

Emerging Trends In Social Media Marketing For Fast-Moving Consumer Goods And Their Impact On Consumer Purchase Behavior In Accra

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Abstract:

Background: The proliferation of social media has fundamentally reshaped marketing strategies and consumer behavior, particularly within the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. In digitally active markets like Accra, emerging trends such as live commerce, digital scarcity, niche influencer marketing, and user-generated content (UGC) are increasingly leveraged by brands to stimulate engagement and drive purchase decisions. This study aimed to investigate the effects of these evolving social media marketing strategies on consumer behavior, with a specific focus on impulse buying and purchase intention.

Materials and Methods: Using a quantitative, cross-sectional research design and a structured questionnaire, data were collected from 250 active social media users in Accra through purposive and simple random sampling techniques, with questionnaire distributed online via social media, emails, and offline in selected retail locations. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to test hypothesized relationships and mediation effects using IBM AMOS.

Results: Findings revealed that live commerce engagement significantly triggered psychological reactance, which in turn positively influenced impulse buying behavior. Niche influencer marketing and user-generated content were found to enhance purchase intention, with brand trust mediating this relationship. However, digital scarcity tactics did not show significant effects on impulse buying or psychological reactance. Furthermore, brand perception and trust did not significantly influence consumer engagement. Mediation analysis confirmed key indirect paths, particularly from live commerce through psychological reactance and from influencer marketing via brand trust.

Conclusion: This study provides empirical evidence that emotional and cognitive mechanisms are central to how consumers respond to digital marketing in social commerce. While live commerce and influencer marketing are effective in stimulating purchasing behavior, strategies like scarcity appeals and standalone user-generated content require enhancement to foster engagement. These findings offer pragmatic insights for marketers seeking to optimize consumer experiences in Africa's evolving digital economy.

Key Word: Live Commerce Engagement; Digital Scarcity; Niche Influencer Marketing; User-Generated Content; Consumer Trust; Brand Perception; Consumer Engagement.

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I. Introduction

Social media marketing has become a dominant force in shaping consumer behavior across industries, particularly within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. As digital platforms evolve, brands are adopting innovative strategies to enhance engagement and influence purchasing decisions. Live commerce, digital scarcity tactics, niche influencer marketing, and user-generated content (UGC) have emerged as critical components of social media-driven marketing approaches. These techniques aim to increase brand visibility, enhance trust, and drive sales through interactive and persuasive content (Sardar & Vijay, 2025). Studies have shown that social media platforms provide businesses with the tools to target consumers more precisely, creating personalized experiences that enhance brand loyalty and purchasing behavior (Dzreke & Dzreke, 2025). However, the extent to which these emerging strategies shape consumer decisions in specific contexts, such as Accra, remains underexplored.

Consumer behavior is significantly influenced by digital marketing strategies, with trends indicating a shift toward interactive and real-time engagement. Live commerce, which integrates live video streaming with instant purchasing options, has been particularly effective in driving impulse buying behavior (Duan & Song, 2024). Similarly, digital scarcity tactics, such as limited-time offers and countdown timers, create urgency, prompting consumers to make quick purchasing decisions (Hakim & Farid, 2025). Additionally, niche influencer marketing has gained prominence as consumers increasingly rely on trusted social media personalities for recommendations. Unlike traditional celebrity endorsements, niche influencers foster deeper connections with their followers, enhancing trust and brand perception (Dhaliwal & Malik, 2024). Meanwhile, user-generated content (UGC), which includes customer reviews, testimonials, and shared experiences, serves as a powerful tool for brand credibility and engagement, influencing consumer attitudes toward products and services (Jain, 2024).

The FMCG industry in Ghana provides a compelling setting for this study, given its dynamic growth and reliance on digital marketing strategies. FMCGs, which include essential consumer products such as food, beverages, personal care items, and household goods, constitute a significant portion of retail transactions in the country. The sector is characterized by high competition, rapid inventory turnover, and evolving consumer preferences, making it essential for businesses to adopt innovative marketing techniques to maintain relevance (Tibokbe & Shankar, 2025). Leading FMCG companies in Ghana, such as Unilever Ghana, Nestlé Ghana, Fan Milk Limited, and Kasapreko Company Limited, have increasingly leveraged digital platforms to promote their products and engage with consumers (Bansah et al., 2023).

Notwithstanding its buoyant nature, social media has changed how people interact with brands in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry, where quick decisions and strong brand visibility are key to success (Holloway, 2024). As internet penetration and smartphone usage rise in Ghana, social media marketing presents significant opportunities for brands to influence purchasing decisions in urban centers. In Ghana's capital, Accra, many FMCG brands are now using platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook to promote products through live commerce, scarcity-based tactics, niche influencers, and user-generated content (Babatunde et al., 2024; Hansen, 2024). These new marketing strategies are meant to grab attention quickly and influence how consumers think and act. However, there is limited research in Ghana on how these trends actually affect consumer behaviors such as trust, impulse buying, brand perception, and purchase intention. While global studies suggest that social media trends significantly shape digital consumer habits (Lisun et al., 2024; Gabhane et al., 2023), local consumer responses in emerging markets like Accra may differ due to cultural, economic, and technological factors. Understanding how these strategies impact everyday shopping decisions in this context is crucial for brands aiming to stay competitive and connect meaningfully with consumers (Busari, 2025). Without this insight, businesses risk relying on digital marketing approaches that may not produce the desired outcomes. Furthermore, despite the growing application of influencer-led campaigns and interactive content strategies in Accra's FMCG industry, there is limited scholarly insight into the causal relationships between these marketing trends and specific consumer responses (Tsey et al., 2023).

Questions remain as to how live-stream shopping events, urgency-based sales promotions, and peer content influence impulse buying behavior, how niche influencers shape trust and brand loyalty, and to what extent UGC fosters brand engagement and credibility in the local context. Meanwhile, existing research on social media marketing and consumer behavior has primarily focused on broad digital marketing strategies, with limited emphasis on specific emerging trends such as live commerce, digital scarcity, and niche influencer marketing in the FMCG sector. Many studies have explored general consumer trust and brand engagement dynamics but have not sufficiently examined how these contemporary strategies shape consumer purchase decisions in localized contexts (Taheri et al., 2024; Galdón-Salvador et al., 2024; Hsu et al., 2024). This gap highlights the need for rigorous, context-specific, empirical research that investigates the causal relationships, particularly in emerging markets like Ghana.

Addressing this gap, the present study uniquely examines the combined impact of live commerce, digital scarcity tactics, niche influencer marketing, and user-generated content (UGC) on consumer trust, brand perception, impulse buying, and purchase intentions in Accra's FMCG sector, while incorporating a localized perspective on social media marketing within Ghana's digital landscape and employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to uncover both direct and indirect causal relationships, offering deeper insights beyond existing descriptive analyses. In doing so, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital marketing and consumer psychology while offering practical insights for FMCG companies seeking to optimize their social media marketing efforts.

The entire paper is presented in six sections. Having presented an overview of the study in section one, section two presents an empirical review of related studies, examining existing literature on social media marketing strategies and consumer decision-making. This is followed by the research design and methods section, which details the study's methodological approach, data collection techniques, and analytical framework. The analysis and discussion of results section then provide an in-depth interpretation of the study's

findings, linking them to the study objectives and theoretical perspectives. Based on these insights, the recommendations and practical implications section offers strategic guidance for FMCG companies and marketers aiming to optimize their social media marketing efforts. Finally, the conclusion and future research directions summarize the key contributions of the study and highlight areas for further investigation in this rapidly evolving field.

Aim and objective of the study

This study aims to examine the emerging trends in social media marketing for Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) and their impact on consumer purchase behavior in Accra, Ghana, by exploring the mechanisms through which live commerce engagement, digital scarcity tactics, niche influencer marketing, and user-generated content (UGC) influence consumer trust, brand perception, impulse buying, and purchase intentions. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the study seeks to uncover direct and indirect causal relationships between these variables, providing empirical insights into how social media-driven marketing strategies shape consumer decision-making in e-commerce environments. In effect, the study has the following specific objectives;

1. To assess the impact of social media live commerce and digital scarcity tactics on consumer impulse buying behavior on social media marketplaces.
2. To examine the influence of niche influencer marketing on consumer trust and brand perception in social media marketplaces.
3. To explore the role of user-generated content in shaping brand credibility and consumer engagement in social media e-commerce.

Purpose and rationale of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the emerging trends in social media marketing for Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) and their impact on consumer purchase behavior in Accra, Ghana. As digital marketing evolves, businesses are increasingly leveraging strategies such as live commerce, digital scarcity tactics, niche influencer marketing, and user-generated content (UGC) to influence consumer decisions. Despite the growing adoption of these techniques, there is limited empirical research on their effectiveness within the Ghanaian market, particularly in the FMCG sector. Understanding how these strategies affect consumer trust, brand perception, impulse buying, and purchase intentions is crucial for businesses seeking to optimize their marketing efforts in a rapidly changing digital environment. Given the high competition and fast-paced nature of the FMCG industry, this study provides critical insights into how social media-driven marketing approaches shape consumer behavior.

Novelty of the study

This study offers a novel contribution to the field of digital marketing and consumer behavior in Sub-Saharan Africa by being among the first to empirically investigate how emerging social media marketing trends influence the purchasing behavior of FMCG consumers in Accra, Ghana. While previous research has explored the general effectiveness of social media in brand engagement globally, few studies have examined the specific mechanisms such as live commerce, digital scarcity, niche influencer marketing, and user-generated content (UGC) within the localized context of Ghana's rapidly growing digital economy. The study's use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze both direct and indirect effects of these variables on consumer trust, brand perception, impulse buying, and purchase intentions offers a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of consumer decision-making processes in online environments. This context-specific focus fills a significant gap in the literature by integrating behavioral, technological, and cultural dimensions into a single framework, thereby providing actionable insights for marketers, brand strategists, and e-commerce platforms operating within Ghana and similar emerging markets.

Contributions of the study

The significance of this study is multifaceted, encompassing theoretical, academic, economic, practical, and policy-related dimensions. Theoretically, the study contributes to the evolving discourse on digital consumer behavior by integrating concepts from marketing psychology, digital influence theory, and trust-building mechanisms within the framework of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). It advances understanding of how specific social media marketing trends such as live commerce, digital scarcity, niche influencer marketing, and user-generated content function as interrelated variables that shape consumer cognition, emotion, and behavior in online marketplaces. Academically, it fills a critical research gap by offering context-specific insights into how these variables operate within Ghana's socio-cultural and technological landscape, where existing models developed in Western or Asian contexts may not fully apply. Economically, the study equips fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands and SMEs with empirical data to inform marketing strategies that

can enhance consumer engagement, increase conversion rates, and strengthen brand loyalty in a competitive digital environment. Practically, it offers actionable recommendations to marketers, influencers, and digital strategists on optimizing content and engagement tactics that resonate with Ghanaian consumers. From a policy standpoint, the findings provide a foundation for shaping national digital marketing regulations, online advertising standards, and consumer protection frameworks particularly in relation to transparency, data ethics, and influencer accountability in the rapidly expanding e-commerce sector.

II. Empirical Review Of Related Studies

Impact of social media live commerce and digital scarcity tactics on consumer impulse buying behavior on social media marketplaces

Zhang, Zhang, and Wang (2022) aimed to examine the factors influencing impulse buying behavior under the hunger marketing model in live commerce, drawing on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory. The researchers conducted a quantitative study involving 533 Chinese online consumers, analyzing data using SPSS 23.0 and structural equation modeling (SEM) through AMOS 25.0. Their findings indicated that external stimuli such as anchor characteristics, online reviews, logistics service quality, and promotional incentives significantly influenced consumers' impulse buying behavior through perceived trust and perceived value. Interestingly, the promotional time limit had no significant effect, possibly due to consumer desensitization in the face of frequent sales events. This study is highly relevant as it demonstrates the mechanism through which extrinsic cues interact with internal cognitive processes to shape consumer behavior in live commerce environments.

In the same vein, Goetha, Niha, and Fallo (2024) explored the impact of scarcity messages and competitive arousal in live commerce settings within Kupang's e-commerce market. Using a purposive sampling technique, the authors surveyed 450 respondents who had participated in flash sales through live-streaming platforms. Data were collected via Google Forms and analyzed using SEM-PLS techniques. Their findings showed that both scarcity messages and the live nature of commerce stimulate competitive arousal, which in turn influences impulse buying. Although the individual effects of scarcity and live interaction were modest, their combined influence was meaningful. This study reinforces the psychological dimensions of live commerce and complements Zhang et al.'s work by adding the competitive component that may escalate consumers' urgency and fear of missing out.

Saman Ismail and Danish Siddiqui (2025) offered a more nuanced perspective by focusing on the intrinsic psychological triggers that drive impulsive and compulsive buying in live-streaming contexts. Their study used data from 310 respondents and analyzed it with Smart PLS, incorporating emotional mediators such as regret and rejoice. The authors identified materialism, hedonism, FOMO, and upward social comparison as key intrinsic stimuli that indirectly fostered impulsive and compulsive behaviors through emotional responses. Moreover, the presence of scarcity messages intensified these emotional reactions, magnifying their impact. Unlike Zhang et al. (2022), who emphasized trust and value, this study foregrounds emotion-based mechanisms. It is particularly relevant to your current research because it demonstrates how internal motivations interact with environmental cues to shape consumer decisions in real-time.

Similarly, Feng et al. (2024) conducted a broad investigation into the drivers of impulse buying during live streaming, underpinned by the S-O-R framework. Their study sampled 837 Chinese participants via an online questionnaire and utilized Smart-PLS 4.0 for analysis. They identified factors such as susceptibility to social influence, affective and cognitive reactions, and a general tendency toward impulsive behavior as significant predictors. Notably, scarcity persuasion and price perception were found to moderate these relationships. Their inclusion of both emotional and rational elements offers a holistic view of consumer impulse behavior, aligning with Ismail and Siddiqui's findings while reinforcing the idea that scarcity enhances both the cognitive urgency and emotional tension in purchase decisions.

In an investigation focusing on Generation Z, Andika et al. (2025) examined how social presence during live streaming contributes to impulse buying behavior. Their study involved 263 Gen Z participants in Indonesia and applied structural equation modeling to test their hypotheses. The findings revealed that presence of hosts and product demonstrations significantly boosted perceived usefulness and emotional engagement, triggering impulsive buying. However, the presence of other viewers only affected usefulness, not emotions. This study, grounded in Social Presence Theory, diverges from prior research by emphasizing the social dynamics of live-streaming rather than scarcity or emotion alone. Its relevance lies in uncovering the social-environmental cues that, when combined with scarcity, could intensify impulsive consumer behavior.

Hum (2025) held a slightly different view as she investigated the mediating role of arousal in the scarcity-impulse buying relationship. Conducted in Southeast Asia's rapidly expanding e-commerce environment, this study examined how flash sales using time or quantity limitations activate arousal, which subsequently drives impulsive purchases. The analysis revealed that scarcity positively influences arousal, and arousal, in turn, leads to impulse buying. This model places emotional arousal as a central mediating

mechanism, contrasting with studies like Goetha et al. (2024) that emphasized competitive arousal or Zhang et al. (2022) who stressed cognitive perceptions. It offers compelling evidence for the emotional immediacy that scarcity generates, which marketers can strategically harness to increase conversions during time-sensitive promotions.

In a recent study, Phan and Hoai (2025) explored the intersection of scarcity cues, consumer motivations, and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) within collectible markets, specifically focusing on collectors of Popmart's Labubu series. Grounded in Social Comparison Theory, the study examined how self-expressive motivation (SEM) and self-presentational motivation (SPM) interact with scarcity cues to intensify FoMO, which in turn influences consumers' willingness to pay for premium items. Using a sample of 442 participants and analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the study found that scarcity significantly elevates FoMO, which positively affects willingness to pay. Furthermore, SEM weakened the impact of scarcity on FoMO, while SPM heightened it. These findings are particularly relevant to the current study, as they emphasize the psychological mechanisms particularly social comparison and self-presentation that shape consumer behavior in digitally-driven and high-stakes purchasing contexts. This insight is valuable when considering how perceived uniqueness and social desirability may also drive user acceptance of technologies such as biometric security systems in banking environments where exclusivity and trustworthiness are valued.

In the same vein, Özen and Hus (2025) investigated the role of FoMO and social media addiction in shaping impulsive buying behaviors and post-purchase regret. Conducted with 428 participants, the study utilized structural equation modeling to explore how digital environments trigger irrational purchasing decisions. Findings revealed that FoMO had a strong and significant impact on impulse buying, while social media addiction had a milder effect. Additionally, impulsive purchases often led to heightened regret. This study complements the work by Phan and Hoai by reaffirming the behavioral influence of FoMO, especially within digital consumerism. Though Özen and Hus focused on digital retail behavior rather than scarcity marketing, their findings have implications for understanding how psychological states like anxiety and urgency driven by social media exposure can also affect user acceptance of emerging technologies, particularly when consumers feel that missing out on innovations may place them at a disadvantage socially or financially.

Similarly, Husnain et al. (2025) extended this discussion by examining how Facebook second-hand marketplace browsing influences impulse buying through factors such as immersion, serendipity, perceived scarcity, and deal proneness. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the authors surveyed 684 participants and conducted qualitative interviews with 23 users. Their analysis demonstrated that immersive digital experiences foster impulsive purchases, with perceived scarcity acting as a significant driver. Notably, the study found that while users aim for sustainable shopping through second-hand purchases, their behavior can be undermined by digital cues that intensify impulsivity. The research provides a broader view of how situational and psychological triggers interact to shape behavior on social platforms. For the current study, these insights help clarify how users may react to perceived security features in technology not merely on rational grounds, but based on emotional and situational triggers. For instance, scarcity-driven urgency might similarly influence how consumers adopt biometric authentication if framed as a modern, secure, and exclusive banking innovation.

The influence of niche influencer marketing on consumer trust and brand perception in social media marketplaces

Amini (2025) conducted a qualitative case study focusing on Sadaf Masaeli (Sadaf Beauty), a prominent Iranian beauty influencer, to examine the fragile balance influencers must maintain between authenticity and product promotion. The study revealed that followers perceive a breach of authenticity when influencers indiscriminately comment on sensitive issues or fail to establish personal-professional boundaries. Amini found that this perceived indiscretion leads to follower distrust and disengagement. The relevance of this research lies in its real-world application to influencer behavior, emphasizing that sustained trust depends not only on content but on self-regulation and ethical boundaries. For studies exploring consumer trust in influencer marketing, such as the present one, Amini's work offers a critical perspective on what breaks trust and why maintaining boundaries is key to preserving authenticity.

Similarly, Radita and Latifah (2025) provided a literature-based analysis on the intersection between influencer marketing and consumer trust. Their study emphasized that authenticity, transparency, and participation are central pillars in building trust online. Unlike Amini's narrow case focus, their broader analytical framework covered multiple influencer strategies and audience responses across platforms. They concluded that trust is a key predictor of brand loyalty and that influencers who maintain genuine interactions tend to have more persuasive power. Their findings complement Amini's by providing a macro-level validation of the micro-level breakdown Amini observed in Sadaf's case. Together, these studies highlight that trust is both earned through honest engagement and jeopardized through perceived insincerity.

In the same vein, Kim et al. (2024) approached trust-building through a novel lens, investigating virtual influencers computer-generated personas with human-like characteristics. Using a quantitative approach

involving 485 U.S.-based social media users, they assessed the role of playfulness and content expertise in shaping trust and consumer behavior. Their study found that these two dimensions significantly influenced trust in both the influencer and associated brands, which in turn predicted purchase intentions. This study extends the discourse beyond human influencers, suggesting that digital charisma and perceived competence can mimic real-world trust-building mechanisms. While Amini (2025) and Radita & Latifah (2025) focused on human influencers' emotional and relational authenticity, Kim et al. illustrate that digital performance traits can replicate or even enhance trust-building in the virtual sphere, signaling an evolving paradigm in influencer marketing.

Nabirasool et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive study on the impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior and brand loyalty. Their research used both conceptual frameworks and applied marketing insights to assess how influencer marketing shapes purchase decisions and long-term engagement. They argued that successful influencer strategies hinge on message consistency, relatability, and strategic platform use. Their work aligns with Kim et al.'s findings by affirming that trusted influencers drive not only short-term conversions but also lasting brand relationships. However, Nabirasool et al. placed greater emphasis on behavioral outcomes and brand alignment, making their research particularly valuable for marketers aiming to translate digital trust into tangible business returns.

Kalkumbe, Marathe, and Longani (2024) provided empirical evidence on how influencer marketing enhances brand awareness. Through a quantitative survey distributed via Google Forms, the researchers discovered a strong correlation between influencer activity and heightened brand visibility. The study emphasized the strategic selection of influencers based on value congruence and audience alignment, reiterating the importance of authenticity. Their findings resonate with those of Radita and Latifah (2025), affirming that influencers who align closely with the brand identity yield better audience trust and brand recall. Their rejection of the null hypothesis further strengthens the argument that intentional and value-based influencer marketing is a robust strategy for visibility and trust cultivation.

S. Sruthi (2024), in her exploration of influencer marketing in niche markets, offered a strategic framework emphasizing the role of micro and nano influencers in fostering authentic engagement within specialized audiences. The study underscored that in niche sectors, deeper audience connections matter more than reach, making trust and relevance the core variables for campaign success. Sruthi also pointed out that long-term partnership with influencers can yield sustainable benefits by reducing audience fatigue and reinforcing brand loyalty. Her perspective complements Kalkumbe's emphasis on value alignment and builds on the idea that tailored marketing approaches can foster trust in ways that mass-market strategies may not achieve. This niche-centric view is particularly relevant in today's fragmented digital environment where consumer segments demand targeted and context-sensitive communication.

Hum (2025) held a slightly divergent view by emphasizing that e-commerce trends and consumer behavior are increasingly influenced by platform algorithms and peer-to-peer reviews, sometimes diluting the power of influencer authenticity. Hum's study, based on data analytics and e-commerce trend analysis, revealed that while influencers contribute significantly to shaping purchasing decisions, trust is not solely determined by influencer behavior external digital forces and crowd perceptions also play a substantial role. This challenges the more influencer-centered perspectives seen in Amini (2025) and Kim et al. (2024), offering a broader ecosystem-based understanding of trust in online commerce. The implication here is that influencer trust cannot be isolated from the platform and audience ecosystem within which it operates.

In an empirical study by Shlash et al. (2024), the impact of influencer marketing on brand perception among Jordanian customers was investigated. The authors aimed to understand how influencer marketing strategies, especially in the context of Jordan's cultural dynamics, influence consumer perception of brands. The study utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze data from a sample of 455 customers from online retail companies. The findings revealed that influencer marketing had a significant positive effect on brand perception, with trustworthiness being the most influential factor. The study emphasized the importance of selecting influencers who align with local cultural values to ensure authenticity and resonance with the audience. This study is relevant to the current research as it highlights the role of culturally tailored influencer marketing in shaping consumer perceptions, which could have implications for businesses seeking to engage customers in diverse cultural contexts, such as Ghana.

Similarly, Jin et al. (2019) explored the effectiveness of different types of celebrities in influencer marketing, comparing Instagram celebrities and traditional celebrities in terms of trustworthiness, brand attitude, envy, and social presence. Their research used a two-group experimental design, involving 104 participants, and employed structural equation modeling to analyze the data. The study found that consumers exposed to Instagram celebrity posts perceived them as more trustworthy and developed a more positive brand attitude than those exposed to traditional celebrity posts. Social presence mediated the relationship between celebrity type and consumer perceptions, highlighting the unique influence of Instagram celebrities. This study offers valuable insights into how different types of influencers impact brand perception, providing a comparative perspective

for understanding the effectiveness of various influencers in digital marketing, a consideration that might be applicable in Ghana's social media landscape.

In contrast, a study by Gbedawo (2021) focused on the effectiveness of social media influencer marketing in Ghana, specifically among small businesses in the fashion industry. This research, conducted using qualitative methods including interviews with business owners and analysis of sponsored posts, found that influencer marketing significantly increased the visibility and follower base of small businesses. Interestingly, the study revealed that influencers did not necessarily need to align with the product they endorsed to achieve success, as long as they were perceived as trustworthy, engaging, and authentic. This finding contrasts with the research by Shlash et al. (2024), where influencer-brand fit was emphasized as crucial. Gbedawo's study is particularly relevant to the current research, as it provides insights into how social media influencer marketing functions in the Ghanaian market, offering a fresh perspective on the effectiveness of influencer marketing in an emerging market.

Again, Botchway (2023) examined the influence of marketers and their followers on Ghanaian telecommunication brands, focusing on two major players: MTN and Vodafone. Using quantitative data, the study explored the impact of influencers and their followers on brand perception in the telecom sector. Interestingly, the study found that influencers had little to no effect on shaping the perceptions of telecom users, contradicting previous research suggesting that influencers play a pivotal role in consumer perceptions. This study's findings provide a counterpoint to the previously discussed research, suggesting that the impact of influencers might vary across industries and regions. While influencer marketing is effective in other sectors like fashion, its influence may be less pronounced in industries with strong brand loyalty and established customer bases, such as telecommunications in Ghana. This insight is crucial for understanding the broader applicability of influencer marketing in different contexts.

The role of user-generated content (UGC) in shaping brand credibility and consumer engagement in social media e-commerce

Alamyar and Kurniawati (2024) examined how psychological mechanisms underlie the formation of consumer trust in e-commerce through user-generated content. Using qualitative interviews with regular online shoppers and thematic analysis, the researchers identified perceived authenticity, community engagement, and relatability of content creators as key drivers of trust. These factors distinguish UGC from traditional advertising by creating a more transparent and believable brand environment. Additionally, they found that social proof and cognitive biases heavily influence how consumers process and rely on UGC. The study's emphasis on psychological dynamics adds theoretical depth to the field of communication psychology and is directly relevant to any research exploring consumer behavior and trust in digital ecosystems. Its insights are especially pertinent for understanding how authenticity and peer influence enhance consumer-brand relationships in e-commerce.

Similarly, Lariba (2023) examined the role of UGC in shaping brand perceptions employing a systematic literature review, drawing insights from various global studies, including those from the US, Canada, Europe, and Africa. The research emphasized how UGC enhances brand trust, credibility, emotional connection, and differentiation. Central to her framework is Sherif's (1935) Social Proof Theory, which explains how individuals align their behavior based on peer-generated cues. This paper highlights how brands like Patagonia and Gucci, as well as African brands like MTN, leverage UGC to resonate with localized cultural values. The comprehensive synthesis offers marketers insights into how peer endorsements build brand equity across cultural contexts. Her study complements Alamyar and Kurniawati's findings by extending the scope from trust to broader brand perception and reinforcing the psychological basis for the persuasive power of UGC.

In the same vein, Naeem et al. (2024) explored UGC through the lens of semiotics and symbolic interactionism in the context of Instagram luxury fashion branding. Their mixed-method approach included 718 UGC reviews and 21 in-depth interviews with Instagram users. The authors identified six themes influencing consumer behavior: aesthetic excitation, symbolic discourse, emblematic valuation, digital resonance, semiotic faith, and semiotic compliance. Their findings suggest that consumers engage in meaning-making as they interact with brand visuals and symbols, indicating that UGC extends beyond function to symbolic consumption and identity construction. This study contributes a semiotic and interpretive perspective not fully explored in the previous studies. While it aligns with the other studies in recognizing UGC's role in trust and perception, it adds a nuanced cultural and symbolic dimension, deepening our understanding of how digital storytelling and visual cues can influence brand interpretation and consumer loyalty.

However, Alabi (2024) held a slightly different view by incorporating a mixed-method approach combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to investigate UGC's role in brand trust and consumer engagement specifically in the fashion retail sector. The study analyzed various UGC formats such as reviews, videos, and testimonials—and found that authentic peer content significantly enhances brand credibility and engagement. Positive user experiences shared via social media were shown to increase consumer interaction and purchase intentions. The study also presented case studies where fashion brands successfully boosted trust and

loyalty through strategic UGC campaigns. Unlike Naeem et al., who focused on symbolic meaning, Alabi focused on tangible behavioral outcomes, such as increased interaction and sales. His findings reinforce Alamyar and Kurniawati's conclusion that authenticity and peer experiences are powerful trust-building tools, while offering practical strategies for UGC-driven marketing initiatives.

Chung (2025) explored how user-generated content (UGC) on social media influences consumer purchase behavior through the lens of consumption values theory. The study aimed to assess how perceived value comprising functional, emotional, and social dimensions shapes consumer attitudes toward UGC and subsequently affects UGC adoption and purchase behavior. Using data from 445 respondents across three major cities in Vietnam, the research applied Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the conceptual model. Findings showed that while perceived overall value from UGC does not directly influence purchase behavior, it does so indirectly through consumer attitudes and UGC adoption. This underscores the mediating role of psychological engagement in translating content value into purchasing decisions. The study is relevant to the current research on UGC influence in digital consumerism, especially in understanding how value perception mediates digital trust and adoption behaviors.

Similarly, Choudhary et al. (2024) approached the topic of UGC from the angle of credibility assessment, focusing on the multimodal nature of online content. Their study reviewed the evolution of credibility evaluation beyond text, incorporating images, videos, and audio to determine the trustworthiness of UGC across platforms such as social media, review forums, and Q&A sites. The article offers a systematic review and meta-analysis of credibility assessment techniques, presenting a comprehensive framework for identifying fake news, deceptive testimonials, and suspicious user profiles. It also discussed publicly available multimodal datasets and future challenges in automated credibility analysis. Although their work diverges methodologically from Chung (2025), Choudhary's insights are essential to the current study as they highlight the importance of content verification, which in turn influences consumer trust and ultimately purchase behavior.

In the same vein, Kemala and Azhar (2025) conducted an empirical investigation into the role of UGC in shaping customer engagement and brand loyalty. Grounded in service-dominant logic theory, their conceptual framework involved firm-generated content, customer engagement, consumer-based brand equity, and purchase intention. Analyzing survey data from 248 respondents using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS, their findings revealed that both firm- and user-generated content significantly influenced customer engagement, which in turn enhanced brand equity. However, unlike Chung (2025), they found no significant direct effect of customer engagement on purchase intention, suggesting that brand perception may be a stronger intermediary variable than engagement alone. This highlights the multifaceted relationship between content, emotional investment, and consumer loyalty, which aligns well with the current study's aim to examine how different forms of digital content drive consumer behavior.

On a different note, Khan et al. (2021) adopted a cross-sectional empirical design to explore how UGC shapes a business's reputation on social media, particularly focusing on the moderating role of trust propensity. With data from 217 active Facebook users, they applied linear regression and moderation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS macro. Their findings emphasized that UGC significantly impacts brand reputation, but this relationship is moderated by the individual's tendency to trust. Users with lower trust propensity were more inclined to rely on peer reviews and scrutinize content more deeply, emphasizing the subjective nature of trust in digital environments. This diverges from Chung (2025), who found an indirect path via attitude and adoption, but complements Choudhary et al. (2024) by reinforcing the idea that content credibility and user trust levels critically shape the influence of UGC.

Key concepts of the study

Live commerce engagement: Live commerce where brands or influencers engage with audiences in real-time to showcase and sell products has become an innovative tool in digital retail marketing (Wang, 2024). Rooted in the principles of experiential marketing and interactive consumer behavior, live commerce fosters immediacy, emotional engagement, and participatory viewing (Joo & Yang, 2023). Its impact on impulse buying stems from the synchronous nature of decision-making it encourages, often blurring the line between entertainment and consumption. In this study, live commerce is conceptualized as a direct stimulant of consumer impulse buying, aligning with findings by Yoon et al. (2024), who observed that real-time interactivity and product demonstration significantly reduce decision fatigue and increase immediate purchases. The application of this concept in the context of Accra provides a culturally relevant angle, where mobile connectivity and social commerce platforms like Facebook Live and Instagram Live are reshaping urban consumer engagement patterns.

Digital scarcity: Digital scarcity refers to strategic limitations on product availability or time-limited offers to trigger urgency among consumers (Zhou, 2024). Grounded in reactance theory and scarcity heuristics (Zamfir,

2024), this concept manipulates perceived value and exclusivity, enhancing the likelihood of impulse-driven decisions. Scarcity signals such as “only 3 items left” or “flash sale ends in 10 minutes” create psychological pressure that accelerates consumer decision-making (Hamilton et al., 2019). In this study, digital scarcity tactics are examined for their role in stimulating impulse buying, especially within FMCG sectors where product turnover is high. The empirical focus on Accra highlights how mobile-based scarcity messaging in WhatsApp groups, Instagram stories, or TikTok flash deals may influence consumer responses, a contextually valuable exploration that extends traditional western-centric scarcity literature.

Niche influencer marketing: Unlike macro-influencers, niche influencers are social media users with a relatively smaller but more focused and engaged follower base, often considered more authentic and relatable (Okonkwo & Namkoisse, 2023). This concept is tied to source credibility theory, where trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness of the influencer affect consumer attitudes toward brands (Wellman, 2024). The study integrates niche influencer marketing as a variable influencing consumer trust and brand perception. This approach is significant in the Ghanaian market, where trust in localized voices such as micro-celebrities, lifestyle bloggers, or community-specific content creators may carry more influence than global campaigns. The work of Listiawati et al. (2024) supports this, noting that consumers often perceive niche influencers as peers, enhancing message resonance and brand authenticity.

User-generated content (UGC): User-generated content (UGC) encompasses online content created voluntarily by consumers rather than the brand itself. It is often viewed through the lens of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and social proof theory, both of which emphasize peer influence in online environments (Shukun & Loang, 2024). UGC is essential in shaping brand credibility and consumer engagement, especially when consumers interpret peer content reviews, testimonials, and product photos as more trustworthy than traditional advertisements. In the present study, UGC is explored for its indirect impact on purchase behavior by influencing perceived credibility and fostering participatory brand-consumer relationships. This resonates with findings by Wimalasena and Jayasinghe (2025), who demonstrated that positive UGC enhances engagement metrics and builds brand communities, particularly within digital-native populations. In Accra, this could relate to how youth engage with content posted in Facebook marketplace groups or TikTok duets showcasing FMCG products.

Consumer trust: Consumer trust is a fundamental psychological mechanism that governs how consumers evaluate the credibility and integrity of a brand or online seller, particularly in environments where face-to-face verification is absent. Trust becomes even more crucial in social media marketplaces, where consumers often rely on third-party endorsements or cues such as influencer behavior, product reviews, and UGC to make decisions (Chen et al., 2024). Theoretically anchored in trust transfer theory, consumer trust in social media settings often originates from trust in the platform or trusted individuals (e.g., influencers) and is transferred to the brand (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2024). In this study, consumer trust is positioned as a mediating variable that explains how niche influencer marketing and UGC affect purchase decisions. As shown in research by Wang and Zhang (2025), influencer credibility enhances trust, which in turn leads to stronger behavioral intentions. In Accra, where trust in digital transactions is still developing, understanding the formation and reinforcement of consumer trust through local influencers and authentic content is critical for FMCG brands seeking to build sustainable consumer relationships.

Brand perception: Brand perception refers to the set of consumer beliefs, attitudes, and feelings toward a brand, shaped by marketing communications, experiences, and peer interactions. In the digital age, brand perception is highly malleable and increasingly co-created through dynamic consumer-brand interactions on social media platforms (Satar et al., 2024). This construct is closely tied to brand equity theory, where favorable brand associations contribute to a stronger market position and customer loyalty. Within this study, brand perception is examined as an outcome influenced by niche influencer marketing and UGC. According to Singha (2024), brands that engage consumers through authentic and community-driven content are more likely to be perceived as trustworthy, modern, and socially connected. In the Accra context, where younger consumers are especially active on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, the ability of localized content and relatable influencers to shape favorable brand perception is particularly relevant for competitive positioning in the FMCG sector.

Consumer engagement: Consumer engagement encapsulates the depth of the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral connection between consumers and brands on digital platforms. Rooted in relationship marketing and interactive marketing theory, engagement goes beyond mere transactional behavior to include actions such as commenting, sharing, liking, and co-creating content (Ahmad et al., 2022). It is both a driver and a consequence

of strong brand-consumer relationships. In this study, engagement is viewed as an outcome influenced by user-generated content (UGC), as well as a catalyst for purchase behavior. Studies by Danyal et al. (2024) suggest that higher engagement levels correlate with increased brand loyalty, word-of-mouth promotion, and purchase intentions. Given the high mobile phone penetration and social media activity in Accra, fostering engagement through interactive storytelling, consumer participation in content creation, and feedback loops is likely to enhance brand presence and drive FMCG sales within this growing digital marketplace.

III. Material And Methods

Research approach, participants and sampling techniques

A cross-sectional quantitative research approach was adopted to investigate emerging trends in social media marketing for Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) and their impact on consumer purchase behavior in Accra. This approach was deemed appropriate as it allows for the collection of data from a large sample within a specific time frame, making it suitable for studying dynamic online consumer behaviors and digital marketing strategies (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2024). The use of a quantitative method ensures objective measurement of variables, enabling the identification of causal relationships between social media marketing techniques and consumer decision-making through statistical analysis (Dehalwar & Sharma, 2024). Given the increasing role of digital platforms in shaping purchasing behavior, this approach provides a systematic means of analyzing data patterns and testing hypotheses with empirical rigor (Du et al., 2023).

The study focused on social media users who engage with FMCG brands in Accra, Ghana. The participants included individuals who have interacted with FMCG advertisements, influencer promotions, live commerce events, or user-generated content on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter). Consumers who frequently purchase FMCG products through online marketplaces and e-commerce platforms were also considered. This group was selected to ensure that respondents had relevant exposure to digital marketing techniques being examined in the study (Opoku et al., 2016). Since FMCGs are everyday consumer products such as food, beverages, personal care items, and household goods, it was necessary to include a diverse group of participants to reflect different demographic and psychographic profiles within Accra's consumer market (Samanth, 2024).

A combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques was employed to select the study participants. The purposive sampling method was used to identify individuals who actively engage with FMCG brands on social media and have experience purchasing such products online. This involved collecting email addresses and other contact details of users who follow or interact with FMCG brand pages, influencer promotions, and live commerce activities (Thomas, 2022). The purposive selection ensured that only relevant respondents who had been exposed to social media marketing strategies were included in the study (Makwana et al., 2023). After identifying this target group, a simple random sampling technique was applied using an online randomizer to select the final sample. This method minimized selection bias and ensured that all eligible participants had an equal chance of being included in the study (Danie et al., 2024).

A total sample size of 250 participants were selected to take part in the study, guided by statistical considerations from previous studies in digital marketing and consumer behavior. The selection of this sample size was justified by the need to achieve statistical power for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which requires a sufficiently large dataset to generate reliable and valid results (Jobst et al., 2023). Studies in social media marketing research often recommend a minimum of 200 to 400 participants when employing SEM, depending on the complexity of the model and the number of latent variables being analyzed (Singh et al., 2025). Given the scope of this study, the chosen sample size was considered adequate to capture significant relationships between the variables and ensure the robustness of the findings.

Research instrument and data collection process

The study employed a structured questionnaire as the primary research instrument to collect data from participants. A questionnaire was chosen due to its efficiency in gathering standardized responses from a large sample, ensuring consistency and reliability in data measurement (Karunaratna et al., 2024). The instrument was designed to comprehensively capture information on socio-demographic characteristics, emerging trends in social media marketing, consumer behavior, purchase intentions, and the mediating variables influencing these relationships.

The questionnaire was structured into four sections to align with the study's objectives. The first section focused on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, collecting information such as age, gender, education level, and frequency of social media usage, which are essential for understanding the profile of consumers engaging in social media-based purchasing. The second section examined emerging trends in social media marketing, with five construct items developed for each independent variable; live commerce engagement, digital scarcity tactics, niche influencer marketing, and user-generated content, based on definitions and conceptualizations found in existing empirical literature. Each item was presented in a five-point

Likert scale format, ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree,” to capture respondents’ perceptions and experiences.

The third section of the questionnaire focused on consumer behavior and purchase intentions. Five construct items were designed for each dependent variable, including impulse buying behavior, trust, brand perception, and purchase intention, ensuring that the constructs were measured consistently with previous studies in marketing and consumer behavior (Dash & Paul, 2021). The final section analyzed mediating variables that influence the relationship between social media marketing trends and consumer responses. Five construct items were developed for each mediating variable, such as psychological reactance, and brand credibility and trustworthiness. These items were similarly measured using a five-point Likert scale to facilitate statistical analysis and ensure comparability across constructs. The complete questionnaire is provided in table 1 for reference.

Table 1: Study Instrument and Measurement Scales

Section	Construct	Items
Section 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics		1. Age Range 2. Gender 3. Education Level 4. Frequency of Social Media Usage 5. Social Media Platforms Used for Shopping 6. Types of FMCG Products Frequently Shopped for
Section 2: Emerging Trends in Social Media Marketing	Live Commerce Engagement (LCE)	LCE1: Watching live-stream product demonstrations increases my interest in purchasing. LCE2: I feel more confident buying a product when I see it presented live on social media. LCE3: Real-time interaction with sellers during live commerce enhances my shopping experience. LCE4: Live shopping events on social media make me more likely to make a purchase. LCE5: The ability to ask questions and get immediate responses during live shopping influences my decision to buy.
	Digital Scarcity Tactics (DST)	DST1: Limited-time offers on social media encourage me to buy immediately. DST2: Seeing countdown timers on promotions makes me feel I need to purchase quickly. DST3: Knowing that only a few items are available increases my urge to buy. DST4: Flash sales on social media influence my shopping decisions. DST5: The fear of missing out (FOMO) drives me to act fast on social media deals.
	Niche Influencer Marketing (NIM)	NIM1: I trust recommendations from influencers who specialize in specific product categories. NIM2: An influencer’s expertise makes me more likely to buy a product they endorse. NIM3: I follow niche influencers because their product reviews seem more authentic. NIM4: I am more likely to engage with brands promoted by influencers I trust. NIM5: Niche influencers shape my perception of brand credibility and product quality.
	User-Generated Content (UGC)	UGC1: Customer reviews on social media influence my purchasing decisions. UGC2: I trust product testimonials shared by other consumers. UGC3: Unboxing videos and peer recommendations make me more confident in buying a product. UGC4: Seeing real users share their experiences increases my trust in a brand. UGC5: I engage more with brands that showcase user-generated content.
Section 3: Consumer Behavior and Purchase Intentions	Impulse Buying Behavior (IBB)	IBB1: I tend to make unplanned purchases when I see attractive deals on social media. IBB2: Social media promotions often lead me to buy products on impulse. IBB3: Live shopping events influence me to make spontaneous purchases. IBB4: The fear of missing out (FOMO) pushes me to buy immediately. IBB5: I find it difficult to resist social media advertisements that

Section	Construct	Items
		create urgency.
	Consumer Engagement (CEN)	CEN1: I interact frequently with brands on social media. CEN2: Social media marketing strategies keep me engaged with certain brands. CEN3: I often comment, like, and share posts from brands I follow. CEN4: Engaging content on social media makes me more loyal to a brand. CEN5: Brands that engage actively with consumers on social media earn my trust.
	Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1: I am likely to purchase products promoted on social media. PI2: Seeing influencer endorsements increases my intention to buy a product. PI3: Positive reviews on social media make me consider buying a product. PI4: Brands that engage well with customers on social media make me want to buy from them. PI5: My purchasing decisions are influenced by how brands present their products on social media.
Section 4: Mediating Variables	Psychological Reactance (PSR)	PSR1: When I feel pressured to buy due to limited-time offers, I resist making a purchase. PSR2: The idea that a product might sell out makes me feel uncomfortable. PSR3: I feel frustrated when a deal makes me feel forced to buy immediately. PSR4: Scarcity tactics on social media sometimes make me skeptical of the brand. PSR5: I hesitate to buy when marketing messages create urgency.
	Brand Perception and Trustworthiness (BPT)	BPT1: I perceive brands promoted by trusted influencers as more credible. BPT2: Brands that use customer reviews in their promotions appear more trustworthy. BPT3: I trust brands that engage transparently with their audience on social media. BPT4: My perception of a brand improves when it is consistently recommended by users. BPT5: Social media branding influences how much I trust a product or service.

In the same way, the data collection process was carefully planned and executed to ensure the reliability and validity of the responses. Before administering the questionnaire, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of their confidentiality, and given the option to withdraw at any stage without any consequences, aligning with ethical research principles. The questionnaire was distributed online through social media platforms, emails, and direct messages, as well as offline through printed copies in selected retail outlets and shopping malls where digital consumer engagement is prevalent. The use of an online distribution method was particularly appropriate, given the study's focus on social media marketing, ensuring that the target population was effectively reached.

To enhance response rates and minimize non-response bias, follow-up reminders were sent to participants after a week, encouraging them to complete the survey. Additionally, respondents were assured that their answers would remain anonymous, reducing potential response bias and ensuring candid feedback. After data collection, responses were reviewed for completeness, and any incomplete or inconsistent entries were excluded from the final dataset to maintain data integrity.

In addition, the structured nature of the questionnaire and the systematic data collection process provided a strong foundation for statistical analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This approach was appropriate for examining the direct and indirect causal relationships between social media marketing trends and consumer behavior, allowing for a robust assessment of the study's hypotheses.

The first step involved designing and pre-testing the questionnaire to confirm its clarity, reliability, and validity. A pilot study is conducted with a small sample of respondents to refine the wording of items and improve comprehension. Necessary adjustments are made based on feedback before the final questionnaire is distribute. The questionnaire was administered through both online and face-to-face surveys, maximizing the reach to different consumer demographics. Participants were informed about the study's objectives, and consent was obtained before they proceeded to answer the questions. To maintain ethical research standards, finally, participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in handling their responses. No personally identifiable information was collected to protect participants' privacy and ensure

unbiased responses. During the data collection phase, respondents were encouraged to provide honest and thoughtful answers, and efforts were made to clarify any ambiguities in the questionnaire when needed.

Study variables and model framework

The study examined key variables that influence consumer purchase behavior in social media marketplaces for Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs). These variables include live commerce engagement (LCE), digital scarcity tactics (DST), niche influencer marketing (NIM), user-generated content (UGC), psychological reactance (PSR), brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT), impulse buying behavior (IBB), consumer engagement (CEN), and purchase intention (PI). Figure 1 presents the study model, illustrating the relationships among these variables.

Live commerce engagement (LCE) refers to real-time interactions between brands and consumers through live-streaming platforms, where products are showcased, demonstrated, and sold instantly (From, 2023). This marketing approach fosters a sense of urgency and enhances consumer engagement by enabling direct communication, interactive participation, and instant purchasing decisions (Hassim & Shamsudin, 2023). Given the increasing popularity of live commerce in digital marketplaces, its influence on impulse buying behavior (IBB) is a significant area of investigation in this study.

Digital scarcity tactics (DST) involve marketing strategies that create a sense of urgency by limiting product availability, such as flash sales and countdown timers (Oberoi, 2024). These techniques leverage the psychological principle of scarcity, triggering fear of missing out (FOMO) and compelling consumers to make unplanned purchases (Platon, 2024). The study explores the extent to which DST influences impulse buying behavior and how psychological reactance (PSR) mediates this relationship.

Niche influencer marketing (NIM) refers to the use of social media influencers with a highly engaged and specialized audience to promote products and influence consumer decisions (Seyanpa, 2024). Unlike traditional celebrity endorsements, niche influencers establish deeper trust with their followers, making their recommendations more persuasive (Kumar, 2024). This study examines how NIM affects purchase intention (PI) and how brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) mediate this effect.

User-generated content (UGC) includes testimonials, unboxing videos, peer recommendations, and product reviews shared by consumers on social media platforms (Santos, 2024). As consumers rely heavily on peer opinions when making purchase decisions, UGC plays a crucial role in shaping brand credibility (BRC) and consumer engagement (CEN) (Naeem & Ozuem, 2021). This study investigates the influence of UGC on CEN and PI, while also considering the mediating role of BRC.

Psychological reactance (PSR) describes a consumer's emotional and cognitive resistance to perceived restrictions on their freedom of choice, particularly in response to scarcity-based marketing tactics (Nguyen, 2021). This study examines how PSR mediates the effect of LCE and DST on IBB.

Brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) represent consumers' overall impression of a brand's credibility, reliability, and authenticity, which significantly influence consumer loyalty and engagement, thus impacting their willingness to purchase. The study explores how BPT mediates the relationship between NIM and PI, as well as the relationship between UGC and both CEN and PI.

Impulse buying behavior (IBB) describes spontaneous and unplanned purchasing decisions influenced by emotional triggers and marketing stimuli (Radlović, 2021). This study examines the direct effects of LCE and DST on IBB.

Consumer engagement (CEN) reflects the level of interaction, participation, and emotional connection consumers have with brands in digital environments (Blasco-Arcas et al., 2016). The study analyzes how UGC influences CEN and how BRC mediates this effect.

Finally, purchase intention (PI) refers to a consumer's likelihood of purchasing a product based on their attitudes, brand perception, and prior experiences (Jia et al., 2022). The study assesses how NIM and UGC impact PI, considering the mediating effects of BPT and BRC.

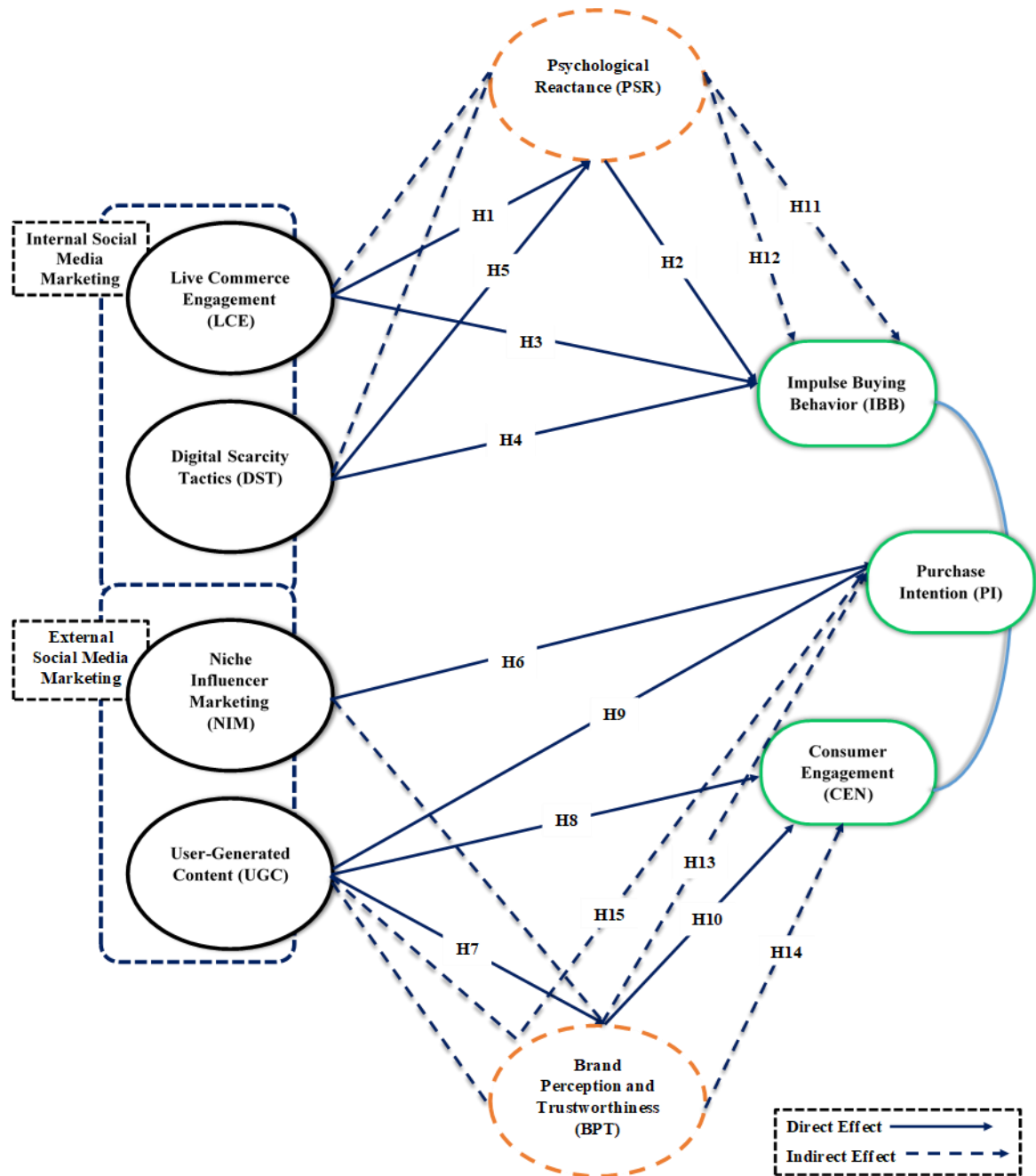


Figure 1: Conceptual Model and Measurement Framework of the Study

The following hypotheses are formulated to examine the relationships among the study variables based on the conceptual model and measurement framework (figure 1):

- H1: Live commerce engagement (LCE) has a significant effect on psychological reactance (PSR).
- H2: Psychological reactance (PSR) has a significant effect on impulse buying behavior (IBB).
- H3: Live commerce engagement (LCE) has a significant effect on impulse buying behavior (IBB).
- H4: Digital scarcity tactics (DST) have a significant effect on impulse buying behavior (IBB).
- H5: Digital scarcity tactics (DST) have a significant effect on psychological reactance (PSR).
- H6: Niche influencer marketing (NIM) has a significant effect on purchase intention (PI).
- H7: User-generated content (UGC) has a significant effect on brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT).
- H8: User-generated content (UGC) has a significant effect on consumer engagement (CEN).
- H9: User-generated content (UGC) has a significant effect on purchase intention (PI).
- H10: Brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) has a significant effect on consumer engagement (CEN).

In addition, the following mediation hypotheses are formulated to test indirect relationships between the study constructs:

H11: Psychological reactance (PSR) mediates the relationship between live commerce engagement (LCE) and impulse buying behavior (IBB).

H12: Psychological reactance (PSR) mediates the relationship between digital scarcity tactics (DST) and impulse buying behavior (IBB).

H13: Brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) mediates the relationship between niche influencer marketing (NIM) and purchase intention (PI).

H14: Brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) mediates the relationship between user-generated content (UGC) and consumer engagement (CEN).

H15: Brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) mediates the relationship between user-generated content (UGC) and purchase intention (PI).

These hypotheses provide a structured framework for examining the causal relationships among social media marketing trends and consumer behavior in Accra's FMCG sector. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is an appropriate method for this study, as it enables the simultaneous analysis of multiple relationships and mediating effects, enhancing the accuracy of the findings.

Model fitness assessment and data analysis methods

The study employed a rigorous model fitness assessment framework to establish the reliability and validity of the measurement and structural models. The assessment process began with Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to explore the underlying factor structure of the measurement items and ensure the appropriateness of the items used. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was subsequently conducted to verify whether the observed variables adequately represented the theoretical constructs proposed in the conceptual model.

To ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the constructs, Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients were computed. These measures verified whether the indicators consistently measured the same underlying concepts. Convergent validity was assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), ensuring that each construct adequately captured the variance of its observed variables and reflected a sufficient proportion of the variance explained by the indicators.

Following the validation of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships among the constructs. Structural Equation Modeling with Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) was utilized for this analysis. SEM was selected because it allows for the simultaneous estimation of multiple interrelated dependence relationships while accounting for measurement errors (Ferraro et al., 2025). This approach is particularly effective for testing complex theoretical models involving mediating effects and multiple dependent variables.

Model fitness was assessed using a combination of absolute, incremental, and parsimony fit indices, consistent with established best practices in covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM). The indices considered included the Chi-square/degree of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). These indices were used to determine the extent to which the model provided a good fit to the observed data.

All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM AMOS version 26. IBM AMOS was chosen due to its advanced capabilities for handling CB-SEM, its robustness in managing complex models, and its ability to produce comprehensive model fit indices and standardized estimates (Dash & Paul, 2021). The use of CB-SEM in IBM AMOS was appropriate for this study, given the theory-driven nature of the research model and the objective of confirming the hypothesized relationships among the constructs.

The combination of factor analytic techniques, reliability and validity testing, and SEM-based structural analysis provided a comprehensive methodological approach to examining the emerging trends in social media marketing and their influence on consumer purchase behavior.

IV. Result

Socio-demographic characteristics and social media usage pattern of participants

The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants indicated a slightly higher representation of females compared to males. As shown in Table 2, females accounted for 58% of the total respondents, while males constituted 42%. This distribution suggests a greater female engagement in social media shopping activities within Accra, reflecting potential gendered trends in online consumer behavior.

Age distribution among the participants revealed a youthful and digitally active sample. Participants aged 35–44 years formed the largest group, representing 32.4% of the sample. This was followed by individuals aged 18–24 years at 29.6%, and those aged 25–34 years at 27.6%. Participants within the 45–54 years' age bracket represented 10.4% of the total. The results point to the dominance of young and middle-aged adults in

the social media shopping space in Accra, highlighting the importance of targeting marketing strategies toward this demographic group.

Educational attainment among respondents showed a strong leaning toward higher education levels. As presented in Table 2, 34.8% of participants had obtained a Bachelor's degree, 26.8% held a Master's degree, and 24.8% had a Diploma. A smaller proportion, 10.8%, possessed a PhD, while only 2.8% had completed high school as their highest level of education. These findings suggest that consumers engaging in social media shopping for FMCGs in Accra are predominantly well-educated, likely contributing to informed and discerning purchasing behaviors.

Table 2: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	105	42
	Female	145	58
Age	18-24 years	74	29.6
	25-34 years	69	27.6
	35-44 years	81	32.4
	45-54 years	26	10.4
Education Level	High School	7	2.8
	Diploma	62	24.8
	Bachelor's Degree	87	34.8
	Master's Degree	67	26.8
	PhD Level	27	10.8
Frequency of Social Media Usage	Daily	106	42.4
	Weekly	89	35.6
	Monthly	46	18.4
	Rarely	9	3.6

With regard to social media usage frequency, the results demonstrated a high level of daily engagement. Table 2 shows that 42.4% of participants used social media platforms daily, while 35.6% reported weekly usage. Monthly users comprised 18.4% of the sample, and only 3.6% used social media rarely. These patterns indicate that a substantial portion of the target market maintains regular and sustained interactions with social media platforms, offering marketers continuous opportunities for brand exposure and consumer interaction.

Turning to the specific platforms utilized for shopping activities, Table 3 outlines participants' preferences. Facebook emerged as the most frequently used platform, with 79.6% of respondents indicating its use for shopping. Instagram followed with 58% usage, while YouTube and TikTok were utilized by 56.8% and 50.8% of respondents, respectively. X (formerly Twitter) registered the lowest shopping-related engagement, with only 23.2% of participants reporting its use. The prominence of Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok suggests that visually rich and interactive platforms hold significant appeal for FMCG consumers in Accra, reinforcing the strategic value of multimedia marketing content.

Table 3: Social Media Platforms Used for Shopping

Social Media Platforms	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	Yes	199
	No	51
Instagram	Yes	145
	No	105
TikTok	Yes	127
	No	123
X (Twitter)	Yes	58
	No	192
YouTube	Yes	142
	No	108

Further exploration into the types of fast-moving consumer goods purchased via social media is presented in Table 4. Food and beverages constituted the most popular category, purchased by 88.4% of respondents. Personal care products also demonstrated high engagement, with 83.2% of participants indicating purchases in this category. Household products were shopped by 53.2% of participants, whereas health and wellness products showed considerably lower engagement, with only 19% making purchases in this area. Beauty and cosmetics products attracted 58% of respondents, reflecting a notable interest in appearance-related

goods. These results suggest that essential, everyday products, alongside beauty-related items, are the primary drivers of social media shopping behavior for FMCGs among consumers in Accra.

Table 4: Frequently Shopped FMCG Products on Social Media

FMCG Products		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Food & Beverages	Yes	221	88.4
	No	29	11.6
Personal Care	Yes	208	83.2
	No	42	16.8
Household Products	Yes	133	53.2
	No	117	46.8
Health & Wellness	Yes	48	19.2
	No	202	80.8
Beauty & Cosmetics	Yes	145	58.0
	No	105	42.0

To sum it up, the socio-demographic characteristics and social media usage patterns observed among the participants reveal that young, educated, and digitally active consumers dominate the social media marketplace for FMCGs in Accra. Their frequent use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, alongside their purchasing preferences for food, personal care, and beauty products, provide critical direction for FMCG brands seeking to optimize their social media marketing strategies in this context.

Measurement model fitness assessment

The assessment of the measurement model's reliability and validity was conducted through the analysis of convergent reliability and model fit indices. Table 5 presents the reliability results for each construct, including Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted. The results clearly indicate that all constructs demonstrated excellent internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.900 (Digital Scarcity Tactics) to 0.943 (Brand Perception and Trustworthiness), exceeding the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70. Similarly, Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.908 to 0.944, also surpassing the recommended minimum of 0.70, confirming the internal reliability of the constructs. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted for all constructs ranged from 0.713 to 0.834, which is above the suggested threshold of 0.50, thus confirming adequate convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). These results affirm that the measurement model possesses sufficient reliability and validity to proceed with the structural model analysis.

Table 5: Reliability Analysis of Measurement Model

NO.	VARIABLES	No. of Items	CA	CR	AVE
1	LCE	4	0.940	0.943	0.806
2	DST	4	0.900	0.908	0.717
3	NIM	5	0.931	0.936	0.748
4	UGC	4	0.934	0.938	0.794
5	PSR	5	0.932	0.925	0.713
6	BPT	5	0.943	0.944	0.772
7	IBB	4	0.916	0.924	0.754
8	CEN	3	0.931	0.937	0.834
9	PI	4	0.931	0.937	0.790

Following the confirmation of reliability, the model fit summary was assessed using multiple fit indices, as shown in Table 6. The Chi-Square Minimum Discrepancy (CMIN) value for the default model was 3750.867 with 648 degrees of freedom ($p < .001$), suggesting a significant difference between the observed and estimated covariance matrices. Although a significant Chi-Square is common in large samples, the ratio of CMIN to degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF) was 5.788, which exceeds the recommended cutoff of 3.0, indicating a moderate model fit.

Additional indices were considered to evaluate the goodness-of-fit more comprehensively. As reported in Table 6, the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) was 0.243, and the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) was 0.616. The Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) was 0.561, and the Parsimony Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI) was 0.539. Although these values fall below the generally accepted threshold of 0.90 for GFI and AGFI, they are not uncommon in complex models involving numerous constructs and indicators.

Table 6: CMIN, RMR, GFI fitness results

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	p	CMIN/DF	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	93	3750.867	648	.000	5.788	.243	.616	.561	.539

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	p	CMIN/DF	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Saturated model	741	0.000	0			0.000	1.000		
Independence model	38	12961.428	703	.000	18.437	0.402	.188	0.144	.178

Moreover, the baseline comparisons (Table 7) revealed that the Normed Fit Index (NFI) was 0.711, the Relative Fit Index (RFI) was 0.686, the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) was 0.748, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was 0.725, and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.747. These values, although falling short of the ideal 0.90 benchmark, suggest a reasonable model fit, considering the complexity and size of the model.

Table 7: Baseline Comparisons fitness results

Model	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Default model	.711	.686	.748	.725	.747
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

In addition to these indices, parsimony-adjusted measures were evaluated to further assess model fit. Table 8 displays the Parsimony Ratio (PRATIO) of 0.922, Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) of 0.655, and Parsimony Comparative Fit Index (PCFI) of 0.688. These results reflect a good balance between model complexity and explanatory power.

Table 8: Parsimony-Adjusted Measures fitness results

Model	PRATIO	PNFI	PCFI
Default model	0.922	0.655	0.688
Saturated model	0.000	0.000	0.000
Independence model	1.000	0.000	0.000

The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was also examined. As shown in Table 9, the RMSEA value for the default model was 0.139, with a 90% confidence interval ranging from 0.134 to 0.143, and a p-close value of .000. While an RMSEA below 0.08 is generally considered indicative of good fit, the reported value suggests moderate fit with room for improvement.

Table 9: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation fitness results

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	0.139	0.134	0.143	0.000
Independence model	0.265	0.261	0.269	0.000

Finally, Table 10 presents the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), and other information criteria. The default model showed an AIC of 3936.867, BCC of 3971.410, and BIC of 4264.363. Lower values compared to the independence model indicate a better relative fit.

Table 10: AIC and Related Indices fitness results

Model	AIC	BCC	BIC	CAIC
Default model	3936.867	3971.410	4264.363	4357.363
Saturated model	1482.000	1757.229	4091.403	4832.403
Independence model	13037.428	13051.542	13171.243	13209.243

Structural effect assessment and analysis of study variables

The assessment of the structural effects among the study variables was carried out through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Amos. Initially, the factor solution presented in Figure 2 indicate suboptimal outcomes, as several construct items did not meet the minimum standardized factor loading threshold of 0.70. Specifically, LCE1 (0.21), UGC4 (0.20), CEN2 (0.67), CEN5 (0.29), DST1 (0.44), IBB3 (0.63), and PI4 (0.64) exhibited low factor loadings. To improve the model's overall fit and reliability, these weak items were removed, and a revised confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. The refined factor structure, presented in Figure 3, demonstrated improved factor loadings, confirming the adequacy of the final measurement model for subsequent structural analysis.

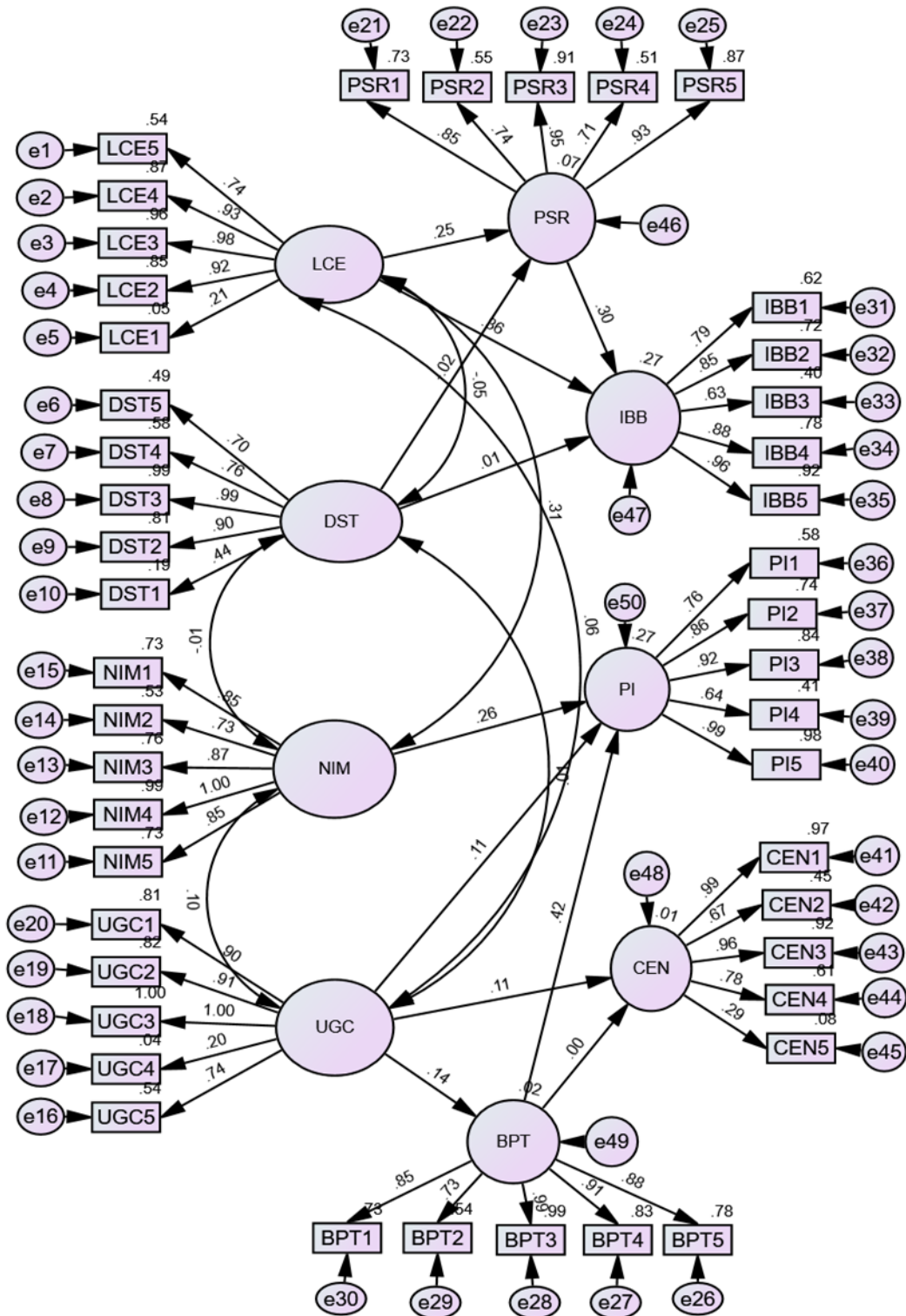


Figure 2: Exploratory Structural Analysis with Suboptimal Outcomes

Following this, the structural model was assessed to test the direct and indirect effects among the study variables, in accordance with the research objectives and hypotheses. The results of the direct effects analysis are presented in Table 11.

As indicated in Table 11, the direct relationship between live commerce engagement (LCE) and psychological reactance (PSR) was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.253$, $t = 3.834$, $p < 0.001$), leading to the acceptance of Hypothesis H1. This finding suggests that increased engagement in live commerce significantly triggers psychological reactance among consumers, potentially due to the urgency and scarcity

often associated with live selling environments. In turn, psychological reactance exhibited a significant positive effect on impulse buying behavior (IBB) ($\beta = 0.293$, $t = 4.711$, $p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis H2. This result implies that consumers who experience heightened psychological reactance are more likely to engage in spontaneous purchasing behavior.

However, Hypothesis H3, which proposed a direct positive effect of live commerce engagement (LCE) on impulse buying behavior (IBB), was not supported ($\beta = 0.358$, $t = 5.500$, $p = 0.111$). Although the path coefficient was substantial, the p -value exceeded the 0.05 threshold, indicating the absence of a statistically significant direct relationship. Similarly, digital scarcity tactics (DST) did not demonstrate a significant direct effect on impulse buying behavior (IBB) ($\beta = 0.006$, $t = 0.113$, $p = 0.910$), resulting in the rejection of Hypothesis H4. The relationship between digital scarcity tactics (DST) and psychological reactance (PSR) was also not significant ($\beta = -0.018$, $t = -0.278$, $p = 0.781$), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis H5.

Conversely, niche influencer marketing (NIM) was found to have a significant positive effect on purchase intention (PI) ($\beta = 0.256$, $t = 4.398$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting Hypothesis H6. This outcome highlights the critical role of niche influencers in enhancing consumers' likelihood of purchasing fast-moving consumer goods through social media platforms. Furthermore, user-generated content (UGC) showed a significant positive influence on brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) ($\beta = 0.144$, $t = 2.263$, $p = 0.024$), confirming Hypothesis H7. This finding reflects the importance of authentic, peer-generated content in building consumer trust toward brands.

In contrast, the direct relationship between user-generated content (UGC) and consumer engagement (CEN) was not significant ($\beta = 0.103$, $t = 1.592$, $p = 0.111$), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis H8. Despite a positive coefficient, the lack of statistical significance suggests that UGC alone may not be sufficient to stimulate meaningful engagement unless complemented by additional factors. Nevertheless, user-generated content (UGC) did have a significant positive effect on purchase intention (PI) ($\beta = 0.112$, $t = 1.970$, $p = 0.049$), thereby supporting Hypothesis H9.

Lastly, the direct effect of brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) on consumer engagement (CEN) was found to be insignificant ($\beta = 0.007$, $t = 0.113$, $p = 0.910$), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis H10. Despite the theoretical importance of brand trust in fostering engagement, the data suggests that other moderating factors might influence this relationship within the context of social media FMCG marketing in Accra.

Table 11: Direct Effects Analysis and Hypothesis Test Results

Label	Hypothesis Statement	B	t	p – value	Decision
H1	LCE → PSR	0.253	3.834	0.000	Accepted
H2	PSR → IBB	0.293	4.711	0.000	Accepted
H3	LCE → IBB	0.358	5.500	0.111	Not Accepted
H4	DST → IBB	0.006	0.113	0.910	Not Accepted
H5	DST → PSR	- 0.018	- 0.278	0.781	Not Accepted
H6	NIM → PI	0.256	4.398	0.000	Accepted
H7	UGC → BPT	0.144	2.263	0.024	Accepted
H8	UGC → CEN	0.103	1.592	0.111	Not Accepted
H9	UGC → PI	0.112	1.970	0.049	Accepted
H10	BPT → CEN	0.007	0.113	0.910	Not Accepted

Turning to the mediation analysis, the indirect effects among the variables were examined, and the results are presented in Table 12. The analysis revealed that psychological reactance (PSR) significantly mediated the relationship between live commerce engagement (LCE) and impulse buying behavior (IBB) (Effect $\beta = 0.080$, $p = 0.001$, Boot LLCI = 0.034, Boot ULCI = 0.140), supporting Hypothesis H11. This finding underscores the critical role of emotional triggers in explaining how live commerce influences consumer impulsivity.

However, psychological reactance (PSR) did not mediate the relationship between digital scarcity tactics (DST) and impulse buying behavior (IBB) (Effect $\beta = -0.007$, $p = 0.761$), resulting in the rejection of Hypothesis H12. This suggests that the scarcity appeals commonly employed in digital marketing may not directly translate into psychological pressure strong enough to alter impulse buying tendencies in the sampled population.

Additionally, brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) were found to significantly mediate the relationship between niche influencer marketing (NIM) and purchase intention (PI) (Effect $\beta = 0.078$, $p = 0.001$), thus supporting Hypothesis H13. This result affirms the critical role that trusted niche influencers play in enhancing brand image and driving consumer purchase behavior.

Meanwhile, the mediating effect of brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) between user-generated content (UGC) and consumer engagement (CEN) was not significant (Effect $\beta = 0.001$, $p = 0.768$),

leading to the rejection of Hypothesis H14. This implies that while UGC may strengthen brand perceptions, it alone does not necessarily translate into deeper engagement behaviors among consumers. Nonetheless, the mediation of brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) between user-generated content (UGC) and purchase intention (PI) was significant (Effect $\beta = 0.064$, $p = 0.045$), supporting Hypothesis H15.

Table 12: Mediation (Indirect) Effects Analysis Results

Label	Hypothesis Statement	Effect (β)	p - value	Boot (LLCI)	Boot (ULCI)	Test results Decision
H11	LCE→PSR→IBB	0.080	0.001	0.034	0.140	Accepted
H12	DST→PSR→IBB	-0.007	0.761	-0.070	0.051	Not Accepted
H13	NIM→BPT→PI	0.078	0.001	0.040	0.129	Accepted
H14	UGC→BPT→CEN	0.001	0.768	-0.018	0.027	Not Accepted
H15	UGC→BPT→PI	0.064	0.045	0.001	0.137	Accepted

From the foregoing analysis, the results conclusive suggest that emotional mechanisms such as psychological reactance and cognitive evaluations like brand trust are crucial pathways through which emerging social media marketing strategies affect consumer purchasing behavior. Furthermore, the findings emphasize that live commerce engagement and niche influencer marketing are particularly potent strategies in shaping impulse buying and purchase intentions within the dynamic social media marketplaces for fast-moving consumer goods in Accra.

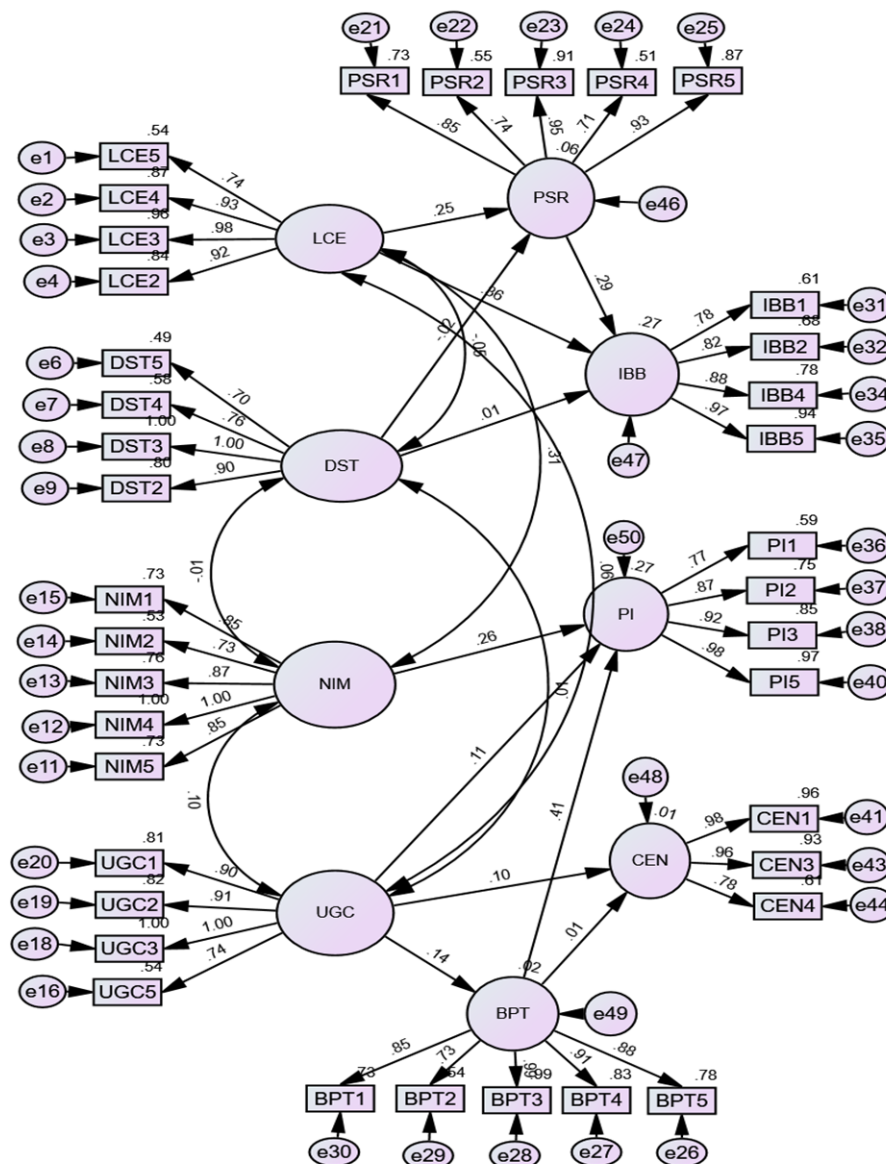


Figure 3: Confirmatory Structural Analysis with Standardized Factor Loadings

V. Discussion

Social media usage patterns and consumer engagement with FMCGs in Accra

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into social media usage patterns and consumer engagement with FMCGs in Accra, and these can be further enriched by incorporating insights from existing literature on user-generated content (UGC) and its role in shaping brand credibility, trust, and consumer behavior.

The high frequency of social media usage observed in this study, with 42.4% of participants engaging daily, aligns with Alamyar and Kurniawati's (2024) findings, which emphasize the importance of transparency and authenticity in the digital ecosystem, particularly in the context of e-commerce. The frequent use of social media platforms by consumers suggests that these platforms are fertile ground for building consumer trust through authentic UGC, a mechanism that plays a pivotal role in driving engagement and purchasing behavior. Alamyar and Kurniawati's identification of community engagement and relatability as key drivers of trust directly aligns with the observed daily usage of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok in this study. These platforms thrive on peer-to-peer interactions, which help establish trust and credibility, reinforcing the idea that brands can leverage UGC to enhance their consumer engagement strategies.

Similarly, the prominence of Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok for shopping activities, as shown in Table 3, aligns with Lariba's (2023) findings on the global impact of UGC in shaping brand trust and credibility. Lariba's study underscores the psychological mechanisms at play in shaping brand perceptions across diverse markets, including Africa. This aligns with the current study's finding that visually rich and interactive platforms are the most engaging for FMCG consumers, suggesting that UGC, as highlighted by Lariba, plays a critical role in shaping brand perceptions and trust in social media environments. By leveraging localized cultural values and peer endorsements, brands can enhance their equity and appeal to the Accra market, further validating the strategic importance of UGC in FMCG marketing.

In terms of consumer purchasing behavior, the study's finding that food, personal care, and beauty products are the most frequently purchased FMCGs via social media corresponds with Naeem et al. (2024), who explored UGC's role in Instagram luxury fashion branding. While Naeem's focus was on luxury products, his findings on the symbolic and identity-driven nature of consumer engagement with UGC extend to FMCGs, where consumers also engage in symbolic consumption. The strong engagement with beauty and personal care products in the current study suggests that consumers are not only purchasing functional items but are also influenced by the symbolic value these products hold, which aligns with Naeem et al.'s view on the emotional and symbolic resonance of UGC.

However, the study also identified health and wellness products as a category with lower consumer engagement, with only 19% of respondents purchasing in this area. This finding contrasts with the broader perspectives on UGC, such as those presented by Chung (2025), who found that UGC influences purchase behavior indirectly through consumer attitudes and engagement. While UGC may not directly drive purchases in the health and wellness category, it may still play a role in shaping attitudes toward these products. This suggests that health and wellness brands might need to focus more on building emotional and social value through UGC to increase consumer engagement in these categories, particularly by leveraging content that highlights peer experiences and authenticity.

In contrast, the work of Alabi (2024) complements the findings in this study by focusing on the tangible outcomes of UGC, such as increased interaction and purchase intentions. Alabi's focus on authentic peer content enhances brand credibility and drives engagement, which aligns with the observed purchasing behavior in the FMCG categories of food and personal care products. The study suggests that UGC's power to increase interaction and sales is particularly relevant to everyday consumer goods, where authenticity and peer reviews play a significant role in purchasing decisions. This supports the idea that UGC is not just about symbolic value but also about building consumer trust through authentic, relatable content.

Additionally, Choudhary et al. (2024) focused on the multimodal nature of UGC and its credibility assessment. Their work aligns with the current study's findings on the importance of visual content in platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. The study's emphasis on content verification and trust highlights that the type of UGC shared on these platforms—such as images, videos, and testimonials can significantly influence consumer trust and purchase behavior. This suggests that brands should prioritize authentic and visually engaging UGC to ensure credibility and foster consumer loyalty in the digital space.

On the other hand, Chung's (2025) findings that perceived value from UGC mediates purchase behavior indirectly through consumer attitudes presents a different perspective. While the current study focuses more on direct behavioral outcomes like purchasing specific FMCG products, Chung's emphasis on psychological engagement and value perception suggests that FMCG brands could enhance their strategies by focusing not just on the transactional aspects of UGC but also on how it shapes consumer attitudes toward brands. This could help build long-term brand loyalty, particularly among younger, digitally active consumers who value authenticity and emotional connection with brands.

The impact of social media marketing for fast-moving consumer goods on consumer purchase behavior in Accra

The first objective of this study was to assess the impact of social media live commerce and digital scarcity tactics on consumer impulse buying behavior on social media marketplaces. The first objective of this study was to assess the impact of social media live commerce and digital scarcity tactics on consumer impulse buying behavior on social media marketplaces. Under this objective, several hypotheses were tested, and the findings are discussed below in relation to the confirmed empirical review. The first finding indicated that the direct relationship between live commerce engagement (LCE) and psychological reactance (PSR) was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.253$, $t = 3.834$, $p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis H1. This suggests that increased engagement in live commerce significantly triggers psychological reactance among consumers, potentially due to the urgency and persuasion tactics commonly present in live-streaming environments. This finding aligns closely with Zhang, Zhang, and Wang (2022), who demonstrated that external stimuli such as anchor characteristics and promotional incentives influence consumers' internal cognitive states like trust and perceived value, thereby shaping behavior. Similarly, Goetha, Niha, and Fallo (2024) showed that live interaction combined with scarcity messages leads to competitive arousal, a state akin to psychological reactance in that it reflects heightened emotional-cognitive resistance. However, it differs slightly from Andika et al. (2025), who emphasized emotional engagement rather than reactance when discussing the effects of live commerce on Gen Z consumers. The intellectual reason for this difference likely stems from the distinct theoretical bases; while the current study emphasizes Psychological Reactance Theory, Andika et al. were grounded in Social Presence Theory, which prioritizes emotional warmth and connectedness over feelings of pressure or resistance.

Moving to the second finding, psychological reactance (PSR) exhibited a significant positive effect on impulse buying behavior (IBB) ($\beta = 0.293$, $t = 4.711$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting Hypothesis H2. This result implies that heightened psychological reactance feelings of perceived pressure or restriction propels consumers toward spontaneous purchases.

This result is strongly supported by Hum (2025), who found that arousal mediates the relationship between scarcity and impulse buying. Psychological reactance can be conceptualized as a form of emotional arousal, thus aligning Hum's and the current study's findings conceptually. Moreover, Feng et al. (2024) also lend support by demonstrating that affective reactions significantly predict impulse buying. On the other hand, Phan and Hoai (2025), while acknowledging emotional triggers like FoMO, focused more on social comparison and self-expressive motives rather than reactance or pressure. The intellectual reason for this divergence is the contextual focus: Phan and Hoai investigated collectible luxury markets where self-image concerns are primary, whereas the current study examines live commerce, where urgency and perceived pressure are more immediate. Regarding Hypothesis H3, which proposed a direct positive effect of live commerce engagement (LCE) on impulse buying behavior (IBB), the study found no statistically significant support ($\beta = 0.358$, $t = 5.500$, $p = 0.111$). Although the path coefficient was substantial, the lack of statistical significance indicates that LCE alone may not directly trigger impulse buying without mediating emotional factors like psychological reactance. This outcome differs from Zhang et al. (2022) and Andika et al. (2025), both of whom found direct pathways from live commerce engagement to impulsive purchase behavior. An intellectual explanation for this discrepancy lies in measurement and cultural contexts: Zhang et al. collected data in China, where live commerce is highly integrated into consumer culture, whereas the current context may involve a consumer base less accustomed to live sales, making emotional mediation necessary for the behavior to occur.

Turning to Hypothesis H4, the study revealed that digital scarcity tactics (DST) did not have a significant direct effect on impulse buying behavior (IBB) ($\beta = 0.006$, $t = 0.113$, $p = 0.910$), leading to rejection of the hypothesis.

This finding contrasts with Goetha et al. (2024) and Feng et al. (2024), who both found that scarcity cues, when paired with competitive or emotional triggers, enhanced impulse buying. The intellectual reason for this difference could be consumer desensitization — as noted by Zhang et al. (2022), frequent exposure to scarcity promotions may blunt consumers' reactions over time, thereby weakening the direct effect of scarcity alone.

Similarly, Hypothesis H5, proposing a direct positive relationship between digital scarcity tactics (DST) and psychological reactance (PSR), was not supported ($\beta = -0.018$, $t = -0.278$, $p = 0.781$).

This finding diverges from Hum (2025), who reported that scarcity positively triggers emotional arousal. One possible intellectual explanation is that arousal and reactance—while related—are distinct constructs: arousal refers to heightened emotional states generally (including excitement), while reactance specifically involves resistance against perceived pressure. Thus, scarcity might stimulate excitement (arousal) without necessarily invoking negative reactance unless the promotional framing feels overly manipulative.

Finally, regarding mediation analysis, psychological reactance (PSR) was found to significantly mediate the relationship between live commerce engagement (LCE) and impulse buying behavior (IBB),

supporting Hypothesis H11. This indicates that consumers' experience of pressure or control loss during live commerce drives them toward impulsive purchasing, rather than live engagement alone. This result aligns well with Saman Ismail and Danish Siddiqui (2025), who emphasized emotional intermediaries like regret and rejoice in the pathway from intrinsic motivations to compulsive buying. It also complements Hum (2025), who demonstrated the mediating role of arousal. In contrast, Husnain et al. (2025) reported more direct effects of immersive experiences on impulse buying without focusing extensively on emotional or psychological intermediaries. The intellectual reason behind this difference lies in the nature of the digital environment: second-hand marketplaces might stimulate more opportunity-driven purchases, while live commerce sales, filled with persuasion tactics, evoke stronger emotional resistance that must be overcome before a purchase decision is made.

In contrast, Hypothesis H12, predicting that psychological reactance (PSR) would mediate the relationship between digital scarcity tactics (DST) and impulse buying behavior (IBB), was not supported. This again differs from the work of Phan and Hoai (2025) and Özen and Hus (2025), who both found that scarcity and FoMO significantly influenced consumer behavior. The possible reason for this divergence lies in the type of emotional responses measured: while this study focused on psychological reactance (a feeling of being pressured), other studies emphasized FoMO and anxiety, which are more anticipatory or loss-oriented emotions rather than defensive resistance.

The second objective of this study was to examine the influence of niche influencer marketing (NIM) on consumer trust and brand perception in social media marketplaces. Under this objective, two hypotheses were tested: H6: NIM → PI (Purchase Intention) and H13: NIM → BPT (Brand Perception Trust) → PI. It was found that niche influencer marketing had a significant positive influence on purchase intention directly (H6) and also indirectly through the mediating effect of brand perception trust (H13). This means that when consumers perceive niche influencers as authentic, relatable, and aligned with their interests, their trust in the influencer translates into a more favorable perception of the brand, ultimately boosting their intention to purchase.

These findings align closely with the results of Radita and Latifah (2025), who argued that authenticity, transparency, and participation are critical for building consumer trust online. In both studies, the genuine engagement by influencers was seen as fundamental to enhancing consumer trust and ultimately influencing purchase behavior. The alignment can be intellectually explained by the fact that trust-based marketing theories posit that relational authenticity forms the core of consumer-brand relationships, making sincerity and engagement powerful predictors of purchase intention. Similarly, the current findings are consistent with the research by Nabirasool et al. (2024), who found that message consistency, relatability, and strategic platform use enhance consumer behavior and brand loyalty. Like the present study, Nabirasool et al. demonstrated that trust cultivated by niche influencers not only drives short-term consumer actions like purchasing but also builds lasting brand relationships. The intellectual reason for this alignment is that both studies tap into the relational marketing theory, which stresses the importance of meaningful and coherent communication between brands and consumers.

Additionally, the findings resonate with Sruthi (2024), who emphasized that in niche markets, micro and nano influencers drive deeper engagement and brand loyalty because of their closer ties to highly specific audiences. The present study, which focused on niche influencer marketing, similarly found that targeted influencer strategies foster stronger trust and brand perceptions, leading to higher purchase intentions. The intellectual explanation here lies in the niche marketing principle, which suggests that specialized, audience-specific engagement leads to higher relational quality and stronger behavioral outcomes. Again, Kalkumbe, Marathe, and Longani (2024) also found that authenticity and value congruence between influencers and brands are critical for driving brand awareness and trust findings that align with the current study's results. Their emphasis on strategic influencer selection mirrors the present findings that niche influencer credibility significantly boosts brand trust and purchase decisions. This similarity is intellectually grounded in source credibility theory, which posits that the perceived expertise and trustworthiness of a communicator (in this case, the influencer) directly influence the audience's acceptance of the message. However, the current study's findings differ from Hum (2025), who emphasized that trust in influencer marketing is increasingly influenced by platform algorithms and peer reviews, diluting the direct influence of influencer behavior. While the current study established a direct and mediated influence of niche influencers on trust and purchase intention, Hum suggests that external digital forces might overshadow influencer effects. The intellectual reason for this divergence is that Hum's study takes an ecosystem-based view of trust, seeing trust as distributed among multiple digital actors (platforms, peers, algorithms) rather than concentrated solely in the influencer-consumer dyad.

The third objective of this study was to explore the role of user-generated content (UGC) in shaping brand credibility and consumer engagement in social media e-commerce. It was found that user-generated content (UGC) showed a significant positive influence on brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) ($\beta =$

0.144, $t = 2.263$, $p = 0.024$), confirming Hypothesis H7. This result reflects the vital role of authentic, peer-generated content in fostering consumer trust toward brands. In contrast, the direct relationship between UGC and consumer engagement (CEN) was not significant ($\beta = 0.103$, $t = 1.592$, $p = 0.111$), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis H8. Although the coefficient was positive, it lacked statistical significance, suggesting that UGC alone may not be enough to stimulate meaningful consumer engagement without other supportive factors. However, UGC did have a significant positive effect on purchase intention (PI) ($\beta = 0.112$, $t = 1.970$, $p = 0.049$), thereby supporting Hypothesis H9.

Furthermore, the direct effect of brand perception and trustworthiness (BPT) on consumer engagement (CEN) was found to be insignificant ($\beta = 0.007$, $t = 0.113$, $p = 0.910$), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis H10. This suggests that in the context of social media marketing of FMCG products in Accra, other moderating or situational factors may play a larger role in driving engagement. In addition, the mediation effect of BPT between UGC and CEN was also insignificant (Effect $\beta = 0.001$, $p = 0.768$), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis H14. Nonetheless, the mediation of BPT between UGC and PI was significant (Effect $\beta = 0.064$, $p = 0.045$), supporting Hypothesis H15. The significant finding that UGC positively influences brand perception and trustworthiness (supporting H7) aligns strongly with the findings of Alamyar and Kurniawati (2024), who emphasized perceived authenticity, community engagement, and relatability as central to building trust through UGC. Similarly, Lariba (2023) underscored the role of UGC in enhancing brand trust and credibility across cultural contexts, validating the present study's conclusion that authentic peer content serves as a credible trust-building mechanism in digital commerce.

Moreover, the finding that UGC significantly impacts purchase intention (PI) (supporting H9) corresponds closely with Alabi (2024), who showed that positive peer-shared experiences significantly enhance consumer interaction and purchase behaviors. Chung (2025) also found that consumer attitudes toward UGC mediate purchase behaviors, although in his study, perceived value had to first shape attitudes. This shared emphasis on the pathway from UGC to purchasing intentions strengthens the validity of the current study's outcomes.

However, the non-significant direct effect of UGC on consumer engagement (CEN) (leading to the rejection of H8) diverges from findings by Kemala and Azhar (2025), who demonstrated that UGC and firm-generated content both significantly foster customer engagement. The difference can be intellectually reasoned by considering the context: Kemala and Azhar focused on broader service settings with high relational investments, while the current study centered on fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) in a social media environment where frequent, low-involvement purchases dominate, potentially reducing deep emotional engagement.

Similarly, the rejection of H10 (BPT \rightarrow CEN) contrasts with the relational assumptions found in Kemala and Azhar (2025) and to a lesser extent Chung (2025), who assumed that higher trust automatically leads to higher engagement. One intellectual explanation is that in the FMCG category, trust may result more in cognitive assurance (e.g., "this product is reliable") rather than emotional commitment (e.g., "I want to actively engage with the brand"), weakening the direct engagement link.

The rejection of H14 (UGC \rightarrow BPT \rightarrow CEN mediation) and support for H15 (UGC \rightarrow BPT \rightarrow PI mediation) mirrors the conclusions of Chung (2025) and Khan et al. (2021) in interesting ways. Both studies recognized the indirect and conditional pathways through which UGC affects behavior. Particularly, Khan et al. (2021) emphasized that individual trust propensity moderates how UGC influences reputation and behavior, suggesting that a simple, direct path from trust to engagement may not hold universally. Consumers may view trusted brands positively yet not feel compelled to engage unless personal relevance, situational motivations, or trust propensity thresholds are met. Furthermore, the study's findings resonate with Choudhary et al. (2024), who showed that content credibility assessment now involves multimodal evaluation, implying that engagement may depend on a richer set of stimuli (images, videos, narratives) beyond mere textual UGC. The FMCG brands examined might not have offered multimodal UGC content rich enough to foster substantial emotional engagement, explaining the insignificant findings related to consumer engagement.

Recommendations and Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer several important recommendations for businesses, marketers, and platform developers operating in social media marketplaces, particularly within the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector in Accra and similar emerging markets. First, live commerce engagement emerges as a powerful driver of psychological reactance, which subsequently triggers impulse buying behavior. Marketers should therefore design live selling experiences that strategically balance urgency and excitement without overwhelming consumers, as excessive psychological pressure could backfire by reducing customer satisfaction or fostering distrust. Moderated urgency, combined with authentic engagement, can foster a sense of participation and excitement that promotes spontaneous purchases while preserving positive brand experiences.

Second, while digital scarcity tactics alone did not significantly influence impulse buying or psychological reactance, marketers are advised to integrate scarcity elements thoughtfully alongside more engaging strategies like interactive live commerce sessions. Scarcity appeals should be framed authentically highlighting genuine product limitations rather than employing artificial countdowns to avoid skepticism among increasingly savvy social media users.

In addition to the above, the strong, positive effect of niche influencer marketing on purchase intention highlights the strategic value of collaborating with micro- and niche influencers. Brands should prioritize partnerships with influencers whose values and audiences closely align with their own brand identity, as this connection builds brand perception and trustworthiness key mediators in driving consumer intent. Instead of chasing influencers with the largest follower counts, firms should invest in credibility and audience fit.

Again, user-generated content (UGC) was found to significantly enhance brand perception and trust, but it did not directly boost consumer engagement. Brands should, therefore, not rely solely on UGC for engagement metrics. Instead, encouraging UGC alongside interactive brand campaigns, reward programs, or co-creation activities may better leverage its trust-building capabilities while also enhancing active engagement.

Finally, the evidence that brand perception and trustworthiness mediate the influence of user-generated content and niche influencer marketing on purchase intentions suggests that trust-building should remain a core objective. Transparent communication, quality assurance, ethical practices, and customer testimonials must be integral components of social media marketing strategies to maximize the full potential of these dynamic platforms.

VI. Conclusion

This study deepens the understanding of how emerging strategies in social media marketplaces specifically live commerce engagement, digital scarcity tactics, niche influencer marketing, and user-generated content shape consumer behaviors in the FMCG sector of Accra. It emphasizes the critical role of psychological reactance and brand trust as emotional and cognitive mediators influencing impulse buying behavior and purchase intentions. The results affirm that while live commerce and niche influencer partnerships are highly effective pathways to influence, scarcity tactics alone and user-generated content without further interactive elements are insufficient to maximize consumer engagement or drive immediate purchasing actions.

However, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study's focus on Accra limits the generalizability of the findings across different geographic, cultural, or economic contexts. Consumer behavior in other regions may differ based on varying levels of digital literacy, cultural attitudes toward scarcity, and influencer credibility. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional survey design, which captures relationships at a single point in time but limits causal inferences. Third, psychological constructs like reactance and trust were self-reported, which introduces potential biases such as social desirability or memory distortions.

Future research should consider adopting longitudinal or experimental designs to better capture causal relationships and changes over time in consumer behavior. Additionally, future studies could explore moderating variables such as consumer personality traits (such as need for uniqueness, susceptibility to persuasion) or platform-specific features (for example TikTok compared with Instagram) that may influence the effectiveness of live commerce, scarcity tactics, and influencer marketing. Investigating cultural variations by replicating this study in different African cities or across global markets could also offer richer insights into the universal versus context-specific elements of social media-driven consumer behavior. Finally, qualitative research could deepen understanding of consumer emotional responses during live commerce sessions and uncover nuanced psychological mechanisms beyond psychological reactance. Through continued research and practical application of these findings, marketers and businesses can more effectively design social commerce experiences that respect consumer autonomy, build genuine trust, and foster meaningful engagement in the evolving digital marketplace.

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