

The Role of Influencers in Enhancing the Reach and Effectiveness of Social Media Campaigns for Business Growth

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Abstract

In the digital age, social media influencers serve as powerful bridges between businesses and consumers, shaping their behavior and enhancing the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. This study investigates how residents of Oredo Local Government Area perceive the role of influencers in expanding the reach of social media campaigns to drive business growth. The research examines how influencers contribute to the success of social media campaigns in reaching a broader audience and assesses the impact of well-targeted marketing on consumers' behavior and purchasing decisions. Data was collected from a sample of 384 residents who have lived in Oredo for at least five years, using a structured questionnaire as part of a survey research method. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to analyze the data, and a frequency table was created to present the results. The findings suggest that businesses can improve their effectiveness by partnering with influencers who share the same values and brand identity as their target audience. Additionally, regular reviews and feedback are recommended to assess and enhance the impact and reach of influence-driven social media campaigns.

Keywords: Influencers, Marketing, social media, Campaigns, Oredo residents.

Background of Study

In the constantly evolving digital world, social media has become a vital component in shaping consumer behavior, informing advertising strategies, and enhancing brand-customer interactions. Influencer marketing is one of the most critical developments in this field, where individuals with large social media followings promote products, services, and brands to their audience (Freberg et al., 2011). By leveraging the reach, authenticity, and trustworthiness of social media influencers, this modern marketing approach has transformed traditional advertising, increased consumer engagement, and fueled business success (Brown & Hayes, 2008; Olley & Arikenbi, 2022).

Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter have gained popularity, providing businesses and marketers with more opportunities to connect with and tailor their messaging to their target audiences. Influencer marketing utilizes genuine individuals who have formed close bonds with their followers, unlike traditional advertising, which often relies on straightforward corporate messaging (Evans et al., 2017). Influencers can offer a sense of reliability and trustworthiness that traditional advertisements usually lack by sharing personal stories and offering honest recommendations. According to a study, consumers see influencer endorsements as more trustworthy and relevant, which significantly influences their purchasing decisions (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

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The humanized approach to digital marketing that influencers provide is crucial for connecting consumers with businesses. As brand ambassadors, they create authentic content that smoothly mixes promotional messages into everyday social media interactions. Influencer marketing isn't just for celebrities; micro-influencers, or individuals with smaller but highly engaged followings, often have a greater impact on niche audiences because of their perceived sincerity and accessibility (Omosotomhe & Olley, 2018; De Veirman et al., 2017). Consequently, brands are increasingly forming strategic partnerships with influencers who share their target demographics and core values.

Although the effectiveness of influencer marketing is increasing, businesses still need to overcome some challenges to maximize its benefits. Issues such as fake followers or fans, engagement manipulation, and difficulties determining return on investment (ROI) create serious concerns (Hudders *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, because social media platforms' algorithms are continually evolving and consumer behaviours are changing, businesses need to update their influencer marketing strategy continuously.

Considering these factors, businesses seeking sustainable growth in the digital space must understand how influencers can enhance the effectiveness and reach of their social media marketing efforts. This study examines the impact of marketing influence on business performance, brand visibility, and customer engagement. It also discusses the challenges brands face when executing influencer marketing campaigns and highlights best practices to improve results. To stay competitive in social media marketing, businesses should use data-driven strategies, form ethical influencer partnerships, and develop innovative content approaches as influencer marketing continues to evolve.

Statement of the Problem

In today's digital age, social media has become an essential tool for brand communication, customer engagement, and marketing. As traditional advertising becomes less effective, businesses are increasingly turning to influence marketing as a strategic approach to improve campaign success and expand their reach. Influencers with large social media followings act as credible intermediaries between consumers and brands, promoting products and services through their notoriety (Freberg et al., 2011). Although the gap has narrowed, the effectiveness of influence campaigns remains largely anecdotal. Are there significant sales driven by influencer campaigns? The role of influencers in enhancing the reach and effectiveness of social media campaigns for business growth has not been sufficiently studied. This study examines the role of influencers in driving business growth in Oredo L.G.A., Edo State.

Research Objectives

1. To examine how influences contribute to increasing the reach of social media campaigns for businesses.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of influence-driven campaigns in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.
3. To identify the key factors that make influencer campaigns successful in driving business growth through social media.

Research Questions

1. How do influencers enhance or increase the audience reach of social media campaigns for businesses?
2. What impact do influencers have on consumer purchase intentions in social media campaigns?
3. What are the key factors that make an influencer campaign successful in driving business growth through social media?

Literature Review

The Evolution of Influencer

The rise of social media influencers reflects broader changes in media, marketing, and consumer habits in the digital age. Initially, celebrities and influential businesspeople held most of the power; however, as social media gained popularity, everyday people could also amass large followings, thereby democratizing influence. From early endorsement methods to the professionalization of influencer marketing and the current influencer-driven ecosystem, this literature review traces the development of social media influencers.

The history of influencer marketing dates back hundreds of years. In 1765, British potter Josiah Wedgwood received royal approval from Queen Charlotte, which made his pottery known

as “Queensware” and marketed it as a luxury product (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017). These endorsements set the standard for using celebrities to attract customers.

During the 20th century, influential proxies such as fictional characters gained popularity. Coca-Cola’s portrayal of Santa Claus in the 1930s is a well-known example of a character used to represent a company and evoke positive emotions during tough economic times (Abidin, 2018). Similarly, Quaker Oats’ “Mikey Likes It” campaign from the 1970s succeeded by appealing to parents through a lovable child figure (Abidin, 2016).

Celebrity endorsements dominated marketing strategies by the end of the 20th century. Businesses harnessed the fame of athletes, singers, and actresses to promote their products and increase sales (Senft, 2008). However, research revealed that viewers started questioning these endorsements as celebrities’ lavish lifestyles made them less relatable (Evans, Phua, Lim, & Jun, 2017). Eventually, this decline in consumer trust was replaced by a new generation of influencers, driven by social media and reality television (Burgess & Green, 2018).

The Origin of Social Media Influencers

Influence became more accessible with the rise of platforms like YouTube (2005), Instagram (2010), and TikTok (2016). Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, and Freberg (2011) argue that genuine and unique content that connected with niche audiences made ordinary people more visible. These new influencers interacted directly with their followers, unlike traditional superstars, and developed relationships based on their perceived authenticity (Abidin, 2016). This cultural shift was accelerated by reality TV stars, such as those from “Keeping Up with the Kardashians,” who also blurred the line between entertainment and influence (Abidin, 2018).

By mid-2010, influencer marketing had evolved into a data-driven and disciplined industry. Brands began incorporating influencers into their official marketing plans as they recognized their persuasive power (Glucksman, 2017). Influencers have negotiated contracts, signed commercial deals, and created sponsored content, ranging from passionate amateurs to professional creators (Evans et al., 2017).

During this period, micro-influencers —those with smaller but highly engaged followings — became known for their ability to generate authentic and focused engagement. The importance of perceived authenticity in successful influencer campaigns was emphasized by the idea that these influencers were more relevant than celebrities or macro-influencers (Hudders, De Jans, & De Veirman, 2021).

Future Directions: Authenticity and Ethical Influence

As marketing influences evolve, maintaining ethical transparency and authenticity is more important than ever. Today’s audiences, especially Gen Z (children born in the last two decades), are highly wary of overtly commercial content and demand that influencers disclose any financial ties they may have (Abidin, 2016). Influencers who successfully blend personal expression with brand involvement are more likely to earn audience trust and leave a lasting impression, say Casaló et al. (2020).

In the future, influencer marketing is likely to continue evolving in the direction of co-creation, where businesses collaborate with influencers and their followers to develop campaigns and products (Glucksman, 2017). This participatory strategy not only boosts engagement but also enhances the perception of authenticity, which is crucial for influencing marketing to be successful.

The transition of social media influences from imaginary mascots and royal endorsements to regular artists garnering global attention is, therefore, a reflection of broader changes in media consumption, technological development, and consumer confidence. By gaining a thorough understanding of the historical context and new developments, businesses and marketers can refine their strategies to maintain authenticity, relevance, and customer trust in an increasingly fragmented and competitive digital landscape.

Social Media Campaign

A social media campaign is a strategic marketing effort that supports a business goal using one or more social media platforms. According to Olley & Alajemba (2022), in their study conducted in Asaba, they found that 68% of residents actively use social media platforms, especially Facebook, to promote their brands and boost visibility. For businesses and organizations aiming to improve their online presence and foster two-way communication with clients, social media campaigns have become vital tools in digital marketing (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to Dwivedi et al. (2021), these campaigns utilize creative multimedia content, including surveys, live streaming, and images and videos, to capture attention and enhance user engagement.

Additionally, social media ads have increasingly incorporated storytelling and user-generated content elements to enhance authenticity and foster stronger emotional connections with customers (Luttrell, 2021). As the digital landscape evolves, social media campaigns remain adaptable and dynamic tools for boosting engagement, brand exposure, and customer loyalty.

Edo State Social Media Influencers and Their Campaigns

Several well-known influencers in Edo State, Nigeria, have leveraged their platforms to engage with their audiences, promote products, and advocate for social change. They have an impact on several industries, including corporate advertising, social activism, and entertainment. Some prominent Edo State influencers and their campaigns include:

Etinosa Idemudia: MTN Nigeria and MUVng

Actress, comedian, and social media content creator Etinosa Idemudia is well-known for her relatable and funny skits. Her acting talent and creative content have earned her a large following on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. She is a popular influencer for lifestyle and entertainment brands targeting young audiences because of her ability to blend humor with marketing messages. Etinosa has participated in numerous influencer campaigns, including collaborations with MTN Nigeria, where she promoted the MTN Comedy Plus platform, providing users with access to a variety of comedic content on their mobile devices. Her entertaining skits helped increase the platform's visibility and subscriptions. Notably, the MUVng Campaign, through which Etinosa partnered with MUVng, a vehicle-for-hire service based in Benin, to promote its offerings. She effectively communicated the platform's benefits through engaging social media content, increasing the customer base and service adoption in Edo State.

Twyse Ereme: Dettol and Glo Data Plan

Renowned comedian and content creator Twyse Ereme is well-known for his family-oriented sketches, in which he plays multiple roles. He has gained significant fame and influence, especially among young Nigerians, thanks to his creative versatility. Twyse has been part of successful campaigns, such as the Dettol Nigeria Campaign, where he used comedy to raise awareness about hygiene and the importance of handwashing and cleanliness. His humorous sketches helped generate interest in and understanding of the campaign's central message. Additionally, Twyse partnered with Glo; his entertaining sketches demonstrated how Glo's data plans are essential for using digital content and staying connected, thereby increasing user interest and subscriptions. Twyse's content is highly memorable and relatable because of his skill in blending humor with marketing messages, which enhances customer trust and brand recognition.

VeryDarkMan (Martins Vincent Otse):

Social Reform and Consumer Protection Campaigns.

Social media influencer and activist VeryDarkMan is well-known for his candid analysis of social issues. He has a large and active fan base thanks to his ability to discuss controversial topics openly and honestly. His influence is evident in initiatives focused on accountability and social justice. His Social Reform Campaigns promoted transparency in social structures and governance by utilizing his platform to challenge accepted social norms. His widely shared videos have sparked national discussions about corruption and police abuse.

Additionally, to expose dishonest business practices and promote ethical conduct, he has also partnered with consumer rights organizations. His bold remarks and investigative style have increased public awareness and accountability. VeryDarkMan is a strong advocate for social change and consumer rights because of his authenticity and fearless approach to sensitive topics.

Theoretical Framework

Source Credibility theory

The Source Credibility theory, developed by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley in 1953, emphasizes the connection between a source's perceived credibility and the persuasiveness of the message. In influencer marketing, influencers serve as the "source," and their audience considers them likable, knowledgeable, and trustworthy. Companies that collaborate with well-known influencers in fields such as fashion, technology, fitness, and others are more likely to influence consumer attitudes and behaviors through their recommendations, which ultimately increase engagement, growth, and transactions (Ohanian, 1990).

Businesses utilize trustworthy influencers to expand their reach and enhance the outcomes of their campaigns, particularly in crowded digital arenas where customers are often skeptical of corporate messaging. Furthermore, when consumers perceive marketing communications as credible due to their genuine content, anecdotes, and personal experiences, they are more

receptive to them (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Because viewers trust social media campaigns more than traditional advertising, influencers can increase their effectiveness.

Two-Step Flow theory

Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet's (1944) Two-Step Flow theory posits that media messages initially reach opinion leaders, also referred to as influencers, who then analyze and disseminate the information to their followers. This theory emphasizes the role of intermediaries, such as influencers, in shaping consumer choices and public opinion.

Businesses use social media campaigns to tailor and refine their messaging for target audiences by working with influential opinion leaders. Influencers make promotional content more relevant and convincing by linking it to their own brand and audience preferences (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). Since the message originates from a trusted source rather than the company itself, this approach enhances reach and effectiveness, as influencers typically have large, loyal followings. By using this two-step communication strategy, businesses can boost resonance and ultimately drive company success through targeted influence collaborations.

Methodology:

The research used a survey research design, a well-established method in social science research for gathering self-reported data from a large population (Bryman, 2016). This approach was suitable for examining the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of business owners, digital marketers, and social media influencers in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State, regarding how influencers can improve the reach and effectiveness of social media campaigns for business growth.

The study's population consisted of business owners, digital marketers, and influencers operating within Oredo LGA, a bustling commercial hub with a vibrant entrepreneurial and digital marketing scene. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2024), Oredo LGA has an estimated population of 573,411 residents. Using the Krejcie and Morgan table, a sample size of 384 respondents was deemed appropriate for data collection. Data was gathered through a structured questionnaire divided into two sections: demographic information and questions about influencer marketing, campaign effectiveness, and business growth. The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and the results were presented in frequency tables for straightforward interpretation and understanding.

Analysis of Data Collected

Research Question 1: How do influencers enhance or increase the audience reach of social media campaigns for businesses?

Table 1: Awareness of Influencer Marketing

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very aware	264	73%
Somewhat aware	60	17%
Not aware	40	10%
Total	364	100%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

According to the statistics, 264 respondents (73%) had a high level of awareness of the influence on marketing and the roles that influencers play in social media campaigns. Furthermore, 40 respondents (10%) are completely unaware, and 60 respondents (17%) are somewhat or moderately aware. This indicates that marketers and businesses in Oredo LGA are highly mindful of influencer campaigns.

Table 2: Frequency of Seeing Influencer Campaigns

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	260	72%
Occasionally	70	19%
Never	34	9%
Total	364	100%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

According to the research, 260 respondents (72%) frequently encounter influencer-led marketing, showing that marketers and companies often come across influencer content promoting products

and services. While 34 respondents (9%) have never seen such an ad, 70 respondents (19%) occasionally see it. This highlights how influencers in Oredo LGA help increase campaign visibility.

Research Question 2: What impact do influencers have on consumer purchase intentions in social media campaigns?

Table 3: Influence of Influencer Campaigns on Purchase Intentions

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Significant Influence	264	73%
Moderate Influence	60	17%
No Influence	40	10%
Total	364	100%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

Influencer marketing is a powerful tool for shaping customer behavior in Oredo LGA, as the data shows that 264 respondents (73%) reported that influencer campaigns significantly influenced their buying decisions. Additionally, 40 respondents (10%) reported no influence, while 60 respondents (17%) acknowledged moderate influence. This suggests that most people can be positively influenced by influencer content when making purchasing decisions.

Table 4: Effectiveness of Influencer Campaigns

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	200	56%
Moderately effective	150	41%
Not effective	14	3%
Total	364	100%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The data shows that 150 respondents (41%) believe influencing efforts are moderately effective at increasing business sales, while 200 respondents (56%) believe they are highly effective. Only 14 respondents, or 3%, said they are ineffective. This suggests that influencers can significantly enhance sales results for businesses running social media campaigns.

Research Question 3: What are the key factors that make influencer campaigns successful?

Table 5: Internet Accessibility

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Often accessible	240	66%
Rarely accessible	100	27%
Not accessible	24	7%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

According to the table, 240 respondents (66%) reported frequently using the internet, which is a vital part of effective influencer marketing. However, 24 respondents (7%) have no access, while 100 respondents (27%) report rare access. This suggests that reliable internet access is crucial for influencer marketing to succeed, despite some firms in Oredo LGA still encountering challenges.

Discussion of findings

Businesses in Oredo Local Government Area (LGA) are increasingly turning to influencer marketing as a key strategy for expanding their reach and engaging broader audiences online. Data reveals that awareness of influencer marketing is remarkably high among respondents, with over 70% indicating strong familiarity. This widespread recognition reflects the extent to which influencers have become embedded in the region's digital landscape. Their content is frequently encountered, as 72% of respondents reported seeing influencer-led campaigns regularly on social media platforms. Such visibility demonstrates that businesses are actively collaborating with influencers to amplify their campaigns and expand their reach to potential customers who may not be accessible through conventional channels.

In addition to increasing visibility, influencers play a decisive role in shaping consumer purchasing behavior. A large proportion of respondents, 73%, admitted that influencer campaigns exerted a strong influence on their Businesses in Oredo Local Government Area (LGA). Businesses in this area are increasingly adopting influencer marketing as a key strategy to expand their reach and engage broader online audiences. Data shows that awareness of influencer

marketing is notably high among respondents, with over 70% indicating strong familiarity. This widespread recognition underscores the profound integration of influencers into the region's digital landscape. Their content is often seen, as 72% of respondents reported regularly encountering influencer-led campaigns on social media platforms. This visibility demonstrates that businesses are actively working with influencers to amplify their campaigns and reach potential customers who might not be accessible through traditional channels.

In addition to increasing visibility, influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions. A substantial portion of respondents, 73%, admitted that influencer campaigns had a strong influence on their purchasing decisions. This underscores the persuasive power of influencers, who often enjoy trust and credibility with their audiences. Even when the influence is moderate, as 17% of respondents reported, the results still show how influencer content can affect the decision-making process by shaping preferences and considerations. Only a small fraction of consumers reported being unaffected, indicating that for most people, influencers play a significant role in the overall marketing landscape.

The success of influencer campaigns, however, depends on more than just endorsements. Several key factors support their effectiveness in driving business growth. One such factor is internet access, which enables audiences to engage with influencer content consistently. About two-thirds of respondents confirmed they have reliable internet access, making it easier for campaigns to sustain ongoing visibility and interaction. In Oredo LGA, where digital infrastructure is relatively strong, influencer content not only reaches a broad audience but also promotes continuous brand-consumer engagement. This aligns with the Source Credibility theory, which highlights trust, expertise, and attractiveness as essential elements of persuasive messaging. Influencers perceived as credible and relatable tend to generate higher engagement, especially when their content is easily accessible online.

The combination of widespread internet access and credible influencer figures, therefore, enhances the reach, visibility, and impact of social media campaigns, ultimately leading to increased sales and brand loyalty. Conversely, where digital access is limited, even popular influencers may struggle to achieve the same results due to fewer opportunities for engagement. This highlights how both influencer credibility and the digital environment in which they operate jointly shape business outcomes.

The findings show that influencer marketing has become a vital part of business strategy in Oredo. It broadens campaign reach, influences consumer purchasing decisions, and, when backed by reliable internet access, offers measurable growth opportunities for businesses competing in the increasingly digital marketplace.

Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of influencers on the reach and effectiveness of social media campaigns for business growth in the Oredo Local Government Area (LGA). The findings showed that influencers are crucial in increasing the visibility of social media campaigns, as most respondents often see content led by influencers. Most participants agreed that influencers influence their purchasing decisions, indicating that influencer marketing has a positive impact on consumers' intent to buy. Factors such as internet access and the frequency of influencer engagement with the target audience also significantly impact the success of these programs. However, some local businesses are unable to fully utilize influencer campaigns due to issues such as inconsistent power supply and poor internet connectivity. Overall, the study suggests that influencer marketing has strong potential to accelerate business growth in Oredo LGA, mainly when supported by reliable digital infrastructure and consistent influencer credibility.

Recommendations

1. To benefit from influencers' broad audience reach and credibility, businesses should insistently integrate influencer marketing into their advertising campaigns.
2. Since it boosts trust and purchase intent, building genuine relationships with their audience should be an influencer's top focus. This will ultimately benefit the businesses they promote.
3. To boost the effectiveness of digital campaigns, the government and other interested parties should invest in improving digital infrastructure, like more reliable internet access and a consistent electrical supply.
4. To make sure that campaign messaging is effectively received, businesses should work with influencers who share the same values as their target audience and brand.
5. Businesses and influencers should have access to training and workshops to assist them in creating more impactful and strategic campaigns that maximize engagement and sales results.

6. To analyze the effectiveness of influencer campaigns and pinpoint areas for development, it is recommended that businesses and consumers participate in regular evaluations and feedback gatherings.

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