

**Topic: Exploring the Synergy Between Content Marketing and Influencer Strategies:  
Measuring Their Impact on Consumer Engagement and the Moderating Role of Brand  
Reputation in Digital Marketing**

**Sample**

## ABSTRACT

The interplay between content marketing and influencer strategies, influenced by brand reputation, is a dynamic and influential force in digital marketing. Based on this, the study sought to examine the moderating role of brand reputation in the interplay of content marketing and influencer strategies on consumer engagement.

The study adopted a quantitative research approach. The study was conducted using a cross-sectional research approach. A sample of 210 respondents was included in the study using a purposive sampling method. The data was collected using questionnaires and analysed using correlational analysis.

From the analysis, the study found that BR significantly influences CE with a beta coefficient of 0.173 ( $t=2.411$ ,  $p=0.016$ ). It was also revealed that IS exhibit a strong and significant positive effect on CE ( $\beta=0.623$ ,  $t=6.602$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The study revealed that the interaction between BR and CM on CE is not significant ( $\beta=-0.031$ ,  $t=0.428$ ,  $p=0.669$ ), while the interaction between BR and IS is significant ( $\beta=0.228$ ,  $t=2.473$ ,  $p=0.013$ ).

The study recommended that future research could greatly benefit from longitudinal studies to track the effectiveness and evolution of digital marketing strategies over time.

## Table of Content

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLE</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURE</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	2
1.3 Study Aim	3
1.3.1 Specific Objectives	3
1.4 Hypothesis	4
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Conceptual Review	5
2.2.1 Content Marketing	5
2.2.2 Influencer Strategies	6
2.2.3 Consumer Engagement	6
2.2.4 Brand Reputation	6
2.2.5 Digital Marketing	7
2.3 Theoretical Review	7
	2

2.3.1	Theory of Reasoned Action	7
2.3.2	Social Influence Theory	8
2.4	Empirical Review	9
2.4.1	The Relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement	9
2.4.2	The Relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement	9
2.4.3	The Relationship between Brand Reputation and Consumer Engagement	10
2.4.4	The Moderating role of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement	11
2.4.5	The Moderating role of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement	12
2.5	Conceptual Framework	13
2.6	Literature gap	14
2.7	Conclusion	14
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>		<b>16</b>
3.1	Introduction	16
3.2	Research Philosophy	16
3.3	Research Approach	17
3.4	Research Strategy	17
3.5	Methodological Choices	17
3.6	Time horizon	18

3.7	Techniques and Procedures	18
3.7.1	Study population	18
3.7.2	Sample size and sampling technique	18
3.7.3	Data Collection Tool	19
3.7.4	Data Collection Process	20
3.7.5	Data Analysis	20
3.8	Ethical Consideration	21
<b>RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>		<b>22</b>
4.1	Introduction	22
4.2	Results	22
4.3	Reliability and Validity Test	23
4.4	Descriptive Statistics	26
4.5	Correlation	29
4.6	Moderation Analysis	30
<b>THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>		<b>33</b>
<b>LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b>		<b>35</b>
	Limitations	35
	Suggestions for future studies	35
<b>REFERENCES</b>		<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>		<b>41</b>
		4



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of respondents	22
<i>Table 4.2: Reliability and validity test result</i>	23
<i>Table 4.3: Fornell-Larcher Criteria</i>	24
<i>Table 4.4: Cross-Factor Loadings</i>	24
<i>Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics for Content Marketing</i>	26
Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics for Influencer Strategies	27
<i>Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics for Brand Reputation</i>	28
Table 4.8: Descriptive statistics for Consumer Engagement	29
Table 4.9: correlation analysis for Variables	29
Table 4.10: Results of moderation analysis	30

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

- Figure 2.1: A conceptual framework for the moderating role of brand reputation in the interplay of content marketing and influencer strategies on consumer engagement. 13

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

The interplay between content marketing and influencer strategies, influenced by brand reputation, is a dynamic and influential force in digital marketing. Content marketing is explained as the creation and distribution of valuable and relevant content to attract a targeted audience (Ao et al., 2023). Content marketing focuses on storytelling, entertainment and education to build brand awareness and trust. Influencer strategies on the other hand refer to the leverage of individuals with significant social media followings to endorse or promote a brand (Ao et al., 2023). Here, influencers share brand-created content by adding authenticity while reaching the message. Organisations that strategically leverage these elements can create engaging, authentic, and impactful digital campaigns, fostering long-term relationships with their audience (Ali et al., 2020). Authentic content from both brands and influencers builds trust with consumers. The combination of content marketing and influencer strategies allows for diverse formats and catering to various consumer preferences. For instance, blog posts, video content and social media collaborations offer engaging experiences. Also, content marketing and influencer strategies encourage two-way communication between brands, influencers and consumers.

Another key factor that serves as a foundation for successful content and influencer strategies is a strong brand reputation. According to Rather et al. (2023) consumers are more likely to engage with content from reputable brands. A strong brand reputation serves as a buffer against potential risks associated with influencer partnerships.

In research, much has been done to prove the relationship between brand reputation, content marketing, influencer strategies and consumer strategies in various areas around the world.

Balanche et al. (2021) analysed influencer marketing and the role between influencers, products and consumers in the UK. The result from the study revealed that when a strong congruence is established between customers and the product, optimal returns are achieved through a favourable attitude towards the product, higher purchases and improved recommendation intention. In Africa, Moodley et al. (2022) examined the impact of influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements on the behaviour of consumers in South Africa. Findings from the study revealed that content marketing and influencer strategies provide the platform to influence consumers' decision-making. In Ghana, Botchwey (2023) explores the impact of influencer marketers and consumers on telecommunication brands. The study found that influencers' strategies play a role in consumer's perception of a brand.

Despite the numerous analyses done on the relationship between brand reputation, content marketing, influencer strategies and customer engagement, attention must be placed on further assessment of the role of each study and how they influence each other. Thus, the current study examines the moderating role of brand reputation in the interplay of content marketing and influencer strategies on consumer engagement.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

In the rapidly evolving landscape of digital marketing, the synergies between content marketing, influencer strategies and brand reputation have become instrumental in shaping consumer engagement (Ao et al., 2023). However, a critical gap exists in understanding the nuanced dynamics of this interplay, particularly concerning the moderating influence of brand reputation. As investment in content creation has increasingly become profitable for organisations, the need to collaborate with influencers to enhance their online presence has also become a major concern (Ali et al., 2020).

While most existing literature (Ao et al., 2023; Botchwey, 2023; Rather et al., 2023) acknowledges the individual significance of content marketing, influencer strategies, consumer engagement and brand reputation, a comprehensive examination of their interconnectedness remains limited. The potential moderating role of brand reputation in shaping consumer responses to integrated content and influencer campaigns represents an unexplored area that demands scholarly attention. Addressing this gap is essential not only for advancing academic understanding but also for providing actionable insights to marketers seeking to optimise their digital marketing strategies. By delving into this uncharted territory, the study seeks to offer a nuanced understanding that goes beyond isolated examinations of each component, providing a holistic view of the factors influencing successful consumer engagement in the digital realm. Hence, this research aims to unravel the complexities of the relationship between content marketing, influencer strategies, and brand reputation, with a specific focus on how the reputation of a brand may enhance or diminish the impact of content and influencers on consumer engagement.

### **1.3 Study Aim**

The main aim of the study is to examine the moderating role of brand reputation in the interplay of content marketing and influencer strategies on consumer engagement.

#### **1.3.1 Specific Objectives**

- i. To examine the relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement
- ii. To examine the relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement
- iii. To examine the relationship between Brand Reputation and Consumer Engagement
- iv. To examine the moderating role of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement

- v. To examine the moderating role of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement

#### **1.4 Hypothesis**

To address the objective of the study, the following hypothesis is used;

**H1=** There is no statistically significant relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement

**H2=** There is no statistically significant relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement

**H3=** There is no statistically significant relationship between Brand Reputation and Consumer Engagement

**H4=** There is no statistically significant moderating effect of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement

**H5=** There is no statistically significant moderating effect of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The literature review delves into the existing body of knowledge regarding content marketing and influencer strategies and their effects on consumer engagement, as well as the influential role brand reputation plays in digital marketing. In doing so, the literature review focuses on the conceptual review, shifts to a comprehensive review of theories, empirical studies based on the objectives of the study and the conceptual framework to explain the variables identified in the study topic. Next, the literature review ends with the identification of the gaps in the existing studies and the summary of key points in the entire literature review.

### **2.2 Conceptual review**

The conceptual review categorises and describes concepts that are relevant to the study on the effects of content marketing and influencer strategies on consumer engagement, as well as the influential role brand reputation plays in digital marketing. The concepts relevant to the study include content marketing, influencer strategies, consumer engagement, brand reputation and digital marketing.

#### **2.2.1 Content marketing**

Content marketing has grown to become a crucial strategy in an era marked by a rapid transition to information technology and digitalisation. Content marketing is a marketing strategy that entails producing and sharing relevant articles, films, podcasts and other media content to draw in, hold on to and grow an audience (Vinerean, 2017). Pulizzi (2013), in his work "Marketing Trends 2013 for B2B Content Marketing", emphasises the importance of content marketing as building trust and driving consumer action.

### **2.2.2 Influencer strategies**

Influencer strategy is a social media marketing strategy that uses product mentions and endorsements from individuals with dedicated social following and considered experts in their niche (Tafesse & Wood, 2021). According to Smith et al. (2023), the authenticity factor that characterises influencer strategy is what makes it play a pivotal role in contemporary marketing. This authenticity factor is about the genuine connections between influencers and their audiences, including the consistency of the brand aligning with the specific interests of the influencer.

### **2.2.3 Consumer engagement**

Consumer engagement has to do with the relationship a customer has with a business. Brodie et al. (2013) discuss its (consumer engagement) multidimensional nature, where they focus on the physical, cognitive and emotional presence of consumers in their relationship with a business or brand. According to Verhagen et al. (2015), the transition to digital platforms has made it more important than ever for companies and businesses to build genuine connections with their customers, emphasising how involvement in the contemporary market is dynamic and ever-changing.

### **2.2.4 Brand Reputation**

Brand reputation is a crucial component of the success of any business, as it influences consumer trust and loyalty. When consumers trust and are loyal to a specific brand, the said brand is likely to make more sales, thereby increasing profits (Afzal et al., 2010). However, this is only possible

or depends on the reputation of the brand. Brand reputation refers to the general opinion the public has of a specific brand or business (Afzal et al., 2010).

### **2.2.5 Digital Marketing**

With the development of technology, one area of marketing that is rapidly changing is digital marketing. In defining digital marketing, Alamsyah et al. (2019) state that it is about promoting brands to reach potential consumers, using the Internet and other forms of digital communication. Further, they (Alamsyah et al., 2019) emphasise social media, which is one of the technological advancements, and the crucial role it plays in shaping the behaviours of consumers. There are other forms, such as web-based advertising, text and multimedia messaging and emails, all of which are digital marketing channels used to communicate with target audiences.

## **2.3 Theoretical review**

The theoretical review is an explanation of existing theories that serve as a guide for developing arguments related to a study topic. In the context of the study on content marketing and influencer strategies and their effects on consumer engagement, as well as the influential role brand reputation plays in digital marketing, the theory of reasoned action and the social influence theory are ideal.

### **2.3.1 Theory of Reasoned Action**

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) states that attitudes and subjective norms shape the behavioural intentions of individuals (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015). The TRA, when applied to content marketing and influencer strategies, suggest that consumers' engagements with content

put out depend on their beliefs or opinions about, or aligned with influencers. Influencers, in this context, act as social referents or people who refer to products, and this means they (influencers) can influence attitudes and subjective norms, as their name suggests. Thus, it is worth mentioning that if the content they put out resonates, they are likely to impact consumer behaviours. Also, within the framework of the TRA, brand reputation along with digital marketing plays a crucial role. When a brand has a positive reputation, it contributes to positive attitudes, and fosters intentions and behaviours that are favourable. In short, consumers are more likely to engage with brands with positive reputations than those with negative or bad reputations.

Overall, aligning content and influencers with the values of a brand ensures consistency with the theory of reasoned action, leading to positive engagements.

### **2.3.2 Social Influence Theory**

Social influence theory states that the influence of other people in social networks is what significantly shapes the behaviours, attitudes and decisions of individuals (Lim, 2022). From the perspective of digital marketing, the social influence theory underpins the influence or power of social media and other online communities in terms of defining and shaping the perceptions and opinions of consumers. The social influence theory has been applied in various fields including psychology, sociology, marketing and communication (Albaram et al., 2023). It helps explain the mechanisms behind conformity, persuasion, and the adoption of new behaviours within social contexts. Additionally, understanding social influence is crucial for promoting positive social change and addressing issues related to group dynamics and decision-making. Despite its numerous benefits, various criticisms of the social influence theory highlight areas where the theory can benefit from refinement for a more comprehensive understanding of social influence

processes. The theory has been criticised for downplaying the role of individual agency and the capacity of individuals to resist social influence (Lim, 2022). In terms of the current study analysis, social influence theory provides a lens through which to understand the dynamics of the interplay between content marketing, influencer strategies, and consumer engagement, with brand reputation serving as a central moderating factor. The theory highlights the reciprocal nature of the exchange, the role of trust, and the importance of long-term relationship building, emphasising the ethical dimensions of the interaction.

## **2.4 Empirical review**

This section presents the review of already existing studies conducted about the current study objectives.

### **2.4.1 The Relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement**

The relationship between content marketing and consumer engagement is crucial in the digital landscape, where brands aim to capture and maintain the attention of their target audience. Relevant and interesting content captures the audience's attention and fosters a connection between the brand and the consumer. This is proven in the study conducted by Bui et al. (2023) the relationship between digital content and brand loyalty was analysed in Vietnam. The study utilised the quantitative research approach through the survey method where data was obtained from a total of 290 respondents. The gathered data for the study was analysed using the exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation model. Findings from the study indicated that content marketing through experimental evaluation significantly and positively affects brand engagement.

In essence, the relationship between content marketing and consumer engagement is symbiotic. This ongoing cycle creates a dynamic and mutually beneficial relationship that contributes to the overall success and growth of a brand in the digital landscape.

#### **2.4.2 The Relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement**

The relationship between influencer strategies and consumer engagement thrives on authenticity, relatability, creativity, and the ability of influencers to connect with their audience. Successful influencer marketing campaigns leverage these dynamics to create a meaningful and ongoing relationship between the brand, the influencer, and the consumers, ultimately driving higher levels of engagement and brand affinity. This is evidenced in the study conducted by Pradhan et al. (2023) which examines the relationship between social media influencers and customer engagement. The study was conducted based on a systematic review of literature relating to the study topic. Results from the study indicated that influencer strategies positively influence customer engagement when influencers create a good relationship with customers through various strategies such as creativity and the ability to influence. In another study, Ao et al. (2023) assessed the impact of social media influencers on customer engagement. The study synthesises a total of 176 effect sizes derived from 62 studies. The study found that influencer characteristics such as expertise, trustworthiness, credibility, congruence and homophily have a moderate to high correlation with customer engagement which positively impacts purchase intentions.

While empirical evidence generally supports a positive relationship between influencer strategies and consumer engagement, the effectiveness may vary based on multiple factors such as cultural context.

### **2.4.3 The Relationship between Brand Reputation and Consumer Engagement**

Customers are more likely to engage with brands they trust. A positive reputation contributes significantly to building and maintaining trust, which, in turn, enhances customer engagement. This is seen in most existing studies conducted about the relationship between brand reputation and customer engagement. For instance, Rather et al. (2024) examined the relationship between consumer engagement and brand reputation. Here, the study was conducted using the survey method where primary data was obtained from consumers of luxury hotels in India who were sampled using the purposive sampling technique. The study gathered data using a questionnaire where data was obtained from a total of 372 respondents. The gathered data for the study was analysed using confirmatory factor analysis. The result of the study indicated that brand reputation is a major factor that positively influences employee engagement in digital marketing. Empirical evidence consistently supports the notion that brand reputation has a profound impact on customer engagement. Continuous research in this area helps businesses understand the evolving dynamics of brand reputation and its influence on customer engagement strategies.

### **2.4.4 The Moderating role of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement**

The moderating role of brand reputation in the relationship between content marketing and consumer engagement explains how the perceived reputation of a brand influences the effectiveness of content marketing strategies in engaging consumers. The study conducted by Rather et al. (2024) indicated that brand reputation moderated the positive relationship between luxury brand content marketing and customer engagement. In another study conducted by Rifakli et al. (2022), the relationship between content marketing, consumer engagement and brand reputation was assessed in Indonesia. The study was conducted using the quantitative research

approach where data was obtained from 100 respondents using a questionnaire. The gathered data for the study was analysed using the SPSS program. Results from the study revealed that brand reputation increases brand trust and loyalty which enables the positive impact of content marketing on brand loyalty.

The moderating role of brand reputation in the relationship between content marketing and consumer engagement is a complex interplay of factors. The trust, credibility, and overall positive perceptions associated with a strong brand reputation create a favourable environment for meaningful and sustained consumer engagement with content marketing initiatives.

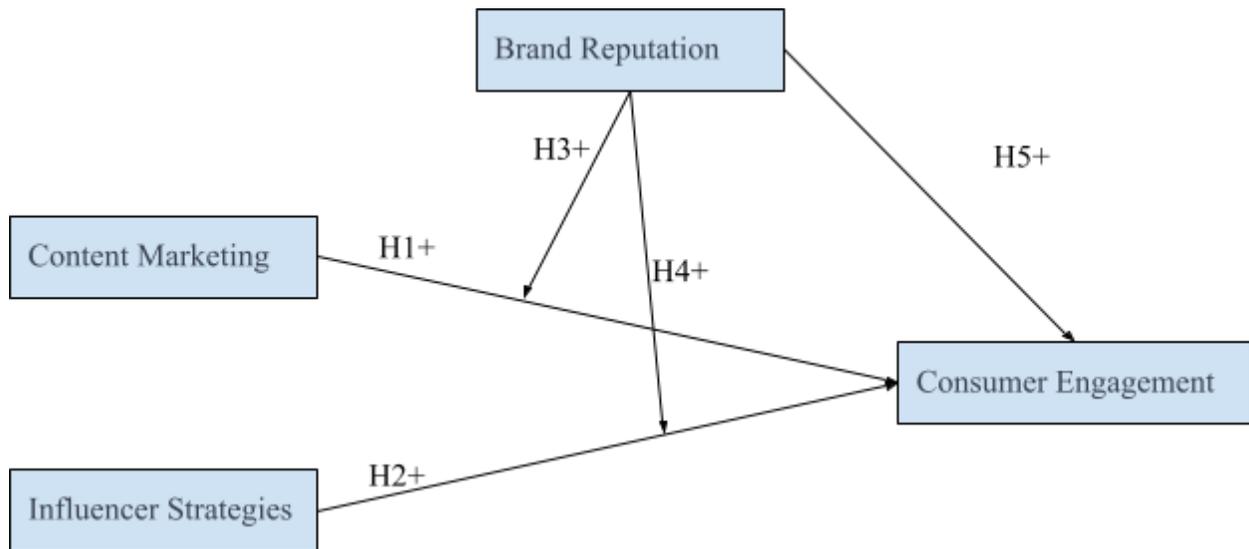
#### **2.4.5 The Moderating role of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement**

The moderating role of brand reputation in the relationship between influencer strategies and consumer engagement is a critical aspect of contemporary marketing research. Understanding how the perceived reputation of a brand influences the effectiveness of influencer strategies in engaging consumers is key to developing successful marketing campaigns. Most studies (Muhammad et al., 2023; Ao et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2023) have shown that brand reputation moderates the relationship between influencer strategies and customer engagement. This is to say that brand reputation moderates the consistency of the brand image across influencers. A positive reputation ensures that consumers perceive a unified brand identity, enhancing engagement. Also, brand reputation moderates the perceived authenticity of influencer content. Consumers are more likely to engage when both the influencer and the brand are perceived as authentic.

Overall, the moderating role of brand reputation in the relationship between influencer strategies and consumer engagement highlights the interconnected nature of these elements. Understanding

and leveraging this moderating role is essential for brands aiming to maximise the effectiveness of their influencer marketing initiatives.

## 2.5 Conceptual framework



*Source: Researcher's Construct (2023)*

*Figure 2.1: A conceptual framework for the moderating role of brand reputation in the interplay of content marketing and influencer strategies on consumer engagement.*

Figure 2.1 presents a structured guide for understanding and analysing the dynamics involved in creating effective marketing strategies that leverage both content and influencers while considering the overarching influence of brand reputation on consumer engagement. Each element plays a crucial role in shaping how consumers perceive and interact with a brand. When content marketing, influencer strategies, and brand reputation align optimally, consumer engagement is enhanced (Muhammad et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2023). A strong brand reputation creates positive associations in the minds of consumers (Rather et al., 2024). Positive associations contribute to higher levels of trust, loyalty, and willingness to engage with the brand. Also, relevant and valuable content resonates with the audience, driving higher

engagement (Bui et al., 2023). In terms of influencer strategies, it is evidenced that consumers engage with influencers they trust, and the authenticity of influencer content enhances customer engagement (Pradhan et al., 2023).

## **2.6 Literature gap**

The review of the literature helps to recognise specific areas that have not been extensively addressed in already existing research. From the empirical review analysis, identified literature gaps include the lack of studies on the topic in Ghana. The lack of existing studies in Ghana may affect the presentation of opinion for a better generalisation of results in the area. Also, most existing studies lack the in-depth exploration of cultural and contextual variation in the moderating role of brand reputation (Bui et al., 2023; Pradhan et al., 2023; Ao et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2023). Thus, there is a need for research that investigates how cultural nuances and contextual factors influence the effectiveness of brand reputation in moderating the interplay between content marketing, influencer strategies and customer engagement. Moreover, the majority of existing studies (Muhammad et al., 2023; Ao et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2023) focus on online transactions neglecting the potential integration of offline touchpoints. This affects the understanding of how offline and online interactions collectively contribute to the moderating role of brand reputation in the interplay of content marketing, influencer strategies and consumer engagement. Addressing these research gaps will enhance understanding of the current study topic while providing practical insights for marketers and contributing to the development of more effective and culturally sensitive engagement strategies.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

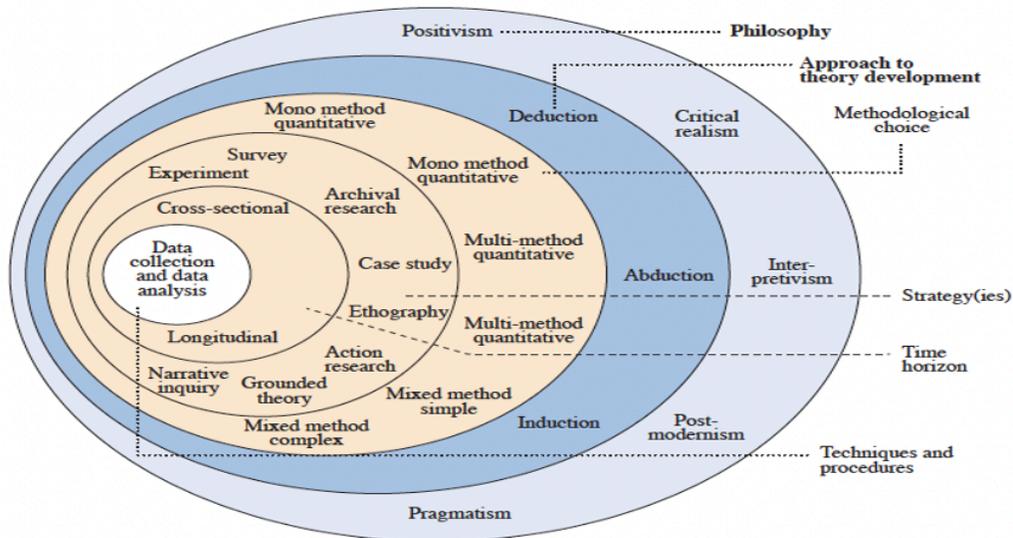
This chapter presents a review of literature from various authors as related to the current study topic. Consisting of the conceptual review, theoretical review, empirical review and conceptual

framework, the chapter provides a deeper understanding of existing studies and documentation that are relevant to the current study topic. The chapter is also useful to identify related studies while comparing them for the identification of gaps for further analysis. The literature underscores the pivotal role of consumer engagement as a cornerstone of contemporary marketing strategies. Both content marketing and influencer collaborations are acknowledged as potent vehicles for driving engagement, with the effectiveness influenced by the overarching presence of brand reputation.

# METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

In this section, the methods adopted for data collection and analysis are presented. The methodology for this study is based on Saunders et al (2019) research onion which explores the various decisions a researcher takes in developing a research methodology.



Source: Saunders et al (2019).

## 3.2 Research philosophy

A research philosophy is described as a set of beliefs a research is built on (Saunders et al., 2019). There are three main research philosophies which are interpretivism, positivism and pragmatism. Interpretivism philosophy is the assumption that reality is subjective, positivism philosophy is the assumption that research can be done objectively without personal opinions or personal views and pragmatism is the assumption that research has to be approached from a practical point of view (Bryman & Bell, 2015). For this study, the positivism philosophy was adopted and this is because the focus of this philosophy is causal relationships where variables

affecting other variables are examined. This philosophy was also used because the aim is to present an objective result which can be generalised and replicated.

### **3.3 Research approach**

There are two research approaches which are inductive and deductive. While deductive research approach starts with a hypothesis which is tested through observations whereas an inductive research approach uses specific patterns and observations to develop new theories (Patel & Patel, 2019). The study adopted a deductive research approach where hypotheses were developed to be tested. The study adopted a deductive research approach because it helped to explain the causal relationship between the variables and concepts in the study. It also helped in measuring the concept quantitatively thus making it possible to generalise the research findings.

### **3.4 Research Strategy**

The research strategy adopted for the study was a case study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) described a case study as a detailed study of a subject or a phenomenon to gain an in-depth understanding within the context of the research. The study adopted a case study strategy because it helped in identifying the relationship between the subject matter, the context and people. It also helped in capturing the context and lived reality of the study respondents.

### **3.5 Methodological Choices**

There are three main methodological choices available to a researcher and they include qualitative method, quantitative method and mixed-method. Quantitative methods are the collection and analysis of numerical data to find correlations, test hypotheses and describe characteristics whereas qualitative methods are the collection and analysis of non-numerical data to understand experiences, opinions and concepts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Mixed methods are a combination of both elements of qualitative and quantitative methods in finding answers to

a research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative research method was adopted because it presents objective answers as it relies on concrete answers and uses fewer variables. This helped in removing biases from the research and presenting more accurate results. Similarly, using quantitative research made room for the use of large sample sizes thus allowing generalisation of the results.

### **3.6 Time horizon**

Time horizon is described as how many points in time data collection will be done thus there are two types which are cross-sectional and longitudinal time horizons (Saunders et al., 2019). While the longitudinal time horizon involves repeatedly collecting data from the same sample over an extended period, the cross-sectional study involves collecting data from a population at a specific point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study adopted cross-sectional because it helped in explaining how different variables relate to each other.

### **3.7 Techniques and procedures**

#### **3.7.1 Study population**

The study population was Individuals/consumers who make purchases via social media in the Accra Metropolis. However, the information available is the number of social media users in Ghana. Kemp (2023) revealed that there are 6.60 million social media users as of January 2023. This equates to 19.5 per cent of the total population. Thus, 19.5% of the population was used.

#### **3.7.2 Sample size and sampling technique**

##### **Sample size**

In determining the appropriate sample size for the current study, an apriori sample size calculator for the Structural Equation Model by Daniel Cooper was utilised. Thus, the sample size for this study was determined through a power analysis, aiming for a statistical power level of 0.8 to

detect a medium anticipated effect size of 0.3, with an alpha of 0.05. Considering the interplay between four latent and 18 observed variables, the power analysis recommended a minimum sample size of 137 to ensure sufficient power to detect the expected effect. Consequently, a sample size of 210 was chosen, which exceeds the recommended threshold and accounts for potential non-responses, ensuring robust and reliable statistical analysis. This size is deemed adequate for the structural complexity of the model and is feasible within the constraints of the Accra Metropolis context. The parameters set for the calculation are shown in Appendix B

### **Sampling technique**

The study used a purposive sampling method as the sampling technique in selecting respondents from the population. Saunders et al., (2019) described a purposive sampling method as a non-probability sampling method where units are selected because they have characteristics that a researcher needs. In other words, respondents are selected on purpose. The purposive sampling method was used because it helped in targeting niche demographics that helped in obtaining specific data points. This is because individuals who have a shared set of characteristics are selected. Therefore only individuals with social media accounts and purchase or make enquiries from business online platforms were included in the study.

### **3.7.3 Data collection tool**

The data collection tool for this study was a questionnaire. A questionnaire is described as a document containing a list of questions that are used in gathering data about the attitudes, opinions or experiences of respondents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The questionnaire was designed using the 5-point Likert scale which is a psychometric response method where a respondent gets to answer questions and state their level of agreement in five points. The point ranges from 1 being strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree and 5 being strongly agree.

The 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used for data collection because it is easy to convert a high amount of abstract information into quantitative data thus making calculating the relationship between variables easier.

#### **3.7.4 Data collection process**

The respondents were contacted at their various locations which included homes, workplaces, shops and those walking on the streets. Once consents were given, the questionnaires were administered to the respondents. Due to the location of the study, there was no need for respondents to take questionnaires home and return the following day. The questionnaires were filled out within 5 minutes. Therefore 15 days was used for data collection.

#### **3.7.5 Data analysis**

The questionnaires retrieved were cross-checked for completeness after which they were coded for easy data entry. The data were entered into a data processing software which in this study was Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. The data output was analysed using inferential statistics of correlation. According to Saunders et al., (2019), correlation if a relationship exists between variables, determining the magnitude and action of the relationship. The correlation analysis was conducted on data obtained for the various study objectives. In other words, the analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement, the relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement and the relationship between Brand Reputation and Consumer Engagement. The analysis was also conducted to determine the moderating role of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement and the moderating role of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement.

### **3.8 Ethical consideration**

Before data collection, the respondents were contacted and consent was received before being included in the study. Their rights were explained to them as well as the aim of the study. The respondents were also informed about the absence of incentives before, during and after the study. Thus, only respondents who agreed were included in the study whereas those who disagreed were excluded.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from the data analysed. The chapter also entails a discussion of the results which are presented under the specific objectives of the study. The discussions are also presented in line with results from related studies.

### 4.2 Results

This section presents the results obtained from the analysis.

*Table 4.1: Demographic profile of respondents*

		Frequency (n=210)	Per cent
<b>Gender</b>	Female	106	50.5
	Male	104	49.5
<b>Age</b>	Less than 20	16	7.6
	20-29	125	59.5
	30-39	55	26.2
	40 and 49	14	6.7
<b>Education</b>	JHS/SHS	37	17.6
	Tertiary	170	81.0
	Others	3	1.4
<b>social media platform</b>	Facebook	91	43.3
	Instagram	84	40.0
	LinkedIn	16	7.6

	Youtube	19	9.0
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In the demographic profile of your study's respondents, out of 210 participants, 106 (50.5%) were female, and 104 (49.5%) were male, indicating a balanced gender representation. The majority of respondents were between 20-29 years old, with 125 (59.5%) in this age group, highlighting the prominence of younger individuals in social media engagement. Most participants had tertiary education, with 170 (81.0%) falling into this category. Regarding social media platforms, Facebook was the most used platform among respondents, with 91 (43.3%) users, followed by Instagram with 84 (40.0%) users. This diverse demographic composition, including a range of ages, genders, and social media platform preferences, suggests a comprehensive representation of the target audience for the study.

### 4.3 Reliability and Validity Test

*Table 4.2: Reliability and validity test result*

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Reputation (BR)	0.781	0.786	0.534
Consumer Engagement (CE)	0.733	0.743	0.653
Content Marketing (CM)	0.829	0.834	0.595
Influencer Strategies (IS)	0.829	0.831	0.596

The reliability and validity test results in Table 4.2 for your study indicate satisfactory levels for all constructs. Cronbach's alpha values for Brand Reputation (BR), Consumer Engagement (CE), Content Marketing (CM), and Influencer Strategies (IS) are 0.781, 0.733, 0.829, and 0.829, respectively. These values, all above 0.7, suggest good internal consistency. Composite reliability values are similarly robust, with all constructs exceeding the 0.7 threshold, indicating reliable

measures. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct also meets the acceptable level (>0.5), demonstrating a good level of convergent validity. These results collectively affirm the reliability and validity of the constructs used in your study.

*Table 4.3: Fornell-Larcker Criteria*

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>BR</b>	<b>CE</b>	<b>CM</b>	<b>IS</b>
<b>BR</b>	0.731			
<b>CE</b>	0.450	0.808		
<b>CM</b>	0.511	0.530	0.771	
<b>IS</b>	0.560	0.699	0.723	0.772

Table 4.3 presents the Fornell-Larcker Criteria for discriminant validity in your study. The diagonal values represent the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct: Brand Reputation (BR) is 0.731, Consumer Engagement (CE) is 0.808, Content Marketing (CM) is 0.771, and Influencer Strategies (IS) is 0.772. These diagonal values are greater than the off-diagonal values in their respective rows and columns, which represent the correlations between constructs. This pattern indicates that each construct shares more variance with its indicators than with those of other constructs, affirming discriminant validity in your study.

*Table 4.4: Cross-Factor Loadings*

	<b>BR</b>	<b>CE</b>	<b>CM</b>	<b>IS</b>	<b>BR x CM</b>	<b>BR x IS</b>
<b>BR1</b>	0.734	0.336	0.390	0.428	-0.249	-0.245
<b>BR2</b>	0.796	0.372	0.457	0.476	-0.394	-0.436
<b>BR3</b>	0.719	0.318	0.355	0.374	-0.327	-0.384

<b>BR4</b>	0.697	0.303	0.325	0.385	-0.275	-0.308
<b>BR5</b>	0.702	0.308	0.324	0.376	-0.367	-0.393
<b>CE1</b>	0.371	0.819	0.502	0.602	-0.131	-0.098
<b>CE2</b>	0.319	0.859	0.464	0.597	-0.102	-0.069
<b>CE4</b>	0.411	0.741	0.301	0.486	-0.069	-0.061
<b>CM1</b>	0.352	0.365	0.674	0.472	-0.222	-0.257
<b>CM2</b>	0.369	0.458	0.809	0.589	-0.232	-0.243
<b>CM3</b>	0.368	0.403	0.788	0.577	-0.226	-0.273
<b>CM4</b>	0.430	0.401	0.783	0.545	-0.326	-0.379
<b>CM5</b>	0.453	0.411	0.795	0.596	-0.310	-0.406
<b>IS1</b>	0.478	0.470	0.612	0.776	-0.372	-0.383
<b>IS2</b>	0.408	0.543	0.554	0.816	-0.259	-0.270
<b>IS3</b>	0.452	0.580	0.606	0.812	-0.354	-0.318
<b>IS4</b>	0.345	0.541	0.526	0.778	-0.167	-0.154
<b>IS5</b>	0.481	0.547	0.491	0.670	-0.183	-0.268
<b>BR x IS</b>	-0.485	-0.095	-0.402	-0.359	0.838	1.000
<b>BR x CM</b>	-0.443	-0.127	-0.341	-0.344	1.000	0.838

Table 4.4 in your study displays the cross-factor loadings for the constructs: Brand Reputation (BR), Consumer Engagement (CE), Content Marketing (CM), Influencer Strategies (IS), and their interactions (BR x CM, BR x IS). The loadings for each item (e.g., BR1, CE1) on their respective constructs are generally strong, indicating good internal consistency. The loadings of items on their respective constructs are higher compared to cross-loadings on other constructs, which supports the discriminant validity of the measures. For instance, BR1 has a higher loading on BR (0.734) than on other constructs like CE, CM, or IS.

#### 4.4 Descriptive statistics

##### Content Marketing (CM)

*Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics for Content Marketing*

CODE	Latent variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
CM1	I engage with content from brands on social media regularly.	210	1	5	3.83	1.03
CM2	The content posted by brands on social media is relevant to my interests.	210	1	5	4.09	0.99
CM3	I trust the content shared by brands on social media.	210	1	5	4.00	1.01
CM4	The quality of a brand's content positively influences my perception of the brand.	210	1	5	4.12	1.04

CM5	Quality content on social media makes me more likely to follow a brand.	210	1	5	3.98	1.07
	Composite Mean	210	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.79

In the study, the descriptive statistics for Content Marketing (CM) demonstrate a generally favourable response from the 210 participants. The mean scores for various aspects of content marketing, such as engagement with brand content, relevance to interests, trust in content, the influence of content quality on brand perception, and likelihood to follow brands, ranged from 3.83 to 4.12. These scores indicate a positive attitude towards content marketing. The standard deviations, between 0.99 and 1.07, show a moderate range of responses. Overall, the composite mean of 4.00 reflects a positive view of content marketing among the respondents.

### **Influencer Strategies (IS)**

Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics for Influencer Strategies

CODE	<b>Latent variables</b>	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
IS1	I trust products endorsed by influencers I follow on social media.	210	1	5	4.09	0.99
IS2	Influencer endorsements increase my interest in a brand.	210	1	5	4.00	1.06
IS3	I often purchase products based on recommendations by influencers.	210	1	5	4.12	1.01
IS4	Influencers significantly impact my perception of a brand's credibility.	210	1	5	4.06	1.06
IS5	I am more likely to follow a brand on social media if endorsed by influencers I trust.	210	1	5	3.98	1.00
	Composite Mean	210	1.00	5.00	4.05	0.79

The descriptive statistics for Influencer Strategies (IS) in the study, based on responses from 210 participants, show mean scores ranging from 3.98 to 4.12. These scores reflect a positive response to various aspects of influencer marketing, such as trust in products endorsed by influencers, increased interest in brands due to influencer endorsements, purchase influence by influencers' recommendations, the impact of influencers on brand credibility, and likelihood to follow brands endorsed by trusted influencers. The standard deviations range from 0.99 to 1.06, indicating a moderate variability in responses. The overall composite mean of 4.05 suggests that the participants generally view influencer strategies favourably.

### **Brand Reputation (BR)**

*Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics for Brand Reputation*

CODE	<b>Latent variables</b>	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
BR1	I generally perceive the brands I follow on social media as reputable and trustworthy.	210	1	5	4.01	0.97
BR2	A positive brand reputation increases my interest in a brand's content on social media.	210	1	5	4.10	0.92
BR3	Brand reputation influences my decision to engage with a brand on social media.	210	1	5	4.13	0.91
BR4	I tend to recommend brands with a good reputation to others.	210	1	5	3.99	1.09
BR5	A brand's reputation on social media affects my perception of its credibility.	210	1	5	4.33	0.90
	Composite Mean	210	1.00	5.00	4.11	0.70

In the study, the descriptive statistics for Brand Reputation (BR), based on 210 participants, show mean scores ranging from 3.99 to 4.33. These scores indicate a generally positive

perception of brand reputation. Aspects like the general perception of brand trustworthiness, the influence of brand reputation on interest in a brand's social media content, the impact on engagement decisions, the tendency to recommend reputable brands, and the effect of a brand's social media reputation on its perceived credibility all received favourable responses. The standard deviations range from 0.90 to 1.09, suggesting a moderate spread in the responses. The composite mean of 4.11 reflects a positive overall view of brand reputation among the respondents.

### Consumer Engagement (CE)

Table 4.8: Descriptive statistics for Consumer Engagement

CODE	Latent variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
CE1	I frequently share, like, or comment on posts from brands on social media.	210	1	5	4.15	0.92
CE2	I feel a sense of connection to brands with an active online presence.	210	1	5	4.19	0.89
CE4	I actively participate in social media activities (contests, polls) initiated by brands.	210	2	5	4.08	0.87
	Composite Mean	210	1.33	5.00	4.14	0.72

The descriptive statistics for Consumer Engagement (CE) in the study, based on 210 participants, show mean scores ranging from 4.08 to 4.19. These scores indicate a positive engagement with brands on social media, including frequent interactions (like sharing, liking, or commenting), a sense of connection to brands with an active online presence, and active participation in social media activities initiated by brands. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.87 to 0.92, suggest

a consistent pattern in the responses. The composite mean for these items is 4.14, highlighting a high level of consumer engagement among the study's participants.

#### 4.5 Correlation

Table 4.9: correlation analysis for variables

	1	2	3	4
1. CM	1			
2. IS	.722**	1		
3. BR	.508**	.557**	1	
4. CE	.523**	.693**	.452**	1

Table 4.9 presents the correlation analysis for Content Marketing (CM), Influencer Strategies (IS), Brand Reputation (BR), and Consumer Engagement (CE). The analysis reveals a strong positive relationship between CM and IS ( $r=0.722$ ), indicating that effective content marketing is closely linked with influencer strategies. Similarly, a positive significant relationship exists between BR and IS ( $r=0.557$ ), and BR and CM ( $r=0.508$ ), suggesting that brand reputation is an influential factor in both influencer strategies and content marketing. Lastly, CE shows strong positive correlations with IS ( $r=0.693$ ) and moderate positive correlations with both CM ( $r=0.523$ ) and BR ( $r=0.452$ ), indicating that consumer engagement is significantly influenced by influencer strategies, content marketing, and brand reputation. The correlation coefficients are all below 0.8, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a concern, thereby providing distinct insights into the influence of each variable.

#### 4.6 Moderation analysis

Table 4.10: Results of moderation analysis

	$\beta$	SD	T statistics	P values

BR -> CE	0.173	0.072	2.411	0.016
CM -> CE	0.092	0.086	1.066	0.286
IS -> CE	0.623	0.094	6.602	0.000
BR x CM -> CE	-0.031	0.072	0.428	0.669
BR x IS -> CE	0.228	0.092	2.473	0.013

Table 4.10 in the study demonstrates that Brand Reputation (BR) significantly influences Consumer Engagement (CE) with a beta coefficient of 0.173 ( $t=2.411$ ,  $p=0.016$ ). The results show that a brand's reputation affects the relationship between a business and its consumers. In other words, having a positive brand reputation creates a positive relationship where businesses through their intentional and consistent approach provide value to every customer they interact with and this increases loyalty. This is in line with results from related studies such as Bui et al. (2023) which revealed that content marketing through experimental evaluation significantly and positively affects brand engagement. The results imply that companies that engage in content marketing can build a positive relationship with their customers. This relationship leads to customer loyalty which drives sales and retention. The results are also supported by the Theory of Reasoned Action which asserts that a consumer's engagement with content depends on their opinion or beliefs that align with an influencer. Thus, consumer behaviour can be impacted due to content that resonates with them. Based on this, it is evident that the result does not support the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement.

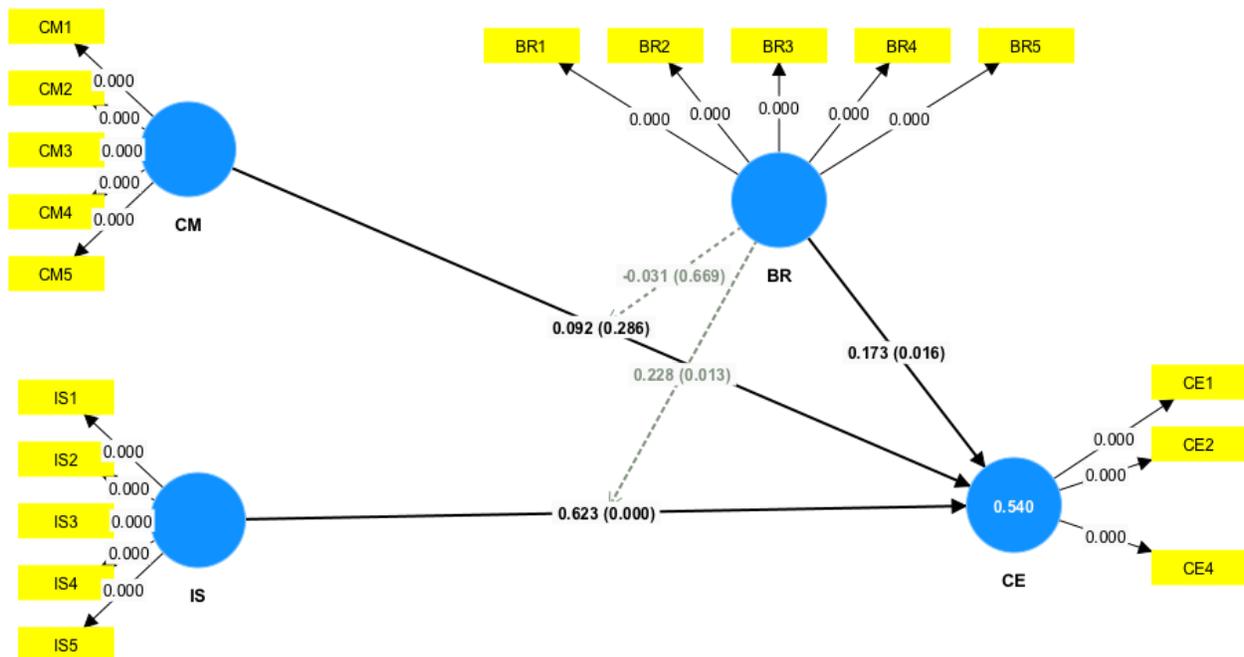
The Table also revealed that Influencer Strategies (IS) exhibit a strong and significant positive effect on CE ( $\beta=0.623$ ,  $t=6.602$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). In other words, the use of product mentions and endorsements from individuals with dedicated social following affects consumer engagement.

This means that businesses can use individuals with high social following to drive sales. In a similar study conducted by Pradhan et al. (2023), it was found that social media influencers have a positive effect on customer engagement. Likewise, Ao et al. (2023) revealed that influencer characteristics such as expertise, trustworthiness, credibility, congruence and homophily have a moderate to high correlation with customer engagement which positively impacts purchase intentions. These results are indications that a consumer is likely to purchase a product or service due to a social media influencer's association with the brand. This means that some customers make purchases not because they necessarily need a product or service but because of an influencer associated with the product or service. This is supported by the Social Influence theory which asserts that the influence of people in social networks significantly shapes the decisions, behaviors and attitudes of individuals. This means that a customer makes a decision based on a social media influencer they can associate with. This also reveals the role of social media in shaping and defining the attitudes, behaviour and perceptions of customers. Therefore the results from the study do not support the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement.

The interaction between BR and CM on CE is not significant ( $\beta=-0.031$ ,  $t=0.428$ ,  $p=0.669$ ), while the interaction between BR and IS is significant ( $\beta=0.228$ ,  $t=2.473$ ,  $p=0.013$ ), suggesting that BR enhances the impact of IS on CE. The p-values and t-statistics indicate the robustness of these findings. In other words, the effect of brand reputation on content marketing affects consumer engagement although it is not significant. In other words, with or without brand reputation and content marketing, businesses can still engage their customers. However, their brand reputation is significantly influenced by influencer strategies. This is because a social media influencer associated with a brand is the brand ambassador thus any action or inaction can make or unmake the brand which plays a role in customer engagement. This result is supported by some studies and one of the studies is by Rather et al. (2024) who revealed that brand reputation moderated the positive relationship between luxury brand content marketing and customer engagement. Similarly, Rifakli et al. (2022), revealed that brand reputation increases

brand trust and loyalty which enables the positive impact of content marketing on brand loyalty. Muhammad et al., (2023) and Zaman et al., (2023) also found that brand reputation moderates the relationship between influencer strategies and customer engagement. This implies that brand reputation moderates the consistency of the brand image across influencers. A positive reputation ensures that consumers perceive a unified brand identity, enhancing engagement. Furthermore, brand reputation moderates the perceived authenticity of influencer content. Consumers are more likely to engage when both the influencer and the brand are perceived as authentic. These results do not support the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant moderating effect of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement. The results do not also support the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant moderating effect of Brand Reputation in the relationship between Influencer Strategies and Consumer Engagement.

### Graphical description of results



## **THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Understanding the theoretical implications of this study requires a careful analysis of the findings and how they relate to existing theories, particularly the Theory of Reasoned Action and Social Influence Theory. The study reveals intricate relationships between brand reputation (BR), content marketing (CM), influencer strategies (IS), and consumer engagement (CE).

The findings indicate that BR significantly influences CE and moderates the impact of IS on CE. This aligns with the Theory of Reasoned Action, as it highlights the role of a brand's reputation (akin to subjective norms) in shaping consumer behaviour. Consumers are likely to engage more with brands they perceive positively, reflecting the theory's emphasis on attitudes and norms influencing behaviour.

Interestingly, the relationship between CM and CE, while positive, was not as strong as expected. This could suggest that while content is important, its effectiveness in driving engagement may be contingent on other factors like the nature of the content, the context of its delivery, or the audience's pre-existing attitudes towards the brand. This aspect offers a nuanced understanding of the Theory of Reasoned Action, indicating that consumer behaviour is influenced by a complex interplay of factors beyond just attitudes and norms.

Moreover, the significant relationship between IS and CE underscores the Social Influence Theory, where the behaviour, attitudes, and decisions of individuals are significantly shaped by others within their social networks. This study extends this theory by applying it to digital marketing, demonstrating how influencers can shape consumer engagement through social media platforms.

The study, therefore, extends existing theories by providing empirical evidence on how different components of digital marketing interact and influence consumer behaviour. It emphasises the nuanced role of brand reputation in this matrix and offers a fresh perspective on the interplay between content marketing, influencer strategies, and consumer engagement. This contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of digital marketing strategies and their impacts, guiding future academic and practical explorations in this field.

The study's findings have practical implications for managers and marketers in the digital marketing sphere. The crucial role of brand reputation (BR) in enhancing consumer engagement (CE) implies that brands should invest in building and maintaining a strong, positive reputation. This can be achieved through consistent, high-quality content marketing (CM) and authentic influencer strategies (IS). The significant impact of IS on CE underscores the importance of collaborating with influencers who align with the brand's values and resonate with the target audience. Marketers should focus on developing influencer partnerships that foster trust and credibility. Additionally, the study highlights the need for a strategic approach to integrating BR, CM, and IS. Brands should not only create quality content but also ensure it aligns with their reputation and is amplified effectively through the right influencers. This integrated approach can lead to more meaningful consumer interactions and stronger brand loyalty. Overall, understanding these dynamics is crucial for brands looking to maximize their impact in the digital landscape.

## **LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **Limitations**

The study's limitations are rooted in its reliance on a questionnaire-based approach. This method may not always capture the true intentions or behaviours of respondents, as they might be inclined to provide socially desirable responses rather than truthful ones. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study limits its ability to track changes over time, offering only a snapshot view at a single point. The chosen sample and the platforms studied may not fully

represent the diverse global digital marketing landscape, affecting the generalizability of the findings. Further, the study primarily focuses on quantitative data, potentially overlooking the rich, qualitative insights that could be gleaned from more in-depth, narrative-based research methods.

### **Suggestions for future studies**

**Longitudinal Studies:** Future research could greatly benefit from longitudinal studies to track the effectiveness and evolution of digital marketing strategies over time. Such studies would provide insights into the lasting impacts of brand reputation, content marketing, and influencer strategies on consumer engagement, offering a dynamic view of these relationships as they develop and change.

**Expanded Demographics and Platforms:** Another area for future research is to expand the scope of study to encompass a broader range of demographics and digital platforms. This approach would enhance the representativeness and generalizability of the findings, ensuring they are applicable across various consumer segments and digital environments.

**Ethical Considerations in Digital Marketing:** There is a growing need for research focusing on the ethical aspects of digital marketing, particularly in influencer marketing and content strategy. Future studies should explore the ethical implications, challenges, and best practices in these areas, considering the increasing concern for consumer data privacy, consent, and the authenticity of marketing communications.

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[&utm\\_medium=Country\\_Article\\_Hyperlink&utm\\_campaign=Digital\\_2023&utm\\_term=Ghana&utm\\_content=Global\\_Overview\\_Link](#) [Accessed 18 December 2023]

## **Appendix A**

### **Questionnaire**

Thank you for participating in the data collection of this research. The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather information on the moderating role of brand reputation in the interplay of content marketing and influencer strategies on consumer engagement. Your insights are valuable to help develop a detailed understanding of the topic and make informed decisions based on the results from the research. All responses from this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. Your anonymity is also a priority and as such, your identity will not be disclosed.

### **Section A: Demographic profile**

1. Age Group:

a. Under 20 years [ ] b. 20-29 [ ] c. 30-39 [ ] d. 40-49 [ ] e. 50 and above [ ]

2. Gender:

a. Female [ ] b. Male [ ] c. Other [ ]

3. Highest Level of Education:

a. Basic [ ] b. JHS/SHS/Vocational [ ] c. Tertiary d. Others (Please specify).....[ ]

4. Primary Social Media Platform Used:

a. Facebook [ ] b. Instagram [ ] c. Twitter [ ] d. LinkedIn [ ] e. YouTube [ ] f. TikTok [ ] g. Other (Please specify).....[ ]

**Section B: Digital marketing strategies**

Please select from 1 to 5 on your level of agreement with the statements in the table below concerning digital marketing strategies, where 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Code		1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Content marketing</b>					
CM1	I engage with content from brands on social media regularly.					
CM2	The content posted by brands on social media is relevant to my interests.					
CM3	I trust the content shared by brands on social media.					
CM4	The quality of a brand's content positively influences my perception of the brand.					
CM5	Quality content on social media makes me more likely to follow a brand.					

	<b>Influencer strategies</b>					
IS1	I trust products endorsed by influencers I follow on social media.					
IS2	Influencer endorsements increase my interest in a brand.					
IS3	I often purchase products based on recommendations by influencers.					
IS4	Influencers significantly impact my perception of a brand's credibility.					
IS5	I am more likely to follow a brand on social media if endorsed by influencers I trust.					

### **Section C: Consumer Engagement**

Please select from 1 to 5 on your level of agreement with the statements in the table below concerning consumer engagement. Where 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Code		1	2	3	4	5
CE1	I frequently share, like, or comment on posts from brands on social media.					
CE2	I feel a sense of connection to brands with an active online presence.					

CE3	My engagement with a brand's social media influences my offline interactions with the brand.					
CE4	I actively participate in social media activities (contests, polls) initiated by brands.					
CE5	My engagement with a brand on social media increases my likelihood of purchasing their products.					

**Section D: Brand Reputation**

Please select from 1 to 5 on your level of agreement with the statements in the table below concerning brand reputation. Where 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Code		1	2	3	4	5
BR1	I generally perceive the brands I follow on social media as reputable and trustworthy.					
BR2	A positive brand reputation increases my interest in a brand's content on social media.					
BR3	Brand reputation influences my decision to engage with a brand on social media.					
BR4	I tend to recommend brands with a good reputation to others.					

BR5	A brand's reputation on social media affects my perception of its credibility.					
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### Appendix B

**Anticipated effect size:**  ?

**Desired statistical power level:**  ?

**Number of latent variables:**  ?

**Number of observed variables:**  ?

**Probability level:**  ?

**Calculate!**

**Minimum sample size to detect effect: 137**

**Minimum sample size for model structure: 88**

**Recommended minimum sample size: 137**