

The Impact of Social Media Influencer Strategies on Gen Z Consumer Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of social media influencer strategies on Gen Z consumer behavior, focusing on buying behavior, consumer trust, and brand awareness. Primary data were collected from 108 respondents using a structured questionnaire, supported by secondary data from journals and research articles. The findings indicate that social media influencers significantly affect the purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers. Factors such as trust, content quality, relatability, transparency, and consistency play an important role in influencing consumer behavior. The study provides useful insights for marketers to develop effective influencer marketing strategies and strengthen brand awareness among Gen Z consumers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has transformed the way consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and Facebook have become important sources of product information and recommendations. Among all consumer groups, Generation Z is one of the most active users of social media and is highly influenced by digital content.

Social media influencers have emerged as powerful marketing intermediaries who connect brands with consumers through authentic and engaging content. Their recommendations often shape consumer perceptions, increase brand awareness, and influence purchasing behavior.

The rapid growth of influencer marketing has encouraged businesses to invest heavily in influencer collaborations. However, understanding which influencer strategies effectively influence Gen Z consumers remains a significant research concern. This study investigates the role of influencer marketing in shaping buying behavior, trust, and brand awareness among Gen Z consumers.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing popularity of influencer marketing, there remains uncertainty regarding which influencer strategies most effectively influence Gen Z consumers. Factors such as trust, content quality, credibility, and engagement may impact consumer behavior differently. Therefore, it is important to examine the extent to which influencer marketing affects Gen Z purchasing decisions.

Significance of the Study

This study enhances the understanding of how social media influencer strategies shape Gen Z consumer behavior. It provides valuable insights for marketers to improve brand awareness, build consumer trust, and develop effective influencer marketing strategies while serving as a useful reference for future research in digital marketing.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on Gen Z consumers who actively use social media and engage with influencer content. It examines the impact of influencer strategies on buying behavior, consumer trust, and brand awareness during the 2025–2026 academic year. The findings are based on questionnaire responses from a limited sample and are applicable only to the selected Gen Z population.

Research Objectives

- To study the influence of social media influencers on Gen Z buying behavior.
- To identify influencer strategies that attract Gen Z consumers.
- To examine the trust of Gen Z towards social media influencers.
- To analyze the impact of influencer marketing on brand awareness.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

- Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) emphasized the growing importance of social media in marketing communication and consumer engagement.
- Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that social media influencers are perceived as more relatable and trustworthy than traditional celebrities, significantly affecting purchase intentions.
- Lou and Yuan (2019) proposed the Social Media Influencer Value Model and concluded that influencer credibility, trustworthiness, and content quality positively influence consumer trust and purchase intention.
- Sokolova and Kefi (2020) reported that trust and emotional connections between influencers and followers significantly influence buying behavior among younger consumers.
- Campbell and Farrell (2020) highlighted that authenticity and engagement are critical factors determining influencer marketing success.

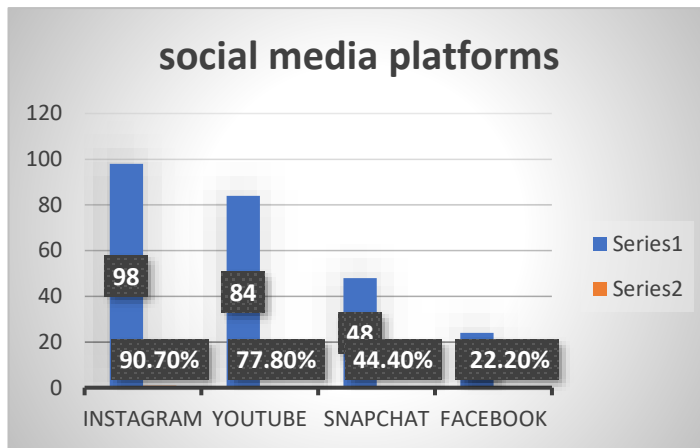
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research design using **descriptive and analytical methods** to examine **the impact of social media influencer strategies on Gen Z consumer behavior**. The target population consists of Gen Z social media users, from **Hyderabad and surrounding Tier-2, Tier-3, and urban areas** which a **sample of 108 respondents** was selected using the convenience sampling method. Data collection involves both **primary and secondary sources**. Primary data was collected through a **structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms**, while secondary data was obtained from **research journals, academic articles, books, and online sources** related to influencer marketing and consumer behavior. This methodology provides a systematic approach to understanding the influence of social media influencers on buying behavior, consumer trust, and brand awareness among Gen Z consumers.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

1. which social media platforms do you use frequently?

Social media platform	Respondents	Percentage on overall
Instagram	98	90.7%
YouTube	84	77.8%
Snapchat	48	44.4%
Facebook	24	22.4%

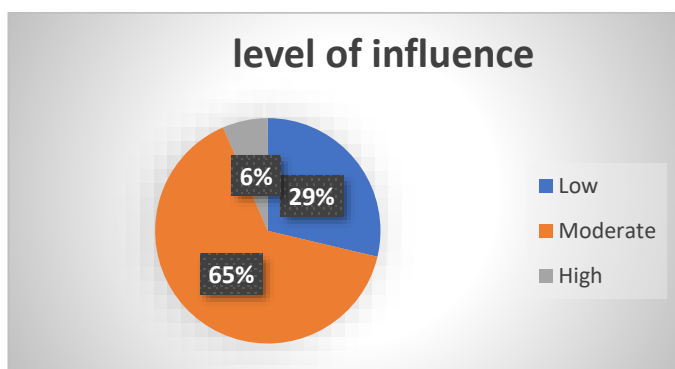


Interpretation:

The table above gives the social media sites commonly accessed by the respondents. Instagram is the most commonly used site among the 108 respondents; 98 respondents (90.7%) access Instagram, followed by YouTube, where 84 respondents (77.8%) access it. Snapchat is commonly accessed by 48 respondents (44.4%), whereas only 24 respondents (22.2%) access Facebook.

2. Rate the level of influence influencers have on your buying decision?

Level of influence	Respondents	Percentage
Low	31	28.7%
Moderate	70	64.8%
High	7	6.5%
Total	108	100%



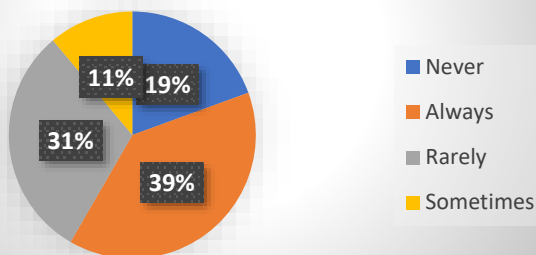
Interpretation:

Influence on buying decisions of the respondents by social media influencers is provided in the table above. Among the total number of respondents, which was 108, 70 respondents (64.8%) claimed that there was a moderate level of influence, which was the most popular option among others. On the other hand, 31 respondents (28.7%) and 7 respondents (6.5%) chose low and high levels of influence, respectively.

3. How often do influencers impact your purchase decision?

Frequency	Respondents	Percentage
Never	21	19.4%
Always	42	38.9%
Rarely	33	30.6%
Sometimes	12	11.1%
Total	108	100%

How often do influencers impact your purchase decision?



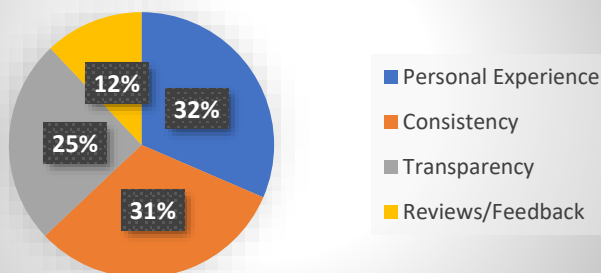
Interpretation:

The above table highlights the frequency at which the influencers affect the decision-making process of the respondents. Out of the 108 respondents, the highest number of respondents is always affected by the influencers, with 42 respondents (38.9%), followed by those that are rarely affected, with 33 respondents (30.6%). The largest proportion of the respondents indicates that influencers never affect their decisions, with 21 respondents (19.4%), while 12 respondents (11.1%) say they are affected occasionally.

4.What increases your trust in an influencer?

Factor	Respondents	Percentage
Personal experience	34	31.5%
Consistency	34	31.5%
Transparency	27	25%
Reviews/feedback	13	12%
Total	108	100%

What increases your trust in an influencer?



Interpretation:

Above is the table containing the factors that boost the trust of the respondents towards their influencers. Out of the total 108 respondents, Personal Experience and Consistency both tie as the two major factors boosting the trust of the respondents; both of which were chosen by 34 respondents (31.5% each). The third major trust factor was Transparency, which gained the votes of 27 respondents (25%).

Statistical Analysis

Regression Analysis:

Model summary;

Measure	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F Statistic	Significance	Sample size
Value	0.353	0.328	14.050	0.00000000349	108

Interpretation: R square value of 0.353 indicates that 35.3% of the variation in Gen Z buying behavior explained by the influencer -related factors included in the model. The model is statically significant because the significance value is less than 0.05.

ANOVA:

Source	df	F value	Significance
Regression	4	14.050	0.00000000349
Residual	103	—	—
Total	107	—	—

Interpretation: since the significance value is less than 0.05, the regression model is statistically significance.

Regression coefficients:

Variable	Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Result
Constant	0.368	1.174	0.243	Not significant
Trust in influencer Recommendations	0.291	3.427	0.001	Significant
Brand awareness	0.036	0.460	0.646	Not significant
Brand discovery through influencers	0.058	0.422	0.674	Not significant
Purchased based on influencer recommendations	0.491	3.985	0.000	Significant

Interpretation:

- Trust in influencer recommendations has a positive and Significant impact of buying behavior ($p=0.001$).
- Purchasing based on influencer recommendations as the strongest positive effect on buying behavior ($\beta = 0.491$, $p < 0.001$).
- Brand awareness and Brand discovery show positive relationships but are not statistically significant.

Hypothesis Testing:

H_0 : (Null Hypothesis)

There is no significant relationship between social media influencer marketing and the buying behavior of Gen Z consumers.

H₁: (Alternate Hypothesis)

There is a significant relationship between social media influencer marketing and the buying behavior of Gen Z consumers.

- Since the model significance value (0.00000000349) is less than 0.05, H₀ is rejected and H₁ is accepted.

FINDINGS

1. Respondents from the age group 21-23 years account for 55.6% of the surveyed population, which shows that they constitute the largest portion of Gen Z sample.
2. The vast majority of respondents (74.1%) are male, whereas 25.9% are female.
3. Instagram is used by 90.7% respondents, followed by YouTube (77.8%).
4. A majority of 82.4% respondents follow influencers on social media.
5. 73.1% of respondents have bought a product on the basis of influencers' recommendation.
6. Fashion and technology products make up for 65.7% and 61.1% respectively.
7. Lifestyle content and product reviews account for 63.9% and 61.1% respectively.
8. Macro influencers are more preferred than both celebrity influencers and micro influencers among respondents at 52.8%.
9. Content quality and relatability are the two major qualities influencing influencers' appeal among Gen Z consumers at 42.6% and 38.9% respectively.
10. Personal experience and consistency influence their trust in influencers the most, accounting for 31.5% of the total respondents.
11. Overwhelming majority of 81.5% respondents learned about some brands through influencers.

CONCLUSION

The study explored the effect of social media influencer tactics on Gen Z consumer behaviors. The results revealed that there is indeed a significant influence that can be exerted by social media influencers on purchasing behavior of Gen Z. Most of the participants are followers of social media influencers and have also made purchases from these individuals. The aspects such as content quality, relatability, transparency, and consistency were identified to be some of the aspects that draw consumer attention. As far as the type of content that is most appealing, lifestyle and product review posts stood out. In addition, the role of influencers in promoting brand awareness and discovery of new brands was revealed in the results.

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