

The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Generation Z Purchase Decisions: Evidence from the Personal Care Products Market

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Abstract. The rapid growth of social media has transformed consumer communication and created new opportunities for influencer marketing, especially in the personal care products market. Generation Z, as a digitally native consumer group, actively uses platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to search for product information, follow influencers, and evaluate recommendations before making purchase decisions. In this context, personal care influencers have become important sources of reviews, product demonstrations, and brand-related information. The objective of this study is to examine the impact of influencer marketing on Generation Z purchase decisions in the personal care products market, with particular attention to influencer credibility, brand popularity, credibility of information, brand loyalty, and influencer expertise. The study applies a survey research design based on primary data collected from 252 Generation Z respondents, mainly from Pune, Maharashtra, India. A structured questionnaire was distributed through social media platforms, including LinkedIn, Facebook, and WhatsApp groups. The study used non-probability convenience sampling. The collected data were analysed using percentage statistics, hypothesis testing, ANOVA, and Spearman rank correlation analysis. The findings show that credibility of information and influencer expertise significantly affect Generation Z purchase decisions. The hypothesis testing results indicate that credibility of information has a significant effect on purchase decision, with $p = 0.021$, while influencer expertise also has a significant effect, with $p = 0.005$. In contrast, influencer credibility and brand popularity were rejected as direct significant predictors in the hypothesis testing. Correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between brand popularity and purchase decision, and between credibility of information and purchase decision. The study concludes that Generation Z consumers are influenced more by reliable information and influencer expertise than by brand popularity alone. Future studies should use larger and more diverse samples, compare different product categories, include platform-specific analysis, and examine mediating variables such as trust, engagement, authenticity, and visual content quality.

Keywords: influencer marketing; Generation Z; personal care products; purchase decision; social media marketing; influencer credibility; influencer expertise; brand popularity; brand loyalty; credibility of information; consumer behaviour; digital marketing.

JEL Classification: M31; M37; D12; L81; O33

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Introduction. In today's world, the effect of social media platforms on people's lives is undeniable. It has changed the way people used to communicate with each other. It is now a platform where individuals express their opinions, share ideas, and recount personal experiences. Increase in the use of social media platforms have led to emergence of a new form of advertising called influencer marketing (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). This strategy has proven to be highly effective for companies aiming to promote their products or services through individuals who have large followings on social media platforms. In the industry of personal care, influencers have become a crucial source of product recommendations and reviews, making this marketing approach especially impactful (Tamara et al., 2021).

There have been ample studies that have explored the effect of influencer marketing on consumer. But there has been limited research focused on Generation Z although they are the largest group of consumers of beauty products. People who are born between 1997 and 2012 are termed as Generation Z. They are the first generation to have witnessed the era of social media during their growing years.

Influencer marketing involves brands collaborating with influential personalities to endorse their products or services (Saima & Khan, 2020). These influencers, who have substantial follower bases on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, have the power to influence the purchasing decisions of their followers through their likes, comments and reviews. The influencer marketing concept traces back to early advertising, where celebrities were engaged to promote products. However, the increased use of social media has made influencer marketing more widespread and accessible to businesses of all sizes.

Social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and TikTok have enabled users to build global audiences and share their content widely. Many of these users have evolved into influencers, leveraging their reach to endorse brands and products. This phenomenon has led to the development of an innovative marketing model that relies heavily on the endorsement of individuals with large social media followers.

As the influencer marketing industry expands, various types of influencers and collaboration models have surfaced. For example, micro-influencers, who have highly engaged followers although small in number, are increasingly popular for targeted campaigns. Additionally, brands are exploring new partnership formats with influencers, such as long-term relationships and co-created content.

One of the primary objectives of this research is to deepen the understanding of customers' perceptions of personal care products influencers. Although some studies have explored the effect of social media influencers for personal care products on consumers' purchase decision in India, the existing research remains limited. This study enhances the existing literature by offering a comprehensive explanation of how influencers'

attributes influence consumers' purchase decision, with credibility of influencers serving as a mediating factor. Consequently, the study makes a significant contribution in the field of influencer marketing, specifically in the context of personal care products.

This study highlights the mediating role of influencer's credibility in shaping purchase decision through key features such as brand loyalty, popularity of the brand and credibility of information. It also explores how the influencers' credibility and expertise impact the purchase decision of Generation Z consumers.

Literature Review. This research aimed to examine the impact of influencer marketing on purchasing behavior of Generation Z consumers, particularly concerning personal care products. According to Sharma et al. (2024a), content marketing plays a key role in digital marketing by highlighting product uniqueness and influencing customer decisions. A quantitative study with 119 respondents examined the impact of advertising, content marketing, and social media on customer satisfaction. Using SPSS analysis, the study found all three factors significantly influence satisfaction.

Pham et al. (2021) stated that elements of influencer credibility impact Generation Z's buying decisions positively through mediators such as content quality, perceived usefulness, and social influence. Notably, the attractiveness of influencers has the strongest effect on Gen Z's online behavior. Specifically, attractiveness most significantly shapes Gen Z consumers' perceived usefulness and social influence, whereas influencers' expertise primarily influences content quality. Rather than being drawn by skills alone, Gen Z shows greater attraction towards the influencer's appearance.

Lalwani et al. (2021) found that media richness significantly affects Gen Z's intention to engage on TikTok. This is because Gen Z members, often students or part-time workers, are digital natives who view social media as a hub for communication and entertainment. Consumers tend to trust and prefer cosmetic brands that have received official verification, emphasizing their appreciation for authenticity and reliability. Generation Z's habits on TikTok are shaped by their engagement intentions, driven by their interest in brand-related social media content. After viewing impressions of a brand's content, respondents often click on the store link within the brand profile to explore products and related materials.

Kapoor (2021) noted that millennials follow influencers for reasons such as entertainment, staying updated with trends, product recommendations, and access to deals or discounts. In contrast, baby boomers seek more realistic and grounded content to make informed purchasing decisions. Influencers gauge audience's preferences through their comments and feedbacks and use it to tailor their social media content. Each influencer therefore remains targeted to a distinct demographic base of consumers.

Młodkowska (2019) emphasized that consumers rely heavily on reviews as well as photos and videos with branded tags on Instagram and YouTube. Traditional methods of marketing like television, radio and magazine ads are no longer sufficient alone. Collaborations with Instagram and YouTube influencers offer a more cost-effective and impactful marketing strategy for brands.

According to Wansi (2020), an influencer is the initial contact point in the buying journey of consumers, particularly for Gen Z. By drawing attention to products or services, influencers impact Gen Z's purchasing behavior, encouraging them to seek further information through website reviews or social media comments, videos, and related content.

Bilro et al. (2020) found that the social media posts can significantly influence consumer perceptions and their interests in brands. Additionally, influencers themselves play a major role in shaping respondents' purchase intentions and brand recommendations. However, sponsorship disclosure labels and post format labels were not found to have a significant impact on consumer's buying intention or recommendations.

Wang and Lee (2021) studied Korean beauty influencers from the general public. According to the study findings, social media posts by general public influencers increased consumer's likelihood of purchasing new products and these posts did not include any sponsorship displays affiliation with the products. A significant interaction was observed between the type of influencer, sponsorship disclosure manifestation and the presentation of product. When the three factors general public influencers, product presentation and sponsorship displays are aligned then the consumers were most inclined to accept and buy a new product.

Sharma et al. (2024b) studied haul videos which were popular among Generation Z and feature individuals showcasing and reviewing recent purchases. This study examined 300 respondents and it was found that credibility of the source, information usefulness and viewer's involvement in fashion-related YouTube haul videos were noted to significantly influence consumer purchase intentions. This study emphasized on the impact of influencer's content on consumer behavior.

Dogra (2019) highlighted that young women follow beauty influencers for getting useful information through their recommendations and validation on social media. Age plays a role here, as users form close bonds with influencers who share similar traits or personalities. Followers are also motivated to engage with influencers who endorse products they appreciate. This relationship helps influencers boost awareness of specific cosmetic brands among their followers. It increases the likelihood that users will purchase those products that possess authoritative recommendations from influencers.

Overall, a connection exists amongst consumers, influencers, and cosmetic brands, with consumer attitudes and behaviors varying by age

group. The focus on Millennials and Generation Z was intended to understand how rapid technological changes are reshaping marketing strategies for cosmetic brands, affecting both younger consumers and the preceding generation, who were also exposed to more traditional marketing methods.

Kotecha et al. (2024) conducted a survey of 200 participants and showed that influencer marketing strongly impacts consumer behavior, especially among males aged 18-40 from diverse professional backgrounds. The chosen population set had an income bracket of ₹1-5 lakh annually. Participants spent 1-2 hours daily on social media, mainly Instagram, and trusted influencers' recommendations when making purchase decisions. The study results highlight the significant role of influencers in shaping brand preferences within the personal care sector and underscore the necessity for brands to tailor their marketing strategies accordingly.

Aims. The aim of this study is to explore how personal care influencers affect the purchase decision-making of Generation Z consumers in the personal care products market. The study focuses on the role of influencer credibility, credibility of information, brand loyalty, brand popularity and influencer expertise in shaping the purchase decisions of Generation Z consumers.

The objectives of the research are:

1. To explore the effect of social media on changing purchase decision.
2. To comprehend the influence of personal care influencers on purchase decision of Gen Z.
3. To understand how personal care influencers influence the purchase decision of Gen Z.

The study is based on the following hypotheses:

- H1:** Influencer's credibility impacts purchase decision of the consumers.
- H2:** Popularity of the brand impacts the Gen Z's purchase decision.
- H3:** Credibility of information impacts purchase decision of the consumers.
- H4:** Influencer expertise impacts the Gen Z's purchase decision.

Methodology. The study adopted a survey research design. Social media users were included in the study, and the target population consisted of Generation Z consumers, generally in India and particularly in Pune, Maharashtra. The study used a non-probability convenience sampling technique. The sample size was 252 respondents.

A questionnaire was prepared in four parts and shared through social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook and WhatsApp groups. These four parts gathered information on the following aspects of the chosen population segment: demographic data; knowledge of social media, brand loyalty and popularity of the brands; how the credibility of information through influencer marketing impacts purchase decision of the consumers; and how the influencer expertise impacts purchase decision of Generation Z.

It is assumed that the respondents are honest and unbiased in their responses. The data were collected between 26 July and 30 September 2025. Data were analyzed using percentage statistics, correlation analysis and ANOVA.

Results. The analysis and interpretation section presents demographic characteristics of respondents, hypothesis testing results, ANOVA results, and correlation analysis. The findings provide insight into how influencer marketing affects the purchase decision of Generation Z consumers in the personal care products market.

Demographic profile of respondents. The demographic profile of respondents includes age and gender. Table 1 presents the age distribution of respondents.

Table 1. Demographic details of respondents by age

S.N.	Age groups	Counts	Percentage
1	Below 18 years	24	9.523
2	18-20 years	185	73.412
3	21-23 years	29	11.507
4	24-26 years	14	5.555

Source: compiled by the authors based on the survey results.

Out of 252 respondents, 24 respondents, representing 9.523%, were aged below 18 years; 185 respondents, representing 73.412%, were aged from 18 to 20 years; 29 respondents, representing 11.507%, were aged from 21 to 23 years; and 14 respondents, representing 5.555%, were aged from 24 to 26 years. The majority of the respondents were in the category of 18-20 years.

Table 2. Demographic details of respondents by gender

S.N.	Gender	Counts	Percentage
1	Male	91	36.111
2	Female	161	63.888
3	Not mentioned	0	-

Source: compiled by the authors based on the survey results.

Out of 252 respondents, 91 respondents, representing 36.111%, were male, while 161 respondents, representing 63.888%, belonged to the female category. The majority of the respondents were from the female category.

Summarization of hypothesis testing. The hypothesis testing results are presented in Table 3.

The variables credibility of the influencer and popularity of the brand have significance values greater than 0.05, through which it can be concluded that those variables have no impact on Generation Z's purchase decisions. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted for H1 and H2. H3 and H4 are the alternative hypotheses considered for this study and are accepted, whereas the null hypotheses are rejected. The results state that the credibility

of information and the influencer expertise have an impact on purchase decision of Generation Z.

Table 3. Summarization of Hypothesis Testing

S.N.	Hypothesis statement	p-value	Rejected / Accepted
1	Credibility of the influencer impacts on purchase decision of the consumers.	0.068	Rejected
2	Popularity of the brand impacts the Generation Z's purchase decision.	0.085	Rejected
3	Credibility of information impacts purchase decision of the consumers.	0.021	Accepted
4	Influencer expertise impacts purchase decision of Generation Z.	0.005	Accepted

Source: calculated by the authors based on hypothesis testing results.

ANOVA Test I. The ANOVA Test is conducted between two independent variables, credibility of information and brand loyalty, and one dependent variable, purchase decision of Generation Z.

Table 4. ANOVA Test I: Credibility of Information, Brand Loyalty and Purchase Decision of Generation Z

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	p
Credibility of information	0.000	-	0.000	-	-
Brand Loyalty	0.0889	1	0.0889	0.168	0.68
Interaction: Credibility × Brand Loyalty	20.273	13	1.559	2.934	0.0015
Residuals	121.956	231	0.528	-	-

Source: calculated by the authors based on ANOVA results.

The overall significant value is 0.0015, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the independent variables credibility of information and brand loyalty have no impact on the dependent variable, purchase decision of Generation Z. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

ANOVA Test II. The ANOVA Test is conducted between two independent variables, expertise and popularity of the brand promoted by the personal care influencer, and one dependent variable, purchase decision of Generation Z.

Table 5. ANOVA Test II: Popularity of the Brand, Influencer Expertise and Purchase Decision of Generation Z

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	p
Popularity of the brand	0.000	-	0.000	-	-
Influencer Expertise	0.234	1	0.234	0.483	0.49
Interaction: Popularity × Expertise	26.29	12	2.191	4.53	0.001
Residuals	112.47	232	0.484	-	-

Source: calculated by the authors based on ANOVA results.

The overall significant value is 0.001, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the independent variables popularity of the brand and

influencer expertise have an impact on the dependent variable, purchase decision of Generation Z. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Correlation analysis. A non-parametric test called Spearman rank correlation is used to gauge how closely two variables are associated. The tests are conducted between popularity of the brand and purchase decision of Generation Z; influencer's expertise and purchase decision of Generation Z; brand loyalty and purchase decision of Generation Z; and credibility of information and purchase decision of Generation Z.

Table 6. Spearman Rank Correlation Results

Relationship tested	Correlation value	Interpretation
Popularity of the brand and purchase decision of Generation Z	0.482	Moderate positive correlation
Influencer's expertise and purchase decision of Generation Z	0.190	Weak positive correlation
Brand loyalty and purchase decision of Generation Z	0.176	Weak positive correlation
Credibility of information and purchase decision of Generation Z	0.598	Moderately positive relationship

Source: calculated by the authors based on Spearman rank correlation analysis.

The correlation value of 0.482 indicates a moderate positive correlation between popularity of the brand and purchase decision of Generation Z, as the correlation coefficient's value is positive and falls between 0.4 and 0.59. Thus, the alternate hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

The correlation value of 0.190 indicates a weak positive relationship between influencer's expertise and purchase decision of Generation Z. As it is positive and falls between 0.1 and 0.3, the alternate hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected.

The correlation value of 0.176 indicates a weak positive relationship between brand loyalty and purchase decision of Generation Z. As it is both positive and falls between 0.1 and 0.3, the alternate hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

The correlation value of 0.598 indicates a moderately positive relation between credibility of information and purchase decision of Generation Z. As it is both positive and falls between 0.4 and 0.59, the alternate hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion. The results show that influencer marketing plays an important role in shaping Generation Z purchase decisions in the personal care products market. The findings reveal that credibility of information and influencer expertise have a significant impact on purchase decision. This means that Generation Z consumers are more likely to respond to influencer content when the information appears reliable and when the influencer is perceived as knowledgeable and experienced in the field of personal care.

At the same time, influencer credibility and popularity of the brand were rejected in the hypothesis testing because their p-values were greater

than 0.05. This suggests that these variables do not directly influence Generation Z purchase decisions in the same way as credibility of information and influencer expertise. However, the correlation analysis still indicates positive relationships between popularity of the brand, brand loyalty, influencer expertise, credibility of information and purchase decision. Therefore, these factors may still contribute to purchase intention, although their statistical impact differs across tests.

The ANOVA results provide additional insight into how combinations of variables influence purchase decisions. The first ANOVA test indicates that credibility of information and brand loyalty do not show a direct impact on purchase decision according to the interpretation provided in the study. The second ANOVA test shows that popularity of the brand and influencer expertise have an impact on Generation Z purchase decision. These findings suggest that influencer expertise becomes especially important when combined with brand-related factors.

Several practical suggestions arise from the findings. Personal care influencers should keep up with trends. It is essential for the social media influencers of personal care brands to stay updated on the latest developments in personal care. This enables them to develop content that is fresh, relevant and engaging for their younger audience (Thakker & Pabalkar, 2021).

Influencers should also use attractive visuals. Young audiences are drawn to eye-catching and engaging imagery. Influencers can capture their attention by incorporating high-quality photographs, images, videos and graphics into their content (Hapsari et al., 2024).

Collaborating with fellow influencers is another useful strategy. Partnering with other influencers in the personal care industry can help influencers expand their audience and grow their fan base. In addition, influencers should provide educational content. Young people are keen to learn and acquire new skills and techniques. Personal care influencers who share educational content, such as tutorials and how-to videos, can attract younger viewers interested in improving their own personal care skills (Varma & Subha, 2023).

Influencers can also explain medical and health aspects of personal care products, especially for female segments of personal care products. Since personal care products may have health-related consequences, adding transparent and useful information can strengthen consumer trust.

Finally, influencer credibility remains important for long-term engagement. Consumers tend to react more positively to influencers who appear to be transparent and authentic (Abraham et al., 2022). Influencers must enhance their credibility by remaining authentic and transparent so as to attract more fan base.

Conclusions. The expertise of personal care influencers was found to significantly influence Generation Z's purchase decisions. In other words,

Generation Z respondents recognize that a personal care influencer's knowledge, skills, and passion are crucial factors that drive their purchase decision. They understand that to attract and retain viewers, an influencer must possess genuine expertise in their field.

On the other hand, brand loyalty has only a weak positive effect on Generation Z's purchase decision. This suggests that while trust matters, it may be a secondary concern for this group. It is essential that the company's voice and values are clearly reflected in the visuals shared by influencers. These visuals should comply with brand guidelines, including primary colors, brand identity and content direction. Consistent and appealing imagery aligned with the company's brand encourages viewers to engage further by visiting the fan page.

Furthermore, endorsing too many brands simultaneously can harm the influencer's credibility. Promoting conflicting messages may lead to a negative reaction from consumers. Maintaining a focused and authentic endorsement strategy is vital to preserving a positive consumer response.

Overall, the study concludes that influencer marketing affects Generation Z purchase decisions in the personal care products market, especially through credibility of information and influencer expertise. For businesses and marketers, these results suggest that influencer campaigns should focus not only on reach and popularity, but also on informative content, expertise, transparency, visual quality and authenticity.

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