ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON BOTH PURCHASE AND SWITCHING INTENTIONS OF FMCG CONSUMERS IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate how social media influencers affect Nigerian consumers' purchase and switching intentions regarding fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design, employing the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model for data analysis. The target population comprised social media users in Nigeria who actively engage with Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to respondents, while relevant secondary data were obtained from published sources. The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), employing both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The findings of the study revealed a positive and significant relationship between social media influencers on the selected platforms and consumers' purchase intentions. The study thus concluded that social media platforms should address influencer-related issues that significantly impact consumer switching and purchase intentions.

Keywords: Social Media, Trustworthiness, Influencers, Purchase Intentions

1 Introduction

Opinion leaders are crucial to the decision-making process of customers in today's international marketplaces. Based on their individual skills, specific knowledge or their personality, opinion leaders have a direct or indirect influence on the attitudes and decisions of consumers (Zak & Hasprova, 2020). The advent of digital media includes social media platforms, websites, email, blogs, podcasts, and search engine marketing has transformed the way of interaction between marketers and consumers (Agnihotri & Chaturvedi, 2023). As such, social media platforms, for instance, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter and so on, has widely used by the marketers for promoting products and to reach customers with various type of marketing communications (Wallace et al., 2022). With the properly approach of using the social media, the marketers are able to create value and enhance customer engagement, partnership, and brand value (Moran et al., 2020). Based on data from dataportal.com, the estimated number of social media users in Malaysia in January 2023 is 26.8 million. The largest number of users is 25.9 million who browse the YouTube application, followed by Facebook users (20.25 million), TikTok users (19.3 million), and Instagram users (13.9 million). For example, a recent study has revealed that TikTok has become an important social media platform for consumers in searching for tourism services (Deng et al., 2022). TikTok, which offer a short time frame videos are able to describe narrative stories, thus offer consumers a sense of presence, thereby enhancing overall brand image and consumer purchasing behavior (Cao et al., 2021). As a result, this study looks at how the qualities of social media influencers

(SMIs), such as reputation, authenticity, and knowledge, as well as trustworthiness, affect how customers behave when making purchases of products on the TikTok platform.

1.1 Problem statement

One of the most important issues in social media research is how to quantify social media influencer marketing, particularly when considering the influencers' effect on customer behavior. Common metrics used to assess the impact of an influencer such as the number of followers or the number of interactions with a post, remain questionable as to what extent these metrics are suitable to estimate the impact or quality of an influencer (Grave & Greff, 2018). Furthermore, the higher the number of followers of an influencer does not always indicate their actual social power, so identifying the best influencer characteristics to influence consumer is challenging (Shirehpazazari, 2019). Social media influencer is prevalent in firm strategies, yet little is known about the factors that drive success of online brand engagement at different stages of the consumer purchase behavior (Hughes et al., 2019).

Studies have shown that social media influencers are more likely to influence consumer purchasing behavior (Jin et al., 2019). Numerous researches have established a strong positive correlation between influencer qualities and customer buying patterns. A study by Wei et al., (2021) has founded that influencer attributes such as expertise, attractiveness, and similarity has a significant influence on the consumer purchase intention, while the other two variables tested was not significant which is trustworthiness and respect. Another study by Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2019) examined the relevance of influencers' attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness in online campaigns and found that trustworthiness followed by attractiveness were the strongest components of brand loyalty and trust that led to purchasing intention. However, the relevance of expertise was insignificant. However, the results of another study by AlFarraj et al. (2021) revealed that influencer attractiveness and expertise had a significant impact on customers' engagement. The study discovered that purchasing intention was not significantly predicted by the influencers' knowledge, dependability, or attractiveness. This demonstrates the inconsistency of the findings from earlier research. The literature study demonstrates how social media influencers are becoming more and more important.

But in addition to the contradictory findings of earlier research, more studies are required to look at how the characteristics of social media influencers affect the buying habits of consumers. This study bridges the gap by investigating whether the attractiveness, reliability, and experience of social media influencers (SMIs) affect consumers' decisions to buy and switch to online items. Besides, as competition intensifies, business and organizations are having a harder time identifying genuine influencers with a sizable following (Chan, 2022). Moreover, majority of the research done focuses on social media platforms and their effectiveness in influencing consumers' attitudes and their purchase intentions, but not on the influencers' traits (Hoo et al., 2022). Therefore, there is a need to bridge the gap about how the characteristics of social media influencers affect consumers' attitudes and purchase decisions. Thus, the purchasing patterns of consumers on the Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and TikTok platforms will be the main focus of this study. In addition to the theoretical contribution, by incorporating trustworthiness as a mediator in the relationship, this study will give consumers and marketers a greater understanding of how the characteristics of social media influencers affect consumer purchase behavior. "The study aims to assess the impact of social media influencers on both purchase and switching intentions of consumers in the fast moving commodity goods (FMCG) industry in Nigeria. The research's objectives are to investigate the influence of social media influencer's trustworthiness on purchase and switching intentions, examine the impact of social media influencer's attractiveness on purchase and switching intentions, and to determine the impact of social media influencers' expertise on purchase and switching intentions. The study is divided into six sections. The first section comprise of

introduction, the second section comprise of conceptual studies, the third methodology, the fourth data presentation and analysis, the fifth findings and discussions and finally, conclusions as the sixth section.”

2 Literature review and hypothesis development

2.1 Purchase Intentions

The term “purchase intention” (PI) has been defined in numerous ways. Yoo et al. (2000), for example, describe PI as the individual’s tendency to purchase certain products in the future. Spears and Singh see it as “an individual’s conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand” (2004, p. 56). It could also be described as “a mental stage” in the process of developing a decision during which the consumer builds up the willingness to perform the purchasing behaviour (Wells et al., 2011; Dodds et al., 1991). Previous studies have also suggested that PI represents a significant indicator of actual purchasing behaviour and can measure future consumer actions (Pavlou, 2003; Vineyard, 2014; Lee et al., 2015; Rebelo, 2017; Lisichkova & Othman, 2017; and Kim et al., 2008).

OPI can be considered as the element that stimulates the individual’s intention to purchase an item online (Salisbury et al., 2001). It can also be defined as a status where the customer is willing and intends to conduct an online purchase (Pavlou, 2003). It refers to a person's willingness to make a purchase online despite the dangers associated (security, inability to see or feel the products, and delivery concerns). In the literature, many studies investigated the independent variables impacting OPI (Chang et al., 2005, p. 544; Akar, 2015,). In the Saudi context as a Muslim nation, prior research has examined the antecedents of continued intentions towards e-shopping (Almaghrabi et al., 2011) and online purchase adaptation in Saudi Arabia (Abdul-Muhmin& Al-Abdali, 2011). These researches, however, have not addressed the impact of any social media constructs.

2.2 Switching Intentions

Switching intention (SI) refers to a consumer’s inclination to abandon a current product or brand in favour of another (Keaveney, 1995). Previous research has identified several factors that drive switching behaviour, including price sensitivity, dissatisfaction with the current brand, perceived quality of alternatives, and social influence (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Bansal et al., 2005; Balabanis et al., 2006).

The rise of social media influencers has introduced a new dimension to switching behaviour, as influencers can expose consumers to alternative brands and influence their perceptions of competing products (Chetioui et al., 2020). Studies have shown that trust in influencers, brand credibility, and perceived authenticity significantly impact consumers' willingness to switch brands (Schouten et al., 2020; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

In the Nigerian FMCG industry, brand switching is prevalent, especially in categories such as cosmetics, beverages, and packaged foods, where consumer preferences are highly dynamic. While traditional advertising has played a role in brand switching, the influence of social media endorsements and influencer credibility remains under-researched. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how influencer marketing affects both purchase intentions and switching intentions among Nigerian FMCG consumers.

2.3 Social media influencers

According to the study, SMI refers to individual users who have more over 10,000 followers on social media networks, applications, and platforms. They are everyday folks whose material and knowledge make them famous online. Depending on the platform they use—blog, tweet, video, or photography—their content changes. They may be regarded as online thought leaders and are typically recognized for their proficiency in a certain area, such

as fashion, technology, sports, health, or gaming. Moreover, these individuals maintain their connection to their followers by regularly updating their status (Liu et al., 2012). On social media, influencing can be defined as the capability to stimulate and motivate UGC followers (Freberg et al., 2011).

Influencer marketing refers to the use of SMI to promote products or services, either directly or indirectly, to motivate purchases and enhance the brand image (Scott, 2015). It is becoming a common marketing tactic used by companies. Many businesses in Saudi Arabia employ this strategy because, while making decisions, consumers take into account the opinions of others, including friends, family, industry experts, and, in this case, SMI. Freberg and others have suggested that SMI represent "a new type of independent third-party endorser who shapes audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media" (Freber et al., 2011).

Attractiveness

Attractiveness is the extent to which a person's facial features are pleasant to observe, defined in (Patzer, 1983). It refers to the physical appearance of a media person. Physical attractiveness examines the influence of the physical attributes of the influencers' personalities (Lim, et al., 2017). A source with an attractive appearance is better suited to induce positive outcomes from the advertising campaigns (Silvera & Austad, 2004), as an endorser with appealing physical features is more likely to grab the audience's attention (Lim, et al., 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Since the concept of using celebrities as an endorser began, several researchers have investigated the impact of source attractiveness on the audience's attitude towards the advertisement (Silvera & Austad, 2004; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). The physical attractiveness of social media influencers is expected to have a high tendency in influencing the consumers' perception of the advertised message (Lim, et al., 2017). Numerous studies have shown that the audience's perception of the ads is influenced by how appealing the source is. Studies concluded that the advertisement related to the products that include the characteristics of physical attractiveness was considered more affected when endorsed and advertised by an attractive source than less attractive endorsers (Joseph, 1982; Kamins, 1990; Silvera & Austad, 2004).

We therefore hypothesize that:

H_{o1}: Attractiveness of social media influencers do not significantly impacts purchasing and switching intentions

Trustworthiness

In marketing, trust is built to have long-term relationships with the customers (Pennanen, et al., 2007). Pop, et al., (2021) states that trust and trustworthiness are not the same, instead trustworthiness is an accumulated perceptual experience of the past that leads to trust (Caldwell & Clapham, 2003). It can be defined as the degree to which the audience trusts the source (Chetioui, et al., 2020). Trustworthiness refers to the extent of trust, acceptance, and confidence of listeners in the message and the source who delivered the message (Ohanian, 1990). It is "the degree of confidence in the communicator's intent to communicate the assertions he considers most valid" (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). It can be said that trustworthiness is the extent to which an endorser's content can be perceived as reliable and dependable (Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020). In the marketing context, Wiedmann & Mettenheim (2020) referred to trustworthiness as the perceived honesty of the endorsed source. It explains that whether the endorser is expressing his or her own belief or is influenced by a third party (Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020), for instance, maybe because of monetary rewards (Djafarova, 2017; Govindan & Alotaibi, 2021). Hence, trustworthiness refers to the extent to which an endorser is perceived as believable for the audience (Erdogan, 1999). In influencer

marketing communication, an endorser who is perceived as endorsing products for self-benefits would be committed to self-serving bias (Aw & Chuah, 2021) and would lead to causing negative responses about advertisements (Cheung, et al., 2009; Aw & Chuah, 2021). The credibility of the source is high when the audience perceives the source as trustworthy (Ohanian, 1990).

We therefore hypothesize that:

H_{o2}: Trustworthiness of social media influencers do not significantly impacts purchasing and switching intentions

Expertise

The term "expertise" describes the source's assessed capacity to deliver accurate information given his or her training, experience, and knowledge. An expert can perform exceptionally under a specific field or domain that cannot be attained by everyone (Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020). Therefore, an individual has to invest additional time and energy, requires long-term practice, and has to work hard to become an expert (Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020). As the perceived expertise of the source increases, so does the audience's acceptance of the message (Samarasinghe, 2018). Previous studies have concluded that individuals consider the knowledge and achievements of a source to be indicators of their perception of the source's expertise (Silvera & Austad, 2004; Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020). Approximately 64% of customers thought that social media influencers' legitimacy was dependent on their expertise in their profession, according to a survey by Žák1 & Hasprová (2020). In communication, expertise is "the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions" (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Several empirical studies have confirmed that the perceived expertise of the source leads to a positive attitude towards the content of the communicator (Hughes, et al., 2019; ki & Kim, 2019; Trivedi & Sama, 2020).

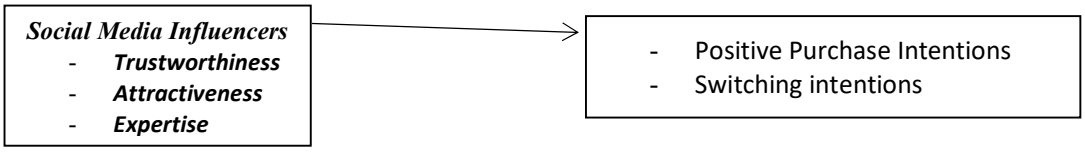
We therefore hypothesize that:

H_{o3}: Expertise of social media influencers do not significantly impacts purchasing and switching intentions

2.4 Social media influencers and purchase behavior

Numerous past studies have examined the social media influencers traits and their impact on consumer behaviour such as brand awareness, loyalty, engagement and participation, willingness to pay more, positive word of mouth, and repeat purchase (Hamid et al., 2022; AlFarraj et al., 2021; Wiedmann and Mettenheim, 2021; Chetioui et al., 2020; Lou and Yan, 2018; Schwemmer and Ziewiecki, 2018). Additionally, a study by Kim (2022) has stated that SMIs have the ability to influence consumer satisfaction. Most research found that all of these consequences have direct relationship to the SMIs traits discussed previously. For instance, trustworthiness, attractiveness, credibility and similarity significantly predicts consumers' brand awareness and intention to purchase (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Since these traits and consequences are not universal, it is crucial for marketers to carefully select influencers as their brand endorser by mapping these favourable attributes to their product, brand and strategic aims to ensure they are coherent and thus produce desired impacts to the target consumers (Chopra et al. 2021). Despite the spike on published studies in recent years, Hudders et al., (2021) suggest that research on SMI is still at infancy stage.

2.4 Conceptual framework



(Researcher's construct, 2024)

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design, population and sample

The study ascertained the impact of social media influencers on purchase and switching intentions across four social media platforms namely: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter. Hence, the cross-sectional survey research design method was utilised in the study, as it allows for data collection from a sample of respondents at a specific point in time. The study's population consisted of Nigerian consumers in purchasing fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). The study randomly and conveniently chose 120 respondents stratifying them equally across the four selected social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter) thus ensuring adequate representation of social media users who use these platforms for the purchase of FCMGs. The research instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed based on established scales from previous validated studies on social media influence and consumer behavior and comprised two major sections: section one elicited responses about the demographics (age, gender, frequency of social media use) of the respondents and section two contained questions on the influence of social media influencers, purchase and switching intentions measured using a five-point Likert scale. To ensure validity, the questionnaire was subjected to expert review by marketing scholars and professionals in digital consumer behaviour. A pilot study was conducted with 20 respondents to test for reliability, and the instrument achieved a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above 0.7, indicating high internal consistency. The questionnaire was distributed electronically via Google Forms and shared through direct messaging and relevant consumer groups on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. This approach facilitated broad participation and increased response rates.

3.2 Model Specification

Based on the conceptualised assumptions, the model that follows is tailored for the current investigation. The following equation represents the functional relationship:

Model 1

The functional relationship

$PSI = (TRU_i, EXP_i, ATR_i)$ ……..……. 3a

Model 2

To check the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable

$PSI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TRU_i + \beta_2 EXP_i + \beta_3 ATR_i + Ui$ ……... 3b

Where:

TRU = Trustworthiness
EXP = Expertise
ATR = Attractiveness
PSI = Purchase and Switching Intentions
β_0 = Intercept
$\beta_1 - \beta_3 > 0$; U = Error Term

Estimation technique

Using percentage, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis, the data were descriptively examined. The association between the companies' environmental performance and sustainable manufacturing methods was estimated using regression and correlation analysis. All analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) at a significance level of 5%.

Results and Discussions

Description of respondents' demographics

After the distribution of the research instrument, 109 responses were gotten from the 120 respondents who were emailed the questionnaire link. The respondents' various background details, such as gender, age, level of education, and work experience, are included in this part. Table 1 displays the findings as follows:

Table 1: *Respondents demographics'*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender of respondents	Male	43	41.3
	Female	61	58.7
Age of respondents	18-20	53	51.0
	25-35	25	24.0
	36-50	18	17.3
Social Media Usage	30mins-1hr	11	10.6
	Ihr-2hrs	12	11.5
	2hrs-2.5hrs	17	16.3
	2.5hrs-above	64	61.5
Education	University entrant	34	32.7
	Intermediate college	43	41.3
	Graduate	25	24.0
	Postgraduate	2	1.9
Social Media Platform	Facebook	31	29.8
	Instagram	34	32.7
	YouTube	27	26.0
	Twitter	11	10.6
	TikTok	1	1.0

Table 1 showed that male and female respondents accounted for 41.3% and 58.7%, respectively, implying that most users of FMCG on social media platforms are females. In terms of respondents' age, 53 (51%) of them are 18-20 years, 25 (24%) are 25 – 35 years old, 18 (17.3%) are 36 – 50years old, 32 (13.1%) are 41 – 50years old while 53 (51%) showing that the majority of the respondents are between 18 and 20 years old. Table 1 further showed that respondents that are university entrants, intermediate college, graduate, and postgraduate levels accounted for 32.7%, 41.3%, 24.0%, and 1.9%, respectively. Additionally, Table 1 revealed that 10.6% of the respondents are engaged on social media platforms between 30 minutes and 1 hour daily, while 11.5% are engaged on social media platforms between 1hour and 2hours daily, 16.3% are engaged on social media platforms between 2hrs and 2.5hours daily and 61.5% are engaged on social media platforms between 2.5hours and above daily. Finally, table 1 further reveals that 29.8% of the respondents use Facebook, 32.7% use Instagram, 26.0% use YouTube, 10.6% use Twitter and 1% use TikTok.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of research variables

S/N	Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Normality Test	
				Kurtosis	Skewness
1	Attractiveness	10.52	2.4	-0.32	-0.28
2	Trustworthiness	11.11	2.3	-0.06	-0.69
3	Expertise	6.25	1.5	-0.28	-0.16

4	Purchase and Switching Intention	4.07	0.9	0.26	-0.39

The mean and standard deviation scores for purchase and switching intentions are 4.07 and 0.9. The mean scores for Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, and Expertise are 10.52, 11.11, and 6.25 respectively. Normality test on the dataset was conducted using skewness and kurtosis. The absolute values of skewness and kurtosis at the construct level ranged from 0.06 to 0.32, and 0.16 to 0.69 respectively. The reported values are less than 3.0 and 8.0 for skewness and kurtosis respectively based on Kline's (2011) benchmark.

Correlation analysis

Table 3 Correlation coefficients of the constructs

	Attractiveness	**Trustworthiness**	**Expertise**	**Purchase and Switching Intentions**
Attractiveness	1			
Trustworthiness	0.463**	1		
Expertise	0.875**	0.493**	1	
Purchase and Switching Intentions	0.307**	0.631**	0.301**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The Pearson's correlation coefficients in Table 3 revealed that purchase and switching intentions is positively and significantly related to attractiveness ($r = 0.307$, $p < 0.05$), trustworthiness ($r = 0.631$, $p < 0.05$), expertise ($r = 0.301$, $p < 0.05$). The results show that all the constructs' correlation coefficients are less than 0.80. In line with Bryman and Cramer's (1997) benchmark of having a score of not more than 0.80, the results rule out the presence of multicollinearity in the model.

Estimated model using regression analysis

The research model was estimated using multiple regression analysis.

The results are shown in Table 4: *Estimated purchase intention model*

Independent Variables	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**T**	**Sig**	**Collinearity Statistics**	
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**			**Tolerance**	**VIF**
(Constant)	1.106	0.409	-	2.701	0.008	-	-
Attractiveness	0.040	0.064	0.100	0.621	0.536	0.233	4.291
Trustworthiness	0.264	0.037	0.633	7.089	0.000	0.753	1.328
Expertise	-0.061	0.102	-0.098	-0.601	0.549	0.225	4.453

$R^2 = 0.633$; Adj $R^2 = 0.400$; F-Statistic = 22.229; F-Statistic (Prob) = 0.000; Durbin-Watson = 2.300; Number of Observation = 104. Dependent Variable: Purchase and Switching Intention

Table 4 reveals that purchase and switching intention is positively and significantly related to two of the constructs [Attractiveness ($\beta = 0.\ 0.040$; $p<0.05$); Trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.264$; $p<0.05$); while it is negatively and significant to Expertise ($\beta = -0.061$; $p<0.05$)]. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.633 shows that the constructs jointly explain 63.3% of the variation in the purchase and switching intentions among the FMCG social media users. The

F-statistic of 22.229 is significant at $p<0.05$, implying a statistically significant relationship between the dependent and the independent variables as a group. The results in Table 4 show that the tolerance values ranged from 0.225 to 0.753, demonstrating evidence of substantial scores above the minimum threshold of 0.10 (Hair et al., 2010). The variance inflation factors (VIFs) scores ranged from 1.328 to 4.453, below the maximum acceptability limit of 5 (Hair et al., 2010). The Durbin Watson statistic is 2.300. The result validates the collinearity statistics (tolerance and VIF) thereby ruling out multicollinearity in the model.”

Discussions

This study found that that purchase and switching intention is positively and significantly impacted by attractiveness of social media influencers. This finding corroborates Wei et al., (2021), which found that consumer behaviors such as purchase and switching intention are positively influenced by attractiveness. In fact, (Jin et al., 2019) highlights that various studies have shown that social media influencers are more likely to influence consumer purchasing behavior. More so, several studies have found that there is a positive and significant relationship between influencer attributes and consumer purchasing behavior. Similarly, the work of Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2019) further highlights that trustworthiness followed by attractiveness were the strongest components of brand loyalty and trust that led to purchasing and switching intention. This study's findings further align with Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2019) that showed that expertise has virtually nil or negative impact on purchase and switching intention. Meanwhile, the results of another study by AlFarraj et al. (2021) revealed that influencer attractiveness and expertise had a significant impact on customers' engagement. The study found that the influencers' attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise were not significant predictors of purchasing intention

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the impact of social media influencers on the purchase and switching intentions of FMCG consumers in Nigeria. While previous studies have examined the role of influencers in shaping consumer decisions, there remains a gap in understanding how specific influencer attributes, such as attractiveness and trustworthiness, affect both purchase and switching behaviours. This study fills this gap by providing an empirical assessment of these attributes in the Nigerian FMCG market. A total of 109 completed questionnaires were collected from FMCG consumers and social media platform managers (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter). The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings indicate that social media influencers significantly shape consumer behaviour, particularly in terms of brand loyalty and willingness to switch brands. Specifically, the study finds that:

1. Consumers are more likely to purchase FMCG products when endorsed by visually appealing influencers. Attractive influencers create a strong emotional connection with their audience, making their recommendations more persuasive.
2. Consumers are more inclined to follow the recommendations of influencers they perceive as honest, credible, and knowledgeable. Trustworthiness is a critical factor in both purchase and switching intentions, as consumers rely on influencers' opinions when making buying decisions.
3. The study highlights that influencer marketing plays a dual role—not only encouraging brand loyalty but also prompting brand switching when consumers perceive a more attractive or credible recommendation from another influencer.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering a deeper understanding of influencer attributes and their effect on consumer decision-making in Nigeria's FMCG sector.

Recommendations

To optimise the impact of influencer marketing, it is recommended that FMCG brands and marketing strategists should consider the following:

1. Engage in strategic influencer selection by collaborating with influencers who are not only popular but also perceived as trustworthy. Endorsers with high credibility and attractiveness enhance brand appeal and consumer engagement.
2. Companies should ensure that the image and values of the selected influencer align with the brand's identity to foster authenticity and consumer trust.
3. Rather than focusing solely on an influencer's follower count, brands should assess engagement levels, audience demographics, and authenticity, as these are better predictors of influencer effectiveness.
4. Brands should establish clear key performance indicators (KPIs) to track the effectiveness of influencer partnerships in driving sales and customer retention.
5. Note that while influencers can boost sales, they can also encourage brand switching, therefore FMCG companies should implement consumer retention strategies, such as loyalty programmes and exclusive influencer-led campaigns, to prevent customer attrition.

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