



Ashesi University

Exploring the use of social media influencers as a marketing tool for small businesses in
reaching the youth in Ghana

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of theses established by Ashesi

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Abstract

In recent years, the youth's preference for advertising has changed, forcing businesses to find new and innovative ways of reaching consumers. With the rise of social media, a new form of advertising – social media influencer marketing- emerged. Due to its novelty, especially in Ghana, literature on this topic is underdeveloped. While there have been extensive studies on celebrity endorsement, research on the effectiveness and practices of social media influencer marketing, especially in the Ghanaian context, is limited. As a result, there is a gap in business knowledge. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the use of social media influencer marketing to reach the youth in Ghana and the conditions under which product-influencer fit is not necessary for a campaign to be successful. The study used a qualitative exploratory research approach to collect data. Interviews were held with 10 businesses in the fashion industry that had employed social media influencer marketing, and sponsored posts were analyzed using inter-rater reliability rating. This study found that influencer marketing was effective in gaining small businesses new followers and higher levels of exposure. The findings also highlighted the importance of brand fit, pricing, credibility, authenticity, and engagement as factors that affected the effectiveness of a social media influencer campaign. Influencers who were considered trustworthy and attractive were not required to fit with the product they endorsed for a drive to be successful.

Key Words: *Influencer marketing, source credibility, product-influencer fit, small businesses.*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

With the high concentration of advertisements in many traditional channels such as T.V., radio shows, websites, and billboards, businesses are on the hunt for innovative and effective ways to reach their target markets. Celebrity endorsement has long been one of the ways businesses have connected to their customers. However, studies show that this marketing strategy is proving to be less effective than before, especially among the youth. A survey by Roth Capital Partners (2017) reported that celebrity endorsements do not influence a whopping 78% of millennials. Young people are spending less time watching television and listening to the radio, and spending more time on the internet. Due to digitization, consumers are becoming more critical of commercials that they come across. (Perrey & Spilleck, 2013). As social media platforms have a considerable role in the lives of many young people today, a new type of "celebrity" has begun to take over – social media influencers. This novel celebrity has led some brands to turn to a more recent marketing strategy, social media influencer marketing.

The internet has given consumers the power to give reviews on product experiences that can reach a large audience online (Yusuf, Hussin, & Busalim, 2018). This ability to automatically influence others in online communities has created the space for influencer marketing to grow. Social media influencers have a following on social media platforms for their content and specialty in specific fields such as fashion, lifestyle, gaming, health, and fitness. Also referred to as content creators, they consistently engage with their following and continuously put out content that their audience resonates with. Influencer marketing can be

defined as discovering individuals who influence a specific target market or forum and using them to drive a brand's message (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Influencer marketing involves product endorsements or mentions by these influencers to their following. With their immense growth and increasing power (Booth & Matic, 2011), social media influencers are a force to be reckoned with.

Influencer marketing holds excellent value because businesses can use it to establish credibility, create buzz around the product, and drive sales (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Some influencers already have a loyal following and a wider reach than some other brands, giving their content a higher guarantee of being consumed. Social media influencers as a marketing tool have seen a rise in popularity in recent years. More and more businesses are signing on to influencers to advertise and create a conversation about their products. Due to its novelty, and the dynamic nature of social media, measuring influencer marketing's effectiveness proves to be quite challenging. In Ghana, little to none has been examined on the efficacy of influencer marketing. According to Sudha and Sheena (2017), direct marketing is not as effective as it was in the past. Businesses need to find out how indirect marketing strategies, such as social media influencers, are a better way to engage audiences.

Having an effective marketing structure plays a significant role in the success of businesses. Not only is marketing meant to create awareness about a brand, but it is also used to engage target audiences, and it is a continuous process. Lenskold (2003) referred to marketing as an investment rather than an expense. Businesses need to be sure that the marketing strategies they are investing in will produce good results, both in the short and long run. To keep up with ever-changing markets and customers that are increasingly difficult to please, smaller businesses need to be innovative in the ways they reach out to their target markets. Due to the monopoly of large businesses and the expense of more traditional

marketing channels, smaller businesses need to ensure that the marketing strategies they choose to implement are affordable and will engage and impress consumers. Smaller businesses that lack large amounts of capital can capitalize on the individuals' testimonials to entice customers.

Even with the rise of influencer marketing in many western countries, it is still an emerging marketing strategy that has yet to be investigated thoroughly in African countries. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gap by exploring the effectiveness of social media influencing Ghana's youth. This study aims to understand the impact social media influencer campaigns have on audiences and investigate the factors that can be used to measure the effectiveness of using social media influencer marketing as a marketing strategy.

1.1 Problem Statement

To make the most out of their resources and truly convert potential customers, businesses need to figure out if the marketing strategies they implement are working. Smaller businesses need to explore innovative and profitable ways to reach customers that are not already dominated by larger businesses in the market. The younger generation has a larger buying power and yet is harder to influence. Younger people trust those they have built an intentional connection with, such as their friends, family, and influencers they choose to follow on social media platforms. Based on this, social media influencer marketing could be an excellent way to target this generation. It is important to discover whether this marketing strategy is effective and how individuals respond to it.

1.2 Project Justification

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the use of influencer marketing by exploring measures of influencer marketing success. Smaller businesses should gain useful

information from this study because it will show which marketing channels to employ to reach specific market segments. Findings from this study will give an in-depth understanding of how influencer marketing affects businesses and why it does. Influencer marketing is a relatively new phenomenon and has not been studied extensively in Ghana. This research seeks to fill that gap in Ghana and serve as a stepping stool for more extensive research to be done on the topic.

1.3 Project Goals

The study's main project goal is to investigate the effectiveness of the use of social media influencer marketing.

The study also seeks to explore the conditions under which product-influencer fit is not necessary.

1.4 Research Question

How does the use of social media influencers as a marketing tool affect the marketing of small businesses to the youth in Ghana?

Sub-Question

Is product – influencer fit associated with marketing campaign success?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This literature review aims to better understand existing knowledge concerning the important elements of the research question "How does the use of social media influencers as a marketing tool affect the marketing of small businesses towards the youth in Ghana?".

The context will first be given by developing an understanding of small businesses, their characteristics, and their relationship with marketing. This will be followed by a review of influencer marketing, covering aspects of its emergence, features, and what enables it to be considered as a marketing strategy.

Social media influencers are a relatively new mode of marketing. The literature on this topic is, therefore, limited. However, more recent literature in relation to the emergence of social media influencers, brand-influencer fit, and the impact of influencer marketing will be analyzed. This study also examines general endorsers regarding credibility and product-fit to build a better understanding of social media influencing. It aims to review the knowledge already available on the topic, note common themes, and discover specific gaps in the literature. This will provide some context addressing the research question of whether businesses can use influencer marketing to reach the youth or not.

2.1 Small Business Marketing

Small Businesses in Ghana play a significant role in the economy. According to research done by intracen.org, small and medium-sized businesses in Ghana make up about 85% of businesses, mainly in the private sector (Abor & Quartey, 2010). Small businesses are generally independently owned and have critical decisions about them made by the owners

(Australia Bureau of Statistics 2001). Despite SME's contribution to 70% of the nation's GDP, small businesses in Ghana face some challenges and limitations.

According to intracen.org, a very small percentage of small businesses engaged in advertising in 2015, possibly retarding their clientele' growth. For small businesses to be successful, a clear basic understanding of marketing is important (Scott, Hatson, & Wilson, 1996). Smaller businesses tend to have an advantage over larger businesses when it comes to creating interpersonal relationships. Smaller businesses are much closer to the customer and can connect with their customers (Scott *et al.*, 1996). Using this advantage can help level the playing grounds between small and larger businesses by boosting their growth.

According to research done by Bruno and Leidecker (1988), there is evidence that a lack of marketing or poor marketing practices can lead to business failures. Marketing enables businesses to advertise their products - it also allows them to understand and connect to their clientele. Considering the intimacy of smaller businesses, the relationship and communication aspects of marketing are very important (Carson & Gilmore, 2000). Smaller enterprises are characterized by the attention they can give to customers. Neglecting this important aspect of relating to customers could be harmful to businesses.

Despite the knowledge that marketing is important to the growth and sustenance of small businesses, some business owners are less inclined to intentionally implement marketing practices, referring to it as an 'unnecessary luxury' (Scott *et al.*, 1996; Peterson, 1989). Small business owners tend to oversee everything concerning the business and feel marketing is not as important as sales and production. Managers or small business owners tend to lack expertise in marketing (Peterson, 1989). The owner's role makes them central to all decisions made in smaller businesses, unlike larger organizations with entire sectors dedicated to a specific business aspect. Ford and Rowley (1979) suggest that the marketing

behavior of a business is tied to the beliefs of the business leader. They also note the influence marketing limitations have on marketing practices, which Carson (1985) also argues in his paper.

Smaller businesses tend to lack a formal skillset for marketing. However, lack of expertise in traditional textbook marketing is not a determining factor of business owners' success in marketing ventures. Carson and Gilmore (2000) state that small businesses acquire marketing competency through experiential learning, which compensates for limitations due to lack of formal marketing knowledge. In his research, Peterson (2000) also found that small firms believe that profits could increase if marketing concepts were implemented; yet they fail to do so because profit is not the driving force of their business.

Recent studies, however, have shown that small businesses have integrated marketing practices into their business. Information technology growth has led businesses with low capital to implement more digital, internet-based driven marketing methods (Taneeja & Toombs, 2014). Small businesses now use social media networks as a marketing communication channel, with millions of small businesses managing their brands on Facebook (Pasternak et al., 2017).

Earlier studies by some scholars mentioned small businesses' reliance on word of mouth as a means of communicating with their customers (e.g., Scott et al., 1996; Peterson, 1989). This is of great relevance to the modern world, especially with the use of the internet to spread the word, also known as e-word of mouth. Lin et al. (2013) suggest that smaller businesses can use electronic word of mouth to leverage their competitive advantage against larger businesses. Sudha and Sheena (2017) state that influencer marketing is a more professional extension of the original concept of word-of-mouth marketing in a social context.

2.2 Influencer Marketing

Influencers are portrayed as new-age advertisers, who brands use to influence consumers' purchase intentions (Freberg, Graham, & McGraughy, 2011). Mudge and Shaheen (2017) describe influencers as regular individuals who have attained a celebrity-like status through the attraction of numerous followers and, as a result, make a living. Influencers are held in high esteem by their followers and can wield a lot of power. In fact, Freberg *et al.* (2011) imply that consumers hold influencers' advice in higher regard than business leaders' advice. Lazarsfeld *et al.*'s (1944) two-step communication theory explains how ideas flow from the mass media to influencers, whose perception of the message is then broadcast to the public. This suggests that ideas developed in public strongly rely on the interpretations of the influencer.

Sudha and Sheena (2017) identify various kinds of influencers such as celebrity endorsers and digital influencers, which include social media influencers, the focus of this study. However, celebrities are not viewed as relatable despite the patronage of celebrity endorsement, and consumers show better responses to non-celebrities, such as social media influencers (Schimmelpfenning & Hollensen, 2016; Martinez-Lopez *et al.*, 2020; Woods, 2016). Even though Jin *et al.* (2019) believe that celebrity endorsement is still a reliable strategy, Schimmelpfenning and Hollensen (2016) dispute this, emphasizing the need for a new type of endorser, as celebrity endorsement is no longer as effective; this warrants the need for a new kind of endorser. Social media influencers have a huge role to play in marketing, as they are more trusted storytellers.

The emergence of social media influencers can be attributed to the rapid rise in social media platforms that serve as their communication channels. Consumers use social media platforms as a tool for sharing their experiences with brands and products with their social

networks and the world (Sudha & Sheena, 2017; Booth & Matic, 2011; Ali et al., 2019; Jin et al., 2019). Brands needed a way to have positive reputations in the conversations that were affecting their business activities. Companies have no way of controlling conversations on social media, but they can influence them (Booth & Matic, 2011). According to a study by Woods (2016), influencer marketing emerged as a way for brands to have a presence on these platforms. Initially, social media platforms like Instagram did not have features that allowed brands to post sponsored posts. The algorithm is such that only a brand's followers could see the content it posted. This, according to Woods (2016), is what prompted businesses to use influencers as a means of promoting their brand. Businesses had to rely on influencers to influence how certain brands were presented (Sudha & Sheena, 2017).

As its name suggests, influencer marketing works based on the influence they have on their followers. Social media influencers use their position and opinion to impact customers' purchasing decisions (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Consumers tend to gravitate towards other consumers' unbiased opinions rather than the messages that brands push to promote their products. When consumers follow influencers, it is due to their like for them or respect for a field in which they are considered experts. The level of expertise influencers are believed to have in a subject affects the follower response to their content (Martinez-Lopez et al., 2019). An earlier study by Holt (2002) showed that consumers tend to react more positively when there is a perceived level of expertise regarding a product or brand.

Sudha and Sheena (2017) categorize influencer marketing into two categories; earned influencer marketing and paid influencer marketing. Earned influencer marketing in this study arises from pre-existing relationships or third-party content promoted for personal growth. Genuine recommendations or shoutouts of products and brands that are not sponsored should also be considered as a form of unpaid marketing. Paid influencer

marketing covers sponsored posts, testimonial messaging (Suddha & Sheena, 2017), and paid appearances at events (Jin *et al.*, 2019). In their study, Martinez-Lopez *et al.* (2020) concluded that a follower's trust in an influencer is lowered when the content of the post has commercial purposes. Woods (2016), however, disputes this, claiming that the trust and confidence influencers have gained through building relationships are not affected by a sponsored post. He states that a good influencer's trust level with their followers is so high that a sponsored post is still considered genuine and authentic (Woods, 2016). The trustworthiness of consumers is greatly affected by the credibility of the influencer. To understand how trustworthiness and other factors influence source credibility, researchers have come with source credibility model, which will be explored further in the next section.

2.3 Source-Credibility Model

Wathen and Burkell (2002), note that the criteria used to filter the large amount of information we encounter is credibility. Source credibility simply refers to a situation where a message's believability depends on the credibility status as perceived by the responders (Umeogu, 2012). Hovland, Janis, and Kelly (1973) state that people are more likely to be influenced when the source seems credible.

Researchers on source credibility have noted that key elements that affect a message's effectiveness are based on an endorser's level of expertise and trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1991; Fogg, 2003; Wathen & Burkell, 2000). The source credibility model suggests that a message's effectiveness depends on the level of trustworthiness and expertise the consumer believes the endorser possesses (Ohanian, 1991). Wathen and Burkell (2000) further support this claim, noting that the impression of a message strongly influences credibility.

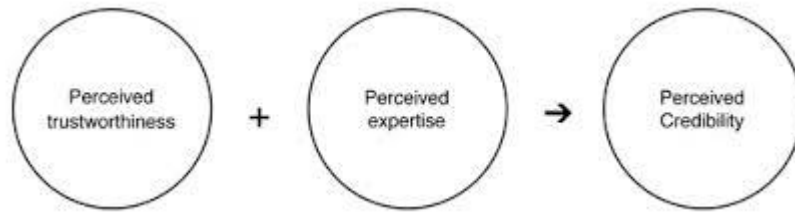


Figure 1: Source Credibility Model (Foggs, 2003).

According to the credibility theory, the effectiveness of endorsement is due to the higher probability of consumers being persuaded by sources of trust (Ohanian, 1990).

Concerning Source Credibility, trustworthiness is the consumer's perception of the endorser's integrity, belief, and honesty (Erdogan, 1999). Sudha and Sheena (2017) found that the level of trust between consumers and influencers positively affects sales and long-term relationships between the influencer's following and the endorsed business.

On the other hand, expertise is the consumer's opinion on the influencer's awareness and qualification on a topic (Hovard et al., 1953). Expertise is the perception of the source as qualified, professional, or expert (Ohanian, 1991). With fitness, an expert would be considered someone who actively performs physical activities in the form of exercise. Expertise is an important attribute for influencers, as it has a strong correlation to an influencer's reputation (De Veirman et al., 2017).

In Ohanian's (1991) explanation of the factors that influence source credibility, source attractiveness was also stated as a major influence in consumers' perceptions. Even though the attractiveness of a source is commonly linked to beauty and elegance, other imperative features of attractiveness include similarity and familiarity between the receptor and endorser (Corina, 2006) and any form of affection shown to the receptor (Erdogan, 1999). It can be said of influencers on the Web that much of their following is a result of their likeability or relatability. It can be deduced from this that the initial reaction influencers' content receives

from their followers is positive. Wathen and Burkell (2002), affirmed that once the audience is receptive to a source's messages, they are more likely to believe its credibility.

The commerciality of a message makes it less credible. In their study, Wathen and Burkell (2000) discovered that this heavily applied to information on the Web, with sites denoting educational or governmental sources rated as more credible than commercial sources. Martinez-Lopez et al. (2020) also found that level of commercial orientation negatively affects the audience's reception of the message.

Overall, when a credible endorser communicates a message, it is less doubtful (Jain & Posavac, 2001). Factors that can influence the source's credibility are its trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, and the similarity between influencers and their followers. However, Munukka et al. (2016) argue that similarity is less important and emphasizes physical attractiveness and source match-up. Both studies, however, emphasize the need for businesses to match their product with the right endorser.

2. 4 Product – Endorser Fit

An American study by Busler and Till (2000), found expertise to be better matching criteria for brands with celebrities than attractiveness. However, the authors noted that attractiveness had not been measured effectively when the study was conducted, and beauty was still key for product endorser fit (Busler & Till 2000). In Kamins' study (1990), he captured the importance of attractiveness. His research indicated that consumers were likely to rate products linked to attractiveness, such as cosmetics, on the endorser's attractiveness. Ilicic & Webster (2013), however, state that the effectiveness of an endorsement is diluted when the information shared is not relevant. Jiang et al. (2015), also note that the degree of compatibility of an endorser and the product being advertised relies heavily on the endorser's level of expertise in that field.

The compatibility of an endorser and a brand is also important when choosing endorsers to promote a product. Consumers have a more positive attitude towards sponsorships that they believe are compatible with endorsers (Mathys et al., 2016). A connection between the endorser's beliefs, opinions, or experiences will improve an advert's persuasiveness. Martinez-Lopez et al. (2020) note in their study that when an endorser's image is consistent with that of a brand and an expert in the product field being endorsed, influencer marketing will create better responses with followers.

2.5 The Success of Influencer Marketing

Research has shown that businesses find social media influencers as a marketing tool to be effective. According to research done by Mediakix (2019), 80% of marketers find influencer marketing to be a successful strategy. Woods (2016) notes that more money is being allocated to social media influencer marketing budgets. Duran (2017) states that marketing professionals have been using influencer marketing, and investments have doubled over a year.

The immense growth of influencers has led businesses to integrate social media influencers into their social media marketing campaigns (Booth & Matic, 2011). Influencers have proven to be a powerful way of reaching and influencing target markets. Sudha and Sheena (2017) note that influencers have the biggest impact on consumers' information search stage and post purchase behaviour. In addition to this, they believe that social media influencers' appeal is that they can promote brands and give their opinions from a neutral point of view.

Influencer marketing has also proven to be a more successful strategy among today's youth. The youth are most confident in social media influencers, which is important to note considering their high purchasing power (Martinez-Lopez et al., 2020). The use of ad blocks shows the youth's apathy towards more traditional forms of online marketing. Utilizing

content creators that spark the younger generation's interest has become one of the only ways to effectively reach them (Martinez-Lopez et al., 2020). Sudha and Sheena (2017) also mention the preference of non-celebrity endorsers over traditional influencers.

The creative control that influencers have over the content they create also adds to influencer marketing's effectiveness (Woods, 2018). Considering the adverse effect the tone of commercialization can have on an audience (Martinez-Lopez et al., 2020), influencers are a more practical way of advertising. To gauge the performance of an influencer's campaign, advertisers measure reach, engagement, and impressions.

2.5 Conclusion

The second chapter of this study explores marketing in relation to small businesses and the emergence and meaning of influencer marketing. The source credibility is also looked at to explain why influencer marketing is effective. It shows how consumers are more likely to pay attention to social media influencers than other types of endorsers. Product influencer fit was also seen to be a factor in the success of influencer marketing.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This research aims to explore the effectiveness of using social media influencers as a marketing strategy. Research on this topic is recent and has been carried out in foreign countries such as the United States and India. However, it has not been confirmed whether discoveries abroad pertain to Ghana, as well as in the context of small businesses. The literature review showed that influencer marketing has proven to be a successful venture for companies, as well as the relationship small businesses have with marketing. This chapter presents the research design, population method, sampling technique, data collection, and data analysis method.

3.1 Research Objectives

This study explores the effectiveness of using social media influencers as a marketing tool for small businesses to reach the youth in Ghana. The research also investigates the conditions under which product – influencer fit is not necessary for a campaign to be successful. Results from this study would help provide recommendations as to how social media influencer marketing could be implemented effectively.

3.2 Research Design

This study is qualitative; exploratory because it explores the use of social media influencer marketing for small businesses in Ghana and the conditions under which product-influencer fit is not necessary for a campaign to be successful. Under qualitative research, the data collection methods and analysis tend to be exploratory. Barker et al. (2002) propose that exploration, suitable as the base for qualitative inquiry, is usually used when there is little known about the research area, as is the case in this study. The study seeks to explore how the

relationship between influencers and their followers is being capitalized in the Ghanaian context.

The research approach that this study seeks to implement is inductive reasoning. The inductive approach develops theoretical understandings from the interpretation of data collected (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Considering there is little literature on social media influencer marketing in Ghana, this study seeks to use inductive reasoning to develop theories around the topic. The inductive approach is also relevant to this study because it emphasizes the qualitative method of small sample sizes (Saunders et al., 2016).

Several scholars have indicated varying differences between the suitability of using qualitative and quantitative methods in answering research questions (e.g., Thomas, 2003; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Each method is better suited at answering questions that the other does not have the capability to. Quantitative research is usually highly structured, allowing the researcher to investigate specific concepts, while qualitative research is relatively unstructured, enabling the researcher to ascertain participants' meanings from the data collection (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Studies involving social media influencers, such as Sudha and Sheena (2017), or Booth and Matic (2011), which focused on mapping influencers to brands, tend to employ quantitative studies. However, since influencer marketing is relatively understudied in the Ghanaian context, a qualitative approach will be better suited to this study. The decision to use qualitative and not quantitative is supported by the point Kelle (2006) makes in his paper, explaining that in research domains where little is known about how specific words or actions are understood in sociocultural contexts, wrong questions may be asked, or respondents answers misunderstood in questionnaires. Therefore, a qualitative study will serve as a basis for a deeper understanding of the topic, which may serve as the grounds for quantitative

studies in the future. Qualitative research has also been used to explain the social media influencer phenomenon, as can be seen in Woods' (2018) study to uncover influencer marketing's intricacies.

As with any research method, there are drawbacks that the researcher needs to consider so that measures can be taken to ensure they do not invalidate the study.

Representing the target group can be difficult due to the small sample sizes in qualitative research (Morris, 2015). However, since the topic is underdeveloped, its initial exploration will allow for an explorative and data rich study that will lead to a more in-depth understanding of social media influencer marketing.

3.3 Scope of Research

The study focuses on the effectiveness of social media influencers in reaching the youth. For the scope of this study, only influencers who belong to the youth age group were selected. Small businesses in Accra were used to conduct this research. The area was narrowed to Accra due to time and accessibility constraints. Accra was also chosen because it is the commercial center of Ghana. Only small businesses that had a presence on social media were selected, as this was vital to the field of study being explored. This is because existing research highlights the need for businesses to build brands on social media platforms. It would be more profitable to employ social media influencer marketing if they already have a presence of their own on social media platforms. Instagram will be the platform examined for this study, considering its rank as one of the highest-ranking social media platforms used by Ghana's youth (Mfidie, 2020). Its leading position as the platform for influencer marketing also makes it the most suitable choice for this study ("Most Used Social Media Networks for Influencer Marketing," 2019).

3.4 Sampling Strategy

Sampling is essential in qualitative research (Saunders et al., 2016). Graziano and Raulin (2010) state that samples with a strong representation of target groups allow for confidence in generalizing the study's results. Consequently, chosen participants must closely represent the target group under examination.

According to Saunders et al. (2016), an inductive approach using qualitative methods, with small samples from an interpretive viewpoint, provides better research data than larger sample quantitative methods. For this research, two samples were used; the small business sample and the influencer sample. To select the influencers for this study, a number of criteria was looked at. The first was based on information drawn from the literature review, which revealed that influencers had followings that were similar to them. Since the youth is being looked at in this study, influencers in the youth group (16-35) will be selected for examination. The other criterium used for choosing the influencers was the number of followers they had. The minimum number of followers required is 700, which is the minimum amount needed to be paid on Instagram. The businesses selected for this study belonged to the fashion and accessories industry. This decision was based on the finding that fashion and accessories was the most popular industry for influencer marketing (Moaz, 2018).

Non-probability sampling was used for this study, as, according to Saunders et al. (2016) is best suited to qualitative sampling. The chosen form of non-probability sampling was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is used to sample in a strategic way, so those chosen are relevant to the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This was employed because only businesses that belong to the fashion and accessories industry are being looked at.

3.5 Data Collection

For this study, the research methods for this study are interviews, observation, and inter-rater reliability methods. Observations, metric analysis were used to compare influencers campaign posts' engagement compared to those of the small businesses. It was used to measure impressions or engagement, which is a way in which the success of a campaign is measured (Woods, 2016). A number of small businesses were interviewed to gain insight into their use of influencer marketing. Inter-rater reliability was used to evaluate product-influencer fit on the success of a marketing campaign.

In-depth interviews are a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular topic (Boyce & Naele, 2006). This interview type was conducted with the small businesses that participated in this study. Interviews held followed a semi-structured format, which simply means that questions were partially planned before the interview (Woods, 2011). In his research to understand the role social media influencers play in campaigns, Woods (2016), used an interview guide and allowed the respondents' answers to guide follow-up questions. This method was also employed in this study, which allowed the interviewer to uncover as much as possible. Due to the current global pandemic, interviews were held over zoom meetings or phone calls.

The inter-rater reliability method was conducted by three students of Ashesi University who the primary researcher trained. According to (Campbell, Quincy, Osseman, & Pedersen, 2013), inter-rater reliability is a method aimed to ensure that results are reliable in that they are consistent and reproducible by employing inter-rater reliability. The trained researchers analyzed the data, such as influencer posts, independently. Reliability in this method means that the results can be reproduced and not necessarily valid. However, in the context of studying human behaviors, interactions, and beliefs, perfect validity is

unattainable, and so reliability is relied on more (Forte, McDonald & Schoenebeck, 2019). A discussion was then held over disagreements in the themes to arrive at a consensus.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, otherwise known as pattern matching. This method of analyzing data allowed the researcher to identify themes and patterns in the content. According to Saunders *et al.*, (2016), codes can be found in three ways; participants' words, a compilation of researcher's labeled data, and terms existing in the existing literature. The themes uncovered were also compared to the literature to hold relevant discussions around the topic.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of the data collected, notes were taken during all interviews. When permission was granted, interviews held over zoom or phone calls were recorded. This allowed for revisiting data to ensure that the researchers remained true to the participants' accounts. Verbatim extracts from interviews were also inserted into the study to allow the reader to judge whether the themes reflect the participants' reports. The secondary researchers conducting the research worked independently of each other to prevent influence over one another's work.

3.8 Ethical considerations

The school's Institutional Review Board guidelines were adhered to during this study. Consent was also sought from the Board to ensure that data was collected appropriately from the study's participants. Participants were given the option to participate voluntarily or opt-out after learning about the research objectives. All participants who choose to participate in this study were assured of the confidentiality of information they provided. Ideas of other researchers that were included in this study were acknowledged and cited accordingly to prevent plagiarism.

3.9 Limitations of the study

A limitation of this study is the researcher's reliance on the participants' words. This study seeks to uncover how effective social media influencer marketing is, but its qualitative nature does not look at sales numbers or analytics. Further studies could investigate this and support their findings with analytics that show the effect social media influencer marketing has on business sales. The time constraints of this research also did not allow for engagement on a business page after using social media influencers to be monitored. This would have provided a greater insight into the effectiveness of social media influencer marketing.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and discussion of the main findings from the interviews and inter-rater ratings conducted as part of this study. The first objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of social media influencer marketing. By exploring businesses' interactions with social media influencers, common themes such as brand fit and credibility became apparent. The second objective was to explore the conditions under which product-influencer fit is not necessary for a campaign's success. The first section of the chapter will present each theme and important quotes from the participants to achieve the first and major objective, investigating the effectiveness of social media influencer marketing. The second section of the chapter will evaluate the data from the inter-rater reliability test to address the second objective.

4.1 Research Objective 1

To investigate the effectiveness of the use of social media influencer marketing by small businesses in Ghana, interviews were conducted with 10 businesses in the fashion industry. The table below some important quotes under the themes that were developed in this interview.

Themes						
	Online Presence	Brand Fit and Exposure	Growth	Authenticity	Credibility	Collaboration and Content Creation
A	“I do not have a physical shop. Social media is my shop. ”	“I would like to reach a larger audience, even though being my own	“When you find that perfect influencer, you’ll see the traffic.”	“Ghanaian influencers make it seem like they are over-hyping the product, which makes it obvious that they are	“Innovation. They are all doing the same thing; they should come up with	“You have to keep track of what they're doing. This girl was going on a vacation with her boyfriend, and

		<p>promoter also helped me.”</p> <p>“You must know the influencer; you have to make sure that the person kind of has a link with your brand. You cant go and give your glasses to a food influencer because most of her followers are there for the food.”</p>		<p>being paid to promote the product.”</p>	<p>different techniques.”</p> <p>“Ghanaian influencers are not very creative. People want to know if the dress is comfortable, how to style the dress, but you don't see that; all they do is take a picture and tag the brand.”</p>	<p>I knew a lot of people would be on her page at that time.”</p>
B	<p>“The thing about sponsored ads is that you are targeting everybody.”</p>	<p>The person must have similarities to the market that I am targeting. For example, she has to be of a particular age because I know the people that are following her will also be in that age bracket.</p>		<p>Everyone is doing the same thing; they should come up with different techniques.</p>		<p>“Honestly, it was quite fun. I created my own content and got followers through that. It really helped me gain followers and build a relationship with the ones that were already following me.”</p>
C	<p>“Instagram will want you to pay for ads, so your posts</p>	<p>Personally, I don't like engaging and associating with people</p>	<p>“An influencer will speed up things a lot faster than I would want to carry. Maybe in the future, when I</p>	<p>“None of them were really natural with their style; they made it very obvious that</p>	<p>“For another person to put it on her page was 150 cedis. This is</p>	<p>“Active online presence. A personal touch. Engage with your followers.</p>

	aren't as visible."	who partake in any form of drama at all.	want to grow bigger, I will work with them but not now."	they were promoting an ad." "Sometimes you even see people sponsoring themselves. If you have to promote yourself, then I might as well pay for the advert[Instagram ad]" "She was advertising slim tea, and she had photoshopped her waist to look tiny. Like it was so bad even I could tell. When you do things like that, no one will even want to buy the product because you are lying."	someone who has 100k followers. So, I felt like obviously, this is a price that a lot of small businesses can afford. That means that it will be very easy for her product to get lost. Because if she is taking 100 cedis from 20 people, and she's posting them 3 times a day, the spotlight I am looking for, I wouldn't really get it."	Remind them that there is a face behind your business." "She will not create content for the number of businesses she has. Because it is mass advertisement. Influencers with smaller followings will have more time to put effort into creating content for your page. The more following people have, the less time people have for brands."
D		"Without the brand ambassadors or influencers, I wouldn't be able to get new people to see my stuff."	"I noticed an increased in the number of my followers."			
E		"I use influencers to reach new audiences."	"I got more followers."		"Some prices are fixed. Others are bargained with."	

F	"I started my page last year, and you know that's how I sell my clothes."		"[I] use influencers all the time; that's how I grew my page."		"Open slots every month. You pay for the slots. You send in the goods you want to advertise. Send in the best stuff she has. Prices are fixed"	"Every month, slots are opened. You pay for the slots, and then you send in the goods to be advertised"
G		It is [influencer marketing] mostly about the exposure because people don't necessarily come and buy	"I check the number of followers I have before the ad. After the ad, I will check the increment in followers."		"Prices are fixed."	
I		"Influencer marketing significantly increases brand awareness especially for small-sized businesses." "Some influencer partnerships open doors to other brand partnerships and campaigns as well."	[We check] immediate sales following campaigns, engagement, follower growth rate. "We look out for follower count, engagement, followers' locations, and their values should align with their brand's."			
J	"Sponsored ads just target random	"Instagram too, sometimes you post		"Some of them even buy followers. So, if the number of		

	<p>people, but at least with an influencer, you have an idea of whom you are advertising to."</p>	<p>things, and they don't show up on anyone's page. So, the influencers help."</p>		<p>people engaging does not match the follower count, they might have bought their followers." "Some will want to tailor the work to their audience, while others will just ask you for everything."</p>		
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Table 4.1: Comments from Interview

The next sections explain the themes discovered in the interviews in detail.

4.1.1 Business and Marketing Online

The data collection process began by asking participants about their target market and the use of Instagram as a platform to sell their products. 8 out of the 10 participants mentioned that their target market fell between the ages of 16-35, which the U.N. defines as youth. The rise of social media has changed the shopping experience for many people. With Instagram's video and photo features, businesses can give customers a virtual shopping experience. For some of these businesses, Instagram is their only place of sale; as evidenced below with extracts from the data collected:

Interviewee A "I do not have a physical shop. Social media is my shop."

Interviewee F "I started my page last year, and that is how I sell my clothes."

For these online businesses, Instagram is the major point of contact between them and their followers. Therefore, they must maximize their reach and interactions with customers on the app. As marketing is key to any businesses' success, businesses on this platform have invested in multiple advertisement forms. One method created by the social network was the use of sponsored ads. Sponsored ads look like any other post on the platform, making them

feel less conspicuous and commercial. With Instagram ads, however, businesses are being advertised to random audiences. Understandably, people do not wish to spend their money on advertising to people who are not their target market. The comments below highlight some businesses' concerns about this.

Interviewee B "The thing about sponsored ads is that you are targeting everybody."

Interviewee J "Sponsored ads just target random people, but at least with an influencer, you have an idea of whom you are advertising to."

These comments give insight as to how influencer marketing is a more targeted means of exposure than Instagram ads. Influencer marketing allows businesses to have a fair idea of the people that they are advertising to, based on the influencer that they hire.

4.1.2 Brand Fit and Exposure

Following the conversation about their use of the Instagram app and their target market, the conversation moved towards social media influencer marketing. Out of the 10 participants, nine had used social media influencers as a marketing strategy, while all 10 had spoken to social media influencers about possible collaborations. Participants gave some explanation about their choice of social media influencers as a marketing tool.

One participant explicitly mentioned her use of social media influencers to reach a specific target market of senior high school students.

Interviewee A "I wanted to target a younger market. SHS. So, I contacted an influencer in high school."

This participant noted that influencers' followers usually comprised of people who were like them, especially age-wise. Corina (2006) found that individuals are attracted to endorsers similar to them. This study confirms that finding, noting that most influencers' following consists of people who can relate to them. Followers are more likely to engage with people

they can relate to, and to reach that market, influencers that are like them are an optimal choice.

In general, most businesses cited the need for exposure as their reason for working with social media influencers. Influencers have already attained a higher number of followers and consequently have larger audiences than rising small businesses. Influencers with established followings can reach a larger group of people. Using an influencer whose followers primarily fit the target market means targeting the group of people who are likely to become customers. There was a consensus among participants that social media influencers help give them exposure.

Interviewee G "It is mostly about the exposure because people do not always necessarily come and buy."

Interviewee I "Influencer marketing significantly increases brand awareness, especially for small businesses."

Interviewee D "Without the brand ambassadors and influencers, I would not be able to get new people to see my stuff."

Interviewee J "Instagram too. Sometimes you post something, and it does not show up on anyone's page. So, the influencers help."

This last comment gives insight into how influencers could leverage a business' position against the Instagram algorithm. Quite a few businesses mentioned how influencers on the app were likely to get more reach than they would. According to Cooper (2021), a post's popularity does not necessarily matter if it has content that an individual has shown interest in before. Since individuals follow influencers because they're interested in their content, influencers' posts are more likely to show up in their feed than a business'.

Businesses mentioned that to gauge how much exposure they were getting; they tracked the interactions on a sponsored post. To truly understand how much people are actually 'seeing a post,' engagement is a good thing to track. Due to mindless scrolling that

many people do on the app, especially the younger ones, interaction is a sign of people paying attention. Likes and comments are an excellent way to track the number of people taking note of an endorsement.

Exposure, however, is only considered effective when influencers advertise businesses to the right audience. While all participants mentioned their preference for influencers with high engagement rates, others took it a step further to share their thoughts on having their product or business match the influencers.

Interviewee C "I could not find specific influencers that were into swimwear and spending a lot of the time at the beach and things like that. They did not fit the kind of thing that I was into."

Interviewee A "You have to know the influencer; you have to make sure that the person has a link with your brand. You cannot go and give glasses to a food influencer because her followers are there for food [content]"

This indicates that when a promotion between a brand and an influencer does not correspond to the followers' interest, there will be little to no response. This finding complements Ilicic and Webster's (2013) view that an endorsement is less effective when the information shared is not relevant. Influencers who have a very specific niche tend to attract a certain audience because of how they tailor their content. There are also lifestyle influencers who have incredibly versatile accounts, showing several aspects of everyday life, and have a wide-ranging audience. Businesses need to note the type of followers an influencer has before they partner with them to promote their products or services.

With lifestyle influencers, businesses do not consider the influencer's expertise in the product to be necessary. Here is what a participant who owned a fitness store had to say:

Interviewee J "Honestly, I look at the people that Ghanaians like. We tend to like gossip and drama and all that, so I contact those people. They do not have to be fitness gurus; they have to be genuine. Besides, these days everyone is getting into health and fitness, so once it is something they already use or can use, they can promote it"

This suggests that brand–fit in businesses' eyes does not require an influencer to be an expert in the product they are promoting. In Till and Busler's (2000) study, they emphasized the need for expertise in promoting products. However, this study found that the influencer does not necessarily need to be an expert but rather just an individual who uses the product. Relatability and likeability are considered more important factors for ensuring brand fit.

Participants were also concerned about social media influencers' attitudes and the type of attention they drew to themselves. For example:

Interviewee C "I do not like engaging and associating with people who partake in any form of drama at all. I do not like my businesses to be associated with that sort of thing."

This participant indicated that the person's reputation online would also affect her business. This is complementary to Veirman, Caubeghe, and Hudders' (2017) findings, which state that an influencer's image may transfer to the brand due to collaboration. This is a significant finding for businesses in that, in their search for a social media influencer, their concentration should be spent on finding someone who aligns with their values.

4.1.3 Growth / Increase in followers

Participants were in consensus about their pages' growth after they had worked with a social media influencer. The following comments are examples of how influencer marketing affected business' accounts.

Interviewee F "[I use influencers] almost all the time, that is how I grew my page."

Interviewee A "When you find that perfect influencer, you will see the traffic."

One significant way businesses tracked an influencer's campaign's success was the increase in their business accounts' followers. Increased followers guarantee the business more potential customers because individuals are more likely to see their products and make purchases once they follow a business' page.

Participants emphasized repeated usage of influencer marketing to acquire the desired traffic from an endorsement.

Interviewee E "For a short time, the person got me followers. If I had used them for longer, I would have gotten a lot more followers."

The repeated showing of the brand on an influencer's page might draw their follower's attention to the persistent endorsement of said brand.

In advertising, this is referred to as effective strategy. The number of times that a consumer sees an advert may influence their purchase intent. According to Schmidt and Eisend (2015), repeated exposure to an opinion makes people believe that the opinion is prevalent, regardless of whether it is only one person saying it. Repetition fosters trust in the influencer's endorsement of the product.

However, Interviewee J's comment goes further to explain the frequency with which the same influencer should be used.

Interviewee J "If you use someone and it yields great results, the next time it might not work well or even at all. The person's followers have already seen you, and those who wished to follow have already done that. Do not throw money away."

While the repeated endorsement of a brand may develop trust among an influencer's followers, businesses should limit how often their sponsorships show up on an influencer's page. Several researchers, e.g., Greenyer (2004), and Erdogan (2008), have found that the excessive use of the same communication channel results in wastage. Too much repetition can cause consumers to become so tired of an ad that they tune out, making the advert counterproductive. For businesses whose main goal is to reach more people, this study finds that the influencer's growing size is key in determining whether an additional endorsement might be a waste or not. With a slow increase in growth, the product will be advertised to the same number of people, and brand awareness would not be increased.

Regarding an increase in sales, participants clarified how an increase in followership could directly affect their revenue. Businesses noted that while influencer marketing did not always lead to a spike in sales, it provided other benefits that they found important. This is summed up by one respondent's comment:

Interviewee X "Sometimes you do a campaign, and people follow you, but no one will buy anything. However, it is not always about people buying from the business. Having more followers also means people take the business more seriously."

Followers are crucial in building the rapport of a business on social media. Businesses on Instagram with a higher number of followers are considered more credible than those with less followers. Businesses who seem more trustworthy attract more customers and allow businesses to be more established in their industries.

A growing number of followers also points to a business' popularity. More followers attract more followers. With a high number of followers, a business gets more people to talk about them and give reviews. The comment below is an example of how peer-to-peer conversations work for brands.

Interviewee J "I like to post much content on the business page. One time I posted something on waist trainers and saw that many people were sharing it with their friends."

Electric word of mouth is an efficient means of creating a conversation about a business. A larger audience implies that even more people will be speaking about a brand. A number of participants noted that referrals by friends and family prove to be more effective than influencers. So, while influencers' endorsements might increase followership count, the credibility perceived about the business page and recommendations from followers can increase sales. Individuals are more inclined to believe specific sources if others do as well. This finding can be associated with Vieman et al.'s study, which found that popularity caused individuals to have a more trustworthy perception of an account.

Despite its use as a key success factor, this study also found that rapid growth was why some businesses might shy away from influencer marketing.

Interviewee C "An influencer will speed up things a lot faster than I would want to carry. Maybe when I want to grow bigger, I will work with them but not now. When a business grows, they lose the ability to pay attention to many things, because they have many things on their plate"

This extract mentions how rapid growth might not be every business's goal and how an increase in customers could cause a business to lose the advantages it had when it was small. According to Scott et al.'s study (1999), smaller businesses have a closer relationship with their customers. A closer relationship results in loyalty on the customer's part and allows the business to cater specifically to the customer's needs. As the conversation progressed, it was revealed that another reason why businesses have been hesitant about the use of influencers is authenticity.

4.1.4 Authenticity

When asked about their perception of sponsored campaigns and collaborations, respondents rated posts with criteria that included authenticity, engagement, and creativity. While factors own their own, engagement and creativity were also used to evaluate an influencer's authenticity. One respondent noted how an influencer's engagement rate could determine how authentic their page and followers were.

Interviewee J "Some of them even buy followers. So, if the number of people engaging does not match the follower count, they might have bought their followers." This comment reveals the length to which people will go to be recognized as an influencer, spending large amounts of money to boost their follower count. This makes the motivation for which many people join the influencer industry questionable. Considering the novel nature of the influencer industry in Ghana, it is far from concentrated in the country. Many influencers are relatively new to the job, and participants spoke about how eager individuals are to be a part of the system.

Interviewee C "Sometimes you even see people sponsoring themselves. Like a sponsored ad will be a girl's page. If you have to promote yourself, then I might as well pay for the advert[Instagram ad]"

The core of the influencer industry is being visible on social media, cultivating a following, and leveraging that following into financial and social opportunities. Numbers have proven to be essential for success in the profession. Businesses look for influencers who have already established a following of their own. These influencers already have the attention of an audience that a business may want to target.

While not identified as a significant factor for choosing an influencer, participants discussed how an influencer's creativity reflected how genuine they were.

Interviewee A "Everyone is doing the same thing; they should come up with different techniques."

Interviewee J "Some will want to tailor the work to their audience, while others will just ask you for everything."

Interviewee C "None of them [influencers] were very natural with their style; they made it obvious that they were promoting a brand. All they do is take a picture and tag the brand."

This, therefore, indicates that influencers need to find a way to integrate sponsored content into their feed in the most natural and organic way possible. Influencers who tailor ads towards their followers will most likely get better results because they know what works well and what does not.

This study found that there was a difference between "true authenticity" and "commercial authenticity." Participants observed how it was important that influencers had to have a particular look while promoting their brands, even though it might not be in the most natural form.

Interviewee J "If you are selling my product, I expect you to look good. Like look put together and all of that. If you are wearing my gym clothes and you are at the gym wearing makeup, and your wig is slayed, that's not realistic, no one exercises like that. But no one wants to see you sweaty and, in a mess, promoting my stuff."

Influencers are meant to showcase what is going in their lives in a glamorous manner, whether it is a bit staged. The problem arises when some influencers blatantly lie to promote

a product. One participant reflected on how she was deterred from hiring an influencer after seeing some of her sponsored content.

Interviewee C "I remember there was this girl I was looking at and then I saw something that really put me off. She was advertising slim tea, and she had photoshopped her waist to look tiny. Like it was so bad even I could tell. When you do things like that no one will even want to buy the product because you are lying."

Thus, indicating how an influencer could lose the trust of her followers and destroy any form of relationship a brand could have with the influencer's audience. An influencer's ability to sway is based mainly on trust, and once perceived as a liar, their influence could drastically reduce. Sudha and Sheena's (2017) study on the impact influencers had in the consumer decision process found that the level of trust between an influencer and their followers could positively affect a business's sales and relationship with the influencer's following. This study found that when the influencer loses their followers' trust, it could negatively affect the business's sales and long-term relationship with the endorser's followers.

The focus on authenticity and engagement led the conversation towards the factors they believed affected an influencer's credibility, which is the next theme.

4.1.5 Credibility

Participants shared their thoughts on the need for influencers to be credible or genuine. Most disclosed how the number of followers an influencer had could affect the influencer's credibility.

Interviewee A "If the person is popular, then it's good for me, because it means she already has the attention of people I want to advertise to."

Thus, indicating that an influencer's followership count makes them popular and attention holders. As said in the previous section, the popularity of a page could affect individuals' perception of their credibility. A higher number of followers implies more people are attracted to or enjoy the influencer's content. As the conversation progressed, participants also disclosed why a high follower count might dilute an influencer's credibility.

Interviewee C "Influencers with larger followings tend to do more ads because many businesses contact them. Other brands doing the same thing are also being promoted, so it will be tough for people to get convinced about a particular brand."

This comment suggested that the switching between brands is harmful to their trustworthiness by consumers. Furthermore, participants also indicated how this behavior could lead to the crowding out of their products.

Interviewee C "If she [influencer], is advertising so many businesses at a time, no one is going to pay attention to my business when she promotes it."

Subsequently, brand switching and numerous businesses' endorsements are two aspects that businesses believe affect the credibility and trustworthiness of influencers. This could be explained by Martinez-Lopez et al. (2020), who stated the negative reception consumers had to highly commercial messages.

4.1.6 Collaborations and Content Creation

The final section focused on business' collaboration with influencers and how that impacted their business page's management. Participants first explained the procedures they underwent in finalizing a brand deal with an influencer. While some businesses contacted influencers and closed deals through direct message, many others obtained endorsements through slots.

The following comment is a detailed description of the process of slot openings.

Interviewee C "So for example, if she is [an influencer], is opening slots for March, all the businesses that want to be advertised will send her money, and then she will give them a slot. Sometimes the prices some of them charge is surprising. Someone with 50,000 plus followers will be charging only 150 cedis for an in-feed post. This is something that a lot of small businesses can afford; obviously, she will have many ads to create."

As a strategy to attract more businesses, some influencers tend to reduce their prices to allow more brands to pay for their marketing services. This results in competition between brands, as many will be fighting for the spotlight on the influencer's page. As said in the previous section, being promoted with other businesses that offer the same products or services may prove harmful to both the influencer and the business.

Another issue brought up was the competition brands had to engage in when contacting influencers with large followings. Considering numbers are what initially draw attention, many businesses tend to flock towards the same influencers. Participants noted how the quality of advertisements was low in this situation.

Interviewee C "She [influencer] will not create content for the number of businesses she has because it is mass advertisement. Influencers with smaller followings will have more time to put effort into creating content for your page. The more following people have, the less time they have for brands."

These findings indicate that there is a tradeoff between reach and the quality of an advertisement. Influencers with a higher number of followers, and therefore a larger audience are bound to receive a higher number of offers than those with smaller followings. Larger influencers who accept most of these offers are less likely to produce exceptional advertisements than influencers with a smaller audience and fewer businesses to promote.

Brands seemed to have picked up the creation of quality content from influencers. One participant explained how he decided to make content himself after a bad experience with an influencer. By creating engaging and aesthetic content, the brand offered consumers something that influencers did - "information and entertainment."

Interviewee B "Honestly, it was quite fun. I created my own content and got followers through that. I told people how to style my products and all that. It really helped me gain followers and build a relationship with the ones that were already following me."

Interviewee C "Engage with your followers, remind them that there is face behind the business."

This study found that by creating content and engaging with customers, businesses could imitate the relationship that influencers had with their followers. In the case of small businesses, it is easier for brands to connect with their followers. Followers are less likely to build a connection with a page if they feel like it is one big corporation that is out to get their money. However, when consumers are aware of the individual(s) behind a business, it is easier for them to connect because they can relate to the person.

While content creation worked well for them, participants still cited the need for influencer marketing; exposure is still necessary. Respondents also mentioned how they tracked influencers to see when the best time it would be to contact them. A participant described how she got in touch with an influencer on a trip and how she profited from it.

Interviewee A "You have to keep track of what they're doing. This girl was going on a vacation with her boyfriend, and I knew a lot of people would be on her page at that time."

This comment emphasizes the importance of businesses paying attention to what an influencer is doing and working it to their advantage.

Finally, participants were asked to rate how effective they thought influencer marketing had been for them. Out of the ten interviewees who participated in the study, 8 rated influencer marketing a score of 8 and above. The reasons the other two participants gave for the low rating were their own ability to grow their page and the gamble they believed influencer marketing could be.

4.2 Research Objective 2

The aim of this section of the chapter is to determine the factors under which influencer-fit is not deemed necessary for a campaign's success. Three independent secondary researchers were made to scroll through the Instagram pages of ten influencers to gain a fair idea of the influencer, the type of content they normally produced, as well as their level of interaction with their followers. Firstly, the engagement rate of the influencer's post was calculated and compared to the business they were promoting. The graph below depicts the findings.

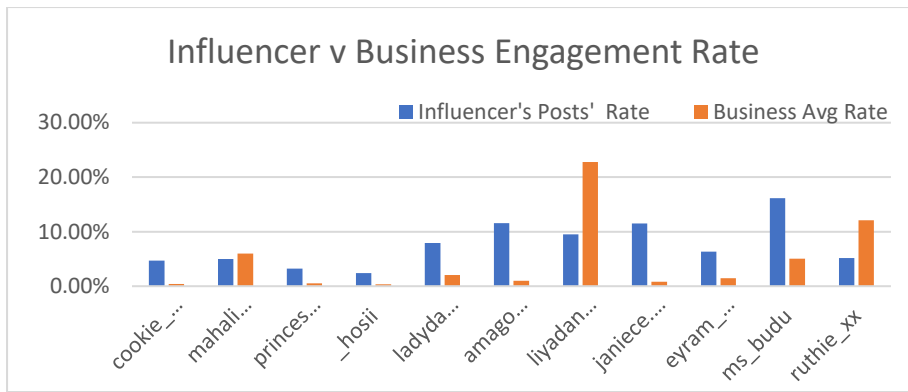


Figure 4.1

According to *contentcal.io*, a good engagement rate on Instagram is 2%, while anything higher than 3 is considered excellent. From Graph 1.0, all posts by influencers promoting brands have an engagement rate of 2% or higher. Using engagement rate as a success factor, these campaigns were successful.

However, it is important to note that the comparison between the engagement rate of the influencer and the business should not be taken at face value. For example, with *liyadances*, the business she is promoting has a much higher engagement rate than she does. However, the business page has a handful of posts and a much lower number of followers. So, while the business’ average engagement rate might be higher than what was attained on *liyadance’s* sponsored post, she had higher number of people interacting and engaging with her campaign.

Secondary researchers then used a scale created by Ohanian to rate one post from each influencer, specifically their trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and fit with the product they were promoting. Intraclass correlation co-efficient (ICC) was used to calculate the inter-rater reliability of the secondary researchers’ responses. The table below shows the intraclass correlation co-efficient based on all 4 categories.

Trustworthiness	0.76
Expertise	0.75
Attractiveness	0.77

Product-Influencer fit	0.75
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Table 4.2

According to Koo and Mae (2016), a coefficient between 0.75 and 0.9 means that the reliability among the raters is good. The ICC of 0.75 and above in all categories indicates that the influencers can be rated with good reliability by different raters.

Finally, a chi-squared test of independence was then conducted to determine whether there was a relationship between the factors for credibility and influencer-fit. The level of significance used for this study was $\alpha = 0.05$.

	Degree of Freedom	N = Sample size	Chi-Squared Statistic	p = p value
Attractiveness v Endorser Fit	1	30	2.49	0.114
Trustworthiness v Endorser Fit	1	30	2.234	0.134
Expertise v Endorser Fit	1	30	5.9627	0.015

Table 4.3

Attractiveness and Endorser- Fit: The relation between the attractiveness of the endorser and their perceived fit with the product they were advertising was insignificant, $X^2 (1, N = 30) = 2.49, p = .114$. Influencer's fit with products they advertise is not dependent on their attractiveness.

Trustworthiness and Fit: The test chi-squared test of independence also showed that there was no significant association between the trustworthiness of the endorser and their perceived fit with the product that they were promoting, $X^2 (1, N = 30) = 2.234, p = .134$.

Expertise and Fit: There was a significant relationship between the influencer's expertise with the product that they were promoting and their perceived fit with the product. The

influencer's fit with a product depends on their level of expertise in the field of the product they are producing.

Till and Busler's (2000) study found that the level of expertise is heavily linked to the fit of the influencer, and that this fit was crucial to the effectiveness of the campaign. Contradictory to Till and Busler's findings, this study finds that a product-influencer fit based on expertise is not necessary for a campaign to be successful. Based on insights from participants in sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3, this study finds that under high levels of trustworthiness or attractiveness of the influencer, followers do not need the influencer to fit with the product to engage with their advertisement of a product. This translates to good success rate of the campaign, as engagement is a key factor for determining the success of a campaign.

From the findings and discussions in this chapter, recommendations for businesses in terms of the use of social media influencer marketing have been brought to light. In the next chapter, these will be presented and summarised.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of social media influencer marketing for small businesses to give such brands a clear perspective on utilizing the advertising source best.

The research has advanced both marketing and academia by looking at the influencer industry and social media influencer marketing from the perspective of small businesses in Ghana. This study aimed to fill the gap in knowledge about social media influencer marketing in the Ghanaian context. To fill this gap, this study identified the factors small businesses used to measure influencer marketing success, the factors that affected the success of the campaign.

The areas of Brand Fit, Exposure, Authenticity, Growth, Credibility, and Content Creation have all been explored to propose important recommendations for brands to consider in making their decision to utilize social media influencer marketing as a marketing tool. It also highlights potential areas for further research on the topic.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The main aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of the use of social media influencer marketers. Out of the 10 businesses interviewed for this study, the 9 who had used social media influencer marketing disclosed that it had been helpful to their businesses. An analysis of influencer's sponsored posts compared to businesses' average engagement rates also showed that the influencer's posts had higher engagements in general. This study found that businesses needed to consider the influencer's credibility, authenticity, follower count, fit with the brand, and their goals for collaborating with a specific influencer for a social media influencer marketing campaign to be successful. It also found that businesses measured the success of a campaign by the number of new followers they got and

the engagement rates on the sponsored post. Concerning whether product-influencer fit was necessary for a campaign to be successful, it was found that product-influencer fit was not required under high levels of trustworthiness and attractiveness.

In summation, this study sought to fill the gap of the social media influencer industry in Ghana.

5.2 Implications for Brands

5.2.1 Brand Fit with the influencer

A key aspect for the success of an influencer campaign was the type of audience an influencer targeted. Brands must ensure that the influencers they work with have followers who would find the collaboration relevant and be interested in their product. Businesses need not target only people who work in niches related to their product but lifestyle influencers as well. Lifestyle influencers can easily integrate a range of products into their feed because they reveal several aspects of their lives on social media. Make sure that you have said this in your analysis. Brands should also work with influencer's whose values align with theirs because an influencer's image can transfer to them after collaboration. With the specific type of product to be promoted, brands should look for attractive and trustworthy influencers and not necessarily experts in using their product.

5.2.2 Pricing and Number of Endorsements.

Businesses need to consider the price an influencer may charge before agreeing to work with them. Social media influencer marketing is a relatively affordable means of marketing, which affects the number of businesses an influencer may promote. Businesses should consider the price to followership ratio before contacting an influencer, which might affect the advert's

effectiveness. Using an influencer who endorses many companies might promote competition among brands and reduce the attention they might wish to get from a collaboration.

Businesses also need to ensure the influencer they choose to collaborate with avoids switching between brands that promote the same product. This makes their reviews or promotions less trustworthy and convincing.

5.2.3 influencer's engagement rates

Participants emphasized the need for influencers to be genuine and authentic with the content they were producing. Working with an influencer who is not genuine could damage any potential relations a brand could have with the influencer's followers. To gauge the genuineness of an influencer, businesses should pay attention to the influencer's engagement rate. Low engagement rates could mean fake followers or followers who have little interest in the influencer.

5.2.4 Goal of Endorsement

Businesses need to clearly define their goals of collaborating with social media influencers before contacting them. The size of an influencer's following plays a large role in the outcome of an endorsement. Influencers with more significant followings will get a brand a significantly large amount of exposure. In contrast, influencers with smaller followings can invest time and effort into creating an advert for the business. This might result in higher response rates to the advertisements and be more persuasive. Depending on what the business wishes to achieve, they should consider an influencer's followership count.

Businesses that wish to reach more people should consider an influencer's growth rate. Using an influencer with a slow growth rate will result in stagnant results for the business, as little to no new followers are seeing their advertisements. Businesses who wish to establish themselves with an influencer's audience should invest in long-term partnerships. If a

follower regularly sees that someone they follow is partnering with a brand, it helps to build trust.

5.2.5 Establishing a strong social media presence.

Participants emphasized the need for businesses to create their content and maintain their own social media page. While it was found that influencer marketing could lead people to a business' page, it was not enough to make them stay there. Businesses need to pull a page from social media influencers' books and be engaging, creative, and consistent to get followers to interact with their account. Dedicated followers will also serve as promoters, which serve as an even more effective means of advertising.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

- Other African countries, such as Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria, where the influencer industry is also growing could replicate this study. This will give brands who work in these countries insights as to how influencer marketing campaigns work best in their countries.
- While this study emphasized attractiveness and trustworthiness, all participants belonged to the fashion industry, and all influencers were female, highlighting a limitation of this study. Future research may examine how the other aspects of credibility affect a campaign's success in different industries and whether these factors apply differently to male social media influencers.
- This research also focused on the effectiveness of reaching the youth in terms of followership count and engagement. Further research could investigate how

influencer marketing directly affects the sales of businesses that adopt this marketing method. This would give insight into how influencer marketing affects the purchase intentions of consumers in Ghana.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

Questions

1. What is the age range of your target market?
2. Have you ever hired a social media influencer to promote your product/brand?
3. If you have, kindly describe the process you undertook to find and contact this influencer.
4. Is there an approval process posts must go through before the influencer can make them public?
5. Were there specific guidelines the influencers were made to follow when posting about your brand?
6. Were there specific qualities you looked for when searching for an influencer? If so, kindly state a few.
7. How often are influencers used in your business as a means of marketing/advertising?
8. What do you think about the social media influencer industry?
9. How do you think using social media influencers as a marketing strategy has affected your business?
10. Why do you use social media influencers as a marketing tool?
11. Have you ever had a poor experience working with an influencer? If so, kindly elaborate.
12. What key performance indicators do you use to track the success of your campaign?
13. On a scale of 1-10, to what extent do you think influencer marketing is helpful? Please explain the rating.

14. Do you think influencer marketing is going to gain more traction in the following years?