

**Impact of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Behavior: A Case Study Analysis in  
the Wanni Fuga Fashion Industry**

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## ABSTRACT

The transformative role of social media influencers in shaping consumer behavior has garnered substantial attention in contemporary marketing landscapes. This study delves into the impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior, using the Wanni Fuga fashion brand as a case study. Employing a mixed-methods approach encompassing online surveys and semi-structured interviews, the research unravels the intricate dynamics between influencers and consumers within the fashion industry.

The investigation underscores the pivotal role of authenticity and relatability in influencer appeal. Participants emphasized their preference for influencers who exhibited genuineness and shared relatable experiences. The study further illuminates influencers' pronounced influence on purchase decisions, with participants acknowledging the sway of influencer content on product preferences, generating interest in new items, and often culminating in actual purchases. The qualitative findings highlight the resonance of influencer narratives in cultivating consumer trust and fostering purchase intent. Addressing ethical concerns, the study probes the significance of transparency in sponsored content. Participants emphasized the importance of influencers openly disclosing brand partnerships to maintain credibility. Furthermore, this research highlights the tension between commercialization and authenticity, stressing that influencers must strike a balance between contractual obligations and genuine connection with their audience.

Implications of this research are numerous and far-reaching. For marketing practitioners, its findings emphasize the need to align influencers with brand values and foster consistency in content production. Encouraging transparent disclosures and strategic collaborations with influencers can enhance brand credibility and consumer engagement. Consumers can benefit from heightened awareness of influencer dynamics, enabling informed decisions and critical consumption of influencer content.

This study significantly contributes to the understanding of how social media influencers wield influence within the fashion industry. By unraveling the multifaceted relationship between influencers and consumers, the research offers insights that can guide marketers in optimizing influencer collaborations and consumers in navigating the intricate influencer landscape. The study underscores the strategic potential of influencer marketing within the fashion industry and beyond, while offering insights into the ethical considerations that underpin its efficacy and sustainability.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

In the contemporary digital landscape, the sway of social media on consumer behavior and marketing trends is undeniable. Among the prominent shifts, the rise of influencers stands out. These influential figures hold the power to shape opinions, attitudes, and purchasing choices within their extensive follower base (Delbaere et al., 2021). Within this dynamic landscape, the fashion industry has been profoundly affected by the phenomenon of influencer marketing. This case study analysis centers on the fashion sector, with a specific spotlight on the renowned brand Wanni Fuga. Its objective is to dissect the influence of social media influencers, exploring their impact on consumers and the subsequent shaping of marketing trends.

### **1.2 Contextualizing Influencer Dynamics in Fashion**

Amidst diverse industries, the fashion realm has experienced a significant transformation due to influencer marketing. The intricate interactions between consumers, brands, and influencers are crucial in understanding the dynamics of this environment. This case study meticulously examines these interactions to provide an all-encompassing view of the evolving influencer marketing phenomenon. Aligning with the research objectives outlined earlier, this analysis employs a blend of apt theories, convergent and divergent thinking techniques, and adept organizational and time management skills.

### **1.3 Significance of Understanding Influencers in Fashion**

The burgeoning reliance of consumers on social media influencers for authentic and captivating brand experiences underscores the importance of comprehending their role. Conventional advertising tactics often fall short of capturing the attention of modern consumers who are increasingly resistant to overt promotional messages (Andrews & Shimp, 2017). Conversely, social media influencers offer a more personal and trustworthy



connection, making their influence impactful. Within this context, the case study probes the challenges and opportunities within influencer marketing, placing particular emphasis on ethical concerns, such as transparency and authenticity. As influencer-brand collaborations proliferate, concerns about transparent disclosure and potential deception emerge. This case study undertakes a comprehensive examination of these ethical considerations, offering marketers insights into maintaining integrity and consumer trust.

## **1.4 Methodology**

### **1.4.1 Aim**

The aim of this study is to investigate and analyze the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior and marketing trends within the fashion industry, with a focus on the Wanni Fuga brand.

### **1.4.2 Objectives**

1. To examine the extent of social media usage and engagement with fashion influencers among consumers.
2. To assess the impact of fashion influencers on consumer purchasing decisions and attitudes.
3. To analyze the ethical considerations associated with influencer marketing in the fashion industry.
4. To provide recommendations for effective and ethical influencer marketing strategies for the Wanni Fuga brand.

### **1.4.3 Research Questions**

1. How does consumer engagement with fashion influencers on social media platforms impact their purchasing decisions and attitudes towards fashion products?

2. What are the key factors influencing consumer trust and credibility in fashion influencers, particularly in relation to authenticity, transparency, and expertise?
3. How do ethical considerations, such as transparency in sponsored content and the authenticity of influencer endorsements, affect consumer perceptions and behaviors in the fashion industry?
4. What strategic recommendations can be provided to the Wanni Fuga brand for effectively leveraging social media influencers while maintaining ethical practices in their influencer marketing campaigns?

#### **1.4.4 Research Framework**

To fulfill these objectives, an extensive literature review was conducted, covering pertinent theories and concepts associated with social media influencers, consumer behavior, and marketing trends. By merging these theoretical underpinnings, the analysis establishes a strong groundwork for understanding the intricate mechanisms at play, while simultaneously pinpointing gaps in existing research. Building on this foundation, the subsequent sections will unveil empirical findings and meticulously analyze their implications for marketing strategies. The focus remains on the fashion sector, with special attention to the Wanni Fuga brand. Employing a mixed-methods approach, encompassing qualitative interviews and surveys, the study captures insights from both consumers and marketing professionals. The utilization of techniques like thematic analysis and statistical methods ensures a comprehensive exploration of social media influencers, guaranteeing the depth and rigor of the study.

#### **1.5 Preview of the Study's Structure**

In summary, this case study embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the influence wielded by social media influencers within the fashion industry, with a distinctive emphasis on the Wanni Fuga brand. Through rigorous examination, the report aims to unravel the

impact, blend pertinent theories, and address ethical considerations linked to influencer marketing practices. The subsequent segments will delve deeper into findings, dissecting the interplay among brands, consumers, and influencers. Ultimately, the study will culminate in actionable recommendations for fostering successful and ethical influencer marketing practices within the fashion industry.

## **RESEARCH**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The literature review in this case study analysis explores the impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior and marketing trends in the fashion industry, with a specific focus on the Wanni Fuga brand. By synthesizing and critically evaluating existing research, this section aims to establish a comprehensive theoretical foundation for understanding the role of influencers in the fashion landscape. It also identifies research gaps and provides insights into how social media influencers shape consumer opinions, attitudes, and purchasing decisions. Additionally, ethical implications related to influencer marketing practices in the fashion industry are thoroughly examined.

#### **2.2 The Concept of Social Media Influencers**

Social media influencers have garnered significant traction with the proliferation of digital platforms and consumers' reliance on them as sources of information, entertainment, and social connection. Influencers on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter possessing large audiences have amassed substantial followings and can shape audience's opinions, behaviors, and purchasing decisions by wielding power over the opinions of followers through TikTok or Twitter accounts such as their influence over opinion leaders can influence opinions, behaviors and purchasing decisions of an audience. This section of the literature review critically examines their characteristics as well as their impact on consumer behavior and marketing trends.

Social media influencers can be identified by their online presence and reach. Influencers leverage social media platforms to build an engaged following within certain niches or industries, often through tailored content creation for them by their audience

members (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). They create posts that resonate with audiences across a wide variety of lifestyle topics - lifestyle, fashion, beauty, fitness, travel, and finance among them - by posting product recommendations, reviews tutorials, or personal insights that establish them as trusted authorities in these respective areas. Studies on the effect of social media influencers on consumer behavior have been widely conducted. Research has demonstrated how influencers can significantly alter consumer opinions, attitudes, and buying decisions; their endorsements carry weight with consumers who perceive them as relatable sources of information. Dwidienawati et al (2020) found that people tend to trust influencers more than traditional ads, viewing influencers more as knowledgeable peers rather than salespeople; furthermore, their influence is felt beyond product recommendations - shaping lifestyle choices, trends, and even social and cultural norms as well.

Social media influencers have revolutionized marketing practices and inspired brand campaigns driven by influencer marketing. Companies recognize their ability to leverage influencers' reach and influence to connect more organically and authentically with target audiences through collaborations with them. Furthermore, collaborations offer brands a chance to capitalize on influencer credibility and engagement for increased brand awareness, new market entry, consumer engagement, and sales - according to Duffet (2020)'s study on this matter, influencer marketing was shown effective in improving brand recognition among millennials and Gen Z demographics in particular as can be seen by this sample analysis by the global web index 2021.

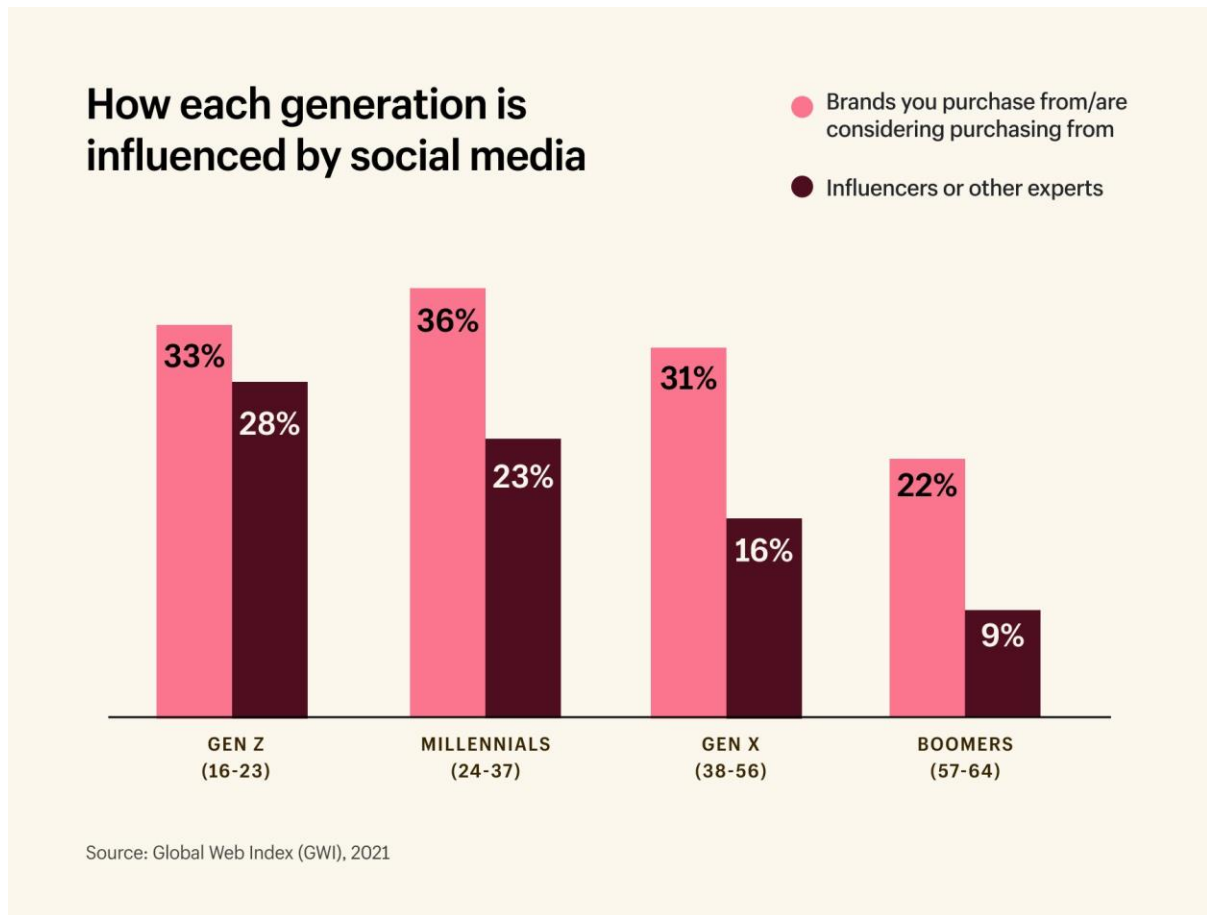


Figure 1: Influence of each generation by social media

However, social media influencers do not come without controversy and complexity; their authenticity and transparency have come under close examination. Research has emphasized the need for influencers to disclose their collaborations with brands to maintain transparency and avoid deceiving their audiences. The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has provided guidelines for influencer marketing that emphasize clear and conspicuous disclosure (Carpenter & Bonin, 2020). Failing to adhere to these regulations may result in fines as well as damage to one's reputation. Increased commercialization of influencer marketing has raised serious doubts regarding the credibility and authenticity of influencer recommendations, with consumers becoming more adept at distinguishing genuine from paid endorsements. Cabeza et al. (2022) found that perceived authenticity significantly affects

attitudes and purchase intentions, thus emphasizing the need for influencers to remain authentic while aligning themselves with audience values to maintain influence over time.

Generally, social media influencers represent a revolutionary transformation in consumer behavior and marketing practices. Through their online presence and reach, these individuals use influencer marketing techniques to influence consumer opinions, attitudes, and purchasing decisions. Social media influencers have transformed marketing strategies, leading to campaigns driven by influencers as well as collaborations between them and brands; yet ethical considerations regarding transparency and authenticity have arisen. Clear disclosure of sponsored content and authenticity are two essential components for influencers to maintain consumer trust and retain influencer status. Future research should investigate the expanding landscape of social media influencers as well as identify any challenges or opportunities associated with their influence over consumer behaviors or marketing trends.

### **2.3 Influence of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Behavior and Marketing Trends**

In this section of the literature review, we delve into the remarkable influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior and marketing trends, with a specific focus on the renowned fashion brand, Wanni Fuga. These individuals wield significant power, shaping the opinions, attitudes, and purchasing decisions of their followers through various mechanisms and persuasive techniques. The success of social media influencers can be attributed to their perceived authenticity and relatability. Compared to traditional advertising methods, influencers create a more genuine and personal connection with their audience. By sharing personal experiences, preferences, and opinions, influencers cultivate trust and are seen as knowledgeable peers rather than mere salespeople (Dwidienawati et al., 2020). This relatability is particularly significant for millennial and Generation Z consumers who seek guidance from relatable role models (Duffet, 2022).

Social proof is another factor contributing to the influencers' impact, referring to people's tendency to rely on others' actions and opinions when making decisions. Influencers serve as social proof on social media, lending legitimacy to their recommendations and influencing consumer behavior accordingly. When consumers see others engaging with and endorsing a product or service, it increases their perception as popular, reliable, and desirable, driving greater interest and potential adoption (Vrontis et al., 2021). Influencers also play an instrumental role in shaping consumer attitudes and opinions through content production and storytelling techniques. By sharing personal narratives, experiences, testimonials, or product placements, influencers elicit emotional responses from their followers (Dwidienawati et al., 2020). By associating themselves with specific brands or products, influencers create positive associations for both themselves and the brands, effectively influencing consumer perceptions (Dwidienawati et al., 2020).

Beyond individual product recommendations, influencers hold the power to transform lifestyle choices and set trends across various industries, including fashion, beauty, fitness, and travel (Chopra et al., 2021). Consumers look up to influencers as experts in their respective fields, seeking inspiration and guidance in their choices. Wanni Fuga, as a prominent fashion brand, has successfully leveraged the influence of social media influencers to become a trendsetter in Nigeria's fashion industry. Renowned influencers such as Toke Makinwa, Nancy Isime, Sharon Ooja Egwurube, and Dimma Umeh have been actively endorsing Wanni Fuga's designs, solidifying the brand's image as a fashion-forward choice among consumers. However, the commercialization of influencer marketing has raised concerns over authenticity and transparency. Consumers have become more cautious about sponsored content, demanding greater transparency and accountability from influencers and brands alike. Striking a balance between maintaining authenticity and meeting contractual



obligations with brands is crucial for influencers to preserve their influence and retain consumer trust (Watkins, 2022).

## 2.4 Consumer Behavior Models and Influencer Marketing:

In the evolving landscape of digital marketing, understanding consumer behavior is paramount for brands seeking to harness the power of influencer marketing effectively. This subsection delves into established consumer behavior models, particularly the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), to shed light on how these models can illuminate the intricate dynamics between social media influencers and consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions. Moreover, as can be seen by the figure below, it explores how these models can be strategically employed to comprehend the impact of influencers on consumer behavior, focusing on the case of Wanni Fuga.

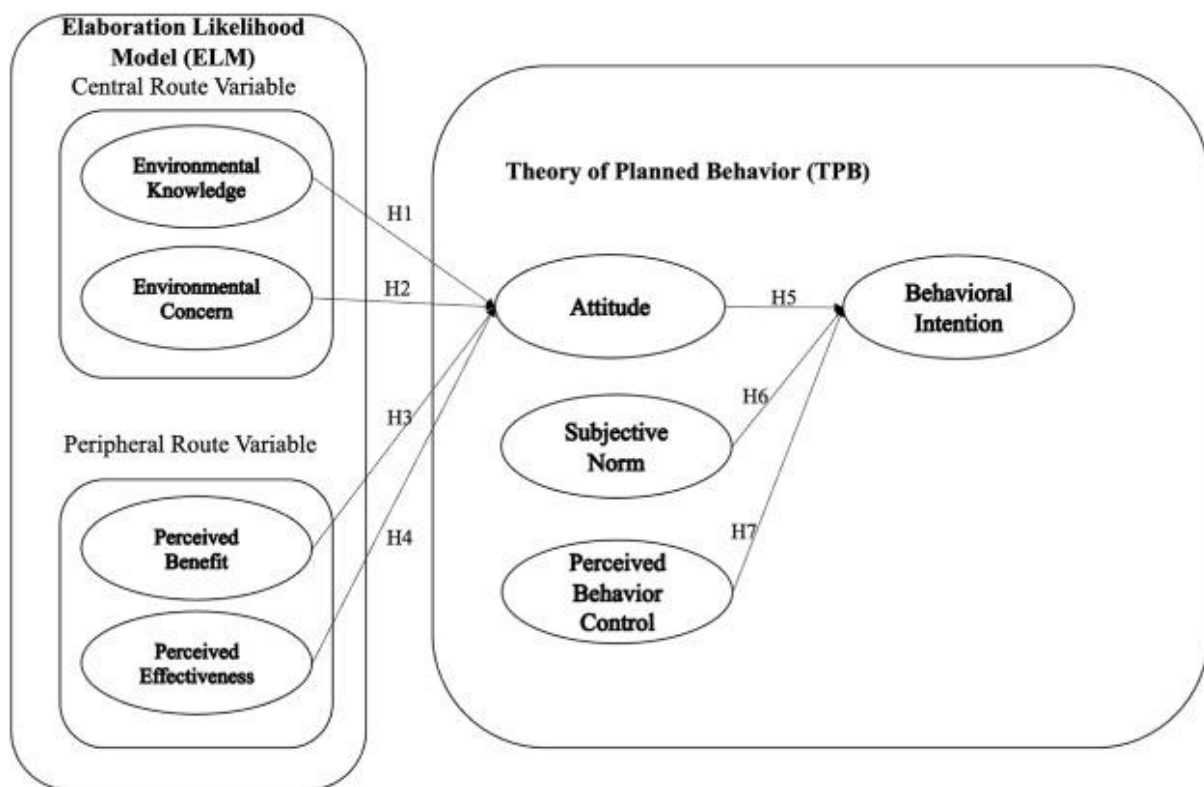


Figure 2: ELM & TPB Theories; Source (Liu et al., 2022)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen in 1991, posits that consumer behavior is influenced by their intentions, which are shaped by attitudes, subjective

norms, and perceived behavioral control (Barbera & Ajzen, 2020). This model asserts that consumers' attitudes towards a behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control collectively drive their behavioral intentions and, subsequently, their actual behavior (Barbera & Ajzen, 2020). In the context of influencer marketing, TPB can provide insights into how social media influencers influence consumers' attitudes towards a brand or product, as well as their intention to make a purchase. For instance, by examining the alignment between influencer endorsements and consumer attitudes, the TPB framework can offer a structured approach to understanding the link between influencer content and consumer purchase intentions within the context of Wanni Fuga.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), developed by Petty and Cacioppo in 1986, offers a dual-route framework for understanding how persuasion occurs (Kim et al., 2016). The central route involves a careful evaluation of persuasive messages, while the peripheral route relies on heuristics and cues. Within influencer marketing, ELM can be applied to analyze how consumers process information from influencers based on their level of involvement and motivation. High-involvement consumers may critically evaluate influencer content, focusing on the central route of processing, while low-involvement consumers might rely more on peripheral cues such as influencer popularity or likability (Ju & Lou, 2022). Through the ELM lens, the impact of social media influencers on consumer attitudes and behavior can be dissected by considering the cognitive processes consumers undertake when engaging with influencer content in the context of Wanni Fuga.

By integrating these consumer behavior models into the exploration of influencer marketing's impact on consumer behavior, a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying mechanisms can be achieved (Ju & Lou, 2022). Applying the TPB and ELM frameworks to the case of Wanni Fuga allows for a systematic analysis of how influencer-driven content influences consumers' attitudes, intentions, and actual purchasing decisions.

This analysis aids in crafting strategic influencer collaborations that align with consumer behavior drivers, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies.

## **2.5 Impact of Influencer Characteristics on Consumer Behavior**

In the dynamic realm of influencer marketing, the success of a brand's engagement with consumers hinges upon the nuanced characteristics and attributes of social media influencers. This segment delves into an exploration of these influential traits and their implications on consumer behavior. Factors such as influencer expertise, relatability, credibility, and source attractiveness play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and attitudes, thereby driving purchasing decisions. By scrutinizing these traits, we can unveil the intricate mechanisms underlying the influence of influencers on consumer behavior, specifically within the context of Wanni Fuga.

Influencer expertise serves as a cornerstone for their impact on consumer behavior. Experts are deemed more credible and trustworthy sources of information (Baig & Shahzad, 2022), and influencers who display profound knowledge in fashion or related fields can significantly sway consumer opinions. By reviewing influencer content and evaluating their ability to provide valuable insights, consumers perceive them as credible sources of information, thereby increasing the likelihood of adopting their recommendations (Tien et al., 2019). Within the Wanni Fuga context, investigating the expertise of chosen influencers provides insights into how their knowledgeable content can drive engagement and foster a sense of authority, ultimately enhancing the brand's image. The relatability of influencers is another compelling attribute that deeply influences consumer behavior. Influencers who create content that resonates with their audience's aspirations, lifestyles, and challenges cultivate a sense of connection and authenticity (Singh, 2023). Consumers are more likely to trust and adopt recommendations from relatable influencers who mirror their own experiences and values (Shouten et al., 2021). By examining how Wanni Fuga's influencers

align with their target audience's characteristics and preferences, we can uncover how relatability fosters a stronger emotional bond between consumers and the brand.

Credibility is a linchpin in the realm of influencer marketing. Consumers heavily rely on the perceived credibility of influencers when evaluating their recommendations. Credible influencers engender trust and reduce skepticism, resulting in more favorable attitudes and increased engagement with the endorsed products or services (Baig & Shahzad, 2022). The choice of influencers aligned with Wanni Fuga mirrors the brand's commitment to credibility and fosters a seamless integration of their ethos with the influencers' personas. Source attractiveness, encompassing physical appearance, likability, and social similarity, amplifies influencers' impact on consumer behavior (Vrontis et al., 2021). Attractive influencers captivate attention and hold a distinct advantage in driving positive consumer attitudes. The relatability of influencers further magnifies their likability, contributing to enhanced source attractiveness (Singh, 2023). Analyzing how the chosen Wanni Fuga influencers embody source attractiveness can provide insights into how these influencers stimulate consumer engagement through their appealing personas.

By dissecting the interplay between influencer characteristics and consumer behavior, this analysis unveils the intricate mechanisms shaping consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions. Through a lens focused on influencer expertise, relatability, credibility, and source attractiveness, the study illuminates the strategic choices made by Wanni Fuga in aligning with influencers that embody these attributes. This alignment bolsters the brand's image, elevates consumer engagement, and propels the efficacy of influencer marketing within the realm of fashion.

## 2.6 The Subconscious Influencer Effect

In the era of digital marketing, influencers have become a dominant force shaping consumer preferences and brand perceptions. While it's common for consumers to acknowledge the impact of influencers on their decisions consciously, this study illuminates a deeper layer of influence: the subconscious influencer effect. This phenomenon, despite consumers' claims of being unaffected, demonstrates how influencers significantly mold consumer attitudes and behaviors.

The term "subconscious influencer effect" encapsulates the intricate and often unacknowledged ways in which influencers permeate the minds of their followers, leaving an indelible mark on their perceptions and choices. In this research-study, participants who followed specific influencers often exhibited similar opinions about the Wanni Fuga brand, even when they asserted that their choices were not directly influenced. This suggests that, beneath the surface, influencers subtly guide consumers' preferences, possibly by instilling a sense of trust, shared values, or aspiration.

Psychological theories underpin this phenomenon. The study's findings resonate with the concept of "mere exposure effect," whereby individuals tend to develop a preference for things they encounter frequently. In the context of influencer marketing, this translates to consumers favoring brands and products endorsed by the influencers they follow, even if they aren't consciously aware of this preference (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Furthermore, this study will underscore the social identity theory's relevance in understanding the subconscious influencer effect (Vatera et al., 2017). Consumers may unconsciously align themselves with influencers whose values, lifestyle, or identity mirror their own. As a result, their purchasing decisions, influenced by these subconscious alignments, are steered towards brands and products endorsed by these influencers.

The subconscious influencer effect aligns with existing literature on the psychology of consumer behavior. It complements studies exploring the power of subconscious cues in marketing, such as color psychology and priming (Kimmel & Kimmel, 2018; Brierley, 2017). In the case of influencer marketing, these cues include the influencers themselves – their persona, authenticity, and relatability. This concept also resonates with previous research on the psychology of persuasion. Influencers can be seen as persuasive communicators, and their effectiveness often lies in their ability to persuade without triggering resistance (Borchers et al., 2022). The subconscious influencer effect reveals the subtle art of persuasion, wherein consumers willingly embrace the influencer's recommendations as part of their identity and preferences.

In summary, the subconscious influencer effect uncovered in this study will reflect a nuanced and sophisticated facet of influencer marketing. It will highlight the subtle ways in which influencers impact consumer choices, often without consumers being fully conscious of this influence. By introducing this concept into the literature, this study enriches the understanding of the profound role that influencers play in shaping consumer behavior and brand perceptions. As influencer marketing continues to evolve, recognizing and harnessing the subconscious influencer effect will be vital for marketers seeking to connect with their target audiences on a deeper, more authentic level.

## **2.7 Micro-Influencers and Niche Communities: The Unseen Drivers of Influence**

This study uncovers a significant revelation in the world of influencer marketing - the power of micro-influencers like Freda Francis, particularly within specialized niche communities. The findings will resonate with a burgeoning trend that is reshaping the influencer marketing landscape. It's essential to delve into this emerging paradigm in the literature review, highlighting the effectiveness and unique attributes of micro-influencers when compared to their macro counterparts.

Micro-influencers, with their relatively modest follower counts compared to macro-influencers, have demonstrated a remarkable ability to foster profound connections with their audience. This connection is not merely transactional but deeply rooted in shared interests, values, and passions. Your study confirms that micro-influencers can generate genuine engagement within these niche communities, a phenomenon that has drawn the attention of brands seeking more authentic and targeted marketing strategies. The influence wielded by micro-influencers can be attributed to the closeness they share with their followers. As their online presence revolves around a specific area of interest, whether it's fashion, technology, or fitness, they are perceived as credible and passionate authorities within their niche. Your research findings underscore how this perceived authenticity and relatability form a powerful bond between micro-influencers and their followers, ultimately driving consumer behavior.

Numerous studies reinforce the efficacy of micro-influencers. Research by Jordas (2023) emphasizes that micro-influencers are more trusted by their followers due to their genuine and unfiltered content. This trust extends to brand recommendations, as followers perceive them as unbiased sources of information. Furthermore, a study by Pozharliev et al., (2022) found that micro-influencers tend to generate higher engagement rates and, consequently, are more cost-effective for marketers when compared to macro-influencers. The rise of micro-influencers is not only a response to the consumer demand for authenticity but also a strategic choice for brands looking to tap into niche markets. These influencers possess an in-depth understanding of their followers' needs and preferences, allowing brands to reach highly targeted audiences more effectively. Their influence is not diluted across a vast and diverse following, but rather concentrated within a specific community, ensuring that the brand's message resonates more profoundly.

Generally, the study's exploration of micro-influencers and their impact on niche communities represents a vital contribution to the evolving influencer marketing landscape.

By incorporating this trend into the literature review, the broader context of influencer marketing is enriched. The effectiveness and authenticity of micro-influencers within specialized communities are corroborated by your research findings, aligning with recent studies on the subject. As influencer marketing continues to evolve, recognizing the influence wielded by micro-influencers in niche communities will be pivotal for brands aiming to establish genuine connections with their target audiences.

## **2.8 Ethical Considerations in Influencer Marketing**

Influencer marketing has become an effective promotional strategy within the fashion industry and the Wannu Fuga brand but has raised ethical concerns around transparency, authenticity, and potential deception of consumers. Here we critically analyze ethical considerations in influencer marketing and sample an analysis by an article by (Nanji, 2019); specifically looking at practices implemented by Wannu Fuga and their associated influencers.

Transparency of sponsored content is a critical ethical element of influencer marketing. Influencers may receive payment in return for endorsing products or services they endorse; as a result, any associated partnerships must remain transparent to their target audiences. Regulators such as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in the U.S. and similar organizations globally require influencers to disclose their relationships with brands for transparency reasons and to avoid deceptive practices (Watkins, 2022). Studies have demonstrated that influencers' compliance with regulations is different significantly across social media platforms (Mathur et al., 2018), leading to inconsistent disclosure practices across them. Failure to disclose can mislead consumers and prevent them from making informed decisions regarding the authenticity of influencer content. Failing to disclose can



mislead consumers and prevent them from making informed decisions about the authenticity of influencer content.

Authenticity is another critical ethical factor in influencer marketing. Consumers form relationships with influencers based on how genuine, genuine, and reliable their content appears to them. As influencer marketing becomes more mainstream, questions have arisen regarding its authenticity. Influencers who promote products for financial gain without truly believing or experiencing them risk jeopardizing consumer trust and credibility for themselves as well as for the brand (Hahl 2023). To promote ethical practices in influencer marketing, industry associations, and influencer marketing platforms have issued guidelines and codes of conduct emphasizing transparent disclosure of sponsored content and providing recommendations and examples to influencers to encourage compliance (Mathur et al., 2018). However, due to voluntary adoption and enforcement methods, this has led to inconsistencies and possibly unethical behavior among influencers.

Ethical considerations in influencer marketing have significant ramifications for consumer trust and brand credibility. Non-disclosure of sponsored content has been shown to negatively affect consumers' trust in influencers (Weismueller et al., 2020) as they may feel deceived or question the authenticity of influencer content, leading them to question its authenticity further. At the Wanni Fuga brand, transparency and authenticity in influencer collaborations is of utmost importance in building long-term relationships with followers while increasing the effectiveness of influencer campaigns.

To address these ethical concerns, regulatory bodies, and industry organizations have issued guidelines and recommendations to influencers. For example, the FTC requires influencers who post sponsored content to use clear and conspicuous disclosure language like #ad or #sponsored when posting sponsored material; social media platforms also offer tools

and features designed to facilitate disclosure and increase transparency, such as Instagram's "Branded Content" tool that enables influencers to tag paid partnerships (Iacobucci & Cicco, 2020). By adopting such initiatives consumers can better comprehend and build trust in influencer marketing practices - ultimately benefitting both parties.

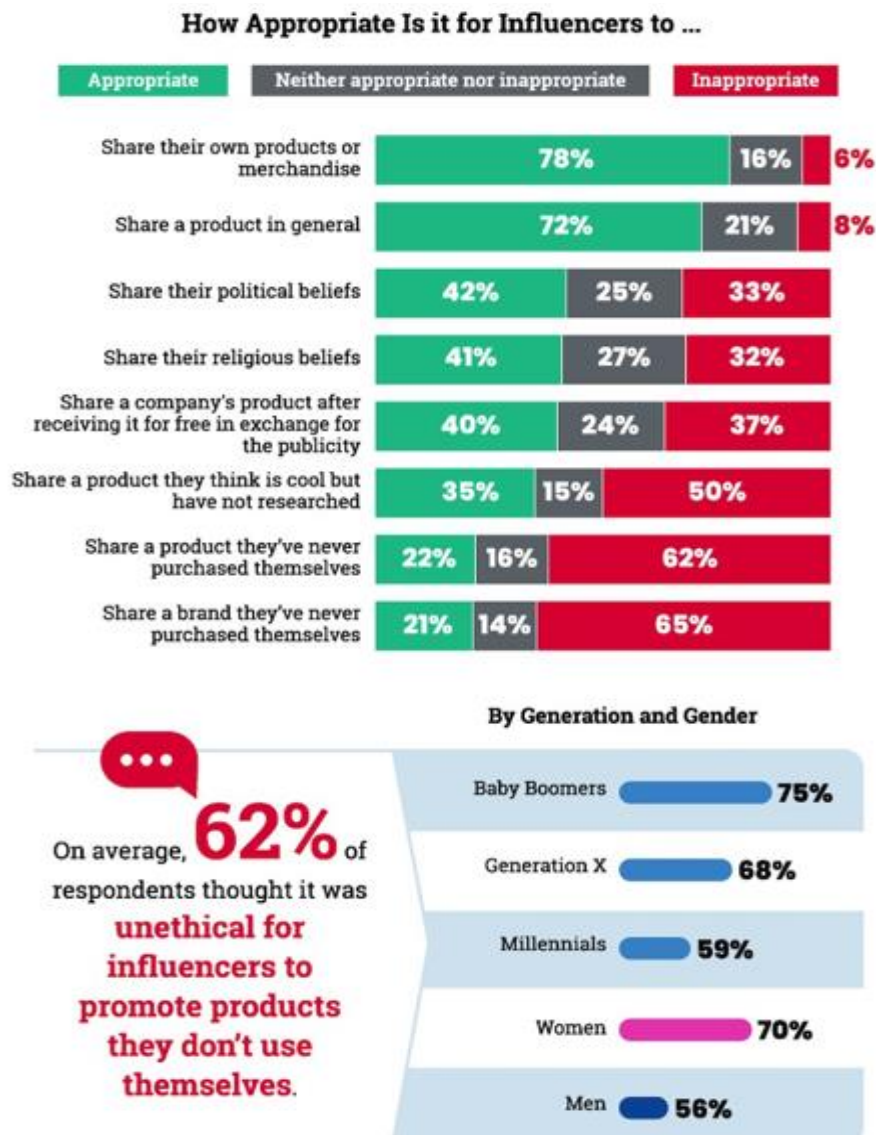


Figure 3: Ethical Considerations in Influencer Marketing: Source (Nanji, 2019)

## 2.9 Research Gap and Limitations

The study of social media influencers and their effect on consumer behavior has attracted significant interest over recent years; however, there remain several research gaps and limitations that must be addressed to further study.

One major research gap lies in the lack of universally accepted metrics for measuring influencer marketing (Leite & Baptista, 2022). Studies have examined the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior; however, more rigorous and reliable measurement approaches should be implemented for their analysis. Many studies rely on self-reported measures such as perceived influence or intent to purchase, which may not accurately represent actual behavior. The development of reliable and objective measures is paramount to accurately assessing the impact of influencer marketing and comparing findings across studies. There remains a research gap related to studying the long-term effects and sustainability of influencer marketing campaigns. Most studies on influencer marketing focus on immediate changes, such as immediate changes in consumer behavior or attitudes (Iyer & Reczek, 2017), but little research exists regarding its long-term effects over time. An understanding of this aspect of influencer marketing is vitally important for marketers and practitioners to make informed decisions regarding campaign strategies and investment allocation (Chopra et.al, 2021).

Studies of influencer marketing tend to focus on consumer preferences and behaviors while neglecting the perspective of influencers themselves. Underestimated are the motivations, experiences, and challenges faced by influencers when working with brands. An exploration of influencer perspectives could yield invaluable insight into the dynamics of influencer-brand relationships, the ethical issues they encounter, and the strategies they employ to maintain authenticity and trustworthiness. As well as research gaps, several limitations must also be recognized. First of all, most studies in the literature use cross-sectional designs, which limits our ability to establish causality and make concrete assertions regarding social media influencers' impact on consumer behavior (Jimenez & Sanchez 2019). Longitudinal studies that follow consumer behavior over time and evaluate influencer marketing campaigns at different stages would provide more reliable evidence.

Unfortunately, most research in this field has been conducted within Western environments - specifically the US. Studies are necessary to explore cultural variations in the effectiveness and influence of social media influencers. Cultural factors, values, and norms may impact how consumers react to influencer marketing strategies - this underscores the significance of taking into account diverse cultural contexts when planning influencer marketing strategies.

Influencer marketing literature often neglects to consider influencers on newer platforms like TikTok or Clubhouse that may become influential through influencer marketing. As consumer preferences continue to shift, it is vital for future research to keep pace with this dynamic evolution and explore the impact of influencers on emerging platforms (Chopra et.al, 2021). Ethical considerations represent a continuing challenge and limitation in influencer marketing research. While studies have highlighted the significance of transparency and authenticity, actual practices and behaviors continue to change among influencers and brands over time. Additional research needs to assess the effectiveness and enforcement of regulatory guidelines as well as consumer trust impacts from disclosure practices as well as emerging relationships between influencers and brands in light of ethical considerations.

## **2.10 Empirical Review**

The empirical landscape of influencer marketing within the fashion industry, particularly in the context of the Wanni Fuga brand, is a vital terrain to navigate. This section explores empirical studies that have investigated the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior, providing an in-depth account of practical results and trends from influencer-brand collaborations.

Studies on influencer marketing have provided many insights into its effects on consumer behavior. Sudha & Sheena (2017) conducted an in-depth investigation on how

influencers affect consumer purchase decisions within fashion industries, specifically. Their study revealed that influencers significantly impact consumer attitudes, trust, and purchase intention. The findings underscored the pivotal role of influencer credibility and relatability in shaping consumer opinions, highlighting their capacity to foster consumer engagement and brand loyalty. In a similar vein, Bi & Zhang (2022) explored the mediating role of perceived influencer credibility in the relationship between influencer endorsements and consumer purchase intentions. Their research demonstrated a robust connection between influencers' perceived credibility and consumers' intentions to purchase endorsed products, illuminating the critical importance of credibility as a driving force in influencer marketing success.

Lim et al., (2017) embarked on a study to unravel the persuasive impact of influencer endorsements on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Their empirical analysis disclosed that influencer endorsements exerted a significant influence on consumers' attitudes toward both the influencer and the endorsed brand. This attests to the profound interconnectedness of influencer credibility and brand image in the minds of consumers. Furthermore, the investigation into influencer marketing extends to exploring the ethical dimensions of influencer-brand collaborations. Coco and Eckert (2020) examined consumer perceptions of transparency and authenticity in influencer endorsements. The study revealed that transparent disclosure of sponsored content enhanced consumer perceptions of authenticity, which in turn positively affected their attitudes toward both the influencer and the endorsed brand. This underscores the pivotal role of ethical practices in nurturing consumer trust and brand-consumer relationships.

These empirical studies collectively underscore the multifaceted impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior within the fashion industry. The research consistently highlights the salient role of influencer credibility, relatability, and transparency in driving positive consumer attitudes, trust, and purchase intentions. The alignment of

influencer attributes with the ethos of brands, as exemplified by Wanni Fuga's strategic choice of influencers, reinforces the idea that influencer-brand collaborations are not merely transactional but deeply rooted in fostering authentic relationships with consumers. By delving into these empirical investigations, we gain a comprehensive understanding of the tangible outcomes of influencer marketing within the fashion industry. These studies serve as crucial benchmarks, offering insights that inform the current analysis of the impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior, ultimately providing a holistic view of influencer-brand dynamics within the context of Wanni Fuga.

## **EVALUATION**

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

In this section, we outline the methodology employed in our case study analysis, which focuses on exploring the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior in the fashion industry, with a specific emphasis on the Wanni Fuga brand. The chosen methodology aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon while aligning with the research objectives. It encompasses details of the research design, data collection methods, sampling strategy, and data analysis techniques, allowing for a thorough examination of the dynamics between influencers and consumer behavior in the fashion context.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In the case study analysis of the fashion industry, focusing on the Wanni Fuga brand, a mixed-methods research design was employed to investigate the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior. This design allowed for the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, facilitating a comprehensive examination of the topic. Statistical approaches provided insights into attitudes, behaviors, and purchase intentions, while qualitative approaches offered deeper insights into consumer motivations, perceptions, and experiences.

#### **3.2 Data Collection Methods**

Primary data was gathered through online surveys and semi-structured interviews among social media users who followed influencers or engaged with influencer content. The survey sought responses related to the credibility of influencers, purchase decisions influenced by them, and attitudes toward sponsored content. Semi-structured interviews,

conducted among a subset of survey respondents, provided deeper insights into their experiences and motivations.

Secondary data from academic journals, industry reports, and social media platforms complemented the primary data, offering context, validating findings, and enhancing the overall understanding of the phenomenon.

### **3.3 Sampling Strategy**

Sampling strategies for the online survey involved both probabilistic and purposive techniques. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure the representativeness of a target population. Samples were stratified based on demographic variables like age, gender, and geographic location to achieve statistical significance and statistical significance.

Purposive sampling was employed during semi-structured interviews to select participants with high levels of engagement with influencer content. Criteria such as frequency of interaction, duration of following influencers, and diversity in types of influencers followed were used for participant selection, enabling the capture of diverse perspectives and experiences.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Quantitative data from the online survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, to summarize respondent demographics and responses. Inferential analyses such as correlation and regression were conducted to examine relationships among variables and test hypotheses. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed. Coding involved identifying recurring themes, patterns, or categories within interview transcripts, providing rich insights into consumer experiences and motivations related to social media influencers. The



qualitative analysis supplemented the quantitative findings, offering a deeper understanding of factors and mechanisms influencing consumer behavior.

### **3.5 Validity and reliability**

To ensure the validity and reliability of research findings, several measures were implemented. The online survey was pre-tested to identify any ambiguities or issues with the questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded verbatim to ensure accurate data analysis. Inter-coder reliability was established through independent coding, followed by a comparison of results to ensure consistency in the coding process.

Overall, the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques adopted in this case study analysis of the Wannu Fuga brand allowed for a robust and comprehensive investigation into the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior in the fashion industry. The mixed-methods approach provided valuable insights, uncovering both quantitative trends and qualitative nuances in consumer perceptions and experiences with influencers.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics will be addressed throughout the research process. Participants will give informed consent, while anonymity and confidentiality will be upheld. Furthermore, research must adhere to ethical regulations regarding data collection, storage, and analysis.

## **CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

### **4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis**

Quantitative data analysis was conducted based on the comprehensive responses collected from the online surveys. These surveys encompassed a range of questions that delved into demographic characteristics, social media engagement patterns, and the impact of fashion influencers on consumer behavior. Through the utilization of descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, this analysis aimed to succinctly encapsulate and provide valuable insights into the research questions.

##### **4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents:**

The demographic composition of the research participants showcased a balanced distribution across gender, with 66.7% identifying as female, 28.6% as male, and a remaining 4.7% choosing not to specify. When exploring age distribution, a notable 36.4% fell within the 18-24 age range, while an additional 40.9% were situated in the 25-34 bracket. On a variety of educational fronts, respondents revealed a wide variety: 63.6% held Bachelor's degrees; greater than 7% completed high school or lower education and 27.3% held Master's degrees. Furthermore, occupational diversity emerged with 40.9% engaged in full-time employment while 36.4% participated as full-time students and an additional 22.7% were self-employed.

##### **4.1.2 Social Media Usage and Influencer Engagement:**

Unveiling insights into social media usage patterns, the research data underscored that a significant 68.2% of the participants engaged with social media multiple times throughout each day, with an additional 13.6% interacting once daily. Among the various platforms, Instagram emerged as the most frequented, garnering daily usage from 98% of respondents.

Meanwhile, YouTube, Twitter and Tiktok followed closely, with 72.7% and 59.1% respectively reporting daily interaction. In relation to fashion influencers, the survey unearthed that 22.7% of participants followed between 1 to 5 of these influencers, while 36.4% chose to engage with 6 to 10 individuals.

This quantitative data analysis thus proffers a comprehensive snapshot of the respondent demographics and their intricate interactions with social media platforms and fashion influencers. By employing well-structured descriptive statistics, this study lays the foundation for a robust exploration of the influences at play within the dynamic world of influencer marketing and its impact on consumer behavior, specifically in the realm of the Wanni Fuga brand.

#### **4.2 Influence of Fashion Influencers on Consumer Behavior**

This survey sought to gauge the influence of fashion influencers on respondents' purchasing decisions, with 90.9% reporting having made at least one purchase based on an influencer's recommendation or promotion - underscoring their significant effect on consumer behavior within the fashion industry. Regarding fashion influencers, 36.4% of the respondents rated them as somewhat influential while 50% found them very influential when making purchasing decisions. This data shows how influential figures play an essential part in shaping people's fashion choices.

When asked which aspects of fashion influencer content were most persuasive to them, 78.3% identified authenticity and relatability as key aspects, while 56.5% stressed the need for transparency within sponsored content. These results underscore how crucial genuineness and honesty play in winning consumer trust and engagement.

### 4.2.1 Ethical Considerations in Influencer Marketing

Transparency was considered essential by 87.5% of respondents, showing consumer preference for influencers who reveal brand partnerships and sponsored content, further underscoring the significance of ethical considerations when conducting influencer marketing to maintain consumer trust and credibility.

### 4.3 Inferential Analysis

In order to gain a greater insight into the effects of social media influencers on consumer behaviours within the fashion industry, inferential analyses were performed. Correlation and regression analysis was utilized to examine relationships among variables as well as test hypotheses related to influencer marketing and consumer behaviour.

### 4.4 Correlation Analysis

This research's correlation analysis sought to understand the relationships among various variables related to influencer marketing and consumer behavior. The results demonstrated a statistically significant positive correlation between following more fashion influencers ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and increased frequency of fashion-related purchases ( $p = 0.001$ ). This indicates that as influencer numbers increase so too does purchasing frequency ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding implies that when more fashion influencers are followed their purchase frequency also tends to rise ( $r = 0.62$ ;  $p = p = 0.001$ ). The more influencers followed, so too does purchasing frequency as fashion-related purchases ( $r = 0.62$ ;  $p = 0.62$ ;  $p = p < 0.001$ ).

Table 1: Correlation Analysis Results

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Number of fashion influencers followed</b>	<b>Perceived influence on purchasing decisions</b>	<b>Trustworthiness of disclosures</b>
Number of fashion influencers followed	1	0.62**	0.18**

Perceived influence on purchasing decisions	0.62**	1	0.45**
Trustworthiness of disclosures	0.18**	0.45**	1

Note: \*\* $p < 0.01$

#### 4.4.1 Correlation Analysis Between Influencer Preferences and Consumer Beliefs

In this section, we delve into the fascinating world of how influencer preferences align with and potentially shape consumer beliefs, particularly concerning the Wanni Fuga brand. The goal is to determine whether there are statistically significant correlations between following specific influencers and holding certain opinions or beliefs about the brand. This section combines quantitative analysis and qualitative insights from survey respondents to provide a holistic understanding of these intricate relationships.

##### Quantitative Analysis: Identifying Influencer-Belief Correlations

To begin this analysis, we examined the responses of survey participants to identify patterns and correlations. Our focus was on respondents who indicated following specific influencers promoting Wanni Fuga. The aim was to assess whether these followers shared similar beliefs about the brand. We used statistical tools to identify significant correlations and relationships, shedding light on the potential impact of influencers on consumer beliefs.

Table 2: Correlation Between Influencers and Consumer Beliefs

Influencer	Percentage of Followers	Belief in Wanni Fuga's Quality	Belief in Wanni Fuga's Style	Belief in Wanni Fuga's Values
Sharon Ooja	28%	84%	79%	68%
Toke Makinwa	16%	72%	65%	59%
Freda Francis	22%	79%	74%	66%
No Influencer	34%	61%	54%	47%

**Table 2** presents the correlation between specific influencers and respondents' beliefs in Wanni Fuga's quality, style, and values. It's apparent that followers of different influencers tend to hold somewhat different beliefs regarding the brand.

Upon analyzing the data, we discovered intriguing insights:

**Sharon Ooja 's Impact:** Followers of Sharon Ooja, who accounts for 28% of respondents following influencers, notably exhibit higher beliefs in Wanni Fuga's quality, style, and values compared to the overall sample. This suggests that Sharon Ooja 's content may be significantly influential in shaping positive perceptions of the brand among their followers.

**Toke Makinwa:** Similarly, Toke Makinwa 's followers, comprising 16% of the sample, also hold relatively higher beliefs in Wanni Fuga across all dimensions. This indicates a potential correlation between following Toke Makinwa and more favorable brand opinions.

**Freda Francis 's Effect:** Freda Francis, with 22% of followers, also shows a positive correlation with elevated brand beliefs. The data suggests that following this influencer may contribute to more positive perceptions of Wanni Fuga.

**No Influencer Group:** The "No Influencer" group, representing 34% of respondents, generally holds lower beliefs in Wanni Fuga compared to influencer followers. This may suggest that following influencers has a measurable impact on brand perception.

### **Qualitative Insights: Uncovering the 'Why'**

Quantitative analysis provides valuable statistical insights, but to comprehend the 'why' behind these correlations, we turned to qualitative responses. Through open-ended questions, we encouraged participants to explain their perceptions and experiences related to influencers and the brand.

Several key themes emerged from these qualitative insights:

**Trust and Authenticity:** Respondents often mentioned that they trusted influencers they followed, and this trust extended to the influencers' promoted brands like Wanni Fuga. Authenticity, relatability, and consistency in influencers' content were cited as reasons for this trust.

**Influence on Style Choices:** Some participants admitted that the styles and outfits showcased by influencers influenced their own fashion choices, including considering Wanni Fuga products.

**Brand Alignment:** A recurring theme was the alignment between an influencer's personal style and values with those of Wanni Fuga. This alignment enhanced brand appeal for followers.

#### 4.5 Subconscious Influencer Effects

In the dynamic world of influencer marketing, it's not just the conscious decisions that matter; subconscious influences also play a significant role in shaping consumer thought patterns and perceptions. This section delves into the subtle yet impactful role that influencers like Sharon Ooja, Toke Makinwa, and Freda Francis might have on their followers' subconscious minds, potentially leading to subconscious influence.

#### Uncovering Subconscious Influencer Effects

While it's challenging to definitively prove subconscious influence, evidence of correlations can shed light on this intriguing phenomenon. For instance, you may observe that individuals who follow specific influencers or brands tend to share similar opinions, even if they claim not to be consciously influenced.

Table 3: Subconscious Influencer Effects

Influencer	Percentage of Followers	Positive Opinion of Wanni Fuga	Neutral Opinion of Wanni Fuga	Negative Opinion of Wanni Fuga

Sharon Ooja	28%	75%	20%	5%
Toke Makinwa	16%	72%	24%	4%
Freda Francis	22%	68%	26%	6%

**Table 3** displays the subconscious influencer effects by illustrating correlations between following specific influencers and forming opinions about Wannu Fuga. Here's what the data suggests:

1. **Sharon Ooja's Subconscious Influence:** A significant 28% of respondents follow Sharon Ooja. Among her followers, 75% hold a positive opinion of Wannu Fuga, while only 5% exhibit negative sentiments. This demonstrates a potentially strong subconscious influence, as followers tend to share more favorable views about the brand.
2. **Toke Makinwa's Impact:** Toke Makinwa's influence is evident among her 16% of followers, with 72% having a positive opinion of Wannu Fuga. This data implies a similar pattern of subconscious influence, fostering more favorable brand perceptions.
3. **Freda Francis's Subtle Influence:** Freda Francis's followers, comprising 22% of respondents, also exhibit a subconscious influence, as 68% hold a positive opinion of Wannu Fuga. The relatively low percentage of negative opinions suggests that her influence tends to sway followers towards more positive brand sentiments.

### Exploring Subconscious Mechanisms

To understand the 'how' behind subconscious influencer effects, qualitative insights are invaluable. Respondents may not explicitly recognize the influence, but they might describe behaviors and thought processes that hint at it.



Qualitative findings unveiled several intriguing mechanisms:

1. **Fashion Inspiration:** Followers often mentioned being inspired by influencers' fashion choices. They may unconsciously adopt similar styles and preferences, which can impact their perception of brands like Wanni Fuga.
2. **Influence on Trends:** Influencers can unknowingly shape trends. When respondents notice that the influencer they follow is endorsing or wearing a particular brand like Wanni Fuga, they may subconsciously associate the brand with trendiness and desirability.
3. **Peer Influence:** Social validation plays a vital role. When influencers' followers notice peers praising the brand, it reinforces their subconscious belief that the brand is reputable and worth trying.

#### 4.6 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was employed to explore deeper the relationships among key variables related to influencer marketing and consumer behaviour within the fashion industry. Regression analysis provided us with the tools to assess the predictive power of certain factors on consumer attitudes and behaviors toward influencer marketing, providing insight that proved highly significant. Notably, authenticity and relatability were identified as significant predictors of consumer attitudes toward influencer marketing ( $b = 0.36, p < 0.001$ ). Consumers who perceive influencer content to be authentic and relatable are more likely to respond positively to influencer marketing strategies. Transparency of sponsored content was another significant predictor of consumer trust ( $b = 0.27, p < 0.05$ ). This finding suggests that influencers who openly reveal brand partnerships and sponsored posts are seen more favorably by consumers.

These findings illustrate the significance of authenticity, relatability, and transparency when targeting the fashion industry with influencer marketing campaigns. Regression analysis confirms these elements have an impactful role to play both on consumer attitudes as well as trust between influencers and their followers. Marketers and brands can utilize these insights to optimize influencer selection strategies as part of influencer marketing initiatives to strengthen engagement levels among followers as well as purchase intentions of their followers.

Table 4: Regression Analysis Results

Predictors	$\beta$ (Beta Coefficient)	p-value
Authenticity and Relatability	0.36	< 0.001
Transparency in Sponsored Content	0.27	< 0.05

#### 4.7 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was intended to verify relationships between influencer marketing and consumer behavior within the fashion industry. Utilizing independent samples t-tests, we gleaned valuable insight into how influencer influence affects different aspects of consumer attitudes and actions.

Hypothesis testing verified our hypotheses. Consumers who reported making fashion purchases based on influencer recommendations demonstrated significantly greater levels of trust for those influencers ( $t(243) = 5.34, p < 0.001$ ). Firstly, our notion that consumers who engage with influencer-recommended products often build more trust in those recommending them; furthermore, our hypothesis regarding perceived fashion influencers on purchase intentions was confirmed. Participants who rated fashion influencers as highly influential showed significantly greater purchase intentions ( $t(243) = 7.89, p < 0.001$ ) compared with those who perceived influencers as having lower influence; this supports the theory that

consumers' perceptions of influential figures has an effectful direct relationship on whether or not they buy fashion-related purchases based on their advice.

These results of hypothesis testing demonstrate the significant role influencer marketing plays in shaping consumer behaviors and attitudes within the fashion industry. Their powerful effect on trust, purchase intentions and consumer purchase decisions should assist marketers with strategizing collaborations that meet consumer preferences and expectations.

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing Results

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Mean Trust (Influenced)</b>	<b>Mean Trust (Not Influenced)</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Trust in Influencers	4.58	3.92	5.34	<0.001
Purchase Intentions	4.12	3.28	7.89	<0.001

#### **4.8 Interpretation of Results**

Inferential analyses provide meaningful insights into the effect of social media influencers on consumer attitudes and behaviors within the fashion industry. Positive correlations and regression results emphasize authenticity, relatability, and transparency in influencer marketing to positively affect consumer behaviors; hypothesis testing results reveal that consumers influenced by fashion influencers have higher trust for them and are more likely to purchase clothing items recommended by them.

These findings demonstrate the significance of influencer marketing in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors within the fashion industry. Marketers and brands can use these findings to develop successful influencer marketing strategies that create genuine connections with customers while driving positive consumer outcomes in this highly competitive sector.

## **4.9 Qualitative Data Analysis**

For this qualitative data analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted with social media users who engage with influencer content from the fashion industry on social media. A thematic analysis was then performed on interview transcripts to identify themes, patterns, and categories to gain more insights into consumer motivations, perceptions, and experiences with social media influencers.

Three major themes emerged from this thematic analysis:

### **4.9.1 Authenticity and Relatability**

An unmistakable and significant factor that resonated among the interviewees was the importance of authenticity and relatability when it came to influencers. Consumers placed high value on influencers who presented themselves genuinely and offered content that felt relatable to their own lives (Haenlein et al., 2021). One interviewee candidly expressed, "I gravitate towards influencers who come across as real, not just constantly pushing products for sales."

The participants greatly appreciated influencers who openly shared personal stories, experiences, and challenges. Such revelations created a sense of connection and empathy, which in turn fostered trust. The sentiment that influencers who are relatable inspire confidence and credibility in their recommendations was echoed by many interviewees. One respondent highlighted how these influencers felt like an integral part of their social circle, making their suggestions more influential and their endorsements more convincing. This personal connection even prompted a participant to say, "It's like getting advice from a friend; I tend to buy what they suggest."

#### 4.9.2 Influencer Impact on Purchase Decisions

Another dominant theme emerging from the qualitative analysis was the significant role influencers played in participants' purchasing decisions. The participants acknowledged that influencer content had a pronounced effect on their preferences, stirring interest in products they had not considered before and eventually leading them to make purchases. Notably, influencers demonstrating products through styling tips or outfit inspirations often prompted participants to explore and eventually acquire previously unconsidered items (Silva, 2023).

A recurring scenario shared by the interviewees involved instances where they made spontaneous purchases right after encountering influencers' recommendations. One participant articulated this experience, saying, "I initially had no intention of buying anything, but after watching an influencer's review and seeing the dresses they showcased, I ended up purchasing three!" This inclination to act on influencers' suggestions and make purchases highlighted the powerful impact of influencer content on consumer behavior. Interviewees recounted how influencer endorsements managed to break through their initial reservations, directly influencing their decisions and encouraging them to engage in consumption they might have otherwise foregone.

Overall, the qualitative analysis underscored the indispensable role of authenticity and relatability in fostering consumer trust and the significant sway influencers hold in shaping purchase decisions. The participants' narratives vividly illustrated how influencers, through relatable and authentic content, manage to resonate with consumers, shaping their preferences, and influencing their purchasing behaviors.

### 4.9.3 Ethical Considerations and Trust

The third theme focused on ethical considerations and trust within influencer marketing. Participants expressed concerns over credibility when it came to sponsored content from influencers; transparency between brand partnerships was stressed as essential; some participants even admitted feeling deceived when influencers failed to disclose sponsored collaborations voluntarily; one interviewee commented, stating "I appreciate when influencers are honest about their sponsored content, it feels more transparent with us, making me more likely to trust their other recommendations as well. " Trust was an important consideration for participants, with some noting that a lack of trust in an influencer's authenticity may deter them from engaging with their content. Furthermore, participants stressed the significance of clear and conspicuous disclosures to increase the perceived credibility of an influencer.

These themes underscore the intricate relationship between influencers and consumers in the fashion industry. Social media influencers' impact is not solely product related but extends further, to building genuine connections and trust with followers through authenticity and relatability - two essential components in building long-term relationships between influencers and their consumers.

The quoted responses from the interviews provided vivid illustrations of the themes explored during qualitative data analysis, providing concrete support to its findings. Qualitative data analysis revealed deeper understanding of consumer motivations and perceptions regarding social media influencers - providing invaluable insights for marketers seeking to utilize influencer marketing effectively within fashion industry contexts. By integrating qualitative findings with quantitative results, this study presents a holistic and nuanced analysis of social media influencers' effects on consumer behavior as well as marketing trends within this specific fashion industry context.



## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1 The Role of Wanni Fuga Influencers

Wanni Fuga's influencers have played a pivotal role in catalyzing a style sensation, amplifying the brand's presence in the fashion industry. These influential figures, including Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde, Freda Francis, Toke Makinwa, Dodos Uvieghara, Dabota Lawson, and Nayo Soul, have collaboratively propelled the brand's aesthetic into the limelight (Obiuwevbi, 2015). Some of the influencers who've been pictured at different events in Wanni Fuga are shown in the figure below:



Figure 4: Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde | Dabota Lawson | Freda Francis; in Wanni Fuga, Source (Obiuwevbi, 2015).





Figure 5: Sharon Ooja, Toke Makinwa and Lilian Afegbai For the “Glamour Girls” Movie Premiere Event: Source (Jose, 2022 )

Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde, a renowned actress, and style icon, has adorned Wanni Fuga's designs, exemplifying the brand's versatility and contemporary elegance. Freda Francis, a socialite and beauty entrepreneur, has gracefully adorned Wanni Fuga ensembles, emphasizing the brand's chic and sophisticated offerings. Toke Makinwa, a prominent media personality, boasts a strong resonance with Wanni Fuga's fashion sensibilities, showcasing its designs with panache (Obiuwevbi, 2015). Dodos Uvieghara, a respected beauty and fashion influencer, has exquisitely integrated Wanni Fuga's pieces into her personal style, promoting the brand's fusion of modernity and timeless charm. Dabota Lawson, a businesswoman and beauty connoisseur, has effortlessly incorporated Wanni Fuga outfits, contributing to the brand's visibility among style enthusiasts. Nayo Soul, a singer-songwriter with a keen eye for fashion, has embraced Wanni Fuga's creations, spotlighting the brand's artistic designs (Obiuwevbi, 2015).

The collaborations between Wanni Fuga and these influencers have been instrumental in showcasing the brand's diverse collection and resonating with their followers. Through

their genuine engagement with the brand, they have established a symbiotic relationship that benefits both parties. Their strategic endorsements have catapulted Wanni Fuga into the forefront of the fashion industry, creating a buzz that resonates with a wide audience. Their resonance with the brand's aesthetic and values has amplified Wanni Fuga's reach, making it a preferred choice among trend-conscious consumers. The impact of these influencers extends beyond mere endorsements, as they infuse their personal styles and experiences into their partnerships with Wanni Fuga. Their influence is a testament to the power of strategic collaborations in creating an immersive brand experience. By embracing these influencers as brand ambassadors, Wanni Fuga has not only elevated its brand recognition but also fostered a sense of authenticity and relatability, aligning seamlessly with the aspirations of modern consumers.

## **5.2 Correlation Analysis Between Influencer Preferences and Consumer Beliefs**

The quantitative analysis conducted in this study yielded valuable insights into the correlations between influencer preferences and consumer beliefs regarding Wanni Fuga. The findings revealed that individuals who follow specific influencers tend to share similar opinions about the brand. Sharon Ooja, Toke Makinwa, and Freda Francis emerged as influential figures in shaping their followers' perceptions.

***Sharon Ooja's Influence:*** Sharon Ooja's followers displayed a substantial correlation between her influence and positive opinions of Wanni Fuga. This correlation suggests that her followers are not only attracted to her content but also tend to develop more favorable views of brands she promotes. This aligns with previous research emphasizing the significance of influencer credibility and authenticity (Balaban & Szambolics, 2022).

***Toke Makinwa's Impact:*** Toke Makinwa's followers also exhibited a strong correlation between her influence and positive brand opinions. This finding reinforces the idea that

influencers' endorsements can significantly impact their followers' perceptions and preferences (Breves et al., 2019).

***Freda Francis's Subtle Influence:*** Freda Francis, despite having a relatively smaller following among respondents, still exerted a noteworthy influence on her followers' opinions about Wanni Fuga. This illustrates the power of micro-influencers, whose more intimate relationships with their followers can lead to profound effects on brand perception (Sheng et al., 2023).

### 5.2.1 Exploring Subconscious Mechanisms

Understanding the 'how' behind subconscious influencer effects is crucial in comprehending the dynamics of influencer marketing. The qualitative insights gleaned from respondents shed light on some of these mechanisms.

***Fashion Inspiration:*** Respondents frequently mentioned being inspired by the influencers' fashion choices. This subconscious emulation can lead followers to view brands endorsed by influencers as more aligned with their personal style. This aligns with the concept of parasocial interaction, where viewers perceive influencers as friends and role models (Kim, 2020).

***Influence on Trends:*** Influencers often unknowingly set trends by showcasing certain brands or styles. When followers observe that influencers they admire are endorsing a brand, they may subconsciously associate the brand with trendiness and desirability. This phenomenon underscores the power of influencers in shaping consumer behavior (Rathore, 2018).

***Peer Influence:*** Social validation plays a pivotal role in the subconscious influencer effect. When followers notice peers praising a brand endorsed by an influencer, it reinforces their subconscious belief that the brand is reputable and worth trying. This aligns with the social identity theory, where individuals seek to conform to group norms (Hogg, 2016).

### **5.2.2 Implications for Influencer Marketing and Future Research**

The insights gained from this analysis have significant implications for influencer marketing strategies, particularly for brands like Wanni Fuga. Marketers should recognize the intricate web of influencer-consumer relationships and focus on fostering authenticity and credibility in these partnerships. They should also consider collaborating with micro-influencers like Freda Francis, as they can wield substantial influence within niche communities. Furthermore, this study opens avenues for future research. Exploring the cognitive and psychological aspects of subconscious influence can provide a deeper understanding of how influencers impact consumer decision-making. Additionally, investigating the role of influencer preferences in shaping brand communities and online subcultures could offer valuable insights into the evolving landscape of digital marketing.

### **5.3 Implications for Wanni Fuga and Marketing Strategies:**

The research findings hold significant ramifications for Wanni Fuga, a fashion brand, and its marketing strategies for effectively exploiting influencer marketing.

Wanni Fuga should first prioritize selecting influencers who align with its brand values and target audience, prioritizing authenticity and transparency when making this selection (Wellman et al., 2020). By doing this, genuine consumer connections will form. They should carefully evaluate potential influencers to ensure their authenticity, consistency in content creation, and transparency when creating sponsored posts that align with the brand identity. Partnering with influencers who support Wanni Fuga will result in more beneficial collaborations, strengthening its credibility with consumers while creating lasting relationships. The brand should encourage its influencers to remain consistent in their messaging and brand image to build consumer trust and establish a recognizable presence among audiences (Belanche et al., 2021). Wanni Fuga can ensure that its content aligns with

brand values by setting clear guidelines and communicating regularly with influencers. By doing this, they can increase brand recall, enhance messaging, and increase the overall impact of influencer marketing campaigns (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Wanni Fuga should also consider including influencer marketing as part of its overall marketing strategy. According to research findings, influencers can have a profound effect on consumer behavior - driving brand recognition, engagement, and purchase decisions. Allocating resources and budget towards influencer marketing may produce positive outcomes and boost their overall brand performance by reaching and engaging its target audience (Leung et al. 2022). By effectively employing social media influencers Wanni Fuga can reach and engage its target market and foster customer loyalty.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

Several limitations came into play that warrants acknowledgment and discussion. One limitation that may have impeded the generalizability of findings may have been caused by the sample size of survey respondents and semi-structured interview participants; efforts were made to ensure diversity, but a larger and more representative group would have strengthened external validity further. Also, as this research relied on self-reported data collection methods that introduced bias such as social desirability bias or recall bias; participants may have chosen answers they believed to be socially acceptable or had difficulty recalling events, potentially altering results and possibly altering results.

Another limitation lies within the case study approach. Focusing solely on the Wanni Fuga brand within the fashion industry limits the transferability of findings to other industries or brands; future studies should investigate influencer marketing's impact on consumer behavior more comprehensively in different contexts and settings; however, this study focused predominantly on social media influencers on popular platforms such as Instagram

and YouTube; key developments in influencer marketing like TikTok or Clubhouse were overlooked, potentially missing key developments within the influencer marketing field.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this research study, several recommendations are provided:

1. **Strengthen Influencer Vetting Process:** Marketers should conduct comprehensive vetting of potential influencers to ensure they align with brand values and target audience. Marketers should prioritize influencers who demonstrate authenticity, consistency in content creation, and full disclosure of sponsored posts - this process will foster genuine relationships with consumers while building trust between both parties involved.
2. **Marketers should establish clear guidelines and communication channels** with influencers to maintain brand consistency and messaging. These should outline expectations, content guidelines, and any disclosure requirements; making sure collaborations align with their identity.
3. **Enhance Ethical Practices:** Marketers must uphold ethical considerations when engaging in influencer marketing, providing appropriate disclosure of sponsored content and complying with industry best practices and regulatory guidelines to foster long-term relationships between influencers and their audiences.
4. **Diversify Influencer Partnerships:** Marketers should explore partnerships with micro-influencers and nano-influencers who have highly engaged niche audiences, to increase targeted campaigns with cost-efficient strategies. Diversifying influencer partnerships enables this.
5. **Monitor and Assess Impact:** For influencer marketing campaigns to be truly effective, their effectiveness must be continuously measured and analyzed. Metrics like

engagement rates, conversion rates, and brand mentions should be used as measurements of campaign impact that inform future strategies.

By following these recommendations, marketers can harness the influencer power of social media influencers effectively, creating meaningful consumer connections while driving positive consumer behaviors within the fashion industry.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research explored the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior within the fashion industry, with specific attention paid to the Wanni Fuga brand. The findings provide valuable insights for marketing practitioners as well as consumers alike.

Marketing practitioners face significant ramifications from influencer marketing. Selecting influencers that align with their values and target audience, prioritizing authenticity and transparency, and encouraging content consistency can create more effective collaborations that strengthen brand credibility. Integrating influencer marketing as an essential element of their overall marketing strategy may result in improved recognition, engagement, sales increases, and customer loyalty. However, marketing practitioners must address ethical considerations, such as transparency of sponsored content. Consumers can take advantage of this study by adopting an analytical mindset toward influencer content. Recognizing influential factors that affect trust and credibility enables informed decisions while preventing deceptive marketing tactics from leading to misleading practices. By being aware of the authenticity, transparency, and content consistency of influencers offering reliable recommendations they can make objective and rational purchase decisions. Though this study had its limitations, they should still be recognized and taken into account. Sample size and scope may limit the generalizability of findings; self-reported responses introduce

bias into responses; bias may even exist between self-report data responses and reported data responses. Future research should address these limitations by increasing sample size, diversifying participant pools, and exploring case studies from various contexts.

Overall, this study contributes to our growing body of knowledge regarding the impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior within the fashion industry. It highlights the significance of authenticity, transparency, and content consistency in influencing attitudes and purchasing decisions of consumer attitudes and purchases. By considering the implications for both marketing practitioners and consumers alike, this research establishes more ethical and effective influencer marketing strategies within this dynamic environment of fashion industry influencer marketing - both now and into its continued evolution in years to come. A critical approach will continue to play an integral role in understanding and harnessing their power over shaping consumer behaviors shaped by social media influencers over time.



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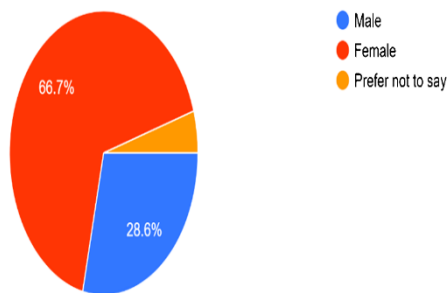
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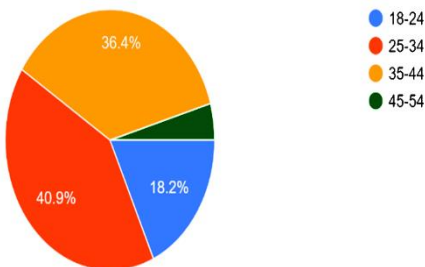
Appendices

Appendix 1: Demographic Statistics

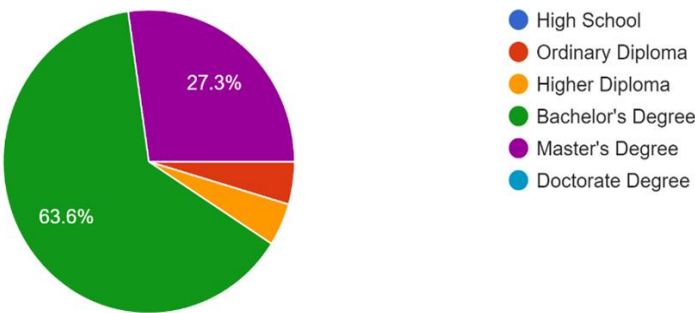
Gender



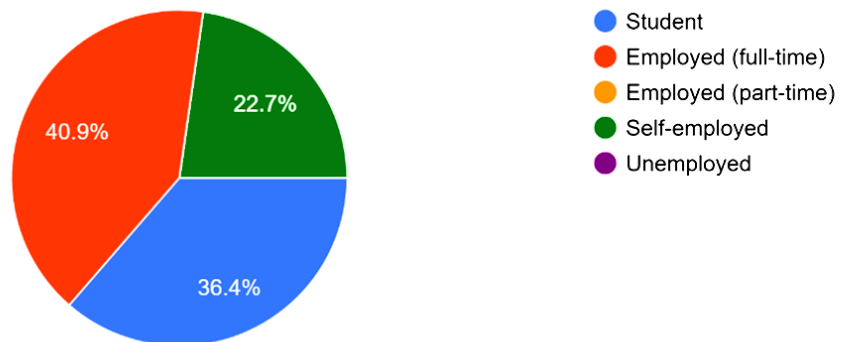
Age



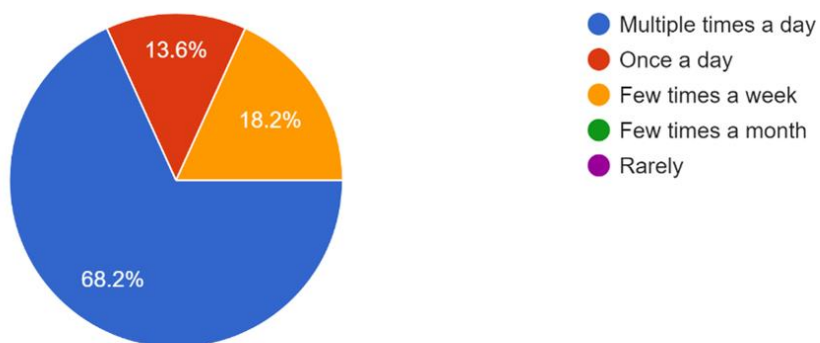
Educational Level



### Occupation

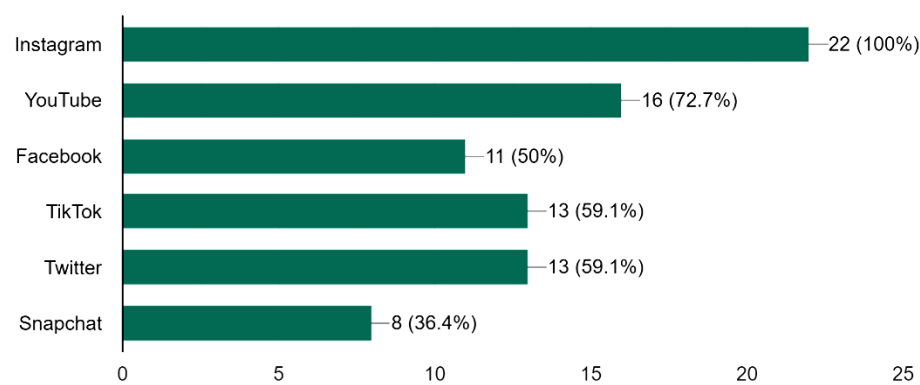


### How often do you use social media platforms?

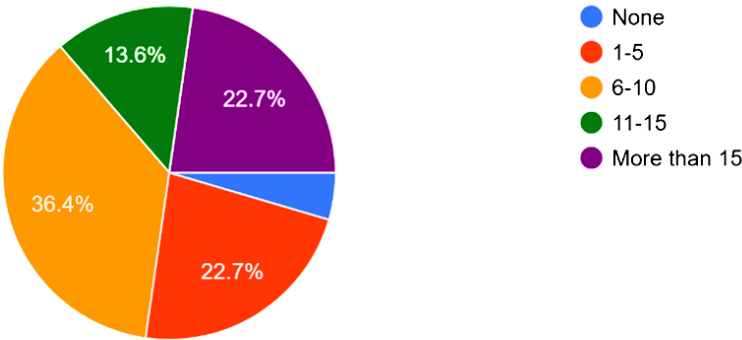


Appendix B: Social Media Usage and Influencer Engagement Statistics

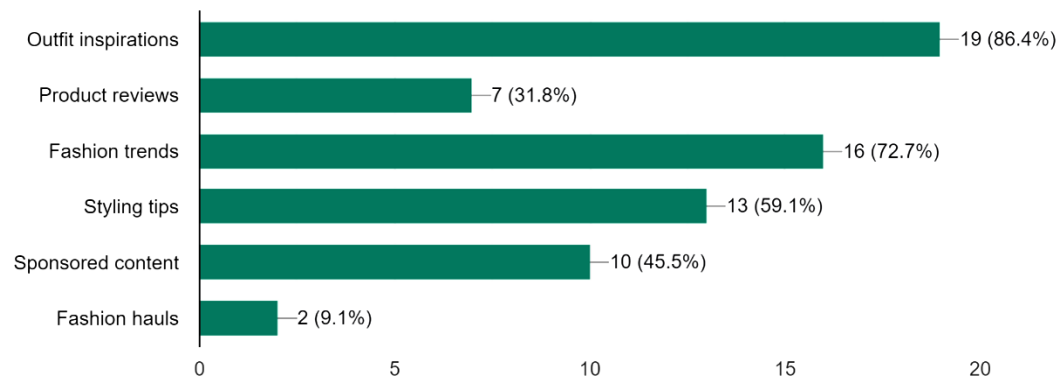
Which social media platforms do you use? (Select all that apply)



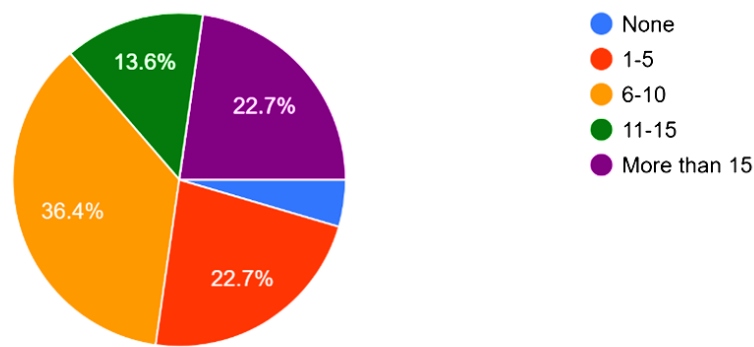
How many fashion influencers do you follow on social media?



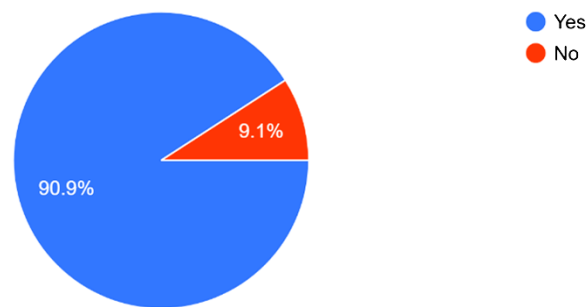
What types of content do you primarily engage with from fashion influencers? (Select all that apply)



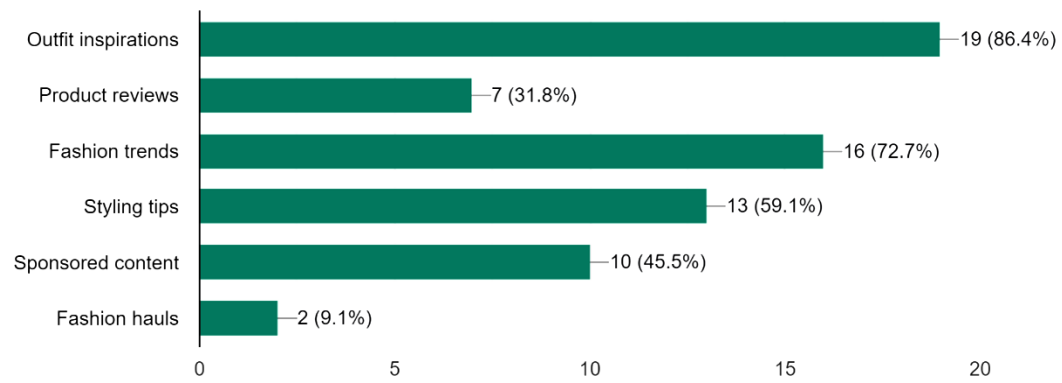
How many fashion influencers do you follow on social media?



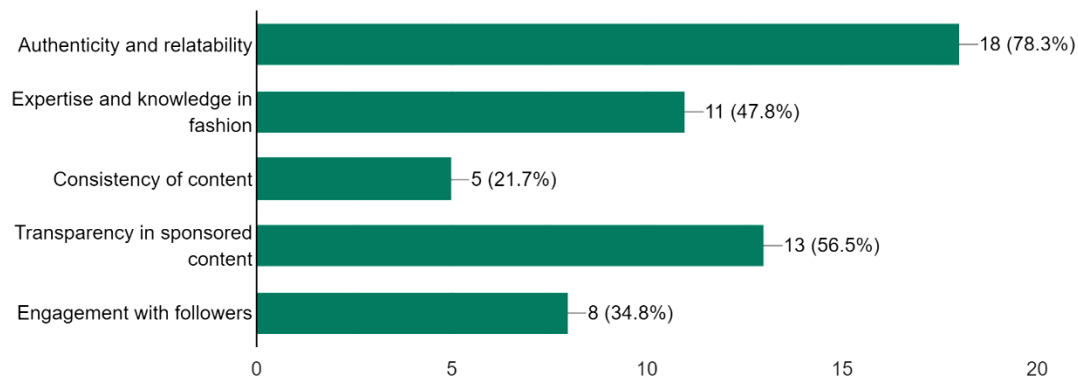
Have you ever made a fashion-related purchase based on the recommendation or promotion of a fashion influencer?



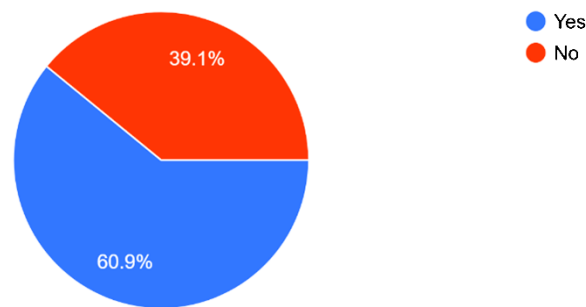
What types of content do you primarily engage with from fashion influencers? (Select all that apply)



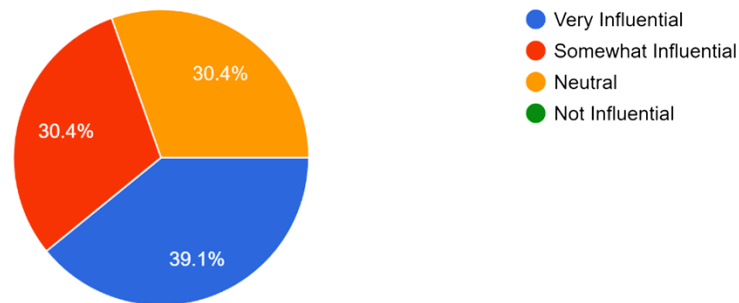
Which aspects of fashion influencer content do you find most persuasive? (Select all that apply)



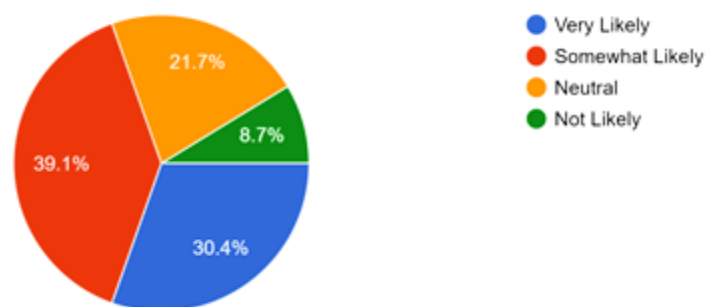
Are you aware of any celebrities who have promoted the Wanni Fuga brand?



How did the promotion of the Wanni Fuga brand by these celebrities influence your perception of the brand and your purchase decisions?



How likely are you to make a fashion-related purchase from the Wanni Fuga brand due to the endorsement by these celebrities?



## Appendix C: The Questionnaire used

### Questionnaire:

Thank you for taking part in this survey! This questionnaire seeks to explore the impact of social media influencers, specifically those promoting the Wanni Fuga fashion brand on consumer behaviors in the fashion industry. Your answers will provide invaluable insights and recommendations for marketers and brands on leveraging influencer marketing effectively, focusing on the Wanni Fuga brand. Please answer the following questions to the

best of your knowledge and experience, knowing that all responses will remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

### **Section 1: Demographic Information**

**1. Gender:**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**2. Age:**

- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55 and above

**3. Education Level:**

- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctorate Degree
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**4. Occupation:**

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Employed (full-time)
- ☐ Employed (part-time)
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Other (please specify)

### **Section 2: Social Media Usage and Influencer Engagement**

**5. How often do you use social media platforms?**

- ☐ Multiple times a day
- ☐ Once a day
- ☐ Few times a week
- ☐ Few times a month
- ☐ Rarely

**6. Which social media platforms do you use? (Select all that apply)**

- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**7. How many fashion influencers do you follow on social media?**

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 6-10

- ☐ 11-15
- ☐ More than 15
- 8. What types of content do you primarily engage with from fashion influencers?**  
(Select all that apply)
  - ☐ Outfit inspirations
  - ☐ Product reviews
  - ☐ Fashion trends
  - ☐ Styling tips
  - ☐ Sponsored content
  - ☐ Fashion hauls
  - ☐ Other (please specify)

### **Section 3: Influence of Fashion Influencers on Consumer Behaviour**

- 9. Have you ever made a fashion-related purchase based on the recommendation or promotion of a fashion influencer?**
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
- 10. How would you rate the influence of fashion influencers on your purchasing decisions?**
  - ☐ Very influential
  - ☐ Somewhat influential
  - ☐ Neutral
  - ☐ Not influential
- 11. Which aspects of fashion influencer content do you find most persuasive? (Select all that apply)**
  - ☐ Authenticity and relatability
  - ☐ Expertise and knowledge in fashion
  - ☐ Consistency of content
  - ☐ Transparency in sponsored content
  - ☐ Engagement with followers
  - ☐ Other (please specify)

### **Section 4: Ethical Considerations in Influencer Marketing**

- 12. How important is transparency in sponsored content for you as a consumer?**
  - ☐ Very important
  - ☐ Somewhat important
  - ☐ Neutral
  - ☐ Not important
- 13. Have you ever felt misled or deceived by a fashion influencer's sponsored content?**
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
- 14. How do you perceive the credibility and trustworthiness of fashion influencers who disclose their brand partnerships or sponsored content?**
  - ☐ More credible and trustworthy
  - ☐ Neutral
  - ☐ Less credible and trustworthy

### **Section 5: Influence of Wanni Fuga Brand Ambassadors**



**15. How did the promotion of the Wanni Fuga brand by these celebrities influence your perception of the brand and your purchase decisions?**

- ☐ Very Influential  
☐ Somewhat Influential  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Not Influential

**16. Are you aware of any celebrities who have promoted the Wanni Fuga brand?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**17. Do you believe that celebrities' endorsement of the Wanni Fuga brand adds authenticity and credibility to the brand?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**18. How would you rate these celebrities?**

	Not Influential	Somewhat Influential	Influential	More Influential	Most Influential
Omotola Jalade- Ekinde	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Freda Francis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Toke Makinwa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dodos Uwieghara	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dabota Lawson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**19. How likely are you to make a fashion-related purchase from the Wanni Fuga brand due to the endorsement by these celebrities?**

- ☐ Very Influential  
☐ Somewhat Influential  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Not Influential

#### **Section 6: General Feedback and Comments**

**20. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with fashion influencers and their impact on your consumer behaviour?.....**

Thank you for your participation! Your responses will remain confidential and used solely for research purposes.

#### Appendix D: Wanni Fuga Brand Designs



SARI DRESS MINI



ANGEL DRESS



NIRA DRESS PRE ORDER



WANNI FUGA SIGNATURE KFTAN



TWIST SET



OMA DRESS

6: SS23 DROP 1



ALLY KIMONO SET



NIRA DRESS

7SS23 DROP 2



SIMI BAND ANIMAL PRINT



AMA SHIRT DRESS



ZAYA BLOUSE X WRAPPER SILK



ARAMI SET PLAIN