

The Impact of Social Media Influencer Marketing on the Consumer Purchase Decision in Nigeria: The Cosmetics and Beauty Industry

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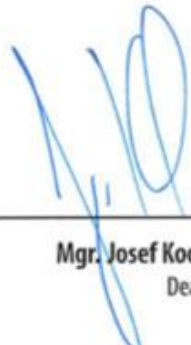
Recommended resources:

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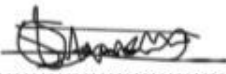
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ABSTRAKT

Sociální média poskytla tradičním marketérům nové možnosti, jak zpestřit svůj marketingový plán. Sociální média umožňují parasociální interakce mezi influencery a jejich následovníky, což ovlivňuje chování spotřebitelů. Před několika desetiletími dominovala marketingu tradiční média. Tyto tradiční marketingové metody jsou jen malou částí z mnoha způsobů, jakými dnes společnosti inzerují a propagují zboží. V důsledku toho je nyní efektivní využívání sociálních médií nezbytné pro vybudování a udržení konkurenční výhody po celém světě, včetně Nigérie, nejlidnatější africké země s více než 211 miliony obyvatel. Nigerijští spotřebitelé jsou díky rozmanitému etnickému původu v zemi dynamičtí. Nigerijské společnosti využívají influencer marketing, strategii sociálních médií, která využívá podporu celebrit a umístění produktu. Influenceri mají schopnost ovlivnit nákupní zvyklosti nebo jednání spotřebitelů, což je důvod, proč je důležité zkoumat, do jaké míry. Hlavním cílem této studie je prozkoumat, do jaké míry ovlivňují influenceri na sociálních sítích nigerijské spotřebitele při nákupu kosmetiky a kosmetických výrobků, a změřit, zda tento vliv převažuje nad pozitivní zkušeností, nebo zda se spotřebitelé setkali s nigerijskými influencery spíše negativně. Na základě výsledků tohoto výzkumu navrhneme účinná řešení, která mohou zlepšit uplatňování této marketingové strategie pro firmy, influencery a spotřebitele, aby se tento marketingový plán maximálně využil ku prospěchu všech.

Klíčová slova: Influencer marketing, chování spotřebitelů, sociální média, Nigérie, kosmetický a kosmetický průmysl.

ABSTRACT

Social media has given traditional marketers new ways to vary their marketing plan. Social media allows parasocial interactions between influencers and their followers, which affects consumer behavior. Traditional media dominated marketing a few decades ago. These traditional marketing methods are just a small part of the many ways companies advertise and brand items today. As a result, efficient use of social media is now essential to build and retain a competitive advantage worldwide, including in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country with over 211 million people. Nigerian consumers are dynamic due to the country's diverse ethnicity. Influencer marketing, a social media strategy that uses celebrity endorsements and product placement, is used by Nigerian companies. Influencers have the ability to affect consumers buying habits or actions, reason why it is important to investigate to what extent. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the extent to which social media influencers impact the Nigerian consumers to purchase cosmetics and beauty products and to measure if this impact weighs more on the positive experience or if the consumers have had more negative encounters with the Nigerian influencers. Based on the findings of this research we will propose effective solutions that can improve the application of this marketing strategy for firms, influencers, and consumers to maximize this marketing plan to everyone's benefit.

Keywords: Social media influencer, consumer purchase decision, Influencer marketing, consumer behavior, social media, Nigeria, cosmetics and beauty industry

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	10
I. THEORY	13
1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	14
1.1 SOURCE INPUT VARIABLE STUDIES	14
1.2 MESSAGE INPUT VARIABLE STUDIES	16
1.3 RECEIVER INPUT VARIABLE STUDIES	17
1.4 INTENT VARIABLE STUDIES	19
2 SOCIAL MEDIA	20
2.1 IMPORTANCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA	20
2.2 INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER PURCHASING DECISION	21
2.3 CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN NIGERIA	24
3 INFLUENCER MARKETING	27
3.1 PRINCIPLES OF INFLUENCER MARKETING.....	27
3.2 INFLUENCER MARKETING AND ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (EWOM).....	29
3.3 SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS VS TRADITIONAL INFLUENCERS	30
3.3.1 SUCCESS OF (SMIs) COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL INFLUENCERS	31
3.3.2 SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS CATEGORY	32
3.4 THE COSMETICS AND BEAUTY INDUSTRY	34
3.5 WHY SMIS SHOULD CARE ABOUT ETHICS	34
4 METHODOLOGY	36
4.1 OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	36
4.2 PHILOSOPHY OF RESEARCH ADOPTED	36
4.3 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS	39
4.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD	41
4.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS	42
4.6 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD	43
4.7 CONSIDERATION OF ETHICAL ISSUES	43
II. ANALYSIS	44
5 PRIMARY RESEARCH RESULTS	45
5.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS	45
5.1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS	45
5.1.2 INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMERS IN NIGERIA.....	50

5.1.3	SMIs IMPACT ON THE CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION OF THE COSMETICS AND BEAUTY PRODUCTS	53
5.1.4	VARIOUS TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER	56
5.1.5	THE CREDIBILITY STUDY OF SMIs.....	57
5.1.6	THE IMPACT OF SMIs ON THE CONSUMERS AND THE COSMETICS INDUSTRY	63
5.1.7	SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS VS TRADITIONAL MEDIA	66
5.1.8	THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER MARKETING.....	67
5.2	QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS	69
5.2.1	RESPONDENTS DATA.....	69
5.2.2	QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM RESPONDENTS	70
III.	PROJECT	75
6	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND PROJECT PROPOSAL	76
6.1	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS	76
6.2	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	79
7	PROJECT PROPOSAL	81
7.1	OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM.....	81
7.2	ETHICAL IDEAS	82
7.3	PROJECT EXECUTION STRATEGY USING (SMART SCHEME)	83
7.4	PROJECT DETAILS	85
7.4.1	PROJECT TIMELINE.....	86
7.4.2	PROJECT BUDGET.....	87
7.5	PROJECT LIMITATIONS	89
7.6	PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY	90
7.7	LIMITATIONS OF STUDY	93
7.8	SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	94
	CONCLUSION.....	95
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	96
	LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	101
	LIST OF FIGURES	102
	LIST OF TABLES	104
	APPENDICES.....	105

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian cosmetics industry is thriving due to the increased use of social media. Brands are using social media influencers (SMIs) to promote their products, particularly among the younger demographic. Influencer marketing is effective in Nigeria because it enables brands to reach a larger audience, particularly younger consumers who may be difficult to reach through conventional advertising channels. During the golden era of traditional media, consumers had significantly fewer options for what to watch, listen to, or read than they do today. In exchange for the most recent news, information, and entertainment, consumers willingly gave advertisers their valuable time and focus. On the other hand, it was extremely difficult for ordinary people to influence individuals outside of their local communities and immediate social circles. The widespread adoption of connected devices such as smartphones and use of numerous social media platforms have dismantled traditional barriers and enabled a new generation of influencers to communicate with vast audiences of Internet-connected online citizens (Backaler, 2018). Traditional marketing is deemed ineffective since the internet has altered the market and rendered it obsolete. According to previous study, the 2008 financial crisis and technological advancements altered the marketing tactics of a number of businesses. In order for businesses to survive during and after the financial crisis, they had to reduce expenses, but maintaining income was still essential; hence, marketers altered their strategy. (A. Kazım Kirtiş, 2011). They were seeking for the most cost-efficient and effective technique. A social media marketing plan was implemented as a means of reducing expenses while delivering effective campaigns.

The idea of (SMIs) has become so widespread in the Nigerian online community that there are now hundreds of self-proclaimed and well-established online influencers with millions of followers . According to a survey by the Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC), Nigeria has approximately 98.3 million internet users (Report, 2018). According to (Agwu, 2022), the Nigerian beauty and cosmetics industry is thriving and worth over \$1.256 billion at retail due to the country's large market of over 101.67 million women. The beauty care category in Nigeria is projected to create revenue of \$98.28m by 2023, expanding at an annual rate of 11.30% to reach \$150.80m by 2027. The Nigerian cosmetics industry is propelled by the country's population of over 200 million individuals and the rising demand for personal care products. The sector is comprised of both domestic and international

brands. In recent years, urbanization, rising disposable incomes, and altering aesthetic trends have all contributed to the industry's significant growth. The Nigerian culture places a high value on beauty and personal hygiene, creating a substantial market for cosmetics. To meet the demand for natural and organic products, numerous local small and medium-sized businesses produce and market their own cosmetic products, frequently using natural and locally sourced ingredients. However, the industry encounters obstacles such as a lack of regulation, issues with quality control, and counterfeit products, which can endanger consumers and harm the reputation of legitimate businesses. Local cosmetics brands like House of Tara, Zaron cosmetics, and BMPro, along with international brands such as Maybelline, L'Oreal, Nivea, Dove, and Revlon, compete in the Nigerian beauty market. These brands use influencer marketing and collaborate with popular influencers in Nigeria, such as Ronke Raji, Dodos Uvieghara, Dimma Umeh, and others, to promote their products.

The cosmetics and beauty industry relies heavily on social media influencers (SMIs) for marketing, as customers turn to them for product recommendations and reviews. According to (Laham, 2020), cosmetics ads in popular publications like Seventeen and Glamour push young women toward unrealistic ideals of beauty. There is a massive anti-aging market, with 2016 sales of \$250 billion, thanks to the allure of the pursuit of beauty and perpetual youth. Collaborating with influencers can boost brand exposure, engagement, and sales. However, there are challenges with influencer marketing, such as influencer fraud, lack of ethical guidelines, and issues with transparency. Influencers may use filters and editing tools that distort product appearances, leading to unrealistic expectations and mistrust. Some influencers may also lack proper knowledge about the products they endorse, leading to uninformed consumer decisions. Moreover, influencer marketing can contribute to pressure on consumers to conform to beauty standards, impacting self-esteem and body image. This study aims to investigate the impact of social media influencer marketing on the purchasing decisions of Nigerian consumers in the cosmetics and beauty industries. It seeks to ascertain whether the influencer marketing experiences of consumers have been positive or negative. It will also investigate the credibility of (SMIs) in the cosmetics and beauty industry, as well as the impact of this perception on consumer purchasing decisions. The findings will aid in the exploration of feasible solutions that can be applied to enhance this marketing strategy for the respective advantage of firms, influencers, and consumers. Additionally, the research will aid Nigerian cosmetics companies in enhancing their products and services in response

to consumer feedback. By analyzing consumer behavior, interests, and attitudes toward influencer marketing, the study can help businesses target their marketing campaigns more effectively. Due to the increasing prevalence of influencer marketing and the dearth of exhaustive research in this area, the study is pertinent and timely, providing an opportunity to contribute to the field's knowledge.

I. THEORY

1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to (Watkin, 2021), the (McGuire, 1989) communication-persuasion matrix can be used to understand and analyse influencer persuasion tactics because it outlines five input variables that may be manipulated in persuasive communications. McGuire's four input variables, "source," "message," "receiver/audience," and "intent/destination" serve as a framework for this study.

1.1 Source Input Variable Studies

McGuire's source input variables include the endorsers themselves, as well as the factors that influence the link between endorsers and the efficacy of advertising (McGuire, 1989) identifies trustworthiness, attractiveness, and power as source input factors that affect the efficacy of a communication. This analysis will focus on three theories and models—the Source Credibility Theory, the Uses and Gratifications Theory, and the Two-Step Flow Model—that correspond to McGuire's source input factors.

- **Source Credibility**

To establish a source's credibility, studies have used the author's trustworthiness, the author's competence, and the author's physical appeal. (Alexander P. Schouten, 2020), compared the effects of celebrity and influencer endorsement on the efficacy of advertisements in terms of consumers' attitudes toward the ad, their opinions of the product, and their intents to buy. Product-endorser compatibility served as a moderator. Identification (defined as both actual and desired resemblance) and credibility (defined as both trustworthiness and knowledge) acted as mediators. The findings demonstrated that consumers view influencers as more trustworthy, relatable, and believable than celebrities. The connection between endorser type and the impact of advertisement was mediated by factors including similarity, desired identification, and trust. The connection between endorser type and ad effectiveness was not found to be mediated by expertise, and there were no interaction effects detected between product-endorser and endorser type. Marketers learned an important lesson from this study: if an influencer can inspire feelings of identification, resemblance, and trust, they can be more influential than a celebrity. The study authors conceded that the demarcation between traditional celebrities and social media influencers is blurring as some celebrities have become very active on social media as influencers and as some influencers have become celebrities in their own right.

The research by (Shupeí Yuan, 2020) studied the factors that drove brand awareness and purchase intent among consumers. The study indicated that confidence in the posts had the biggest influence on customers' inclination to make a purchase, and that it was connected to the information value, credibility, attractiveness, and similarity of the source. The influencer's credibility exhibited a direct and negative correlation with brand awareness, although their competence and attractiveness had direct and positive relationships. There was, however, no correlation between any of the indicators of source credibility and subsequent desire to purchase. Numerous further research explored the influencer effects of advertising literacy interventions and advertising disclosure. (Marijke De Veirman, 2017) , discovered that having a large fan base improved the perceived popularity and likeability of an influencer, but not necessarily their status as a thought leader. The study also indicated that women with fewer followers had a reduced likelihood of being liked.

- **Uses and Gratifications Theory**

This theory aims to explain the needs of audience members who have expectations of the mass media or other sources, resulting in various patterns of media exposure or engagement to meet those expectations. Although the uses and gratifications theory can be used to understand the audience of influencers, the following two research projects studied the theory from the perspective of the source, or influencer, and hence come under McGuire's source input variable. (Antonia Erz, 2018) discovered that influencers add more hashtags and utilize the platform for self-presentation, as they tend to score higher than average users on narcissism, extraversion, and self-monitoring. In the other study, (Eva Lahuerta-Otero, 2016) found that influencers utilized more hashtags and mentions but less words and embedded links than non-influencers in approximately 4,000 tweets connected to Toyota and Nissan. Influencers also followed a larger number of individuals and conveyed good and negative ideas and emotions via Twitter. Both of these research investigate the content shared by influencers (i.e., hashtags, mentions, words, and links), but only (Antonia Erz, 2018) explored motivations such as self-presentation and its predictions (i.e., narcissism, extraversion, and self-monitoring). When applied to influencers, this theory can tap into a plethora of additional dimensions to construct a comprehension of both uses and gratifications. Various social gratifications can be researched outside self-presentation. In addition, the evaluated research did not address the uses and gratifications of users who follow influencers, which is an additional field of investigation.

- **Two-Step Flow Model**

This Model hypothesizes that the media indirectly influence the public via information gatekeepers or opinion leaders who forward media messages to their networks (Riley, 1956). The Two-Step Flow Model was utilized in a single study. In this literature review, two-step flow is classified under McGuire's source variable since it begins with the opinion leader. (Caleb T. Carr, 2014) used a two-step flow to determine the impact of perceived third-party influence on the credibility of the influencer, as well as on the product attitudes and buy intentions of blog readers who had accessed product evaluations. Researchers highlighted the interaction between information from corporations and then mavens (influencers) in the Two-Step Flow Model as volatile, which can cause problems for the flow of information if relationships are not disclosed . When this occurs, the status of the influencer is compromised, which might compromise their ability to influence others.

1.2 Message Input Variable Studies

The message input variables of McGuire (1989) include delivery and message style, argument types and structure, and forms of appeals. The effect of disclosure of paid promotion was a common influencer study topic among the journal articles analyzed for this analysis, and may be classified under McGuire's message input variable.

- **Persuasion-Knowledge Model**

(Friedstad, 1994) Persuasion-Knowledge Model (PKM) concentrates on how customers comprehend persuasive techniques, recognize them, and employ coping strategies in response. This methodology has been extensively employed in studies of influencer marketing, particularly in terms of advertising transparency. Numerous studies on influencers have examined the function of persuasive knowledge as a mediator of various effects using the PKM model. These studies investigated the effects of factors including sponsorship type (organic or sponsored), content type (experience-centric or commercial), disclosure of sponsorship, message asymmetry, and advertising disclosure on consumer responses, brand attitudes, and perceptions of advertising transparency and trustworthiness. In addition, research has examined the effects of advertising disclosure on the advertising knowledge and literacy of adolescents, as well as the impacts of various types of disclosure on attitudes, purchase intent, electronic word-of-mouth messaging, and brand recall. The

PKM model has been applied to various facets of influencer marketing, and researchers should continue to examine real-world elements while contemplating the impact of FTC regulations on brand recognition .

1.3 Receiver Input Variable Studies

McGuire's (1989) receiver input variables can include demographics, personality, and lifestyle. This review will address four receiver-related models: Elaboration Likelihood Model, Relationship Management Theory, Six-Segment Strategy Wheel, and the Parasocial Interaction Theory.

- **Elaboration Likelihood Model**

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) proposes two routes to persuasion, the central route and the peripheral route, based on the receiver's capacity and motivation to process a message (Petty, 1986). Message recipients who are able and willing to comprehend messages are more likely to take the central route, resulting in a permanent attitude shift. Those who are unable or unwilling to comprehend messages are more likely to rely on peripheral cues or heuristics, which may result in a less long-lasting shift in attitude.. (Babajide Osatuyi, 2018) used the ELM to determine that the type of social media platform and the stage of the consumer decision-making process can impact the effectiveness of advertising. Blog readers who are typically in a high-involvement, low-distraction, and central route environment may be more influenced by source expertise than Facebook users who are typically in a low-involvement, high-distraction, and peripheral route environment. This research supports the use of ELM to comprehend the factors that influence the path to persuasion in various media contexts.

- **Relationship Management**

Influencers are utilized in marketing because of their ability to establish online relationships with target consumers. The relationship management theory of (Linda Hon, 1999) can be used to evaluate the outcomes of these relationships, including trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality. However, only one of the reviewed studies measured relationship management theory variables. (Ganga Dhanesh, 2019) discovered a positive and statistically significant correlation between paid endorsement awareness and trust and

satisfaction. This led them to the conclusion that the FTC rule requiring influencers to disclose their endorsement relationships is advantageous for the influencer-customer relationship, especially in terms of trust and satisfaction. Both control mutuality and commitment were found to be significant predictors of future behavior in a relationship, as identified by the researchers.

- **Six-Segment Strategy Wheel**

The Six-Segment Strategy Wheel (SSSW) is an alternative framework for analyzing powerful actors and organizations. The six spokes of the communication wheel stand for the transmission and ritualist views on language use (three for each view of communication). Communication strategies that are reasonable, acute, and routine are examples of the transmission perspective. Consumers can be prompted to make a purchase in one of three ways: logically, by analyzing available information and making a well-informed decision; acutely, when under time pressure; or habitually, by relying on familiarity. There are distinctions between ego-centered, social, and sensory-based ritual communication approaches. Ego strategies enable consumers to satisfy emotional needs for self-definition via purchases; social strategies enable consumers to demonstrate social status via purchases; and sensory strategies capitalize on consumers' associations between the product and positive emotions such as pleasure and happiness. The SSSW falls under McGuire's receiver variables because one of the examined experiments centered on message recipient remarks. (Emory Daniel, 2018) investigated the Vape Capitol YouTube Channel's comment sections to evaluate if the SSSW was relevant to conversations within the vaping community. 42% of comments contained SSSW categories, with 86.3% of those criticisms referring to the ceremonial side and 13.7% to the transmission side. Parasocial contact, which can give various benefits for advertisers, is a crucial component of the authors' model of social message strategy.

- **Parasocial Interaction Theory**

(Horton, 1956) coined the term "parasocial interaction" to characterize the unidirectional relationship between a celebrity and their audience, which is typically mediated by television. With the rise of digital and social media, however, parasocial interaction has become more interactive, with admirers engaging with celebrities via Twitter, blogs,

YouTube, and email, among other channels. (Sophie C. Boerman, 2020) studied parasocial contact resulting from disclosure and ad recognition, but noted that the sample had minimal parasocial interaction with the influencer, suggesting that future research may benefit from using influencers with greater parasocial interaction among their followers. Daniel et al. (2018) also examined parasocial interaction in YouTube vaping community comments, discovering evidence of parasocial interaction in 68% of the comments and concluding that frequent parasocial contacts can lead to feelings of parasocial connection, brand loyalty, sales, and word-of-mouth marketing.

1.4 Intent Variable Studies

In a persuasive campaign, the intent input factors, also known as destination variables, are geared toward the attainment of particular objectives. According to study conducted by McGuire, when communications successfully alter one of the three components - beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors - the other two are likely to be affected as well. Despite the fact that the persuasive power of a message may initially peak upon delivery, it may progressively decline with time. This overview will delve into Reactance Theory, which examines negative reactions to persuasion attempts and its connection to beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in relation to intent variables.

- **Reactance Theory**

The reactance theory suggests that customers may react negatively to attempts at persuasion, such as advertisements, due to their desire to maintain autonomy and independence (Brehm, 1981). (Marijke De Veirman L. H., 2019) used reactance theory as a framework to examine whether consumers experience reactance when exposed to Instagram posts with disclosure, leading to skepticism, which in turn negatively affects influencer credibility and brand attitudes. The researchers found evidence supporting the role of reactance and used it to explain unexpected differences in consumer perception between disclosure of material compensation and financial compensation. They hypothesized that consumers may be more aware of influencers' motives when they are being paid, but less so when they receive free products, which raises suspicion about the reliability of their evaluation due to ambiguity in the connection between compensation and recommendation.

2 SOCIAL MEDIA

2.1 Importance and Characteristics Of Social Media

According to (Solis, 2010), the characteristics of social media can be summed up as "the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers. The shift from a broadcast mechanism, one-to-many to a many-to-one model, rooted in conversations between authors, people, and peers. A large scale, complex, and pluralistic networked society has emerged as a result of the development of Internet technology. Within this society, the mode of information dissemination has shifted from the traditional single centralized mode to the distributed mode. This shift has allowed for a wider variety of perspectives to be represented. The use of social media has been linked to a variety of behavioral shifts. People's lifestyles, as well as the ways in which information is disseminated, have been impacted by social platforms. It is possible to define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan, 2015). Interactivity is one of the characteristics that distinguishes social media from traditional media and has been one of the most researched aspects of the two types of media. Traditional media, which are examples of one-way communication models and are used by a limited number of social entities (such as an individual or an organization) to disseminate information and messages to media consumers, include television programs, newspapers, magazines, and other paper-based publications. Traditional media also include radio broadcasts.

The most salient aspects of social media are social presence and the sharing of personal information. According to (Kietzmann, 2011), there are seven elements that can be used to differentiate amongst social media platforms. One of these aspects is identity, which refers to the degree to which individuals reveal their identities in a social media environment. Relationships (meaning "the degree to which users can be related to other users"). Sharing (meaning "the degree to which users share, get, and exchange content"). Presence (meaning "the degree to which users can know whether other users are accessible"). Reputation (meaning "the degree to which users can identify the social status of others"), and groups (meaning "the degree to which users may think they belong to certain communities") are all

aspects of user engagement. No matter what criteria are used to categorize social interaction platforms, every variety of social media has its own set of advantages and capabilities. In contrast to Twitter, which is largely utilized because to the ease of information sharing and frequency of postings, blogs may be more beneficial for educational purposes (Melike Demirbag Kaplan, 2010) .

On the other hand, social networking websites are an essential component in the process of developing powerful brands. Statistics compiled from a variety of sources have shown that the use of social networking sites is widespread and beneficial for individuals as well as businesses in every region of the world, this is due to the fact that individuals do not need to have any knowledge of the technical aspects of these platforms in order to become content creators or, eventually, influencers. Because of the equal and innovative features that online platforms provide, it is predicted that when these platforms emerged, they would become the new way for "construction and definitions of the self." This self in a digital world was taken further by (Belk, 2013), who argued that in the visual digital environment, particularly on social media, individuals are "disembodied and re-embodied as avatars, photos, and videos, because of this, we might claim that users are experiencing new methods of constructing their identity through the act of posting information on social media that reflects their ideal self. According to (Peters, 2013), social media are "living organisms" that are "dynamic, linked, egalitarian, and interactive." As a result, the specific characteristics of these social media platforms have brought about a considerable shift in the current state of the market.

2.2 Influence of Social Media on Consumer Purchasing Decision

Understanding the behavior of consumers is essential for a successful marketing plan. Consumer behavior is "the decision-making process and physical action individuals participate in when analyzing, acquiring, utilizing, or discarding goods and services" (Loudon, 1993). Consumer attitudes are created via experience and education, and these views can influence customers' purchasing behavior. There are several distinct types of purchasing behavior. **Complicated Purchasing** : In this type of transaction, there is a high level of consumer interaction, a significant brand distinction, expensive items, and a high amount of risk. **Low dissonance**: this sort of transaction is characterized by a high amount of consumer interaction, a lack of brand differentiation, and a high level of risk. **Consistent**

buying : Customers are not actively involved, there is little differentiation between brands, and there are consistent purchases. **Consumer participation is low** : there are significant brand gaps, and customers frequently switch brands. According to (Klieb, 2018), complex purchasing involves a greater risk, hence information collection is more important, they defined a community as a place where people connect and participate on posting, tracking, and collecting views. Consumers are more involved in complex purchases, yet they spend more time reading articles on social media before making a decision. Decision-making refers to the inclination to optimize or satisfy a decision. According to (Schwartz B., 2002), "maximizers want the finest possible outcome, while satisfiers want a result that is strong enough to meet all criteria". In contrast, satisfiers just review and test products until they locate one that satisfies those requirements or meets their proper boundaries. Maximizers instead spend more time examining and evaluating possibilities for the optimal measurement.

Owing to digitization and new marketing techniques, such as Influencer Marketing, have impacted consumers' purchase decisions, the information search for products and services has shifted, making it simpler for businesses to communicate with customers. In order to be prosperous, organizations must comprehend the demands and desires of individuals as well as new technology and methods. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is becoming increasingly important to brands in order to interact with customers and develop trust . (Engel, 1968) developed a model of the consumer decision process, which consists of five stages:

1. **Need Recognition** : In the first phase, a consumer identifies a need that he or she want to fulfill. This need arises as a result of stimuli, the Internal Stimuli, which includes feelings such as hunger or drowsiness, and the External Stimuli, which is a reaction to the external environment, such as when a person sees a product advertised in the media and feels compelled to acquire it.
2. **Information Search** : As soon as the desire is strong enough, the consumer begins searching for information about the product and the brand in order to make the best choice. As a result, there are two types of information sources: the "Internal Information Source," which is based on an individual's personal experience with a product and is typically the most reliable, and the "External Information Source,"

which includes recommendations from friends, family, acquaintances, influencers, advertisements, and public media sources. Social media is a new medium that simplifies information search for consumers; hence, this study will focus primarily on the effects of social networks.

3. **Assessment of Alternatives:** In this stage, the consumer has acquired adequate information about the product or service and is attempting to determine which selection would be the most satisfying based on numerous criteria, such as price, performance, or quality
4. **Purchase Decision:** The customer has made a decision about the brand, but there are additional aspects of influence present, including the "social context," in which the consumer communicates his preference to, say, a buddy who argues for a different brand. So, the consumer's decision could alter again. Another factor is "Considered Risk," which occurs when a consumer has reservations about the quality of a product and consequently switches to a rival to decrease risk. The third and final factor is "Situation-Related Factors," which may include the availability of the desired product or a malfunctioning payment method .The consumer will switch to a competitor in this instance.
5. **Post-Purchase:** The post-purchase phase is significant because it affects whether the consumer will remain loyal to the brand or switch to a competitor, as well as whether the product will be suggested to others or not. If the product/service was deemed satisfactory and satisfied the customer's expectations, he or she will likely purchase from the brand again. By upgrading technical elements, customer service or the consumer's buying experience can be better, resulting in more satisfaction.

Although social media advertising was extensively monitored, few marketers fully grasped its effect on consumers. Numerous researchers study consumer behavior but ignore the role of social influences on choices (Darley, 2010). Because of the low cost of seeking for information online, consumers have been able to make more educated purchasing decisions, and new information search opportunities have been generated. The media's influence is contingent on proximity to the decision-making process. The media has implemented new social media, online decision service, and advising structures, which have a greater impact on all levels of decision-making while still encouraging intelligence analysis. Online decision-making is affected by factors such as the risks involved, the degree of sensitivity to

the product, the level of confidence in the information, and the time and mental effort required to acquire and process the information. There is a direct correlation between the number of people who use the internet and the number of people who make a purchase there. Users of today's online technologies have access to a wealth of data and analytical tools that aid in the creation of sound judgments. The decision-making process and its outcomes are what set the offline world apart from the digital one. Duangruthai and Leslie (Klieb, 2018) conduct a comprehensive study to explore people's evolving perspectives on social networks. The results show that social media usage affects customer loyalty across the whole information-seeking and alternative-evaluation processes, leading to happier customers who are more likely to make purchases and provide feedback afterward.

2.3 Challenges of Social Media in Nigeria

As is typical in business, there are always obstacles that can impede the achievement of desired goals; the same holds true for the marketing value of social media. A survey of comparable publications reveals a series of difficulties linked with social media marketing in Nigeria.

- **Lack of Online Marketing Know-How and Inconsistency**

Lack of technical expertise is a major barrier to online marketing in Nigeria, says (Anthony Chinedu Ekwueme, 2018). Despite the apparent simplicity of social media marketing's stages, the poll found that many respondents struggled with the tasks of creating content, designing graphics and photos, and integrating their social network profiles with e-commerce platforms. These issues persist, particularly in Nigeria, for online marketers. It was also pointed out that not all social media marketers are equally active; some don't update their followers daily. It is also argued that one of the issues with social media marketing is that marketers don't interact with their audience, don't respond to audience comments, and seldom link their social media accounts to their main website to give the audience additional information about the marketed product or concept. Somebody has to keep an eye on all of the platforms, respond to comments and questions, and share information about products that customers care about (Darren Barefoot, 2010).

- **Weak Strategies**

Social media marketers in Nigeria continue to operate in the dark because they lack a road plan. The problem of poor strategies for online marketing is endemic to marketers, as most

of the time, they do not have a plan that addresses the 4 Ws (Who, What, Why, and Where) of social media marketing. Why are we utilizing social media for marketing? Who is or intended market? What exactly do we sell? What is our intended outcome? What content suites our audience? , where do we market our products and services (social media platforms). As well as the how of social media marketing as a component of strategy, which includes the following: • How we will succeed (selection of the correct channel, development of the right content, how to collaborate with influencers),how to quantify the success achieved (Evaluation).

- **Negative Feedbacks**

Reactions are a component of social networking that is particularly destructive to marketing campaigns. There is little a marketer can do to prevent unsatisfied consumers or industry rivals from posting insulting or offensive photographs, blog posts, or videos. Issues such as this are not uncommon in Nigeria; however, when issues such as this occur, we find that some social media marketers ignore these comments, which is not good for the reputation of the brand or product because others are likely to read such comments and lose interest in purchasing or taking positive action regarding the advertised products. In other instances, marketers may engage such commenters in a verbal battle, which is also unacceptable.

- **Trademark and Copyright Concerns**

According to (Steinman, 2010), it is of the utmost importance for businesses to safeguard their trademarks and copyrights when utilizing social media to promote their brands and products. Social medias potential to promote casual and unplanned communication frequently in real-time can assist businesses in marketing their brands and sharing protected content, but it can also facilitate infringement by third parties. In Nigeria, there is little consideration for trademarks, brand names, etc. Due to the continuous exploitation of intellectual properties such as music, advertisement lines, and visuals (without legal license) in marketing messages, we conclude that there is no meaningful mechanism to check the excesses of social media users in Nigeria.

- **Security and Privacy Concerns**

This issue of trust, privacy, and security presents a difficulty for social media marketing. Using social media to advertise one's brand, products, or services might raise trust, privacy, and data security concerns. Customers of today regularly connect with businesses across many channels and devices, leaving a trail of identifiers (such as email addresses, loyalty

accounts, browser cookies, and mobile device IDs) strewn throughout the technology that power these consumer interactions. This renders users vulnerable since this information can be utilized by a third party, especially if the device used to enter e-information falls into the wrong hands. When completing an online payment, there is also the chance of revealing personal information such as home addresses (in the case of home delivery), phone numbers, and in some situations, bank account information. This does not make purchasing via social media any easier.

3 INFLUENCER MARKETING

3.1 Principles of Influencer Marketing

According to (Sevil Yesiloglu, 2020), to find what influences people and their decisions has always been enigmatic and a challenge for marketers, brands, and advertisers. To know how to influence people, it is necessary to examine how academicians and psychologists have traditionally defined influence. The research of (Cialdini, 2009) examined the six principles of compliance as consistency, reciprocity, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity - that exert a tremendous force and effect on society to vote, buy, donate, etc. He explains reciprocity as a principle that is paying someone back if they do a favor for us. For example, influencers will often share each other's content as a means of reciprocating the favor of engagement. The term consistency refers to a commitment that compels someone to adhere to a routine. It may be the case that an influencer frequently publishes discounts for popular products to entice followers to visit their page frequently. Social proof entails actions that we commit to and believe we have the right to take if we observe others engaging in them. For example, if prominent influencers fail to disclose that their work is paid, it may become the norm. Liking implies it is a principle that compels us to comply with the desires of those we like. Many bloggers may invite their audience to like and subscribe to their blog. Authority principle says that individuals tend to accept requests if they originate from trustful and/ or accepted sources. Finally, scarcity relates to the fact that when opportunities are scarce, they become more desirable and valued. This last premise may appear paradoxical to the proliferation of influencers, but if applied to sponsorship possibilities presented by brands, exclusivity can drive influence. Collectively, these six principles have shown to be incredibly effective for understanding the process of influence and enhancing persuasive skills in order to influence the purchase choice of the target audience. These ideas are called "weapons of influence," but scholars seek to define the concept of how to influence the decisions and behaviors of others. Several studies have begun to focus on prominent non-celebrities who wield significant influence over others who follow them. These individuals are identified as powerful information sources and influencers.

According to (Wachler Brain Boxer, 2022), it is so simple for us to automatically disregard the effects of influencers. When it comes to separating fact from fiction in our social media

accounts, we require an expansion of our critical thinking spectrum in order to remain sober in the face of the intoxicating effect of internet celebrity and the associated authenticity. Our insecurities can lead us to believe nearly anything that appears to offer a solution to a perceived problem. As we receive and process information, advice, reportage, and recommendations from influencers, we must postpone our intuition, which is otherwise essential to our creative motivations and, on occasion, our survival. Failure to activate critical thinking in our minds can lead us to accept false information at face value and act against our best interests, such as by purchasing something we don't need, emulating a behavior that proves harmful, or engaging in a bogus health trend that will fail to produce the desired result.

While academics and psychologists have debated the fundamental characteristics of influence, some researchers have shifted their attention to "ordinary" people who have extraordinary influence over those who follow them. It has also been suggested that social media plays a significant role in these influential people becoming influencers or even celebrities. Due to the ongoing evolution of social media applications, it might be difficult to distinguish influencers and comprehend how they acquire their authority. Abidin and Ots (Abidin, 2015) proposed a broad definition of influencers as: Everyday Internet users who amass a relatively large following on blogs and social media through textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in digital and physical spaces, and monetize their following by integrating advertisements into their content. (Nadja Enke, 2019) observed that Abidin and Ots (2015) emphasized the significance of influencers' activities in influencing their followers, but they failed to consider the importance of a strategic approach behind these actions on online platforms. By taking this crucial factor into account and considering the various definitions of an influencer, it can be defined as an individual who possesses a strategic mindset and has the ability to impact people's (buying) decisions in digital communication platforms. Although an influencer can operate on any communication platform, they typically have a specific audience that trusts their power, authority, and expertise in a particular subject, product, industry, or brand.

3.2 Influencer Marketing and Electronic word of mouth (EWOM)

Word of Mouth (WOM) is founded on recommendations and reviews, and eWOM emerges alongside technological advancements. Electronic word of mouth refers to the informal dissemination of information about a product or service through online chats and the exchange of links (Stephen Litvin, 2008). Influencer marketing and word-of-mouth (eWOM) are connected and can have same outcomes. Consumers increasingly depend more on online word-of-mouth (eWOM) recommendations from unidentified sources than on word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations spread in person. Customers can research products by reading comments and ratings made by people who have never met them before. Individuals are profoundly influenced by the knowledge acquired through social interactions. The effectiveness of word-of-mouth lies in the fact that individuals are more likely to believe what they hear if it comes from a person they know and trust. As demonstrated by empirical research, positive WOM has a positive impact on business outcomes such as sales. Hence, identifying important nodes on social media, i.e., the individuals who genuinely have impact, is a huge difficulty for organizations that wish to conduct an influencer marketing strategy. Previously, word-of-mouth was viewed as unpaid, impartial promotion, whereas influencer marketing was viewed as paid, influenced advertising. 80% of consumers have made a purchase based on a social media influencer's advice, this is largely owing to the fact that customers place substantial weight on the opinions and suggestions of influential individuals (Rakuten Marketing 2019). So, brands seek for important witnesses whose friends and followers are likely to see their endorsement as authentic word-of-mouth communication in order to reach vast audiences with an efficient eWOM approach.

Utilizing their social networks, consumers can publish content about a company's brand or product with relative ease. In recent years, marketers have taken a greater interest in managing consumers' relationships with one another. This is due to the fact that consumers have evolved into dynamic co-producers of value and significance in relation to brands, products, and services. Initially, businesses were more interested in searching for and analyzing consumer feedback on social networking sites, as any positive comment about a product was regarded as valuable and a fantastic promotional tool for marketers and businesses as long as it remained online. People are dubious of eWOM since it is anonymous,

making it less credible. According to prior study, reputation is a critical aspect of eWOM adoption. As eWOM occurs in cyberspace, it is not limited by time or location, which is a twofold advantage. Yet, (Shu-Chuan Chu, 2011) contend that the ability to express ideas and share experiences through social media has lessened anonymity, causing individuals to see such statements as more credible. Companies and organizations can use eWOM method influencers to indirectly influence consumers' purchasing decisions, and the viral effect of influencer-generated branded content can aid in the content's dissemination. While it is undeniable that eWOM strategy is crucial to the success of influencer marketing, it is also true that the eWOM effect can be amplified by employing a creative and engaging content strategy.

3.3 Social Media Influencers vs Traditional Influencers

According to micro-celebrities have emerged as a result of the proliferation of social media over the past decade, which has enabled "regular users" to build and expand their online personal brand alongside established celebrities. As a result, social media influencers have gained popularity, as their followers find it simpler to connect with them. After observing this new trend, marketers have begun to depart from more conventional celebrity endorsement marketing campaigns. Previously, marketers relied on conventional advertising channels such as television, radio, and print media. Icons or celebrities, who were regarded as traditional influencers, were utilized extensively for product promotion. With the advent of social media, however, anyone can become famous by cultivating an online following, giving birth to a new category of influential individuals: social media influencers. Instagram, a visual social media network in which users create content for self-presentation, stands out due to its large user base and rapid growth rate.

In contrast to well-known personalities, influencers are perceived to be approachable, credible, and personal because they share private, typically inaccessible aspects of their lives with their followers and interact with them in person. Compared to the high quantities required to sign one or more well-known celebrity endorsers, businesses may opt for influencers who are less expensive. Business-savvy SMIs have transformed their enormous following and prominence into a lucrative brand. According to (Geysler, 2022), 91 percent of survey respondents viewed influencer marketing as advantageous. In 2019, over 380 influencer marketing agencies were founded, and by 2022, brands are expected to spend over

\$15 billion on influencer marketing. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the interaction between influencers and followers has significant economic value and impact.

3.3.1 Success of (SMIs) compared to Traditional Influencers

According to (Marina Leban, 2020), scholars are yet to reach a consensus or establish a model on what makes social media influencers more successful online than traditional celebrity influencers. Three main criteria are discussed as possible reasons for the stronger influence: being relatable, being reachable, being perceived as trustworthy or credible.

- **Relatability**

Social media influencers are viewed as more approachable than traditional personalities, who frequently use social media to promote their lavish lifestyles. Social media influencers typically portray themselves as more approachable than traditional personalities, who may appear lavish and unapproachable. However, according to (McQuarrie, 2012), the perceived relatability of influencers may have more to do with the performance techniques employed by influencers than with actuality. He describes a variety of social media influencers' techniques for creating and emphasizing their relatability. One such strategy is known as "Feigning similarity," in which influencers combine posts about their affluent and privileged lifestyles with commonplace activities to give the impression that they are "just like them." In order to establish this sympathetic persona, social media influencers may vlog about mundane activities like doing laundry, hanging clothes, and washing utensils. Influencers may also use "self-deprecation" to minimize their accomplishments and success by attributing credit to others or acknowledging their devoted followers. To appear more approachable and personable, influencers use pleasant language and address their audience directly.

- **Reachability**

Influencers on social media work diligently to make themselves approachable to their fans by sharing intimate details of their daily lives on their platforms. This can be achieved by frequently and swiftly connecting with their followers, responding to their comments, and participating in other live activities. Moreover, followers experience a sense of connection,

or "perceived interconnectivity," with influencers because the content appears exclusive and inaccessible in real life. Despite the fact that past research has examined parasocial relationships between celebrities and fans, the notion of reachability is typically portrayed as an illusion of followers feeling near to their idols. Traditional celebrities cultivate parasocial interactions through one-to-many communication strategies. In contrast, social media influencers employ both broad and targeted outreach strategies.

- **Trustworthiness**

Due to the growing number of social media influencers and traditional celebrities using social media platforms, consumers have become more selective when deciding whom to trust. Social media influencers are viewed as more credible than traditional celebrities and so have a stronger impact on the purchasing decisions of their followers. Trustworthiness, which is described in the context of an influencer as "the endorser's honesty, integrity, and believability" (Erdogan, 1999), is essential, and social media influencers must stress seeming genuine when creating their online personal brand. If social media influencers are viewed as more trustworthy, they may produce stronger electronic word-of-mouth, which can boost their impact on the purchasing decision-making process.

3.3.2 Social Media Influencers Category

Influencers on social media are frequently characterized according to their number of followers, with designations such as mega, macro, micro, nano, and virtual. There are, however, additional elements that differentiate mega and virtual influencers from those who are distinguished only by their audience size.

- **Mega influencers or celebrities** : are well-known actors, artists, or athletes with a substantial social media following. Their popularity can have a significant impact on consumer decisions, and working with them can be costly for businesses. Often, mega influencers have a team dedicated to managing their paid endorsements, and they are known for their expertise. According to (Muhammad Mehtab, 2017), gender, attractiveness, credibility, and multiple celebrity endorsements are some aspects that make the use of celebrities effective in influencing purchasing intentions
- **Macro influencers** : often have between 10K-1 million followers and can be experts, CEOs, journalists, academics, or bloggers with a specific area of expertise and the

potential to influence their audience to take action. They are perceived as thought leaders on a topic and are commonly recognized as subject matter experts. Macro influencers may also be professional social media personalities who are passionate about a specific topic and have skill with offer negotiation and content creation. They are hardly celebrities, but they have an extensive, devoted fan base. With high-quality content, macro influencers enable marketers to reach a substantial chunk of their target audience.

- **Micro-influencers** : have a very smaller community. They achieve between 1,000 and 10,000 followers and intentionally sustain smaller audiences through consistent communications. They are typically focused on a specific topic or sector and may be genuine persons with a strong relationship with their audience. Sponsored content is uploaded to their channels less frequently than that of celebrities, but they may garner more trust from their target audience because of their ability to better relate to their followers and because of the high quality of the content they provide.
- **Nano influencers** : have a smaller number of followers, but a similarly high level of commitment: they reach as few as 1,000 followers and act as persuaders in their social groups with particular opinions of a product or company. Nano influencers have a smaller number of followers, but a similarly high level of commitment. A significant number of businesses make use of micro and nano influencers who have a limited number of followers.
- **Virtual influencers** : Is a new category of influencers, also known as "non-human influencers," that may have millions of followers and may be selected or created by companies based on characteristics they define. The ability to control the behavior and content of the communications conveyed by these virtual subjects is an advantage of virtual influencers. Lil Miquela, the 2016-created fashion icon with more than one million Instagram followers, is one of the most well-known virtual influencers on a global scale. Lil Miquela is a computer-generated model who resides virtually in Los Angeles. She has been hired by the most prestigious luxury brands and is frequently endorsed by her virtual friends.

3.4 The Cosmetics and Beauty Industry

In 2022, the global cosmetics market expanded by more than 16% compared to the previous year. The primary product categories on the cosmetics market are skin care, hair care, makeup, fragrances, toiletries and deodorants, and oral care. In 2021, skincare represented approximately 41 percent of the global market share. In addition, haircare products accounted for 22 percent, while cosmetics accounted for approximately 16 percent. Skincare is one of the most lucrative product categories, with a projected 2026 revenue of approximately 188 billion U.S. dollars. North-Asia was responsible for approximately 35 percent of the global market in 2021 (Petruzzi, 2023). In the cosmetics industry, traditional advertising channels such as department stores, pharmacies, and magazines have been the norm, but in recent years, digital advertising and influencer marketing have gained importance. Environmental concerns have become significant in the cosmetics industry, with customers pursuing sustainable, cruelty-free, and environmentally friendly products. Brands are increasingly emphasizing environmentally responsible manufacturing and packaging practices that do not compromise product quality. Ethical concerns regarding animal testing have also received increased attention, with more consumers avoiding brands that conduct animal testing.

3.5 Why SMIs should care about Ethics

SMIs possess a unique position in society. They receive complimentary products from brands or are compensated for recommending specific items. They function as advertisements by providing product information. In addition, they publish information as journalists contributing to the opinion or commentary page of a news website. The connection between advertising and journalism positions SMIs in the same category as the music critic for a news website, who may receive free music in exchange for reviewing content. Nonetheless, journalists have codes of ethics and editors to ensure the accuracy of published news. SMIs are independent contractors in contrast. Their decision-making is not governed by an official code of ethics. Similarly, some SMIs operate autonomously and have no one to verify that reviews have been handled appropriately. SMIs may have a direct financial involvement in the brands whose products they evaluate. Research indicates that SMIs can influence consumer purchase decisions (Xin Jean Lim, 2017). This suggests that SMIs may have direct effects on the community. SMIs should therefore consider their social

responsibilities as quasi-journalists. President of the University of Chicago Robert M. Hutchins led a group of professors in establishing the Commission on Freedom of the Press to advocate the social responsibilities of the press. The committee, commonly known as the Hutchins Commission, issued a report stating that a free press must also be accountable. The responsibility of the press to uphold the demands of the society it serves is a crucial aspect of this obligation. The Commission's report addresses the accountability of press organizations. It asserts that the press must be truthful, that it should serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas, that it should give people the information they need to vote, that it should help people comprehend the fundamentals of society, and that it should provide intellectual information to the public. This concept was later developed into the theory of social responsibility by (Schramm, 1956). According to the revised conception, news organizations have a social responsibility to educate society for the political system to function and for people to govern themselves. Nonetheless, it included several novel ideas, such as the assertion that the press has a duty to connect consumers and merchants, provide entertainment, and generate a profit. As quasi-journalists, one of the three additional responsibilities introduced to the influencer role, it is unreasonable to expect SMIs to provide election information. To retain their audience, influencers must provide amusement. Similarly, for their activities to continue, they must generate a profit. Additionally, they facilitate the relationship between purchasers and vendors. Moreover, a number of the responsibilities enumerated by the Commission on Freedom of the Press (1947) also apply to the quasi-journalist position. They have the ability to influence purchase intent, but they must be truthful about their product experiences and acknowledge and assist the audience understand societal values. By engaging in these activities, SMIs can simultaneously generate a profit and contribute to the greater good. Maintaining social responsibilities could assist SMIs in establishing relationships with their adherents.

4 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the methods and procedures employed to undertake the study are outlined. It describes the research strategy, data collection and analytic methods, and any ethical considerations incorporated into the research process. The methodology chapter explains precisely how the research was conducted and how the results were reached. It contributes to the accuracy and validity of the study by describing the procedures taken to reduce bias and errors. The various reasons and justifications for the adoption of these methods were also highlighted.

4.1 Objective and Research Questions

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the extent to which social media influencers impact the Nigerian consumers to purchase cosmetics and beauty products and to measure if this impact weighs more on the positive experience or if the consumers have had more negative encounters with the Nigerian influencers.

The purpose of the study is to answer the following research questions.

1. What is the impact of social media influencer marketing on the purchase decisions of Nigerian consumers in the cosmetics and beauty industry, is it positive or negative?
2. How do Nigerian consumers perceive the credibility and authenticity of social media influencers in the cosmetics and beauty industry, and how does this perception impact their purchase decisions?

4.2 Philosophy of Research Adopted

Research philosophy is a collection of theories concerning the true nature of what has been explored or studied. It is the concept underlying the essence of knowledge. A study's research philosophy justifies how the research will be conducted (Mark Saunders, 2007). Philosophy might vary with regard to research objectives and the optimal method for obtaining them. Understanding the research's philosophy can therefore help to explain the research's assumptions and how they fit into the research method. The primary approaches to research are positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory. To establish causal links between variables, Positivism emphasizes empirical observation and quantitative data analysis. In

contrast, interpretivism stresses subjective experience and qualitative data analysis to comprehend the significance and context of human behavior. Critical theory tries to question the existing quo by focusing on the power dynamics and social institutions that impact human behavior. Pragmatism, realism, and postmodernism are other research philosophies.

➤ **Positivism**

For the purpose of this research, positivism and interpretivism philosophy guides the design of this research. We chose to utilize the positivism philosophy because the philosophy of positivism stresses the use of empirical data gathered via systematic observation, measurement, and experimentation to examine phenomena. In the case of examining the influence of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase decisions in Nigeria's cosmetics and beauty business, a positivist methodology can be advantageous for a number of reasons:

Objectivity: Positivism aims to exclude subjective biases and viewpoints from the research process, placing emphasis on objective facts and scientific data. This ensures that the research is conducted objectively and without prejudice, which is vital for deriving valid and trustworthy conclusions.

Quantitative data: Positivism stresses the use of quantitative data, such as surveys, experiments, and statistical analysis, to collect knowledge on the topic of study. This methodology can produce exact and quantifiable findings that can be utilized to draw statistical inferences regarding the influence of social media influencer marketing on the customer purchase decision.

Generalizability: Positivism strives to generate generalizable theories that can be applied to circumstances beyond the scope of the given study. This is significant for the Nigerian cosmetics and beauty business, as the research findings can be applied to other industries in Nigeria and abroad.

Replicability: Positivism enables the replication of the research process by other researchers, which is vital for evaluating the validity and dependability of the findings.

Using positivism as a research philosophy for the influence of social media influencer marketing on the consumer purchase decision in Nigeria's cosmetics and beauty industry can

yield reliable and valid results that can be generalized and replicated, making it an appropriate strategy for this research topic.

➤ **Interpretivism**

Interpretivism is a philosophical perspective that stresses subjective comprehension of human behavior and experiences. In examining the influence of social media influencer marketing on the consumer purchase decision in Nigeria's cosmetics and beauty business, an interpretivist approach can be advantageous for a number of reasons;

Subjectivity: According to interpretivism, individuals have their own subjective experiences and views, which influence their behavior and decision-making. Researchers can acquire a deeper knowledge of how consumers interpret and respond to social media influencer marketing in the Nigerian cosmetics and beauty business by taking an interpretivist approach.

Qualitative data: Interpretivism emphasizes the use of qualitative data, such as interviews, focus groups, and observations, to collect information on the topic of the research. This methodology can provide extensive and detailed insights into the experiences and viewpoints of consumers, thereby revealing the underlying reasons and emotions that drive their decision-making.

Contextualization: According to interpretivism, behavior and experiences are influenced by their surroundings. Researchers can obtain a greater knowledge of how social, cultural, and economic aspects influence the impact of social media influencer marketing on consumer behavior in the Nigerian cosmetics and beauty business by adopting an interpretivist methodology.

Empathy: Interpretivism stresses the significance of empathy and comprehension in the research process. By adopting an interpretivist methodology, researchers might forge a stronger bond with research participants, so facilitating the discovery of deeper insights and perspectives.

Overall, using interpretivism as a research philosophy for the impact of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase decisions in Nigeria's cosmetics and beauty industry can provide rich and detailed insights into the experiences and perspectives of

consumers, as well as help uncover the underlying motivations and emotions that drive their decision-making. This can assist firms and marketers establish effective marketing strategies by providing a greater knowledge of the impact of social media influencer marketing on consumer behavior in this industry.

4.3 Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative research entails the collection of numerical data analyzed using mathematical (particularly statistical) techniques, such as the use of percentages to characterize events. A study is not a quantitative study if no numbers or figures are used in the analysis of the acquired data (Bryman A, 2007). Quantitative research, on the other hand, focuses on objective phenomena that can be measured, in contrast to qualitative research, which tries to investigate subjective experiences and meanings.

This study investigates the influence of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchasing decisions in the Nigerian cosmetics and beauty industry. To achieve this goal, a quantitative research technique was employed. This method made it simple to ascertain the impact that social media influencers have on consumer behavior. Quantitative methods enhance the generalizability of the study's findings, allowing them to be applied to a population larger than the study's sample. In addition, it allows for comparative analyses of various groups, such as those of varying ages, genders, or socioeconomic backgrounds. Because it relies on quantitative data rather than subjective interpretations of qualitative data, this research approach is considered as more objective. This increases the trustworthiness of the study's findings and guarantees that they are based on objective facts, not subjective opinions, or biases.

- **Quantitative analysis of secondary data**

This practice involves gathering numerical information from secondary sources. During the research, this method was also employed to acquire previously documented quantitative data (in numerical form) from the Internet to further develop the research issue. This method makes it possible to evaluate big data sets in order to uncover patterns and trends that contributed to the overall significance of this research. In addition, secondary data collected offered a historical framework for this investigation.

- **Quantitative Interviewing**

This study uses quantitative interviewing to obtain information on attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and demographics for the purpose of compiling primary quantitative data. This entails asking a sample of persons a set of standardized questions. The majority of the questions asked are closed-ended, with a few optional open-ended questions to elicit further responses and insights from respondents. The interview was conducted via electronic questionnaires online. The survey involved the use of multiple social media platforms to attract respondents to participate in the survey. Consumers spend the most time on Facebook, followed by YouTube, according to studies; with more than 2 billion monthly active users, these two platforms dominate the social media scene. Thus, the research was undertaken on Facebook in addition to Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger, Snapchat, Tik Tok, and Twitter, among other significant digital platforms. This online survey lasted three weeks.

- **Sample size and recruitment methods**

Individuals between the ages of 15 and 55 who identify as Nigerian consumers participated in the study. This age range encompasses a sizable population with differing levels of knowledge and perspectives regarding consumer behavior and preferences. The study sought to recruit between 250 and 300 respondents using the **Probability sampling technique**. **Probability sampling technique** which is the selection of a sample from a population based on the randomization principle, also known as chance or random selection. For this study, **stratified sampling**, which involves dividing the population into subpopulations, was utilized. In this instance, we targeted individuals 15 to 55 years old.

- **Research Instrument**

As research instruments, this study employed **Google Forms electronic survey**. The decision to utilize online surveys was influenced by several considerations, including the desire to reach a wide audience and respondents who were not physically located in the same location as the researcher. This is consistent with the statement made by Bryman and Bell (2007), who stated that online questionnaires are easier to respond to than paper questionnaires for collecting data from a large population. In addition, the use of electronic

questionnaires permitted the researcher to keep control over the research process prior to receiving responses from respondents. This was regarded as a substantial benefit of this strategy. In addition, respondents saw the usage of online surveys, particularly Google Forms, as simpler and more convenient than traditional paper questionnaires. This was made possible since respondents could fill out the surveys online, and the researcher could watch the results in real time. Using electronic surveys also allowed for the summary of the results rapidly and efficiently, making data processing simpler and more streamlined.

4.4 Qualitative Research Method

The decision to conduct a qualitative research approach for this research topic is based on the need to gain an in-depth understanding of the concepts, opinions, or experiences of the respondents. Qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as text, video, or audio recordings, to explore and interpret social phenomena. To create appropriate and high-quality data, the interviews were conducted online to facilitate the rapid recording and gathering of the respondents' responses. The data was collected via audio and video calls across social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, and Microsoft Teams. The interview took the form of **Interpersonal Interviews**: Interpersonal interviews are a qualitative research technique used to obtain in-depth information from a single participant through face-to-face or online interaction. In this style of interview, the interviewer engages in a one-on-one conversation with the subject, asking open-ended questions to acquire a deeper knowledge of their associated experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and views.

In addition, the interview consisted of a series of **semi-structured interview** styles that combined elements of structured and unstructured questions. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a list of planned questions or topics to cover but is also free to ask follow-up questions or probe certain areas of interest further. This allows for a more conversational and flexible interview approach, while preserving structure and consistency in the questions addressed.

- **Sample size and recruitment methods**

It is important to put into consideration the nature of this research which is concerned with garnering an in-depth understanding of the research topic, unlike the quantitative research

methods which are solely on gathering numerical data. The sample size to be used in this qualitative research was a bit smaller, for this reason, the age group targeted were age 15-39 years old active social media users, who have had practical experiences with influencer marketing. For the recruitment method “**The purposeful sampling method**” was utilized. This method is a common technique used in qualitative research to select participants who are likely to provide rich and diverse data that is relevant to the research question. Specifically, the **Maximum variation sampling**: which involves selecting participants who have diverse perspectives and experiences related to the research question.

According to studies, women are the primary purchasers and users of cosmetics and beauty products; hence, a greater proportion of women were contacted for this interview. The concept of "theoretical saturation" was also applied to the interviews with the individuals. The notion of theoretical saturation was widely employed in this qualitative research to identify when data collection can cease since sufficient knowledge has been acquired to study and comprehend a research topic in depth. Theoretical saturation is attained when new data no longer yields new insights or perspectives on the research subject or topic. In other words, the researcher has amassed sufficient data to have a complete grasp of the topic under investigation.

- **Qualitative Analysis of secondary data**

This method is also used to collect existing qualitative data that would be relevant to the research topic in the form of texts, audio, or video recordings sourced from online sources in order to further facilitate and develop the research on the topic at hand.

4.5 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

Google forms, as well as video and audio recorders, were used for this study. The researcher made sure there was no flaw in the instrument's quality or its capacity to give results by testing it thoroughly. The quality of the questionnaire and its qualitative items were also assessed. The researcher has analyzed the questions to see if they are relevant to the study's goals. In addition, the pilot study was subjected to a method of verifying and testing to determine the instrument's reliability.

4.6 Data Analysis Method

Google forms was utilized for gathering the data for the quantitative research. The data gathered through the online questionnaires was analyzed and interpreted using excel for the research. Excel is a potent tool for quantitative interpretation of a research topic since it enables researchers to efficiently organize, analyze, and visualize data. Excel allows researchers to organize data into tables and columns, making it easier to manage and analyze enormous amounts of information. This is especially valuable for research studies that collect data from numerous sources, as it enables researchers to consolidate and arrange all their data in a single location. Also, it's analytical tools and functions for analyzing data and identifying patterns, trends, and relationships is useful for this research.

The audio interview was captured using a voice recorder and the video interview was recorded using Microsoft Teams for the qualitative analysis. There was a total of 25 respondents for the qualitative interview. By rewatching and relistening to the prerecorded interview, the researcher was able to examine the qualitative data and capture in writing any of the respondent's comments that were deemed valuable and pertinent to the research issue.

4.7 Consideration of Ethical Issues

The first step was taken to prevent data manipulation and ensure that the analysis was conducted in an honest and competent manner. This was accomplished by deploying password-protected computers and software, limiting access to the data, and maintaining a safe backup system. To preserve the respondents' anonymity, the researcher ensured that the questionnaire contained no questions that could identify their identities. This was accomplished by deleting questions requesting personal data such as names and addresses. In addition, the researcher was conscious of issues regarding confidentiality and privacy, thus the research was done responsibly by getting the respondents' permission prior to allowing them to participate in the study. Notwithstanding all the precautions taken to protect the respondents' privacy and maintain confidentiality, the researcher guaranteed that the information acquired from the study participants was treated with the utmost discretion. This required keeping the data securely and allowing only authorized individuals access.

II. ANALYSIS

5 PRIMARY RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter opens with a concise interpretation of the data, followed by a thorough analysis of the data that reveals patterns, trends, and linkages. The data is presented logically, utilizing appropriate tables, graphs, charts, or other visual aids to promote clear comprehension. It may involve comparing the results to existing literature, considering possible causes for unexpected findings, and emphasizing the significance of the results within the context of the research topic.

5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

This section of the analysis aims to provide a systematic and rigorous method for analyzing data, deriving insights, and drawing valid conclusions from the primary data collected from the online investigation of "The impact of social media influencer marketing on the consumer purchase decision in Nigeria: The cosmetics and Beauty Industry." The queries were subdivided into topics to be investigated while interpreting the data and supporting these findings with existing literature on the research topic in question.

5.1.1 Demographic data of Respondents

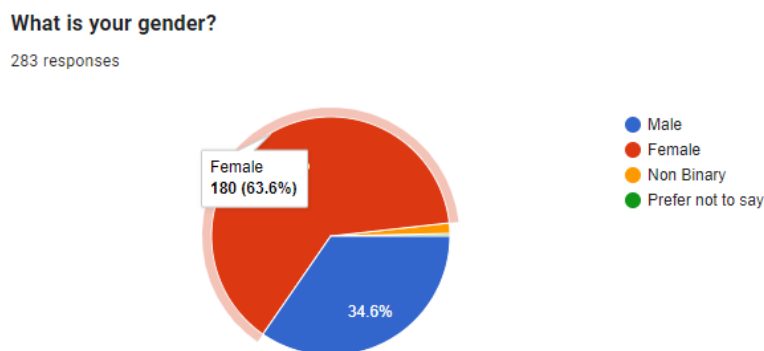


Figure 1: Gender of Respondent (Source: Snapshot from online survey of research,2023)

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Female	180	63.60%
Male	98	34.63%
Non-Binary	4	1.41%
Prefer not to say	1	0.35%
Grand total	283	100.00%

Table 1: Gender of respondents

- **Gender of respondents**

According to the survey that was conducted online to investigate the impact of social media influencer marketing on the consumer purchasing decision in Nigeria, using the **Probability sampling technique** which is the selection of a sample from a population based on the randomization principle, also known as chance or random selection. The result as seen above on (figure 1) which is a pie chart and (table 1) a pivot table shows the number of participants in total 283, that responded to the question of “What is your gender? The result shows that out of the 283 respondent in total, the highest number of respondents that participated in the survey were female with 180 (63.60%) , with the male gender coming in second with 98 (34.63%) respondents and those respondents who do not identify as male or female (Non-binary) in third place with 4(1.41%) and lastly the “Prefer not to say “ with 1 (0.35%) . It is no surprise that most of the respondents were female because many factors, such as societal standards, cultural expectations, marketing and advertising methods, and individual tastes, contribute to the gender gap in cosmetics purchases made by women and men. The cosmetics industry has seen consistent expansion in response to this shift in how individuals view and care for their own appearance. As many skin health issues are disregarded by that consumer category due to their resistance to treatment with cosmeceutical goods, the increased access of male consumers to the cosmetic sector may represent an improvement in their quality of life. Understanding consumer behavior requires thinking about the people involved, the circumstances in which their actions take place, and the broader economic and social

environment. The consumer's response is analyzed in light of the environment in which the stimulus occurred. (R, 2009) categorizes the elements that influence consumer behavior into the anthropological or cultural, environmental, organic, psychological, and socioeconomic categories.

Historically, societal conventions and cultural expectations have often dictated that women should place a higher value on their looks and invest in cosmetics goods to improve their beauty than men have. Gender norms can affect consumer behavior; women may be more likely to buy cosmetics in an effort to achieve social beauty standards because they feel more pressure to do so, especially in a country like Nigeria where women pay a lot of emphasis on their physical appearance. Also, Cosmetics can be a fun and creative way for some women to express themselves and take care of themselves. Cosmetics can be used as a form of self-expression, self-improvement, and confidence-booster. Because of differences in taste and the need to stand out, women may be more likely to buy cosmetics than men. Cosmetics purchases may also be influenced by conventional gender norms, which dictate expected conduct for men and women respectively. Makeup and the use of cosmetics may be seen as more of a feminine prerogative in some cultures, while being seen as unmanly in others. Because of this, men and women may make purchases for different reasons. Furthermore, cosmetics firms frequently target sales to women through campaigns that highlight the significance of beauty, self-care, and grooming. These tactics can persuade women to believe that cosmetics are marketed primarily to them, which in turn increases the likelihood that women will buy them. This interpretation is based on the data generated from the survey which indicates that the majority of respondents were females compared to the male. Gender roles and expectations shift over time, and people's particular preferences and lifestyles shape these shifts.

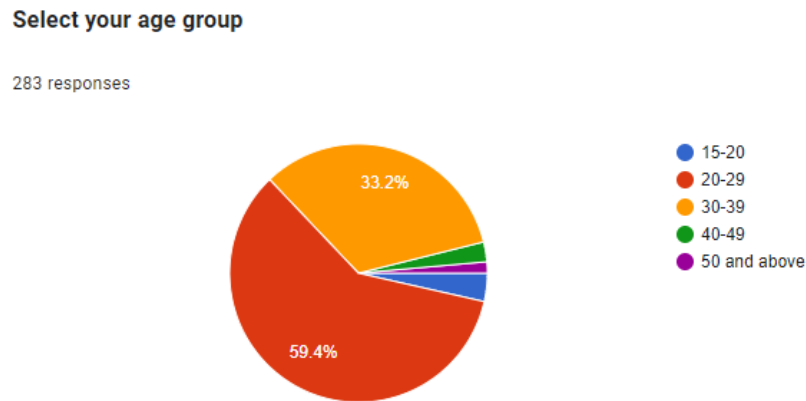


Figure 2: Age group of respondents (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

Age group	No.of Respondent	Percentage frequency
15-20	10	3.53%
20-29	168	59.36%
30-39	94	33.22%
40-49	7	2.47%
50 and above	4	1.41%
Grand Total	283	100.00%

Table 2 : Age of Respondents

- **Respondents Age group**

(Figure 2) and (table 2) indicate that a total of 283 respondents answered the question "select your age group," with the majority of respondents between the ages of 20-29 (168, or 59.36%), followed by the age group 30-39 (94, or 33.22%), the age group 15-20 (ten, or 3.53%), 40-49 years old (seven, or 2.47%), and 50 and older (four, or 1.47%). This survey reveals that the majority of respondents are between the ages of 20 and 29 (59.36%), 30-39 (33.22%), and 15 to 19 (3.53%). These age groups can be classified as Gen Z (1997-2012) and Millennials (1981-1996), respectively. According to studies, this age group is the most susceptible to social media influencer marketing because they are continually online, as compared to their Gen X and boomer counterparts (1965 – 1980 & 1955 – 1964). Due to

several factors, Generation Z and Millennials are more likely to be influenced by social media influencers. Generation Z and Millennials are considered "digital residents" because they grew up in the digital era. From a tender age, they have been exposed to social media and influencer content, which has normalized the concept of influencer marketing in their lives. In terms of influencers, younger generations value authenticity and relatability. Younger generations view social media influencers as companions rather than distant celebrities. Young people (Generation Z) who have grown up in a digital world with internet and social network calls, for instance, are "in pursuit of the truth." Through freedom of expression, they have a strong influence on other generations to create new trends and shape new forms of consumption (Tracy Francis, 2018). Millennials are information-hungry and information-dependent; they require constant updates on what is happening where and when, as they do not want to lose any opportunity or conversation. Gen Z and Millennials are more digitally savvy than Gen X and boomers because they grew up in a world where technology was readily available and an integral part of their daily existence from a young age. Consequently, Gen Z and Millennials have developed a high degree of digital literacy and are accustomed to using digital devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers from a young age. In addition, the Internet has affected their communication, socialization, and information-seeking behaviors. They are accustomed to using social media platforms and online communities for a variety of purposes, such as connecting with others, sharing content, and pursuing information. Communication, amusement, shopping, and other activities rely heavily on mobile applications. Additionally, they are more likely to employ emerging mobile technologies and applications.

What is your occupation ?

283 responses

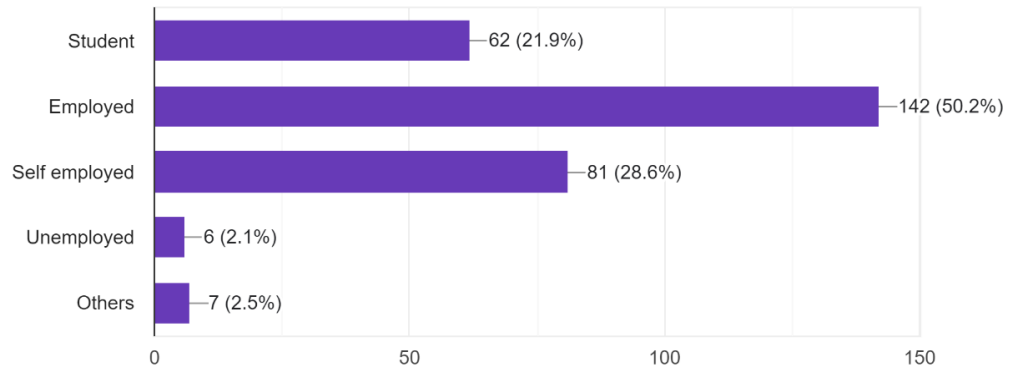


Figure 3: Occupation of respondents (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

- **Occupation of Respondents**

According to (figure 3), which breaks down the respondents answers to the question of “ what is your occupation? . As seen on the graph , the majority of the respondents 142 (50.2%) are employed with 81 (28.6%) as self employed, then 62 (21.9%) respondents who happen to be students. The lowest category are others 7 (2.5%) and unemployed 6 (2.1%) respectively. According to these findings, individuals who are employed, individuals who are self-employed, and students may be able to afford cosmetics products. This is due to the fact that individuals who are employed and individuals who are self-employed typically have a regular source of income that enables them to make discretionary purchases of cosmetics and other beautification products. In addition, students might have extra money in their pockets thanks to allowances from their parents, part-time employment, or other sources of income. It is possible that spending money on cosmetics and other forms of personal adornment, regardless of the individual's job situation, is a priority for them since it is a kind of self-care or self-expression.

5.1.2 Influence of Social Media on Consumers In Nigeria

Do you use social media platforms?

283 responses



Figure 4: Do you use social media platforms ? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

If Yes, which of this social media platforms are you most active? Select one.

283 responses

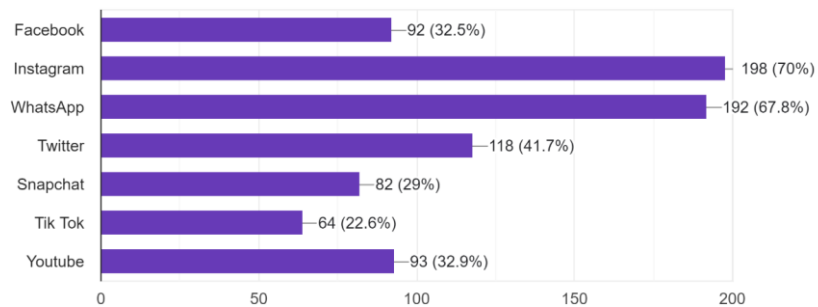


Figure 5: Which of this social media platforms are you most active? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

(Figure 5) , a pie chart illustrating the responses to the query "Do you use social media?", reveals that the vast majority of the 283 respondents confirmed their use of social media. In particular, 99.6% of respondents, or roughly 282 individuals, confirmed that they use social media. This high percentage suggests that the Nigerian consumers who participated in the survey or study have widely adopted social media. Social media has a significant impact on the Nigerian consumer base, as evidenced by the prevalence and influence of social media in their daily existence. Social media platforms presumably play a crucial role in

communication, information exchange, and consumer decision-making processes in Nigeria. This data demonstrates how influential social media has become in our daily lives. The ubiquitous availability of the internet has made it possible for individuals to communicate via social media, including email, Twitter, and Facebook, without the need for in-person meetings. This has been made possible through Web 2.0 applications. Web 2.0 has emerged to facilitate web users' interconnection and participation. Due to the proliferation of social media and online communities, individuals can communicate and access information with relative ease. Online communities and social networking sites (SNSs) are efficient web technologies for facilitating social interactions and information sharing. Today's consumers have access to numerous sources of information and experiences, made possible by the information and recommendations of other customers (Sylvain Senecal, 2004).

With the question in (figure 5) “ Which social media platform are you most active” the majority of the respondents 198(70%) chose Instagram as their most used app, followed by WhatsApp with 192 (67.8%), then 118 (41.7%) respondents choose twitter, 93 (32.9%) choose YouTube, 92(32.5%) chose Facebook, 82 (29%) chose Snapchat, 64 (22.6%) respondents chose Tik toks and we have a few others platforms like LinkedIn with (5) count, Telegram (2) count, Quora (1), Pinterest (1) count and Discord (1) count. It is no surprise that Instagram is the most popular app in Nigeria, as it was one of the earliest apps in the country. Instagram, which was founded in 2010 and has over a billion monthly active users, is a popular social media app known for its visually alluring content. Its user-friendly interface, social connectivity via likes, remarks, and direct messages, and Stories feature all encourage frequent sharing of genuine content. Influencer culture, diverse content catering to various interests, and a concentration on mobile usage all contribute to Instagram's popularity as a personalized and customized user experience. The reason for Instagram's popularity with the Nigerian audience is that it has evolved from an interactive space to one that is extensively utilized by Nigerian entrepreneurs to promote their goods and services. This is also true for WhatsApp, which is extensively used by Nigerian entrepreneurs for instant messaging, sending voice messages, creating groups, making payments, and sharing documents, among other features. These factors contribute to its widespread use as a messaging application. Other platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, and Tik Tok are also extensively used by Nigerian consumers for entertainment, information sharing, education, and e-commerce.

5.1.3 SMIs Impact on the consumer purchase decision of the cosmetics and beauty products

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
How often do you purchase cosmetics products based on recommendations from an influencer on social media?	16 5.65%	40 14.13%	105 37.10%	83 29.33%	39 13.78%	283 100.00%
How often do you come across social media influencers promoting beauty and cosmetic products?	86 30.50%	111 39.36%	71 25.18%	12 4.26%	2 0.71%	282 100.00%

Table 3: Impact of SMIs on consumers

	Not at all	Not really	Neutral	Somewhat	To a great extent
On a scale of 1-5, how much does social media influencer recommendation influence your purchasing decision	1	2	3	4	5

for beauty and cosmetics products?					
No.of Respondent	55	38	99	66	22
Percentage %	19.6%	13.6%	35.4%	23.6%	7.9%

Table 4: Impact of SMIs on consumers

As seen in (table 3), a few of the questions from the survey whose purpose was to investigate the impact of social media influencers on the purchase decision of cosmetics products by Nigerian consumers. The purpose of these questions was to measure the effectiveness of the influencers and to determine the frequency with which consumers encountered influencer content in their feeds. The following was the outcome: For the query, "How frequently do you purchase cosmetics based on social media influencer recommendations?" Most respondents, 105 (37.10%), selected "Sometimes", followed by "Rarely" from 83 (29.33%) respondents, "Often" from 40 (14.13%), "Never" from 39 (13.78%), and "Always" from 16 (5.65%) respondents. This data indicates that the majority of respondents selected "." This indicates that consumers occasionally purchase cosmetics based on the recommendations of influencers. It implies a moderate frequency, suggesting that consumers only occasionally rely on influencer recommendations, which nonetheless demonstrates the influencers' considerable influence. The term "Rarely" signifies that other consumers rarely purchase cosmetics based on the recommendations of influencers. It suggests that they rarely rely on influencer recommendations when purchasing cosmetics, indicating that this is a rare occurrence. The respondents then selected "Often," indicating that consumers purchase cosmetics based on the recommendations of influencers frequently, but not always. This was followed by "Never," indicating that this group of consumers never purchases cosmetics based on recommendations from influencers. When purchasing cosmetics, it implies a complete absence of reliance on influencer recommendations. Another group of consumers indicates that they "Always" purchase cosmetics based on influencer recommendations every time or nearly every time they have the opportunity. It implies a high degree of frequency or consistency. Using the responses from "Sometimes," "Often," and "Always," we find that many consumers (161) fell into this category, as opposed to their counterparts who selected "Rarely" and "Never" with (122 respondents). This demonstrates that, with the

exception of a few respondents who are not significantly impacted by social media influencers, the majority are partially impacted.

To answer the question on “How often do you come across social media influencers promoting beauty and cosmetic products?”. Most of the respondents 111 (39.36%) agreed that they “Often” come across SMI’s promoting beauty and cosmetics products while 86 (30.50%) of respondents agreed that they “Always” see social media influencers promoting beauty and cosmetic products, while 71 (25.18%) respondents said they “Sometimes” see this post. The remaining 12 (4.26%) respondent agreed to seeing influencers content “Rarely” while the least respondents 2 (0.71%) said they “Never” see these contents. For a consumer to see a particular reoccurring post on their feed means they’ve been searching for this content, this proves that the majority of the respondents are somewhat familiar with social media influencers advertising cosmetics products. The prevalence of this proves that cosmetics and beauty contents are prevalent in the online platforms.

The question "On a scale of 1-5, how much does social media influencer recommendation influence your purchasing decision for beauty and cosmetics products?" used in (Table 4) is an attempt to quantify the extent to which recommendations from social media influencers sway consumers to make purchases. Most respondents (99, 35.4%) selected "Neutral" as their response. Neutral in this context indicates that respondents are uncertain about the impact of SMI's recommendation on their cosmetics purchase decision. In this instance, they deny that SMIs have no effect and are not precisely accepting. The following response was "Somewhat," selected by 66 respondents (23.6%). This response indicates that SMI's recommendation has some influence on the respondent's purchase decision, but this influence is not fully acknowledged. Then, approximately 55 respondents (19.6%) selected "Not at all," indicating that SMI's recommendations have no impact on their purchasing decisions. Following this, 38 (13.6%) respondents selected "Not really," indicating that SMIs have little to no effect on their purchasing decisions. Finally, 22 respondents (7.9%) acknowledged that the influencers' recommendations have a significant impact on them by selecting the option "To a great extent. " I believe it is fair to conclude, based on the data, that the majority of consumers have been influenced by SMI's recommendation, despite a few respondents' reservations.

According to research conducted by (Bazaarvoice, 2019) prominent platform for consumer-generated content and influencer marketing, discovered that 47% of global consumers had made a purchase based on an influencer recommendation. According to a separate study conducted by Influencer Marketing Hub, 80% of consumers have made a purchase based on the recommendation of a social media influencer they follow. Influencers on social media are renowned for their ability to establish trust and credibility with their followers, often because of their expertise in a particular niche, relatability, and authenticity. Influencers frequently publish product evaluations, endorsements, and testimonials, which can sway consumers' purchasing decisions. Their content frequently includes visual demonstrations, testimonials, and personal anecdotes, which lends credibility to their recommendations.

5.1.4 Various Types of social Media Influencer

Do you feel influenced by the number of followers and engagement of the social media influencer when deciding whether to purchase a beauty or cosmetic product?

281 responses

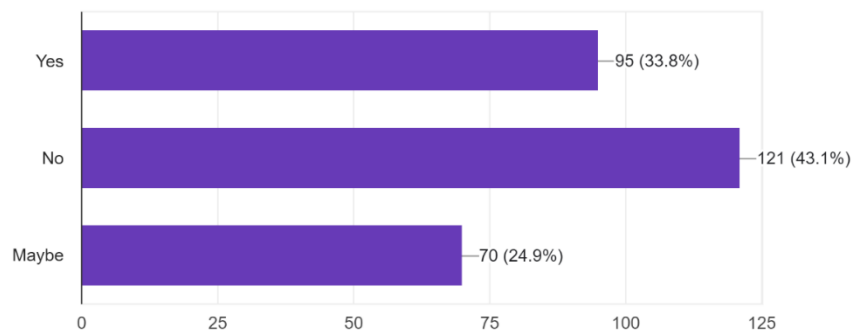


Figure 6: Do you feel influenced by the number of followers and engagement of the social media influencer when deciding whether to purchase a beauty or cosmetic product? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

The query “Do you feel influenced by the number of followers and engagement of the social media influencer when deciding whether to purchase a beauty or cosmetic product? Examines whether consumers decide to purchase a product based on the engagement of influencers. This is an essential question because there are various types of social media influencers based on the number of followers they have and the amount of engagement their posts receive. Some consumers decide to purchase a product based on this criterion because

they believe it must be credible to command such a large audience. These various types of influencers are Nano Influencers: These niche influencers have a tiny but highly engaged following and are noted for their honesty, relatability, and knowledge. Micro Influencers: These influencers have 10,000–100,000 followers and are noted for their authenticity and ability to connect with their audience. Macro Influencers: These influencers have millions of followers and a wider reach than micro influencers. Brand endorsements and sponsored content are possible. Celebrity Influencers: Famous people in entertainment, sports, or other sectors have a large following and influence and a bunch of others. According to the results 121 (43.1%) of respondents admitted to not being influenced by the number of followers and engagement of the social media influencer when deciding whether to purchase a beauty or cosmetic product, while 95(33.8%) of respondents admitted to be influenced and 70 (24.9%) of respondents chose the option “Maybe” which means they are unsure of not being influenced by the number of followers and engagement of the social media influencer when making a purchase. According to a study conducted by Bazaarvoice , reveals 47% of U.S. consumers trust social media influencers for beauty product recommendations, 47% of U.S. consumers are more likely to trust beauty or cosmetic product recommendations from social media influencers with a large following and high engagement rates on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. This suggests that the number of followers and activity of influencers can affect how consumers perceive product recommendations. In addition, research published in the (Journal of Global Fashion Marketing) revealed that the popularity and engagement of social media influencers considerably influenced consumers' intentions to purchase beauty and cosmetic products. The study found that consumers viewed products recommended by prominent influencers with high follower counts and engagement rates as more trustworthy and reliable, resulting in increased purchase intent (Shin, 2018).

5.1.5 The Credibility Study of SMIs

Are you more likely to purchase a product if it is recommended by an influencer you trust and follow?

279 responses

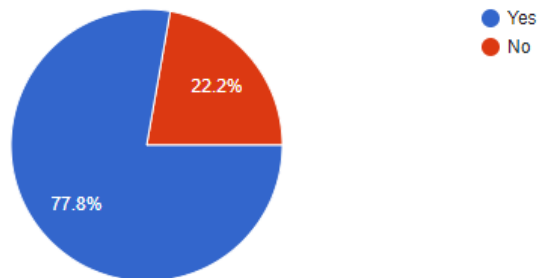


Figure 7 : Are you more likely to purchase a product if it is recommended by an influencer you trust and follow? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

Have you ever been disappointed in a beauty or cosmetic product that was recommended by a social media influencer?

279 responses

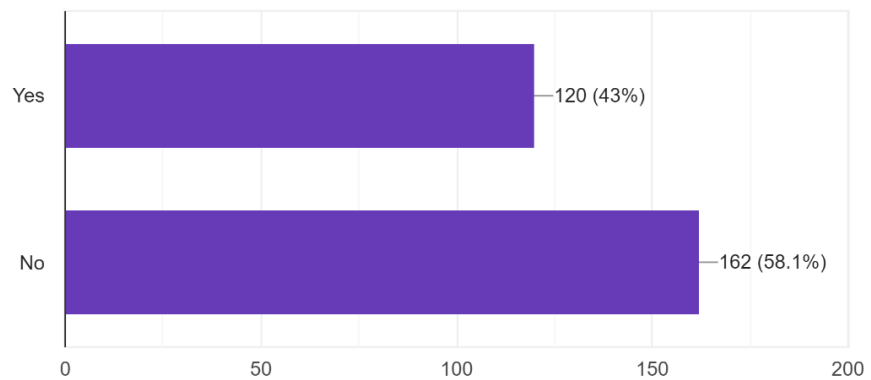


Figure 8: Have you ever been disappointed in a beauty or cosmetic product that was recommended by a social media influencer? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

This aspect of this analysis tries to explore the issue of trust and credibility of the SMIs in Nigeria. The credibility of social media influencers has been questioned in several studies and articles. For instance, a study published in the Journal of Advertising Research found that social media influencers frequently engage in product-related covert advertising, in which they do not clearly disclose their relationships with brands, leading to potential issues with transparency and trustworthiness (Choi, 2009). Influencers on social media may not be

as real or trustworthy as they make it seem because of the way they promote themselves online. The reliability and integrity of social media influencers have been under scrutiny in recent years due to a number of high-profile examples involving phony endorsements, misleading information, and unethical practices.

As shown in (Figure 7), the majority of respondents, representing 77.8% of the total sample, indicated a favorable disposition toward purchasing a product from an influencer they trust and follow. This indicates that influencer recommendations have a significant impact on the purchasing decisions of the surveyed population, and that the vast majority of respondents have a positive attitude toward influencer marketing if the source is credible and trustworthy. The comparatively small percentage of respondents, 22.2% of the sample, who selected "No" suggests that there are some individuals who are not influenced by the recommendations of influencers when making purchase decisions. This minority response indicates that influencer marketing may not be equally effective for all consumers in this specific context, and that other factors may play a larger role in their purchasing decisions.

The purpose of the question on (figure 8), "Have you ever been disappointed by a beauty or cosmetic product recommended by a social media influencer? ", is to investigate the respondents' experience with influencer product recommendation, which ultimately boils down to the issue of trust and credibility of influencers. Most respondents, 162 or (58.1%) of the total, chose the response "No" to indicate that they have not been disappointed by a cosmetics or cosmetic product recommended by a social media influencer. In contrast, 120 respondents, or (43%) of the total, selected the "Yes" option, indicating that they have been dissatisfied with a cosmetics or cosmetic product recommended by a social media influencer. According to the data, the majority of respondents have had positive experiences with the products they purchased through influencers, while the minority have had negative experiences. Numerous respondents will encounter varying results, so this result was anticipated. In general, SMIs must make endeavors to be honest and genuine when recommending their products to the consumers.

On a scale of 1-5 rate the credibility of social media influencers on the marketing of cosmetics and beauty products in Nigeria?
280 responses

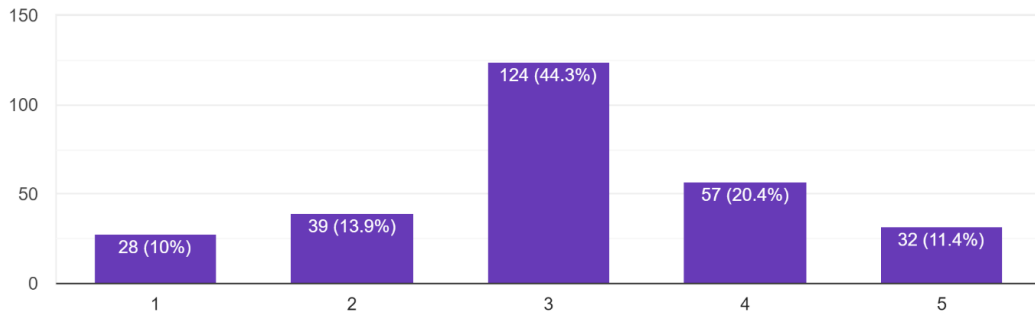


Figure 9 : On a scale of 1-5 rate the credibility of social media influencers on the marketing of cosmetics and beauty products in Nigeria? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

The question on(figure 9) “On a scale of 1-5 rate the credibility of social media influencers on the marketing of cosmetics and beauty products in Nigeria?”, is intended to investigate the perceived credibility of social media influencers in Nigeria regarding the marketing of cosmetics and beauty products. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the least credible (low credibility), 2 (Not really credible), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Somewhat credible) and 5 being (High credibility). 124 (44.3%) of 280 respondents selected option 3 (Neutral), indicating that they are unsure of the credibility of the Nigerian influencer. The fact that 57 respondents (20.4%) selected option 4 (somewhat credible) indicates that respondents acknowledge that these influencers are credible, but not entirely so. Then, 39 (13.9%) respondents selected option 2 (Not really credible), indicating that the influencers are not authentic, but with some uncertainty. Then, 32 (11.4%) respondents selected option 5 (High credibility), confessing that Nigerian influencers are credible in their cosmetics product marketing. Lastly, 28 (10%) consumers selected option 1, indicating that these respondents do not believe Nigerian influencers to be credible.

On a scale of 1-5, how important is it for a social media influencer to use the beauty and cosmetic products they promote in their own personal lives?

281 responses

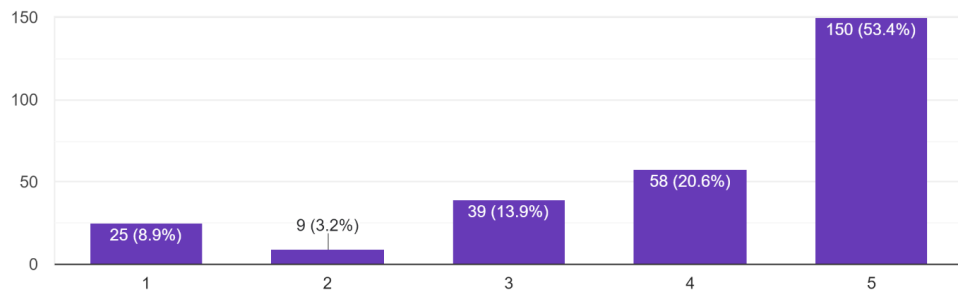


Figure : 10 On a scale of 1-5, how important is it for a social media influencer to use the beauty and cosmetic products they promote in their own personal lives? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

The purpose of the question in (figure 10) is to examine the perceived importance of social media influencers using the beauty and cosmetic products they promote in their personal lives, as rated on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being (Not Important at All), 2 being (Not Really Important), 3 being (Neutral), and 4 being (Somewhat Important) and 5 (Absolutely essential). It is generally believed that social media influencers, particularly those who endorse beauty and cosmetics products, should use the products they promote in their personal lives. This is because it adds authenticity and credibility to their endorsements, thereby increasing the likelihood that their followers will trust them. Influencers who authentically use and incorporate the products into their daily lives are more relatable and appealing to the audience. Furthermore, promoting products that influencers do not personally use may raise ethical concerns, as it may be perceived as deceptive or dishonest. Using the products promoted by influencers who adhere to the principles of transparency and honesty in influencer marketing is consistent with these principles. Although regulations and guidelines for influencers may vary, using the products personally can help influencers establish trust, authenticity, and credibility with their audience, thereby enhancing their brand partnerships and long-term influencer success. According to the results of the survey, the majority of respondents 150 (53.4%) chose option 5 (Absolutely essential), indicating that it is essential for influencers to use the products they promote, whereas the remaining respondents 58(20.6%) chose option 4 (Somewhat Important), indicating that respondents

acknowledge that these influencers should use this product but are uncertain about it. Then there are 39 (13.9%) respondents who selected option 3 (Neutral), 25 (8.9%) respondents who selected option 1 (Not at All Important), and 9 (3.2%) respondents who selected option 2. (Not Really Important). The majority of respondents concur, based on the analysis, that it is crucial for influencers to use the products they promote.

On a scale of 1-5, how likely are you to recommend beauty or cosmetic products promoted by social media influencers to others?
279 responses

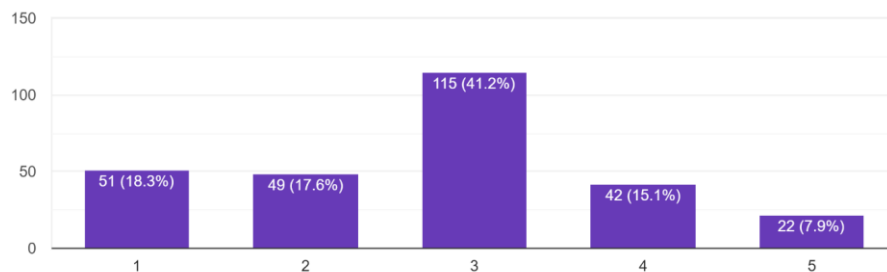


Figure 11 : On a scale of 1-5, how likely are you to recommend beauty or cosmetic products promoted by social media influencers to others? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

In addition to the preceding paragraphs, respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 the likelihood that they would recommend cosmetic products promoted by social media influencers to others (figure 11) . This question was designed to assess respondents' level of trust in influencers and whether they would feel comfortable recommending such products to family and acquaintances. According to the research, 115 respondents (41.2% of the total) selected option 3 (Neutral), indicating that they were undecided about recommending these products to acquaintances. This indicates that a sizeable proportion of respondents were uncertain regarding the credibility of influencers and their products. In addition, 51 respondents (18.3%) selected option 1 (Extremely unlikely), indicating that they would never recommend a product from an influencer to their family or acquaintances. This indicates a lack of confidence in products promoted by influencers among this group of respondents. Another group of respondents, 49 (17.6%), selected option 2 (Unlikely), indicating that they were not likely to endorse products promoted by influencers. In addition,

42 (15.1%) of respondents selected option 4 (Likely), indicating a propensity to recommend such products to others. A significant proportion of respondents are unsure or skeptical about recommending influencer-promoted products to their social circle, indicating that the level of trust and credibility associated with social media influencers is variable among respondents.

5.1.6 The Impact of SMIs on the Consumers and The Cosmetics Industry

What impact would you say social media influencer marketing as had on the beauty and cosmetic industry in Nigeria ?
272 responses

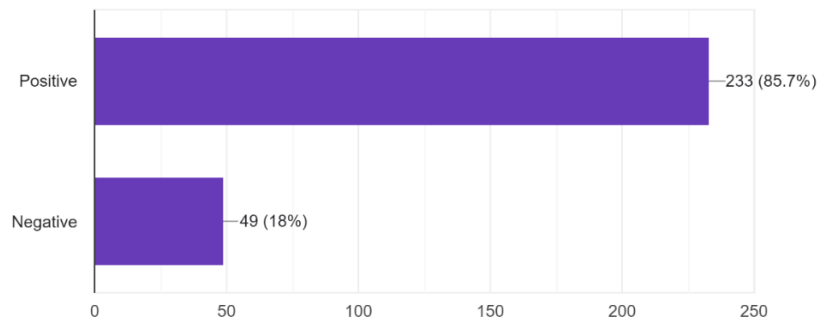


Figure 12 : What impact would you say social media influencer marketing as had on the beauty and cosmetic industry in Nigeria ? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

Do you think social media influencer marketing has contributed to an increase in consumer spending in the beauty and cosmetic industry?
281 responses

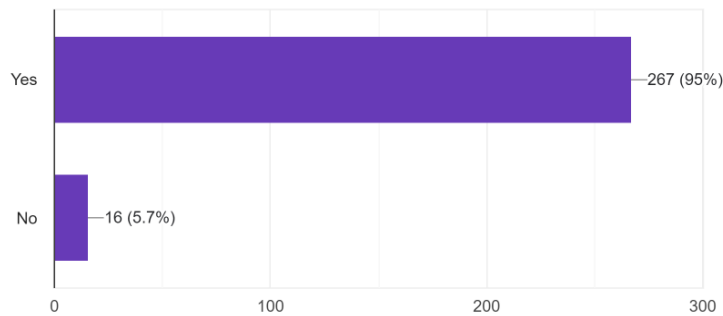


Figure 13 : Do you think social media influencer marketing has contributed to an increase in consumer spending in the beauty and cosmetic industry? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

This section aims to explore the Impact of SMI marketing in the cosmetics and beauty industry in Nigeria, with the question “Do you think social media influencer marketing has contributed to an increase in consumer spending in the beauty and cosmetic industry?”. According to (figure 13), we can see that 267 (95%) of consumers agreed that social media influencer marketing has contributed to an increase in consumer spending in the beauty and cosmetic industry, while a very low percentage of respondents 16 (5.7%) disagreed with this. There was a follow up question, that encourage respondents to state their reasons why they think influencer marketing as has contributed to an increase in consumer spending in the beauty and cosmetic industry. We had 133 responses and majority of the respondents stated that “The impact of an influencer on consumer purchasing behavior is proportional to the influencer's popularity and degree of engagement, as people tend to see the effect of a cosmetic on this influencers and opt for that brand. Simply by advertising the product, they subliminally impose their recommendations, causing customers to purchase. Many individuals are more likely to purchase a product, particularly cosmetics, after reading a review of it. When there is a visual example of how the product appears on the skin, it is simpler to persuade someone to purchase, thereby increasing sales for cosmetics brands that utilize social media influencers.”

The majority of respondents, approximately 85.7% or 233 individuals, concurred that social media influencer marketing has had a positive impact on the Nigerian beauty and cosmetics industry (figure 12). This indicates that the promotion of cosmetics and cosmetic products by influencers on social media platforms has effectively influenced consumer behavior and increased sales in the Nigerian market. In contrast, a smaller proportion of respondents, approximately 18% or 49 individuals, selected "Negative" when asked about the impact of social media influencer marketing on the Nigerian beauty and cosmetics industry. This suggests that a portion of respondents hold a negative view of the effects of influencer marketing in the beauty and cosmetics industry, possibly due to concerns regarding authenticity, transparency, or other ethical considerations associated with influencer endorsements. (SMI) marketing has had a significant effect on the cosmetics and beauty sector in Nigeria. It has enabled targeted marketing to specific demographics, encouraged

user-generated content, and intensified competition and innovation among brands. It has increased brand awareness because of influencers promoting products on social media. It has boosted product promotion and sales through influencer endorsements. Because of the intense competition in the beauty and cosmetics business in Nigeria, social media marketing (SMI) has evolved into an essential tactic for companies that want to connect with their target market and boost revenue.

What impact would you say social media influencer marketing as had on you as a consumer ?
265 responses

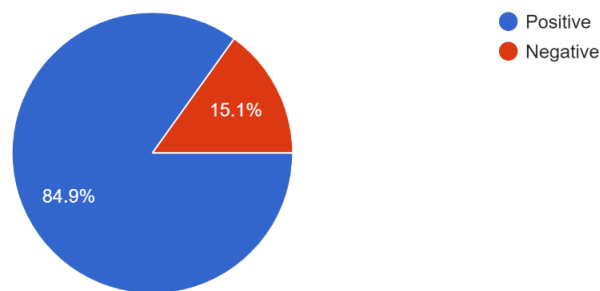


Figure 14: What impact would you say social media influencer marketing as had on you as a consumer ?
(Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

This section tries to examine if the impact of social media influencer marketing on the Nigerian consumer is positive or negative. The majority of the respondents about (84.9%), admitted that their experiences with social media influencer marketing as been positive, while a low percentage (15.1%) of consumers said their experience was negative. A follow up statement to this question asked the consumers to state their reasons. The majority of the consumers who said the impact was positive said “Sometimes, social media marketing by influencers brings a product closer to the consumer and provides instructions on how to use it. I have faith in the influencers I follow, and they are able to persuade me to a great extent. For a beginner, having access to more information from other people (influencers) who have experience with excellent beauty and cosmetic products is free information”.

For the respondents who said the impact of influencers are negative, they had this to say “Nigerian social media heavily promote bleaching products, forgetting that it is acceptable

to have dark skin. In addition, not all these influencers use these products, and they are primarily motivated by money and have little regard for consumers”. Based on this result, we can conclude that the impact of influencers on Nigerian consumers is overwhelmingly positive.

5.1.7 Social Media Influencers Vs Traditional Media

Whose recommendations, when it comes to purchasing beauty and cosmetic products are you likely to trust?

267 responses

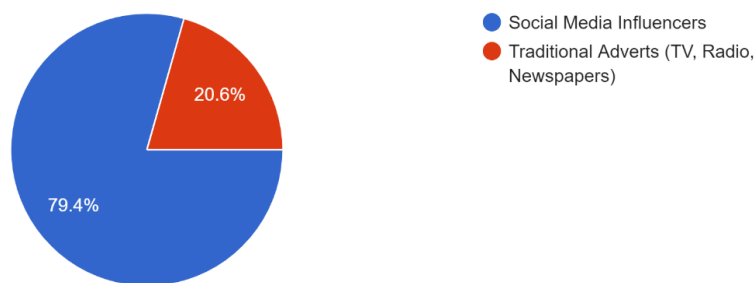


Figure 15: Whose recommendations, when it comes to purchasing beauty and cosmetic products are you likely to trust? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

This section investigates the advertising platforms with which Nigerian consumers are most familiar. The majority of consumers, approximately 79.4%, selected social media influencers as their preferred advertising medium, compared to the 20.6% of respondents who chose traditional advertisements (Tv, Radio, Newspaper etc.). There are a number of factors why consumers may favor social media influencers as their preferred advertising medium over traditional advertisements such as television, radio, and newspapers. These factors include the perception that social media influencers are more authentic and relatable than traditional advertisements, which are viewed as more scripted and impersonal (Miyazaki, 2009). In addition, social media influencers produce engaging and interactive content that encourages consumer participation in advertising. Influencers may conduct polls, request feedback, or encourage comments and shares, which can generate higher levels of consumer engagement than traditional advertisements, which are typically passive forms of communication (Phua, 2018). Lastly influencers have a specialization and target audience, making advertising more targeted. This increases relevance and resonance with

consumers who are truly interested in the influencer's specialty. Traditional ads are more generalized and reach a wider audience, which may not appeal to consumers seeking tailored and relevant material.

5.1.8 The Future of Social Media Influencer Marketing

Would you continue purchasing beauty or cosmetic products promoted by social media influencers in the future?
275 responses

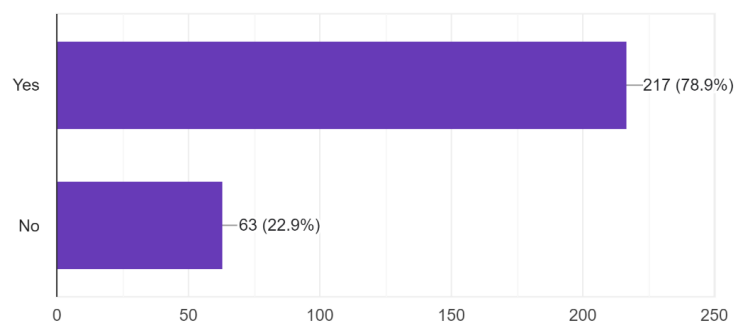


Figure 16: Would you continue purchasing beauty or cosmetic products promoted by social media influencers in the future? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

Do you think social media influencer marketing will continue to be a dominant force in the beauty and cosmetic industry in the future?
276 responses

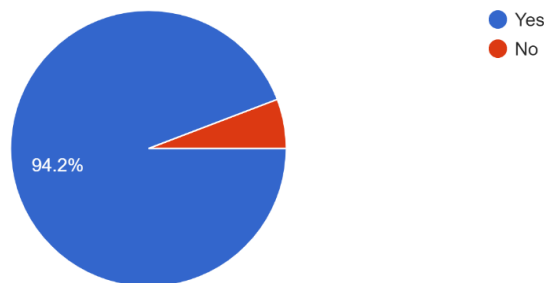


Figure 17: Do you think social media influencer marketing will continue to be a dominant force in the beauty and cosmetic industry in the future? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)

This section of the thesis explores the future of social media influencers in an effort to conclude the survey. To determine whether it will continue to be a prominent marketing strategy in the foreseeable future. The question “Would you continue to buy cosmetic products promoted by social media influencers in the future?”, was asked in (figure 16). The majority of respondents, approximately 217 (78.9%), responded affirmatively with "Yes" when asked if they would continue to purchase beauty or cosmetic products promoted by social media influencers in the future, while approximately 63 (22.9%) said "No". This favorable response from consumers is due to their positive experiences with influencers such as relatability, trustworthiness, etc. Despite the shortcomings of social media influencer marketing highlighted by a few respondents, the positive responses to SMIs outweigh the negative opinions.

(Figure 17) explored the future of social media influencer marketing by asking respondents, "Do you believe that social media influencer marketing will continue to be a dominant force in the cosmetics and cosmetic industry in the future?" 94.2% of respondents answered "Yes," while 5.8% responded "No." In a follow-up statement to this query, consumers were asked to provide their reasons. The consumers that chose the answer “Yes” had this to say “The world is transforming into a global village, with technology becoming the primary anchor. People believe in the value of followership, so influencer marketing will persist. The days of viewing billboards are over, and people don't go out as much as they used to; everything is now online, so businesses must establish an online presence. Utilizing highly recognizable entities to promote products is the most effective method. Additionally, more people are exposed to social media, and it is easier to purchase online, particularly with positive recommendations and comments. As social media usage continues to increase, companies will recognize the need for internal marketing by a member of the target audience, and social media will remain a part of our daily lives due to technological advancements”.

The consumers that chose the option “No” had this to say “They mostly promote bad products and may disappoint you”. In conclusion, it is anticipated that the field of social media influencer marketing will continue its rapid expansion and development in the years to come, with an increasing emphasis on authenticity, measurement, and specialized collaborations. There is a possibility that influencers and marketers may investigate new

platforms, content formats, and ethical issues, which will result in influencer partnerships that are more diverse and specialized.

5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

As highlighted in the methodology chapter, the purpose of this section is to review, interpret, and make sense of data that is in the form of non-numeric or qualitative information. It involves the identification, organization, and analysis of patterns, themes, and relationships within the data to derive meaningful insights and understanding. This includes data such as interview transcripts, field notes, audio or video recordings, and written or visual materials.

For the purpose of the research topic a semi structured interview was conducted on 25 respondents to get more relevant insights on the topic. These respondents were chosen using the “ **The purposeful sampling method**” . This method is a common technique used in qualitative research to select participants who are likely to provide rich and diverse data that is relevant to the research question. The notion of theoretical saturation was widely employed in this qualitative research to identify when data collection can cease since sufficient knowledge has been acquired to study and comprehend a research topic in depth. Theoretical saturation is attained when new data no longer yields new insights or perspectives on the research subject or topic. Using Semi-structured interview style, we were able to extract a few information on the topic that we believe would be valuable to the topic. The respondents were named and given numbers, to enable easy identification.

5.2.1 Respondents Data

Table 5: Respondents Data

Date	No. of Respondents	Gender	Age group	Occupation	Interview channel
18/03/2023	Respondent 1	Female	20-29	Model	WhatsApp audio call
18/03/2023	Respondent 2	Female	20-29	Self employed	WhatsApp audio call
18/03/2023	Respondent 3	Male	30-39	UI / UX designer	WhatsApp audio call
19/03/2023	Respondent 4	Female	30-39	Accountant	MS Teams video
17/03/2023	Respondent 5	Male	30-39	Master student	MS Teams video
17/03/2023	Respondent 6	Male	30-39	Self employed	WhatsApp audio
18/03/2023	Respondent 7	Male	20-29	Master student	MS Teams video
18/03/2023	Respondent 8	Female	20-29	Entrepreneur	Snapchat audio
18/03/2023	Respondent 9	Female	20-29	Entrepreneur	Snapchat audio
18/03/2023	Respondent 10	Female	20-29	Entrepreneur	Snapchat audio
17/03/2023	Respondent 11	Female	20-29	Project developer	WhatsApp audio call
19/03/2023	Respondent 12	Male	30-39	Entrepreneur	WhatsApp audio call
18/03/2023	Respondent 13	Female	20-29	Employed	WhatsApp audio call
17/03/2023	Respondent 14	Male	30-39	Chef	WhatsApp audio call
18/03/2023	Respondent 15	Male	20-29	Customer service ASST	MS Teams video
19/03/2023	Respondent 16	Female	20-29	Master student	WhatsApp audio call
19/03/2023	Respondent 17	Male	20-29	Master student	WhatsApp audio call
19/03/2023	Respondent 18	Male	30-39	Master student	MS Teams video call
19/03/2023	Respondent 19	Male	30-39	Civil Servant	WhatsApp audio
20/03/2023	Respondent 20	Female	20-29	Entrepreneur	WhatsApp audio call
20/03/2023	Respondent 21	Female	20-29	Entrepreneur	WhatsApp audio call
20/03/2023	Respondent 22	Female	20-29	Entrepreneur	WhatsApp audio call
22/03/2023	Respondent 23	Female	20-29	Radio presenter	WhatsApp audio call
27/03/2023	Respondent 24	Female	30-39	Social media Influencer	Instagram audio call
21/03/2023	Respondent 25	Female	20-29	Entrepreneur	WhatsApp audio call

5.2.2 Qualitative Questions and Feedback from Respondents

- **Q1: What are your perspectives on the social media influencer marketing of cosmetics and beauty products in Nigeria, as well as the credibility of the influencers?**

Respondents (1, 3, 8, 13, 23, 20, 21, 24) had similar thoughts on social media influencers in Nigeria which mostly centers on the idea of the lack of authenticity of the influencers. They argue that the influencers are not genuine with these cosmetics products they advertise and that they barely use these products. They believe majority of the Nigerian SMIs do not use the products they advertise, and this should be paramount to them. They also emphasized on the saturation of the market with influencers which makes it harder to tell who is genuine amongst these influencers. Respondents 24 also highlighted “companies’ higher influencers for different purposes and products but in Nigeria it is not so “she emphasized on the need to use these influencers based on their expertise and area of knowledge, but unfortunately this is not the case for Nigerian brands, they often use the same influencers for different products, not considering their area of expertise. A few other respondents like respondents (11) said “they are initially credible in the beginning, when they initially venture into this field but as time goes on, they lose their credibility, perhaps based on greed and lust for money and fame”. Respondent (2), emphasized on the fact that she believes influencers in Nigeria are doing a great job because of “their unconventional marketing strategy of cosmetics products and services”. A few other respondents like respondents (14 & 21) said “they have a great impact, some people see them as role models, I have had positive experiences and read positive feedbacks on them”. Lastly respondent (22) had this to say, “influencers are improving profit and sales for businesses, because of the visual representation of this product they advertise, people can see these products come to life and that improves the overall strategy and therefore increases sales”.

- **Q2: What is your opinion of the Nigerian cosmetics and beauty industry? What do you believe should be improved in this industry?**

A few Respondents (14, 7, 16, & 12) had positive reviews and experiences with the Nigerian cosmetics industry. They all have purchased made in Nigerian products like skincare, makeup products, hair care etc. They emphasized the natural ingredients being utilized by these businesses to produce these products. Respondent (12) said “Nigerian products are very authentic and indigenous, I prefer it to foreign brands because these ingredients are naturally sourced, because they are made with herbal products, they can also be therapeutic”. Some argued that these foreign brands do not understand our skin type therefore allowing

their products to be ineffective when applied to the skin. Some other respondents said they would rather choose foreign brands over the Indigenous brand. Other respondents such as respondents (1 & 2) emphasized on the bleaching agents included in some of these cosmetics products, especially in the area of skincare. These respondents believe that because of the high rate of consumers in Nigeria who are willing to bleach their skin, it allows for these skincare brands to create a market for these products, which should not be so. These respondents believe that these brands should invest more in producing natural products with native ingredients. Respondent (13) said “the skin is the largest organ of the body, the businesses should be very particular on the ingredients used in these skincare products, they should pay attention to the health implications of using unsafe ingredients”). Respondent (10) also mentioned “I never purchase any made in Nigerian cosmetics products because I have a sensitive skin and I do not trust the process of production”. A few other respondents also had interesting things to say as regards what can be done to improve the cosmetics industry in Nigeria, in other for these brands to have a competitive advantage against foreign brands. Respondents (1, 2, 3, 5, 6 & 8), believes that the cosmetics and beauty sector in Nigeria needs to invest heavily into research and development, to research various skin types, in other to be able to meet the demands of consumers. Respondents (20 & 21) said ‘I believe these Nigerian brands needs to create a solid research team; these team can be in charge of generating feedback from consumers in the form of “social listening”. With this feedback they can further improve on these products and services”. Other interesting feedback came from respondents (5,6, 14, 12), they emphasized on products packaging as having a positive impact on the consumer purchasing decision. They insist that the Nigerian brands need to step up on the packaging and presentation of the products in other to someday have a competitive advantage against foreign brands and to generally increase sales and reach. Respondents (24) touched on the issue of dishonesty with some of these cosmetics brands because according to her, some of these brands do not include their ingredient list on their products, making it difficult to detect what ingredients is contained in these products. Some consumers react to certain types of products, thereby including a comprehensive products list of ingredients should be of utmost priority. Respondents (3 & 5), spoke about the importance of thorough regulation of cosmetics body by the “Nigerian National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Regulation” (NAFDAC). NAFDAC, a federal agency under the Nigerian Ministry of Health, regulates, controls, and supervises the manufacture, importation, exportation, advertisement, distribution, sale, and use of cosmetics, food,

pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, and other regulated products. These respondents argue that some brands are not registered under the supervision of (NAFDAC), they say that these brands should be investigated and arrested in order to curb the importation and production of fake cosmetics products in Nigeria.

Lastly, respondent (22), highlighted the fact that the Nigerian cosmetics brands are heavily bent on marketing via social media influencers alone, whereas they are also neglecting the influence of traditional media like billboards, which are not so common in recent times.

- **Q3: What is the future of SMI marketing in comparison to traditional media, in your opinion? and what aspects of SMI marketing in Nigeria need to be improved.**

The respondents all agreed that social media influencer marketing future growth prospects are favorable. SMI marketing is perceived as a more effective and prospective avenue for businesses and brands than traditional advertising channels, which have struggled to keep up with the rapid pace of digitization in recent times.. Social media platforms have become an integral part of people's daily existence, with billions of users globally. This vast user base provides businesses with a significant opportunity to communicate with their target audience and promote their products or services through influential personalities with a large social media following. In addition, respondents noted that social media influencer marketing enables more targeted and customized advertising than traditional media. Influencers are able to create content that aligns with the interests and preferences of their followers, resulting in more genuine and engaging promotional messages. It has been determined that this personalized approach is more effective at influencing consumer behavior and generating sales. In addition, respondents acknowledged that social media influencer marketing provides improved measurement and analytics tools that provide businesses with valuable insights into the performance of their campaigns. In contrast to traditional mediums, which frequently lack precise data on reach, engagement, and conversion rates, social media influencer marketing enables real-time monitoring of campaign performance, enabling businesses to optimize their strategies for improved results. A few respondents like respondents (6) said "the massive growth of SMI in the future will also with huge taxing system to moderate this strategy to be more effective and regulated in the future". Also respondent (6 & 23) believe that both mediums are valuable for different

target audience and regardless of the growth of SMI marketing, the traditional media sphere will also remain relevant in years to come”. Respondent (19) said “ I would rather purchase any product through the traditional medium, I do not want to be misled by social media influencers”. As regards room for improvement for the SMIs, majority of the respondents touched on the area of lack of credibility of the Nigerian influencers. They emphasize that these influencer often come of as inauthentic while marketing these cosmetics products . Hence they need to be more authentic with their delivery . According to Respondent (20) , they need to work more on improving the quality of their content and delivery, they need to be more creative with their marketing approach “.

III. PROJECT

6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND PROJECT PROPOSAL

This chapter's objective is to discuss the main findings of this study and to propose a project that could have a significant impact on SMIs, Nigerian consumers, and businesses. Researchers and academics in the fields of marketing, consumer behavior, and social media can use this study as a reference for their own research or as a starting point for additional research. Other sections of this chapter describe the limitations of the study and offer suggestions for future research on the topic.

6.1 Quantitative Research Methods

This research, which primary objective was to collect numerical data, was divided into several important research areas related to the topic to facilitate interpretation of the research results. On the premise of this research area, this study's findings will be discussed.

- **Influence of social media on consumers in Nigeria**

This area of the research investigated the impact of social media on Nigerian consumers. A large percentage of respondents (99.5%) confirmed their use of social media, indicating that social media has a substantial impact on Nigerian consumers. The most popular social media platform among Nigerian respondents is Instagram, followed by WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, and TikTok. Instagram and WhatsApp are popular among Nigerian entrepreneurs due to their social connectivity and features that appeal to a wide range of interests; they are also widely used for business purposes. Other social media platforms are also extensively utilized for entertainment, information exchange, education, and e-commerce by Nigerian consumers. Overall, Nigerian consumers have widely adopted social media, which has become a prominent instrument for communication, business, and entertainment.

- **Social Media Influencers Impact on the Consumers Purchase Decision of Cosmetics products in Nigeria**

The findings of this study indicate that social media influencers have a moderate to substantial effect on the purchasing decisions of Nigerian consumers. A small percentage of respondents indicated they always or never purchase cosmetics based on influencer recommendations. The majority of respondents indicated they occasionally purchase

cosmetics based on influencer recommendations. A significant proportion of respondents reported frequently or always encountering influencer-promoted cosmetics and cosmetic products on social media. When questioned about the impact of influencer recommendations on their purchasing decisions, the majority of respondents indicated ambiguity by selecting a neutral response. Nonetheless, a significant proportion of respondents acknowledged some degree of influence, while a minority reported a substantial degree of influence or no effect. These results indicate that social media influencers play a significant role in influencing the purchasing decisions of Nigerian consumers for cosmetics and beauty products, although the degree of influence reported by respondents varies.

- **Various Types of Social Media Influencers**

This section of the study aimed to determine whether Nigerian consumers purchase cosmetics from social media influencers based on their engagement and number of followers. The popularity and engagement of social media influencers significantly influenced consumers' intentions to purchase beauty and cosmetic products, as products recommended by influential influencers with high follower counts and engagement rates were perceived as more trustworthy and reliable. The majority of Nigerian respondents (43.1%) according to the research were not influenced by the number of followers and engagement of social media influencers when making purchase decisions, while 33.8% were influenced and 24.4% were uncertain.

- **The credibility study of SMIs**

This study investigated the issue of social media influencer credibility in Nigeria. Due to covert advertising, selective self-presentation, and high-profile cases of false endorsements, the findings indicate that the credibility and trustworthiness of social media influencers are in question. A majority of respondents are inclined to purchase products from trusted influencers, while a minority are unaffected by influencer recommendations. There is a range of perceptions regarding the legitimacy of influencers, with some respondents finding them credible while others are uncertain or skeptical. According to studies, influencers' personal use of products is crucial for establishing trust and authenticity, and influencer marketing requires transparency and honesty. Indicating a lack of confidence, a significant proportion of respondents are uncertain or unlikely to recommend influencer-promoted products to acquaintances. Overall, respondents' perceptions of the trustworthiness and legitimacy of

influencer-promoted products varied, with some unsure or skeptical about recommending them to their social circle.

- **The Impact of SMIs on the cosmetics industry in Nigeria**

The findings of this study suggest that social media influencer marketing has had a positive impact on the cosmetics and beauty industry in Nigeria. The majority of consumers (95%) concurred that SMI marketing has contributed to an increase in industry consumer spending. According to respondents, the prominence and engagement of influencers play a significant role in influencing the purchasing behavior of consumers. Visual examples of products on the skin of social media influencers, along with reviews, have been effective in persuading consumers to purchase, thereby increasing sales for cosmetics brands that employ social media influencers. Additionally, SMI marketing has resulted in targeted marketing, user-generated content, increased brand awareness, and enhanced product promotion and sales via influencer endorsements. It has become essential for companies in Nigeria's competitive beauty and cosmetics industry to communicate with their target audience and generate revenue.

- **The impact of SMI on the Nigerian consumers**

The majority of Nigerian consumers (84.9%) reported that their experiences with social media influencer marketing have been positive, while a lesser percentage (15.1%) said their experience was negative. Consumers who viewed the impact as positive stated that influencer marketing brings products closer to consumers, provides instructions on product use, and offers free information from experienced individuals. On the other hand, those who viewed the impact as negative expressed concerns about the propagation of bleaching products and the perception that influencers are motivated by money and lack consideration for consumers. Overall, the findings suggest that the impact of influencers on Nigerian consumers is exceedingly positive.

- **Social Media Influencers Vs Traditional Media**

This study examines the advertising platforms that Nigerian consumers favor. It reveals that approximately 79.4% of consumers prefer social media influencers as a form of advertising, while only 20.6% prefer traditional forms of advertising such as television, radio, and newspapers. Social media influencers are preferred by consumers because they perceive them to be more authentic, relatable, and engaging than traditional advertisements.

Influencers on social media generate interactive content that encourages consumer participation and increases levels of engagement. In addition, influencers have a specialization and target audience, which makes advertising more targeted and pertinent to consumers' interests, whereas traditional advertisements are more generalized and reach a larger audience.

- **The future of Social Media Influencer**

The future of social media influencers in the context of marketing is discussed in this section. A majority of survey respondents expressed an intent to purchase cosmetic products promoted by influencers in the future. Reasons for this included influencers' relatability and credibility. A large proportion of respondents also believed that social media influencer marketing will continue to dominate the cosmetics industry in the future, citing factors such as the increasing reliance on technology and online presence, the convenience of online purchasing, and the rise in social media usage. Nevertheless, some respondents voiced concerns about influencers promoting subpar products. Overall, it is anticipated that the field of social media influencer marketing will continue to grow, with a focus on authenticity, measurement, and specialized collaborations. Influencers and marketers may investigate new platforms, content formats, and ethical issues for future partnerships that are more diverse and specialized.

6.2 Qualitative Research Findings

The purpose of this research method was to investigate and collect non-numerical data, which are designed to explore and understand human behavior, experiences, and perspectives in depth. The findings of this research was interpreted based on the questions asked during the interview process.

- **Q1: What are your perspectives on the social media influencer marketing of cosmetics and beauty products in Nigeria, as well as the credibility of the influencers?**

Majority of the respondents believe Nigerian SMIs do not use the cosmetics they advertise. They also note the market's saturation with influencers, making it hard to tell who's real. Nonetheless, some respondents praise Nigerian SMIs for their unusual marketing methods .

The findings show that Nigerians have mixed feelings about social media influencers, with concerns about authenticity and market saturation and acknowledgement of their potential impact on sales and marketing techniques.

➤ **Q2: What is your opinion of the Nigerian cosmetics and beauty industry? What do you believe should be improved in this industry?**

A few respondents had positive experiences with Nigerian cosmetics, citing natural ingredients and authenticity as benefits. While majority were skeptical about the quality of the made in Nigeria products. Some individuals voiced concerns about bleaching agents in cosmetic products and demanded a greater emphasis on producing natural products with indigenous ingredients. Suggestions to improve the Nigerian cosmetics industry included investing in research and development to meet consumer demands, improving product packaging and presentation, regulating cosmetics brands for ingredient transparency, and utilizing both traditional and social media influencers for marketing.

➤ **Q3: What is the future of SMI marketing in comparison to traditional media, in your opinion? and what aspects of SMI marketing in Nigeria need to be improved.**

Social media influencer marketing has favorable future growth prospects, as it is viewed as a more effective and promising avenue for businesses than traditional advertising channels, according to the respondents. Social media platforms have become an integral part of daily life for billions of users around the world, affording businesses a significant opportunity to communicate with their target audience via influential personalities. In comparison to traditional media, SMI marketing allows for more targeted and customized advertising, resulting in more authentic and engaging promotional messages, according to respondents. In addition, SMI marketing offers enhanced measurement and analytics tools for businesses to monitor campaign performance in real-time and optimize strategies for improved outcomes. Nevertheless, some respondents highlighted concerns about the lack of credibility of Nigerian influencers, emphasizing the need for authenticity, improvement in content quality, and a more strategic marketing approach. Despite the expansion of SMI marketing, some respondents believe that traditional media will continue to serve distinct target audiences in the future.

7 PROJECT PROPOSAL

The objective of this study was to determine the effect of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase decisions in the Nigerian cosmetics and beauty industry. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of research to collect data and generate useful feedback. The lack of credibility of Nigerian influencers in the marketing of cosmetics and beauty products was one of the main findings of the study, amongst others. This suggests that consumers may not always trust the recommendations and endorsements made by influencers, which may influence their purchasing decisions. The research also revealed the potent influence of social media on Nigerian consumers, which is an important finding. In the cosmetics and beauty industry, social media was found to significantly influence consumer perceptions, preferences, and purchasing decisions. This demonstrates the significance of social media as a marketing instrument for Nigerian businesses and influencers. The research also identified the ethical implications of social media influencer marketing as a crucial area of concern. Significant concerns were identified regarding transparency, disclosure, and authenticity of influencer marketing practices. This implies that when utilizing influencer marketing strategies in Nigeria, ethical considerations should be taken into account to ensure responsible and transparent practices.

The research project aims to develop a program in Nigeria that educates and raises the awareness of consumers, influencers, and business owners regarding ethical approaches to influencer marketing. The objective is to promote responsible and ethical social media influencer marketing practices that benefit all stakeholders. The awareness program targets consumers, influencers, and business proprietors as stakeholders. The credibility of influencers and the potential impact of social media on purchase decisions must be explained to consumers. In their marketing practices, influencers must understand the significance of transparency, authenticity, and ethical behavior. Owners of businesses must comprehend the ethical implications of influencer marketing and ensure transparent and responsible marketing practices.

7.1 Objectives of the program

- **Educating consumers:** The program will assist consumers in comprehending the potential impact of influencer marketing on their purchasing decisions and encourage

them to evaluate influencer-promoted content with discernment. This can include educating consumers on how to recognize sponsored posts, evaluate influencer recommendations critically, and safeguard their rights as consumers within the context of influencer marketing.

- **Guiding Influencers:** The program can provide influencers with guidelines regarding responsible and ethical influencer marketing practices. This may involve promoting transparency in the disclosure of sponsored content, encouraging authenticity and honesty in content creation, and encouraging responsible engagement with followers.
- **Assisting business owners:** The program can assist business owners in comprehending the ethical considerations and best practices associated with engaging with influencers for marketing purposes. This may involve educating them on the significance of equitable compensation, clear contracts, and ethical standards when working with influencers.
- **Fostering positive relationships:** The program can strive to foster positive relationships based on trust, transparency, and mutual benefit between consumers, influencers, and business owners. This can aid in establishing a healthy and sustainable influencer marketing ecosystem in Nigeria.
- **Social impact :** The program can emphasize the potential positive social impact of influencer marketing, such as promoting responsible consumption, supporting local businesses, and increasing awareness of social issues.

7.2 Ethical Ideas

The FTC requires social media influencers to disclose their financial, personal, employment, and family connections to brands. The FTC also provides guidance on how to discuss the relationship (Federal Trade Commission, 2019). SMIs are required to disclose their affiliations with the product or brand they are reviewing. According to (Plaisance, 2007), transparency is revealing the truth, and what, why, and how we share information are crucial to what transparency means. Below are a few ethical ideas that can improve the relationship between consumers, brands and the SMIs.

1. To prioritize transparency and authenticity in influencer partnerships. This could include requiring influencers to disclose sponsored content, and carefully vetting influencers to ensure they align with the brand's values and have a genuine interest in the products they are promoting.
2. Firms could also diversify their marketing strategy by investing in a combination of influencer marketing, customer testimonials (user generated content), and brand-led content to provide a well-rounded perspective to the customer.
3. Businesses can also engage in consumer education and awareness campaigns through their social media platforms and other means to educate consumers on the importance of conducting their own research and relying on multiple sources of information before making a purchase. Consumers can look into product reviews, independent reviews from experts in the field, and overall reputation of the brand and product to make an informed decision.

7.3 Project Execution strategy using (SMART Scheme)

Specific

Specific The goal of the program is as follow:

- Raise awareness among Nigerian consumers, influencers, and business proprietors regarding ethical influencer marketing strategies.
- Educate the target audience on the significance of transparency, authenticity, impartiality, and integrity in influencer marketing.
- Provide consumers, influencers, and business owners with practical guidance and resources on how to implement ethical influencer marketing strategies.

Measurable

It is essential to establish a clear indicator and methodologies for measuring the program's progress and outcomes. Listed below are some methods for gauging the progress of this project:

- We will execute pre- and post-tests to measure changes in the target audience's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding ethical influencer marketing.
- Monitor the number of participants reachedCollect participant feedback and testimonials to evaluate the efficacy of the program.

Achievable

To ensure that the program's objectives are realistic and achievable, the following steps will be taken:

- Provide sufficient resources for program development, material production, seminars, and communication and outreach initiatives.
- Identify and engage relevant stakeholders to support the program, including influencers, business owners, consumer protection agencies, industry associations, and regulatory bodies.
- Utilize existing educational and communication channels in Nigeria, including social media, online platforms, and traditional media, to effectively reach the intended audience.

Relevant

Ensure that the program is aligned with the organization's overall vision and mission and that it addresses the particular requirements and concerns of the target audience in Nigeria.

- We will investigate the creation of educational materials and resources that are culturally appropriate and resonate with the intended audience in Nigeria. This will include the creation of informative and engaging content such as articles, infographics, videos, and social media posts that emphasize the significance of ethical approaches to influencer marketing, provide practical guidance on best practices, and provide real-world examples.

Time-bound

To ensure the utility of the research, it is essential to establish a timeline with specific deadlines and program milestones for each phase. As seen below;

- Within the first three months of the program, we plan to develop educational materials and resources.

- Evaluate and monitor the program's results and impact throughout its implementation.
- Revision and adaptation of the program based on surveillance and evaluation findings.

7.4 Project Details

- **Project name:** Awareness Program on Ethical Approaches to SMIs Marketing in Nigeria
- **Proposed Date:** 13th July, 2024
- **Venue:** Eko Hotels and suite, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria.
- **Participants:** 50-65
- **Target audience**

Includes, age 16-55 social media influencers, marketing professionals, business owners, advertising agencies, content creators, regulators and policymakers, consumers, and academics/researchers in Nigeria who are engaged in social media marketing or influencer marketing or are interested in understanding the ethical implications of such practices.

- **Project Team**

To execute the project successfully, it is necessary to compose a team of specialized professionals with industry-specific knowledge. The team should include a marketing expert who is proficient in both online and offline marketing, and who will monitor the campaign's progress throughout its duration. A project manager is accountable for strategic planning, project execution, establishing goals and deadlines, and managing team members. A graphic designer will also create visually appealing graphics, such as logos, banners, and infographics, while a public relations specialist will develop and implement a PR strategy to generate media coverage, including press releases and media inquiries. Also, we will have financial analyst who will oversee and evaluate the financial aspects of the project, including budgeting, forecasting, and financial reporting and lastly, a knowledgeable customer service representative who understands the project's objectives will be essential for handling inquiries, addressing concerns, and supporting stakeholders.

- **Partnerships or Sponsorship**

We will be partnering with several non-profit organizations, including "The Nigerian non-profit Digital Rights Lawyers Initiative (DRLI), Media Rights Agenda (MRA), which promotes media practitioners and consumers freedom of expression, and (CECAD), a Nigerian non-profit that promotes cyber awareness, cybersecurity, and digital ethics. In addition, we will collaborate with government agencies tasked with regulating advertising and marketing practices, such as the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC). It is also essential to include broadcasting platforms such as AIT (African independent Television), Cool FM, and Silverbird channels, among others. We will also pursue partnerships with cosmetics brands (Zaron, Tara), telecommunications brands (Globalcom limited, MTN, Airtel), and FMCG brands (fast moving consumer goods) (Coca Cola, Unilever Plc, Nestle) etc. Lastly, we are looking to partnering with a few educational institutions such as LASU (Lagos State University) and UNN (University of Nigeria) this will be beneficial in reaching out to students and educating them about ethical SMI marketing practice. This will help us reach out to students and educate them about ethical SMI marketing practices.

7.4.1 Project Timeline

The timeline (fig 18) of the project is within a period of 10 months to give us the opportunity to efficiently complete the project and produce the desired results. During this 10-month timeframe, multiple phases are scheduled, including the project conception and initiation phase, budget planning and allocation of resources phase, execution phase and project review / Performance phase.

- **The project conception and initiation phase**

This are the initial phase in which the project's concept is defined and the project's viability is evaluated. This will include conducting market research, identifying project goals and objectives, delineating project scope, and determining the overall viability of the project. This phase also includes obtaining approvals and buy-ins from stakeholders, establishing project governance, and creating a project charter that describes the project's purpose, scope, and stakeholders.

- **The budget planning and resource allocation phase**

This involves creating a detailed budget for the project, estimating the costs associated with various project activities, and allocating resources such as personnel, materials, and

equipment to various project duties. This phase will also involve procurement planning, the identification of potential vendors or suppliers, and the acquisition of approvals for procurement-related activities.

- **The Execution Phase**

This is the primary phase of project implementation. It includes tasks such as project monitoring and control, progress tracking, team coordination, risk management, and problem resolution, among others. This phase also includes reporting and communication with stakeholders on a regular basis to keep them informed of the project's progress.

- **Review / Performance Phase**

This phase evaluates the project's performance against the predefined aims and objectives. This will entail conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the project's deliverables, comparing them to the initial project requirements, and performing a final quality assurance check. Lessons learned are documented, and a project evaluation report is generated, highlighting the project's successes, challenges, and improvement opportunities.

7.4.2 Project Budget

Before calculating the total cost of the project, it is necessary to investigate in greater detail the primary facets of the endeavor to which this budget will be devoted.

- **Cost of venue**

It is essential to consider the cost of the venue for this program; in this instance, we intend to rent a hall in Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria. The name of this hall is Eko Hotel and suites. This hall was chosen because it is located in an easily accessible area of Lagos state and can accommodate more than 100 visitors. The cost of the venue comprises the rental fee, taxes, service fees, and any other applicable fees. The Eko Hotel and Suites provides additional amenities such as audiovisual equipment and décor. According to duration of time spent, the average expense of the venue is 50,000 CZK.

- **Marketing and Promotion**

During the course of four weeks, we plan to employ prominent influencers and other organizations to spread the word via social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram,

WhatsApp, and Twitter. During this time, we will also be advertising on Google. Around 15,000 CZK is needed for the digital ad campaign. We want to use Traditional media, which is more costly than digital platforms, to raise awareness among a niche demographic that is more likely to frequent these channels. We plan to primarily make use of outdoor advertising, postal mail, and broadcast media. This will add another 35,000 to the whole price tag, bringing it to a whopping 50,000 CZK.

- **Cost of merchandise**

We intend to produce branded T-shirts and baseball caps for the events, which will be given to our visitors as a token of appreciation. The durable and comfortable merchandise will feature our company logo and the theme. We are also considering a variety of color and size options to accommodate our audience preferences. Designing, manufacturing, printing, packaging, and transportation are included in the estimated cost of producing the product. To obtain competitive pricing while maintaining quality standards, we are investigating a range of production options, including domestic and foreign suppliers. In addition to production costs, we are considering packaging, labeling, and branding costs. We want to ensure that the merchandise reflects our brand identity and creates an unforgettable experience for our visitors. This could cost between 15,000 and 20,000 CZK.

- **Feeding costs**

These are an essential factor to consider when organizing an event. Nigeria is renowned for its diverse and delicious cuisine, which affords us the chance to include local culinary options in our budget. The main courses may include jollof rice, fried rice, moi moi, grilled poultry, beef, or fish, as well as other Nigerian delicacies. Small chops, puff-puff, samosa, chin-chin, and other popular finger dishes may be served as snacks. We anticipate inviting between 50 and 65 visitors. The average cost per individual is approximately 350 CZK, resulting in a total average of 22,750 CZK for a group of 65 people.

- **Logistics and event management**

These expenses include event registration, attendee administration, transportation, and other logistical arrangements. This ranges from 10,000 to 15,000 CZK

- **Personnel and resources**

Costs associated with employing or enlisting event staff, volunteers, or other personnel required to support the execution of the program. Personnel and resources are essential to the planning and execution of an event. This cost will include salaries for event coordinators, event managers, registration staff, stewards, security personnel, audiovisual technicians, and other positions associated with the event. These costs will also cover staff-related expenses such as training, uniforms, and specialized instruments. This can range from 35,000 CZK to 45,000 CZK.

- **Equipment and Supplies**

Sound systems (speakers, microphones, amplifiers, mixing consoles), lighting, staging, AV apparatus such as (projectors, screens, laptops), and other multimedia tools may be required for presentations, displays, or visual content during the event. In comparison to purchasing, renting equipment can be a more cost-effective option; hence, we will be renting these items. The estimated average cost is 15,000 CZK.

It is also essential to consider additional costs, such as utilities, legal and compliance fees, and miscellaneous expenses. We should budget a total of **245,000 CZK** on average for the execution of this event.

7.5 Project Limitations

As with any endeavor, developing a program in Nigeria that educates and raises awareness about ethical approaches to influencer marketing may face certain limitations or obstacles. Some possible limitations could include: Similar to many other developing nations, Nigeria may have limited access to technology and internet connectivity, which could impede the implementation and reach of an online education program. This could limit the program's accessibility to consumers, influencers, and business owners, especially those in rural areas or with limited means. In addition to the problem of cultural and language divides: Nigeria is a multicultural nation with numerous languages and cultural practices. It may be difficult to develop a program that accommodates to the diverse cultural contexts and languages of Nigeria, as different regions may have diverse perspectives on influencer marketing and varying levels of familiarity with ethical practices. In addition, Nigeria may have inadequate or inconsistent regulatory frameworks governing influencer marketing practices. Consequently, establishing a standard set of ethical guidelines for influencer marketing and enforcing compliance among consumers, influencers, and business proprietors may be

challenging. Developing and implementing an education program requires funding, competent personnel, and infrastructure, among other resources. Developing and maintaining a comprehensive program on ethical influencer marketing in Nigeria could be hindered by a lack of available resources. Despite these potential limitations, it may be possible to develop a successful program in Nigeria that educates and raises awareness about ethical approaches to influencer marketing, ultimately to the benefit of consumers, influencers, and business owners.

7.6 Practical Implications of Study

Even though this study aimed at investigating the Nigerian consumers The study of the impact of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase decisions in the cosmetics and beauty industry in Nigeria has several practical implications. Some of the potential practical implications of this study could include:

- **Marketing and Advertising Strategies**

This study investigates the preferred advertising channels among Nigerian consumers. It reveals that approximately 79.4% of consumers prefer social media influencers over traditional forms of advertising such as television, newspapers, and magazines. Consumers prefer social media influencers because they view them as more authentic, relatable, and engaging than traditional advertisements. Influencers on social media produce interactive content that encourages consumer participation and boosts engagement levels. Utilizing social media influences marketing, the findings of this study can help marketers and businesses develop more effective marketing and advertising strategies. This may involve identifying social media influencers with a significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions and forming partnerships with them to promote their products or services.

- **Consumer Behavior Insights**

This study indicates that social media influencers have a moderate to significant impact on the purchasing decisions of Nigerian consumers. The majority of Nigerian consumers (84,9%) have reported positive experiences with social media influencer marketing. Positively affected consumers stated that influencer marketing brings products closer to consumers, provides instructions on product use, and provides free information from experts.

These results indicate that social media influencers play a significant role in influencing the purchasing decisions of Nigerian consumers for cosmetics and beauty products; therefore, this information is valuable to businesses and marketers who can use the positive feedbacks to improve their marketing and services. Brands can gain a deeper understanding of how consumers are influenced by social media influencers, as well as their preferences, motivations, and decision-making process, allowing them to better tailor their marketing efforts.

- **Resource Allocation**

The majority of Nigerian consumers are most active on Instagram, followed by WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, and TikTok, according to the findings of the study, which discovered that a large percentage of respondents in Nigeria (99.5%) confirmed their use of social media. This information is extremely valuable to businesses and marketers who use social media to promote their products and services, as it indicates that Nigerian consumers are social media savvy. This information is beneficial for local and foreign brands seeking to penetrate the Nigerian consumer market, as well as for marketers. This allows them to optimize their marketing budgets by informing them of the platforms on which Nigerian consumers are most active. Brands can more effectively allocate their marketing resources, including budget and personnel. They are able to determine which social media platforms are most effective at influencing consumer purchase decisions and allocate their resources accordingly to maximize their return on investment (ROI).

- **Brand-Consumer Relationship**

Most Nigerian consumers are skeptical of the social media influencers that Nigerian brands use to promote their cosmetics and beauty products, according to the studies. Some respondents view influencers as credible, whereas others are unsure or skeptical. According to studies, influencers' personal use of the products they promote is essential for establishing trust and authenticity, and influencer marketing necessitates transparency and honesty. Respondents believe that Nigerian SMIs do not use the cosmetics they promote, indicating a lack of confidence. As a result, a significant percentage of respondents are unsure or unlikely to recommend influencer-promoted products to acquaintances. This research's findings are valuable to brands and marketers because establishing a strong relationship with consumers is the key to gaining their loyalty. Through influencer collaborations that resonate with their target audience, brands can use these insights to develop stronger and more

genuine relationships with their consumers. If consumers are skeptical of the influencers used to promote a brand, this can result in decreased sales and decreased profits. This information can assist the SMIS in conducting additional research on the most effective methods of brand promotion, allowing them to create content that is more alluring and authentic to consumers, thereby increasing the profitability of the brands involved.

- **Industry implications**

The findings of this study will be very valuable to the cosmetics and beauty industry in Nigeria and also for foreign cosmetics brands looking to invest in the Nigerian market because the study found that only a few respondents were satisfied with the Nigerian cosmetics, citing natural ingredients and authenticity as benefits. Majority of the respondents voiced concerns about bleaching agents in cosmetic products . Other suggestions to improve the Nigerian cosmetics industry included investing in research and development to meet consumer demands, improving product packaging and presentation, regulating cosmetics brands for ingredient transparency, and utilizing both traditional and social media influencers for marketing. Putting this data into considerations , brands can improve the quality of products and services in other to effectively target their consumers and generate sales

- **Legal and Ethical Considerations:**

From the research, a few respondents highlighted the bleaching agents present in some of these cosmetics, particularly in the hygiene category. These respondents believe that the high percentage of Nigerian consumers who are prepared to bleach their skin enables these skincare brands to create a market for their products. Other respondents brought up the issue of dishonesty with respect to some of these Nigerian cosmetics brands because, according to these respondents, some of these brands do not include ingredient lists on their products, making it difficult to determine what ingredients are present in these products. The issue of phony products on the Nigerian market is another significant ethical concern. Some respondents emphasized the significance of the Nigerian National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Regulation's regulation of the cosmetics industry (NAFDAC). It is the responsibility of NAFDAC, a federal agency under the Nigerian Ministry of Health, to regulate, control, and superintend the production, importation, exportation, advertising, distribution, sale, and use of cosmetics, food, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, and other

regulated products. These respondents contend that certain brands are not registered under the supervision of (NAFDAC), and that these brands should be investigated and arrested in order to prevent the importation and production of counterfeit cosmetics in Nigeria. This discovery will benefit not only the cosmetics industry, but also consumers, as fake cosmetics can have long-lasting negative effects on their complexion, which can lead to a variety of health problems if left unchecked.

- **Social implications**

The social issue uncovered as a result of this study centered primarily on cosmetics brands that produce products only for specific skin types and tones, while neglecting or ignorant to other variant of skin types, tone and skin conditions. As highlighted by a respondent. She said she was not happy and comfortable in her skin tone growing up because she was dark skinned and the majority of the skincare products she came across had bleaching agents that encouraged skin lightning in Nigeria. This notion can have a negative lasting effects on the confidence of consumers , if not investigated on. This information is useful for cosmetics firms so that they can evaluate product quality based on these findings. Adjustments based on these findings can also help consumers feel more attractive in their own skin.

7.7 Limitations of Study

As with any research study, the impact of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase decisions in the Nigerian cosmetics and beauty industry may be subject to a number of potential limitations. Some possible limitations could include: Sample size and proportionality: The study included 284 respondents for the quantitative interview and 25 for the qualitative research; this is a small proportion of the enormous Nigerian consumer population. This may not be an accurate representation of Nigeria's diverse consumer population. This may affect the generalizability of the findings to a larger population, as the results may not accurately represent the entire population of interest. In addition, the study's findings may be limited to Nigerian consumers and the cosmetics industry and may not be applicable to other industries or nations. Nigeria-specific cultural, economic, and social factors may influence consumer behavior in ways that are inapplicable in other contexts. In conclusion, social media platforms and influencer marketing practices are continuously evolving, and the dynamics of consumer behavior on social media may shift over time. The

findings of this study may only be applicable for a limited time and may not accurately reflect the future landscape of social media influencer marketing.

7.8 Suggestion for Future Research

Frequently, studies have limitations, which may inform future research directions. Future research pertaining to "The Impact of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decision in Nigeria: The Cosmetics and Beauty Industry" should attempt to survey a larger sample of Nigerian consumers as the sample size that was investigated on might affect the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, researchers must investigate the role of cultural factors in influencer marketing: Nigeria's cultural landscape consists of numerous ethnic groups, languages, and customs. In the cosmetics and beauty industry, research could investigate how cultural factors affect consumer perceptions of social media influencer marketing. This may involve examining the effect of cultural values, beliefs, and norms on consumer attitudes toward influencer content, brand preferences, and purchase decisions. Researchers can also examine the impact of social media platforms on consumer purchase decisions: In Nigeria, various social media platforms have distinct features, user demographics, and usage patterns. In the cosmetics and beauty industry, research could investigate how the choice of social media platform for influencer marketing influences consumer purchase decisions. This could involve examining the effect of platform-specific features such as visual content, interactivity, and social cues on consumer behavior, as well as investigating how user demographics and usage patterns on various social media platforms influence consumer preferences, perceptions, and purchase decisions.

This research illuminates the significant impact of social media influencer marketing on the purchase decisions of Nigerian consumers in the cosmetics and beauty industry. This study's findings emphasize the increasing influence of social media influencers as opinion leaders and trendsetters, particularly in the context of cosmetic and beauty products. The analysis of consumer perceptions and behavior reveals that (SMI) marketing has a direct and positive effect on Nigerian consumer purchase decisions. Consumers are more likely to make purchase decisions based on recommendations and endorsements from social media influencers who are perceived as trustworthy and relatable figures in the cosmetics and beauty industry, according to the study. Consumers in Nigeria increasingly rely on social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook to obtain information.

CONCLUSION

This research illuminates the significant impact of social media influencer marketing on the purchase decisions of Nigerian consumers in the cosmetics and beauty industry. This study's findings emphasize the increasing influence of social media influencers as opinion leaders and trendsetters, particularly in the context of cosmetic and beauty products. The analysis of consumer perceptions and behavior reveals that (SMI) marketing has a direct and positive effect on Nigerian consumer purchase decisions. Consumers are more likely to make purchase decisions based on recommendations and endorsements from social media influencers who are perceived as trustworthy and relatable figures in the cosmetics and beauty industry, according to the study. Consumers in Nigeria increasingly rely on social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook to obtain information, guidance, and ideas pertaining to cosmetics and beauty products.

In addition, this study highlights the significance of authenticity and openness in social media influencer marketing. Consumers in Nigeria value authenticity and transparency in influencer endorsements and are more likely to trust those who disclose sponsored content and maintain authenticity. To increase consumer trust and loyalty, brands and influencers must establish a genuine connection with their target audience, cultivate trust, and maintain transparency in their influencer marketing campaigns. As social media continues to evolve and influence consumer behavior, influencer marketing is likely to remain a crucial tactic for businesses in the Nigerian cosmetics and beauty industry and beyond.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- SMIs - Social Media Influencers
- NAFDAC - Nigerian National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Regulation's regulation of the cosmetics industry
- FTC - Federal Trade commision
- EWOM- Electronic Word of Mouth
- WOM-Word of Mouth
- NCC -Nigeria Communications Commission

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Gender of Respondent (Source: Snapshot from online survey of research,2023)45

Figure 2: Age group of respondents (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)48

Figure 3: Occupation of respondents (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023).....50

Figure 4: Do you use social media platforms ? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023).....51

Figure 5: Which of this social media platforms are you most active? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)51

Figure 6: Do you feel influenced by the number of followers and engagement of the social media influencer when deciding whether to purchase a beauty or cosmetic product? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023).....56

Figure 7 : Are you more likely to purchase a product if it is recommended by an influencer you trust and follow? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)58

Figure 8: Have you ever been disappointed in a beauty or cosmetic product that was recommended by a social media influencer? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023).....58

Figure 9 : On a scale of 1-5 rate the credibility of social media influencers on the marketing of cosmetics and beauty products in Nigeria? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)60

Figure : 10 On a scale of 1-5, how important is it for a social media influencer to use the beauty and cosmetic products they promote in their own personal lives? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023).....61

Figure 11 : On a scale of 1-5, how likely are you to recommend beauty or cosmetic products promoted by social media influencers to others? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023).....62

Figure 12 : What impact would you say social media influencer marketing as had on the beauty and cosmetic industry in Nigeria ? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023).....63

Figure 13 : Do you think social media influencer marketing has contributed to an increase in consumer spending in the beauty and cosmetic industry? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)63

Figure 14: What impact would you say social media influencer marketing as had on you as a consumer ? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)65

Figure 15: Whose recommendations, when it comes to purchasing beauty and cosmetic products are you likely to trust? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)66

Figure 16: Would you continue purchasing beauty or cosmetic products promoted by social media influencers in the future? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)67

Figure 17: Do you think social media influencer marketing will continue to be a dominant force in the beauty and cosmetic industry in the future? (Source : snapshot from online survey from the research, 2023)67

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Gender of respondents	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 2 : Age of Respondents	48
Table 3 : Impact of SMIs on consumers.....	55
Table 4: Impact of SMIs on consumers	54
Table 5: Respondents Data	69

APPENDICES

Appendix P I: Supplementary data for Gantt Chart



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Figure 18: Supplementary data for Gantt Chart