

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

Making sales is the primary objective of any business or profit oriented organization. Even when an organization is non-profit oriented or out to make sales, they are after goodwill of the people they are sending their messages to and want it to be effective. In order to do this, brands, businesses etc. have sought for various ways to reach their target audience to avoid fishing in the dark. Thanks to advertisements making sure that target consumers are aware of goods, services has been made possible. However, there are lots of goods and services been placed in the media as advertising messages, this has therefore birthed a “survival of the fittest” approach, as the attention span of target consumers is very low, therefore there is a need to explore several ways to connect to the target consumers. Opinion leaders and recently influencers have been identified to connect with the target audience of a business, organization or brand and get them on board with what the brand is selling thereby birthing Influencer marketing. On popular social media platforms like Instagram, Youtube, facebook, among others, many users often follow popular social media accounts, these accounts are called social media influencers. Due to their popularity, many brands approach these influencers to endorse or review their products. The work of the influencers is to endorse or review products of several brands. Influencers are there on almost all social media platforms, and different types such as fitness, fashion, beauty, books, Do It Yourself (DIYs) and many more¹. Influencers are now regarded as the new type of opinion leaders and have been incorporated into the marketing mix by several brands because most young people are found on social media². On a photography platform such as Instagram, the fashion influencers mostly endorse a product by wearing it and then tagging the picture with the

name of the brand³. On a video forum such as YouTube, and recently Tik tok and Instagram reels which take 30 seconds to a minute videos, influencers have the liberty and the time to properly explain the features of a product as well as express their opinions of the same⁴.

However, apart from people with a huge following on social media who have carved a niche for themselves in various aspects like comedy, skits-making, fashion lifestyle and so on, celebrities in the entertainment sector are fast falling into the role of influencers both on and off social media. It has been found out by several studies that a large percentage of customers believe a referral from their people they know, with a lot of those referrals taking place online². As an individual with purchasing power, how many times have you asked the opinion of a family member before making a purchase? This is not because you do not trust their judgment but because they have not been seen as an authority on a particular product you want to purchase. Testimonials work as a tool of marketing, but testimonials of popular people work better. Using celebrities to sell or drive sales for a product is not new but with the advent of the digital media and access to information, not forgetting a surge in the ease of content creation due to social media networks For example, Tik Tok, Instagram, Facebook, snapchat and gadgets, thousands of influencers are created daily⁵.

For young people, their attention is divided and the only way to get their attention is through the uses of creative and catchy content which have been found to be very effective especially with the use of video skits on social media, catchy songs by top celebrities/influencers and catchy tag lines / phrases. The youths constitute a large market with a considerable purchase power, therefore a lot of brands jostle for their attention and find ways to outshine each other with creativity and persuasive adverts. In addition to these, brands make use of influencers who have carved out a niche for themselves on social media as well as celebrities who are now opinion

leaders to grab the attention of this teeming population particularly in Nigeria. Grabbing the attention of people is one thing, persuading them to take a corresponding positive action is another. Everyday products, especially with fast moving consumable goods like tea, milk and soft drinks. Influencing the purchase intention of people especially young people can be a lot of work due to a lot of factors. It has been realized by brands in recent time that the most success is achieved when satisfied and happy customers tell their brand's story. They are viewed as the real brand ambassador⁶. Now imagine the power of an individual who is already respected in a particular niche talking, showing, using, and endorsing their brand. Popular personalities can convert into excellent salesmen. Seeing a friendly and usually well-known face is usually considered to be the smartest and effective avenue for companies to grow an association and a bond in the mind of its consumers. Whenever consumers come across an actor, skit maker, or a well-loved sports figure endorsing a product, immediately, that product attains credibility. The sole need for these celebrities or influencers is that they are intimately connected with their target audience; they do not need to be global superstars. We watch and hear these celebrities on television, in movies, and on the radio, and we see and read about them in periodicals. These celebrities receive significant income from endorsements every year, and the fact that they are well-liked in the advertising industry lends credibility to products and services. Consumers are interested in owning products that have received positive reviews from customers. When people use the same products influencers and celebrities do, there is a sense of social class advancement. Marketing managers use popular people to give credence their goods and services in order to position their goods and services well against its competitor⁷. Consumers, are surrounded by different brands trying to sell the same thing, either a product or service; they get to see different types of personalities on smart billboards, television, and social media. Every brand tries to get a

clear picture the consumers time to inform about what they have to offer to and teach the different attributes of the product and why it is better than the next ⁷.

People frequently view celebrities as idols when compared to influencers, and they wish to emulate them by trying out things that have been touched by celebrities since celebrities make products more seductive and desired⁷. The study of purchase intention helps marketers, organizations and all round sales people to understand and predict consumer's acquisition, consuming and disposing activities.

Contrary to popular belief, influencer marketing is not done solely on social media, it has been infused into television advertising, radio advertising, billboards and flyers. Instead of using just one medium to pass advertising messages across, different media is used at different times and sometimes together this is referred to as Integrated marketing Communication. Imagine browsing through the daily newspaper on your way to work, you see an advert of instant breakfast, then you remember how you rushed out of your house to be able to get to work in record time, you then drop the paper, your driver turns the radio on and the next thing you hear is an advert about the same instant breakfast, you are stuck in traffic and you look out the window, you see the same advert on the billboard a few minutes later, this advert is already in your subconscious. Finally, you get to work and during lunch you are scrolling through Instagram and you see your favorite influencer advertising the same product, whether you like it or not, sooner or later you will purchase the instant breakfast. This is how integrated marketing communication works.

After being exposed to advertising messages, there are four stages an individual goes through. As stated earlier, the attention span of individuals is low and influencing their purchase intention largely depends on taking them through all these stages in this model in the shortest time

possible. This model is the AIDA model. AIDA refers to attention, interest, desire and action. AIDA consists of Awareness; making the customer know about your product or service; Interest, improving customer's interest by focusing on profits and benefits and not the features of the product; Desire, convincing the customer that this product can fulfill their needs; Action, the customer then purchases the advertised product⁸.

The Pepsi brand which is the brand being studied makes use of influencer marketing to drive purchase intention and eventual purchase. Pepsi makes use of different influencers especially when launching campaigns, for example, recently, a Pepsi campaign #FortheLoveOfIt, Ayra Starr and Rema were unveiled as brand ambassadors to the 2021 concluded edition of Big Brother Naija⁹. The winners of the Pepsi task for the 2021 Big Brother Naija task were Liquorose, Cross, Angel and Saskay who went on to become Pepsi's ambassadors. Another campaign, #YourLifeMaxAm unveiled Burnaboy, Wizkid, Tiwa Savage and DJ Cuppy to promote the Pepsi Max bottle¹⁰. Pepsi is a global brand and has therefore used other foreign celebrities and influencers to launch several campaigns and push new products in the market. People like Messi, Paul Pogba, Neyo among others. Pepsi influencers in Nigeria are among others Kie Kie, Toke Makinwa, Mr Jollof, Nancy Isime, DJ Obi, DJ Exclusive, DJ Spinall, Alex Unusual and Don Flexx.

In this study, the researcher focused on the influencer marketing, purchase intention and buying behavior of Pepsi product among undergraduates of Lead City University, Ibadan.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The quest for brand superiority, large acceptance, and loyalty of target audience of companies and brands is an ever-increasing variable that just like man's wants is insatiable. A lot of brands and marketers are competing for the attention span of people targeted as consumers for their

products hence the use of different attention-grabbing methods which has evolved over time. Some of these brands are FMCG's that is fast moving consumable goods, one of which is Pepsi. Pepsi is one of the leading brands in soft drink production in the world. In the FMCG's industry, advertising is cannot be overemphasized because there are lots of companies churning out almost the same kind of products which has given rise to a stiff competition for superiority in the market place. A lot of methods for marketing have been employed from, television advertising, radio advertising, billboards and banners, food tasting events, roadside activation among others to direct consumers to purchase their products. Integrated marketing which is a mix of all these advertising mediums is also employed, as well as celebrity endorsements and influencer marketing. An example is Crown pasta employing Omoni Oboli as an influencer and also a brand ambassador, Twisco chocolate drink employing Tiwa savage and her son, Jamal as brand ambassadors and influencers among others. Pepsi as one of the fast moving consumable goods also uses influencer marketing to gain traction in the highly competitive market of soft drinks. This form of marketing is now being adopted even by smaller companies who are deemed to not have as much advertising and marketing power as big brands due to the rise of social media. Social media creates avenues for people to create content in the twinkle of an eye and send it out with little or no delay thereby giving rise to influencers, who are the new opinion leaders in several niches that is being carved for themselves. Therefore, it is important to critically assess influencer marketing to see if it is succeeding in influencing target consumers' purchase decisions, as this is what it is intended to do. There have been studies conducted on Influencer marketing but not much has been done to understand the dynamics of Influencer marketing in Nigeria and if it is living up to the expectation of brands and marketers, which is influencing the purchase intention and ultimately decision of the target audience, there is a huge increase in the

use of influencers both on social media and traditional media. Taking a good look at how it plays out in Nigeria will give brands, companies and marketers a sense of direction with data which will be gotten and analyzed from this study. This study therefore seeks to examine influencer marketing, purchase intention and buying behaviour of Pepsi brand among undergraduates of Lead City University, Ibadan.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The Aim of this study is to investigate influencer marketing, purchase intention and buying behaviour of Pepsi brand among undergraduates of Lead City University, Ibadan.

And these are the specific objectives are to:

1. ascertain the factors that effectively influence purchase intentions of Lead City university undergraduates
2. find out the factors that influence buying behavior of undergraduates of Lead city university towards the Pepsi brand
3. find out the level of influence of Influencers employed by the Pepsi production company on Lead City University undergraduates
4. find out the most preferred platform of exposure to adverts of the Pepsi product
5. find out the demographic differences in purchase intention of Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand
6. Find out the demographic differences in buying behavior of Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand
7. Find out the demographic differences in the strength of influencer marketing on Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand

8. Ascertain the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention of the Pepsi brand
9. Ascertain the relationship between influencer marketing and buying behavior of the Pepsi brand

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the factors that influence the purchase intentions of Lead City University undergraduates regarding the Pepsi brand?
2. What are the factors that influence the buying behavior of undergraduates of Lead City University towards the Pepsi brand?
3. What is the strength of influencers employed by Pepsi production company on Lead City undergraduates?
4. What is the most preferred platform of exposure of Lead City University undergraduates to advertising messages of Pepsi product?
5. Are there demographic differences in the purchase intention of Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand?
6. Are there demographic differences in the buying behavior of Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand?
7. Are there demographic differences in the strength of influencer marketing on Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand?

1.5 Hypotheses

- H₁. There is a significant relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention
- H₂. There is a significant relationship between influencer marketing and buying behavior.

1.6 Significance of the study.

This study will help to know if influencer marketing works in influencing the purchase intention of Nigerian youths. This study will be significant to anybody studying youth behaviours, buying decisions and consumer behaviour, by providing a background on the origin of certain consumer behaviour trends that Nigerian youths engage in.

Furthermore it will help advertising agencies craft their messages better to be able to appeal to the teeming youth population in the best way that is fit to communicate advertising messages to them, thereby influencing purchase intention and ultimately buying decision which will in turn boost the Nigerian economy when the population is attracted to buy Nigerian owned and made products, which also will to a very large extent decrease the love for imported or foreign goods above Nigerian-made ones.

Findings from this research will help the government and policy makers put in place adequate policies and support for advertisers and all that are interconnected in one way or the other to boost the economy's growth.

1.7 Scope of Study

This study is limited to undergraduate students of Lead city university, Ibadan. The researcher will however study a subset of the student's population. These undergraduate students of this institution for the purpose of this research will be those that are duly

registered for the 2021/2022 academic session. This study is limited to perception of Influencer marketing, purchase intention and Pepsi products.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

Since the research method adopted in this study is qualitative, the amount of data is limited. In the future, a combined research method can be applied.

The research is also limited to a particular scope, this may not be the reality on a larger scale. Also purchase intention and buying behaviour are very large variables and could not be exhausted in this research work.

1.9 Operational definition of terms

Buying behaviour

The decision process and acts of people involved in buying and using products. It refers to actions taken both online and offline by consumers before buying a product or service.

Influence

The capacity or power of persons or things to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behaviors, or opinion of others. It could be either positive or Negative.

Influencer/Celebrity

A person with the ability to influence potential buyers of a product or service by promoting or recommending the items on social media.

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a type of social media marketing that uses endorsements and product mentions from influencers—individuals who have a dedicated social following and are viewed as experts within their niche. Influencer marketing works because of the high amount of trust that social influencers have built up with their following, and recommendations from them serve as a form of social proof to your brand’s potential customers.

Pepsi Product

Pepsi is a carbonated soft drink manufactured by PepsiCo. PepsiCo manufactures a range of products like Pepsi, Mirinda and Mountain Dew. This study is limited to Pepsi.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the willingness of a customer to buy a certain product or a certain service. Purchase intentions are a measure of the respondent’s attitude towards purchasing a product or availing a service.

Undergraduate Students

Students in Lead City University who are registered for the 2021/2022 academic session and are within the ages of 15 and 30.

ENDNOTES

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

Key concepts that are central to this study are explained. The concepts are Influencer marketing and influencers, the role of the influencers, Social proof and identifying influencers, purchasing intention and online purchase intent, factors influencing the purchase intent and the online purchase intent, Social media Influencers as credible advertising sources, Social media influencers as relatable role models.

2.2.1 Concept of Influencer Marketing and Influencers

The advent of the Internet has changed the face of conducting business and establishing relationships with consumers, the way companies and customers interact and the transactions¹. Purchasing of goods and services online is the new normal and is rapidly gaining popularity in the world. We now have a lot of e-commerce outlets on the internet, so anyone can log on to a site either e-commerce or even social media and purchase whatsoever they need from the comfort of their home, it can now be said that the future is here². We now have Facebook shops and a lot of small business now use their Instagram accounts to reach prospective clients without

even having a physical store. Therefore, social media has become an important source for communicating advertising and marketing messages globally, making the organizations, researchers and marketers be more interested in the possibilities to influence on the multiple platforms³. Hence, influencer marketing is a practice, and can also be defined as a form of marketing that involves activities aimed towards identifying and building relationship with individuals who have the capability to influence and win over potential buyers⁴. Understanding how to influence customers' perceptions is an attempt at understanding how they make decisions and how these decisions can be influenced⁵. The word 'influence' stems from the Latin ad vertere which means influere - "to flow into, stream in, pour in," from in - "into, in, on, upon". In a social context, it is the capacity to influence the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself. The act or power of producing an effect without apparent exertion of force or direct exercise of command⁶. By leveraging influencer marketing, firms can encourage consumers to buy their goods. There are numerous definitions of what an influencer is, but for the purposes of this article, an influencer is somebody who uses several social media platforms at once, such as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and different commercial or professional bloggers.⁷ These people are either everyday people who have carved a niche for themselves in different areas or even Sports, entertainment etc., celebrities who have brought in their mainstream following to the social media platforms. These people use their platforms on social media as a tool to get advertising messages out to their followers, marketers and brands make use of these influencers, either micro-influencers or celebrities with adequate following to promote their advertising messages as a marketing strategy. Micro-celebrities as regular people drawing on the culture of celebrities to boost their popularity within a network, using online tools⁸. These micro-influencers stay in touch and have a direct interaction with their followers or

fanbase and by so doing give an impression of being intimate with them. This is achieved by using different techniques like asking for comments to improve content, sharing everyday problems, or showing a down-to-earth persona⁷.

As social media is used more frequently for commercial purposes, consumers are exposed to more marketing messages. Back in the 1970s, being exposed to 500 adverts a day seemed extensive, yet now we are exposed to a large amount of over 5,000 adverts in this present day⁹. Brands are therefore faced with the challenge of competing for consumers attention, which is very limited, this in turn has led to the increase in use of influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is a form of marketing where emphasis is no longer placed on a target market, but rather on specific individuals¹⁰. In today's social media landscape, influencers are innovators and early adopters that have managed to attract an audience through their expertise and authentic, relatable voice. When they recommend anything, from beauty tips to the best hospitals, they are taken as expert friends giving opinions on the best products and service in the market. Now imagine that amplified to millions of faithful followers on social media¹¹. Influencer marketing has proven to be a crucial feature in the marketing process, as consumers use the advice of others to make purchase decisions, especially when the purchase holds financial or psychological risk¹². Numerous case studies have shown that influencer marketing delivers 6.5 times to as much as 11 times higher Return on investment compared to traditional digital banner ads alone. In a recent survey, 67% of marketers thought influencer marketing helped them reach a more targeted audience, leading to more impactful results¹³.

2.2.2. Concept of Influencers

Recently in marketing and advertising, influencers play a very important role, and at the same time their recognition is fast growing ¹⁴. They represent a new type of independent, third-party endorsers who help in shaping an audience's attitudes, reactions, acceptance or otherwise of a produce, service person etc. through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media channels ¹⁵. Influencers make use of sites like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and twitter to create content and showcase various brands to gain more following and improve the brand's recognition which will translate to sales.

What determines the extent to which a consumer will be influenced by a particular influencer depends majorly on having the right and correct information at the right time, on the right platform and of course from the right person ¹⁶. Social media influencers (SMIs) are everyday people who have created social media profiles in order to influence the behaviour of followers.¹⁷ They are social media users that are well-known for their knowledge and competence in a certain field. On their favoured social media platforms, they frequently share their personal narratives and opinions on a range of subjects, many of which revolve around topics pertaining to products and brands, and generate massive followings of enthusiastic, engaged people that pay close attention to their views.^{18,19}

Social media influencers are those who have amassed a sizable social network of followers. They also represent a brand-new class of endorsers or opinion leaders who use social media to influence an audience's perceptions.²⁰ They are social media content producers who use blogging, vlogging (video blogs on sites like YouTube), or short-form content creation (on sites like Instagram, Twitter, SnapChat, etc.) to provide information about brands in an effort to get followers and increase brand recognition. They share traits with conventional opinion leaders, such as being receptive to ideas, assuming the role of discussant, and commanding respect and

influence among their followers. In addition, they are respected for knowing what is appropriate and current in numerous fields.¹⁷

The influencer takes the form of a friend connecting individuals or prospective customers that are the target of a particular brand to such a brand and this influencer does not only bring his/her own followers but the network of these followers too.

When an influencer has loyal followers, they can also drive traffic to the company's website, increase social media exposure and sell the company's product through their recommendation or story about their experience with the company's product/service¹⁸. When you follow an individual or influencer, it is because you have seen their content and there are things that you like from what they churn out. When such a person uses a particular brand, you are most likely to check the brand out just to see for yourself what you might like and eventually make a purchase. If the service delivery experience is good, you come back with your own testimonial thereby giving credence to the brand and creating more traffic to the advertised brand and invariably the influencer.

There are lots of discussions around blocking of ads and the algorithm on social media which influences what advertising messages can be seen and which will not get to the intended target by advertisers and marketers. A lot of brands have found a way out with influencer marketing. Influencer content cannot be blocked, external influencers are being created every day, and the best way to gain customer trust is by aligning with somebody the customers already trust. The built-in level of trust between influencer and reader or viewer is essentially impossible for a brand to build alone with the customer¹⁹.

According to a study conducted by some businesses, customers trust recommendations from their personal networks 90% of the time, and internet sources account for 81% of all referrals. Referrals from individuals they know are the most trusted (92% 20). The Tomoson Company conducted a poll in 2016 and gathered data from 125 top marketers that took part. Businesses are making 6.50 dollars for every dollar spent on influencer marketing, according to a report on the subject. From March 10 to 16, 2015, 125 marketers participated in an online survey. According to the survey, the majority of marketers, 59%, intend to raise their influencer marketing budgets over the next 12 months, while 21% intend to cut back or maintain current levels of investment.²¹

There are some characteristics that influencers should possess while selecting the best ones for a brand. These qualities include being knowledgeable about the product or service and genuinely interested in it, being an authority figure and expert in their field, having the right target market for the business, being able to create appropriate content, such as stories, videos, pictures, and social media posts, understanding marketing and being intrigued by commercial cooperation, having a sizeable base of devoted followers in the appropriate social media channels, and having good interpersonal skills.²² Choosing the right influencer for your brand, product or service is not just about the number of followers they have on Instagram, twitter and other social media/networking sites. It is more about the type of followers they have, content they produce and the relatability of the niche they have carved for themselves to the product or service you are pushing to your target consumers.

Because of the connections that the internet has created, businesses that want to be seen as authentic will focus their marketing efforts on partnering with influencers to share information or

promote products. This is done in an effort to give consumers a sense that they are among "people like me," which is considered to be the most powerful form of influence²³. As a result, brands must carefully search for influencers who generate genuine enthusiasm for their products or services. These influencers may be different from the conventional celebrities and paid endorsements.

2.1.2 The Impacts of Influencers on Customers and Brands

One of the key components of a communication strategy is social media, which has grown to play a significant role in the daily lives of average consumers. Social media is a crucial part of integrated marketing strategies because it has been understood that brands no longer only communicate with consumers directly but also engage with them through social media²⁴. This demonstrates how social media influencers have a significant impact on online word-of-mouth in the advertising and promotional sectors²⁵.

Today, influencers serve as the primary point of contact between a company and a customer. Positive customer testimonials can persuade others to purchase the goods²⁶. Because they are honest and transparent with their followers, influencers have a strong social following and reputation, which is why the trend is so well-liked and effective. Influencers have the exceptional capacity to connect with niche populations that have previously been out of reach, while mainstream marketing typically targets mass markets^{27,28}.

Even though a brand can't completely control its online communication, the two-way dialogue created for the business through social media outlets instills the brand with an influencer's direct voice and the trust that customers have in them.²⁹ The reputation a brand gains from its social media influencers helps to create direct relationships with its core consumers and fosters brand loyalty³⁰.

An influencer is someone who has the power to affect the purchasing decisions of others because of his or her authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with his or her audience. The influencer carves a niche, with whom he or she actively engages. The size of the following depends on the size of his/her topic of the niche e.g beauty, lifestyle, fashion and sports.

It is important to note that these individuals are not ordinarily marketing tools, but instead social relationship assets with which brands can collaborate to achieve their marketing objective

Over the last decade, social media grow as rapidly in importance with more than 3.4 billion people actively using social media which translates to 45% of the world's population³¹.

As a result, people look up to influencers in social media to guide them with their buying decision making.

Social media influencers are people who have built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a particular topic. They make regular posts about that topic on their preferred social media platforms and develop large followings of ardent, engaged people who pay close attention to their views. Brands love social media influencers because they can create trends and encourage their followers to buy products they promote.

There are various ways to categorize or classify influencers. The most popular techniques include counting followers, looking at content genres, and measuring influence. They can also be categorized according to the industry they serve. This means that influencers who might rank low according to one metric might appear to be more influential under an other metric. For instance, many mega-influencers are also well-known individuals. However, due to their lack of knowledge in a specific, limited sector, both of these groups frequently have less meaningful influence on their audience. In their specialized sector, certain micro- and even nano-influencers can have a significant impact on followers.³¹ They may be of significant benefit to a firm selling a product targeting that sector. Here are some type of influencers.

1. Mega-Influencers

Mega influencers are the people with a vast number of followers on their social networks. Although there are no fixed rules on the boundaries between the different types of followers, a common view is that mega-influencers have more than 1 million followers on at least one social platform³¹.

Many mega-influencers are celebrities who have gained their fame offline, for example, movie stars, sportspeople, musicians, and even reality television stars. Some mega-influencers have gained their vast followings through their online and social activities. In virtually every case, mega-influencers will have agents working on their behalf to make any promotion deals³¹.

2. Macro-Influencers

Macro-influencers are one step down from the mega-influencers, and are maybe more accessible as influencer marketers. They have between 40,000 and 1 million followers on a social network.

This group tends to consist of two types of people. They are either celebrities, who are not so popular yet. Alternatively, they are successful online experts with larger followings than typical micro-influencers. The latter is likely to be more useful for businesses that engage in influencer marketing.³¹.

Macro-influencers are well-known and effective at raising awareness. Because there are more macro-influencers than mega-influencers, it is much easier for a brand to find a willing macro-influencer to push their products and services. They are also more likely to be used to working with brands than micro-influencers, thereby making communication easier. However, brands must exercise caution when working with these types of influencers. This is the group most inclined to engage in influencer fraud, as some have only gotten to where they are because they bought followers.³¹.

3. Micro-Influencers

Regular people who have grown recognized for their knowledge of a specific niche are considered micro-influencers. As a result, they typically have a considerable social media following among devotees of that niche. The relationship and engagement that a micro-influencer has with his or her followers, rather than the number of followers, indicates a level of influence.³¹.

On a single social platform, a micro-influencer can have anywhere from 1,000 to 40,000 followers. A micro-influencer may be oblivious to the existence of an organization until that company attempts to contact him or her. If this is the case, the company must first persuade the influencer of its real value. Micro-influencers have a unique type of fan base, and they will not want to jeopardize their relationship with them by promoting something fake, so out niche, or

unbeneficial.

Influencers are very choosy about who they deal with since the relationship amongst micro-influencers and companies must coincide with target audiences. Some micro-influencers are willing to freely promote a brand. Others will anticipate being paid in some way³¹.

The nature of influence is changing. Micro-influencers are becoming more common and more famous. Some have risen from virtual obscurity to being nearly as well-known as traditional celebrities. This is particularly the case for Gen Z, who spend more time on the internet than watching television or going to sports or movies. In all reality, micro-influencers are the influencers of the future. The internet has led to the fragmentation of the media into many small niche topics. Even if one is into something not really popular, the individual is likely to find a Facebook group or Pinterest board devoted to it. And it is in these niche groups and boards that micro-influencers establish themselves as genuine influencers.³¹

4. Nano-Influencers

The nano-influencer is the newest kind of influencer to acquire popularity. Even though they have a limited following, these individuals are frequently authorities in extremely specialized or esoteric fields. They could be compared to the traditional huge fish in a little pond. They frequently have fewer than 1,000 followers, but these are engaged, interested followers who are eager to interact with the nano-influencer and pay attention to what he or she has to say. While many brands might dismiss nano-influencers as unimportant, they can be vital to businesses that provide highly specialized and niche goods..

They may be cheap and have great effect with a small number of people, but in most niches, a brand would need to work with hundreds of nano-influencers to reach a broad audience.

The term influencer marketing is introducing products and services of those who take action to influence the purchase intention or buying behaviour of other people. Such influence is usually the result of popularity, reputation or even expertise of influencers. This type of marketing can be set side by side with word of mouth marketing. A strong social media presence is very important in creating appropriate conditions for the use of this instrument. Branding, that is to say the use of celebrities a few years ago, has become more popular with bloggers over the years, but today, branding is also about just consumers who have a lot of influence on others. Influencer marketing can be said to be one of the fastest growing tools in reaching new consumers.

2.1.4 What makes influencers so powerful?

Because they have influence, we refer to people as influencers. The ability to influence someone, something, or a set of events ³². Influence can manifest itself in a variety of ways, from straightforward buying recommendations to fundamental changes in how one perceives the seller's reputation. Influence can also refer to the action of creating a favorable environment in order to change another person's perspective on a particular issue³². These influencers on social media have developed expertise in a certain sector, and because of their standing and reputation, they are very persuasive.

Through the pertinent information flow and persuasion theories, this effect can be understood. According to the two-step flow hypothesis, information conveyed through mass media is not transmitted to people directly but is instead managed by opinion leaders who interpret

information and facilitate its dissemination through various group interactions.³⁴ Interpersonal contact has a greater impact on the attitudes of individuals compared to mass media³⁵.

The two-step communication process places a lot of emphasis on opinion leaders who operate as middlemen in the network of social connections. Individuals are involved in communication. Others mostly rely on other personal connections as their mentors, while some individuals are interested in gathering and spreading ideas from the media. Opinion leaders are people with a large social network who are influential in the distribution of knowledge and act as both a source and a mentor ³⁶.

The capacity to serve as the primary point of contact and inform their counterparts on what works in politics, culture, and consumer choice is what gives opinion leaders their power, not riches or popularity.³⁷ Because they share their personal lives with their followers, influencers are perceived as being more relatable than celebrities because they are more honest, open, and realistic.³⁸ Influencer endorsements, as opposed to paid advertisements, are more likely to be perceived as the influencer's actual thoughts³⁸.

Theories from sociology can also be used to explain this phenomenon. New behavioral patterns can be taught through firsthand experience or by imitating the actions of others, according to social science theorist Bandura.³⁸ In other words, individuals take after what they see and influencers serve as role models for their fans. These fans are more inclined to adopt practices that the influencers they follow on social media practice. This justification makes it easier to comprehend why influencers are so powerful.

Here, the Robert Cialdini "principle of liking"—according to which people are more likely to say "yes" to persons they like—can also be applied³⁹. Most of the time, we follow influencers because we enjoy them. That explains why followers would react whenever influencers made a suggestion. A different theory is known as social proof³⁹. It indicates that if something is done by others, we have a tendency to copy them. And the greater the number, the more it will affect us. Basically, we tend to believe that anything that the crowd is doing is wise. And this is why we favor those who have a large following. And because they are perceived as having some form of authority, we trust anything they say.

The use of influencers in marketing is expanding quickly as more firms see their potential. Here are a few more factors that contribute to its strength:

1. The Development of Social Media

Our contemporary society is greatly influenced by social media. Globally, it is devouring the population at an alarming rate.

3.02 billion people existed in 2021⁴⁰. And as the availability of the internet and devices grows like wildfire, this number is skyrocketing. Social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have made it simple for us to share and communicate ideas.

Brands previously had to use their corporate websites to disseminate information about their products. However, social media channels have provided businesses a fresh and more effective way to inform consumers about their goods and encourage customer interaction.

Regarding users, these platforms have significantly altered how they engage with one another and consume material. They now have unlimited access to knowledge and the ability to create social ties.

2. Traditional marketing techniques are becoming less effective.

A typical advertisement uses media like radio, billboards, or television commercials to persuade consumers to make a purchase. However, as more people spend time on digital platforms, traditional advertising is becoming less and less appealing⁴⁰.

The necessity for firms to win back consumers' confidence is one of the factors contributing to the expansion of influencer marketing. Consumers no longer trust brands or endorsements, especially millennials and Generation Z.

In addition, typical advertising techniques are costly and time-consuming. Additionally, there is no accurate way to assess the success of your conventional marketing initiatives.

Businesses are concentrating their energy on digital marketing because the impact of these traditional approaches on clients is steadily declining.

3. It Increases Brand Reach

Consumers want for a more sincere and reliable voice in today's oversaturated advertising environment. The best method to use the dynamics of influence to convince clients using personalities they recognize and trust is through influencer marketing⁴⁰.

Influencers are those who have established a reputation for being knowledgeable via their dedication and hard work. These influencers have a sizable, reliable, and active fan and follower base.

Influencers can start trends and have an impact on their followers' purchasing decisions based on this trust.

Businesses have found it challenging to communicate with their customers directly as a result of the fierce competition. As a result, they apply influence psychology to engage and connect with their audience.⁴⁰

With their massive influence, influencers help these businesses reach a much wider audience base.

4. It is a Low-Cost Marketing Method

82% of consumers, according to Experticity, are most likely to heed the advice of a micro influencer⁴¹.

Micro influencers are simpler to approach despite having a small following. They have a more devoted and close-knit fanbase.

Microinfluencers are seen as being substantially more authentic than macroinfluencers and have a much greater potential for influence. Their promotions don't appear to be advertisements; rather, it appears that they are disseminating helpful information.

These micro influencers have significantly smaller followings, but they are much less expensive than well-known macro influencers.

Even small firms with limited resources may now leverage influencer marketing because to the accessibility of these micro influencers.

5. Results are Obtained with Influencer Marketing

The quickest method of consumer acquisition available now is influencer marketing⁴⁰. The strategy is expanding really quickly due to the many advantages it provides to the businesses. Here are a few examples.

1. Influencers have the power to sway the purchasing decisions of customers of all ages. In actuality, influencer marketing is the best strategy for interacting with millennials and Gen Z consumers. About 70% of young YouTube users claim to trust influencer opinions more than those of traditional celebrities⁴¹.
2. It is the best method for locating and connecting with your target market. Brands can divide up their target markets before selecting the right influencers.
3. Influencer marketing can significantly increase your brand's visibility and positioning online.
4. Influencer marketing can increase profits for many types of organizations, including established companies and start-ups

5. Multiple social media networks are home to a large number of influencers. Through influencer marketing, firms can connect with customers on all of these channels.
6. **Builds trust faster.** Influencers have taken time to build relationships, trust, and credibility with their followers. People already are used to them and respect their content and recommendations.
7. **Improves brand awareness.** Influencer marketing can greatly increase a brands reach and awareness as well as positioning online. The more influencer marketing is engaged, the more social users will begin to know more about the brand, who they are, and the solutions offered.
8. **Effectively Reaches Target Audience.** Through relevant influencers, a brands content is placed in front of social users that are already interested in the brand's niche. There is no need to spend additional funds on testing and finding the right audience. The influencer has already fostered this audience on social media.

There are a lot of things that contribute to the influence that these social media influencers have on their followers. Below are some of the components of such influence:

1. Social Evidence

The primary benefit of using social media influencers for influencer marketing is that it offers social proof⁴¹. In essence, it means that individuals believe that something must be okay if everyone else is doing it.

When a company offers social evidence, a lot of individuals decide to buy. One of the finest ways to offer social proof is to use a reliable micro-influencer to market your brand.

2. Authority

The idea of authority is another justification. We've all been taught to pay attention to professional counsel and take it at face value.

Therefore, if a business uses industry leaders and authoritative individuals, customers are more likely to embrace their advice without hesitation. This is one of the main reasons influencer marketing is so successful, particularly when it involves subject-matter experts.

3. Liking

This is based on the notion that people tend to imitate the people they find appealing. You are more inclined to purchase a product if someone you admire or admires you suggests it. That is all there is to it.

Influencer marketing is a highly effective strategy that may be used to persuade customers to purchase particular products for the reasons mentioned above.

Influencers have the ability to attract additional customers to goods or services. Customers rely on the advice of their favorite influencers, which is why²². This is a tool that brands can employ to sway consumer choices and increase conversion rates.

2.1.5 Concept of Purchase Intention and Online Purchase Intent

Purchase intention is a measurement of each shopper's propensity to purchase a good or service. It is also known as customer or buyer' intent²⁴ One of the most important and central topics covered in the marketing concept is purchase intention. Intentions are seen to be powerful indicators of future results²⁵. Intentions are measures of how willing people are to approach a particular conduct and how many times they are making an attempt to do a particular behavior²⁶. The buying process begins when a consumer peruses products, which may result in the procurement of a certain item. It also determines the possibility that the client would acquire a particular good or service²⁵. Making a purchase selection is a difficult procedure. Purchase intention is frequently correlated with consumer behavior, perceptions, and attitudes²⁷. It might be seen as a propensity to plan on acquiring goods or services in the future ²⁸. Purchase intention indicates how people will use their knowledge, preferences, and surrounding circumstances to obtain information, weigh their options, and make judgments ²⁹. A consumer's actual intention toward a commodity is referred to as purchase intention³⁰. Purchase intention can alternatively be understood as the consumer's deliberate choice or purpose to exert effort in order to make a purchase³¹. Additionally, online purchase intention examines customers' willingness and intent to acquire a specific goods using online transaction platforms³². This study therefore implies that purchase intention is a consumer's readiness to purchase a certain product at a particular time or in a particular situation. Consumers' desire to make purchases online is expanding quickly and is beginning to replace more conventional methods of shopping. Due to the abundance of online technologies that can help make this situation effective, there is a consequent rise in the number of online sellers entering the market with fresh online brand recognition. Until now, customers have learned about products from friends and salespeople. On the other hand, social media word-of-mouth (WOM) has developed into a fantastic informational resource.³³ WOM on social sites is

a factor that influences consumers' purchase decisions at various levels. This is because of technological advancements that enable consumers to access and share information in real-time and demonstrate that word of mouth has a positively significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions³⁴. Given that functional value is the component of social media with the greatest influence, brands must emphasize its importance. Individuals who used WOM of social media to communicate and circulate information about brands eventually led to buy intention, according to WOM determinants and research. According to prior studies, firms' advertisements on social media and website pages are positively impacted by reputation³⁵. However, consumers are more involved in exploring the social media pages of a familiar brand in comparison to an unfamiliar brand³⁶. Past studies recommend that online brand experience compares to online brand familiarity, influence the purchase intentions of consumers and brand credibility can strengthen the association bond among firm and consumers as well as increases the consumers purchase intention³⁶. Purchase intention is a topic of critical attention to strategy creators and commercial experts, and it is vital to recognize which variables in a certain buyer group impact purchase intention³⁷It is considered to be a prime input that marketers utilize to project forthcoming sales³⁸ and manipulate actions to impact purchasing behavior. According to many earlier studies, consumers' purchase intentions are a reliable indicator of their propensity to buy. Platforms play a crucial role in social interactions, useful content delivery, and real-time communications that are crucial for decision-making³⁸. Consumers' intentions to buy are influenced by numerous factors. A consumer's decision to purchase a product is largely influenced by the product's quality and by customer reviews posted on social media (e-WOM)³⁹Facebook allows businesses to communicate with customers primarily through their pages and sponsored adverts, increasing brand awareness, learning more about the company, and influencing consumers' purchasing

intentions⁴⁰. According to a study⁴¹, the popularity of a fan page or a post on Facebook does not always correspond to actual purchasing behavior. However, it may have a significant impact on consumers' brand loyalty and purchasing intent. As previously said, Facebook plays a significant role in influencing consumers' attitudes and behavior toward brands. For instance, one in five users respond to Facebook advertisements by purchasing the advertised products⁴².

According to research, consumers' buying intentions have a big impact on their actual decision-making. Companies understand how crucial purchasing intent is since it is connected to their drive to increase sales of their goods and services in order to increase profits.⁴³ The data from purchase intentions can assist managers in their marketing decisions related to market classification and promotional strategies, so purchase intentions are habitually evaluated and used by marketing professionals as an insight for sales or market share projections for both existing and/or new products and services⁴⁴. Purchase intent is related to both browsing activity that is goal-oriented and behavior that is exploration-oriented⁴⁵. While exploration-oriented consumers are known as the ones that behave freely and honestly, which means that they do not make pre-plans just before buying of anything, goal-oriented customers are more likely to hunt for details before making any purchasing decision towards a specific product. Both offline and online consumers can be divided into these two categories⁴⁶. When customers are happy with their comparison of a product to a competitor's, they go on to the information seeking and appraisal stages, where they develop a purchase intention⁴⁷.

4 Types of Customer Purchase Intention

Online, there are various forms of intent, and each user comes to a brand's website with a specific objective in mind.

1. Informational intent

Consumers who have this intent type are already in the process of obtaining information.

They are either looking for a specific solution or educating themselves.

This includes those who visit a beauty website looking for sensitive skin skincare routines, for instance. They can locate a suitable article to comprehend how to address their issue.

2. Investigative intent

Customers who have this kind of intent are still conducting study. They are currently investigating their options through price matching, option research, reading product and company ratings, and social listening even though they are not quite ready to make a purchase.

Due to the enormous variety of options available to online shoppers, more and more time is being spent in this intent stage across all markets and product categories.

According to Google Trends, searches for "best [product]" have been climbing consistently and aren't showing any signs of slowing down.⁴⁷

It is your responsibility to persuade the online consumer that your brand and items are ideal for them at these middle touchpoints throughout the customer journey.

3. Navigational intent

This intent group will contain those who are looking to visit a certain website or going straight to a brand's online store.

For instance, a user seeking to visit the lead city university website may search for leadcityuniversity.com.

This phrase is sometimes used to refer to search user intent rather than online consumer intent, but those with navigational intent may be more likely to make a purchase since they are looking for a particular brand or web domain.

4. Transactional intent

When thinking about buyer purpose, the majority of people see this kind of intent. Transactional intent refers to persons who have a high "intend to buy" and have a strong inclination to buy a particular good or service.

Although there are different levels of transactional intent, clients who fall under this category are nearer to the conversion phase of the customer experience.

Making a sale is the goal with these customers, thus in order to do so, you should provide them the customized offer or incentive that will make them most inclined to act.

2.1.6 How to Assess & Understand Customer Intent

Prior to learning how to gauge customer intent, it is important to have a basic understanding of intent.

- 1. Purchase intent changes with time**
- 2. Customer intent isn't necessarily a consciously expressed desire to buy.**

b. The significance of purchase intent

The return on investments for marketing operations increases when marketing is measured based on consumers' intentions to make purchases⁴⁸. Knowing a customer's intentions in advance or being able to quantify them precisely can help in designing marketing campaigns that reach the

target market and produce the desired outcomes, such as higher customer engagement and return on investment⁴⁸. This occurs because there is no requirement that a brand first raise consumer knowledge of a product or service provided by it before advertising it. When a client tries to buy a product or service but the transaction is unsuccessful or the purchase doesn't occur, the customer's explicit purchase intentions are captured. These intents can then be anticipated or documented using behavioral data or the engagement database⁴⁹.

Search marketing, also referred to as search engine marketing and search engine optimization, is one source of how purchase intention is measured. Other potential sources of purpose information include site data, off-site web activity, point of sale systems, and customer relationship management software⁴⁸. Social data—information gathered from social networks—can also be quite useful. Because they may be matched to certain key head phrases on a search engine, content consumption statistics or patterns are particularly helpful in terms of the intent data we can learn from them⁴⁹. These occur from interactions that happen when customers use social media platforms or visit websites, and they provide us with a quick snapshot or estimate of the customer's present and future purchasing intentions⁴⁸. Each of these intent measurements provides valuable insight about how to create effective engagement activities that will improve platforms' usability and productivity.

Stages of Purchase intention

1. Awareness or need recognition

The customer recognizes their need for a particular product at the awareness stage, also known as need recognition. For instance, a customer suddenly become very thirsty, probably from bring in the sun for a prolonged period of time. The customer then understands the necessity of

purchasing a drink, but he or she may not yet be prepared to do so because further investigation is still required.

2. Interest

The next stage is to search for information. At this point, the customer begins to search for and look into information about the different available products and services before making a decision. Customers have a different places or sources they gather information from. For instance, in our drink example, the customer might ask around shops, or friends or just scan the environment to see which drink is readily available or which drink the friend or shop owner can recommend. A customer with a weak intent to buy may not have a strong idea on which retailer to buy from.

3. Desire

Once the consumer has gotten enough information to facilitate their buying decision, the consumer or customer is in a position to weigh the alternative products that are available to them. In this stage, purchase intentions are strengthened, and the brand will be interested in whether customers are considering purchasing or not.

4. Action

At this stage, the customer actually buys the product and uses it, either immediately, or later. However, according to research, sometimes a customer does not do what they plan to do. For example, customers may have decided on buying a cold carbonated drink but change their mind to get a cold bottle of water while in the shop to buy.

Let's take a look at some of the other factors that shape purchase intent.

5 Factors that influence Purchase Intention

Some of the factors are as follows:

1. Stimulus/Trigger

The cue that triggers a buyer towards considering a product or a brand to be included in their consideration set. This might be the attributes of a product or simply its packaging

2. Outcome Expectation

The outcome expected out of the use of a product or a service.

3. Aspirational Value

The product might satiate some aspirations of a buyer. For example, A luxury car.

4. Recommendation

Recommendation by a trust worthy or reliable source

5. Emotional Association

Being emotionally associated with a product or a brand owing to the brand's perceived personality.

6. Seasonality

Some products tend to be sold at specific times of the year. However, this is not always obvious, therefore, it is important to find out directly from customers whether and how seasonality is impacting purchase intent for products.

7. Consistent customer satisfaction

Consistent satisfaction is an important factor for purchase intent. If a customer is unsatisfied after making a purchase decision, they are likely to have intent to buy another product from another place.

2.1.7 Social media Influencers as reliable advertising providers

A network of internet-based connections founded on an ideological and technological foundation is referred to as social media⁵⁰, which enables content and information to be generated and shared between users. As part of their channels of communication, businesses and various government organizations have been using social media platforms to engage their clients and citizens, according to a survey⁵¹. That implies that their community is mostly impacted by what consumers choose to purchase. It also implies that social media can be characterized as a platform through which people can share information from numerous online sources on a range of subjects⁵².

According to a report, social media platforms are referred to as conduits via which users contribute information⁵³. It is also utilized to increase consumer knowledge of the good and alter their purchase patterns and intents. Similarly, a study found that social media gives a business the opportunity to contact a bigger audience⁵⁴.

Credibility refers to the receivers' perception of the truth about the message⁵⁶. Research conducted in an online context can imply source credibility, a well-known term created by Ohanian to assess the efficacy of the endorser⁵⁷. The audience's reaction to the spokesperson determines the source's trustworthiness. The audience is much more likely to concur with a source that they find credible than one that they find less reliable⁵⁸. The perceived good traits of the communicator that influence how much the message is accepted are referred to as the source's credibility⁵⁷. Since the characteristics of communicators significantly affect the persuading process⁵⁷, therefore, it is crucial that the source be viewed as credible in order to increase the credibility and persuasiveness of the communication process⁵⁸. Factors that support the endorser's or influencer's perceived credibility make up the source's credibility⁵⁹. Several authors have looked at several factors to evaluate the source's reliability. However, reliability and knowledge have held steady over a number of research^{57,58}. But in other research, the audience's assessment of a source's attractiveness is also taken into account as a component to assess the source's perceived credibility^{57 60}. According to what has been said, the source's perceived attractiveness can be both physical and social⁶⁰Physical attractiveness, likeability, similarity, and familiarity are the four criteria McGuire established for his model to quantify source attractiveness. However, following analysis of the source valence and source credibility models, a combined model to examine a source's perceived credibility, particularly in the context of marketing communication, was presented⁵⁷. It was proposed that three factors—perceived expertise, perceived attractiveness, and regarded trustworthiness—determine an endorser's credibility. Since that time, numerous researchers have utilized the three-dimensional Ohanian's source credibility model in the marketing environment to gauge the efficacy of the endorsers⁶¹. A reliable source increases the likelihood that the persuasion process will be successful.

Endorsers who are viewed as having a high level of credibility are more likely to inspire favorable attitudes toward the messages in advertisements⁶³, and are consequently more attractive for marketing communication⁶⁴. Before the trend of using celebrities who best fit the product and the target audience was started⁶⁴, customers who seem to be the best matches for the product were chosen as endorsers (for example, doctors for the advertisement of health-related products⁵⁷). More recently, however, the trend of using social media influencers for endorsement purposes has emerged because they are seen as more credible than traditional celebrities⁶⁵. Social media influencers are the channel through which marketers engage with their target audience, according to influencer marketing⁶⁶. To improve the impact of their message and leave a lasting impression on their followers, social media influencers give reliable information⁶⁴. Influencers on social media who are regarded as reliable sources by their followers have a favorable impact on consumers' attitudes, behaviors, and purchase intentions⁶⁷. The more credible a social media influencer is seen as, the more accepted their message or content is. Recent research suggests a relationship between customer attitudes toward brands⁶⁸, purchase intent⁶⁹, and perceived trustworthiness of social media influencers. This study uses a three-dimensional notion of source credibility theory to examine the effects of social media influencers' credibility in the areas of beauty, trustworthiness, and expertise⁷⁰.

1. Beauty

The degree to which a person's facial characteristics are appealing to look at is their level of beauty⁷¹. It speaks of a media person's outward look. Examining physical attractiveness's impact on the personalities of those who influence it⁷². Because an endorser with attractive physical characteristics is more likely to capture the audience's attention, sources with attractive appearances are more equipped to encourage favorable results from marketing initiatives⁷². Since

the idea of using famous people as endorsers first emerged, various academics have looked into the effect that source attractiveness has on the audience's perception of the advertisement. Social media influencers' physical appearance is anticipated to have a strong propensity to affect how customers perceive the advertised message⁷². Numerous studies have shown that the audience's perception of the commercials is influenced by how appealing the source is. Studies found that advertisements for goods with physical attractiveness attributes were more effective when they were promoted and advertised by attractive sources than by less attractive endorsers⁷³. According to the attractiveness component of credibility, a message's efficacy rises when the audience is drawn to the social media influencers⁷³. The usage of a social media influencer's physical appearance as a construct to assess their credibility is growing rapidly in the context of social media influencer marketing⁷⁴. Since the research is conducted within the framework of the fashion and style category, and the physical attractiveness of the social media influencers is generally well-suited with this category, the present study focuses primarily on the physical attractiveness of the endorser.

2. Trustworthiness

The goal of marketing is to develop long-lasting relationships with customers⁷⁵. The terms "trust" and "trustworthiness" are not interchangeable; rather, trustworthiness is the result of cumulative prior perceptual experience⁷⁶. It can be characterized as the level of audience trust in the source⁷⁷. The degree of listeners' acceptance and confidence in the message and the source who gave it is referred to as the message's trustworthiness.⁶⁴ It is "the level of trust in the communicator's intent to convey the claims he deems to be most credible."⁷⁸ The degree to which an endorser's material can be viewed as trustworthy and dependable can be defined as trustworthiness. In a marketing environment, trustworthiness refers to how honestly a source is

seen to be. It clarifies whether the endorser is expressing their own opinions or is under the influence of a third party, such as perhaps due to financial incentives⁸¹. Therefore, the audience's perception of an endorser's credibility is measured by their trustworthiness⁸². An endorser who is believed to be advocating things for self-benefits would be guilty of self-serving bias in influencer marketing communication, which would result in negative reactions to commercials⁸⁴. The credibility of the source is high when the audience perceives the source as trustworthy⁶⁴. Consumers are believed to respond more favorably to endorsers who are viewed as being trustworthy than to those who are not⁸⁵. It was found that the trustworthy endorsers had stronger persuasive power regardless of whether the audience considers them as experts in their field or not⁸⁶. This was confirmed by manipulating the trustworthiness and expertise components of source credibility. In earlier research, the relationship between traditional celebrities as a source and consumer behavior, purchase intention, attitude toward the marketing, and attitude toward the companies was examined⁸⁷. When it comes to social media influencer marketing, trustworthiness can be summed up as the degree to which social media influencers are regarded as sincere, honest, and dependable by their online followers⁷⁷. Numerous studies have discovered a connection between consumers' sentiments and how social media influencers are seen as trustworthy. ⁷⁷.

3. Expertise

Expertise is the perceived capacity of the source, based on his or her knowledge, abilities, and experience, to offer accurate information. An expert can perform brilliantly in a certain subject or domain that is not possible for everyone to achieve⁸⁸. As a result, being an expert needs a person to put in more time and effort, practice for a long time, and put in a lot of effort⁸⁸. The audience's acceptance of the message rises in direct proportion to the source's perceived knowledge ⁸⁹.

Previous research has found that people view a source's accomplishments and knowledge as markers of how knowledgeable they believe the source to be⁸⁸. Approximately 64% of customers thought that social media influencers' credibility was dependent on their expertise in their respective fields. The degree to which a communicator is regarded as a source of reliable assertions is referred to as expertise in communication⁷⁸. Numerous empirical investigations have demonstrated that a source's perceived knowledge fosters a favorable attitude toward the communicator's message⁹⁰. Expertise in marketing refers to the endorser's familiarity with the product being promoted⁷³. Expertise is the perceived level of knowledge, abilities, and competencies in a given domain of the celebrity endorsers⁹³. A source is seen as more credible if they are an authority figure and are knowledgeable about the things they are endorsing⁷³. Since it is only the viewers' perception of the endorsers' competence, not their real expertise⁶⁴, they can alter the results of the commercials based on their perceived expertise and perceived knowledge of the endorsed product⁹⁴. Expertise can be defined in terms of marketing communication as the degree to which a target audience believes a spokesperson has the necessary knowledge, talent, and experience to support and promote a product⁹⁵. Unless the audience perceives the endorser to be an expert, an endorsement need not necessarily be⁷⁷. For example, if an endorser is pushing soaps, etc., it is not crucial that the endorser be a specialist in the field of beauty-related products, but it is crucial when marketing technology-related products. In the framework of traditional marketing, a number of research examined the connections between the perceived knowledge of the source and audience purchase intentions, brand attitudes, and celebrity endorser attitudes⁷³. The degree to which social media influencers are regarded as knowing, competent, experienced, and skilled by their followers on social media is referred to as the social media influencers' expertise for the purposes of the current study.⁷⁷

a. Loyalty of followers to the influencer

In the context of marketing, client loyalty is defined as their willingness to uphold a sustained engagement with a certain brand⁹⁶. Customer loyalty is described as a firmly held intention to repeatedly purchase or use a particular good or service, despite external factors including marketing initiatives having the ability to affect switching behavior⁹⁷. Thus, clients who have a favorable attitude toward a brand and want to continually buy the goods or services provided by that brand are said to be loyal customers. They may also suggest that brand to others⁹⁸. However, in the context of the current study, followers' loyalty to social media influencers is referred to as brand loyalty or consumer loyalty to the brand⁹⁹. According to Thomson's human brand theory, the current study treated social media followers as a brand to assess their fans' devotion to them⁹⁹. The human brand theory outlines the process by which well-known individuals can establish themselves as a brand, forge strong emotional bonds with their followers and win their loyalty, and produce successful marketing outcomes by increasing business sales and turning their fans into devoted patrons of the advertised product as well¹⁰⁰. Numerous scholars have examined media figures as a human brand¹⁰¹. Customer loyalty can be defined as a customer's determination to do business with a specific company, recurrent use of their products and services, and referrals of those services and products to acquaintances and associates¹⁰². According to the human brand theory and the previously mentioned definition of customer loyalty, within the context of the current study, since social media influencers can be re-considered as human brands; consequently, the content created by social media influencers can be re-considered as their product offerings, followers can be re-considered as consumers, customers' loyalty can be re-considered as followers' loyalty, and repeatedly purchasing can be re-considered as re-visiting and continuing⁹⁹. Thus, followers' loyalty can be defined as “the

followers' commitment to; continuously follow the account of a particular social media influencer, consistently follow the social media influencers' recommendations, and recommending the social media influencers' account to friends and associates. While the majority of academics have defined loyalty as customers' recurring purchasing patterns¹⁰³, it's equally critical to comprehend the factors that contribute to this behavior¹⁰⁴. This suggests that repeat purchases do not always signify a consumer's brand loyalty⁹⁸, i.e., a regular customer is not always loyal¹⁰³. For instance, if a consumer routinely purchases a particular product from a certain brand because there are no alternatives, rather than because they are loyal to the brand, the consumer would likely switch to another brand whenever there were better alternatives available⁹⁸. Therefore, repurchasing behavior alone cannot accurately reflect consumer loyalty¹⁰⁵; it is also crucial to assess how customers feel about the brand. This will help to determine how loyal customers are. To quantify customer behavior, it is crucial to assess the two widely acknowledged notions of customer loyalty, namely the behavioural approach and the attitudinal approach. The behavioral method examines behavior's effects without considering the emotional component; it says that devoted customers usually favor a certain brand over rivals and, as a result, engage in repurchasing behavior. While the latter emphasizes the emotional, cognitive, and deliberate factors that influence consumers' allegiance to a particular brand and are the primary emphasis of the attitudinal approach. In other words, the behavioural strategy looks at the consumers' recurring purchasing patterns, whereas the attitudinal approach concentrates on their positive attitudes and their intentions to spread the word about the brand. The current study examines the followers' loyalty to social media influencers by taking into account both components of customer loyalty: intention to follow the account and intention to promote the social media influencers to other social media users¹⁰⁷. The current study comes to the

conclusion that the consistency with which followers follow an influencer's social media accounts, as well as their intents to heed their advice and refer them to others, are indicators of their commitment to that influencer.⁹³.

2.1.8 Concept of Buying Behaviour

Consumer buying behaviour is the study “of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires”⁹⁴. Consumer behavior includes both personal and organizational consumer behavior when used in a sentence. What to buy, how to buy, where to buy, and why people buy are all topics covered in the study of consumer behavior⁹⁵. It describes the behavior of people who are directly involved in the acquisition and utilization of products and services. It also comprises the choice-making procedure that results in the act of buying. Consumer behavior includes not just what people consume but also how often and under what circumstances they do so. Numerous studies have identified and examined elements that influence customers' purchasing decisions, either individually or collectively. The decision-making process, buying habits, purchasing behavior, brands a consumer chooses to buy, and where he shops are all influenced by a variety of elements, specificities, and characteristics⁹⁶. Every single one of these criteria contributes to a purchase decision. Everyone's social and sociocultural milieu, as well as their culture, subculture, socioeconomic status, membership groups, families, personalities, psychological factors, etc., form who they are as individuals and as consumers. They have an effect on cultural trends as well. The behavior of a consumer might be significantly influenced by his age. What things a buyer may be interested in buying largely depends on how old they are. Consumer preferences for food, clothing, automobiles, furnishings, and leisure activities frequently correlate with age. Each and every one of these criteria contributes to a purchase decision⁹⁶The customer looks for

the products he intends to consume first, and then he only chooses those that appear to offer greater usefulness. The consumer estimates the amount of money he has available to spend after choosing his goods. The consumer then evaluates the current commodity pricing to determine which commodities he should purchase. The consumer's decisions are also influenced by a number of other elements, including social, cultural, economic, psychological, and personal ones⁹⁶.

Factors Influencing Consumer Buying Behaviour

The consumer behaviour or buyer behaviour is influenced by several factors or forces. They are: Internal or Psychological factors, Social factors, Cultural factors, Economic factors, Personal factors.

Internal or emotional factors

Numerous internal or psychological elements can affect a consumer's purchasing behavior. The most significant being Motivation and Perception

a. Motivation

A motivation is a desire or urge that a person has and is trying to satiate. When a person looks to find fulfillment through a purchase, it becomes a buying motive⁹⁷. The two types of wants—core wants and secondary wants—that drive a person to make a purchase are satisfied by a motive, which is an inner impulse (or need)⁹⁶. So, goal-oriented behavior is activated by motivation. An individual's motivation serves as a driving force that compels him to behave in order to meet his needs. As a result, it starts to influence customer behavior on an internal level. When a need is sufficiently aroused, it transforms into a motivator.

b. Perception

There are many more senses in humans than just the five senses. In addition to the basic five senses (touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing), there are also senses of direction, balance, a distinct awareness of which way is up, and so on. The brain receives information from each sense continuously, and if one were to take it all in, the system would become gravely overloaded. In order to filter out the unnecessary noise, the brain makes choices from the surroundings around the person. Consequently, the data that enters the brain does not give you a full picture of the environment. After developing a worldview, the person puts the remaining pieces of information together to map out what is happening in the outer world. Imagination and life experience will fill up any holes (and there will be plenty of them, of course). As a result, the cognitive map is not a "pic" but rather an invention. The following variables will have an impact on this mapping:

1. **Subjectivity:** A person's subjective worldview is their own, individual point of view.
2. **Categorization:** This is the "pigeonholing" of information and the evaluation in advance of things like occurrences and goods. Chunking, which is the organization of information into groups of related objects, is a technique that can be used to achieve this. For instance, an image that is seen when a certain piece of music is played might be chunked together as one memory item, causing the music to be evoked by seeing the picture and vice versa.
3. **Selectivity:** This refers to how much the brain chooses from the outside world. It depends on both how much is going on around the person and how selective (concentrated) they are on the work at hand. Selectivity is also a matter of opinion; some persons exhibit much greater levels of selection than others.

4. **Expectation:** These influence how people interpret upcoming information.

5. **Past experience:** Because of what we already know, we interpret future experiences in light of that knowledge.

The law of priority, according to psychologists suggests that sometimes, memories of sights, sounds, or smells from our past will cause us to react in an inappropriate way. For example, the aroma of baking bread may bring to mind a village bakery from twenty years ago, but it may have actually been caused by an aerosol spray that was placed near the supermarket's bread counter.

1. Social factors

Humans are social creatures. Therefore, the people in our immediate environment have a significant impact on our behavioural patterns, preferences, and dislikes. We almost never act in a way that is not socially acceptable because we constantly look to the people around us for approval. Family, reference groups, roles, and status are the social elements that affect consumer behavior.

a. Family

The buyer belongs to two different types of families: nuclear families and joint families. Joint families are those where there are many people in the family and group decision-making is preferred over individual decision-making. Nuclear families are those where there are few people in the family and individuals have more freedom to make decisions. The buying habits of the family can have a significant impact on the individuals' interests, likes, dislikes, lifestyle choices, and other factors.

b. Reference group

A group is made up of two or more people whose relationship causes their behavior to be interdependent and who share a common set of rules. A reference group is a collection of people that a person hangs around with. A person's attitudes, values, and behavior are greatly influenced by a group of individuals, either directly or indirectly.

c. Roles and status

A person is a member of numerous groups, including their family, clubs, and organizations. The person's status and role within each category can be determined. The tasks that a person is expected to complete make up their function. Every position has a status. Products that reflect a person's status and role in society are chosen by consumers. Marketers need to be conscious of a product or brand's potential status symbolism.

2. Cultural factors

Human behavior is essentially a product of learning; hence, as children grow up, they acquire a set of values, perceptions, preferences, and behavioral patterns as a result of socialization within the home and a number of other important institutions⁹⁸. We create a set of values from this, and these values greatly influence and guide our behavior. The values of achievement, success, efficiency, development, material comfort, practicality, individualism, freedom, humanitarianism, youth, and practicality are among those held dear⁹⁹. Then, these diverse subcultures, such as nationality groups, religion groups, racial groupings, and geographic regions, which all display varying degrees of ethnic taste, cultural preferences, taboos, attitudes, and lifestyles, have an impact on this broad collection of values. a) Culture, b) Subculture, and c) Social class make up cultural components.

a. Culture

The most fundamental factor influencing someone's desires and actions is their culture. Through his or her family and other important institutions, the developing youngster picks up a set of values, perceptible preferences, and behavioral traits. Consumption and decision-making patterns are significantly influenced by culture. However, culture is not static and undergoes continuous transformation, which is gradually absorbed into society. Culture is a set of values and beliefs that are generally held by members of a group.

b. Sub-Culture

Smaller subcultures within each culture enable their members to identify and socialize in more focused ways. A subculture is a collection of views that members of a certain nationality, religion, racial group, or geographic area share with the larger culture⁹⁶. Important market segments are made up of a variety of subcultures, and marketers must create products and advertising campaigns specifically for those groups. Although the majority of the views of the main culture will be shared by this minority, they also hold different opinions that may be in conflict with those of the main group.⁹⁶.

c. Social class

The social class that a person belongs to affects their purchasing decisions. Socio-Economic Classification (SEC)⁹⁶ is a system for categorizing socioeconomic categories. A society can be divided into social classes, which are more or less permanent divisions of organized people with

similar values, interests, and behaviors. Social class is measured as a collection of criteria, including income, occupation, education, authority, power, property, ownership, life styles, consumption, pattern, etc. Social class is not determined by a single component, such as money, but rather by a number of factors. In our culture, there are three different social classes. They belong to the upper, middle, and lower classes. The purchasing habits of these three social levels vary. To retain their standing in society, upper class buyers seek out high-class products. While lower class consumers make impulsive purchases, middle class consumers carefully consider their purchases and gather data to evaluate many producers in the same category. Therefore, marketing managers must thoroughly research the connection between social classes and consumer behavior and take the necessary steps to appeal to the members of those social classes who their products are intended for.

3. Economic Factors

Economic factors have a significant impact on consumer behavior. The following economic variables have an impact on consumer behavior: a) Personal income; b) Family income; c) Income expectations; d) Savings; e) Consumer liquid assets; f) Consumer credit; and g) Other economic variables.

a. Personal Income

A person's purchasing behavior is determined by his personal income⁹⁶. Disposable income and discretionary income make up a person's gross personal income. The term "disposable personal income" refers to the real income (i.e., money balance) that is still available to a person after taxes and other items that must be deducted from gross income are subtracted. Increased spending on various products is a direct result of increased disposable income. On the other side,

a decrease in disposable income causes a decrease in the amount spent on different things. The balance left over after paying for the essential necessities of life is referred to as discretionary personal income. This money can be used to buy luxury items, durable goods, and shopping supplies. An increase in discretionary income results in an increase in spending on products for shopping, luxury, etc., which raises a person's standard of living.

b. Family income

The total income of a family is referred to as family income. Family purchasing habits are influenced by family income⁹⁶. After paying for the family's essential necessities, any excess revenue is made accessible to be used for shopping, durables, and pleasures.

c. Income Expectations

One of the key factors affecting an individual's purchasing behavior is their expected income⁹⁶. He may be persuaded to spend more on luxury items, durable products, and shopping if he anticipates an increase in income. In contrast, he will cut down on comforts and pleasures and limit his spending to the absolute requirements if he anticipates a decrease in his future income.

d) Savings

Savings have an impact on a person's purchasing decisions as well. A person's expenditures alter in response to changes in their savings level. A person will spend less on comforts and pleasures if they choose to save more of their current income.

e) Liquid assets

Assets that can be promptly and cost-effectively turned into cash are referred to as liquid assets. Cash on hand, bank balances, marketable securities, etc. are examples of liquid assets. An

individual will purchase comforts and luxuries if he has more liquid assets. On the other hand, if he has fewer liquid assets, he will be unable to spend as much on pleasures and comforts.

f) Consumer credit

Consumer credit is the term used to describe the credit facility made available to individuals who want to buy enduring comforts and luxuries. The vendors either directly or indirectly, via banks and other financial institutions, make it accessible. Consumers can obtain credit through hire purchase, installment purchase, direct bank loans, and other methods. Consumer behavior is influenced by consumer credit. Spending on comforts and luxuries rises if more consumer credit is accessible on favorable terms since it encourages customers to buy these items and raises their level of life.

g) Other economic factor

The consumer behavior is also influenced by other economic issues, such as inflation and business cycles.

4. Personal factor

Buyer behavior is also influenced by personal characteristics. The key individual variables that affect consumer behavior are: a) age; b) occupation; c) income; and d) life style.

a) Age

One of the key personal characteristics determining a person's purchasing behavior is their age. At different points in their life cycles, people purchase various goods. With changes in the life cycle, their tastes, preferences, etc., also vary.

b) Occupation

A person's career or place of employment affects his purchasing decisions. Depending on the type of profession, there are significant differences in life styles and purchasing considerations and decisions. For instance, it is simple to distinguish between a doctor's purchase and those of a lawyer, teacher, clerk, businessperson, landlord, etc. As a result, marketing managers must create several marketing plans to accommodate the diverse occupational groups' motivations for purchasing.

c) Income

The level of income of a person is another factor that could affect how they behave in terms of consumption. Income is an important source of purchasing power. Because of this, people's spending patterns vary according on their income.

d) Life Style

A person's pattern or manner of living as shown by his or her interests, activities, and opinions, which depicts the "whole person" interacting with the environment, is referred to as a life style. To accommodate the consumers' lifestyles, marketing managers must create various marketing techniques.

2.1.9 Influencers on social media as approachable role models

Typically, parents, societal role models, relatives, and persons in positions of authority come to mind when we think of "role models." By being both personable and motivating, these individuals have clarified and taught what is good from wrong, earning them the title of "greatest role models."

However, there is a new category of role models for today's youth: social media influencers.

Influencers are persons who, thanks to their big fan bases, can reach a wide audience with the material they publish. Young people end up idolizing influencers because they spend a significant portion of their spare time online enjoying, viewing, and commenting on their content.

We've seen that social media has the ability to guide entire generations, and this effect shouldn't be undervalued.

Whether or whether influencers ought to be role models, they already are. Due to how simple it is for people to access their content at any time of the day, social media stars are just as likely to serve as role models as traditional celebrities, if not more so. Because these young people look up to them and like the content they post, they won't be losing their current following any time soon.

Influencers should consider it their responsibility to be good role models and exhibit positive behavior through their posts in order to contribute to the creation of a more positive online environment because the followers of all well-known influencers will be quick to follow anything, genuine or not, that the influencer advertises.

2.1.10 The Link between Purchase Intention and Buying Behaviour.

There are three common techniques to inquire about a customer's purchase intentions. Asking directly (e.g., "Do you plan to buy product X in the next six months?") is the first option. The alternative is to make a probabilistic inquiry (i.e. How likely are you to buy product X in the next six months")⁹⁷. From the perspective of explaining and forecasting household purchases, research by the Bureau of the Census in the middle of the 1960s found that buy probability measures were superior to direct intent measures⁹⁷. There are metrics created to evaluate both the likelihood and the timing of potential purchases in the future. If intent is measured incorrectly, the relationship between intent and purchase will be undermined. Due to confusing wording of questionnaire items or a mismatch between the assessment context and the behavioral context, measurement error results from a failure to properly access underlying intent. The shape of the relationship between intent and conduct varies among behaviors and contexts, according to prior research. For instance, it has been demonstrated that the reliability coefficient of intentions varies depending on the type of product and the market segment⁴⁵The predictive validity has been demonstrated to be stronger when the conduct has been previously performed, when the respondent is led to believe that the action will occur soon, or when the respondent is asked to consider both the negative and positive aspects of the behavior ⁶⁰. According to a study, there will be a perfect correlation between intention and conduct if 1) the behavior is under conscious control, and 2) the intention accurately captures the intention shortly before the behavior is carried out. In many instances where marketing intents are used, these prerequisites may not be met⁷². For actions where factors other than purpose influence whether or not a product is purchased, the relationship between intent and purchase is not likely to be perfect. Intention tends to overestimate actual behavior when environmental or psychological barriers prevent it from being achieved. For instance, if the product was hard to find or the budgeted was copied

with the owner's consent, intent might overstate action. Without permission, further reproduction is banned. Money was required for another reason. There are several barriers that prevent people from achieving their goals⁷². First, some actions could call for other people's cooperation, such as when family members decide on a purchase together. Unexpected difficulty or price in carrying out the activity is a second barrier. This suppression of intent is more prevalent when the status quo (i.e., choosing not to buy the product) is very inertia-ridden. Given the significant role that inertia plays in inhibiting behavior, it stands to reason that when a person has the option of either buying or not buying a particular product, their intent is much more likely to overstate their likelihood of making the purchase than when there are several different product options available⁸⁸. Situational circumstances may not only encourage or discourage making purchases, depending on the level of intent. For instance, one can succumb to peer pressure or the unexpected breakdown of a previously owned item to make an unintentional purchase⁸⁸. The recall date of the previously owned goods may be impacted by telescoping concerns. A tendency to believe that the currently owned product is newer than it actually is would be caused by a forward telescoping impact on a product purchase date, which would reduce intent to acquire a new product. Given that they are known to occur for salient events, such telescoping effects are anticipated to occur for pricey durable products (such as the date of most recent automotive purchase)⁸⁹. When people engage in a behavior for which they have past experience, the relationship between intent and conduct is greater⁷². If the person has previously had to make the decision to buy something, he or she is generally aware of the factors (other than intent) that will affect the purchase. On the other hand, we would anticipate a lesser correlation between intent and purchase for new products. If the assessed intent does not match the real intent at the time the behavior is carried out, the relationship between intent and conduct will also be imperfect. As

previously said, this requirement is unlikely to be met if there is a significant amount of measurement error in the evaluation of intent or if there is a significant amount of time that passes between the assessment of intent and the inciting of the behavior. The individual fails to consider the necessary aspects that establish actual purpose since the assessment is conducted in a more isolating situation. An "imaginability bias" may apply to uncertain buying events.⁷⁷ People assess their desire to acquire by picturing the details of the transaction. One basis for assessing intent is the ease with which such images may be conjured in the mind⁷⁷. By assessing and combining intentions for intermediate and contextually specific acts, it has been shown that the predictive validity of intentions can be improved (e.g. intend to save, intend to buy)⁶². It was also discovered that the individuals' initial thoughts on a topic had an impact on their likelihood assessments of potential future events. Customers will have to build intent if their purchase intent has not already been stored by reviewing their memories for justifications or denials of a potential purchase⁷⁸If pro-buy justifications come to mind first, it can prevent the development of justifications against the purchase and result in an overestimation of intent. According to a study, people automatically come up with convincing arguments, but they must specifically use counterfactual reasoning⁸⁹. Asking the responder to consider justifications for and against a future purchase could be one strategy to increase the legitimacy of intent. Intent may alter as more time passes between the assessment of the behavior and the intent due to the discovery of new information or a shift in the person's perspective on the activity⁸⁹. An individual's intent could obviously change in either the positive or negative direction. Over time, the relative weighting of certain traits may change. According to psychological research, the closer one gets to the decision point, the more significance negative information gains⁸⁹. Another study discovered that when participants were not instructed to assume that a commitment was near,

predictions for future occurrences based on utility were worse⁷⁸. If the buying event is not immediately approaching, the customer may avoid or be unable to think about unpleasant thoughts when developing intent to buy. It may be possible to enhance an intent measurement for a future purchase by imitating or asking the respondent to imagine that their commitment is about to become imminent. When evaluating a product for future use, consumers utilize straightforward assessment techniques that are not loss-averse, whereas when evaluating a product for current use, customers employ rather sophisticated evaluation techniques that are loss-averse⁷². Studies have revealed that the time horizon for a future purchase affects the tactics employed to establish those intentions⁷². Psychological research reveals that people are more likely to follow through on their intentions if they publicly declare them, as this strengthens their commitment to doing so⁷⁷. People frequently overestimate the likelihood of bad actions occurring and underestimate the likelihood of favorable behaviors occurring⁷⁸. They then act accordingly. The self-erasing character of predictions errors is the name given to this effect⁸⁵. This suggests that consumers who are asked about their purchase intent may indicate that they are more likely to buy a desirable product and in turn actually will be more likely to buy that product as comparison to consumers for whom no intent measure is collected. As a result, the connection between the two may be stronger for the sample of people polled than for the demographic from which they were selected. Alternatively, it could just be self-canceling, meaning that the measured group's intent and purchase levels increased (or decreased) proportionately. A group whose purpose was measured would engage in a desired (unwanted) action at a higher (lower) frequency than an unit whose intent was not detected in each scenario. As a result, the outcomes for the randomly chosen sample could be better than those for the

population it was meant to represent in a marketing study that randomly picked a group from a population of interest in order to forecast population purchasing behavior for a desirable product.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1. Source Credibility Theory

The term source credibility is defined as “a term that is commonly used to imply a communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message”⁶⁴. Given this definition, it is expected that the more a source, like a message creator, is being perceived as credible, the greater the impact on consumers, and the more likely they get persuaded. Ohanian developed the source credibility model to measure the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers and named expertise, trustworthiness and physical attractiveness as the three main characteristics that drive the individuals’ perceptions of source credibility. Furthermore, the source credibility model suggests that the effectiveness of a message communicated by an endorser depends on those three dimensions¹⁰⁶. Therefore, many authors use this model to measure the influence of the perceived source credibility of the spokesperson on consumers’ behaviors and attitude changes¹⁰⁷. Previous findings show that the celebrity endorsers’ source credibility is an important factor for customer-oriented advertisement to enhance brand attitude and purchase intention ¹⁰⁸. In the following subsections, the three main factors that influence the source credibility, which are expertise, trustworthiness and physical attractiveness, are discussed.

1. Attractiveness

In literature, there can hardly be find a universal definition for the term physical attractiveness since it is commonly believed that beauty is perceived differently in the eye of the beholder ¹⁰⁹. Nevertheless, researchers concluded that the physical attractiveness of a spokesperson often

refers to their physical appearance and describes how pleasant or appealing a human's aesthetic beauty and physical characteristics is ¹¹⁰. As one main characteristic in the consumer's perception of source credibility, it is often used to examine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement and the influence on consumers' behavior and opinion change ⁶⁴. Previous studies concluded that if an advertising spokesperson is recognized as attractive it can influence the perceived information credibility of consumers ¹¹¹, significantly enhance the persuasiveness and is favored by the audience ¹⁰⁸. Thus, the attractiveness of a social media influencer has a positive impact on his or her exertion of influence. A physically appealing social media influencer is helping to attract and direct the attention of followers in terms of recognition and remembering the sponsored brand¹¹². Moreover, the attractiveness of an influencer presented in pictures on social media platforms like Instagram is of significant importance for users to decide whether following new profiles or not ¹¹³. The persuasion of a celebrity endorser is greater when the attractiveness of the spokesperson is high and therefore it is an important factor in the endorsement effectiveness¹¹⁴.

2. Expertise

The second dimension of the source credibility construct, source expertise, is defined as "the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions"¹¹⁵. Moreover, it is the degree of perceived knowledge, experiences, skills, and qualifications that an endorser has. Thus, it can be said that source expertise is the knowledge that the communicator possesses to support information in an advertisement. An experienced advertiser or influencer implies that he or she is capable of delivering what is promised to the consumers in the advertisement¹¹⁹. The three dimensions of source credibility were tested and it was found out that the expertise of a celebrity endorser has a significant influence on the consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, if

consumers are convinced that the communicator is highly skilled the more likely they tend to consider the message in a positive light and this has a positive impact on the consumers' attitudes and behaviors¹²⁰. A study investigated the effect of perceived blogger credibility and assume the dependence of credibility on the bloggers' expertise¹²¹. For instance, if an influencer is an experienced engineer and has the ability to give valid information, the technical information about a brand or product posted on his or her blog should be seen as more credible by blog readers than messages posted by a blogger who is not an expert in this field. Thus, it is highly probable that their expertise in a specific area makes them qualified to advertise certain products or brands effectively¹²².

3. Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of a spokesperson can be defined as "the perceived willingness of the source to make valid assertions"¹²³. Trust exists if a message receiver, like a consumer, has confidence that the communicator, for instance, a celebrity endorser, is reliable and honest⁶⁴. Previous research shows that consumers are more likely persuaded and influenced if the source is perceived as trustworthy and is being communicated in a sincere manner without bias¹²⁴. There are numerous studies that support the power and influence of trustworthiness on attitude change and purchase intention of consumers. The role of consumers' trust in the effectiveness of influencer marketing was examined and findings show that influencer's trustworthiness positively affects the followers' trust in branded posts, which subsequently influences their purchase behavior¹²¹. In-depth interviews were also conducted to examine the factors of social media celebrities that influence young female Instagram users' purchase decisions. It was found that online celebrities are more strongly perceived as trustworthy and socially relatable than traditional celebrities, and as a result, have a greater impact on users' decisions and purchasing

behaviors⁶⁷. Additionally, one of an influencer's key qualities is trustworthiness, which helps them persuade their social media followers and has a favorable impact on how consumers feel about a business¹²⁴.

The celebrities of the digital era are social media influencers. They are the stars and starlets of Instagram and YouTube. Some people become famous before they can even spell. DJ Khaled's kid Asahd Tuck Khaled gained millions of fans before he was even two years old.

Social media influencers have proliferated in public life ever since platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok became well-known. The stream of content on Instagram is chosen based on your interests, the recentness of the post, and your connection to the author or sharer of the content. Influencers on social media have effectively mastered the skill of gaming the system.

It is no secret that influencers profit from their influence by promoting products. They are not naive, millennials. They are okay with that since they prefer a third party endorsement than one from the goods manufacturer. They find celebrities' and product businesses' advertisements boring because they are too blatant. Social media influencers are more approachable than A-list celebrities because they are inventive in incorporating the items into their lives.

Many enjoy a cult-like following and are readily able to raise the money necessary to meet their idols in the real world.

Because it just takes a small amount of work to be replaced by another growing influencer, influencers are always pushing themselves and their rivals to new heights. With AI influencers, they will progressively share their fan base and advertising budget. High-end beauty businesses currently utilize the CGI (computer-generated imagery) influencers with beautiful skin and dreamy eyes. Adulating admirers, PR professionals, and meet & greet occasions come along with

the transient fame. Millions of people who suffer from the mindless swiping syndrome that we see in restaurants and at dinner tables are what's driving all of this.

Ryan, of Ryan Toys reviews fame, won \$22 million before turning 8 years old by simply unwrapping toys. Why not let them play with their own toys instead of making millions of kids watch him in a virtual capacity? The closest thing to genuinely playing with children, it appears, is seeing him unbox and play with the toys they cannot buy.

The influencers' allegedly perfect lives, which resemble reality TV, are part of what makes them so alluring on social media. Some followers firmly believe that whatever posted online must be true.

Influencers must, however, tread carefully in the thin space between fantasy and reality, for example, appearing to care deeply about the location they visited despite going on a perfectly staged expedition solely for an Instagram photoshoot.

A want to be influencer lurks inside many of us, waiting for our big viral break. Influencers frequently aim for nothing more than fame. Nevertheless, this has given a much wider range of people than ever before the chance to become famous. A young man from a slum like Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya, or Ajegunle in Nigeria can briefly gain popularity online. They serve as examples for other regular people to pursue social advancement that would otherwise take a lifetime to accomplish.

One questions whether influential people are good role models because of their exaggerated successes and never-ending streams of well contrived spontaneity. In an effort to emphasize health and wellbeing, many influencers have launched "getting real" campaigns. Without using filtered images, they discuss their own struggles and fears. Many businesses choose to work with

influencers that share their goals and target a specific demographic. They prefer to collaborate with micro-influencers that have a following of 2000–50,000.

2.2.2 Relevance to the Study

Examining the source credibility theory and its constructs comprising of expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness is very relevant to this study on influencer marketing, purchase intention and buying behavior. The theory states and explains how the credibility of a source determines if intending consumers or target audience of brands will pay attention to advertising messages and eventually purchase a product. Brands that make use of influencer marketing as a means of promotion aim to get their target audience or consumers have some sort of emotional connection that will raise purchase intent and eventually inform buying. For a fashion brand in Nigeria, getting an influencer that is very fashionable and has a teeming following in the fashion niche as well as great engagements is the best bet to push and portray the brand to the

2.2.3 Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour is an extension of the theory of reasoned action¹²⁵ made necessary by the original model's limitations in dealing with behaviours over which people have incomplete volitional control. The intention of an individual to engage in a certain behavior is a key component of the idea of planned behavior, just as it was in the original theory of reasoned action. The motivating variables that drive a behavior are thought to be captured by intentions, which also serve as indicators of how much effort a person is prepared to put forth to carry out the behavior. In general, a behavior should be more likely to be performed the stronger the intention to engage in it. But it should be apparent that only volitionally controlled behavior—behavior that may be freely chosen to be performed or not—can give rise to a behavioural

intention that manifests in action. The performance of most behaviors depends at least in part on such non-motivating elements as the availability of necessary opportunities and resources, even if some behaviors may actually meet this criterion rather well (for example, time, money, skills, cooperation of others). These elements together show how much control individuals actually have over their behavior. If someone desires to engage in the behavior and has the necessary means and opportunity, they should be successful in doing so. It is by no means a novel concept that motivation (intention) and ability (behavioral control) work together to influence behavior. It serves as the foundation for theories on a wide range of topics, including animal learning, aspirational level, psychomotor and cognitive task performance, and perception and attribution in human beings. It has also been claimed that our more generic models of human behavior incorporate some sense of behavioral control, whether it be in the form of facilitating factors, the context of opportunity, resources, or action control.

In order to forecast a person's intention to engage in a behavior at a certain time and location, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was renamed the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in 1980¹²⁵. The theory was developed to describe any behavior that a person may exercise self-control over. This model's most important element is behavioral intent, which is impacted by attitudes about the likelihood that a behavior will produce the desired result and by a subjective assessment of the risks and advantages of that result.¹²⁵

The TPB has been used extensively to forecast and explain a variety of health behaviors and intents, including substance use, breastfeeding, using health services, and smoking. According to the TPB, behavioral success is a function of both ability (behavioral control) and motivation (intention). It makes a distinction between the behavioral, normative, and control types of beliefs. Six constructs that together reflect a person's real control over the behaviour make up the TPB.

1. Attitudes - The extent to which an individual sees the behavior of interest favorably or unfavorably is referred to here. It requires taking into account how the behavior will affect the world.
2. Behavioural intention: These are the driving forces behind a particular behavior, and the higher the intention to carry it out, the more probable it is that the behavior will be carried out.
3. Subjective norms - This is the conviction that the majority of people either support or disapprove of the conduct. It has to do with a person's opinions about whether colleagues and significant others believe the individual should indulge in the behavior.
4. Social norms - In a larger cultural context or among a group of people, this refers to the accepted norms of behavior. Social norms are seen as typical or normative in a group of people.
5. Perceived power – This relates to the perception of the existence of elements that may help or hinder the accomplishment of a behavior. Each of those factors is thought to be under a person's behavioral control to some extent depending on perceived power.
6. Perceived behavioural control - This is a person's assessment of how simple or difficult it is to carry out the behavior of interest. Each event and action affects how behavioral control is perceived, which causes an individual to perceive behavioral control differently depending on the circumstance. The Theory of Planned Behavior was introduced as a result of the later addition of this theoretical construct, which replaced the Theory of Reasoned Action.

2.2.4 Relevance to the study.

The theory of planned behavior states that motivating variables that drive a behavior are thought to be captured by intentions, which also serve as indicators of how much effort a person is prepared to put forth to carry out the behavior. In general, a behavior should be more likely to be performed the stronger the intention to engage in it. In the study of influencer marketing, buying behavior and purchase intention of Pepsi, this theory explains that an individual is more likely to purchase the Pepsi product if the intentions of the individual is strong towards the said product. This helps to understand the link between purchase intention and buying behavior.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

2.3.1. Influencer marketing and children

Targets that influencer marketing uses This empirical assessment of various studies on youngsters examines how influencer marketing is directed at this age group. According to the authors, the majority of studies on influencer marketing concentrate on adult consumers and look at how influencers influence their followers' purchasing behavior. Hence the need to examine influencer marketing and kids critically. Children today have a wide range of social media and digital entertainment possibilities. in particular, with the Generation Alpha generation, who have never known a world without social media. In 2022, they went through a pandemic that affected the entire world. This pandemic caused a worldwide disruption in the way of doing things which includes teaching. These children were integrated into a fully online/hybrid method of teaching thereby opening them up to a lot of digital content. YouTube in particular, emerged as the

primary platform for children's screen time and an alternative for traditional television (TV) content. YouTube through this offered new possibilities for brands to engage with children and their parents, including embedded advertising formats containing subtle brand integrations in entertaining media content, making them less intrusive, and therefore harder to recognize¹²⁶. For example, Ryan's World, which features a young boy reviewing branded toys and products, was the 6th most watched YouTube site for children, with more than 19 million viewers¹²⁷.

The stars of social media, also referred to as vloggers on YouTube, have become important influencers for the consumption decisions of their young audiences. They give their followers an insight into the brands they love and use in their daily life and even give direct advice on the products their followers should use or not use¹²⁸. Many firms have incorporated these influencers, who are frequently kids themselves, into their marketing efforts because to their reach and the authority they project. Although some of these endorsers look to be "regular" kids, some of them are actually paid well, like Ryan, who made \$22 million in 2018¹²⁹. This is because brands ask these influencers to advertise their products on their social media profiles (on their feed or in their stories on Instagram, in videos on YouTube and TikTok, or in Facebook updates, etc.) in exchange for free promotional items or payment, and as a result of their large audiences on YouTube, these influencers' YouTube channels generate advertising revenue.

Influencers' material includes seamless implied brand endorsements. As a result, branding and advertising are thoroughly incorporated into the media that kids are watching¹³⁰. The paper asserts that there is still a dearth of research on the effects of influencer marketing on young children, despite their rising presence and significance in the commercial media environment for children.

In order to show how social media influencers, a new source of advertising, target and have an impact on young children, the article developed a theoretical framework. Children have always been a key demographic for marketers, both because of the influence they have on their parents' purchasing decisions and because they will eventually become adult consumers¹³¹. The emphasis was on young children under the age of 12, who are known to be particularly susceptible to advertising. This study, which focuses on children and influencer marketing, demonstrates that much work needs to be done before we can fully understand how influencer marketing actually functions in Nigeria. Online video consumption is increasingly significant in kids' media diets. Content developed exclusively for YouTube by YouTube personalities is very popular with kids. They have developed as social media influencers because they have a broad audience and are seen as likable and reliable. Nowadays, most kids between the ages of 8 and 11 choose to watch content on YouTube, such as cartoons, animation movies, etc., rather than television shows¹²⁸. Children in particular favor content that has been expressly selected for YouTube by YouTube personalities. Children are exposed to a variety of YouTube content, including pranks, people playing video games, product reviews, people opening boxes of goods, and people demonstrating their musical talents. Creators of this content have the potential to amass huge followings and subscriber bases, including millions. YouTubers provide compelling spokespersons for advertisers due to their enormous followings, the popularity of their content, and the fact that kids find them to be likable, trustworthy, and inspirational figures¹³⁰. As a result, YouTube content producers are becoming significant social media influencers who can connect with a younger audience. As influencers, brands engage YouTube creators to mention, demonstrate, or advertise a product or brand in their videos in exchange for money or other mutually beneficial agreements (such as free products). For instance, in his videos on his Ryan's world YouTube

channel, Ryan, a well-known youngster with 22 million subscribers, demonstrates and unboxes Hasbro toys. Additionally, Dutch YouTuber Furtjuh makes cookies in his videos using BlueBand goods, a well-known Dutch butter brand. Influencer marketing on YouTube, also known as sponsored content, native advertising, and vlog advertising, raises ethical questions because it incorporates advertising into independent content creators' non-commercial works, blurring the line between what is advertising and what is not¹³². Audiences find it difficult to distinguish influencer marketing from advertising because to this subdued and integrated approach¹³³. Children's advertising-related knowledge and abilities, such as understanding the selling intent of an advertisement, are referred to as advertising literacy or persuasion knowledge, and are often still developing. As a result, children are expected to be even less likely than adults to understand the commercial nature of influencer marketing¹³³. Children are more vulnerable to advertising, especially covert, embedded advertising like influencer marketing, since humans need advertising literacy to deal with advertising. Children and adolescents (9 to 12 years old) and adults (12 to 16 years old) have trouble distinguishing concealed and embedded advertising in YouTube videos, according to qualitative research¹³⁴. Regulators and self-regulatory groups emphasize the significance of outright disclosing influencer marketing, including on YouTube¹³⁵, in order to assist both adults and children in understanding it. A disclosure can serve as a useful cue for children to notice advertising in YouTube videos, according to a study¹³³. Despite the fact that this finding is encouraging, there is still more to learn in this area. First, it's critical to learn whether influencer marketing disclosures may help kids recognize advertising as well as more sophisticated and nuanced aspects of advertising literacy, such the comprehension that a video has both a selling and a persuading goal¹³⁴. Ad recognition is a crucial first step in developing children's advertising literacy, but it has been suggested that in order for kids to actively engage

their cognitive defenses in reaction to sponsored content, they need to activate more advanced levels of advertising literacy. Importantly, a study revealed that while children's awareness of advertising and comprehension of selling aim did not affect their desire for marketed products, their grasp of persuasive intent did. Investigating the extent of a YouTube content creator's declaration of receiving payment from a brand to advertise in his vlog is crucial. This can improve three aspects of advertising literacy: the ability to recognize advertisements, comprehend the selling intent, and comprehend the persuasive intent. Second, the development of advertising literacy prompted by a disclosure may change kids' cognitive and emotive reactions to the brand, item, and video. A disclaimer may (indirectly) boost brand recall from a cognitive perspective because the deployment of advertising literacy necessitates methodical comprehension of the sponsored material. Influencers are viewed as personal, reliable, and approachable when considering the affective side, according to sources ¹³⁴. Children view YouTube content producers as helpful resources for guidance on what things to purchase and how to use those products¹³³. Similar to how brand views and purchasing intentions may be positively influenced by influencers, research has proven this¹³². However, when a disclosure does encourage kids to respond to a sponsored YouTube video using their advertising literacy, this could also cause reactance ¹³⁴. Indeed, prior studies have shown that a YouTube disclosure triggered kids' overall aversion to vlog advertising, which in turn diminished influencer credibility and eventually lowered buy intentions¹³⁵.

Despite the author of the study's assertions, this paper intends to provide light on the scant research that has been done on Nigerian people' purchase intentions or purchasing behaviors in relation to influencer marketing.

2.3.2. Influencer marketing and Lifestyle Branding.

Influencer marketing is a type of advertising where the target market as a whole is not prioritized, but rather a small group of specific individuals¹³². A renowned person posing for a billboard or appearing in a TV commercial are the typical images that come to mind when someone thinks of influencer marketing. Companies and brands believe that by highlighting notable individuals to their target markets, their target customers will be more likely to try the good or service that the company or brand provides. In a research on the development of social media influencer marketing and lifestyle branding, Lucie Fink was looked at in detail¹³³. From YouTube and Instagram, the author collected examples of influencer marketing and looked into these platforms. Two different kinds of analysis were done. The first used a pentadic study of Instagram to look at the techniques influencers seem to utilize when uploading content. The second technique used was a content analysis of YouTube videos to look at the strategies that social media influencers appear to use to advertise on YouTube and how they interact with their audience members. The author examined films for three qualities—confidence, interactivity, and authenticity—that were considered to be crucial based on prior research in order to undertake this qualitative content analysis. These investigations helped shed light on why influencers are successful, especially when it comes to branding or lifestyle impact.

The study looked at the techniques that have made influencer marketing such a successful public relations tool and how social media use has made it possible for brands and customers to interact more closely.

The study's conclusions demonstrate that interactivity, sincerity, and self-assurance are essential qualities for influencers to have while producing lifestyle branded content. Influencers are more likely to succeed in achieving their brand partnership objectives if they exhibit these three

qualities. The study also confirmed that social media influencer marketing has effectively altered how firms communicate with their customers.

Influencers on social media that support lifestyle brands have the most success engaging with consumers when they are genuine, self-assured, and participatory with their material. Although the study focused on lifestyle branding, the same is probably true for many of the goods that public relations firms and marketers advertise, including cars, gadgets, and home goods. Through social media content, the barrier between the customer, the brand, and followers has been broken down via the use of influencer marketing in lifestyle public relations projects. Before the emergence of social media influencers, brand consumers were only the target of one-sided advertising. A consumer could only see an item through print, billboard, radio, and television advertisements before the advent of social media. A customer can now interact with a brand via social media. Consumers can feel as though they are making a more educated choice when making a buy by watching a reliable source utilize a product. Research has made it clear that social media influencer marketing has actually improved how brands communicate with their target audiences. This two-way interactive public relations strategy contributes to the expected success for brands and explains why social media influencer marketing is one of the hottest trends right now.

2.3.3. Consumer Attitudes towards Sponsored Online Content from Social Media Influencers

The manner that people communicate, whether formally or informally, has been profoundly altered by the technological revolution. One of such notable inventions is social media.

Numerous businesses regularly engage with their clients through social media and create product promotion plans based on the feedback they receive there¹³³. Consequently, the majority of businesses use social media channels for marketing.¹³⁴ Social media's popularity makes it possible and trustworthy to reach the greatest number of clients in a constrained amount of time and money¹³⁵. The most well-known social media sites include Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, and Instagram. However, the steadily growing use of social media led to the development of a brand-new category of digital media marketing known as "Social Media Influencer Marketing"¹³⁶. In this sense, it is now typical for businesses to employ well-known social media influencers to promote their services and products on social media platforms.³⁰ In the end, social media influencers are regular people who gain notoriety on various social media platforms by producing and publishing content on a range of subjects, including technology, entertainment, travel, fashion, education, reviews, sports, and more. Social media influencers serve as an example of a cutting-edge, impartial third-party endorser who dramatically shapes consumers' perceptions and intents about a business through innovative content¹³⁷. Influencers create methods for promoting goods and services through a variety of media, including blogs, videos, and photos¹³⁸. According to a survey, followers and social media influencers interact based on trust and personality¹³⁹. Businesses also think an influencer marketing approach will be very advantageous to them. In this way, social media influencers have been changing marketing fads in line with the present marketing era¹⁴¹. As a result of the abundance of people with varied backgrounds on social media, leveraging social media influencers for marketing communication has become an effective and worthwhile strategy for brands¹⁴². In building a long-term relationship with the firms trying to expand their consumer base and turn them into devoted patrons, this type of marketing strategy may be quite successful.³⁰ As a result, numerous

businesses created social media profiles on various platforms to promote their products. However, only a small percentage of brands managed to attract followers; the majority of them were unable to capture the attention of the greatest number of consumers. As a result, businesses are increasingly paying closer attention to employing a skilled social media influencer that can draw the most followers to their brands¹⁴⁴. However, a number of research shown that in industrialized nations, social media influencers have a considerable impact on customers' purchase intentions and eWOM intentions¹⁴³. The purpose of the study was to determine whether customers' purchase and eWOM intentions toward the companies that the influencers promoted could be influenced by the influencers' personality, content, and trustworthiness. It was discovered that consumers' purchasing intentions and eWOM are significantly influenced by the content and credibility of influencers. As a result, influencers' personalities are slightly impacted. They come to the conclusion that customers are more likely to endorse goods or services from a business that their following influencers have promoted on their various social media platforms. Finally, this study recognized the important influence social media influencers have on consumers' purchasing intentions and eWOM. As a result, companies and advertising experts might plan their marketing initiatives taking into account recommendations from social media influencers.

Marketing firms and companies approach social media influencers to produce content for them for a variety of purposes, such as promoting the release of a new product or gaining publicity for a company¹⁴⁵, which results in a sponsorship between the brand and the influencer¹⁴⁶. A sponsored blog post in the context of blogging is a piece published by a blogger who received payment for the creation and publication of the post, either directly in the form of money or indirectly in the form of freebies or coupons¹⁴⁴. Bloggers are more likely to recommend a

sponsored product if it fits with their blog's aesthetic, according to an observational study of eWOM through consumer fashion pages¹⁴⁷. According to a study, people's sentiments toward the sponsored brand also changed when it was made clear in a blog post that it was sponsored¹⁴⁸. People's recollection of the brand also decreased. Similar findings from another study suggested that consumers form "distrusting views about the post" as a result of the revelation of sponsorship. On the other hand, findings from a different study on the impact of blog sponsorship disclosure type demonstrate that the way the disclosure statement is organized might enhance reader perceptions of the post.¹⁴⁹ They discovered that genuine disclosure, when a blogger discloses sponsorship while maintaining that the ideas are still their own, results in more positive perceptions. Some claim that readers may view bloggers who receive payment for blog posts as less credible than those who receive free samples or discounts, but an experimental study found the opposite to be true. Consumer perceptions were unaffected whether the blogger received payment directly for the post or received payment in the form of a discounted coupon^{144,150}. Additionally, based on brand awareness, which is directly related to buy intent, the results showed that customer attitudes toward sponsored blog post recommendations had a considerable beneficial impact. Similar indicators were discovered in a study on the effects of review valence in organic and sponsored blog sites, with blog sponsorship not having a significant impact on their experimental conditions of perceived credibility, brand attitude, and purchase intention compared to an organically written post. In contrast to sponsored content, organic eWOM occurs when a user naturally tells others about their experiences with a brand or business online¹⁴⁴. Few comparisons have been done between consumer opinions toward sponsored suggestions and how they differ from their attitudes toward organic recommendations, despite the fact that the field of research surrounding sponsored blogging is expanding. One

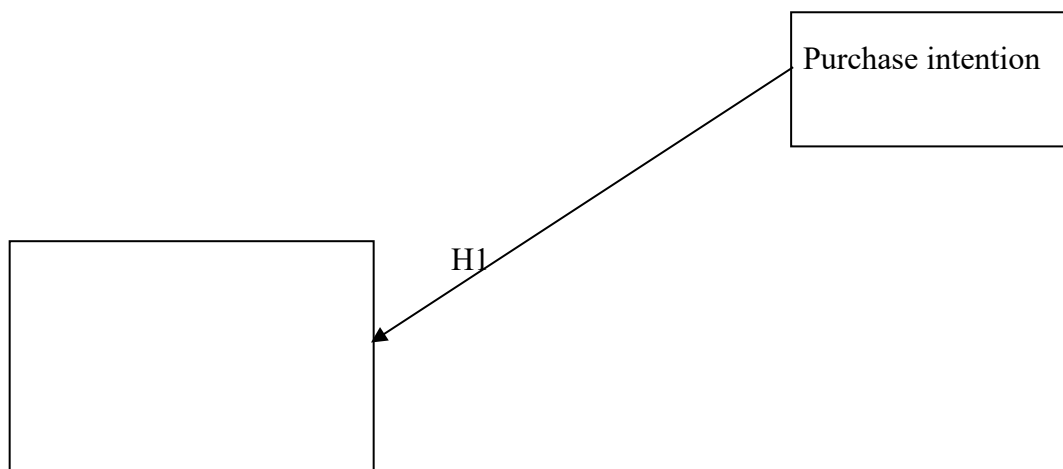
study compared the impact of sponsored and unsponsored content on blogger credibility, and another looked at the influence of review quality in sponsored and unsponsored blogs on behavioural intentions, credibility, and brand attitude. However, neither study compared consumer attitudes regarding sponsored or unsponsored content. An investigation on the effects of open product placement on blogs serves as an illustration of how comparisons have been studied¹⁵⁰. They discovered that when consumers were made aware of the involvement of third parties, their opinions regarding the blog fell more; yet, their intents to make purchases did not.

Brands are aware of a blogger's ability to influence their connected network through recommendations, which can lead to product searches and purchases¹⁵¹. A consumer's "willingness" to purchase a product is included in this purchase intention, which is described as "an individual's conscious plan to make an attempt to purchase a brand."^{143,152}. Through both sponsored and organic eWOM, as well as substantial additional research, the material reviewed in this study regularly links consumer sentiments regarding blogs with purchase intention. It also indicates the influence that online product reviews can have on purchasing behavior. These assert that consumer behavior is directly influenced by attitudes, which also affect consumer purchasing behavior¹⁴³.

2.4 Conceptual framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variables



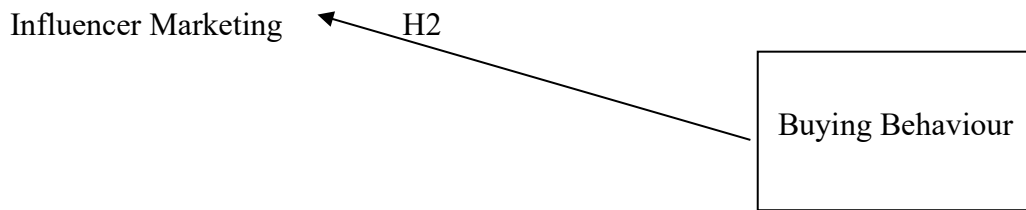


Fig 2.1: Conceptual model on Influencer marketing, purchase intention and buying behavior.

2.5 Summary of Gaps in Literature

From examining literature extensively on Influencer marketing, Purchase intention, buying behavior and factors that influence them, it has been seen that extensive work has been done in this field spanning several countries particularly on influencer marketing. However, in Nigeria, there has been no proper study done to check if influencer marketing has been doing exactly what brands need it to do for them, which is influence public opinion on their product and services. Influencer marketing has on the rise recently with the increase in the use of social media particularly since the global pandemic in 2020. There is a rise in content creation and inadvertently content creators, micro and Nano influencers particularly on Instagram and TikTok, as well as YouTube. There are limited studies to see if influencer marketing is actually influencing the perspectives of potential consumers or target audience to purchase or intend to purchase a particular product or service. This is the gap that this study seeks to fill.

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Methodology

This chapter discusses the method to be used in the study. It contains and explains the following: research design, research methods, population of the study, sample size, sampling procedure, instruments for data collection, validity and reliability, data collection, data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study will adopt survey research design by collecting data in one stream. It will be cross sectional research that will quantify the data collected to answer the research questions. A cross sectional research design has no time dimension and relies on existing differences and classifies groups based on existing differences rather than random allocation¹. Survey includes the use of questionnaire, an instrument specifically designed to elicit information that will be useful for analysis². This research will adopt survey research method in this research work because people's opinions will be sought through the use of a questionnaire from which conclusions will be drawn, quantitative method is based on the measurement of quantity or amount (numeric data) i.e attaching numerical values to certain variables.

3.2 Population of the study

Population is an aggregation of elements from which a sample is selected. For this study, the population consists of full-time undergraduates who registered for the 2021/2022 academic session which stands at 4,706. They are chosen because they possess all the required characteristics. The population is youthful consisting of young men and women between the ages of 16 and 30 and have encountered the Pepsi product one way or the other.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling technique

The procedure adopted for this study is purposive sampling. Since it is not feasible to study the whole Lead City University students, respondents were appropriately sampled. The reason for this technique is to give equal chances to every unit of the population that should be represented.

Sample Size

Based on the population and 95% confidence level that is targeted in this study as it is customary in social research, the appropriate sample size according to Krejcie and Morgan sample size table is 357 respondents.

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1300	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.
Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

Fig 3.1: Krejcie and Morgan table for determining sample size.

Formula for determining sample size

$$s = \frac{X^2 NP(1 - P) + d^2(N - 1) + X^2 P(1 - P)}{d^2}$$

s = required sample size.

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

Fig 3.2: Formula for determining sample size

3.4 Description of the Research Instrument

The instrument that used in this research is a questionnaire because it is easier to use in extracting information. For data collection, a questionnaire is a data gathering instrument which provides informed questions to be answered by the respondents in written form. The questionnaire cuts across all the research questions raised in this research.

3.5 Validity of Research Instrument.

Validity of the research instrument was achieved through extensive literature review. As well as, face and content validity.

3.6 Reliability of Research instrument

For this study, a pilot study was conducted in the University of Lagos before final data collection. Scaled items were subjected to reliability test and attained the Cronbach Alpha of .70.

3.7 Procedure for Administration of the Research Instrument

Data was collected through the administration of questionnaires with the help of a research assistant, when the questionnaires are filled, they will be picked up by the research assistant and given to the researcher for data analysis.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected in this study was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics used were frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The data was analyzed using SPSS.

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Chapter Four

Result and Discussion of Findings

Response Rate

In this study, the sample size was 357 and 357 questionnaire were distributed, 357 questionnaire were received and 347 were valid and therefore analyzed.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Population	Sample size	Questionnaire received
4, 706	357	347

4.1 Demographic Data Analysis

The main demographic characteristics in this study are respondents' age, gender, level of study, faculty and religion. Table 4.2 presents respondents' demographic profile in frequency and percentage format.

Age group

The age range of respondents in this study is between 15 and 30 ($M=1.39$, $SD=.49$). When the age was recoded in to categories, respondents less than 20 constitute the majority of the students in this study, they accounted for more than half (60.5%) of the total respondents. The other respondents (39.5%) are between the ages of 21 and 30 and they constitute the other age group.

This shows that majority of the respondents in this study are young and make up a major part of Pepsi Target audience.

Gender

A little over half (50.4%) of the respondents in this study were females while males accounted for 49.6%. This figure shows a balance to an extent in the gender of respondents in the study. And perhaps reflect the gender classification of Lead city university, Ibadan.

Table 4.2: Respondents' Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile	F	%
Age		
➤ Than 20	210	60.5
21 and above	137	39.5
Total (M=1.39 SD=.49)	347	100
Gender		
Male	172	49.6
Female	175	50.4
Total	347	100
Level of study		
100	57	16.4

200	103	29.7
300	89	25.6
400	98	28.2
Total	347	100

Religion

Christianity	197	56.8
Islam	149	42.9
Other	1	.3
Total	347	100

Level of study

Students in 200 level of their academic program are the majority among the respondents in this study. They accounted for 29.7% of the total respondents. They are followed by those in the 400 level who amount to 28.2%. Those in 100 level are the least group in this study, they accounted for 16.4%

Religion

Christians account for 56.8% of the total respondents while Muslims are 42.9%. Although some practice other religions, Christianity and Islam are the predominant religions in Nigeria. The preponderance of Christians in this study may, therefore, be associated with the environment of

the university being that the location of the university is in Ibadan which is a fine blend of both Christians and Muslims.

4.2.1 Research Questions

RQ1: What are the factors that influence the purchase intentions of Lead City University undergraduates to the Pepsi brand?

Purchase intention is the intent or thought of a consumer or customer to purchase a product or service. It refers to a consumer's attitude and willingness towards purchasing a product. Table 4.3 presents factors that influence the purchase intention of the Pepsi product among the respondents.

Table 4.3: What are the factors that influence the purchase intentions of Lead City University undergraduates to the Pepsi brand?

Factors that influence purchase intention	Level of agreement (f/%)						
	SD	D	A	SA	N	M	SD
I will buy Pepsi because it's my favorite soft drink	(20) 5.8	(61) 17.6	(102) 29.4	(116) 33.4	(48) 13.8	2.72	1.08
If Pepsi becomes more expensive, I will still buy it.	(11)	(43)	(125)	(106)	(62)	2.47	1.02

	3.2	12.4	36.0	30.5	17.9		
I will buy Pepsi because of the size of the bottle	(96)	(97)	(75)	(27)	(52)	3.26	1.50
	27.7	28.0	21.6	8.0	15.0		
I will buy Pepsi because it is always available	(27)	(62)	(125)	(89)	(44)	2.72	1.13
	7.8	17.9	36.0	25.6	12.7		
Total						2.79	1.18

From the responses, 33.4% strongly agree on buying Pepsi because it is their favorite drink, 29.4% however agree that they purchase Pepsi because it is their favorite drink while only 5.8% strongly disagree that they purchase Pepsi because it is their favorite drink. This means that for the 5.8% there are other reasons for purchasing the Pepsi product.

36.0% of the respondents agree that if Pepsi becomes more expensive they will still purchase the product. 30.5% of the respondents are strongly agree, while 12.4% disagree that if the Pepsi product becomes more expensive they will still buy it. From the responses presented in table 4.3, it is seen that majority of the respondents will still purchase the Pepsi product even if it becomes more expensive.

Pepsi launched a long throat PET bottle and this garnered more sales for the brand, though they have now reverted to the 50cl PET bottle. This bottle however is still in the mental salience of a lot of people. 28.0% of the respondents disagree to buying the Pepsi product because of the size of the bottle, 27.7% are neutral, while only 7.5% of the respondents agree to purchasing the Pepsi product because of the bottle. This means that the size of the bottle does not necessarily matter to the respondents who are also consumers of the Pepsi product. However, more research

can be carried out to know if perhaps the bottle gets reduced and price is constant, people will still purchase the Pepsi product.

Even if a product is well loved and accepted, availability in the target audience's stores, shops and places where they can purchase the product is very important. If a product is well loved but unavailable, the competing product will be purchased at the point of sale. 36.0% of the respondents from this study agree that they purchase the Pepsi product because it is always available. 25.6% of the respondents strongly agree on this being a reason for the purchase, while 7.8% of the respondents strongly disagree. In the grand view of the respondents to this study, it is noted that availability is one major factor that aids the purchase intention of the Pepsi product.

RQ2: What are the factors that influence buying behavior of undergraduates of Lead City University towards the Pepsi brand?

A lot of factors influence buying behavior of individuals. Knowing which factors influence buying behavior helps to know what attracts and informs buying decisions among the respondents in this study. Table 4.4 presents factors that influence buying behaviours among the respondents.

Table 4.3: What are the factors that influence buying behavior of undergraduates of Lead City University towards the Pepsi brand?

Factors that influence buying behaviour of Lead City University undergraduates	Level of agreement (f/%)						
	SD	D	A	SA	N	M	SD
I buy products because of the brand colors and appeal.	(62) 17.9	(62) 17.9	(53) 15.3	(22) 6.3	(103) 29.7	3.39	1.13
I will buy a product that my favorite celebrity works with	(19) 5.5	(46) 13.3	(109) 31.4	(85) 24.6	(86) 24.8	2.43	1.16
I always buy products advertised on my favorite social media handle	(34) 9.8	(90) 25.9	(88) 25.4	(42) 12.1	(93) 26.8	2.96	1.18
I don't buy expensive products even though they fit my standards	(61) 17.6	(137) 39.5	(68) 19.6	(27) 7.8	(54) 15.6	3.39	1.21
Total						3.04	1.17

Generally, respondents in this study strongly agree that there are certain factors that influence their buying behavior (M=3.04, SD=1.17). Specifically, 29.7% are neutral about buying products because of brand colors, 17.9% both disagree and strongly disagree respectively while 15.5% agree that they buy products because of brand colors. Overall on brand colors based on the respondents with the highest percentages are those that are neutral and disagree, so it can be generalized that brand colors do not necessarily contribute to buying behavior.

On buying products that their favorite celebrity works with, 31.4% agree, 24.8% are neutral while 24.6% strongly agree. This means that engaging the favorite celebrities of the respondents contribute to buying behavior.

26.8% of the respondents are neutral on social media advertisement on their favorite social media handles. 25.9% disagree, while 24.5% agree to social media advertisement on their favorite social media handles contribute to their buying behaviour.

On the cost of products being a determining factor to buying a product, 39.3% of the respondents disagree that if a product meets their standards and its expensive they will not buy such product. Only 7.8% strongly agree that if the product is expensive, though it meets their standards they will not buy the product. This means that Price and standards is also a contributing factor to buying behaviour.

RQ3: What is the strength of Influencers employed by Pepsi Production Company on Lead City undergraduates?

Influencer marketing has been engaged by many brands to leverage the influence of the select influencers in engaging directly with the Influencers target audience which also happens to be the brands target audience. Table 4.5 presents the influence of influencer marketing on purchase intention of the Pepsi product by respondents.

Table 4.5: What is the strength of Influencers employed by Pepsi Production Company on Lead City undergraduates?

Influencer Marketing on purchase intention	Level of agreement(f /%)						
	SD	D	A	SA	N	M	SD
I like Wizkid, Dj cuppy, Tiwa savage etc so I buy Pepsi because they are their influencers	(36)	(69)	(84)	(106)	(52)	2.86	1.20
	10.4	19.9	24.2	30.5	15.0		

When I see my favorite influencer on the bottle, I always want to buy.	(33)	(75)	(104)	(108)	(27)	2.95	1.05
	9.5	21.6	30.0	31.1	7.8		
I buy Pepsi because I like their adverts	(26)	(125)	(65)	(28)	(103)	3.10	1.05
	7.9	36.0	18.7	8.1	29.7		
If I have my way, I will buy any product that these influencers work for	(36)	(51)	(101)	(103)	(56)	2.74	1.20
	10.4	14.7	29.1	29.7	16.1		
Total						2.91	1.13

30.5% of the respondents in this study strongly agree on buying Pepsi because of the celebrities and influencers who are brand ambassadors as well as influencers for the Pepsi product. 24.2% agree that these influencers play a role in their decision to buy Pepsi while 10.4% strongly disagree on Pepsi brand ambassadors/influencers influencing their decision to purchase Pepsi. The responses are tilted towards agreement, therefore, Pepsi influencers contribute to the decision to purchase among respondents.

Pepsi had a campaign where they amplified the faces of their ambassadors on the PET bottle, though the campaign has ended, a lot of people still remember this campaign. Among the respondents in this study, 31.1% strongly agree to purchasing Pepsi because of the faces of influencers on the bottle. 30% agree to buying Pepsi because their favorite influencers are on the bottle while only 7.9% strongly disagree to this. Overall, respondents agree to purchasing the Pepsi product because of influencers on the Pepsi bottle.

The Pepsi brand is a brand that heavily invests in advertisements. Recently, Pepsi launched the Play to Inspire campaign globally featuring different sport players across the country as the faces of this campaign with a well-produced television commercial as well as the Confam SZN campaign for Nigeria. 36% of respondents in this study said they are neutral to buying Pepsi because of advertisements. 29.7% disagree to buying Pepsi because of advertisements while only 8.1% strongly agree. Overall, respondents disagree to buying Pepsi because of advertisements.

29.7% of the respondents in this study said they strongly agree to buying products that their favorite influencers work with. 29.1% agreed to buying the products if they have their way while only 10.4% strongly disagreed.

Generally, in answering the Research question, Influencer marketing does have influence on purchase intention towards purchase intention of the respondents.

RQ4: What is the most preferred platform of exposure of Lead City University undergraduates to advertising messages of Pepsi product?

Advertisements are deemed intrusive and in the faces of target consumers however this is the way to inform the target audience about a new product or service or to increase awareness about an existing product. Table 4.6 presents respondents most preferred platforms of exposure to Pepsi’s advertising messages.

Respondents in this study have the same level of agreement on watching Pepsi adverts on YouTube till the end, 29.7% were neutral, 29.7% also agreed to watching Pepsi adverts on YouTube till the end. Only 7.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed to watching the adverts till the end. Pepsi adverts are usually short, 15-30 secs duration, though, its short it pops up when the viewer is least expecting to see adverts while watching the content they came on the YouTube platform for. Majority of the respondents in this study agreed to watching these ads till the end. This means that the adverts are quite captivating to the target audience, hence Pepsi can continue with adverts on the video streaming platform.

Table 4.6: What is the most preferred platform of exposure of Lead City University undergraduates to advertising messages of Pepsi product?

Preferred platforms of exposure to adverts	Level of agreement (f/%)						
	SD	D	A	SA	N	M	SD
I watch Pepsi advert on YouTube till the end.	(26)	(95)	(103)	(103)	(20)	3.01	1.05
	7.5	27.4	29.7	29.7	5.8		

I don't mind seeing Pepsi adverts on billboards	(9)	(30)	(134)	(62)	(112)	2.39	0.96
	2.6	8.6	38.6	17.9	32.3		
I like Pepsi merchandise and I will love to have them	(28)	(77)	(102)	(48)	(92)	2.81	1.17
	8.1	22.2	29.4	13.8	26.5		
I prefer to watch Pepsi commercials on Tv	(17)	(49)	(93)	(107)	(103)	2.46	1.14
	4.9	14.1	26.8	30.8	29.7		
Total						2.67	1.08

38.6% of respondents in this study do not mind seeing Pepsi adverts on billboards, 32.3% are neutral, while 2.6% disagree to seeing the adverts on billboards. Billboards remain a very useful above the line type of advertisement medium for passing advertising messages across to the target audience. This can be said for the respondents in this study.

29.4% of the respondents in this study agree to liking Pepsi merchandise and will love to have them, 26.5% are neutral while 8.1% strongly disagree. Pepsi has several merchandise ranging from t-shirts, umbrellas, bottles, cups etc. and recently in the Big Brother Season 7 Level up reality TV show, the brand unveiled a new collection featuring stylish suits and streetwear, these outfits also fall under Pepsi merchandise and majority of respondents in this study agree to loving to have these products. These products fall under the below the line medium of advertising for Pepsi.

30.8% of the respondents in this study strongly agree to preferring to watch Pepsi commercials on Television, and only 4.9% strongly disagree. Television is another major source exposure to

advertising messages and the respondents in this study still prefer it as the channel of exposure to advertising messages.

RQ 5: Are there demographic differences in purchase intention of Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand?

Are there differences in demography when it comes to purchase intention of the Pepsi brand among Lead City University undergraduates? Table 4.7 presents these differences.

A t-test carried out to know if there was significant difference Christian or Muslim on purchase intention. The results show that there is no significant difference between being a Christian or a Muslim on purchase intention of the pepsi product ($t=-.125$, $df=344$, $p=.459$). Also the t-test checked for significant difference between age on purchase intention of the pepsi product. The results show that there is no significant difference between age on purchase intention of the pepsi product ($t=.363$, $df=345$, $p=.872$). This means that there is no demographic difference on purchase intention of the pepsi product among respondents in this study.

A t-test was conducted to check for significant difference between being male and female on purchase intention. The results show that there is no significant difference between being male or female on purchase intention ($t=-1.42$, $df=345$, $p=.616$)

Table 4.7: Are there demographic differences in purchase intention of Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand?

Demographic Variable	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Gender						

Male	172	2.78	.573	-.142	345	.616
Female	175	2.79	.648			
Religion						
Christianity	197	2.76	.639	-.125	344	.459
Islam	149	2.84	.573			
Age						
>Than or= 20	210	2.80	.584	.363	345	.872
Above 20	137	2.73	.652			

There was also a t-test carried out to know if there was significant difference Christian or Muslim on purchase intention. The results show that there is no significant difference between being a Christian or a Muslim on purchase intention of the pepsi product ($t=-.125$, $df=344$, $p=.459$). Also the t-test checked for significant difference between age on purchase intention of the pepsi product. The results show that there is no significant difference between age on purchase intention of the pepsi product ($t=.363$, $df=345$, $p=.872$). This means that there is no demographic difference on purchase intention of the pepsi product among respondents in this study.

RQ 6: Are there demographic differences in buying behavior of Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand?

To find out if there are demographic differences in buying behavior of the respondents towards the Pepsi brand, a t-test was carried out. Table 4.8 presents the demographic differences in buying behaviour.

Table 4.8: Are there demographic differences in buying behavior of Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand?

Demographic Variable	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Gender						
Male	172	2.96	.595	-2.49	345	.487
Female	175	3.12	.574			
Religion						
Christianity	197	3.03	.618	-.475	344	.185
Islam	149	3.06	.546			
Age						
>Than or= 20	210	2.96	.579	-2.66	345	.629

A t-test was conducted to see if there is a significant difference between male and female regarding buying behavior. The results show that there is no significant difference between being male or female on buying behavior ($t=-2.49$, $df=345$, $p=.487$). This negates a study carried out that states that there are notable differences in buying behavior between men and women¹.

The t-test checked to see if there was a significant difference between being Christian or Muslim and buying behavior. The results show that there is no significant difference between being either Christian or Muslim on buying behavior ($t=-.475$, $df=344$, $p=.185$). The t-test also checked to see if there was any significant difference between age on buying behaviour and the results show that there is no significant difference ($t=-2.66$, $df=345$, $p=.629$). This means that there is no demographic difference on buying behaviour of the pepsi product among respondents in this study.

A t-test was conducted to check for significant difference between being male and female on purchase intention. The results show that there is no significant difference between being male or female on purchase intention ($t=-1.42$, $df=345$, $p=.616$)

RQ7: Are there demographic differences in the strength of influencer marketing on Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand?

A t-test was conducted to check for significant difference between being male and female and the influence of influencer marketing. The results show that there is no significant difference between being male or female and the influence of influencer marketing ($t=1.50$, $df=345$, $p=.152$)

There was also a t-test carried out to know if there was significant difference Christian or Muslim and the influence of influencer marketing. The results show that there is no significant difference between being a Christian or a Muslim and the level of influence of influencer marketing ($t=-.989$, $df=344$, $p=.355$). Also the t-test checked for significant difference between age and level of influence of influencer marketing. The results show that there is no significant difference between age and level of influence of influencer marketing ($t=.369$, $df=345$, $p=.506$). This means that there is no demographic difference on the level of influence of influencer marketing on respondents in this study.

Table 4.9: Are there demographic differences in the strength of influencer marketing on Lead City University undergraduates towards the Pepsi brand?

Demographic Variable	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Gender						
Male	172	2.96	.547	1.50	345	.152
Female	175	2.86	.582			
Religion						
Christianity	197	2.89	.572	-.989	344	.355
Islam	149	2.95	.553			

Age						
>Than or= 20	210	2.92	.583	.369	345	.506
Above 20	137	2.90	.541			

Results of Test of Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were formulated in this study to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in this study. To test the hypotheses a multiple linear regression was conducted. However, concepts in this study were correlated as part of the requirement in a parametric statistical test. Table 4.10 reveals the results from the inter-items correlation.

Table 4.10: Inter-items correlation among independent and dependent variables

	Buying Behaviour	Purchase Intention	Influencer Marketing
Buying Behaviour	1	.733	.104
		347	347
Purchase Intention		1	.116
			347
Influencer			1

Marketing

There is a strong positive correlation between buying behaviour and Purchase intention (.733).

Buying behavior and Influencer marketing have a very low positive correlation (.104).

The correlation between Purchase intention and influencer marketing is very low (.116). It is clear that there is an inter-item correlation between all the scaled items. All correlations are significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed). Besides, none of these items is extremely correlated with the other.

Table 4.11: One-way Anova

Dependent Variables	F	p
Purchase Intention	1.230	.256
Buying Behaviour	1.431	.143

H₁: There is a significant relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention

A one way Anova was conducted to check for a significant relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention, The one way Anova revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between purchase intention and influencer marketing (F=1.23, p= >.001.)

This means that the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention is rejected. This disagrees with a study that indicates that compatibility between brands and influencers can influence purchase intention towards the brand that employs the use of Influencer marketing².

H₂: There is a significant relationship between influencer marketing and buying behavior.

A one way Anova was conducted to check for a significant relationship between influencer marketing and buying behavior. The one way Anova revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between purchase intention and buying behaviour (F=1.43, p= >.001.)

This means that the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between influencer marketing and buying behaviour is rejected. This disagrees with a study that found that people conduct impulse buying under the impact of influencers³.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This study examines Influencer marketing, purchase intention and buying behavior of the Pepsi product among undergraduates of Lead City University, Ibadan. Scholars across the world have documented factors that affect or influence purchase intention, what contributes to consumer buying behavior as well as what influencer marketing is and how it works and has worked for several brands. Celebrity endorsement has been around for a while however, with the advent of social media platforms and living in a post pandemic world, several opportunities to build influence in several consumer touch points came up and so we have different levels of

influencers i.e Micro-influencers, macro, mega and nano-influencers all with different kinds of following and niche.

In the view of this, this study explored the level of influence of influencer marketing, purchase intention and buying behavior among youths in Nigeria who are huge consumers of carbonated soft drinks as a product for refreshment in order to understand what influences their purchase intention towards the Pepsi brand, their buying behavior of the product and if influencer marketing employed by the Pepsi company is doing what it is intended to do, which is influence more sales of the Pepsi product.

From findings, it can be established that Lead City University undergraduates know and consume the Pepsi product and are also aware of the influencers that are employed by the Pepsi brand to drive home their advertising messages. It is one thing to know a product and another thing to consume the known product

To understand buying behavior, there are a lots of contributing factors. In this study, respondents agreed that brand colors and appeal are major contributing factors to their purchase of a product. This in turn supports the study carried out on packaging and brand colors influencing buying behavior where conclusions from the study states that color as well as other elements makes a brand more attractive and different from other brands⁴. Also, the respondents agreed that they will buy products their favorite celebrity works with. This resonates with the study carried out on celebrity endorsement and its impact on buying behavior, where it was found that celebrity endorsement does have maximum impact on buying behavior⁵. Most respondents were mainly neutral on buying products from their favorite social media handles and on not buying expensive products they did disagree as well.

Respondents in this study agreed that there are several factors that influence their purchase intention. Although majority of the respondents are neutral on purchasing Pepsi because it is their favorite drink, a lot of them also slightly agreed to Pepsi being their favorite drink being an influencing factor for purchase intention of the product. Majority of respondents in this study agreed to still purchasing Pepsi, even if the product becomes offensive. Taking a cue from the respondents buying behavior, they stated that even if a product is expensive but meets their standards they will still purchase the product. Therefore, it can be said that Pepsi product meets the standards of the respondents in this study, so they will still purchase it even if it gets expensive. On buying the Pepsi product because of the size of the bottle, majority of the respondents in this study disagreed. As stated earlier, it is alluded that the respondents purchase the Pepsi product because it fits their standards and not for the size of the bottle. The respondents also agreed to buying the Pepsi product because it is available. This negates a study carried out that states that product availability has no significant value on purchase intention⁶.

In this study, respondents generally agreed that influencer marketing has influence on their purchase intention. Majority of the respondents in this study slightly agree that they like some celebrities/influencers employed by the Pepsi company, therefore they buy Pepsi because of them. They also slightly agree to always wanting to buy Pepsi when they see the faces of their favorites on the Pepsi bottle. They were mostly neutral on buying Pepsi because of advertisements but slightly agreed to buying all products their favorite influencer works with. To like an influencer means they are either credible, attractive, or trust worthy. This supports a study that found that purchase intention is directly affected by and influencers' trustworthiness and credibility⁷.

In this study, the respondents are exposed to Pepsi's advertising messages on various platforms. The respondents agree to watching Pepsi adverts on YouTube till the end, they also agree on seeing Pepsi adverts on billboards. The respondents also agree to liking Pepsi merchandise and do not mind having these products. The respondents in this study also strongly agree to television being a preferred platform for exposure to Pepsi's advertising messages. Though the world has gone digital, traditional means of advertising should not be undermined as garnered from the findings in this study.

A one sample t-test analysis was also carried out to check if there was any significant difference between demographic variables and level of influence of influencer marketing, Buying behavior and purchase intention. It was seen that there is no significant difference.

A multiple regression analysis was carried out and it was found that there is a strong positive correlation between buying behaviour and Purchase intention. Buying behavior and Influencer marketing have a very low positive correlation. The correlation between Purchase intention and influencer marketing is very low.

A one way anova was performed to test the hypotheses raised and check for statistically significant relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention. Same was done to check for influencer marketing and buyinf behavior. There was no statistically significant relationship as opposed to previous studies carried out. ^{8,3}

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End Notes

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Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

Results from the survey carried out, revealed that a number of factors effectively influence the buying behaviour of Lead City University undergraduates. Some of these influencing factors are brand colors and appeal, influencer or celebrity marketing and endorsements, price and standards of the product.

Findings from this survey showed that purchase intention of Lead City undergraduates are influenced by influencer marketing. If they like a particular celebrity or influencer and a product, service or brand employs their services they will buy such service or product or patronize such brand.

Respondents in this survey patronize or purchase the Pepsi products because they like the influencers that are being used by the Pepsi company to push the brand. They stated that when they see their favorite influencer or celebrity on a Pepsi bottle they are more inclined to purchase the Pepsi product.

From the survey conducted, it was found that the respondents in this study still prefer television as the channel of being exposed to advertising messages from Pepsi. They also do not mind seeing the adverts on billboards, YouTube or other below the line channels of advertising such as merchandise.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted and the results show that there is a correlation between the purchase intention towards the pepsi product and buying behavior. The results also show that there is a strong correlation between exposure to Pepsi advertisements and buying behavior of the Pepsi product.

A one sample t-test also showed that there was no demographic difference, that is , age, gender and religion in purchase intention, buying behaviour and level of influence of influencer marketing towards the Pepsi product.

5.2 Conclusion

The present study investigates influencer marketing, purchase intention and buying behavior of the Pepsi product among Lead City University undergraduate students. Previous studies have mostly been on halal foods, fashion items, and some select products that are not necessarily fast moving consumable goods. It is very important to understand the buying behavior and factors that contributes to purchase intention among youths because they constitute the majority with purchase power in Nigeria as of now. Also, if influencer marketing vis a vis celebrity endorsement is doing exactly what it has been employed to do for the brands that use them. From findings in this study, it has been concluded that influencer marketing works for the Pepsi product among Lead City University undergraduate students. This, perhaps, is the reason the Pepsi brand uses a lot of mega and micro influencers that speak to their target audience in the market.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Pepsi as well as other FMCG products should take note of the factors that effectively influence purchase intentions when introducing a new product into the market or aid visibility for already existing ones.

2. The Pepsi brand team should look into using nano influencers, to reach those with particular niche followings and come up with more niche relevant campaigns to drive meaningfulness among its target audience since influencer marketing does influence purchase intentions of youths.
3. A lot more work should be done by brands to understand their target audience and their buying behaviours in order to scale volume sales in target areas.
4. Television, according to this study is still a very effective medium of communicating advertising messages to a brand's target audience and should not be ruled out and completely replaced even though the world is digital now.
5. To increase top of mind awareness about the Pepsi product, there should be more merchandise given as a gift with purchase to consumers.
6. Further studies should be carried out deep into what the contributing factors that make up influencer marketing.
7. Pepsi should look into other ways they can drive differentiation in the market as the standards of the product is fine with the respondents in this study. Samples of differentiation are like the Pepsi long throat bottle, pictures of the influencers of the bottle etc since they aid mental salience among the target audience.
8. Further research should be done to find out what influences purchase intention for other brands.
9. The Nigerian market is dynamic. Therefore, extensive research still needs to be carried out on buying behavior in the Nigerian market.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study has helped discover factors that influence purchase intention among Lead City University undergraduates which will aid researchers in consumer behavior and purchase intention to know likely factors that influence purchase intentions of youths in Nigeria.

This study also found that influencer marketing is effective in influencing buying behavior and purchase intention among the respondents who are Nigerian youths, this invariably translates to influencer marketing influencing buying behavior and purchase intention among Nigerian youths.

5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research

Although this study documents significant findings on influencer marketing, purchase intention and buying behavior, future studies should enlarge the context of data collection to bring in more respondents. Besides, another research design such as a case study could be used. In addition, collecting qualitative data may also yield additional findings which are impossible through the quantitative method.

Since purchase intention and buying behavior are critical to brand positioning in Nigeria, more research should be done cutting across various brands in Nigeria to get a good understanding of the target audience in different regions and what factors contribute to their purchase intention and buying behavior.

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**INFLUENCER MARKETING, PURCHASE INTENTION AND BUYING BEHAVIOUR
OF PEPSI BRAND AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN LEAD CITY UNIVERSITY,
IBADAN**

This study seeks to examine influencer marketing, purchase intention and buying behavior of Nigerian youths towards the Pepsi brand. It also seeks to examine if there are other factors like price and availability or even loyalty to a celebrity, influencer or brand influences their purchase intention. Given the fact that the demographic set of this population with highest consumption of soft drinks are youths, this research aims at documenting the influence of these people tagged as influencers on their purchase intention and the levels of influencer marketing towards the Pepsi product. You are systematically selected to participate in this study. Kindly provide answers to the following questions. Your response which will be treated with strict confidentiality, will contribute to objective outcomes of this study. Thank you for your co-operation.

For further enquiries contact the researcher

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SECTION A: RESPONDENTS DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

- 1. Age: _____ years old
- 2. Gender: Male () Female ()
- 3. Level of study: 100 () 200 () 300 () 400 () 500()
- 4. Religion: Christian () Muslim () other (please specify)

SECTION B : FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PURCHASE INTENTION OF PEPSI PRODUCT

S/N	FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PURCHASE INTENTION OF PEPESI PRODUCT	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT				
		SD	D	A	SA	N
1	I buy Pepsi because it's my favorite soft drink					
2	If Pepsi becomes more expensive, I will still buy it.					
3	I buy Pepsi because of the size of the bottle					
4	I tend to buy Pepsi because it is always available					

SECTION C: BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF LEADCITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

S/N	BUYING BEHAVIOR OF LEADCITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT				
		SD	D	A	SA	N
1	I buy products because of the brand colors and appeal					
2	I will buy a product that my favorite celebrity works with					
3	I always buy products advertised on my favorite social media handle					
4	I don't buy expensive products even though they fit my standards					

SECTION D: INFLUENCE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING ON PURCHASE

INTENTION OF PEPSI

S/N	INFLUENCE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING ON PURCHASE INTENTION OF PEPSI	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT				
		SD	D	A	SA	N

1	I like Wizkid, Dj cuppy, Tiwa savage, Paul pogba, Messi, Kie kie, Ayra starr, Rema etc. so I buy Pepsi because they are their influencers					
2	When I see my favorite influencer on the bottle, I always want to buy.					
3	I buy Pepsi because I like their adverts					
4	If I have my way, I will buy any product that these influencers work for					

SECTION E: MOST PREFERRED PLATFORM OF EXPOSURE TO PEPSI MESSAGES

S/N	MOST PREFERRED PLATFORM OF EXPOSURE TO PEPSI MESSAGES	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT				
		SD	D	A	SA	N
1	I watch Pepsi adverts on YouTube till the end					
2	I don't mind seeing Pepsi adverts on billboards.					
3	I like Pepsi merchandise (t-shirts, bottles, umbrellas) and I will love to have them					
4	I prefer to watch Pepsi commercials on Tv					

Bio-Data

A. Personal Data

Name: Beatrice Oluwatobi Olalekan

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Phone No: 08166253800

Date of Birth: May 6th, 1996

Place of Birth: Lagos

Nationality: Nigerian

B. Educational Background

University of Ilorin

Bachelors of Science in Mass Communication

2012-2016

Jane-Nath College, Ipakodo, Ikorodu.

Senior School Certificate Examination

2006-2012

St. Margarets Nursery/Primary school, Ikorodu, Lagos

First School Leaving Certificate

2006

C. Hobbies:

Reading

Listening to Music

Surfing the internet

Signature

Date

University Compliance Certificate

This is to certify that this thesis by Beatrice Oluwatobi OLALEKAN with Matric No. LCU/PG/001744 in the Department of Mass Communication and Media Technology, Lead City University Ibadan is in full compliance with the approved university format and style.
