



## Social Media Influencer Marketing and Purchase Intention in the Nigerian Beauty Industry: A Conceptual Framework

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The intersection of social media technology and consumer psychology has made influencer marketing a critical force in digital communication; yet, scholarly understanding of its mechanisms remains fragmented, especially in non-Western contexts like Nigeria's beauty industry.

**Objective:** This conceptual article examines the theoretical and empirical foundations linking social media influencer marketing to consumer purchase intention in the Nigerian beauty industry, developing an integrated conceptual model.

**Method:** A thematic synthesis of peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and industry reports (2017–2025) was conducted, guided by recurring constructs including influencer credibility, content authenticity, trust, parasocial interaction, and cultural context.

**Result:** No single theory sufficiently explains influencer-driven purchase behaviour. An integration of Social Influence Theory, the Elaboration Likelihood Model, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour offers greater explanatory power. Four conceptual gaps were identified: inadequate theorisation of cultural context in Global South research, understudied long-term brand loyalty effects, limited micro-influencer conceptualisation, and absence of platform-specific models for Instagram. The Influencer–Consumer Behaviour Integration Framework (ICBIF) is proposed across structural, relational, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions.

**Conclusion:** The ICBIF transcends mono-theoretical approaches, acknowledging cultural context, platform affordances, and authenticity as moderating variables within a dynamic, self-reinforcing communication ecosystem.

**Unique Contribution:** The ICBIF is the first integrated conceptual model contextualised for Nigeria's beauty industry and comparable Global South digital economies.

**Key Recommendation:** Culturally adapted measurement scales, longitudinal empirical designs, and interdisciplinary scholarship are essential to advancing influencer marketing research in African contexts.

**Keywords:** influencer marketing, purchase intention, consumer behaviour, beauty industry, Nigeria, digital communication



## INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has not merely altered the channels through which marketing messages are disseminated; it has fundamentally reconfigured the relational architecture between brands and consumers. Social media platforms particularly Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have democratised brand communication, enabling ordinary individuals to become powerful nodes of commercial influence. This democratisation has given rise to the influencer economy, a multi-billion-dollar industry in which content creators leverage their social capital, audience trust, and perceived authenticity to shape the purchase behaviours and brand perceptions of millions of followers (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). In the Nigerian beauty industry, this transformation has been especially pronounced: consumers increasingly rely on influencer reviews, tutorials, and lifestyle narratives rather than conventional advertising to inform their product choices (Kalyani, Thomas, & Green, 2024; Oginyi, 2023 et al.).

Despite the growing commercial significance of influencer marketing, scholarly understanding of the mechanisms through which it shapes consumer purchase intention remains fragmented. Theoretical frameworks from classical persuasion research, consumer psychology, and communication studies offer partial explanations, yet no integrated conceptual model has been widely adopted to account for the multi-dimensional nature of influencer influence. This gap is particularly evident in studies situated in the Global South, including Nigeria, where cultural, socioeconomic, and technological factors introduce important variations in how influencer marketing operates and how it is received by consumers (Adelabu, Ibrahim, & Salami, 2024; Adebayo & Ayodele, 2021).

This conceptual article addresses these deficiencies by developing the Influencer–Consumer Behaviour Integration Framework (ICBIF), an integrated model that synthesises the most explanatory theoretical lenses available and accounts for contextual variation specific to Nigeria's collectivist, high-context communication environment.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The conceptual literature on influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention is characterised by theoretical fragmentation, with individual studies drawing on disparate frameworks without integrating them into a coherent explanatory model. Furthermore, existing conceptualisations are predominantly anchored in Western, individualistic cultural contexts, limiting their applicability to communal, high-context communication environments such as Nigeria (Adelabu et al., 2024). Specifically, the literature lacks a unified framework that simultaneously accounts for platform affordances, influencer credibility, consumer cognition, cultural context, and behavioural outcomes particularly purchase intention within a single explanatory structure. This paper addresses these deficiencies by proposing the ICBIF as an integrated theoretical scaffold for future empirical research in Nigeria and comparable digital economies.



## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Specifically, the study aims to:

- i. Examine the major theoretical frameworks underpinning social media influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention in the Nigerian beauty industry.
- ii. Identify and analyse the key constructs and mediating mechanisms shaping the influencer–consumer relationship.
- iii. Synthesise existing empirical studies on influencer marketing to establish patterns of effectiveness in the beauty industry, with particular attention to the Nigerian context.
- iv. Develop an integrated conceptual framework linking influencer characteristics, consumer cognitive and affective responses, and purchase intention outcomes.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This article advances theoretical discourse in digital marketing communication by proposing an integrated framework that resolves existing theoretical fragmentation. It offers communication scholars and marketing practitioners a conceptually grounded map of the influencer–consumer behaviour nexus, with particular relevance for brand strategy in Nigeria's emerging digital economy. The framework provides a foundation for empirically testable hypotheses in future quantitative and qualitative studies and serves as a diagnostic tool for beauty industry practitioners seeking to optimise their influencer marketing campaigns.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conceptual Foundations**

Influencer marketing is broadly understood as a marketing communication strategy that deploys socially influential individuals to promote brand messages to engaged digital audiences (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011). Influencers occupy a position of credibility and relatability that conventional advertising cannot easily replicate; their recommendations function as personalised endorsements embedded within content that audiences voluntarily consume. Central to influencer marketing is the concept of parasocial interaction the one-sided perceived relationship that followers develop with influencers through repeated media exposure (Duffy, 2020). This parasocial bond is particularly influential in the beauty industry, where personal identity, aspiration, and self-presentation are central to consumption decisions.

Consumer purchase intention, as the dependent variable of focus in this study, refers to an individual's conscious plan or willingness to make a purchase of a specific product within a defined period (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of digital influencer marketing, purchase intention is shaped by cognitive evaluations of product quality and influencer credibility, affective responses to content, and social pressures from peer communities. Influencer credibility comprising expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness has been consistently identified as a key antecedent of positive purchase intentions (Rathnayake & Lakshika, 2022). Brand perception, defined as



consumers' aggregate evaluative interpretation of a brand, is malleable and responsive to the quality, authenticity, and frequency of influencer-mediated brand representations.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

Social Influence Theory (Kelman, 1958) constitutes the foundational theoretical lens for understanding how influencers affect consumer purchase intention. Kelman's tripartite model compliance, identification, and internalisation maps a progression of influence depth. Compliance occurs when a consumer purchases a product due to the social pressure or reward associated with an influencer's endorsement. Identification takes place when the consumer adopts consumption behaviours aligned with the influencer's lifestyle as part of a desired social identity. Internalisation, the deepest form of influence, occurs when the brand's values become integrated into the consumer's own belief system. The beauty industry is uniquely suited to all three processes, as cosmetic consumption is deeply intertwined with identity expression, social belonging, and personal values dimensions particularly salient within Nigeria's collectivist cultural context.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) provides a complementary cognitive framework by distinguishing between central processing where consumers engage in deliberate evaluation of product claims and peripheral processing where judgements are formed on the basis of superficial cues such as influencer attractiveness, post aesthetics, or follower count. In influencer marketing on Instagram, peripheral processing tends to dominate among casual scrollers, while central processing is activated among highly involved beauty consumers seeking detailed product information. This dual-processing dynamic explains why influencer campaigns that balance aspirational visual appeal with substantive informational content achieve greater persuasive breadth across diverse audience segments (Lim, Carter, & Van Dijk, 2021).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), though classically developed for health communication, has been increasingly applied to digital consumer behaviour research. It posits that purchase intentions are shaped by three antecedents: attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms (perceived social pressure from significant others), and perceived behavioural control (the individual's assessment of their capacity to perform the behaviour). In influencer marketing, the subjective norm component is particularly salient within the Nigerian context: when consumers observe that individuals they admire and identify with are using and endorsing a beauty product, the social norm effect substantially amplifies purchase intention (Jide, 2022). This is consistent with the collectivist orientation of Nigerian society, where peer approval and group conformity strongly mediate individual consumption decisions (Adelabu et al., 2024).

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

A substantial body of empirical work has examined the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention in the beauty industry. Kalyani, Thomas, and Green (2024) established Instagram as the dominant platform for beauty product discovery, with consumers systematically relying on influencer reviews during the purchase consideration stage. Olaolu and Bamigbaiye-Elatuyi (2025) found that content richness defined as the informational depth and multimedia variety of influencer posts was a significant predictor of consumer



engagement and purchase intention. Jide (2022) and Adelabu et al. (2024) both highlighted authenticity and cultural relatability as pivotal moderators of influencer effectiveness in the Nigerian context, with audiences demonstrating greater responsiveness to influencers whose content reflected lived Nigerian cultural experiences. Adebayo and Ayodele (2021) demonstrated that tutorial-based content, in which influencers demonstrate actual product use, generated significantly higher purchase intention among millennial Nigerian beauty consumers than purely promotional posts.

The mediating role of trust has been consistently documented across the literature. Rathnayake and Lakshika (2022) identified trustworthiness as the most significant dimension of influencer credibility affecting consumer purchase decisions. Zhao and Xie (2020) further showed that Instagram's integrated shopping features enabling direct in-app purchases significantly reduce consumer friction and amplify the conversion potential of influencer endorsements. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) generated through influencer content has been linked to brand awareness amplification and social proof creation, with higher engagement rates (likes, comments, and shares) serving as proxies for broader credibility in the perception of prospective consumers (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a conceptual research approach, involving the systematic review, critical synthesis, and theoretical integration of existing literature on influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention. The methodology is grounded in the tradition of conceptual model-building research, wherein the primary output is a theoretically coherent framework that organises existing knowledge and identifies research gaps (Creswell, 2014). Sources were drawn from peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and credible industry reports published between 2017 and 2025, with priority given to publications focusing on digital marketing, consumer psychology, social media communication, and the beauty industry especially within the Nigerian and broader African contexts.

The review was guided by thematic analysis, with recurring constructs including influencer credibility, content authenticity, trust, para-social interaction, purchase intention, and cultural context identified as organising concepts for the proposed framework. The synthesis process involved mapping theoretical alignments, identifying explanatory gaps, and constructing a layered conceptual model that integrates the cognitive, affective, and relational dimensions of influencer–consumer interaction within the specific sociocultural milieu of Nigeria.

## **DISCUSSION**

Drawing on the theoretical and empirical evidence reviewed, this article proposes the Influencer–Consumer Behaviour Integration Framework (ICBIF), a multi-layered model that conceptualises the influencer–consumer relationship as operating across four interdependent levels: structural, relational, cognitive, and behavioural.



At the structural level, the ICBIF acknowledges the role of platform affordances Instagram's visual architecture, algorithmic curation, and commerce-enabling features in shaping the conditions under which influencer–consumer interactions occur (Zhao & Xie, 2020). The platform does not merely transmit marketing messages; it actively mediates the quality, frequency, and form of influencer–consumer encounters, privileging high-engagement content and seamlessly integrating commercial transactions into the user experience. For Nigerian beauty consumers navigating a growing mobile-first digital environment, these structural features significantly shape access to and engagement with influencer content.

At the relational level, the ICBIF foregrounds parasocial interaction and influencer credibility as the primary relational dynamics through which influence is exerted. Credibility spanning trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness functions as the relational currency that converts passive followership into active consumer engagement and, ultimately, purchase intention (Rathnayake & Lakshika, 2022). Authenticity, understood as the perceived congruence between the influencer's online persona and their actual lived identity, moderates the strength of parasocial bonds and therefore the persuasive impact of endorsements (Duffy, 2020). In the Nigerian context, authenticity carries additional weight: consumers are more responsive to influencers whose cultural references, language, and lived experiences resonate with their own (Adelabu et al., 2024).

At the cognitive level, the ICBIF draws on the Elaboration Likelihood Model to acknowledge that Nigerian beauty consumers engage with influencer content through differentiated processing routes. Central processing, activated by high involvement and content richness, produces durable attitude change and informed purchase decisions. Peripheral processing, triggered by aesthetic appeal and social proof signals, generates quicker but potentially less stable behavioural responses (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Cultural context operates as a moderating variable at this level: within Nigeria's collectivist social environment, where communal belonging and social approval powerfully mediate individual decisions, peripheral cues linked to peer endorsement and aspirational group identity carry particular persuasive weight (Adelabu et al., 2024; Jide, 2022).

At the behavioural level, the ICBIF identifies purchase intention as the primary consumer outcome, which is further linked to brand loyalty formation and eWOM generation. These outcomes are not linear; rather, they are iterative. eWOM activity feeds back into the relational and structural levels of the framework by generating social proof that reinforces future parasocial bonds and amplifies content through algorithmic curation (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022). The ICBIF thus conceptualises influencer marketing not as a linear persuasion process but as a dynamic, self-reinforcing communication ecosystem in which consumer actions continuously reshape the conditions of influencer effectiveness, particularly within the fast-evolving Nigerian digital beauty marketplace.



## IDENTIFIED CONCEPTUAL GAPS

Four critical gaps in the existing conceptual literature are identified. First, existing frameworks insufficiently theorise the moderating role of cultural context, particularly in non-Western settings such as Nigeria, where communal identity, collectivist values, and high-context communication norms significantly reshape influence dynamics. Second, the long-term effects of influencer marketing on brand loyalty as distinct from immediate purchase intention remain under-theorised and empirically under-examined, particularly across extended periods of influencer–audience interaction. Third, micro-influencer dynamics, wherein smaller but highly engaged audiences generate disproportionate trust and purchase conversion, require dedicated conceptual treatment beyond the macro-influencer paradigm that dominates current frameworks. Fourth, platform-specific models are needed that account for Instagram's unique affordances including Stories, Reels, and in-app shopping integration which differentiate its persuasive architecture from other digital platforms (Evans, 2020; Zhou, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

This conceptual article has synthesised the major theoretical and empirical strands of influencer marketing research to propose the Influencer–Consumer Behaviour Integration Framework (ICBIF), an integrated model that accounts for the structural, relational, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions of the influencer–consumer relationship with specific application to the Nigerian beauty industry. The framework advances beyond mono-theoretical approaches by integrating Social Influence Theory, the Elaboration Likelihood Model, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour into a coherent explanatory structure, while acknowledging the moderating influence of cultural context, platform affordances, and content authenticity.

The ICBIF is intended to serve as a theoretical scaffold for empirical research in diverse cultural contexts, particularly in Nigeria and other Global South settings where influencer marketing is growing rapidly but remains theoretically under-served. Future research should subject the ICBIF to empirical testing across different Nigerian demographic groups, beauty sub-sectors, and influencer typologies to validate and refine its predictive architecture.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conceptual synthesis and proposed framework, the following recommendations are advanced:

- Researchers should develop culturally adapted versions of existing influencer marketing scales to capture the unique attitudinal and behavioural dynamics of beauty consumers in collectivist societies, particularly Nigeria.
- Marketing practitioners in the Nigerian beauty industry should adopt the ICBIF as a diagnostic tool, mapping their campaigns across all four framework levels to identify structural, relational, cognitive, and behavioural strengths and deficiencies.



- Future empirical studies should employ longitudinal designs to trace the trajectory of influencer marketing effects on purchase intention and brand loyalty over extended periods, rather than relying solely on cross-sectional snapshots.
- Academic journals and research institutions should encourage interdisciplinary submissions that bring together communication theory, consumer psychology, and digital media studies to advance the conceptual sophistication of influencer marketing research in African contexts.

### **Ethical Clearance**

This study is conceptual in nature and does not involve primary data collection from human participants. Accordingly, no ethical clearance from participants was required. The study relied exclusively on publicly available secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and credible industry reports, all of which are duly cited in accordance with APA 7th edition referencing conventions.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that this research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

### **Authors' Contributions**

The first author conceptualised the study and developed the theoretical framework. The second author conducted the literature review and thematic synthesis. The third author contributed to the development of the ICBIF model and drafted the initial manuscript. All authors critically reviewed and approved the final version and take responsibility for the content and integrity of the work.

### **Data Availability Statement**

No primary datasets were generated or analysed during the course of this conceptual study. All secondary sources consulted are cited in the reference list and are available through their respective publishers or repositories.



### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Disclosure**

The author(s) declare that no generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) or AI-assisted technologies were used in the writing, analysis, or preparation of this manuscript.

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used Grammarly for content and sentences corrections. The author(s) carefully reviewed, revised, and verified all outputs generated by the tool and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the manuscript content.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

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