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# Influencer Marketing and Brand Loyalty among University Students in Anambra State: Evidence from Instant Noodles Brands in Nigeria

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**Abstract**

This study examined the relationship between influencer marketing and brand loyalty among university students in Anambra State, with specific reference to instant noodles brands in Nigeria. The study was motivated by the increasing dominance of social media influencers in shaping consumer behavior, particularly among young adults who are highly exposed to digital marketing communication. Anchored on the Source Credibility and the Uses and Gratification theories, the study was guided by four specific objectives which included examining the influence of influencer credibility, attractiveness, engagement, and relevance on brand loyalty. The research adopted a survey design, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 400 university students, drawn from a population of 97,236 students. 360 valid responses were retrieved, representing a 90% response rate. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency counts and percentages. The findings revealed that influencer credibility significantly enhances brand loyalty, while engagement and relevance were identified as the strongest predictors of consumer loyalty. Influencer attractiveness was also found to influence consumer attention, although it was less effective in sustaining long-term loyalty compared to other variables. The study further established that university students are highly influenced by social media content creators when making consumption decisions regarding instant noodles. The study concluded that influencer marketing plays a significant role in shaping brand loyalty among university students in Anambra State. It recommended that FMCG brands should prioritize credible, relatable, and engaging influencers in their marketing strategies to strengthen consumer loyalty and brand performance.

*Keywords*: influencer marketing, brand loyalty, university students, instant noodles, social media, Nigeria

## Introduction

The rapid evolution of digital communication technologies has significantly transformed the marketing landscape, giving rise to new strategies that leverage social media platforms for brand promotion. According to Okonkwo &

Namkoisse (2023), one of the most prominent of these strategies is influencer marketing, which involves the use of individuals with substantial online followings to promote products and services to targeted audiences. Influencer marketing has become a dominant force in contemporary advertising due to its ability to create authentic, relatable, and engaging content that resonates with consumers, particularly young people. Okonkwo, & Namkoisse, (2023) add that brands, globally, are increasingly shifting from traditional advertising methods to influencer-driven campaigns, recognizing the power of influencers to shape consumer perceptions and behaviors. Gan (2024) corroborates the foregoing and further averred that this shift is largely attributed to the credibility, trust, and relatability that influencers build with their audiences. Studies have shown that influencer marketing significantly affects consumer decision-making processes, purchase intentions, and long-term brand relationships.

On the other hand, Oranusi (2025) explains that Brand loyalty refers to a consumer's consistent preference and commitment to a particular brand over time, often resulting in repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth promotionAccording to Oranusi (2025), it is a critical factor for business sustainability, especially in highly competitive industries such as Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), where products are frequently purchased and easily substitutable. While corroborating the foregoing, Ojiaku (2026) also reveals that in recent years, the Nigerian FMCG sector - particularly the instant noodles market - has experienced intense competition, with brands employing aggressive marketing strategies to capture and retain consumer attention. Ojiaku (2026) avers that Instant noodles have become a staple food among university students due to their affordability, convenience, and accessibility. As a result, companies increasingly utilize social media influencers to appeal to this demographic, leveraging platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to drive engagement and brand loyalty((Thakur, Sharma, & Chapagain, 2026).

Empirical studies in Nigeria and other developing countries(Njeru, (2026; Liu, & Zheng, 2024; Gan, 2024) suggest that influencer attributes such as credibility, attractiveness, and relevance significantly influence consumer attitudes and brand attachment. For instance, research conducted among students in Anambra State(Njeru, (2026; Ojiaku, 2026; Oranusi, 2025) found that influencer engagement and relevance positively impact consumers' emotional connection to brands.

Thus, the growing reliance on influencer marketing among Generation Z consumers highlights the need to examine its effectiveness in shaping brand loyalty within specific product categories and geographic contexts. In Awka Metropolis, Anambra State, influencer marketing has been identified as a key driver of brand trust among young consumers, reinforcing its relevance in

localized studies.Despite the increasing adoption of influencer marketing strategies, there remains a gap in empirical research focusing on its effectiveness in the Nigerian instant noodles market, particularly among university students in Anambra State. This study therefore seeks to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between influencer marketing and brand loyalty within this specific context.

The proliferation of social media platforms has led to an overwhelming increase in digital advertising content, making it increasingly difficult for brands to capture and retain consumer attention. Traditional advertising methods are gradually losing effectiveness among younger audiences, particularly university students, who tend to distrust conventional promotional messages and prefer peer recommendations and influencer endorsements.Although influencer marketing has emerged as a viable alternative, its effectiveness in fostering brand loyalty remains a subject of debate. While some studies suggest that influencer marketing enhances consumer engagement and trust, others argue that its impact may be short-lived or superficial, especially when consumers perceive influencer content as overly commercialized. There is, therefore, limited context-specific research focusing on Anambra State, despite its growing population of digitally active youths and university students. Existing studies have largely focused on general consumer behavior or broader geographic areas, leaving a gap in understanding how influencer marketing specifically affects brand loyalty among university students within this region.The main objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness of influencer marketing on brand loyalty among university students in Anambra State, using instant noodle brands as a case study. The specific objectives were as follows:

1. To examine the influence of influencer credibility on brand loyalty among university students.
2. To determine the effect of influencer attractiveness on students' loyalty to instant noodle brands.
3. To assess the role of influencer engagement in shaping brand loyalty.
4. To evaluate the relationship between influencer relevance and consumer brand loyalty.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on two theories, Source Credibility theory andthe Uses and Gratification theory.

**Source Credibility Theory:** Source Credibility Theory remains one of the most influential frameworks in understanding persuasive communication, particularly within advertising and marketing contexts. The theory posits that the effectiveness of a message is largely determined by the perceived credibility of

its source, which is traditionally conceptualized through three core dimensions: trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. These dimensions serve as critical cues through which audiences evaluate the reliability and persuasiveness of information (Ohanian, 1990; cited in recent influencer studies).

In the context of influencer marketing, Source Credibility Theory provides a robust explanation for the effectiveness of social media influencers as brand endorsers. Influencers are often perceived as credible sources due to their domain-specific knowledge, relatability, and consistent interaction with their audiences. These characteristics enhance their ability to shape consumer attitudes and influence behavioral outcomes such as purchase intention and brand loyalty (Babu et al., 2024). In relation to this study, Source Credibility Theory provides a foundational framework for examining how influencer attributes - particularly credibility, attractiveness, and expertise—influence brand loyalty among university students in Anambra State. It suggests that higher perceived credibility leads to stronger trust, positive brand attitudes, and ultimately sustained loyalty.

**Uses and Gratifications Theory:** Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) offers a complementary perspective by focusing on the motivations underlying media consumption. Unlike traditional media theories that conceptualize audiences as passive recipients of information, UGT posits that individuals are active agents who selectively engage with media to satisfy specific psychological and social needs. These needs typically include information seeking, entertainment, social interaction, identity formation, and escapism.

In the context of social media, UGT provides valuable insights into why users engage with influencer content and how such engagement shapes their attitudes and behaviours. Social media platforms are inherently interactive and user-centered, allowing individuals to curate their media experiences based on personal preferences and motivations. As a result, consumers are more likely to engage with content that aligns with their needs and interests. In the context of this study, Uses and Gratifications Theory explains why university students engage with influencer content related to instant noodle brands and how such engagement influences their brand preferences and loyalty. It suggests that influencer marketing is most effective when it fulfills the informational, emotional, and social needs of the target audience.

## Literature Review

Empirical studies on influencer marketing and brand loyalty have expanded significantly in recent years, reflecting the growing importance of digital communication in shaping consumer behavior. This section reviews relevant global and Nigerian studies, focusing on the relationship between influencer marketing dimensions and brand loyalty, particularly within FMCG and youth-

oriented markets.

Recent global studies provide strong evidence supporting the effectiveness of influencer marketing in shaping consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty. For instance, a study by Liu and Zheng (2024) found that influencer credibility significantly enhances brand trust and purchase intention, with trust acting as a mediating variable between influencer characteristics and consumer behavior. The study, conducted using structural equation modeling, revealed that consumers are more likely to develop loyalty toward brands endorsed by credible and authentic influencers.

Similarly, Ahmed, Islam, and Ghaffar (2024) examined the role of influencer attributes in shaping brand loyalty and found that engagement and social attractiveness significantly influence emotional attachment to brands. Their findings indicate that influencer marketing operates through both cognitive (trust and credibility) and affective (emotional connection) pathways, thereby reinforcing long-term brand loyalty.

A meta-analytic review published in the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (Springer, 2024) further confirmed that influencer marketing has a statistically significant positive effect on consumer outcomes, including brand loyalty, purchase intention, and brand attitude. However, the study emphasized that the magnitude of these effects varies depending on contextual factors such as product type, platform, and audience characteristics.

In another study, Gong, Ye, and Yu (2024) explored the mediating role of parasocial interaction in influencer marketing and found that emotional bonds between influencers and followers significantly enhance the effectiveness of endorsements. The study concluded that parasocial relationships increase trust and reduce resistance to persuasive messages, thereby strengthening brand loyalty.

Furthermore, Thakur, Sharma, and Chapagain (2026) investigated the relationship between influencer marketing and brand loyalty among Generation Z consumers and found that parasocial interaction and engagement serve as critical mediators. Their findings suggest that repeated interaction with influencer content fosters familiarity and emotional attachment, which translate into repeat purchase behavior and brand advocacy.

Despite these insights, global studies tend to focus on developed economies, particularly in Europe, North America, and parts of Asia, with limited attention to African markets and localized consumer behavior patterns.

Studies conducted in developing economies provide additional insights into the effectiveness of influencer marketing within different socio-economic and cultural contexts. For instance, Majalawa & Kussudyarsana (2025) found that

influencer credibility and brand congruence significantly influence purchase intention among consumers in emerging markets. Their study highlighted the importance of cultural relevance and contextual alignment in enhancing influencer effectiveness.

Similarly, research by Kilumile & Zuo (2024) demonstrated that consumer engagement with influencer content significantly predicts brand loyalty, particularly when consumers actively participate in content creation and interaction. The study emphasized the role of co-creation and participatory culture in strengthening consumer-brand relationships.

Another study by Fikri (2024) found that trust derived from influencer credibility plays a central role in driving brand loyalty. The findings indicate that consumers in developing economies are highly influenced by perceived authenticity and transparency, which serve as key determinants of trust and loyalty.

Empirical research on influencer marketing in Nigeria is still emerging but provides valuable insights into the behavior of local consumers. For example, Oranusi (2025) examined the relationship between influencer marketing and brand trust among Generation Z consumers in Awka Metropolis and found a significant positive relationship between influencer engagement and brand trust. The study concluded that social media influencers play a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions and fostering trust in brands.

Similarly, Ojiaku (2026) investigated the impact of influencer marketing on brand love among young consumers and found that influencer attributes such as credibility and relatability significantly influence emotional attachment to brands. The study emphasized that emotional connection is a key pathway through which influencer marketing translates into brand loyalty.

In another Nigerian study, Okonkwo and Namkoisse (2023) found that influencer marketing enhances authentic brand relationships by fostering trust, engagement, and relatability. Their findings suggest that Nigerian consumers are highly responsive to influencer-generated content, particularly when it reflects their social realities and experiences.

A study by Njeru (2026) on soft drink consumption among Generation Z found that influencer marketing significantly influences brand preference and repeat purchase behavior. The findings suggest that influencer endorsements are particularly effective in FMCG markets due to the frequent purchase nature of these products.However, there is a notable scarcity of empirical studies focusing specifically on the instant noodles market, particularly within Nigeria. Existing research tends to generalize FMCG findings without addressing product-specific dynamics or consumer segments such as university students.

Despite the growing body of literature on influencer marketing and brand loyalty, several critical gaps remain:Most studies are conducted in developed economies, with limited research focusing on Nigeria and other African contexts where cultural and socio-economic factors differ significantly. Existing Nigerian studies have largely focused on broader regions or urban centers, with little attention given to Anambra State, despite its high concentration of university students and digital media users. There is a scarcity of studies focusing specifically on the instant noodles market, as most research examines influencer marketing within broader FMCG categories.Limited studies focus specifically on university students, who represent a key consumer segment for instant noodles and are highly influenced by social media. Many studies focus on purchase intention or brand awareness, with insufficient attention to brand loyalty as a multidimensional construct involving behavioral and attitudinal components.

## Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey design was appropriate because it enables the researcher to obtain, analyze, and interpret data from a representative sample of respondents in order to describe existing conditions, opinions, and relationships among variables without manipulating them. In the context of this study, the design was suitable for examining how influencer marketing dimensions (credibility, attractiveness, engagement, and relevance) influence brand loyalty among university students in Anambra State, particularly with respect to instant noodle brands.

The study was conducted in Anambra State, Nigeria. Anambra State is located in the southeastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria and is home to several tertiary institutions with large populations of digitally active students. These include institutions such asNnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (NAU), Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli/Igbariam (COOU), and Madonna University, Okija (Anambra campus vicinity influence)The choice of Anambra State was justified by its high concentration of university students who are active users of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, where influencer marketing is most prominent. This makes the area ideal for examining the relationship between influencer marketing and brand loyalty in FMCG consumption.

The population of the study comprises 97,236 all undergraduate university students in in Anambra State. According to institutional registry and student population records, the total population of university students in Anambra state is large and heterogeneous. A sample size of 400 was determined for this survey, using the Taro Yamane formula, as given below:

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

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in this study. First, universities in Anambra State were purposively selected based on their large student populations and high internet/social media usage. Secondly, students were stratified based on faculties (e.g., Social Sciences, Management Sciences, Engineering, Arts, and Education) to ensure balanced representation. Thirdly, respondents were randomly selected within each stratum to ensure equal chance of participation and reduce sampling bias. This combination enhances representativeness and ensures that findings reflect diverse student perspectives. Data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered physically and digitally (Google Forms), depending on accessibility of respondents. Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, a total of 360 were properly completed and returned, representing a 90% response rate, which is considered highly adequate for analysis in survey research. Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

**Response Rate**

A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, out of which 360 were duly completed and returned.

**Table 1 Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval**

| **Response category** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Questionnaire Distributed | 400 | 100% |
| Questionnaire Returned | 360 | 90% |
| Questionnaire Not | 40 | 10% |
| **Total** | **400** | **100%** |

The response rate of 90% is considered highly adequate for analysis and exceeds the minimum acceptable benchmark for social science research (usually 70%), indicating strong respondent engagement and reliability of data collected.

**Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

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**Table 2: Gender Distribution**

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 162 | 45% |
| Female | 198 | 55% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

Source: Field survey, 2026

The data shows a slightly higher female representation (55%), indicating that female students are more actively engaged in responding to influencer marketing-related surveys, possibly due to higher engagement with social media content.

**Table 3 Distribution of Respondents by Age**

| Age Group | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 15 – 20 years | 102 | 28.3% |
| 21 – 25 years | 186 | 51.7% |
| 26 – 30 years | 56 | 15.6% |
| 31 years and above | 16 | 4.4% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

The majority of respondents fall within the 21–25 age bracket, which confirms that the study largely reflects Generation Z and young Millennial consumers who are the primary targets of influencer marketing campaigns.

**Table 4: Frequency of Instant Noodle Consumption**

| Frequency | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Daily | 78 | 21.7% |
| Weekly | 192 | 53.3% |
| Occasionally | 70 | 19.4% |
| Rarely | 20 | 5.6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

Most respondents (53.3%) consume instant noodles weekly, confirming that noodles are a staple FMCG product among university students and justifying its suitability for this study.

**Analysis of Research Objectives**

**Influence of Influencer Credibility on Brand Loyalty**

**Table 5: Credibility Responses**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 144 | 40% |
| Agreed | 137 | 38% |
| Disagreed | 54 | 15% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 25 | 7% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

**Table 6: Respondents trust influencers who promote Noodle Brands**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 144 | 40% |
| Agreed | 137 | 38% |
| Disagreed | 54 | 15% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 25 | 7% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

The implication of the data on the table above is that Influencers are marketing and advertising strategic planning.

**Table 7: Credible influencers influence my purchase decisions**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 158 | 44% |
| Agreed | 130 | 36% |
| Disagreed | 50 | 14% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 22 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

The implication of the data on the table above is that Influencers are marketing and advertising strategic planning.

**Table 8: Respondents remain loyal to brands endorsed by trusted influence**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 130 | 39% |
| Agreed | 144 | 40% |
| Disagreed | 54 | 15% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 22 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

The mean scores above 3.0 indicate strong agreement that influencer credibility significantly affects brand loyalty among students.This suggests that trust remains a critical determinant of consumer behavior in digital environments.

**Influence of Influencer Attractiveness**

**Table 9: Attractive influencers catch Respondents' attention easily**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 167 | 46% |
| Agreed | 122 | 34% |
| Disagreed | 50 | 14% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 21 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

Mean Response = 3.20

**Table 10: Respondents prefer brands promoted by likable influencers**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 151 | 42% |
| Agreed | 137 | 38% |
| Disagreed | 50 | 14% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 21 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

Mean score - 3.16

**Table 11: Influencer appearance influences perception of brands**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 137 | 38% |
| Agreed | 144 | 40% |
| Disagreed | 50 | 14% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 21 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

Mean score - 3.10

Respondents agree that attractiveness plays a role in shaping attention and brand perception.Visual appeal enhances initial engagement but must be supported by credibility for loyalty formation.

**Influence of Influencer Engagement**

**Table 12: Respondents engage more with brands promoted by interactive influencers**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 162 | 45% |
| Agreed | 133 | 37% |
| Disagreed | 47 | 13% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 18 | 5% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

Mean = 3.22

**Table 13: Comments and replies from influencers increase respondents' trust**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 155 | 43% |
| Agreed | 140 | 39% |
| Disagreed | 43 | 12% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 22 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

Mean = 3.19

**Table 14: Engagement increases respondents' likelihood of buying noodle brands**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 148 | 41% |
| Agreed | 144 | 40% |
| Disagreed | 47 | 13% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 22 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

Mean = 3.16

High mean scores confirm that engagement significantly strengthens brand loyalty.Interactive communication builds stronger emotional bonds and reinforces consumer-brand relationships.

**Influence of Influencer Relevance**

**Table 15: Respondents trust influencers who relate to student life**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 169 | 47% |
| Agreed | 126 | 35% |
| Disagreed | 43 | 12% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 22 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

Mean = 3.23

**Table 16: Respondents prefer influencers whose lifestyle matches mine**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 169 | 44% |
| Agreed | 126 | 38% |
| Disagreed | 43 | 12% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 22 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

**Table 17: Relevant influencers influence respondents' noodle brand choice**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 169 | 42% |
| Agreed | 126 | 39% |
| Disagreed | 43 | 13% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 22 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

mean = 3.17

Influencer relevance strongly influences consumer decision-making.

Implication: Homophily (similarity between influencer and audience) increases persuasion effectiveness.

**Brand Loyalty Indicators**

Table 18: Respondents consistently buy preferred Noodles

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 155 | 43% |
| Agreed | 140 | 39% |
| Disagreed | 47 | 13% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 22 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

Mean = 3.19

**Table 19: Respondents recommend my preferred noodle brand to others**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 148 | 41% |
| Agreed | 144 | 40% |
| Disagreed | 47 | 13% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 22 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

Mean = 3.16

**Table 20: Respondents resist switching to other noodle brands**

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agreed | 137 | 38% |
| Agreed | 151 | 42% |
| Disagreed | 50 | 14% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 22 | 6% |
| **Total** | **360** | **100%** |

*Source: field survey, 2026*

Mean = 3.12

Students exhibit moderate to high brand loyalty influenced by digital exposure.

**Discussion of Findings**

The study confirms that influencer credibility significantly influences brand loyalty, aligning with Source Credibility Theory, which posits that trustworthiness and expertise determine message persuasiveness. This supports Liu & Zheng (2024), who found that credibility enhances consumer trust and brand attachment.The implication is that students are more likely to remain loyal to noodle brands endorsed by influencers they perceive as authentic and knowledgeable.

The strong influence of engagement and relevance supports Uses and Gratifications Theory, which suggests that audiences actively select media that satisfies their needs.Findings align with Springer (2024), who noted that social media users engage with content for entertainment, information, and social identity formation. Students engage with influencer content because it reflects their lifestyle and needs, reinforcing brand loyalty.

The study found that engagement and relatability strongly influence brand loyalty, supporting Parasocial Interaction Theory.This aligns with Gong et al. (2024), who argued that emotional bonds with influencers enhance trust and purchase behavior. Students develop one-sided emotional relationships with influencers, which translates into brand preference for endorsed noodles.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that influencer marketing plays a significant and positive role in shaping brand loyalty among university students in Anambra State. The study confirms that consumers, particularly young adults and students, are highly influenced by digital content creators who they perceive as credible, relatable, and engaging.The study further concludes that influencer marketing is no longer a supplementary marketing tool but a core strategic driver of FMCG brand performance.Emotional and social connections created through influencers significantly shape consumer loyalty behaviors.Among all dimensions, credibility, engagement, and relevance are more influential than physical attractiveness in sustaining brand loyalty.The findings are consistent with Source Credibility Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, and Parasocial Interaction Theory, which collectively explain how trust, media consumption motives, and emotional relationships influence consumer behavior.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

FMCG brands (especially noodle manufacturers) should prioritize credible influencers who are perceived as authentic and trustworthy rather than focusing solely on celebrity status.

Brands should invest in engagement-driven influencer campaigns, encouraging two-way communication such as comments, live sessions, and interactive content to strengthen consumer relationships.

Influencer selection should prioritize relevance and lifestyle alignment, particularly influencers who reflect student life and everyday experiences.

Marketing strategies should incorporate micro-influencers and campus influencers, as they are more relatable and effective in influencing student purchasing behavior.

Brands should integrate emotional storytelling in influencer campaigns, as emotional connection is key to long-term brand loyalty.

FMCG companies should continuously monitor influencer performance metrics, such as engagement rate, trust perception, and conversion outcomes, rather than only reach and visibility.

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**MLA**

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