

# The Role of Influencers in Shaping Gen Z Purchasing Decisions

Trupti Dalei

*Trupti Dalei, Amity Business School, Amity University Chhattisgarh, India*

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## Abstract

This study uses a descriptive, survey-based research methodology to examine how influencer marketing affects the purchasing decisions of Generation Z customers, who are between the ages of 18 and 26. The study investigates important facets of influencer marketing efficacy, such as platform preferences, influencer credibility, and content engagement patterns, using a structured questionnaire that was sent to 38 respondents via Google Forms. The study especially examines the main social media networks and how they influence consumers' decisions to buy and find new products. The results show noteworthy patterns in how Gen Z engages with influencer material, emphasizing Instagram's superiority over other platforms in terms of conversions. Micro-influencers produce significantly higher engagement and purchase rates than their macro-influencer counterparts, according to the study, which also examines the relative efficacy of various influencer tiers. The approach taken by the study places a strong emphasis on using clear charts and graphs to visually communicate data, enabling individuals without extensive statistical background to understand complicated marketing insights.

**Key Words:** Influencer Marketing, Gen Z Consumers, Purchasing Decisions, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Influencer marketing has emerged as a dominant force in shaping consumer behavior, particularly among Generation Z (ages 18–26), who rely heavily on social media for product discovery and purchasing decisions. With platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube becoming key drivers of e-commerce, understanding how influencer content impacts buying choices is critical for marketers. While prior research highlights the role of influencer authenticity and platform algorithms.

This study examines how influencer marketing drives Gen Z purchases, focusing on two key areas like Platform effectiveness and influencer tier impact. Using survey data from 38 Gen Z respondents, we analyze trends through visual analytics (pie charts, bar graphs) rather than complex statistics, making insights accessible for marketers. Our findings reveal Instagram's dominance, the power of micro-influencers, offering actionable strategies for brands targeting this demographic.

This research bridges gaps, while providing practical guidance for budget allocation, influencer selection, and campaign design in the Gen Z market.

By identifying platform-specific effectiveness, ideal influencer profiles, and optimal content approaches, this research contributes valuable empirical evidence to the growing body of knowledge on digital marketing effectiveness in the Gen Z demographic.

Future research directions could explore cross-cultural variations, longitudinal effects, and emerging platform dynamics in influencer marketing effectiveness.

## 2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this study is to seek out the ways influencer marketing influences Generation Z (Gen Z) customers' purchase decisions. The following particular research goals have been developed in order to fulfill this overall objective:

- To examine the extent to which influencer marketing impacts Gen Z's brand perception and purchase intentions.
- To identify the most influential social media platforms (e.g., TikTok, Instagram, YouTube) in shaping Gen Z's buying behavior.
- To assess the comparative effectiveness of different tiers of influencers (mega, macro, micro, and nano-influencers) in driving consumer decisions.
- To provide actionable recommendations for marketers on optimizing influencer selection, content strategy, and campaign measurement to effectively target Gen Z consumers.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive, visualization-based approach to analyze how influencer marketing shapes Gen Z's purchasing decisions. Instead of complex statistical tests, the research will employ pie charts, bar graphs, and other visual tools to identify key trends in platform preferences, influencer credibility, and buying behaviors.

Primary is collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 30 - 40 Gen Z respondents (ages 18–26). The questionnaire covers demographics, social media usage, and purchase habits, with responses analyzed using Excel, Google Sheets, and Canva for clear, accessible visualizations.

The visual approach will highlight dominant patterns, such as which platforms or influencer tiers most drive purchases, providing practical insights for digital marketing strategies.

This research investigates the growing influence of social media platforms on consumer behavior through a focused

empirical study. The study was conducted using a structured 10-question questionnaire designed to capture two fundamental metrics:

- **Demographic Factors:** Specifically examining age distribution (categorized into 18-20, 21-23, and 24-26 years) and gender (male, female, non-binary/other) to understand how these variables correlate with platform preferences.
- **Social Media Platform Engagement:** Analyzing which platforms (TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X, Pinterest, YouTube) are most effective in driving product discovery and purchases among respondents.

The questionnaire-based approach provides clear, quantifiable data on how different demographic segments interact with influencer content across platforms.

## 4. KEY FINDINGS

Through the survey and its analysis the following interpretations was formed:

### 1. Based on Demographics

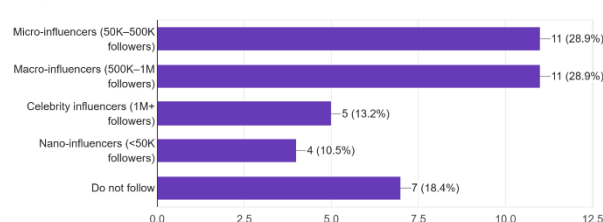
#### a. Age and its Impact on Influencer Type:

- 18-20 year olds: among all the respondents from this age group, **45% prefer Macro Influencers**, dominating all other types.
- 21-23 year olds: among all the respondents from this age group, **39% prefer Micro Influencers**.
- 24-26 year olds: among all the respondents from this age group, **41% prefer Celebrity Influencers**.

#### b. Gender and Its Influence on Influencer Type:

- Female: among all the female respondents, **44 % females trust and prefer Nano Influencers**, over other types of influencers.
- Male: among all the male respondents, **32 % males prefer Macro Influencers**, over other types of influencers.
- Non-Binary: among this population sample **48% trust Macro Influencers**.

What type of influencers do you prefer following? (Select all that apply)  
 38 responses



### 2. Based on Platform Preference

#### a. Age and its influence on platform preference:

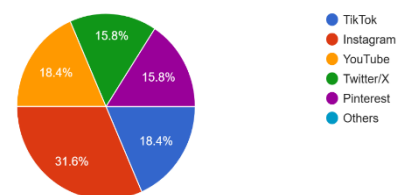
- 18-20 year olds: among all the respondents from this age group, **47% Instagram** dominating all other types.

- 21-23 year olds: among all the respondents from this age group, **52% prefer Instagram**.
- 24-26 year olds: among all the respondents from this age group, **51% prefer YouTube**.

#### b. Gender and Its Influence on Influencer Type:

- Female: among all the female respondents, **46 % females trust and prefer Other platforms**, that were not considered in the survey.
- Male: among all the male respondents, **57 % males prefer Instagram**, over other types of influencers.
- Non-Binary: Among people who did not disclose their gender, **28% prefer Instagram** and **28% prefer other platforms** not included in the survey.

38 responses



Therefore, By considering collective results, it is found that:

- Micro and Macro Influencers have the Maximum Impact on the purchase decisions taken by GenZ.
- Instagram is the most trusted and preferred social media platform to discover new products as well as interact with the influencers.

## RECCOMENDATIONS

- In this fast growing and evolving digital world, marketers focusing on GenZ products and services can make efforts towards shifting their focus on employing Social Media Influencers, specially Micro (50K - 500K Followers) and Macro Influencers (500K – 1M Followers) to their marketing and promotional campaigns.
- Currently, the changing social media preference and trends suggest that Instagram is the most preffered social media platform. But considering the evolving nature a marketer should always be aware of the changes and keep track of them time to time.
- Previous studies have shown that over-commercialization (excessive ads) does lead to disengagement, so marketers should reinforce the need for balanced, value-driven content.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between demographic factors, social media

platform usage, and consumer behavior among Generation Z, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the sample size of 38 respondents, while sufficient for preliminary analysis, may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader Gen Z population. A larger, more diverse sample would strengthen the statistical power and reliability of the results.

Second, the study focuses exclusively on age and gender as demographic variables, omitting other potentially influential factors such as socioeconomic status, geographic location, or cultural background. These variables could significantly impact social media preferences and purchasing behavior but were beyond the scope of this research.

Third, the self-reported nature of the survey data introduces the possibility of response bias. Participants may overreport or underreport their platform usage or purchasing habits due to social desirability bias or recall inaccuracies. Observational or experimental data could complement these findings with more objective behavioral measures.

Finally, the study concentrates on mainstream platforms (TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X, Pinterest and YouTube), excluding emerging or niche platforms that may also influence Gen Z's consumer behavior.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study offers insightful information about how demographic characteristics and social media platforms affect Generation Z's (ages 18–26) purchase decisions. The study concentrated on two important metrics: platform preferences and age/gender demographics using a structured 10-question questionnaire. The results show that Instagram dominates Gen Z purchases and that engagement varies significantly by gender and age subgroups. Although this study provides useful information, results could be strengthened by extending to a bigger, more varied sample and incorporating behavioral data (such as screen time analytics). Examining new platforms (like Lemon8 and BeReal) would also assist marketers in staying on top of trends. In conclusion, our findings provide marketers with data-driven tactics to maximize Gen Z influencer efforts, guaranteeing relevance in a digital economy that is changing quickly.

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