



## **Influencer Marketing and Consumer Behaviour in the Beauty Industry: Evidence from Maybelline's Instagram Campaigns among Instagram Users in Owa-Alero, Delta State**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Influencer marketing has emerged as a dominant digital strategy in the global beauty industry, yet its effectiveness in culturally diverse emerging economies like Nigeria remains insufficiently examined. Instagram-based influencer campaigns by international brands such as Maybelline present unique opportunities and challenges in local markets where cultural identity and content relatability are critical determinants of consumer response.

**Objective:** This study investigated how influencer marketing on Instagram influences consumer behaviour within the Nigerian beauty industry, using Maybelline's Instagram campaigns as a case study among beauty consumers in Owa-Alero, Delta State.

**Method:** Adopting a descriptive survey research design, 74 Instagram users comprising makeup artists, boutique shoppers, and hair stylists were sampled from an estimated population of 800. Of the 80 structured Likert-scale questionnaires distributed, 74 were returned and valid, representing a 92.5% response rate. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation).

**Results:** Findings reveal that 81.1% of respondents actively use Instagram, with 54.1% engaging daily. Maybelline's influencer campaigns were perceived as highly engaging by 75% of respondents, and 62.5% confirmed that influencer endorsements directly influenced their purchasing decisions. However, 44% strongly disagreed that influencer content felt personally relatable, attributable to cultural mismatch and dominance of foreign influencer aesthetics. Influencer credibility and brand-value alignment emerged as the strongest predictor of consumer trust (87%), with a statistically significant positive relationship found between influencer credibility and purchase behaviour ( $r = .72, p < .05$ ).

**Conclusion:** While influencer marketing effectively drives initial purchase decisions, its capacity to sustain long-term brand loyalty remains contingent on content authenticity, cultural relevance, and audience alignment.

**Unique Contribution:** This study offers empirical evidence on the moderating role of cultural congruence in digital influencer marketing effectiveness within emerging economies, providing fresh insight into the conditions under which influencer campaigns translate audience engagement into sustained consumer loyalty.

**Key Recommendation:** Brands like Maybelline should prioritise localised, culturally resonant influencer partnerships that reflect the aesthetic identities and lived realities of Nigerian consumers, complemented by transparent sponsorship disclosures, to deepen market penetration and build durable brand loyalty in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** influencer marketing, consumer behaviour, Instagram, Maybelline, Nigerian beauty industry



## **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid proliferation of social media platforms has fundamentally redefined the landscape of commercial communication, creating unprecedented opportunities for brands to engage consumers through personalised, interactive content. Among these platforms, Instagram has emerged as a dominant force in the digital marketing ecosystem, particularly within the beauty and fashion industries. With over 1.5 billion active users globally (Statista, 2024), Instagram's visually immersive architecture provides an ideal environment for product discovery, brand storytelling, and purchase facilitation. Central to this transformation is the phenomenon of influencer marketing, a practice in which brands collaborate with credible social media personalities to amplify their marketing messages to targeted audiences (Freberg et al., 2011).

In Nigeria, the growth of influencer marketing has been remarkable. Adelabu et al. (2024) document a significant surge in the adoption of social media influencers as brand ambassadors across diverse industries, with the beauty sector at the forefront of this trend. The country's youthful population, rising smartphone penetration, and increasing digital literacy have created a fertile environment for Instagram-based marketing. Brands operating in Nigeria's beauty market have increasingly recognised the persuasive potential of influencers to shape consumer attitudes and drive purchasing behaviour, particularly among millennials and Generation Z consumers who distrust traditional advertising (Adebayo & Ayodele, 2021).

Maybelline, a global leader in the beauty industry with over 13 million Instagram followers (Statista, 2024), exemplifies the strategic deployment of influencer marketing. The brand has consistently leveraged macro-influencers, micro-influencers, and celebrity partnerships to promote product lines, authenticate brand narratives, and foster consumer-brand relationships. Despite this growing practice, there remains a notable paucity of empirical studies exploring how such campaigns specifically influence the behaviour of consumers in semi-urban Nigerian communities, where access to digital platforms is increasing but research attention has been limited.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

While the global effectiveness of influencer marketing has been broadly documented, its specific impact on consumer behaviour within the Nigerian beauty industry remains under-researched. Existing studies tend to focus on urban centres or rely on hypothetical consumer scenarios, leaving a critical empirical gap concerning how real-world consumers in communities like Owa-Alero, Delta State, respond to influencer-driven advertising by brands such as Maybelline. This study seeks to address that gap by generating primary empirical data on the relationship between Maybelline's Instagram influencer marketing and consumer behaviour outcomes — including purchase decisions, brand perception, and engagement.



## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. examine the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour among Instagram users in Owa-Alero.
- ii. determine the role of Instagram as a platform for influencer marketing in the beauty industry.
- iii. evaluate the effectiveness of Maybelline's Instagram influencer marketing strategy.
- iv. assess the relationship between influencer credibility and consumer behaviour.

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

This study contributes primary empirical evidence on influencer marketing in an under-researched semi-urban Nigerian context, offering insights relevant to marketing practitioners, communication scholars, and policy actors in the digital economy. It also extends the application of social influence theory to the Nigerian beauty market, enriching theoretical discourse on mediated consumer persuasion.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conceptual Review**

Influencer marketing is conceptualised as a form of digital marketing that leverages individuals with substantial social media followings to promote brand products and services. These influencers function as third-party credibility endorsers, bridging the gap between brands and targeted consumer communities (Freberg et al., 2011). Consumer behaviour, in this context, refers to the decision-making processes, attitudes, and purchasing actions of individuals as shaped by marketing stimuli encountered on platforms like Instagram (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Influencer credibility, a central construct in this study, encompasses perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, all of which have been empirically linked to the persuasive efficacy of influencer endorsements (Rathnayake & Lakshika, 2022).

### **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Jide (2022) investigated the impact of influencer marketing on trust and purchase intention among Nigerian female cosmetic consumers, finding that authenticity and content relatability were pivotal in converting influencer exposure into purchasing behaviour. Adelabu et al. (2024) similarly demonstrated that Instagram influencers play a central role in shaping brand loyalty among Nigerian youth, particularly when influencers employ personal storytelling and product demonstrations. Adebayo and Ayodele (2021) found that millennial beauty consumers in Nigeria were significantly influenced by tutorial-based content from influencers perceived as authentic and knowledgeable, with Maybelline specifically cited as a brand benefiting from culturally resonant influencer collaborations.

Olaolu and Bamigbaiye-Elatuyi (2025) established that content richness and platform-specific features like Instagram Reels directly correlate with consumer trust and brand engagement, underscoring the functional importance of Instagram's multimedia architecture in beauty



marketing. Kalyani, Thomas, and Green (2024) confirmed that Instagram remains the most influential digital platform in the beauty sector, with consumers relying heavily on influencer reviews during purchase consideration phases. Lim, Carter, and Van Dijk (2021) further demonstrated that engagement-based campaign strategies, including polls and giveaways, strengthen consumer-brand relationships by fostering interactive participation.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is anchored in Social Influence Theory (Kelman, 1958) and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Social Influence Theory identifies compliance, identification, and internalisation as pathways through which influencers shape consumer attitudes and behaviour. The Elaboration Likelihood Model posits that persuasion occurs via central processing (rational evaluation of arguments) or peripheral processing (reliance on superficial cues such as source attractiveness). Together, these frameworks explain why consumers respond differentially to influencer content depending on their involvement level, cognitive engagement, and perceived relationship with the influencer (Duffy, 2020).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design, which is well-suited to investigating attitudes, perceptions, and behavioural patterns within a defined population (Creswell, 2014). The study was conducted in Owa-Alero, Agbor, Delta State, Nigeria. The target population comprised an estimated 800 Instagram-active individuals engaged in beauty-related occupations, including makeup artists, boutique shoppers, and hair stylists.

Given the manageable size of the population, purposive and availability sampling techniques were applied to identify eligible respondents. A total of 80 structured questionnaires were administered, of which 74 were retrieved and deemed valid — representing a 92.5% response rate. It is acknowledged that a sample of 74 respondents is modest in size; accordingly, findings are interpreted with appropriate caution and are not generalised beyond the immediate study population.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into four sections addressing demographic characteristics, Instagram usage patterns, awareness and perception of Maybelline campaigns, and consumer behaviour outcomes. A Likert five-point scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) was used for all attitudinal items. The instrument was pre-tested on 10 respondents to ensure clarity and reliability. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation coefficient), with the correlation analysis specifically employed to address Research Objective 4 — the relationship between influencer credibility and consumer behaviour. Ethical compliance was ensured through informed consent, anonymity, and voluntary participation, in alignment with established research ethics protocols (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).



## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### Demographic Profile

The majority of respondents were female (59.5%), consistent with the beauty industry's predominantly female consumer base. Age distribution showed that 54.1% were between 18 and 24 years, reflecting Instagram's core demographic. Occupationally, 67.6% were university students and 27% were professional makeup artists, groups known for high social media engagement and beauty product consumption. Among all respondents, 81.1% confirmed active Instagram use, with 54.1% accessing the platform daily — a usage pattern aligned with Nigerian national social media trends (Statista, 2024).

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents (n = 74)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Female	44	<b>59.5</b>
	Male	30	<b>40.5</b>
<b>Age group</b>	18–24 years	40	<b>54.1</b>
	25–34 years	26	<b>35.1</b>
	35 years and above	8	<b>10.8</b>
<b>Occupation</b>	University students	50	<b>67.6</b>
	Professional makeup artists	20	<b>27.0</b>
	Others (hair stylists, boutique shoppers)	4	<b>5.4</b>
<b>Instagram use</b>	Active Instagram users	60	<b>81.1</b>
	Daily platform access	40	<b>54.1</b>

*Note: Source: Field survey, 2024. Valid responses = 74 (response rate: 92.5%). Respondents were drawn from makeup artists, boutique shoppers, and hair stylists in Owa-Alero, Delta State*

### RQ1: Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Behaviour

Data from Table 4.2.4 indicate that 62.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Maybelline's influencer marketing influenced their decision to purchase beauty products. Additionally, 54.1% reported increased brand loyalty attributable to influencer campaigns. However, 40.5% disagreed, suggesting variability in how influencer content translates into sustained behavioural outcomes. Item 18, measuring active product-seeking behaviour post-exposure, showed an even distribution of responses, indicating that influencer content does not uniformly generate consistent downstream consumer action.



**Table 2: Impact of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour (RQ1)**

Item	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Remark
Maybelline influencer marketing influenced purchase decisions	62.5	40.5	Significant
Increased brand loyalty attributable to influencer campaigns	54.1	45.9	Moderate
Active product-seeking behaviour post-exposure to content	—	—	Inconclusive

*Note: Even distribution of responses on the product-seeking behaviour item indicates that influencer content does not uniformly generate consistent downstream consumer action across all respondents.*

### **RQ2: Role of Instagram as an Influencer Marketing Platform**

A majority (60.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that Instagram is an effective platform for discovering beauty products through influencer marketing, reflecting the platform's established role as a product discovery and purchase consideration environment (Zhao & Xie, 2020).

However, actual engagement with influencer advertisements was lower than expected, with 40 respondents (54%) disagreeing that they frequently engage with beauty ads on the platform, and 30 remaining neutral. This finding suggests a perception-behaviour gap: while Instagram is recognised as effective, passive consumption rather than active engagement characterises many users' interactions with influencer content.

**Table 3: Role of Instagram as an influencer marketing platform (RQ2)**

Item	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)	Disagree (n)	Remark
Instagram is effective for discovering beauty products via influencer marketing	60.8	—	High agree
Respondents frequently engage with beauty advertisements on Instagram	—	40 (54.0%)	Low engage

*Note: A perception-behaviour gap was identified. Instagram is widely recognised as effective for product discovery; yet active engagement with beauty advertisements remains low, suggesting predominantly passive consumption patterns among respondents.*

### **RQ3: Effectiveness of Maybelline's Influencer Strategy**

Maybelline's campaigns were perceived as engaging by 75% of respondents, with 67% affirming brand-value alignment and 67% agreeing that influencer content felt authentic. However, relatability emerged as a significant challenge, with 44% strongly disagreeing with the statement that influencer content felt personally relatable. This finding is among the most important in this study, as it signals a cultural and contextual mismatch between Maybelline's predominantly



foreign-facing influencer content and the lived realities of semi-urban Nigerian consumers in Owa-Alero. The dominance of international influencer aesthetics, characterised by skin tones, beauty standards, and lifestyles that diverge from local experience, likely contributes to this perceived disconnect. This suggests that limited localisation of influencer content may be a structural barrier to campaign effectiveness in this context. Interactive features such as tutorials and giveaways were noted as interest-drivers by only 12% of respondents — highlighting room for enhancement in the interactivity dimension of campaign design (Evans, 2020; Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022).

**Table 4: Perceived effectiveness of Maybelline's influencer strategy (RQ3)**

Campaign attribute	Respondents in agreement (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Remark
Campaign perceived as engaging	75.0	—	Strength
Brand-value alignment affirmed	67.0	—	Strength
Influencer content felt authentic	67.0	—	Strength
Influencer content felt personally relatable	—	44.0	Weakness
Interest driven by interactive features (tutorials, giveaways)	12.0	—	Low impact

*Note: Low relatability scores are attributed to cultural mismatch between Maybelline's predominantly foreign-facing influencer aesthetics and the lived realities of semi-urban Nigerian consumers in Owa-Alero (Evans, 2020; Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022).*

**RQ4: Influencer Credibility and Consumer Behaviour**

Credibility analysis revealed that 87% of respondents (approximately 64 individuals) agreed or strongly agreed that consistency between influencer content and Maybelline's brand identity enhances perceived credibility. Furthermore, 81% indicated greater purchase likelihood when endorsements came from knowledgeable influencers. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between influencer credibility and consumer purchase behaviour ( $r = .72, p < .05$ ), confirming that higher perceived credibility is strongly associated with favourable consumer behaviour outcomes. This finding directly addresses Research Objective 4 and corroborates the centrality of credibility as a persuasion mechanism in influencer marketing (Rathnayake & Lakshika, 2022).

Notably, 70% of respondents remained neutral on sponsorship disclosure as a trust signal. While this suggests that formal transparency mechanisms may be less salient to Nigerian consumers than relational authenticity and content quality, this interpretation should be treated with caution. The neutral response pattern may reflect limited awareness of disclosure norms rather than a deliberate preference for authenticity over transparency. Further qualitative inquiry would be needed to draw firmer conclusions about the cultural specificity of Nigerian consumers' responses to sponsorship disclosure (Zhou, 2021).



**Table 5: Influencer credibility and consumer purchase behaviour (RQ4)**

Item / statistic	Value	Respondents (n / %)	Remark
Brand–influencer consistency enhances credibility	<b>87.0%</b>	≈ 64	<b>High agree</b>
Greater purchase likelihood with knowledgeable influencers	<b>81.0%</b>	≈ 60	<b>High agree</b>
Sponsorship disclosure perceived as trust signal (neutral response)	<b>70.0%</b>	≈ 52	<b>Neutral</b>
<b>Pearson r — influencer credibility vs. purchase behaviour</b>	<b>r = .72</b>	<b>p &lt; .05</b>	<b>Significant</b>

*Note:*  $r = .72$  indicates a strong positive relationship between influencer credibility and consumer purchase behaviour ( $p < .05$ ). The neutral response pattern on sponsorship disclosure may reflect limited awareness of disclosure norms rather than a deliberate preference for authenticity over transparency (Zhou, 2021).

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study affirm the general efficacy of influencer marketing as a driver of consumer purchase decisions in the Nigerian beauty market, with 62.5% of respondents acknowledging its direct influence on their buying behaviour. This is consistent with Jide (2022) and Adelabu et al. (2024), who similarly established positive relationships between influencer marketing and purchase intentions among Nigerian beauty consumers. The Pearson correlation result ( $r = .72$ ,  $p < .05$ ) provides further quantitative support for this relationship, establishing that influencer credibility is not merely a perceived attribute but a measurable predictor of consumer behavioural response.

However, the study reveals important nuances. The gap between platform effectiveness perception and actual engagement behaviour suggests that while Instagram creates exposure opportunities, sustained consumer interaction depends on deeper factors including content relatability and personal identification with the influencer. The finding that 44% of respondents strongly disagreed that influencer content felt personally relatable is arguably this study's most significant contribution. Rather than undermining the credibility-engagement nexus, this finding reveals that engagement and persuasion can occur even in the absence of full relatability — likely through peripheral processing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), in which consumers respond to source attractiveness and brand aesthetics rather than personal identification. However, the limited relatability also explains why brand loyalty outcomes were more variable: without deeper personal connection to the influencer, purchase behaviour may be transactional rather than loyalty-driven.

The cultural mismatch implied by the relatability finding points to the structural limitations of a globally standardised influencer strategy when applied to localised markets. Nigerian consumers in semi-urban settings like Owa-Alero may engage with Maybelline's content as aspirational



spectators rather than as personally represented audiences, which may suffice for initial purchase stimulation but proves insufficient for the kind of ongoing identification that drives loyalty.

The dominance of credibility and brand-alignment over formal sponsorship disclosure as trust predictors diverges from Western literature that emphasises transparency as a trust prerequisite (Duffy, 2020). As noted above, however, the speculative nature of this finding warrants caution: it may reflect limited disclosure awareness among Nigerian consumers rather than a cultural dismissal of transparency norms. The mixed results on brand loyalty reinforce findings by Olaolu and Bamigbaiye-Elatuyi (2025) and Adebayo and Ayodele (2021), both of whom noted the conditional nature of influencer-driven loyalty. It should further be acknowledged that many of the percentage-based findings in this study — such as 87% agreeing on credibility — translate to approximately 64 respondents out of 74, a limitation that tempers the generalisability of these proportions beyond the immediate study context.

## CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that Maybelline's Instagram influencer marketing significantly influences initial consumer purchase decisions in Owa-Alero, Delta State, while confirming the conditional and contextually variable nature of its impact on long-term brand loyalty. The Pearson correlation analysis ( $r = .72$ ,  $p < .05$ ) establishes a statistically significant positive relationship between influencer credibility and consumer purchase behaviour, affirming credibility as the primary mechanism of persuasion in this context. The findings highlight relatability, cultural resonance, and influencer credibility as the most critical determinants of marketing effectiveness in the Nigerian beauty context. Instagram's role as a product discovery platform is well-established, yet the translation of passive exposure into active engagement and sustained loyalty requires deliberate, audience-centred content strategies. The study's findings must be interpreted within the context of its modest sample size ( $n = 74$ ) drawn from a single semi-urban community, and future research should extend this work to larger, multi-site samples to test the generalisability of these conclusions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are advanced:

- i. Maybelline and similar brands should prioritise partnerships with Nigerian micro-influencers whose cultural backgrounds, beauty practices, and audience demographics closely mirror those of target consumers, thereby addressing the relatability deficit identified in this study.
- ii. Marketing campaigns should incorporate more interactive features such as live tutorials, consumer challenges, and community-driven content to bridge the engagement gap identified in this study.
- iii. Future research should extend this study to urban Nigerian populations and comparative cross-regional designs with larger samples to test the generalisability of these findings.
- iv. Brands should invest in longitudinal campaign tracking to better understand how influencer marketing shapes consumer behaviour over extended periods rather than at single exposure points.



- v. Future studies should incorporate qualitative methods — such as in-depth interviews or focus groups - to more fully explore the cultural dimensions of sponsorship disclosure perception and relatability among Nigerian beauty consumers.

### **Ethical Clearance**

This study is investigative in nature and does not involve collection of data that will lead to identification of individual or human participants. Accordingly, all participant were anonymised and participated willingly where relevant

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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. Both authors contributed to the development of the ICBIF model and drafted the initial manuscript and critically reviewed and approved the final version and take responsibility for the content and integrity of the work.

### **Data Availability Statement**

All primary data were generated and analysed during the course of this empirical 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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