

**THE IMPACT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR:
A Study on Gen Z**

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Abstract

This study examines how influencer marketing impacts the Gen Z consumer purchasing behavior. Since they are digital natives, Gen Z gravitates towards media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok for entertainment as well as gathering information. This renders influencer marketing a strong force in determining their purchasing decisions. The research centers on the influence of influencer traits—credibility, authenticity, and content significance—on the purchase intentions of Gen Z, as well as the effectiveness of different platforms. A systematic questionnaire was employed to gather information about a representative sample of Gen Z users, investigating variables such as influencer trustworthiness, platform preference, and the perceived effect of endorsement from influencers. Employing a quantitative research methodology, the data seeks to determine major influencers of Gen Z consumerism that social media has, as well as provide insights for marketers seeking to develop successful influencer marketing campaigns targeted toward Gen Z's tastes to improve engagement and conversion rates. In addition, the research is beneficial to scholarship by providing answers to deficiencies in how certain platforms and influencer characteristics influence young consumers' buying behavior in the current digital age.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Gen Z, Consumer Buying Behavior, Social Media Platforms, Influencer Credibility, Purchase Intentions, Quantitative Research.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the current era of digitalization, social media has revolutionized brand-consumer interaction. Among other digital marketing tactics, influencer marketing has proven to be a significant force, particularly for reaching Generation Z (Gen Z)—individuals born between 1997 and 2012. In contrast with generations past, Gen Z grew up online, and social media is at the epicenter of their everyday lives, preferences, and buying habits.

This generation prefers content that is real, compelling, and emotionally engaging. They are often unaffected by traditional forms of advertising, while influencer marketing dovetails with their desire for authentic, peer-influenced recommendations. Influencers, from celebrities to those who specialize in niches, serve as go-to sources of trusted opinion leaders who inform and direct the buying process.

Gen Z spends a lot of time on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, where influencers make engaging, authentic, and compelling content. These campaigns will only be effective if they hinge on influential authenticity, credibility, and salience of the content. Gen Z is very sensitive and able to easily pick out fake or overly promotional content.

This research seeks to give marketers practical findings to boost the effectiveness of influencer marketing approaches suited for Gen Z. The following chapters will discuss current literature, define research procedures, interpret data, and offer actionable conclusions both for academic and professional purposes.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

1. Agrawal, A., & Vazirani, K. (2023) –This paper, published in European Economic Letters, investigated how beauty influencers influence Gen Z's buying behavior. It found influencer credibility, content quality shared, trust, and brand recognition to be chief determinants of consumer behavior.

2. Manzoor, A., Farooq, B., Khan, N. L., Hakim, I. A., & Bhat, W. A. (2023) –Also published in European Economic Letters, the paper explored the influence of influencer traits such as credibility, knowledge, and physical attractiveness on Gen Y and Gen Z buying behavior in India.

3. Patel, M., Sanghvi, M., & Vidani, J. (2023) –Found in the International Journal of Sustainable Applied Sciences, the research brought into focus the importance of authenticity, content congruence, and platform-specific strategies in creating Gen Z purchasing behavior.

4. Baghel, D. (2023) –Published in ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts, the article highlighted that actual influencers tend to establish brand loyalty as well as consumer trust among Gen Z consumers.

5. Singh, P. (2024) –In SAGE Open, Singh examined the role of perceived risk, ease of use, privacy, and trust in shaping Gen Z's purchasing behaviors online.
6. Kareem, S. A., & Venugopal, P. (2023) –Their SAGE Open research concentrated on influencer characteristics, brand credibility, and familiarity in determining consumer purchase intentions.
7. Bezbaruah, S., & Trivedi, J. (2020) –This article, published in Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective, explained how authentic branded content acts as a bridge between brands and Gen Z consumers.
8. Doshi, R., Ranganathan, A. R., & Rao, S. (2021) –This arXiv preprint presented a model depicting the importance of involvement and product relevance in influencer marketing.
9. Bogdan, A., Dospinescu, N., & Dospinescu, O. (2025) –The authors of this arXiv study explored how emotional reaction, product attitude, and risk shape the relationship between eWOM credibility and purchase intent.
10. Bertaglia, T., Goanta, C., Spanakis, G., & Iamnitchi, A. (2024) –This arXiv preprint explored how Instagram transparency and self-disclosure influence follower involvement.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Objectives

This study aims to explore the influence of influencer marketing on the purchasing behavior of Generation Z, a group born into the digital era and highly active on social media. The research focuses on understanding how influencer attributes such as credibility, content quality, perceived authenticity, and audience engagement impact Gen Z's buying choices. A main goal is to examine the way these factors interact to develop trust and influence purchase intent. The research also assesses the relative effectiveness of social media sites such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok in communicating influencer messages to this segment. Since each site has different content forms and viewer engagement patterns, the study establishes what they are best suited for use in targeted advertising campaigns.

3.2 Hypotheses

H1: Influencer credibility has a positive influence on the purchasing behavior of Gen Z.

H2: Purchase interest among Gen Z is increased through high-quality influencer content.

H3: High similarity between influencer identity and marketed product enhances purchase probability.

H4: Greater levels of engagement (likes, comments, shares) in influencer posts affect Gen Z consumer buying behavior positively.

H5: Perceived authenticity of influencers enhances their persuasive effect among Gen Z consumers.

3.3 Sampling

The research utilized a non-probability convenience sampling method, where it took 50 Gen Z subjects. It was reasonable and economical, enabling timely data collection under limited resources. Although it might constrain the generalizability of the results, it is appropriate for the exploratory research study.

3.4 Research Design

A quantitative and descriptive research design was employed with the help of a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The survey consisted of closed-ended and Likert-scale questions for the measurement of important variables such as authenticity, engagement, credibility, and content quality.

3.5 Tool Used

A Google Forms questionnaire was the main data collection instrument. It contained a 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) Likert scale to record the perspectives of participants. Data analysis involved the use of Microsoft Excel to calculate simple statistical evaluation and graphical depiction.

3.6 Procedure

It was distributed online to Gen Z participants. Responses were gathered, organized, and interpreted utilizing Excel via simple tools such as charts and graphs to note trends and observations.

3.7 Statistical Analysis

Mean scores for every variable were computed. These scores provided insight into how much influence every factor exerted over purchasing habits.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Participants provided informed consent and were guaranteed confidentiality. No individual data were taken, and the right to withdraw at any moment was given, with their participation being voluntary. The study was kept transparent and honest throughout.

Chapter 4: Results

50 Gen Z participants took part in this study, with information gathered on social media use and demographics to determine how influencer advertising influences their purchasing habits.

The study sought to find out the impact of influencer credibility, quality of content, product-influencer compatibility, engagement, and perceived authenticity on Gen Z purchasing behavior on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. The findings indicated a moderate yet significant role of these factors in purchasing, with mean scores reflecting that influencers do have an impact on purchasing decisions.

Influencer Marketing Factors

1. Credibility: 4% and 20% of them strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they trust influencers, but 56% was neutral. This indicates that Gen Z is careful who they trust, possibly because they don't believe sponsored content. Credibility is still significant but not something all influencers can be sure of.

2. Content Quality: Together, 64% concurred that influencer content is visually engaging and appealing. This indicates that quality, creative content is the way to engage Gen Z and reinforce product messaging.

3. Influencer-Product Fit: 64% concurred that influencers endorse products that are in line with their personal brand, building trust and purchase decision support. This emphasizes the importance of brands choosing influencers whose image aligns with the product.

4. Engagement: High rates of engagement (likes, comments, shares) were reported by 80% of the respondents, validating that high levels of engagement increase the influencer's perceived credibility and persuasive influence.

5. Authenticity: Although 58% concurred that influencers come across as real, 18% disagreed, which indicated mixed sentiments regarding authenticity. This indicates authenticity is important but may be hard to sustain all the time.

Buying Behavior Insights

1. Purchase Behavior - While influencer trust and engagement exist, the effect they have on immediate purchases is moderate. Only 8% of respondents strongly agree and 30% agree that they have purchased a product after watching influencer endorsements. This indicates that influencers are primarily creating awareness and interest but converting this interest into purchases needs better influencer, product, and audience alignment.

2. Neutral Trust in Influencer Recommendations - Most, 52%, are neutral in trusting influencer suggestions for buying, with only 2% strongly agreeing and 18% agreeing. This shows that though influencers may create product awareness, their actual impact on purchasing decisions is minimal. It highlights the importance of credibility, transparency, and message consistency to drive purchase behavior.

3. Brand Exploration - The survey indicates that 66% (12% strong agreement, 54% agreement) of the surveyed users investigate influencer-named brands, underscoring influencers' power in generating initial interest in a brand. Yet, converting interest into concrete sales continues to be an issue, indicating the need for cross-functional marketing strategies.

4. Decision-Making Support-Approximately 38% of respondents are neutral, and 38% (10% strongly agree, 28% agree) believe influencer content aids their purchase decisions. This indicates influencers influence early consideration but the final purchase is based on product quality, price, and reviews.

5. Purchase Confidence- While 40% (8% strong agreement, 32% agreement) are more confident purchasing influencer-endorsed products, 34% are neutral, reflecting varying confidence rates. This emphasizes the significance of establishing trust and sincerity in influencer marketing towards driving conversions.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Conclusion

The research in this paper explored the influence of influencer marketing on Generation Z consumers, a generation that is characterized by extensive engagement with digital platforms. From a sample of 50 Gen Z respondents, the study explored critical factors such as influencer credibility, quality of content, authenticity, engagement, and congruence between influencers and the products they endorse. The results showed that credibility and good content are the strongest purchase intent drivers. Gen Z consumers prefer influencers who seem real and post aesthetically pleasing, authentic content. Though engagement is still high across all platforms, its impact on purchasing was lower, indicating trust and authenticity are more important than followers or likes.

5.2 Limitations

This research had a few limitations. Convenience sampling may not be comprehensive enough to represent the larger Gen Z audience. A sample size of 50 participants is not adequate for generalization. It was limited to popular social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, without others like Snapchat. Economic and cultural factors were not taken into account. Self-reported data resulted in bias, and the short-term focus does not provide insight into trends changing over time.

5.3 Recommendations

Marketers need to focus on collaborating with influencers who are transparent and credible. Developing high-quality, visually appealing content is necessary to get Gen Z's attention. Aligning with an influencer's personality as well as the product strongly is needed to increase authenticity. Formats that produce interactive content, such as Q&As and polls, have the potential to build trust and community. Data analytics can help personalize content and create relevance and campaign effectiveness.

5.4 Future Implications

Future studies would do well to investigate upcoming platforms such as Threads and BeReal to determine their influence on influencer marketing. Longitudinal research can assist in the monitoring of Gen Z change over time. Examining extended partnerships between brands and influencers may provide greater insights into how these establish customer trust and loyalty.

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