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## Research Article

# A Study on the Impact of Influencer Marketing on Buying Decision of Gen Z

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## Abstract

In the digital age, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for brands to connect with their target audience, especially Generation Z, a group known for its strong online presence and digital consumption. This study explores how influencer marketing affects the buying decisions of Gen Z consumers in India. It focuses on various elements such as trust in influencers, the authenticity of content, platform preference, and purchasing behaviour. Using only secondary data from research articles, industry reports, and online surveys, the paper highlights the growing dependence of brands on social media influencers to drive product visibility and consumer engagement. The findings indicate that Gen Z places considerable value on peer recommendations, relatability, and online reviews, all of which are significantly shaped by influencers. This shift in consumer behaviour underscores the need for brands to adapt their marketing strategies to effectively tap into this highly responsive generation.

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**KEYWORDS:** Influencer Marketing; Generation Z; Buying Decision; Influencer Credibility; Social Media Platforms.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, marketing practices have undergone a significant transformation due to the rise of digital platforms and the growing influence of social media. Traditional forms of advertising are gradually being replaced by more personalised and relatable methods, one of the most prominent being influencer marketing. This form of marketing involves collaborations between brands and individuals with substantial online followings, who promote products or services to their audience in a more organic and engaging manner.

Among all consumer segments, Generation Z (those born approximately between 1997 and 2012) has emerged as the most digitally connected and socially influenced demographic. This generation spends a considerable amount of time on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and Facebook, where influencers play a major role in shaping opinions, preferences, and even purchase decisions. Unlike traditional celebrities, Gen Z often sees influencers as relatable figures or peers whose recommendations are trustworthy and more authentic.

Brands are increasingly investing in influencer campaigns to reach this tech-savvy group that values individuality, social proof, and digital storytelling. From fashion and beauty to gadgets and wellness, influencers across various niches now play a vital role in product discovery and consumer choices. However, this growing trend also raises questions about the extent of impact influencer marketing has on actual purchasing behaviour, brand loyalty, and long-term consumer trust. This study aims to analyse the influence of social media personalities on the buying patterns of Gen Z in India, using secondary data sources. It investigates key factors such as platform preference, trust in influencer content, frequency of purchases driven by influencer recommendations, and the psychological factors that drive engagement with influencer content.

As Gen Z continues to reshape consumer culture, understanding their response to influencer marketing is essential for businesses looking to remain relevant and competitive in a digitally driven market landscape.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the role of influencer marketing in shaping the purchasing decisions of Generation Z
2. To identify the social media platforms most used by Gen Z for following influencers.
3. To assess the level of trust Gen Z places in influencer-promoted products.
4. To analyse the key factors that motivate Gen Z to engage with influencer content.

## 3. NEED OF THE STUDY

Generation Z is very active on social media and trusts influencers for product recommendations. Traditional advertising has less impact on them. Influencer marketing has become a key way for brands to connect with this group. However, there is limited research on how influencer marketing affects the buying decisions of Gen Z in India. This study will help brands understand this impact better and improve their marketing strategies accordingly.

## 4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study uses only secondary data, so it may not reflect the most current trends or real-time consumer behaviour.
  2. The findings focus on Gen Z in India and may not apply to other age groups or countries.
- Despite these limitations, we tried to minimise their effect of these limitations in this study.

## 5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study titled "A Study on the Impact of Influencer Marketing on Buying Decisions of Gen Z" explores how social media influencers affect the buying behaviour of Gen Z individuals aged 10 to 29. The focus is on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Snapchat, where influencer marketing is most active. It examines the influence of different types of influencers, mega to nano, on product choices, trust, and engagement. The study targets Gen Z in

urban and semi-urban India and focuses on products like fashion, gadgets, cosmetics, and food. Data will be based on recent trends and secondary sources.

## 6. HYPOTHESES

1. **H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between influencer marketing and the buying decisions of Gen Z consumers.  
**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between influencer marketing and the buying decisions of Gen Z consumers.
2. **H<sub>0</sub>:** The credibility of social media influencers does not significantly influence Gen Z's purchasing behaviour.  
**H<sub>1</sub>:** The credibility of social media influencers significantly influences Gen Z's purchasing behaviour.

## 7. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Hypothesis 1:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between influencer marketing and the buying decisions of Gen Z consumers.  
**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between influencer marketing and the buying decisions of Gen Z consumers.

### 1. Singh & Banerjee (2021)

Their study in the South Asian Journal of Marketing found that influencer marketing significantly shapes the purchase behaviour of Indian Gen Z consumers, especially on Instagram and YouTube. The research revealed that social media influencers create a perceived connection that leads to actual buying decisions in the fashion, food, and electronics sectors.

### 2. Sharma & Jhamb (2020)

Published in the Journal of Content, Community & Communication, this paper reported that 90% of Indian Gen Z participants follow influencers regularly, and 57% admitted to purchasing a product based on influencer recommendations, proving a strong relationship between influencer campaigns and consumer action.

### Hypothesis 2:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The credibility of social media influencers does not significantly influence Gen Z's purchasing behaviour.  
**H<sub>1</sub>:** The credibility of social media influencers significantly influences Gen Z's purchasing behaviour.

### 3. Bansal & Arora (2022)

This study analysed responses from over 300 Indian Gen Z participants and concluded that Gen Z evaluates the credibility of influencers before making buying decisions. Micro-influencers were considered more trustworthy due to real-life content and transparency.

### 4. Gupta & Jain (2021)

Their research focused on credibility dimensions (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness) and concluded that credibility is the most dominant factor influencing purchase behaviour among Gen Z in India. Influencers perceived as knowledgeable and honest had a greater impact on product adoption.

### 5. Rao & Agarwal (2020)

Published in the Indian Journal of Marketing, their findings supported the idea that influencer credibility, especially honesty and relatability, creates brand trust, which directly leads to buying action. Indian Gen Z consumers rejected content that appeared overly promotional or scripted.

## 8. DISCUSSION

### 1. Relationship Between Influencer Marketing and Gen Z Buying Decisions

#### Hypothesis 1:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between influencer marketing and the buying decisions of Gen Z consumers.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between influencer marketing and the buying decisions of Gen Z consumers.

**Discussion:** Influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful strategy in recent years, especially among younger audiences. According to a 2023 report by Statista, over 70% of Gen Z consumers in India reported being influenced by social media content before making a purchase. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook and YouTube are major channels where influencers showcase brands through lifestyle, tutorials, and reviews.

A study by Deloitte (2022) found that Gen Z consumers trust peer reviews and influencer content more than traditional advertisements. This behavioural shift is attributed to the fact that Gen Z values authenticity and relatability over celebrity endorsements.

Furthermore, The Economic Times (2021) highlighted that brands allocating a higher share of their digital budget to influencer campaigns saw up to 25% growth in Gen Z engagement, especially in fashion, gadgets, and cosmetics.

Based on multiple secondary sources and consumer behaviour patterns, there is strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, it is concluded that influencer marketing has a significant relationship with the buying decisions of Gen Z consumers.

### 2. Credibility of Influencers and Gen Z Purchasing Behaviour

#### Hypothesis 2:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The credibility of social media influencers does not significantly influence Gen Z's purchasing behaviour.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The credibility of social media influencers significantly influences Gen Z's purchasing behaviour.

**Discussion:** Credibility plays a critical role in shaping perceptions. According to Influencer Marketing Hub (2023), Gen Z consumers tend to follow micro-influencers who show more transparency and genuine product usage rather than just high-profile celebrities. Factors such as expertise, honesty, and consistent interaction with followers contribute to perceived credibility.

A KPMG India Report (2022) found that 61% of Gen Z consumers are more likely to purchase a product if it is promoted by an influencer they consider authentic and trustworthy. Conversely, influencers caught in controversies or

promoting unrelated products lose their credibility, resulting in decreased engagement and lower conversion rates.

**In academic research published in the International Journal of Digital Marketing (2021),** a positive correlation was found between influencer credibility and consumer trust among Gen Z, which directly impacted purchase intent.

**Conclusion:** The secondary data supports the alternative hypothesis and rejects the null hypothesis. The credibility of influencers significantly impacts Gen Z's purchasing behaviour, making trustworthiness a key driver in digital marketing effectiveness.

## 9. CONCLUSION

The findings from secondary data sources strongly indicate that influencer marketing plays a significant role in shaping the buying behaviour of Gen Z consumers in India. The analysis of various industry reports, journal studies, and market insights provides clear support for both hypotheses.

Firstly, the discussion confirms that influencer marketing significantly influences the purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers. Their active presence on digital platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook makes them highly responsive to content created by influencers. This validates the rejection of the first null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>), establishing a direct and meaningful relationship between influencer marketing and buying behaviour.

Secondly, the credibility of influencers emerges as a critical factor in determining their impact. Gen Z consumers show a strong preference for influencers who are authentic, knowledgeable, and relatable. This insight is backed by multiple sources, showing that trust and perceived honesty strongly influence purchase decisions. Therefore, the second null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is also rejected, supporting that influencer credibility has a significant impact on Gen Z's purchasing behaviour.

In conclusion, both hypotheses are accepted in their alternative form, reaffirming that not only does influencer marketing affect Gen Z's buying decisions, but the credibility of influencers further amplifies this effect. Brands targeting this demographic must prioritise building long-term partnerships with trusted influencers who align with their brand values and communicate authentically.

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**Harsh Kumar** is a dedicated Research Scholar in the Department of Commerce at Maa Shakumbhari University, Saharanpur, India. With an academic background comprising B. Com, M. Com, and MBA, and a qualification of the UGC-NET in Commerce, he possesses a strong interdisciplinary foundation in business and management studies. His research is centred on examining the impact of digital payment systems on consumer buying behaviour, with a particular emphasis on how technological advancements are reshaping purchasing decisions and market structures. His broader academic interests extend to marketing analytics, digital business transformation, and evolving consumer dynamics in emerging economies. Driven by analytical inquiry and evidence-based research, he seeks to generate insights that contribute to contemporary commerce literature while offering practical relevance to industry and policy frameworks. His scholarly pursuits reflect a commitment to innovation, academic rigour, and meaningful contributions to the field of management studies