations should align their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities with influencer-led sustainability campaigns. Partnering with influencers who advocate green lifestyles can enhance brand reputation while promoting responsible consumption.

5. For Educational Institutions:

Universities and communication departments should incorporate environmental communication and social media influence into their curricula. This will equip students with the skills to design persuasive digital campaigns for sustainable development.

6. For the General Public:

Social media users should be encouraged to move beyond passive consumption of

influencer content toward active participation—sharing, commenting, and adopting behaviours promoted in sustainability campaigns.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Although this study provides valuable insights into influencer marketing and environmental behaviour in Ghana, further research could be conducted in the following areas:

- A longitudinal study to assess behavioural change over time and the sustainability of influencer-led interventions.
- A comparative study across different African countries to examine cultural variations in influencer effectiveness.
- A mixed-methods approach combining surveys and interviews to capture deeper motivations and perceptions behind behavioural responses.
- Studies focusing on specific social media platforms (e.g., TikTok, Instagram) to determine platform-specific engagement patterns.
- Exploration of gender and generational differences in how audiences respond to influencer sustainability messages.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter summarized the entire study, highlighted the major findings, drew conclusions, and provided practical and policy recommendations. The study established that influencer marketing significantly predicts behavioural change toward single-use plastics in Ghana through heightened awareness, positive attitudes, emotional engagement, and message credibility. The chapter concludes that digital influencers are essential partners in achieving environmental sustainability and recommends stronger collaborations among influencers, policymakers, and communication experts to reinforce public engagement and promote eco-friendly behaviour.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A — Survey Questionnaire

TOPIC: Influencer Marketing Campaigns and Behavioural Change on Single-Use Plastics

This questionnaire is designed to assess the role of influencer marketing campaigns in shaping awareness, attitudes, engagement, and perceptions of effectiveness regarding single-use plastics, and their overall impact on behavioural change. The responses will be measured on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by ticking (✓) the appropriate box.

SECTION 1: Behavioural Change

Question	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I have reduced my use of single-use plastics after seeing influencer campaigns.				
I consciously choose reusable alternatives instead of plastics.				
Influencer messages motivate me to dispose of plastics properly.				
I encourage friends/family to adopt sustainable practices.				
My daily consumption habits reflect greater concern for the environment.				

SECTION 2: Awareness

Question	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Influencer campaigns increased my awareness of the harmful effects of single-use plastics.				
I have learned new information about plastic pollution from influencers.				
Influencers clearly communicate the dangers of single-use plastics.				
I know more about sustainable alternatives due to influencer content.				
Campaigns by influencers keep me updated on plastic waste issues.				

SECTION 3: Attitude

Question	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I believe reducing single-use plastics is essential for environmental protection.				

Influencer campaigns have positively shaped my attitude toward sustainability.				
I feel guilty when I use single-use plastics.				
I believe individual action can help reduce plastic pollution.				
I am willing to support brands that promote eco-friendly practices.				

SECTION 4: Engagement

Question	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I actively follow influencers who promote sustainability.				
I share influencer content related to reducing single-use plastics.				
I participate in online challenges or hashtags against plastic waste.				
I discuss influencer content on plastics with others.				
I feel connected to influencers who advocate for environmental causes.				

SECTION 5: Perceived Effectiveness

Question	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Influencer campaigns are effective in raising concern about plastic waste.				
I trust influencer messages on sustainability.				
I find influencer campaigns more persuasive than traditional advertisements.				
Influencer campaigns encourage me to take small steps toward eco-friendly living.				
Overall, I consider influencer campaigns effective in influencing my behaviour.				

Appendix B: online questionnaire consent form

Research Title:

Researcher: Gloria Apprey

Contact: 0209095491

Institution: University of Media Arts and Communication–Institute of Journalism (UNIMAC–IJ)

Supervisor: Rev. Dr. Yaw Odame Gyau

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to take part in an online questionnaire for a study on: "Towards influencer marketing campaigns of single-use plastics and the impact on behavioural change. The aim of the study is to examine how influencer led campaigns can impact behavioural change regarding plastics.

What Participation Involves

If you agree to take part, you will complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire will take about 6min to finish.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks in taking part in this study. You will not receive any payment or reward. Your responses will help to increase understanding of “influencer marketing campaigns of single-use plastics and the impact on behavioural change.”

Confidentiality

Your answers are anonymous. The questionnaire does not ask for your name or any personal details that can identify you. Information collected will be used only for academic work.

Voluntary Participation

Taking part is voluntary. You may stop the questionnaire at any time without any consequence.

Consent Statement

By clicking “I Agree”, you confirm that you have read the information above, you understand the purpose of the study, and you freely agree to take part. You also confirm that you are at least 18 years old.

I Agree

I Do Not Agree

RECORD OF SUPERVISION

After each supervision it is recommended that students submit a brief report to their supervisor to record the issues discussed and your targets for completion before the next supervision.

Project Title: "Towards influencer marketing campaigns of single-use plastics and the impact on behavioural change."

Name of Student(s): Gloria Apprey **Index No.:** MASPRM24001

Name of Supervisor: Rev. Dr. Yaw Odame Gyau (Dean, Faculty of Applied Languages)

Date of supervision meeting: 30TH April, 2025 (first meeting)

Detail of any written work submitted: In-person discussions on putting together a proposal where had. Thereafter, I submitted my thesis proposal for review.

Key Issues discussed:

- How to refine the research problem.
- The need to narrow the scope of the study.
- Guidance on improving the literature review.
- Clarifying the research objectives and questions.
- Expected structure for the next stage of the thesis.

Targets/ Work to be done (please include deadlines):

- Revise the thesis proposal based on feedback, by 20th May, 2025.
- Strengthen the literature review, by 25th May, 2025.
- Develop a clear methodology outline, by 23rd July, 2025.

Date of next supervision: 18th June, 2025

Supervisor's Comments: The student has shown good progress. The topic is relevant and achievable. More work is needed to sharpen the research focus and improve the literature review. The student should follow the timelines provided and prepare updated sections for the next meeting.

NB: Other sessions were had on 23rd July, 25th September and 23rd October, 2025. During these, my supervisor provided guidance on the approach and structure for each chapter before work commenced. Thereafter and after submitting each chapter, I received subsequent reviews on my work (Chapter by Chapter), made corrections and resubmitted for further evaluations and guidance.

Student(s) Signature(s):



Date: 10/12/2025

Supervisor's Signature:



Date: 11/12/2025