Linking Integrated Marketing Communications to Consumer Engagement: Perspectives of Luxury Fashion Users at University of Lagos Business School, Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) on consumer engagement with luxury fashion brands, focusing on users of premium luxury fashion among participants of the University of Lagos Business School (ULBS). The study addresses a notable gap in literature, where IMC research has largely been concentrated in developed luxury markets, with limited empirical attention to emerging economies such as Nigeria. A quantitative research design was adopted, using a structured questionnaire administered to 137 ULBS participants, with 103 valid responses analysed. Data were examined using descriptive and inferential statistics to determine the extent to which IMC dimensions influence consumer engagement. Findings reveal that IMC significantly enhances consumer engagement, with digital marketing and public relations emerging as the strongest predictors. The results further indicate that luxury consumers in Nigeria respond more positively to communication strategies that are consistent, authentic, and culturally aligned with their identity aspirations. Based on the findings, the study recommends that luxury fashion brands in Nigeria prioritise integrated digital marketing and public relations strategies that emphasise authenticity, cultural relevance, and interactive engagement. Brands are also encouraged to strengthen message consistency across all communication channels and reduce reliance on fragmented promotional efforts. Furthermore, luxury marketers should adopt consumer-centred IMC approaches that foster trust, emotional connection, and identity-based engagement through storytelling and experiential communication. The study contributes to IMC literature by contextualising its effectiveness within an emerging luxury market and offers practical insights for managers on designing integrated, trust-driven, and digitally enabled communication strategies that enhance engagement, loyalty, and long-term brand equity.

Keywords: Brand trust, consumer engagement, digital marketing, integrated marketing communications, luxury fashion.

1. Introduction

The global luxury fashion industry has evolved into a highly symbolic and culturally embedded marketplace where consumers engage brands not only for product quality but for identity expression, social signalling, and emotional value. Luxury fashion, including premium apparel, footwear, accessories, and bespoke items derives its appeal from exclusivity, craftsmanship, and prestige. Its global growth, projected to exceed $400 billion by 2030, is increasingly driven by digitally active consumers who interact with brands across multiple touchpoints (Bain & Company, 2024). In emerging markets such as Nigeria, rising incomes, expanding digital adoption, and a strong cultural affinity for status-enhancing products have accelerated interest in luxury fashion (Kapferer & Bastien, 2017). Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) has become central to how luxury brands sustain relevance in this evolving landscape. IMC enables brands to deliver coherent and immersive narratives through advertising, digital marketing, influencer collaborations, experiential events, public relations, and relationship-building activities. For luxury brands, IMC is more than coordinated messaging; it is a strategic process for cultivating trust, reinforcing exclusivity, and deepening emotional connections (Keller, 2016). Digital platforms, particularly Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, have transformed communication by enabling real-time interactions, consumer-generated stories, and personalized content that shape brand perception and engagement.

In Lagos State, luxury consumption is closely tied to aspiration, professional identity, and cultural expression. Luxury fashion brands, both local and international, target this market with curated digital campaigns, influencer endorsements, and exclusive brand activations designed to strengthen relevance and loyalty. Participants of the University of Lagos Business School (ULBS) represent a particularly insightful segment of this market, comprising upwardly mobile professionals with global exposure, digital fluency, and strong interest in premium lifestyle products. Their consumption patterns make them ideal for analysing how IMC influences engagement with luxury fashion goods in Nigeria's contemporary environment. Despite the growing prominence of IMC in luxury markets, existing scholarship remains largely skewed toward Western and Asian contexts, where consumer motivations and cultural dynamics differ significantly from those in Nigeria. Limited empirical research addresses how Nigerian professionals interpret luxury brand communication or how IMC dimensions jointly drive engagement in luxury fashion. Most available studies (see Acheampong & Mensah, 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Lim et al., 2022; Osei & Amoako,2022) focus on individual IMC components such as influencer marketing or digital advertising, while neglecting holistic, integrated perspectives relevant to luxury consumption. Similarly, notwithstanding growing visibility through events, influencer campaigns, and digital promotions, luxury fashion brands in Nigeria particularly those offering premium apparel, footwear, accessories, and bespoke items continue to experience weak and declining consumer engagement. This disengagement undermines brand trust and threatens sustained growth in Lagos' increasingly competitive luxury market. A key driver of this challenge is the persistent reliance on traditional marketing communication tools such as print advertising, billboards, and sponsorships.

While integrated marketing communication channels generate awareness, they often fall short in resonating with digitally empowered consumers who now prioritize authenticity, cultural relevance, and interactive brand experiences. Even when brands adopt digital marketing or influencer strategies, these efforts are frequently executed in isolation, lacking integration with personal selling, publicity, or relationship-focused public relations (Adebayo & Ayodele, 2021; Hollebeek et al., 2024). This fragmented IMC approach results in visibility without meaningful engagement, widening the gap between awareness and actual patronage. Little is known about how IMC dimensions jointly shape engagement among aspirational Nigerian consumers, particularly professionals in Lagos whose digital lifestyles and social networks strongly influence their purchase behaviours. This study therefore addresses two critical gaps: the declining depth of consumer engagement caused by overly traditional and poorly integrated communication strategies, and the lack of holistic empirical insights into how IMC can drive sustained engagement with luxury fashion products in Nigeria.

Against this backdrop, the aim of this study is to examine the influence of Integrated Marketing Communications on consumer engagement among executive post graduate participants of the University Of Lagos Business School (ULBS) within the context of Lagos State's luxury fashion Industry Specifically, the study seeks to examine the relationship between Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) dimensions and consumer engagement, as well as investigate the influence of IMC tools, advertising, digital marketing, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and publicity on consumer engagement.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between integrated marketing communication and consumer engagement, focusing on users of luxury fashion brands in Lagos state. The specific objectives are:

i. To examine the relationship between integrated marketing communication and consumer engagement of users of luxury fashion brands among ULBS executive postgraduate participants in Lagos State.

ii. To study the influence of integrated marketing communication (consisting of advertising, digital marketing, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, publicity) on consumer engagement of users of luxury fashion brands among ULBS executive postgraduate participants in Lagos State.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) refers to the strategic coordination of multiple communication channels to deliver consistent, coherent, and experience-driven brand messaging across touchpoints (Duncan & Caywood, 2023; Keller, 2023). Contemporary IMC is no longer limited to message alignment but has evolved into an ecosystem approach where brands integrate digital, experiential, relational, and traditional media to shape consumer meaning and engagement. In luxury fashion, IMC plays a critical role in constructing symbolic value, exclusivity, and emotional resonance. Global luxury brands increasingly rely on hybrid communication systems that merge physical exclusivity with digital amplification, ensuring continuity of brand experience across offline and online environments (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2023).

Traditional marketing communication comprising advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and publicity remains relevant in luxury branding due to its association with prestige and legitimacy. However, recent evidence suggests that these tools are most effective when integrated with digital and experiential strategies rather than deployed in isolation (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2024). Advertising continues to serve as a symbolic expression of brand identity, while PR strengthens credibility and trust in an environment increasingly shaped by misinformation and counterfeit risks (Hutton & Mugridge, 2023). Experiential marketing further deepens engagement by enabling consumers to emotionally and sensorially “live” the brand, enhancing memory-based loyalty and emotional attachment (Schmitt, 2023; Brakus et al., 2023). Experiential marketing creates memorable interactions that stimulate emotional and sensory engagement (Schmitt, 2019). It is most often than not a one-on-one engagement. Rather than passive messaging, it enables consumers to “live” the brand (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Nigerian designers such as Mai Atafo deliver immersive runway shows and curated events, while global brands like Dior use exhibitions that blend fashion, art, and history. These experiences deepen emotional connection and differentiate luxury brands in competitive markets.

Personal Selling is direct interaction aimed at relationship-building and closing sales (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Private fittings by Nigerian designers mirror global practices at Louis Vuitton and Hermès. Sales Promotion are short-term incentives to stimulate purchases (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In luxury, selective events like invitation-only previews maintain exclusivity while generating urgency. Digital marketing has become the dominant force in contemporary IMC, enabling personalised communication, real-time interaction, and co-creation of brand meaning through social media platforms (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2023). Influencer marketing further enhances this ecosystem by leveraging perceived authenticity and social credibility, although its effectiveness depends heavily on strategic brand alignment (Lou & Yuan, 2023).

Consumer engagement

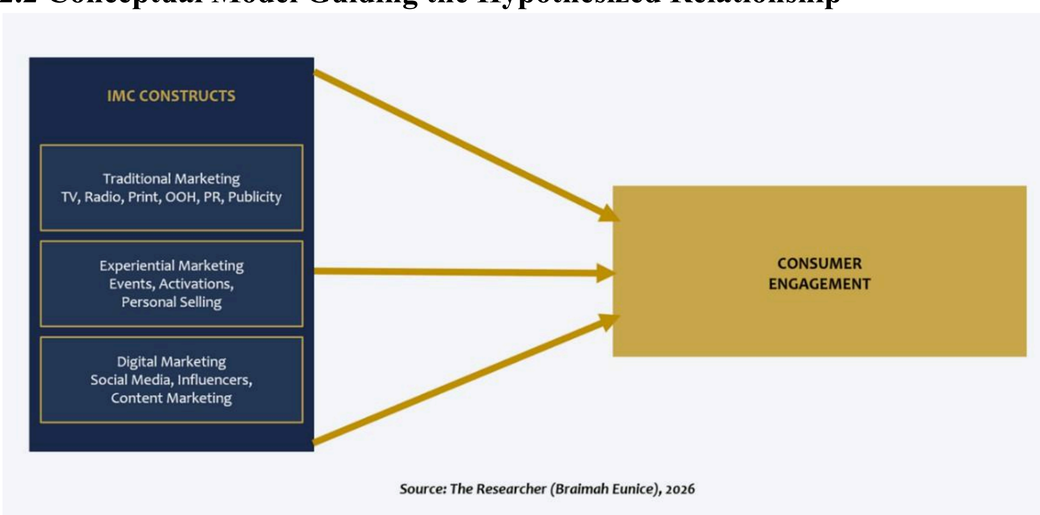
Consumer engagement was initially framed as behavioural participation, such as repeat purchase or interaction (Brodie et al., 2011). Subsequent scholarship expanded engagement into a multidimensional psychological state involving cognitive immersion, emotional resonance, attitudinal alignment, and behavioural involvement (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Recent work conceptualises engagement as a dynamic relational process embedded in brand ecosystems, emphasising identity construction, symbolic participation, and social signalling (Hollebeek & Macky, 2022; Vivek et al., 2023). Also conceptualized as a multidimensional construct involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioural investment in a brand relationship (Hollebeek, 2023). In luxury markets, engagement reflects consumers' desire not merely to buy but to affiliate with meaning systems communicated by brands. Specifically in luxury fashion, engagement extends beyond purchase to include advocacy, identity expression, and community participation. Despite theoretical advancement, empirical findings remain divided. Some scholars position engagement as a precursor to trust, while others view trust as a prerequisite for engagement. Furthermore, most studies rely on digital metrics or survey proxies rather than integrated communication analysis. There is therefore limited empirical insight into how engagement emerges from coordinated traditional, experiential, and digital signals, particularly within emerging luxury markets. This study addresses that gap by examining engagement as a response to integrated communication coherence.

Luxury Brands

Luxury brands were traditionally defined by rarity, craftsmanship, and price-based exclusivity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Subsequent research reframed luxury as a symbolic system communicating identity, aspiration, and cultural distinction. Recent scholars conceptualise luxury as a meaning ecosystem co-created through communication, experience, and social interpretation (Kapferer & Bastien, 2023; Ko et al., 2024). This view recognises that prestige is sustained not only through product attributes but through consistent narrative signalling across touchpoints. Luxury fashion brands themselves are defined by exclusivity, symbolic meaning, and emotional prestige that communicate identity and social distinction (Kapferer & Bastien, 2023). However, contemporary luxury has shifted toward culturally embedded and digitally visible ecosystems where meaning is co-created between brands and consumers.

However, debate continues regarding accessibility. Some studies argue digital democratization weakens exclusivity, while others show controlled visibility expands symbolic reach without eroding prestige. Methodologically, most luxury research concentrates on fashion alone, with limited cross-sector analysis incorporating real estate and automotive luxury simultaneously. This study contributes by examining luxury communication across luxury fashion within a unified IMC perspective.

2.2 Conceptual Model Guiding the Hypothesized Relationship



2.3 Theoretical Review

This study is underpinned by Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), both of which explain different but complementary dimensions of consumer engagement. RMT emphasises trust, commitment, and relational continuity as drivers of long-term consumer relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In modern luxury markets, this theory has expanded to include digitally mediated relationships, where trust is reinforced through personalised communication, exclusivity, and consistent brand experience across platforms (Palmatier *et al*., 2023). However, its limitation lies in its reduced ability to fully explain fluid, network-based relationships influenced by digital communities and influencer ecosystems (Verhoef *et al*., 2023).

UGT explains consumer behaviour as goal-oriented media selection driven by cognitive, emotional, and social gratifications (Katz *et al*., 1973). Contemporary extensions emphasise digital gratifications such as interactivity, identity expression, and co-creation (Sundar & Limperos, 2023). In luxury fashion contexts, consumers actively engage with brands on social media platforms to fulfil identity, status, and belonging needs. Together with RMT, UGT offers complementary insights. RMT explains trust and commitment in sustaining brand relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), while UGT highlights active, need-driven media behaviors shaping engagement. Their limitations justify examining how Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) bridges relational trust with contemporary digital gratifications among Nigerian luxury fashion consumers. RMT and UGT provide a dual explanation for luxury engagement: RMT explains relational trust and continuity, while UGT explains active participation and gratification-seeking behaviour. Integrated Marketing Communications bridges both by providing a structured system through which trust and gratification are simultaneously delivered across touchpoints. This positions IMC as the operational mechanism linking relational and behavioural theories of engagement.

2.4 Empirical Review

Following the evolution and increasing recognition of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), a growing body of empirical studies has examined its relationship with consumer engagement across sectors and geographies. Early empirical work by Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015), conducted within the European consumer goods sector, focused on social media as a core component of IMC. Their findings revealed that consistent brand communication across digital platforms significantly enhances brand credibility, perceived value, and consumer confidence. However, the study's narrow concentration on digital channels limits its explanatory power regarding the role of offline IMC elements, particularly in sectors such as luxury fashion where experiential and symbolic interactions are critical. Extending this line of inquiry, Kim and Ko (2012) examined social media marketing within the luxury fashion sector in South Korea and found that user-generated content and influencer storytelling significantly enhance customer equity and brand engagement. While the study underscores the importance of digital storytelling in shaping luxury brand perception, its contextual limitation reduces its applicability to culturally diverse and emerging markets.

Further advancing IMC scholarship, Keller (2016), through research conducted in the United States premium and luxury sector, demonstrated that consistent and integrated messaging across multiple communication channels strengthens brand meaning, trust, and long-term consumer loyalty. While this provides strong theoretical and empirical support for IMC effectiveness, the framework is largely grounded in developed market conditions and does not fully reflect the structural complexities, trust deficits, and informal market dynamics that characterise emerging economies. More recent empirical studies have begun to address these gaps. For instance, Hollebeek (2023), in a study on digital customer engagement across interactive marketing environments, found that engagement is increasingly co-created through real-time interactions, personalised content, and platform-based experiences, reinforcing the shift from one-way communication to participatory brand ecosystems. Similarly, Verhoef, Kannan, and Inman (2023), examining omnichannel retailing across global markets, demonstrated that integrated customer experiences across online and offline channels significantly enhance engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty, highlighting the importance of seamless IMC integration beyond isolated digital efforts. Building on this trajectory, more recent studies has further substantiated the IMC-engagement nexus. Srivastava, Singh and Bhanot (2025), in a cross-national study spanning India and select African markets, found that holistic IMC deployment, encompassing digital, experiential and traditional channels significantly amplified consumer engagement and brand co-creation, particularly among aspirational middle-class segments. Equally, Al-Dmour, Al-Shraideh, and Obeidat (2024), examining IMC effectiveness across luxury and premium brand contexts in the middle east and North Africa, established that message consistency, channel synergy and audience personalisation were the most significant predictors of sustained consumer engagement, underscoring the continued relevance of integrated communication frameworks in diverse emerging market settings.

Within the Nigerian context, empirical evidence provides further insight into IMC and engagement dynamics in emerging luxury markets. Adebayo and Ayodele (2021) investigated digital engagement within the fashion industry across Lagos and Abuja, finding that although consumers are highly active on digital platforms, their engagement is significantly shaped by trust concerns, particularly those linked to counterfeit products and inconsistent brand messaging. This highlights the critical importance of authenticity and credibility in IMC strategies. However, the study is limited by its exclusive focus on digital touchpoints, with little attention to how other IMC elements interact to influence engagement. Similarly, Abubakar and Bala (2022), in their study of influencer marketing among Nigerian youth across major urban centres, found that influencers serve as credible intermediaries who significantly shape brand perception and purchase intention in the luxury segment. While this confirms the growing influence of social media actors in consumer decision-making, the study adopts a fragmented perspective by isolating influencer marketing from broader IMC integration.

Ekhareafo and Okoye (2024) examining consumer loyalty within Nigeria's luxury fashion market, found that declining loyalty is strongly associated with inconsistent communication and weak brand trust, suggesting that fragmented IMC strategies undermine long-term engagement. In a related study, Emuobor, Osima, Ichendu, and Oyetola (2025) analysed brand engagement within Nigeria's fashion industry and found that integrated communication strategies that combine digital interaction, experiential marketing, and relationship management significantly improve customer loyalty and advocacy. Beyond Nigeria, Srivastava, Singh, and Bhanot (2025), in a cross-market study spanning India and Africa, found that IMC integration positively influences consumer engagement by enhancing message clarity, emotional connection, and brand recall across emerging economies. These findings collectively signal a shift toward more integrated, experience-driven, and relationship-oriented IMC practices in contemporary markets.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Methods

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between integrated marketing communications (IMC) and consumer engagement among luxury fashion brand users. The approach enables the collection of standardized data that supports comparison and generalisation of findings (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). The study population consists of

321 executive postgraduate students at the University of Lagos Business School (ULBS), drawn from eight diverse programmes. This group was considered appropriate due to their managerial exposure and consumer market experience, particularly within the luxury fashion space. Using Yamane's (1967) formula with an 8% margin of error, a sample size of 105 was determined, balancing statistical adequacy with the practical realities of accessing busy professionals. To ensure proportional representation across programmes, a quota-based stratified sampling technique was applied, with respondents selected randomly within each stratum. In practice, 137 questionnaires were distributed to account for non-response, with 103 properly completed and used for analysis.

Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire distributed electronically via Google Forms to accommodate respondents' schedules and improve response efficiency. The instrument comprised three sections: demographic information; IMC dimensions (advertising, digital marketing, public relations, personal selling, and publicity); and consumer engagement indicators focusing on brand trust and loyalty, measured using a five-point Likert scale. Face and content validity were confirmed through expert review and prior to full deployment, a pilot test involving 20 participants. Cronbach alpha values for all the variables and dimensions, exceeding the 0.7 threshold, indicating strong internal consistency. Inferential statistics (correlation and regression) were used to test the hypotheses.

3.2 Overview of the Study Area

This study was conducted at the University of Lagos Business School (ULBS), located on the main campus of the University of Lagos in Akoka, Lagos State, Nigeria. ULBS is one of Nigeria's foremost executive education and postgraduate management institutions, offering programmes that attract mid-to-senior level professionals from diverse industries. Lagos State, the primary context for this study, is Nigeria's commercial capital and its most populous state, with an estimated population exceeding 15 million people. It represents the most significant luxury consumer market in Nigeria, characterised by high purchasing power, cosmopolitan lifestyle aspirations, and deep penetration of digital platforms. The concentration of upwardly mobile professionals, fashion-conscious consumers, and brand-aware individuals within Lagos State makes it an ideal setting for examining how integrated marketing communications influence consumer engagement with luxury fashion brands.

3.3 Model Specification and Decision Rules

To test Hypothesis One, Pearson's product-moment correlation was employed to assess the direction and strength of the relationship between each IMC dimension and consumer engagement. The decision rule states that the null hypothesis is rejected if the computed p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), and the correlation coefficient (r) is statistically significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$). A positive r-value indicates a direct relationship, while a negative r-value indicates an inverse relationship.

Cohen's (1988) benchmarks were applied to interpret correlation magnitude: r = 0.10–0.29 (weak), r = 0.30–0.49 (moderate), and $r \geq 0.50$ (strong).

To test Hypothesis Two, multiple linear regression analysis was employed. The regression model is specified as follows:

$$CE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ADV + \beta_2 DM + \beta_3 PS + \beta_4 SP + \beta_5 PR + \beta_6 PU + \varepsilon$$

Where: CE = Consumer Engagement; ADV = Advertising; DM = Digital Marketing; PS = Personal Selling; SP = Sales Promotion; PR = Public Relations; PU = Publicity; β_0 = constant; β_1–β_6 = regression coefficients; ε = error term.

The decision rule states that the null hypothesis is rejected if the F-statistic is statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$) and individual predictors are assessed at the same significance threshold. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to indicate the proportion of variance in consumer engagement explained by the IMC dimensions.

Additionally, diagnostic tests for multicollinearity and autocorrelation were conducted to ensure the robustness of the regression estimates. Multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF); values below 10 were accepted as indicating the absence of problematic multicollinearity (O'Brien, 2007). Autocorrelation was tested using the Durbin-Watson statistic; values between 1.5 and 2.5 indicate the absence of significant autocorrelation among residuals.

4. Data Analysis and Results Testing of Hypotheses Reliability and Validity Tests

The reliability of the measurement instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. As presented in Table A below, all constructs returned alpha values exceeding the 0.70 threshold recommended by Gliem and Gliem (2003), confirming strong internal consistency. Content validity was established through expert review prior to deployment, while face validity was verified through the pilot test involving 20 participants.

Table A: Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha)

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Advertising (ADV)	5	0.813
Digital Marketing (DM)	5	0.841
Personal Selling (PS)	4	0.798
Sales Promotion (SP)	4	0.782
Public Relations (PR)	5	0.826
Publicity (PU)	4	0.771
Consumer Engagement (CE)	6	0.854

Source: The Researcher, 2026

Diagnostic Tests

Prior to hypothesis testing, diagnostic tests were conducted to verify the assumptions underlying the regression model. The results are presented in Table B below.

Table B: Diagnostic Test Results (Multicollinearity and Autocorrelation)

Variable	VIF	Tolerance
Advertising (ADV)	2.418	0.413
Digital Marketing (DM)	2.647	0.378
Personal Selling (PS)	2.193	0.456
Sales Promotion (SP)	2.502	0.400
Public Relations (PR)	2.376	0.421
Publicity (PU)	2.284	0.438

Source: The Researcher, 2026. Note: Durbin-Watson statistic = 1.874, indicating no significant autocorrelation among residuals.

All VIF values were below the threshold of 10.0, indicating no problematic multicollinearity among the predictors. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.874 falls within the acceptable range (1.5–2.5), confirming the absence of significant autocorrelation. These results affirm the suitability of the regression model for hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis One

There is no strong relationship between integrated marketing communication and consumer engagement of users of luxury fashion brand among ULBS executive postgraduate participants in Lagos State.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis of IMC and Consumer Engagement

	ADV	DM	PS	SP	PR	PU	CE
Advertising (ADV)	1	.650**	.484**	.543**	.416**	.445**	.425**
Digital Marketing (DM)	.650**	1	.403**	.535**	.425**	.489**	.547**
Personal Selling (PS)	.484**	.403**	1	.506**	.458**	.478**	.444**
Sales Promotion (SP)	.543**	.535**	.506**	1	.541**	.572**	.453**
Public Relations (PR)	.416**	.425**	.458**	.541**	1	.559**	.512**
Publicity (Pub)	.445**	.489**	.478**	.572**	.559**	1	.423**
Consumer Engagement (CE)	.425**	.547**	.444**	.453**	.512**	.423**	1

Source: The Researcher 2026

As shown in Table 1, Pearson correlation analysis showed strong positive relationships between all IMC dimensions and consumer engagement ($p < 0.01$). Coefficients range from $r = 0.423$ (publicity) to $r = 0.547$ (digital marketing), with the strongest association observed for digital marketing, followed by public relations (r = 0.512). These results indicate that all IMC dimensions are positively and significantly linked to consumer engagement among ULBS participants, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two

Integrated marketing communication will not significantly influence consumer engagement of users of luxury fashion brands among ULBS executive postgraduate participants in Lagos State.

Table 2: Regression Results of IMC Dimensions on Consumer Engagement

Variables	β (Standardised)	t-value	p-value
Advertising	0.024	0.217	0.829
Digital Marketing	0.356	3.261	0.002*
Personal Selling	0.164	1.672	0.098
Sales Promotion	0.044	0.395	0.694
Public Relations	0.268	2.648	0.009*
Publicity	0.006	0.055	0.956
Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.417$, $F = 11.447$, $p < 0.05$ Significant at 0.05 level			

Source: The Researcher 2026

Table 2 above shows that the combined IMC dimensions have a significant effect on consumer engagement ($F = 11.447$, $p < 0.05$), explaining 41.7% of the variation in consumer engagement ($R^2 = 0.417$). This suggests that IMC plays a meaningful role in shaping how consumers interact with luxury fashion brands among ULBS executive postgraduate participants in Lagos State. Looking more closely at the individual dimensions, there are clear differences in their relative influence. Digital marketing ($\beta = 0.356$) stands out as the strongest driver of consumer engagement, followed by public relations ($\beta = 0.268$), both of which were statistically at 1% level, Personal selling ($\beta = 0.164$) showed some level of influence, although it did not reach statistical significance. In contrast, sales promotion ($\beta = 0.044$), advertising ($\beta = 0.024$), and publicity ($\beta = 0.006$) contributed very little to explaining consumer engagement.

This highlights the critical role of interactive, technology-driven, and relational channels in building lasting consumer connections, while traditional tools, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and publicity show minimal impact. Taken together, these results point to the stronger role of interactive and relationship-focused communication strategies in engaging luxury consumers compared to more traditional promotional approaches. Overall, these findings show that consumer engagement in Nigeria's luxury fashion sector is primarily shaped by digital connectivity and relational communication, reinforcing the strategic importance of trust-based, culturally attuned, and interactive IMC approaches. Based on this evidence, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that integrated marketing communication significantly influences consumer engagement among ULBS executive postgraduate participants who engage with luxury fashion brands in Lagos State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal clear relationships and predictive patterns between Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) and consumer engagement within Nigeria's luxury fashion industry. First, the study establishes a significant positive relationship between IMC and consumer engagement, indicating that well-coordinated communication efforts directly influence how consumers interact with and relate to luxury brands. More specifically, IMC was found to be a strong predictor of engagement outcomes, particularly when communication is consistent, credible, and emotionally appealing. This suggests that beyond mere exposure, the quality and integration of messaging determine the depth of consumer involvement. This finding is consistent with existing empirical studies such as Keller (2016), which shows that integrated messaging strengthens brand meaning and loyalty, and Batra and Keller (2016), who emphasise that synergy across communication channels enhances overall marketing effectiveness. Further analysis shows that not all IMC dimensions contribute equally to engagement.

Digital marketing and public relations emerged as the strongest predictors of consumer engagement, demonstrating a significant positive relationship with both emotional connection and brand interaction. This indicates that consumers are more likely to engage with brands through interactive, content-driven, and reputation-based channels than through traditional media. This aligns with Kim and Ko (2012), who found that social media activities significantly enhance customer equity in luxury fashion, and more recent studies such as Hollebeek (2023), which highlight the role of digital platforms in facilitating active consumer participation and co-creation. In contrast, traditional advertising and sales promotion showed weaker and less significant relationships with engagement, suggesting that they are limited in predicting long-term consumer involvement. This supports findings by Okechukwu (2023), who observed that experiential and relational strategies outperform conventional advertising in building emotional loyalty.

The study also finds that consumer engagement in the Nigerian luxury fashion context is strongly influenced by trust, authenticity, and emotional resonance, indicating that these factors act as underlying conditions through which IMC predicts engagement. In practical terms, this means that IMC efforts that fail to communicate credibility and consistency are less likely to generate meaningful engagement, regardless of frequency or reach. This outcome is supported by Adebayo and Ayodele (2021), who found that trust deficits linked to counterfeit concerns weaken digital engagement among Nigerian consumers, and by Abubakar and Bala (2022), who demonstrated that credibility particularly through influencers significantly shapes consumer perception and behavioural intention.

From a contextual standpoint, the findings further reveal that Nigerian luxury consumers exhibit a distinct engagement pattern characterised by high selectivity and sensitivity to brand authenticity. Engagement is therefore not only a function of communication intensity but also of perceived exclusivity and cultural relevance. This suggests that IMC predicts engagement more effectively when it balances global luxury positioning with local identity cues. This observation is consistent with emerging market studies such as Ekhareafo and Okoye (2024), which link declining loyalty to inconsistent communication, and Emuobor *et al.* (2025) who highlight the importance of integrated and culturally resonant strategies in driving engagement and advocacy. Overall, the study demonstrates that IMC is a significant predictor of consumer engagement in Nigeria's luxury fashion industry, but its effectiveness depends on the extent to which communication is integrated, trust-centred, digitally driven, and culturally relevant. These findings reinforce existing empirical literature while providing context-specific insights into how IMC operates within an emerging luxury market

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) and consumer engagement among executive postgraduate participants of the University of Lagos Business School (ULBS) who engage with luxury fashion brands, within the context of Lagos State, Nigeria. Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that IMC exhibits a positive and significant relationship with consumer engagement. More importantly, the findings show that IMC significantly predicts consumer engagement within the luxury fashion context. However, this predictive strength is not uniform across all IMC dimensions. Digital marketing and public relations emerged as the strongest predictors of engagement, while traditional advertising and sales promotion demonstrated weaker and less significant influence on sustained consumer engagement.

The findings further reveal that consumer engagement within the luxury fashion sector is largely emotional and identity-driven, with trust, authenticity, and consistency serving as critical conditions through which IMC influences engagement outcomes. This suggests that exposure to communication alone is insufficient; rather, engagement is shaped by how well communication reflects credibility, exclusivity, and emotional relevance. In the Nigerian context, where issues such as counterfeit products and trust deficits exist, consumers are more discerning and selective, placing greater emphasis on brands that communicate consistently across multiple touchpoints.

In line with existing empirical studies, the findings support the growing evidence that digital and experiential communication channels play a dominant role in shaping consumer-brand relationships. Prior studies such as Kim and Ko (2012) and Okechukwu (2023) similarly found that digital storytelling and experiential engagement significantly enhance emotional attachment and brand loyalty. The results also align with more recent studies which emphasise that integrated and interactive communication systems are more effective in driving engagement than fragmented or traditional approaches. Overall, the study concludes that effective IMC in Nigeria's luxury fashion industry requires a shift from transactional and persuasive communication to a more integrated, trust-driven, and participatory approach. IMC, when properly executed, serves not only as a communication tool but as a strategic mechanism for building emotional connection, reinforcing brand identity, and sustaining long-term consumer engagement in an increasingly competitive and aspirational market.

Implications for Theory and Practice

The findings of this study contribute to existing knowledge by providing empirical evidence that strengthens the link between IMC and consumer engagement, particularly within the luxury fashion context of an emerging market. The study demonstrates that communication effectiveness is not determined by message frequency or channel usage alone, but by the level of integration, consistency, and credibility embedded within the communication process. This shifts the understanding of IMC from a coordination function to a value-creating system that actively shapes consumer perception and engagement behaviour.

In addition, the study provides further insight into the evolving nature of consumer engagement by highlighting the central role of digital and relational communication channels. It shows that consumers are increasingly active participants in brand communication, engaging with content that reflects their identity, aspirations, and social positioning. This reinforces the need for a more dynamic and interactive view of engagement, where communication is not simply delivered but experienced and co-created.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that luxury fashion brands must rethink how they design and implement their communication strategies. The strong predictive power of digital marketing and public relations indicates that brands should prioritise these channels as core drivers of engagement, rather than treating them as supplementary tools. Furthermore, the weak influence of traditional advertising and promotions highlights the risk of over-reliance on short-term tactics that do not build lasting consumer relationships.

The study also underscores the importance of trust, authenticity, and cultural relevance in shaping engagement within the Nigerian luxury market. Brands that fail to maintain consistency or credibility across touchpoints are less likely to sustain engagement, regardless of their level of visibility. Therefore, IMC should be managed as an integrated system that aligns messaging, experience, and brand identity across all consumer interactions.

Recommendations

On the basis of the aforementioned, this study recommends that

i. Luxury fashion brands should prioritise integrated and consistent communication across all touchpoints, ensuring that messaging reflects authenticity, credibility, and clear differentiation from counterfeit alternatives, as these factors were found to significantly influence consumer engagement.

ii. Brands should increase strategic investment in digital marketing and public relations by developing interactive content, influencer partnerships, and storytelling platforms that enhance consumer participation and emotional connection, given their strong predictive effect on engagement.
iii. Organisations should adopt a more consumer-centric IMC approach by leveraging data and insights to personalise communication and align with consumer identity, aspirations, and lifestyle preferences, thereby strengthening emotional and relational engagement.
iv. Luxury brands should incorporate cultural relevance and local identity into their communication strategies to enhance authenticity and resonance, while maintaining global brand positioning.
v. Firms should implement integrated performance measurement systems that track engagement outcomes such as trust, loyalty, and advocacy, and invest in continuous capability development to ensure communication teams remain effective in managing evolving digital and experiential marketing environments.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

This study is subject to certain limitations which also present opportunities for future research. First, the study focused exclusively on the luxury fashion category, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other sectors within the broader marketing and consumer engagement landscape. Future studies can address this limitation by extending the scope to include other industries such as, telecommunications, and other premium services or products targeting high-net-worth individuals thereby enabling cross-sector comparisons and improving the external validity of the findings.

Second, the sample was restricted to participants from the University of Lagos Business School (ULBS) in Lagos State, which may not fully represent the broader population of luxury consumers in Nigeria. This geographic and institutional concentration could limit the diversity of perspectives captured in the study. To overcome this, future research should consider a wider and more heterogeneous sample by including respondents from different regions, cities, and socio-economic backgrounds across Nigeria, or even across multiple African markets.

In addition, the cross-sectional design of the study captures consumer perceptions at a single point in time, which limits the ability to observe changes in engagement behaviour over time or establish causal relationships. Future research can adopt longitudinal designs to examine how IMC strategies, consumer gratifications, trust, and engagement evolve over time, providing deeper insights into causal dynamics.

Finally, the study relied solely on a quantitative survey approach, which, while useful for generalisation, may not fully capture the depth of consumer motivations and experiences. Future studies can address this by employing mixed-method approaches, combining quantitative analysis with qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews or experiments to better understand how specific IMC elements, particularly digital formats, influence trust, identity formation, and engagement in luxury contexts.

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