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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Social Media Influencer Marketing Tools and Consumer Purchase Behaviour of Undergraduate Students in the University of Benin

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between social media influencer marketing tools and the consumer purchase behaviour of students at the University of Benin, focusing on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 395 undergraduate and postgraduate students selected using Yamane's formula. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, t-test, ANOVA, and multiple regression with SPSS version 20.0. The findings revealed that all four social media platforms have positive and statistically significant relationships with consumer purchase behaviour. Correlation analysis showed significant associations between purchase intention and Facebook, Instagram, X, and YouTube, with YouTube and Instagram demonstrating stronger relationships. Regression results indicated that the four platforms jointly explained 58.4% of the variation in purchase intention, with YouTube emerging as the strongest predictor, followed by Instagram, Facebook, and X. The model also showed no multicollinearity concerns. Demographic factors were also found to significantly influence purchase behaviour. Gender showed a significant difference in purchasing patterns, with female students recording slightly higher mean scores. Educational qualification and age also significantly affected consumer purchase behaviour. The study concludes that social media influencer marketing significantly shapes students' purchase decisions, particularly through visually engaging

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platforms such as YouTube and Instagram. It recommends that businesses strategically use credible and engaging influencer content while considering demographic differences. The study contributes empirical evidence on influencer marketing and consumer behaviour within the Nigerian university context and offers practical implications for marketers targeting young consumers effectively.

Keywords: *Consumer Behaviour, Influencer Marketing, Purchase Intention, Social Media Marketing, University of Benin*

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1. Introduction

In recent times, the rapid evolution of the internet and social media has transformed communication processes across the globe. Social media, in particular, has emerged as a dominant force, reshaping how information is created, shared, and consumed. One of the most significant developments within this digital landscape is the rise of online opinion leadership, commonly referred to as social media influencers. These individuals exert considerable influence over their followers by shaping opinions, attitudes, and behaviours (Olaojo, 2020). Influencers are typically characterized by specific traits such as credibility, relatability, and expertise, which enable them to effectively engage and persuade their audiences (Arrieta, 2018).

Traditionally, the media played a gatekeeping role in controlling information dissemination and shaping public opinion. However, the emergence of social media has disrupted this structure, allowing ordinary individuals to actively participate in content creation and dissemination. As a result, the gatekeeping function of traditional media has diminished, giving rise to a more democratized communication environment (Olaojo, 2020). The advancement of technology and communication has further accelerated the adoption of social media as a key marketing platform. Business organizations increasingly prefer social media marketing due to its wide reach, cost-effectiveness, and interactive nature. Social media has become a primary channel for information dissemination and brand communication (Yea, 2021). One of its major advantages lies in its potential to enhance business growth and consumer engagement (Ayush, 2019). Notably, influencer marketing has gained prominence as consumers, particularly younger audiences, tend to perceive influencers as more trustworthy and relatable compared to traditional celebrity endorsements (Bognar et al., 2019).

With the proliferation of social media platforms, any user can quickly build a substantial following, leading to the emergence of a new category of opinion leaders known as citizen influencers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). These influencers, often being regular users of

the products they promote, generate user-generated content (UGC) that is perceived as more authentic and credible than conventional advertising (Martensen et al., 2018).

Furthermore, social media has empowered consumers by amplifying their voices and enabling them to actively participate in the communication process. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages; instead, they function as both consumers and brand advocates (Cheung et al., 2009; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). Through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, consumers share their experiences, opinions, and recommendations, thereby influencing the purchasing decisions of others (Yea, 2021).

Given the rapid growth of influencer marketing, there is an increasing need for scholarly investigation in this area. Researchers have explored various dimensions of influencer marketing, including the identification of influencers (Freberg et al., 2011), the role of credibility and popularity (Arrieta, 2018; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), and factors influencing influencer effectiveness. However, there remains a need for further empirical studies, particularly within developing countries such as Nigeria.

In light of the aforementioned, the broad objective of this study is to examine the relationship between social media influencer marketing tools and the consumer purchase behaviour of students in the University of Benin. While the specific objectives are: to ascertain the relationship between Facebook as a social media influencer marketing tool and the consumer purchase behaviour of students in the University of Benin; to ddetermine whether there is a relationship between Instagram as a social media influencer marketing tool and the consumer purchase behaviour of students in the University of Benin; investigate the relationship between X as a social media influencer marketing tool and the consumer purchase behaviour of students in the University of Benin, investigate whether a relationship exists between YouTube as a social media influencer marketing tool and the consumer purchase behaviour of students in the University of Benin and finally, to find out the influence of demographic variables (gender, education and age) on consumer purchase behaviour of undergraduate students in the university of Benin.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour has been widely studied in marketing literature due to its critical role in understanding how individuals make purchasing decisions. Consumer Behaviour is defined by Khaniwale (2015) as the study of the decision-making processes and physical activities individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using, or disposing of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires. Similarly, Awoke and Ahmed (2022) describe consumer behaviour as encompassing the intellectual, emotional, and physical activities involved in consumers' decision-making processes, as well as the effects of these activities on both individuals and society. In the same vein, Orji (2017) views consumer behaviour as the study of individuals' needs, motivations, and cognitive processes that guide their choice of one product over another, alongside their patterns of purchasing goods and services.

Consumer behaviour is influenced by a wide range of interconnected factors, many of which may be beyond the direct control of marketers. These factors interact in complex ways, resulting in diverse behavioural patterns among consumers (Kumar, 2019). A comprehensive understanding of these behaviours is essential, as it can enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention key elements in building strong and sustainable brands. The determinants of consumer behaviour are multifaceted, encompassing situational, psychological, social, and demographic influences. Ünsalan (2016) identifies key antecedents such as environmental conditions, individual characteristics, and purchasing motives. Noel (2017) further emphasizes that a clear understanding of these influencing factors is crucial for marketing practitioners, as they directly impact the consumer decision-making process.

In particular, personal factors such as age, income, lifestyle, and personality significantly shape consumer preferences. Psychological factors including perception, motivation, learning, and attitudes also play a vital role in influencing buying decisions. Social influences, such as family, reference groups, roles, and status, further affect consumer behaviour. Families, for instance, including parents, spouses, and children, are instrumental in shaping consumption patterns and preferences (Awoke & Ahmed, 2022). Additionally, cultural

factors comprising shared values, beliefs, norms, and traditions strongly influence consumer behaviour. These cultural elements are developed over time through socialization and early life experiences, forming the foundation upon which individuals base their consumption choices. As noted by Sethi and Chawla (2014), understanding cultural dynamics is essential for marketers seeking to effectively reach and engage their target audience.

2.2. Social Media Marketing

Social Media Marketing has become a central component of modern marketing strategies, driven by the rapid growth of internet technologies and digital communication platforms. Becker et al. (2013) define social media marketing as the use of social media platforms to promote products and enhance their visibility online, while simultaneously facilitating the creation of networks for sharing ideas and knowledge. In a similar vein, Khan and Wang (2018) describe social media engagement as the level of participation and interaction among users, characterized by conversations and exchanges that occur within these platforms.

Different social media platforms offer distinct communication advantages that shape how businesses interact with their audiences. For instance, Facebook is widely recognized for its effectiveness in customer relationship management and community building (Popp & Woratschek, 2016). Twitter, on the other hand, enables real-time communication, allowing brands to disseminate information quickly and respond promptly to consumer inquiries (Culotta & Cutler, 2016). Instagram focuses on visually driven content, making it ideal for image-based marketing (Muñoz & Towner, 2018), while YouTube provides a platform for video content sharing, enabling more immersive and engaging brand storytelling (Indvik, 2011).

Social media platforms also empower consumers by providing access to information about competing brands. According to Salem and Salem (2019), when consumers encounter information that aligns with their expectations, it can lead to increased satisfaction and influence their purchasing decisions, often resulting in brand switching or continued patronage. Social media marketing involves integrating these platforms into all elements of the marketing mix to enhance product promotion and brand visibility (Olabanji, 2014). This

integration allows organizations to effectively communicate value propositions, engage with customers, and build long-term relationships. Notably, social media marketing offers significant advantages for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), enabling them to showcase product benefits, educate consumers, and reach wider audiences at relatively low cost. As a result, many businesses are gradually shifting from traditional marketing channels to social media-based strategies (Omotayo, 2015).

Furthermore, companies increasingly encourage customers to engage with their brands through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This interaction allows consumers to follow brand activities, provide feedback, and share their experiences, which can significantly influence purchasing decisions and generate positive word-of-mouth referrals (Ziwa & Dizon, 2020). One of the most powerful aspects of social media marketing lies in its ability to facilitate electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). The interactive nature of social media ranging from direct communication to passive engagement such as likes and shares enables consumers to exchange opinions and recommendations. These interactions often create a contagion effect, where positive information spreads rapidly and influences the decisions of potential customers (Abdulraheem & Imouokhome, 2021). Moreover, because these interactions occur within digital environments, they are measurable, allowing marketers to track engagement and assess campaign effectiveness. In addition, a well-structured social media marketing strategy provides access to valuable customer data. Social media tools can collect, analyze, and transform this data into actionable insights, supporting informed decision-making and strategic planning. These tools also enable organizations to leverage crowd-sourced ideas and adapt quickly to market trends without being overwhelmed by the challenges associated with big data namely volume, variety, and velocity (Ziwa & Dizon, 2020).

2.3. Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms play a critical role in modern marketing communication by enabling interaction, engagement, and information sharing between businesses and consumers. Among the most widely used platforms are Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube, each offering unique features that support marketing activities and consumer engagement.

Facebook

Facebook remains one of the most widely used social networking platforms globally, with billions of registered and active users. It was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, alongside Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes, and Eduardo Saverin, while they were students at Harvard University (Akpan & Nnaane, 2011). Initially restricted to Harvard students, the platform gradually expanded to other universities and eventually to the global public, evolving into a comprehensive network that includes individuals, organizations, and businesses worldwide (Dunay et al., 2010). Over time, Facebook has transformed from a simple social networking site into a powerful marketing and communication tool. It enables businesses to connect with both existing and potential customers, facilitating two-way communication and relationship building (Paquette, 2013). Through features such as business pages, targeted advertisements, and analytics tools, companies can effectively reach specific market segments and enhance brand visibility. This ability to precisely target audiences makes Facebook a valuable platform for digital marketing.

Facebook also supports diverse forms of content sharing, including text, images, videos, and live streaming, allowing users to engage in interactive communication. Users can send private messages, post on timelines (walls), and customize their profiles based on privacy preferences (Dunay et al., 2010). These privacy settings ranging from "friends only" to public visibility give users control over how their information is shared and who can access it. From a marketing perspective, Facebook serves as a major communication channel within the promotional mix and plays a vital role in integrated marketing communications (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). It enables organizations to foster engagement, encourage feedback, and build long-term relationships with customers. According to Viot (2011), the platform has become a key medium through which customers express opinions and share experiences about brands.

Furthermore, Facebook enhances what Zinnbauer and Honer (2011) describe as "social currency," which refers to the extent to which individuals share brand-related information within their social networks. This sharing behavior contributes to increased brand awareness and credibility, as consumers often trust information obtained from peers. Despite its numerous advantages, some businesses particularly small enterprises fail to fully utilize

Facebook due to limited knowledge or strategic implementation (Chung & Buhalis, 2008). However, as noted by Halligan and Shah (2009), Facebook provides an effective means for organizations to understand customer needs, engage with their audience, and build strong, lasting relationships. Therefore, this study proposes hypothesis as follows:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between Facebook as a social media influencer marketing tool and the consumer purchase behaviour of students in the University of Benin.

X (Formerly Twitter)

X (Twitter) is a microblogging and social networking platform launched in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, along with Evan Williams and Biz Stone. The platform enables users to share short messages, known as *tweets*, which are visible to other users referred to as followers. Originally designed as a microblogging site, X has evolved into a dynamic real-time communication platform that supports global conversations and rapid information dissemination. Tweets, which were initially limited to 140 characters, allow users to communicate concise ideas, share updates, and engage in discussions (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). These messages are displayed on users' profiles and distributed to their followers, enabling fast and wide-reaching communication. The platform's simplicity and immediacy make it particularly effective for real-time engagement, news sharing, and brand communication.

X has grown significantly over the years, attracting millions of active users who generate vast amounts of content daily. Its accessibility across multiple devices including smartphones, tablets, and computers has further contributed to its widespread adoption (Farhi, 2009). The continued expansion of mobile technology and internet infrastructure has also supported its growth and relevance in the digital communication landscape (Wauters, 2010). From a marketing perspective, X serves as a powerful tool for building relationships with customers and stakeholders. It enables organizations to engage directly with their audience, respond to inquiries in real time, and participate in global conversations (Fitton et al., 2010). Businesses can utilize the platform either by creating organic content through their accounts or by purchasing advertising space to promote their products and services. Additionally, X is

particularly effective for driving traffic to company websites and enhancing brand visibility (Castronovo & Huang, 2012). Overall, the platform's interactive and real-time nature makes it a valuable tool for customer engagement and digital marketing strategies. Thus, the study hypothesized as follows:

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between Twitter as a social media influencer marketing tool and the consumer purchase behaviour of students in the University of Benin.

Instagram

Instagram is a visually oriented social media platform launched in 2010 that enables users to share photos and videos with their followers. Initially designed as a photo-sharing application, Instagram later incorporated video-sharing capabilities, thereby expanding its functionality and appeal (Ioanăș & Stoica, 2014). The platform allows users to capture, edit, and share visual content, making it highly effective for storytelling and brand communication. Instagram's core strength lies in its emphasis on visual content, which enhances user engagement and interaction. Users can upload images and videos, apply filters and editing tools, and share content instantly with a global audience (Huey & Yazdanifard, 2014). The platform also includes features such as likes, comments, hashtags, and tagging, which facilitate interaction and content discoverability. Hashtags, in particular, enable users to categorize content and make it easily searchable, thereby increasing its reach and visibility.

Over time, Instagram has evolved into a comprehensive social networking platform that supports content sharing across multiple channels, including integration with other platforms such as Facebook and X. Its features encourage active participation, allowing users not only to consume content but also to engage with it through likes, comments, and shares. This interactive environment fosters a sense of community and strengthens relationships between users and brands. From a marketing perspective, Instagram has become a vital tool for businesses and marketers due to its high engagement rates and visual appeal. Organizations use the platform to promote products, build brand identity, and establish strong relationships with customers. The use of visually compelling content enables brands to communicate their

value propositions effectively and influence consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions (Huey & Yazdanifard, 2014). Therefore, the hypothesis is stated as follows:

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between Instagram as a social media influencer marketing tool and the consumer purchase behaviour of students in the University of Benin

YouTube

YouTube is a leading global video-sharing platform founded in 2005 by Chad Hurley, Jawed Karim, and Steve Chen, and later acquired by Google in 2006. It has since grown into one of the most visited websites and is widely regarded as the second-largest search engine globally (Castronovo & Huang, 2012; Gerhards, 2019). The platform enables users to upload, share, and watch videos, attracting billions of users who consume and generate content daily across various devices, particularly mobile phones. A key strength of YouTube lies in its emphasis on user-generated content (UGC), which promotes active participation and engagement among users (Castronovo & Huang, 2012). This interactive nature allows individuals and organizations to inform, educate, and entertain audiences while fostering global connections. As a result, YouTube has evolved into a powerful communication platform that supports both personal expression and organizational messaging.

From a marketing perspective, YouTube provides businesses with an effective medium for visual storytelling and brand promotion. Organizations can create dedicated channels, share engaging video content, and utilize various advertising formats to reach target audiences (Manetti & Bellucci, 2016). The platform's effectiveness can be measured through metrics such as views, likes, shares, and comments, as well as audience feedback and engagement levels, all of which influence consumer attitudes and purchasing behaviour (Brightpearl, 2011). Consequently, the hypothesis is stated in the null form as:

H_{04}: There is no significant relationship between YouTube as a social media influencer marketing tool and the consumer purchase behaviour of students in the University of Benin.

2.4. Relationship between Demographic Variables and Consumer Purchase Behaviour

Demographic variables such as gender, educational qualification, and age have long been recognized as important determinants of consumer purchase behaviour. These variables provide a basis for market segmentation and help explain differences in consumer preferences, attitudes, and decision-making processes. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), demographic characteristics are among the most commonly used bases for distinguishing consumer groups because they are closely linked to individuals' needs, wants, and consumption patterns. As such, marketers often rely on demographic information to design targeted marketing strategies and predict consumer behaviour.

Gender is a key demographic factor that influences consumer behaviour, as males and females often exhibit different purchasing patterns, preferences, and decision-making styles. Research suggests that females tend to be more emotionally driven and value-oriented in their purchasing decisions, while males are often more task-oriented and focus on functional attributes of products (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006). In the context of social media and influencer marketing, females are generally found to be more engaged with content, more responsive to influencer recommendations, and more likely to make purchase decisions based on online interactions (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). These differences highlight the importance of considering gender when analyzing consumer purchase behaviour.

Educational qualification is another significant demographic factor that shapes consumer behaviour. Individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to possess better information-processing abilities, greater awareness of product alternatives, and a more critical evaluation of marketing messages (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). Education influences consumers' ability to assess product quality, compare alternatives, and make informed purchase decisions. In addition, highly educated consumers are more likely to engage with digital platforms and utilize online information sources, including social media, in their purchasing process (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2016). This suggests that educational background can significantly affect how consumers respond to marketing stimuli, including influencer marketing.

Age is also an important determinant of consumer purchase behaviour, as it influences consumers' needs, preferences, lifestyle, and technological adoption. Younger consumers, particularly students and young adults, are more likely to be active users of social media platforms and are more receptive to influencer marketing strategies (Smith, 2011). They tend to seek peer opinions, follow trends, and rely on digital content when making purchase decisions. In contrast, older consumers may exhibit more conservative purchasing behaviour and rely on traditional sources of information (Solomon, 2018). Age differences also affect risk perception, brand loyalty, and responsiveness to advertising messages, making it a crucial variable in consumer behaviour studies.

Empirical studies have consistently shown that demographic variables significantly influence consumer purchase behaviour across different contexts. For instance, Ordun (2015) found that age and gender significantly affect online shopping behaviour, while Ladhari et al. (2019) reported that demographic factors shape consumers' responses to social media marketing and influencer endorsements. These findings underscore the relevance of demographic characteristics in understanding variations in consumer behaviour. Thus, the study hypothesized as follows:

H_{05}: There is no significant influence of demographic variables (gender, educational qualification, and age) on the consumer purchase behaviour of undergraduate students in the University of Benin.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The research study is based on a cross-sectional survey design. The reason for using this method was that it helped explain the relationships between the variables in this study. The research design enables the analysis of the collected empirical data (Agbonifoh & Yomere, 1999). The introduction of this survey research concept arises from its great flexibility in data collection.

3.2. Population of the Study

This study focused on the social media influencer marketing tool and consumer purchase behaviour of students of the University of Benin. The focus was on four major social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube). The study population consisted of the total number of undergraduate and postgraduate students of the University of Benin which was 34,756 (2021/2022 academic session of the University of Benin).

3.3. Sample Size determination

The study's sample size was determined using Yamane's formula, which is the application of normal approximation with a 95% confidence level and 5% error tolerance. The formula is given as:

$$\mathrm{n} = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where: n = sample size; N= population= 34,756; e = level of significance = 0.05

$$\mathrm{n} = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)} = \mathrm{n} = \frac{34{,}756}{1+34{,}756\,(0.05^2)} = 395$$

The formula shows that the sample size is three hundred and ninety five (395).

3.4. Sampling Technique

Stratified, quota and convenience sampling techniques were adopted for this study as follows. Stratified sampling technique was used to divide the university into faculties. Furthermore, quota sampling was used to divide the students in each faculty according to sex. Convenience sampling was then used to administer the instrument to each department. The stratification Table used for stage 1 is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Sampling Technique Procedure

No.	Faculty	Population of Students	Sample Size of Students
1	Agriculture	1,239	14
2	Arts	5,002	57
3	Basic Medical Science	2,440	28
4	Dentistry	79	1
5	Education	6,285	71
6	Engineering	4,095	46
7	Environmental Science	708	8
8	Law	849	10
9	Life Science	4,181	47
10	Management Science	2,961	34
11	Pharmacy	772	9
12	Physical Science	2,756	31
13	Social Science	2,926	33
14	Medicine	417	5
15	Veterinary Medicine	46	1
	Total	34,756	395

Note. The total population was 34,756 students and the selected sample was 395 students.

3.5. Source of Data

This study adopted a primary data which was obtained from University of Benin students through the use of a structured questionnaire.

3.6. The Research Instrument

The data collection instrument in this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two parts, Part A and B. Part A which took into account the demographic and social economic characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, age and highest level of education of the student. Part B includes variables that measure marketing tools which

influences social media and consumer behavior of students of the University of Benin. The questionnaire was designed based on a 5-point Likert scale indicating Strongly "Agree" (A) Unsure(U) "Disagree" (D) and "Strongly disagree" (SD). The points awarded are between 5 and 1.

3.7. Reliability of the Study

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test. A pilot survey was conducted in which twenty copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents. Copies of the questionnaire were retrieved, coded, and subjected to the Cronbach Alpha reliability test using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Reliability Test for Study Variables

No.	Variable	Question Numbers	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
1	Facebook	Q7–Q10	4	.823
2	Instagram	Q11–Q14	4	.707
3	X (Twitter)	Q15–Q18	4	.832
4	YouTube	Q19–Q22	4	.903
5	Purchase intention	Q23–Q28	6	.817

Note. Cronbach's alpha values of .70 or higher indicate acceptable internal consistency. Values are reproduced from the article.

As can be seen in Table 2, all variables had a reliability standard since they crossed the threshold value of 0.7 recommended by Hair et al. (2006).

3.8. Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, and percentages were used to analyse the demographic data and data on relevant variables. While inferential statistics such as t-test, Analysis of

Variance (ANOVA), correlation and regression were used to test the hypotheses. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0) was used for all the analyses. All tests were carried out at the 5% level of statistical significance.

3.9. Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	184	46.6
	Female	211	53.4
	Total	395	100.0
Age	Less than 20 years	145	36.7
	20–25 years	232	59.2
	26–31 years	11	2.8
	32 years and above	5	1.3
	Total	395	100.0
Education	Undergraduate	371	93.9
	M.Sc. students	17	4.3
	Ph.D. students	7	1.8
	Total	395	100.0
Follows social media influencer	Yes	311	78.7
	No	82	20.8
	Missing	2	0.5
	Total	395	100.0
Most preferred social media platform	Facebook	122	30.8
	Instagram	150	37.9
	X (Twitter)	86	21.7
	YouTube	119	30.1
	Others	113	28.5

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	Total responses	590	149.0
Social media usage per day	30 minutes–1 hour	57	14.5
	1–2 hours	83	21.0
	2–2.5 hours	58	14.7
	2.5 hours and above	197	49.9
	Total	395	100.0

Note. N = 395. For the preferred social media platform item, respondents could select more than one option; therefore, frequencies and percentages exceed the sample size and 100%, respectively. Author's fieldwork (2025).

Table 3 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The table shows that 184 (46.6%) of the respondents were males whereas 211 (53.4%) were females. In ascertaining ages of the respondents, 145 (36.7%) respondents were less than 20 years; 232 (59.2%) respondents were within the age group of 20- 25 years, 11 (2.8%) respondents were between 26- 31 years; while 5 (1.3%) respondents were within 32 years and above.

A total of 371 (93.9%) respondents were undergraduate students while 17 respondents (4.3%) were M.Sc. students. Only 7 (1.8%) were Ph.D. students. The preponderance of the respondents 311 (78.7%) followed social media influencers. The majority of the respondents preferred to use Instagram platform to follow their influencers 150 (37.9%). This was closely followed by Facebook 122 (30.8%). Next was YouTube 119 (30.1%) while other social media platforms not specifically mentioned represents 113 (28.5%). The frequency for the most preferred social media platform is more than the sample size because we used a checklist question which allows the respondents to tick more than one option. Similarly, the percentage is more than 100% because of the checklist question. The social media usage of majority of the respondents 197 (49.9%) was between 2.5 hours per day.

3.10. Multi-Collinearity Tests

Table 4

Correlation Matrix of the Research Variables

Variable	FB	INS	X	YT	PI
Facebook (FB)	1.000	—	—	—	—
Instagram (INS)	.261**	1.000	—	—	—
X (Twitter)	.392**	.518**	1.000	—	—
YouTube (YT)	.354**	.437**	.511**	1.000	—
Purchase intention (PI)	.364**	.614**	.559**	.634**	1.000

Note. Values are Pearson correlation coefficients. FB = Facebook; INS = Instagram; X = X (formerly Twitter); YT = YouTube; PI = purchase intention. **p < .01 (two-tailed). Author's fieldwork (2025).

Pearson correlation coefficients were conducted on the data for the dependent and independent variables in the study. The result is presented in Table 4. The Table shows that purchase intention is positively and significantly related to Facebook ($r = 0.532$, $p < 0.05$), Instagram ($r = 0.614$, $p < 0.05$), Twitter ($r = 0.559$, $p < 0.05$) and YouTube ($r = 0.634$, $p < 0.05$). Bryman and Cramer (1997) stipulated that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) should not be more than 0.80; otherwise, the independent variables that show a relationship of more than 0.80 may be suspected of multi-collinearity. The results in Table 4 show that none of the correlation coefficients is up to 0.80. This, therefore, means that there is no form of multi-collinearity in the model.

Table 5

Regression Coefficients for the Model Predicting Purchase Intention

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient β	t	p	Collinearity Statistics Collinearity Statistics		Decision
	B	SE				Tolerance	VIF	
(Constant)	0.660	0.166	—	3.968	< .001	—	—	—
Facebook	0.151	0.046	0.177	3.305	.001	0.640	1.563	Significant
Instagram	0.197	0.052	0.222	3.804	< .001	0.542	1.845	Significant
X (Twitter)	0.128	0.047	0.147	2.736	.007	0.637	1.569	Significant
YouTube	0.362	0.046	0.417	7.924	< .001	0.665	1.503	Significant

Note. Dependent variable = purchase intention. $R^2 = .584$; adjusted $R^2 = .577$; $F = 79.423$, $p < .001$; Durbin–Watson = 2.174; N = 395. Author's fieldwork (2025).

Table 5 indicates that the value of R2 which is 0.584 indicates that the independent variables (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube) together explain only 58.4 % of the systematic variation in the dependent variable (purchase intention). Other factors or elements not included in this regression model, but taken care of by the error terms accounted for 41.1%. The Durbin-Watson score is 2.174 which by implication show that there is an absence of first-order serial correlation in the model. The F statistic of 0.000 is significant at 0.05. This means that there is a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable (purchase intention) and the independent variables (Facebook, Instagram, twitter and YouTube).

The regression results show that Facebook (t=3.305; p= 0.001<0.05), Instagram (t=3.804; p= 000<0.05), Twitter (t=2.736; p=0.007<0.05) and (t=7.924; p=0.000<0.05) have a significant and positive relationship with purchase intention. To conclude that there is no multi-collinearity in any set of data, the value of tolerance must be considered being over 0.10 while the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) should be below 5. The results show that the value of tolerance ranged from 0.542 to 0.665, evidence of substantial scores above the minimum threshold. Besides, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which ranged from 1.503 to 1.845, was way below the maximum limit of acceptability.

Table 6

Demographic Influences on Consumer Purchase Behaviour

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Frequency	%	Mean	Test Statistic	Decision
Gender	Male	184	46.6	3.5612	t = 61.048, p < .001	Significant
	Female	211	53.4	3.6868		
Educational qualification	Undergraduate	371	93.9	3.6348	F = 65.211, p < .001	Significant
	M.Sc. students	17	4.3	3.4828		
	Ph.D. students	7	1.8	3.6381		
Age	Less than 20 years	145	36.7	3.5962	F = 56.813, p < .001	Significant
	20–25 years	232	59.2	3.6746		
	26–31 years	11	2.8	3.1667		
	32 years and above	5	1.3	3.6283		

Note. N = 395. t = independent-samples t test; F = analysis of variance (ANOVA). Reported test statistics and p values are reproduced from the article. Author's fieldwork (2025).

An independent sample t-test was conducted to examine whether a significant difference exists between gender and consumer purchase behaviour of undergraduate students in the University of Benin. The result presented in Table 6 indicates that gender (t = 61.048; p = 0.000) significantly influences consumer purchase behaviour at the 5% level of significance. This implies that there is a meaningful difference in the purchase behaviour of male and female students. The mean scores show that female students (Mean = 3.6868) exhibit slightly higher purchase behaviour compared to male students (Mean = 3.5612). Furthermore, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to test whether significant differences exist between educational qualification and consumer purchase behaviour. The findings reveal that educational qualification (F = 65.211; p = 0.000) significantly influences consumer purchase behaviour. This suggests that differences in students' educational levels contribute to variations in their purchasing behaviour. Similarly, ANOVA results show that age (F = 56.813; p = 0.000) significantly influences consumer purchase behaviour. The mean scores indicate that students aged 20–25 years (Mean = 3.6746) demonstrate relatively higher

purchase behaviour compared to other age groups, while those aged 26–31 years have the lowest mean (Mean = 3.1667).

4. Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between social media influencer marketing tools and the consumer purchase behaviour of students in the University of Benin. The findings clearly demonstrate that social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), and YouTube significantly influence students' purchase intentions. The positive relationships observed across all variables indicate that influencer credibility, content engagement, and platform characteristics play a vital role in shaping consumer decisions. Among the platforms examined, YouTube and Instagram emerged as the most influential, largely due to their visual and interactive nature, which enhances user engagement and trust. Facebook and X (Twitter) also showed significant influence, particularly in terms of information sharing, communication, and relationship building. Generally, the results confirm that social media has transformed consumers from passive recipients into active participants who rely on influencer recommendations when making purchasing decisions. Based on these findings, the study concludes that social media influencer marketing is a powerful tool for influencing consumer behaviour, especially among young people. It is therefore recommended that businesses and marketers adopt strategic influencer marketing approaches by collaborating with credible influencers, creating authentic content, and utilizing multiple platforms to maximize reach and impact. Future studies may explore additional variables or extend the research to other institutions or regions for broader generalization.

5. Recommendations

The research outcomes from this study no doubt have important implications for social media influencer and consumer behaviour. This section examines the implications of this study for these two categories and recommendations are made as appropriate.

i. Facebook as a social media influencer marketing tool had a positive and significant relationship with consumer behaviour among University of Benin students. Therefore, organisations that want to improve their prominence and increase sales

among University of Benin students in particular and consumers in general should ensure that their social media influencers take advantage of Facebook as a social media influencer tool to reach out to them.

ii. Instagram as a social media influencer marketing tool had a significant relationship with consumer behaviour among University of Benin students. Consequently, business organisations that want to progress and increase their sales among University of Benin students in particular and consumers in general should ensure that their social media influencers leverage on Instagram as a social media influencing tool to reach out to them.

iii. Social media influencer should leverage on Twitter (X) as a social media tool to persuade their followers and promote their clients and their goods and services among University of Benin students.

iv. YouTube as a social media influencer marketing tool had a positive and significant relationship with consumer behaviour among University of Benin students. Therefore, business owners that want to promote their company and products among University of Benin students and consumers in general should ensure that their social media influencers leverage on YouTube as a social media influencer tool to reach out to them.

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