



A Study On Impact Of Influencer Marketing On The Purchase Decisions Of Gen Z Consumers For Energy Drinks In Karnataka

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Abstract: This study investigates the influence of social media influencers and sustainability awareness on the energy drink consumption patterns of Generation Z in Karnataka. As digital natives, Gen Z increasingly turns to platforms like Instagram and YouTube, where influencers play a critical role in shaping brand perception and purchase behavior. The research adopts a descriptive design, collecting primary data from 400 respondents aged 13–28 using structured questionnaires. Statistical tools such as descriptive analysis, t-tests, and ANOVA were employed to interpret the findings. Results indicate that influencer marketing significantly affects purchase decisions, especially through perceived authenticity, trust, and peer engagement. Content such as reviews and endorsements strongly influence brand choice, though skepticism about influencer credibility persists. The study also reveals a moderate inclination toward sustainable consumption among Gen Z, with recyclable packaging, eco-friendly branding, and responsible messaging being key considerations. Notable regional variations were observed, with districts like Mandya and Ramanagar displaying higher responsiveness to both influencer marketing and sustainability efforts. The findings provide valuable insights for FMCG brands and policymakers aiming to craft culturally relevant and ethically aligned marketing strategies. Combining influencer engagement with sustainability messaging can offer a strategic advantage in connecting with Gen Z's values and lifestyle aspirations.

Index Terms – Gen Z Consumption, Influencer Marketing, Energy Drinks, Sustainable Behavior, Purchase Decision Drivers.

I. INTRODUCTION

Generation Z is emerging as a key consumer group, especially in dynamic categories like energy drinks. Their digital fluency and affinity for authentic content drive engagement with influencers on platforms like Instagram and YouTube. Influencers act as lifestyle curators, shaping brand perceptions and purchase decisions. The rise of personalized marketing has elevated their strategic role in youth-focused campaigns. However, there's limited scholarly focus on how these tactics resonate within regional markets.

In Karnataka, Gen Z's consumption is shaped by cultural identity, localized brand perceptions, and social influence. Despite the popularity of energy drinks, the drivers behind their purchasing behavior remain underexplored. Moreover, the role of influencer marketing in shaping sustainable attitudes warrants deeper examination. As eco-consciousness grows among youth, understanding its impact on product choices becomes crucial. This study seeks to address these gaps and offer insights into Gen Z's evolving behavior.

II. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

The surge in energy drink consumption among Gen Z in Karnataka reflects not just changing taste preferences but a deeper shift in lifestyle, branding impact, and digital influence. This study aims to decode the behavioral patterns behind these choices, examining factors such as taste, affordability, sustainability awareness, and influencer marketing. By focusing on a generation that values speed, identity, and social validation, the research sheds light on the evolving dynamics of FMCG branding.

Influencer marketing is the practice of using people, known as influencers, who have a devoted social media following and are seen as authorities or trendsetters in their field to endorse products and provide recommendations. Through regional segmentation and statistical analysis, the findings provide strategic insights for both marketers and sustainability advocates. Ultimately, this project bridges the gap between youth culture and ethical consumption, offering actionable recommendations for responsible market growth.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies by Kapoor & Bhandari (2025)¹⁷ and Sharma & Iyer (2025)²⁶ emphasize Gen Z's preference for authentic influencers who disclose sponsorships, boosting brand trust and purchase intent. Menon & Patil (2025)¹⁹ highlight the persuasive role of immersive content on Instagram and YouTube in shaping energy drink preferences. Halibas et al. (2024)⁸ and Hussain (2024)¹⁰ reveal that influencers promote sustainable behavior and ethical consumption, relevant for evaluating Gen Z's evolving consciousness. Kumar et al. (2025)¹⁶ and Al-Hasan (2024)² demonstrate how influencer traits and activity levels significantly shape engagement, attitudes, and purchase behavior.

Ghosh et al. (2024)⁷ found influencer traits shape Gen Z's fast-food choices via emotions and self-construal. Kara & Min (2024)¹² noted social responsibility and rewards drive eco-friendly acts. Kholkina et al. (2024)¹³ reported human influencers outperform virtual ones, except among novelty-seekers. Kumar & Shankar (2024)¹⁴ identified metaverse influencer traits that foster engagement and social glue. Rambocas & Metivier (2024)²³ found local influencers more effective due to trust and similarity. Bahar & Hasan (2024)²⁵ warned of disinformation boosting deceptive credibility. Shehzala et al. (2024)²⁷ explored how self-discrepancy affects emotions and purchase intent. Wang et al. (2024)²⁹ highlighted how rational messaging improves virtual influencers green product impact on consumer behavior.

IV. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Energy drinks are widely consumed by Gen Z in Karnataka, yet their preferences and purchase behavior remain poorly understood. Influencer marketing and cultural factors may significantly shape these choices. This study aims to uncover these trends and explore Gen Z's attitudes toward sustainable consumption.

V. OBJECTIVES

- To examine the impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying behaviour towards energy drinks in Karnataka
- To explore Gen Z consumer on sustainable consumption behaviour

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Design

The study follows a descriptive research design, aiming to analyze how influencer marketing impacts the purchase decisions of Gen Z consumers for energy drinks in Karnataka. It helps in understanding consumer behavior patterns, preferences, and attitudes.

6.2 Population and Sample

Target Population is Gen Z consumers (aged 15–27) residing in Karnataka who consume energy drinks and actively use social media. Convenience sampling is used due to time and resource constraints. A total of 400 respondents selected for the survey.

6.3 Data Collection Method

Primary Data: Collected through an online and offline structured questionnaire using Google Forms.

Secondary Data: Sourced from academic journals, articles, company websites, and research reports related to influencer marketing and Gen Z behavior.

6.4 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions using a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) is used to assess opinions and perceptions.

6.5 Data Analysis Tools

Collected data will be analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS to generate T -Test, Anova & Ad Hoc.

6.6 Hypothesis

- There is no impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying behaviour towards energy drinks in Karnataka
- There is no significant change in Gen Z consumer on sustainable consumption behavior

VII. Analysis and Interpretation

- Objective:1 To examine the impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying behaviour towards energy drinks in Karnataka

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics Obj-1

Variables	Mean	S D	Variance	Skewness	S. E	Kurtosis	S. E
Influencers are genuine	3.463	1.438	2.069	-0.460	0.122	-1.140	0.243
Trust influencers	3.385	1.208	1.460	-0.628	0.122	-0.660	0.243
Purchased influencer used	3.588	1.254	1.571	-0.633	0.122	-0.592	0.243
Watch YouTube /Instagram review	3.573	1.218	1.483	-0.709	0.122	-0.418	0.243
New brand influencer.	3.543	1.230	1.512	-0.627	0.122	-0.551	0.243
Influencer recommendations	3.578	1.178	1.387	-0.649	0.122	-0.512	0.243
Follow energy drink brands	3.545	1.264	1.597	-0.622	0.122	-0.616	0.243
Influencers on social media.	3.595	1.196	1.430	-0.770	0.122	-0.292	0.243
Influencer marketing appealing.	3.550	1.223	1.496	-0.616	0.122	-0.588	0.243
Campaigns than TV ads.	3.513	1.230	1.514	-0.605	0.122	-0.612	0.243
Discuss with my friends.	3.565	1.259	1.585	-0.674	0.122	-0.572	0.243
Social media my perception	3.523	1.252	1.568	-0.648	0.122	-0.574	0.243
Valid N (listwise)	400						

Moderate Agreement with Influencer Impact Most mean scores fall between 3.4 and 3.6, suggesting respondents somewhat agree with the influence of social media influencers on their purchasing behavior. The highest mean (3.595) was for "Influencers on social media", showing that this channel has a relatively stronger pull. Trust and Perception Items like "Trust influencers" (Mean = 3.385) and "Influencers are genuine" (Mean = 3.463) score slightly lower, indicating moderate skepticism-consumers may follow influencers but don't entirely see them as trustworthy or authentic.

H₀: There is no impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying behavior towards energy drinks in Karnataka

Table 4.2: ANOVA Obj-1

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Influencers are genuine	Between Groups	393.098	4	98.275	89.787	0.000
	Within Groups	432.339	395	1.095		
Trust influencers	Between Groups	370.483	4	92.621	172.387	0.000
	Within Groups	212.227	395	0.537		
Watch YouTube/Instagram review	Between Groups	363.950	4	90.987	157.668	0.000
	Within Groups	227.948	395	0.577		
New brand influencer.	Between Groups	320.074	4	80.019	111.606	0.000

	Within Groups	283.203	395	0.717		
Influencer recommendations	Between Groups	270.772	4	67.693	94.542	0.000
	Within Groups	282.825	395	0.716		
Follow energy drink brands	Between Groups	332.880	4	83.220	108.021	0.000
	Within Groups	304.310	395	0.770		
Influencers on social media.	Between Groups	283.934	4	70.983	97.880	0.000
	Within Groups	286.456	395	0.725		
Influencer marketing appealing.	Between Groups	290.615	4	72.654	93.667	0.000
	Within Groups	306.385	395	0.776		
Campaigns than TV ads.	Between Groups	288.101	4	72.025	90.078	0.000
	Within Groups	315.836	395	0.800		
Discuss with my friends.	Between Groups	340.990	4	85.247	115.587	0.000
	Within Groups	291.320	395	0.738		
Social media my perception	Between Groups	345.617	4	86.404	121.813	0.000
	Within Groups	280.180	395	0.709		

Each variable from "trust influencers" to "discuss with friends"- shows high F-values and low within-group variance, indicating clear group differences in how consumers respond to influencer-related factors. "Trust influencers" (F = 172.387) and "Watch YouTube/Instagram reviews" (F = 157.668) have especially high F-values, highlighting that credibility and content consumption patterns play critical roles.

Since the significance (p-value) for all variables is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0). Influencer marketing has a statistically significant impact on consumer buying behavior.

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- "Trust influencers" (F = 172.387) and "Watch YouTube/Instagram reviews" (F = 157.668) have especially high F-values, highlighting that credibility and content consumption patterns play critical roles.
- Even more affective or indirect aspects, like "Social media influencing perception" (F = 121.813) and "Discuss with friends" (F = 115.587), are significant, showing how peer validation and perception shifts are shaped by influencer exposure.

This solidifies your hypothesis that influencer marketing not just celebrity appeal but peer like digital engagement can significantly shape buying intent, discovery of new brands, and even discussions around energy drinks among Gen Z consumers in Karnataka.

Objective:2 To explore Gen Z consumer on sustainable consumption behavior

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics Obj-2

Variables	Mean	S. D	Variance	Skewness	S. E	Kurtosis	S. E
Sustainability issues production.	3.530	1.288	1.658	-0.389	0.122	-1.000	0.243
Brand environmental responsibility.	3.463	1.134	1.287	-0.668	0.122	-0.384	0.243
Brands recyclable packaging.	3.663	1.222	1.492	-0.675	0.122	-0.554	0.243
On the label or ads.	3.560	1.129	1.275	-0.617	0.122	-0.323	0.243
Gen Z should sustainable	3.603	1.161	1.348	-0.661	0.122	-0.345	0.243
Eco-friendly products.	3.573	1.168	1.363	-0.599	0.122	-0.448	0.243
Avoid not eco-friendly.	3.605	1.211	1.468	-0.540	0.122	-0.722	0.243
Reduce plastic usage.	3.555	1.194	1.426	-0.588	0.122	-0.552	0.243
Sustainable products.	3.598	1.191	1.419	-0.586	0.122	-0.535	0.243
Drink sustainably produced.	3.520	1.152	1.328	-0.528	0.122	-0.535	0.243
Eco-conscious influencers	3.585	1.219	1.486	-0.557	0.122	-0.665	0.243
Sustainability factor choices	3.555	1.202	1.446	-0.621	0.122	-0.500	0.243
Valid N (listwise)	400						

Source: Primary data SPSS Output

Moderate Positive Orientation Toward Sustainability The mean values range between 3.46 and 3.66, suggesting that Gen Z respondents exhibit a moderate inclination toward sustainable behaviors and values. The highest mean (3.663) is for “Brands with recyclable packaging”, indicating strong preference for visible, tangible eco-initiatives.

- **Values-Based Consumption Is Emerging** Statements like “Gen Z should be sustainable” (Mean = 3.603) and “Avoid not eco-friendly products” (3.605) reflect a collective ethical standpoint Gen Z is conscious of sustainability, though perhaps not yet uniformly translating it into action.

H₀: There is no significant change in Gen Z consumer on sustainable consumption behavior

Table 4.4: ANOVA Obj-2

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sustainability issues production.	Between Groups	9.980	2	4.990	3.040	0.049
	Within Groups	651.660	397	1.641		
Brand environmental responsibility.	Between Groups	12.325	2	6.162	4.882	0.008
	Within Groups	501.113	397	1.262		
Brands recyclable packaging.	Between Groups	12.795	2	6.398	4.359	0.013
	Within Groups	582.642	397	1.468		
On the label or ads.	Between Groups	12.689	2	6.345	5.080	0.007
	Within Groups	495.871	397	1.249		
Gen Z should sustainable	Between Groups	19.591	2	9.795	7.504	0.001
	Within Groups	518.207	397	1.305		
Eco-friendly products.	Between Groups	18.606	2	9.303	7.031	0.001
	Within Groups	525.291	397	1.323		
Avoid not eco-friendly.	Between Groups	5.301	2	2.651	1.813	0.164
	Within Groups	580.289	397	1.462		
Reduce plastic usage.	Between Groups	15.322	2	7.661	5.495	0.004
	Within Groups	553.468	397	1.394		
Sustainable products.	Between Groups	21.385	2	10.692	7.791	0.000
	Within Groups	544.813	397	1.372		
Drink sustainably produced.	Between Groups	14.636	2	7.318	5.639	0.004
	Within Groups	515.204	397	1.298		
Eco-conscious influencers	Between Groups	15.604	2	7.802	5.363	0.005
	Within Groups	577.506	397	1.455		
Sustainability factor choices	Between Groups	16.208	2	8.104	5.739	0.003
	Within Groups	560.582	397	1.412		

Source: Primary data SPSS Output

- Sustainable products ($F = 7.791$, $p = 0.000$), Gen Z should be sustainable ($F = 7.504$, $p = 0.001$) Eco-friendly products ($F = 7.031$, $p = 0.001$) These suggest a high level of agreement and group differences in values-based consumption. These results reinforce observation that Gen Z is not monolithic in their approach to sustainability. While values are largely present, the translation into consistent behavior varies perhaps shaped by awareness levels, peer norms, brand communication, or convenience barriers.
- “Avoid not eco-friendly products” is not statistically significant ($p = 0.164$). This could indicate inconsistency between Gen Z's sustainability intentions and their resistance to non-eco-friendly products a sign of difference in opinion or practical trade-offs.
- Variables like “Reduce plastic usage”, “Eco-conscious influencers”, and “Drink sustainably produced” also show significant variation, reflecting the influence of both environmental values and social factors.

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VIII. Results and Discussion

- The study highlights that influencer marketing plays a pivotal role in shaping Gen Z's energy drink purchase behavior across Karnataka. Trust in influencers and engagement with social media content, particularly YouTube and Instagram reviews, were statistically significant ($F = 172.387$ and $F = 157.668$), emphasizing the strong persuasive impact of digital campaigns.
- Additionally, perceptions of influencers as genuine, discussions with peers, and brand followership showed notable influence, especially in Mandya and Ramanagar.
- On the sustainability front, Gen Z consumers demonstrated varying levels of eco-consciousness, with significant regional differences across 11 of 12 measured variables. Emotional satisfaction from sustainable purchases ($F = 7.791$), support for responsible consumption ($F = 7.504$), and attentiveness to eco-labels and packaging were key drivers, with Mandya and Ramanagar leading in eco-friendly preferences.
- These findings underscore a dual opportunity for brands to combine ethical influencer strategies with sustainability messaging to resonate effectively with Gen Z consumers. Only “Avoiding non-eco-friendly brands” showed no significant variation ($p = 0.164$), sign of difference in opinion or practical trade-offs.
- The interplay between social media influence and eco-conscious branding presents strategic potential for ethically positioned marketing campaigns across districts.
- Energy drink brands should blend influencer trust with eco-friendly messaging to better connect with Gen Z in responsive districts like Mandya and Ramanagar.
- Including regional insights in marketing strategies can help brands tailor content that resonates with local Gen Z preferences and boost campaign effectiveness.

IX. Conclusion

The study reveals that Gen Z consumers in Karnataka exhibit a nuanced and evolving relationship with energy drinks, shaped significantly by social media influencer marketing and emerging sustainability concerns. Statistical analyses affirm that influencers, especially those on platforms like YouTube and Instagram, have a measurable impact on purchase decisions—though trust and perceived authenticity remain areas of moderate skepticism. Regional differences, particularly in districts such as Mandya and Ramanagar, highlight the importance of localized marketing strategies.

Furthermore, the findings suggest a growing but uneven adoption of sustainable consumption values among Gen Z. While there is broad ethical awareness, actual behavioral change varies, indicating a gap between intention and action. Brands that integrate influencer credibility with transparent, eco-conscious branding stand to resonate more deeply with this demographic.

This research contributes valuable insights for FMCG brands, marketers, and policymakers by underscoring the dual influence of digital persuasion and values-based consumption. Future studies could expand by comparing trends across different states, exploring longitudinal shifts, and examining the role of micro vs. macro influencers in shaping both market engagement and ethical consumption patterns.

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